Inyo-Mono Resource Conservation District Regular Meeting Minutes

**When: Tuesday Feb 25th 2025 at 5:30pm**

**Where: County Building, 1360 N Main St Bishop CA, Room 207**

Jarret called meeting to order at 5:38

Present board members: Jarret, Graham, Kay

Absent board members: Katie Doonan, Chance Rossi

Others present: Kristen, Rick, Levi, Steve Nelson

Public comment:

Kristen invited Levi to speak about gaps in the wildfire space. Levi offering input to help with hazardous fuels and wildfire mitigation space. Appreciate Levi being here – the RCD hasn’t done much in a long time, trying to build things up right now. Graham asked Levi what the prioritized gaps that the RCD could fill are. Levi is not sure how to answer because he is not familiar with contracts. Graham asked what categories needs would fall in. Levi speaks about how there are differences in Mono and Inyo counties and there are multiple ways to reduce fuels: burning, mastication. Heavy equipment like masticators and excavators would be helpful. Hand work with chainsaw is more for fine details. Chipping you are just rearranging the fuels. Alternatives include burn trailers. Graham thinking we can start with projects on DWP land. Projects on DWP benefit grazing as well as fuels removal.

Jarret entertains motions to approve minutes from 1/14/25

Kay: Expense was $240 revenue was $254.36 net revenue $14.26 Balance is $18,768.06

 Kay has not had a chance to visit with the county

 Christie Martindale is now the treasurer

Kay did research on independent payroll companies – talked to two different companies: venture hr and first work. Both are uncertain about working with special districts. Are we looking at hiring a full time employee with 401k and benefits or a contract position? Should we get information for both to compare them or are we going one way or another. Graham met with John Vallejo and he had the same question for policy. Seems easier if they were a county employee but would work for the RCD. Need to have a conversation with the county to begin thinking about this. Kay will try to get something set up with the county within a couple weeks.

RCD staffing and grant opportunities

Rick: the sooner we can get the financial roadblock out of the way the more likely we can use the funding for an RCD employee

Steve Nelson: The RCD might think about getting together with Christie Martindale. We wont find a similar RCD in the state because we have Inyo and Mono county. He would find an RCD to ask budget questions to. How do they use the county as a pass through for funding? Explain to Christie how it works for other RCDs. Get Christie early exposure to someone who already does something similar. It would be helpful to have someone to do thing aside from us because we all have day jobs. This is essential to grow and be productive. This is particularly important for Inyo county.

CWPP

Kristen is creating action plan from top priorities to make a 5 year roadmap. It is a slow process. Over half of 50 projects had been listed as high priority. Witling down to top 10 and top three. Created a grant application using top 10 priorities. Proposal goes to ESCOG tomorrow for approval. Big gap is DWP fuels reduction. Want to build a relationship and the Bishop resilience project.

Jarret signed letter of support. Agreed we support the project.

Kay asking for strategic notes from Aaron.

 Steve has a list of leasees and others that he is talking to, trying to finish all conversations. Spent a lot of time on upfront research. List was bigger and more complex than traditional grazing leasees. It includes commercial permit holders, mom and pop special use permit holders, there is a mash of things in high risk portions of the Bishop community. Seen some good things that DWP has done in and around Bishop. Hasn’t run into anyone on not traditional leases that thinks wildfire mitigation is unneeded. Steve trying not to point fingers at anyone. Keeping it at a level “this is what it looks like, this is how to navigate it”. A lot can be covered under existing leases, shouldn’t need additional CEQA or large CEQA. This is a worthy effort and every little bit helps. When challenges arose they had non profit partners do the contracting and pay the people and a person would work in the office.

Additional Board Member and Staff Reports

Levi: Kristen has contact information and he is available and here for the RCD.

Graham: Graham is supervisor at CDFW habitat conservation unit. Streamlined restoration projects possible and hoping it is an asset.

Next Meeting: March 25th at 5:30pm

Kay makes a motion to approve Minutes, Jarret so moved, Graham seconds. Motion carries

Jarret motions to adjourn meeting Graham so moved, Kay seconds. Meeting adjourned at 6:38pm.