

**Marion Soil and Water Conservation District
BOARD MEETING
04/01/2020**

Location: Marion SWCD Conference Room
338 Hawthorne Ave. NE, Salem, OR 97301
Date: Wednesday April 1, 2020
Time: 6:45 PM to 7:54

APPROVED MINUTES:
Recorder: Janice Calkins
Chair: Terry Hsu

TELEPHONE-CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE:

<u>DIRECTORS</u>	<u>ASSOCIATES</u>	<u>STAFF</u>	<u>GUESTS</u>
Krahmer, Doug	Budeau, Dave	Keppinger, Jane	Alexander, Catherine-Straub Outdoors
Koch, Rochelle		Bishop, Brandon	Hyatt, Sandy - OR Dept. of Agriculture
Hsu, Terry		Ortiz, Susan (however not recorded)	
Olson, Darin			
Walker, Scott			

1. **CALL TO ORDER / INTRODUCTIONS / ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Chair Hsu called the meeting to order at 6:45 PM. Roll call was taken. Alexander inquired about a pending sponsorship payment to Straub Outdoors. Keppinger responded that a check was in the mail.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

None.

3. **AGENDA APPROVAL / CHANGES:**

Hsu added two agenda items: A general update of operations with Staff, and an Ethics evaluation of MSWCD grants as item H on the agenda.

4. **ACTION ITEMS** (Motion to approve, accept or postpone an item):

a. **CLEAR Grants - Scott Walker, Education Committee Chair**

Walker advised that the Education Committee had approved two grants for school field trips. He informed, that based on recent announcements he understood that the schools will not reopen this year. Therefore, he suggested that the board not fund the two requests, and that they ask that the schools reapply in the new school year.

ACTION:

Hsu moved that the Board decline the CLEAR grants to Cloverdale Elementary and Weddle Elementary Schools of \$2,480.00 respectfully due to Governor Brown's cancellation of school for the year and invite them each to reapply in the following year. Catherine Alexander interjected that Governor Brown herself has not made such an official announcement, but rather the Oregon Department of Education has alluded to that happening. Walker responded he was informed second hand, that Governor Brown had made such a statement today. Olson suggested that the Board postpone deciding about funding until next month on the basis school will continue to be closed until that time. Hsu checked the internet and could not confirm that schools have been officially closed. Krahmer agreed with Olson, it would be wise to simply postpone their decision, until the May Board meeting. **Hsu agreed, they would table their decision until the May Board meeting.**

b. **Conservation Cover Crop / LAP / SPG / OWEB Payment Requests – Chair Hsu**

Walker advised that no document(s) had been received pertaining to any such request(s). Keppinger advised she had e-mailed the information/document forward to Terry Hsu. Terry do you wish to read it or shall I? she asked. He responded back, Go ahead. Keppinger advised we have **two LAP payment requests**:

1. **Granite Ridge Farms** for micro-irrigation, amount requested is for up to \$7,500.00. They are still in the process of finishing up with their receipts.
2. **Youngblood Nursery** for their orchard drip-irrigation system, another micro-irrigation and it too is up to \$7,500.00.

ACTION:

Krahmer motioned for the Board to approve the two LAP grant requests, with the caveat that the required documents first be received in as required. 2nd by Olson.

DISCUSSION:

None.

MOTION PASSED - 5 – 0

Keppinger advised the next set-of payment requests are for the **Cover Crop Program** and each are for their final 25% payments.:

1. **Valley Hop Farms, Inc.** amount if for \$1,875.00.
2. **Coleman Ranch** amount \$1,350.00.
3. **Coleman Ag** amount is \$1,875.00.
4. **Dan Stadeli** amount of \$320.00.
5. **Nelson Kuenzi** amount of \$287.50.

ACTION:

Krahmer motioned for the Board to pay the Cover Crop grant payments as requested. 2nd by Olson.

DISCUSSION:

Walker requested confirmation that each cover crop had been terminated, soil turned over, tilled under or plowed. Brandon Bishop responded yes, all have been completed the processes they have promised to do according to their applications, whether that be by spraying it out (herbicide), mowing, crimping or tillage. Yes, all have been terminated. Walker again asked, and have all been turned over, as in plowed? Yes, Bishop replied. It was confirmed, due to COVID-19 a few verifications were based on photos received from the landowner(s), that cover crops had been terminated as needed. Hsu was okay with this, saying he was comfortable, with the processes taken. There was no further discussion.

MOTION PASSED – 5-0.

c. **Real Estate Services Contract Update – Chair Hsu**

Hsu advised that **Attorney Eileen Aiken had been consulted** regarding the Real Estate Services contract to verify whether the matter was handled properly or not. Eileen had no concern about what had transpired. The Board had reviewed brokers based on their qualifications and the matter with Ward Frederick was also not a concern, she said. Hsu said, he was confident the Board could move forward and send the award letters out as needed. Keppinger he advised, was preparing letters for each of the three brokers now – that would advise that Hancock has been selected as the District's broker. Krahmer reminded Hsu, that the Board had decided that once a realtor had been selected a contract would be needed to confirm rates/fees charged and to outline what the Board was wanting with regards to services. Hsu replied, he felt it was already outlined what Hancock's fees would be with regards to locating a property for the District. Krahmer responded, don't we want to establish side boards that define such things like where property locations are desired? Olson understood a contract would be needed. Walker and Hsu did not wish to limit the broker's reach by creating sideboards. Walker reminded everyone, that the Board wished to look at all possibilities: land purchase, new/used buildings, lease/purchase and or remodels. Walker suggested that a **single point of contact be established for the**

chosen realtor to work with to eliminate confusion. No one voiced objection to this. Olson stated he was in favor of the action. Walker nominated Koch as a point of contact. Hsu asked Koch if she was willing to act as the contact. Koch responded that in-light-of current unprecedented times, if she had support – yes, she would be willing. Hsu 2nd the motion. Then announced, he supposed no motion was needed. After a few minutes and hearing no objections, Hsu simply assigned the duty to Rochelle Koch.

d. **Communication Training Update – Chair Hsu**

Hsu reminded the Directors that during their previous Board meeting under the topic of Manager Evaluation, it was discussed that a meeting was needed about open/improved communications. If you recall, Keppinger expressed a personal desire to hold this meeting with her and all Directors in attendance. Hsu indicated he had discussed the matter with both Attorney, Dee Rubinoff and the recommended facilitator Vanessa. Hsu said, he would prefer that no more than two or three individuals meet (together) – as to avoid having the event viewed/or construed as being a public meeting. This is an unprecedented period with the Corona virus, he said. Different possible options/solutions had been discussed with Vanessa. One being for her to hold individual conversations with each Director by phone. Hsu said after having discussed the options, he would prefer to simply postpone the matter, until after the Corona virus resolves itself.

Revised District Manager Job Description – Chair Hsu

Hsu indicated that in-light-of information received from Attorney Dee Rubinoff, two Directors (Krahmer and Bielenberg) had indicated that the percentages of time devoted to the Manager's duties (Administrative, Personnel, Visionary, etc.) was not accurate. Hsu advised he had redesigned the percentages chart according to what he felt the duties and percentages spent towards category might be. This revised chart (included in the Board's packet) would better accommodate a newly created 360-review questionnaire he said. Krahmer indicated he felt the original chart, best defined the work Keppinger does and the time allocated to each task. Both Krahmer and Olson both felt the proposed chart changes were not needed – as the chart served only as a general guideline, and percentages changed with the times/needs of the District. Walker interjected that the original document had been created in fact, during a time when there were two people acting together as one manager. After continued discussions, the matter was tabled for a later day by Hsu.

e. **Tax Assessment Amount for FY 2020-21 Budget – Chair Hsu**

Hsu voiced a proposal Olson had made in an earlier meeting, that the Board consider reducing its tax income by not claiming the full/entire assessed property tax dollar amount this year, in light of the Corona virus that would negatively be impacting thousands of families and businesses due to lost wages/income. This would not only be a good PR move but would be the right thing to do he said. Koch and Walker voiced opposition to the action. Krahmer was in favor of it. Arguments in favor and against ensued.

ACTION:

A motion was made by Walker to maintain collections of a nickel (\$.05 per every \$1,000.00 collected in property taxes). Motion was 2nd by Koch.

DISCUSSION:

Olson objected to the motion, as he felt it was a duty of the Budget Committee. Walker advised the motion was needed to provide direction to the Manager in which to follow. Keppinger agreed Walker was correct. Krahmer was against the motion, saying he agreed with Olson and felt the District should be collecting a lesser amount in light of the current situation (Corona virus). Olson indicated he would like to see two budgets presented. The first with the numbers showing the full tax allotment being received, the second having received only \$1 million and comparing each to see what might be. Keppinger added, the \$1 million dollar figure might be equivalent to a percentage of 3.5% maybe 4%, and the savings she would guess might be around \$250,000.00 that you would not collect. It was agreed by all that Keppinger would prepare and present two separate budget proposals in May. One having the full assessed property tax dollar payment (\$.05 for every \$1,000.00 paid in property taxes). The second, having a reduced assessment of only \$1 million (Keppinger had earlier reported

\$1 million was needed to sustain minimal operations each year). The Board will approve one of the two proposed budgets in May.

ACTION:

Earlier made motion withdrawn by Walker.

f. **SWCD Letters of Support for OWEB Grants from Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde – Chair Hsu**

ACTION:

Walker motioned to approve sending a letter of support to OWEB. 2nd by Hsu.

DISCUSSION:

None.

MOTION PASSED 5-0.

g. **Amend Network of Oregon Watershed Councils /OACD Lease to reduce needed office space – Chair Hsu**

Keppinger advised that the Network of Oregon Watershed Councils and OACD have leased three offices and one cubicle. They no longer have a need to use/or rent the cubicle and are asking that the Board amend their lease and reduce their rent each month from \$1,750.00 to \$1,500.00.

ACTION:

Walker motioned that the Board amend the lease to the Network of Oregon Watershed Councils by \$250.00 each month. 2nd by Koch.

DISCUSSION:

None.

MOTION PASSED 5-0.

h. **Ethic's Evaluation of MSWCD - Chair Hsu**

Hsu asked Keppinger if she had an update on Walker's stated request of having the Ethics Commission review District policy on Grants. Keppinger responded she had contacted COG to see if a connection with the individual Walker has spoken with could be made. She had been provided with names of three of the speakers that were present during the meeting. With the onset of COVID-19, she had yet to confirm with Walker to whom he had spoken. She now asked Walker if it was one of the two women speakers or the man? Walker advised it was the gentleman who had addressed our Board during a Board meeting. The same man who had stepped down from his position and was now working for the Department of Veteran's Affairs. Oh, that would be Sean O 'Day she said. Now that she knew who to contact, Keppinger advised she would call Mr. O 'Day to see who he felt the District should speak to, to arrange for a review, and to determine what is the process. Walker advised there was no huge hurry.

i. **Staff Operations Update – Jane Keppinger**

Hsu asked Keppinger to update the Board on what Staff were doing, and to advise if everyone had enough work to keep themselves busy with. Keppinger advised that fortunately six out of nine staff members have had experience working remotely from home, so the transition has worked well. Hsu indicated he would have Staff volunteer their time working for local charities, should they run out of things to do. Keppinger advised we are entering into the fourth quarter of the fiscal year, which is a busy time where reports, grant deadlines and another round of LAPs take precedence. Jenny Ammon is busy working with Teachers on the education side of things, ramping up on on-line education as Parents have had to step up and become the Teacher. Work is not slowing down, but if it should Keppinger said, she hoped the board would continue to give staff their full support by continuing to pay wages and benefits. Olson said he would like to evaluate the situation every three months,

and that he too would support staff by asking that they each contribute time and work to a local charity of their choice if things were to get slow to fill in for their full 40 hour week. Keppinger advised that Staff are holding a weekly teleconference and how she herself is working out of the office for several reasons: 1) her personal computer is not up-to-date, 2) She needs to make sure our network is up and running daily, 3) she needs to make sure the building and District vehicles are safe/secure. She noted that the furnace was not working in her wing of the building today, and yes, the landlord was aware, and a repair man has been called to address the problem. Hsu acknowledged that he was aware of several other State agencies like Oregon State Parks whereby upper management has been asked to keep the office/vehicles up and-running and safe. Olson inquired about the phones, saying he never got past auto-attendant when calling in. Keppinger thanked him for the update, indicated she would look to see if a problem existed and if yes, have it addressed.

Tonight's Teleconference – Chair Hsu

Hsu asked those present if they liked how the meeting was held? Krahmer said it was better than having no meeting at all. Koch expressed it worked fine for her, but for our older folks who might be afraid of technology, it could be a problem. We just need to help walk them through this, and to allow for patience. Koch then asked for feedback on the Native Plant Sale.

Native Plant Sale Update – Jane Keppinger

Keppinger indicated the District had done very well, despite the Corona Virus outbreak had just begun. The District's total sales (not including expenditures) was \$15,471.00 which was more than last year's total, she said. And we had perhaps one half to two-thirds less people. As I had joked with Staff today, I let the money sit for two weeks so that any Corona virus would die. Our average sales were larger, likely as we only allowed a smaller number of customers into the greenhouse at a time, so those customers took more time in making their selections. Susan Ortiz and Jenny Meisel did an awesome job in setting up Square and inventorying and selling leftover plants to customers following the sale. Thanks to their efforts all the plants found new homes and the District's total sales increased by two to three thousand dollars. Koch commended Staff on their knowledge of plants and the recommendations made.

Kudos to Staff for Facebook Updates – Chair Hsu

Kudos to the Staff member or members who have been responsible for Facebook posts. They are great, effective and very interesting Hsu said. Keppinger gave credit to Jenny Ammon and Tom Wilson.

6. MEETING WAS ADJOURNED BY CHAIR HSU AT 7:54 PM.

Minutes submitted by Janice Calkins, Office Coordinator.

UPCOMING MEETING DATES:

Next Regular Board Meeting:

May 6, 2020 beginning at 6:30 PM

Location:

Marion SWCD Multnomah Falls Conference Room
338 Hawthorne Ave NE, Salem, OR 97301

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