

**DRAFT Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors
Thursday, January 16, 2025**

4:00 – 6:00 pm

Location: 80 Stone Pine Road, Suite 100, Half Moon Bay, CA 94019 and via Zoom

Directors: Barbara Kossy, Adrienne Etherton, Michelle Weil, Troy Guy

Associate Directors: Helen Wolter, Zahra Kassam

RCD staff: Kellyx Nelson, Cesar Aguilar, Lau Hodges, Amy Kaeser, Grace Allen, Christina Kelleher, Jarrad Fisher, Caileen Viehweg, Barb Kipreos, Clifton Herrmann

1. Call to Order

Kossy called the meeting at 4:02 p.m.

2. Approval of Agenda

3. Introductions of Guests and Staff

All in attendance introduced themselves.

4. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

5. Consent Agenda

The Board of Directors approved:

5.1. [September 2024 Draft Regular Meeting Minutes](#)

5.2. [October 2024 Draft Regular Meeting Minutes](#)

5.3. [November 2024 Draft Regular Meeting Minutes](#)

5.4. [Fiscal Year 2025 First Quarter Draft Financial Statements](#)

The Board of Directors receives into record:

5.5. San Mateo RCD Newsletter "[Boots on the Ground: November 2024](#)"

5.6. National Marine Fisheries Service West Coast Region, "[2024 5-Year Review: Summary & Evaluation of Central California Coast Steelhead](#)"

ACTION: Weil moved to approve the consent agenda with item 5.4 pulled off and moved to the regular agenda, Etherton seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

6. Regular Agenda

5.4. Fiscal Year 2025 First Quarter Draft Financial Statements

- The following edits were made:
 - o Added "Quarter 1" or "First Quarter" on each page
 - o Corrected spelling of "Stewardship" and "Fish"
 - o Removed "County Contributions," as it was removed from the FY 25 budget
- Discussion included: status of booking donations from the All You Seed is Love event; that the negative number in the checking account references checks that had been cut and booked but were not sent until the account balance was higher, so the actual account never dipped below \$500K though it may appear that way in QuickBooks; and former director Glauthier coming to join a conversation about whether/ how to get all income and revenue in the same quarter in financial statements.

ACTION: Weil moved to approve our financials for Q1 as amended, Etherton seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

6.1. The board will consider Resolution 2025-1: Recognizing a Decade of Distinguished Service by Jarrad Fisher

- Discussion included: Fisher has advanced coastal streamflow restoration in California; is a recognized authority on the topic; Fisher and this RCD have piloted new techniques for these projects, including permitting and water rights; the significance of the fact that contractors have said they bid lower if they know Fisher is involved on a project.

ACTION: Weil moved to approve the resolution, Etherton seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

6.2 Board will consider allocation of 2024 earnings for eligible employees to the Employer Sponsored 401K Plan.

- Discussion included: review of the memo, that the RCD doesn't provide pensions like other government agencies do, that we offer a discretionary match program but we don't require match for people to receive from the 401k, goals to be a competitive workplace, how the proposed allocation compare to previous years, our financial position, how we plan for this as an indirect costs in our federally negotiated indirect cost rate and the annual budget, the board's desire to support staff and recognition of the need to be a competitive employer.

ACTION: Etherton moved to approve the allocation of 2024 earnings for eligible employees to the Employer Sponsored 401K plan, Weil seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

6.3 Discussion and possible action regarding membership of board committees.

- Etherton had requested an item to talk about membership on the Personnel Committee and explained that the committee is a sounding board for Nelson as requested and handles her evaluation
- Nelson explained that Etherton is a thought partner to discuss exit interviews, staff retention, performance related issues on staff, or if something might have liability.
- Guy volunteered to join the committee.
- Nelson suggested a closed session at the start of the March meeting for her review and will prepare some materials in advance.
- There was discussion about other committees and that they can involve associate directors and members of the public.

6.4 Executive Director's report

- Fires in southern California are impactful: many staff have loved ones who are experiencing trauma and loss; renewed interest and advocacy in our district around wildfire resiliency and our work; philosophical divide between planning for worst-case vs. most likely scenario with advocates on each side for different priority actions; southern California is the worst-case scenario and for some people that's making it feel statistically more likely; RCD helps with natural resource management aspect, including vegetation management along evacuation routes, most of our fire risk-reduction work is focused on vegetation management; local opinions are ranging from the fires being proof that vegetation management doesn't work to the fires being evidence that their neighborhood is a priority for vegetation management; expectations for misinformation and misunderstanding about our work; the federal forest health bill
- Launching development of a salary schedule with consultants from a company called Fortress and Flourish; will improve the certainty and transparency for all staff about how positions are compensated; RCD has gotten large enough and sophisticated enough that this was an essential step; process to benchmark salaries with comparable positions at comparable organizations, including salary and benefits; discussed DEIJ practices vis a vis merit increases; discussed parity across similar positions internally while reconciling with market pressures for some program areas over others
- Website overhaul is moving forward; interviewed a second designer; Weil described next steps; discussion of functionalities, limited staff capacity to update being a design consideration; user accessibility (Etherton mentioned Userway software).
- Volunteer opportunities for individuals who can make the commitment to be highly trained individuals to support tabling at events- ideally someone who can make a commitment longer than a year
- We also need people who can do some office work.
- DEIJ Plan: minor amendments coming to the board soon; presentation at CARCD went well; very positive feedback
- Innovation in systems change: we were the first in the state to use a new streamlined permitting tool; first adopted public works plan (originated in

Santa Cruz RCD) in the state for doing forest health management projects; first in the state to complete a project using the CALVTP (vegetation treatment program- streamlined CEQA process for forest management); one of the first in the state to use the new statutory exemption for CEQA; piloted a new way of changing water rights in weeks instead years; proud that we are fertile ground for innovation advancing the scale and the pace of restoration; elected officials need to hear these stories, they always hear it is so hard to get things done but don't hear that we are doing it here, and that their district is where it started; sometimes they inadvertently advocate for changes that have already happened because they don't know.

- Next month we start annual budget process.
- Completed an editorial calendar for social media posts- check out our series of short videos about soil with Doug Millar, "Doug's Soiled Shorts"
- "All you Seed is Love" October event results: cost of staff time was \$51,000; vendors, services, materials, and supplies was about \$26,000; total expenses were \$77,350; total revenue was \$71,000; value of relationship building not calculated; increased recognition and awareness; staff time was mostly getting sponsors and donors; estimates that there would be \$15,000 less in staff time in the future
- Strategic Plan has expired. Will bring up in future board meeting.
- Kossy asked about security and cyber security and what we have set up to protect ourselves; Aguilar described steps that we take, the system created by our IT consultant; discussion included threats we experience and how we navigate them and take them seriously

6.5. USDA NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service) report

- Howard was absent.
- In his absence, discussion included the relevance of the potential forest health bill to the district, the potential effect of the fires on southern California on funding for forest health and fuel reduction work

6.6. Directors' connection and reports

Denise Philips

- Just returned from a trip to Antarctica which was a national geographic trip.
- Many lectures about climate change and the challenges they are going through in Antarctica. It has made her more aware of the impact.
- Significant impacts to krill, including products like fish oil that come from krill.

Zahra Kassam

- Had the opportunity to go to the CARCD conference with all the staff.
- It was amazing and inspired her to learn a lot about the RCDs and to hear from people saving the world.
- The most interesting sessions were the sessions about mastication and invasives and how they did 27 different test plots. Herbicide was a main topic.

Helen Wolter

- Was elected to city council in Portola Valley.
- If you want to get something done, run for the city council.
- Kossy asked if there is much intersection with the RCD and what's going on in Portola valley.
- Wolter said that she absolutely does. There is a lot of vegetation management and discussion about evacuation routes.
- Nelson mentioned that we used to work with the town when Jeremy Dennis was town manager and would be happy to partner.

Adrienne Etherton

- Received an e-mail from WSP about some mitigation opportunities.
- Coordinated re: Weed Management Area grant solicitation
- First in the annual series habitat restoration day on Saturday Feb 8th. It is on San Bruno Mountain in Brisbane.

Troy Guy

- No comment.

Barbara Kossy

- Has been following the forest bill and thinking about the RCD's roles.
- There are always opportunities to network and talk about RCD.
- Happy about the new RCD Swag. Thanks to Colleen.

Michelle Weil

- Went to the District 3 open house on Monday by Supervisor Mueller
- There were discussions with him about fuel reduction projects and tsunami

7. Adjourn Meeting

- Meeting adjourned by Kossy at 5:48 p.m.

The next Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors will be February 20, 2025