

**Missoula Conservation District
Joint Budget and Grants Committee meeting
December 22, 2022 at 1:00 p.m.
3550 Mullan Rd, Ste 106, Missoula, MT 59808**

Missoula Conservation District Attendees:

Tim Hall (Grants Committee)
Travis Greenwalt* (Budget & Grants Committees)
Bob Schroeder (Budget & Grants Committees)
Art Pencek (Budget Committee)
Radley Watkins (Staff)
Bryan Vogt (Staff)

Additional Attendees: None

*Denotes virtual participation via Zoom

Call Meeting to Order – 1:07 pm by Tim Hall

Budget vs Actual Report – Watkins presented a fiscal year 2023 (FY 23) Budget vs Actual Report for review. Watkins also presented a spreadsheet of all current District account balances and explained that the mill levy account balance includes a substantial amount of roll over funds from prior years in which the budgeted mill levy funds were not spent down to \$0. The spreadsheet also included proposed allocations for these funds in excess of the current FY23 budget, a majority of which are held by the county in the District’s mill levy account. Committee members discussed the prior practice of moving unspent mill levy funds out of the county account and into a separate savings or investment account for the sake of annual budgeting purposes. Watkins also reported on some of the challenges of preparing the annual operating budget based on required processes that don’t align well with District’s fiscal year beginning and end dates.

MCD Grants Program Budget vs Actual Report – Vogt presented two reports, the first being an overview of FY23 MCD Grant Programs that included the policies and deadlines associated with each grant program, their budgeted amounts, and the source of funds for each MCD grant offering (i.e., mill levy funds or earmarked savings from prior years’ unspent grant budgets). The second report was a FY23 MCD Grants Program Budget vs Actual Report. This report showed that FY23 Grant Program awards only include three grants totaling \$10,000 out of the budgeted \$69,000. Vogt also reported that there are two unpaid Conservation Enhancement Grant awards that were earmarked out of unspent FY22 Grant Program funds that are, therefore, not reflected in the FY23 MCD Grants Program Budget vs Actual Report figures.

Current MCD Grant Requests

Support of Montana Native Seed Network – The Joint Committees recommended the District providing \$25,000/year for two years for a total commitment of \$50,000 of financial support towards Phase I efforts of the Montana Native Seed Network. Funding for this commitment would come from an allocation prior years’ unspent funds rather than from the FY23 Budget. Additional recommendations included the requirement that no funds would be transferred until a MOU is executed between the District and DNRC that clearly defines the role, responsibilities, and benefits of the District agreeing to serve as a principal partner of the Montana Native Seed Network.

CEG-02-22 Highlander Grant Creek Bank Stabilization – The Joint Committees recommended the District award \$5,000 in Conservation Enhancement Grant funding to this project with the conditions that (1) the grantee will work with District staff and contractor on the final location and design of the fence, including the stream access points, (2) browse and/or beaver protection be installed on the planted shrubs, (3) all plantings be subject to District survival criteria (i.e., 75% survival rate of plantings after the first year and at least 50% survival two years following the planting; requirement to replant if survival is less), and (4) high quality educational signs be installed with review and/or content provided by the District; the signs will also acknowledge the District and the project funder. Funding for this CEG award will come from unspent FY22 Grant Program funds as noted above during discussion of the MCD Grants Program Budget vs Actual Report. Vogt noted that additional funding that will be required for installation of the educational signs was not included in the budget submitted by the applicant. The Joint Committee members expressed support of the possibility of additional MDC grant funding going towards the purchase and installation of the educational signs.

ECS-02-22 Missoula Bear Smart (Phase I – Education/Social Marketing Campaign) – Vogt reported that the applicant indicated the full application for this grant will be submitted sometime after the beginning of the year. It is likely the Grants Committee will review it at the same time new quarterly MCD Grant applications from the January 31st deadline are reviewed in early February. The requested \$2,500 ECS-02-22 award was included as a pending amount on the FY23 MCD Grants Program Budget vs Actual Report.

Options for Remaining FY23 Grant Programs – Joint Committee members recommended continuing to offer the remaining FY23 Grants Program as planned and then reassessing any necessary or desired changes for the FY24 Grants Program.

Discussion of Recommended Adjustments to FY23 Budget – Joint Committee members made the recommendation of transferring some of the excess mill levy account funds from the county account to the District's Savings Account held at First Security Bank. Joint Committee members also requested the District Treasurer, Travis Greenwalt, inquire about the possibility and process to transfer the District's funds held in the DA Davidson account out of bonds and into certificates of deposit (CD) in order to receive a better interest rate.

Adjournment – 3:00 pm by general consensus