

MRCDC Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
October 22, 2024 at 1:00pm via Zoom

At 1:06pm, Chair Karl Christians called the MRCDC Executive Committee meeting to order.

Council members present were **Karl Christians, Lewis & Clark CD; John Chase, Cascade CD; Lorri Schafer, Fergus CD;** Greg Jergesen, Blaine CD; **Jeff Ryan, Lewis & Clark CD; and Dana Berwick, Roosevelt CD.** Others present were Macy Bliss, Garfield CD; Robbie Savelkoul, Roosevelt CD; Cora Gray, Phillips CD; Dona Stafford, Fergus CD; Molly Masters, MRCDC Coordinator; Brent Smith, CEMIST Manager; Katie Lund, PCCD/MRCDC Fiscal Manager; and Trish Smith, PCCD Administrator/MRCDC Secretary. **Executive Committee Members in BOLD.*

APPROVE MINUTES

Minutes were reviewed from the September 23, 2024 meeting. John Chase moved to approve the minutes as amended; Karl Christians seconded. Motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

FINANCIAL REPORT

Katie discussed the October financial report. Molly and Katie have been figuring out how to get the budget amended with DNRC. There is \$35K that was reported as income in the FY24 budget, but the rest will be spent out in FY25; the grant covers two years 2023-2025. Have not been reimbursed for the prior quarter yet; need to get caught up. Went over *Profit and Loss* by class. Checking shows a negative balance, but really not in the negative – still holding back the PCCD check right now. Approximately \$47K in savings. Discussed unpaid bills. Profit and loss by class – checking – shows negative \$1505.01 – since holding back the PCCD check right now, so really not in a negative. Approximately \$47K in savings. Went over unpaid bills. Lorri Schafer moved to pay the unpaid bills and approve the financial report; John Chase seconded. Motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Karl stated that he visited with Jeff Pattison and Molly about bringing the Milk River Watershed Alliance under MRCDC. Discussed combining the two groups at the MACD convention into one meeting; MRCDC business first and then discuss the Milk River Watershed Alliance. Greg stated that the MRWA is too small to justify even a part time administrator, so would be good to combine the groups and resources. Karl stated perhaps reducing Molly's CMR CWG workload by having only 1-2 meetings a year so she has time to incorporate the MRWA. Karl discussed the USGS that is looking at eliminating 9 gaging stations; one is the Milk River just north of Malta. It is an important gage for the Test Flow work for getting the Corps information and will cost around \$20K to keep that gaging station going. Molly stated that we will know more after the CMR CWG next week. John stated that we will have to have a better understanding on how it will all work, and Karl stated they will have to have a work plan.

November Quarterly Meeting – hybrid or not, agenda topics: Karl asked the Council everyone's opinion on having the quarterly meeting hybrid or just in person. Karl suggested to just have it in person. Jeff stated it is an opportunity to bring more people in, and his vote is hybrid. Lorri stated that the last meeting didn't have a quorum since there wasn't the hybrid option; her vote was having the meeting hybrid. Karl stated that we should go with the hybrid, due to the good thoughts brought forward. Molly will set the quarterly up as a hybrid meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Fort Peck Test Flows – Molly stated that they dropped the flows pretty low mid-September and they are now getting data compiled. MRRIC meetings are coming up with science advisory panels, so should be getting info from that. There is a Plenary MRRIC meeting the beginning of December near Omaha, and a stakeholder meeting Nov 1. Trying to get someone hired for the additional monitoring surveying with the irrigators; waiting on advertising the job until we get the DNRC to okay the amendment, the PCCD approved the hire. Got together with the Corps to put some of their questions on the survey. Robbie stated they are having their annual operating planning meeting Oct 28th in Fort Peck.

CMR Community Working Group – Molly stated she has only received 2 RSVPs for the Oct 29th CMR CWG meeting. Trish and Brent stated they will attend. Macy added that herself and 4 board members will also be attending. Molly stated that it should be good enough attendance to continue with the meeting.

Living on the Bank – Dona stated that Flathead CD represented at the realtors training. Molly sent swag and information for the table. The event had around 200 realtors and went over really well. Molly stated that CDs should probably attend that convention every year; realtors appreciated the CD and 310 information, etc.

Woody Invasive Species Working Group – Molly stated there was a Woody Invasive Species Working Group meeting last week in Helena that she joined parts of virtually. Their focus was economic and wildlife impacts, other invasive issues if control it, and water usage. She is hoping to watch the rest of the recording that she missed.

MT Water Review –Karl stated that they had their meeting on recommendations a week ago. Neither Molly or Karl were able to attend. Molly is working on getting caught up with their meeting recordings discussing Bills and what moving forward with to the legislative session. They will be having a meeting/information November 21 at the MACD convention; Anna Stevenson with DNRC will be having a MT Water Review discussion. MT Stockgrowers will be having a webinar Nov. 21 discussing the future of exempt wells.

River Rendezvous – Molly stated that we will discuss 2025 River Rendezvous locations at the quarterly meeting.

PARTNER REPORTS:

MACD – Karl asked who all might be attending the MACD Convention and everyone weighed in.

DNRC – No report.

NRCS –Karl stated they are getting a lot of money for conservation projects. Karl discussed the hiring process and how CDs can help with that process hiring locally. A lot of positions available but the hiring process is so stringent; by the time the hiring folks are ready to offer a job the applicant is gone. It would be great for rural communities if they could hire local ranch folk. Need to get the hiring process back into CD hands. Cora discussed direct hires and getting around the algorithm that can knock out good candidates.

MRWA – Greg stated that they have been moving along with the siphon project. The federal side of the funds is still there; it is a 50/50 match. The loan from HB6 is also being used. Karl stated that there is a

special initiative for producers on the highline. Greg stated that there are 8 different NRCS programs offered to producers affected by the siphon failure.

CEMIST – Brent stated that the EHS management response in Fergus County has been great. The site has been rolled, burned, and iron phosphate bait has been spread. We will see what the results are next summer. CEMIST hosted an AIS citizen science event at Lake Elmo for 5th-8th grade students. CEMIST will probably host this event again each year. CEMIST attended and presented at a couple different kids' conservation events last month. CEMIST attended and presented at the NAISMA convention. The presentation was on E&O in rural areas. Last week CEMIST hosted their AIS Train the Trainer workshop in Bozeman and also staffed an E&O booth at the Montana Educators Conference in Bozeman. Next week CEMIST monthly call and November 5th is our Quarterly Meeting (zoom). The meeting will focus on partner updates and activities from this field season. MISC Summit and AIS annual meeting is in Helena on November 13-14th. CEMIST will be attending the MACD convention and will be presenting during the event.

REACH REPORTS

Lower Reach – No report.

Reservoir Reach – Trish stated it has been a very busy last couple months with events, grant applications and reports, and other CD work.

Middle Reach – Dona discussed the Eastern Health Snail eradication efforts and tree sales are starting up.

Upper Reach – Jeff stated that they will be doing their annual planning at their next November board meeting. Their CD adopted the governance calendar (monthly calendar have at each board meeting) and he thinks other CDs should use it. John stated that they were unable to have the meeting at their new CD due to the distance from the main Convention. Karl stated that they received a grant to put up educational signs for wake boats to help minimize erosion.

Individual CD Reports (voluntary/as needed) – None.

COORDINATOR UPDATE – Molly stated the BLM is putting together a National Advisory Committee for implementing the Public Lands Rule; meeting is November 18 and comments are due Nov 4. Looking at having 15 primary members and 15 alternates.

UPCOMING EVENTS/IMPORTANT DATES

October

- 22: MRCDC Exec. Committee Meeting
- 28: USACE AOP meeting, Fort Peck
- 29: CMR CWG, Jordan ****rescheduled date****
- 30: CEMIST meeting
- 30: PCCD meeting

November

- 1: USACE Test Flow stakeholders meeting
- 5: Election Day
- 5: CEMIST Quarterly meeting
- 6: NRCS State Technical Committee, Helena
- 11: Veterans Day
- 19: MRCDC Quarterly meeting, Great Falls**
- 19-21: MACD Convention, Great Falls
- 26: PCCD meeting

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- 27: CEMIST meeting
- 28: Thanksgiving
- 29: Molly out

December

- 3-5: MRRIC Plenary Meeting, Bellevue NE
- 9: Molly out
- 17: MRCDC Exec. Committee Meeting?
- 18: CEMIST meeting
- 18: PCCD meeting
- 25: Merry Christmas!

Other

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:32pm.

Approved on: December 17, 2024

Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Trish Smith".

Trish Smith, MRCDC Secretary

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Karl Christians".

Karl Christians, Chairman