**Regular Meeting**

**Thursday, January 4th @ 3 p.m.**

**USDA Office – Hardin, MT**

1. **Call to Order:** The Big Horn Conservation District Board meeting was called to order at 3:22 p.m. by Chairman Roy Neal. Other members present were Vice-Chair Steve Schanaman, Treasurer Dan Lowe, and supervisors Kent Murdock, Phillip Miller, Austin Pitsch and Associate Bill Hodges. Also, present was NRCS representative Seanna Torske, Big Horn County Extension Agent Andrea Berry, and BHCD Administrator Kylie Martin.
2. **Public Comment:** As there was no response to call for public comment, the chairman proceeded with the meeting.
3. **Approval of Minutes:**  A motion was made by Steve Schanaman to approve December’s minutes as emailed/mailed; motion was seconded by Kent Murdock. As there was no opposition or discussion, the motion was carried.
4. **Officers’ Report:**
   1. Treasurer
      1. Dan Lowe presented the Treasurer’s Report. The FIB Checking Account has a balance of $80,152.67. The County Account has a balance of $30,458.17, and the Certificate of Deposit’s has a balance of $16,419.20. The following bills were presented:

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  + - 1. Montana State Fund Unemployment $4,867.49
      2. First Interstate Checks $63.00
      3. MACD Convention Reg. $870.00
      4. Kylie Martin Wages $1,078.62
      5. Cincinnati Liability Insurance $65.00

1. **Board and committee reports:**
   1. Conservation District Bureau
      1. Kylie Martin presented the Board with the monthly hand out from DNRC

Kylie Martin presented the Board with the update for DNRC *(see report)*

1. **New Business:**
   1. Field Report
      1. Seanna Torske presented the NRCS update
   2. Letter to government
      1. Supervisor Phillip Miller would like to reach out to the higher ups for law enforcement support for our WIS Stations. Our attempts at reaching out locally have been met on deaf ears, and so he is hoping that a letter to the senator might help move things along. Phillip Miller will draft up his main bullet points, and Kylie Martin will fluff it into a letter. The motion was made by Phillip Miller and seconded by Austin Pitsch. As there was no opposition or discussion, the motion carried.
   3. NACD
      1. February 10 - 14 in San Diego
         1. Dan Lowe was approved to attend.
   4. Tree Sales
      1. Jana Pitsch is the new FFA Advisor for the High School. Last year, the Board agreed that it would be a nice addition to have the FFA students buy trees at our discounted price, and then sell them to the public as a fundraiser. The Advisor at that time did not think there would be enough motivation from the students. Steve Schanaman motioned to try again with the new Advisor. The motion was seconded by Austin Pitsch. As there was no opposition or discussion, the motion carried.
   5. Ladies Ag Night – January 26
      1. Kent Murdock made a motion to approve $90.00 worth of tree sale door prizes for the Ladies Ag Night. The motion was seconded by Austin Pitsch; as there was no opposition or discussion, the motion carried. Kylie Martin already had the gift certificates made up, and she gave them to Andrea Berry.
      2. Austin Pitsch made a motion to offer two Soil & Health tickets; motion was seconded by Kent Murdock. As there was no opposition or discussion, the motion carried.
   6. Fuel Mitigation
      1. Update: Kylie Martin received a call from a gentleman right on the Treasure County, Big Horn County line in Sarpy looking for information on fixing his property after a couple big fires went through. Kylie Martin spoke with him about Fuel Mitigation, but that she didn’t know much about it. She reached out to Wendy Jones from Lower Musselshell, and Angie Stahl from Treasure County to see if they were up for a field trip. Wendy Jones has multiple open Fuel Mitigation Grants going, and Treasure County’s NRCS Office has a current TIP open. Wendy Jones informed the group about “ladder fuels” and that the landowner would want to cut out the new growth and thin the space between the mature trees. This helps the fire to move through the area at a quicker rate, rather than sit and build energy on the sap from the new growth.
   7. WIS Site Lead
      1. A motion was made by Steve Schanaman to hire Bill Hodges (Hardin) and Phillip Miller (St. Xavier) as WIS Site Leads. The motion was seconded by Kent Murdock. As there was no opposition or discussion, the motion carried.
      2. A motion was made by Austin Pitsch for the Site Lead pay wage to be $21.00 an hour, return employees to be $19.00 an hour, and new hires to be $17.00 an hour. The motion was seconded by Steve Schanaman. As there was no opposition or discussion, the motion carried.
2. **Old Business:**
   1. 310 – Ryan Rigler
      1. The form is signed. Kylie Martin sent an email to check on his status but has not heard back.
   2. 310 – Jim Scott
      1. Steve Schanaman informed the board that the project was completed. Kylie Martin will get a completion form to Jim for signature and reach out for finished pictures.
   3. 310 – Sunlight
      1. Darryl Dooley approached the Board regarding the pump sites for the Sunlight Game Ranch. An earlier approval was made for a 310, but during the Site Visit, it was discussed that perhaps a Maintenance Permit would be better suited. Darryl is going to refill out applications for 3 pump sites. Motion was made by Kent Murdock and seconded by Phillip Miller. As there was no opposition or discussion, the motion carried.
   4. Tree Planter Location
      1. Austin Pitsch motioned to have the Tree Planter moved to the 4H building at the Fairgrounds. This motion was seconded by Phillip Miller, and already agreed upon by the Commissioners. Kylie Martin will put together an MOU.
3. **Other Business:** 
   1. **WIS Bank Account:**
      1. Kent Murdock motioned that a new checking account be opened at Little Horn State Bank for the purpose of AIS only; motion was seconded by Steve Schanaman. As there was no opposition or discussion, the motion carried. A motion was also made by Austin Pitsch for the following three signers: Steve Schanaman, Vice-Chair, Dan Lowe, Treasurer and Kylie Martin, Administrator. The motion was seconded by Steve Schanaman. As there was no opposition or discussion, the motion carried.
4. **Public Comment: As there was no public comment, the meeting was adjourned at 5:02 p.m. The next meeting will be held February 1st, 2024 at the Big Horn County Courthouse following the Local Work Group Meeting at 1 p.m.**