

**Marion Soil and Water Conservation District
BOARD MEETING
05/06/2020**

Location: Marion SWCD Conference Room
338 Hawthorne Ave. NE, Salem, OR 97301

Date: Wednesday May 6, 2020

Time: 6:32 PM to 8:12 PM

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 Koch, Rochelle Hsu, Terry Olson, Darin Walker, Scott Tim Bielenberg	Budeau, Dave Mark Fields	Keppinger, Jane Bishop, Brandon	Alexander, Catherine-Straub Outdoors

1. **CALL TO ORDER / INTRODUCTIONS / ANNOUNCEMENTS – Chair Hsu:**

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 PM and attendance noted.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENTS - Public:**

Catherine Alexander, Straub Outdoors, thanked the Board for the District's support/sponsorship. She informed them that "Straub" had created distance learning materials and how they (their clients/participants) have been unable to utilize them, as the parents and their children have been told to set their priorities and time towards reading, writing and arithmetic. Alexander was happy to report that the Oregon Health Authority has prioritized Outdoor Activities to be included in the Phase I - Return to Work/Normalcy policy (related to COVID-19). We look forward to going back to work on June 22nd and for each of you to come join us, she said. Hsu responded that is wonderful news! Thank you for your update, Catherine.

Chair Hsu advised the Board Directors that the Chat feature on Zoom was available for their use, for Administrative purposes only. Please feel free to use it he said.

3. **AGENDA APPROVAL / CHANGES:**

Scott Walker asked that the agenda be modified to include Budget Instruction, relating to Program issues. He added, it related to instructing the Manager. Hsu indicated that the item could be included and discussed at the time when Fees and Property Taxes are noted: (Item: 6C).

4. **AGENCY and/or MSWCD COMMITTEE REPORT**

a) **NRCS Report – L. Bachelor**

Bachelor was not in attendance, therefore there was no report.

b) **ADHOC Building Committee – R. Koch, Chair**

Rochelle Koch asked that Hsu provide an update. Hsu advised the Board that a Real Estate Contract/ Agreement had been created. He indicated that his brother, a Real Estate professional himself, had been asked to review it – and his brother replied after doing so, that there were a few concerning items. Hsu indicated the contract mentions a \$185.00 an hour fee for compensation. Say for example, the Real Estate agent is consulted for guidance/info and it did not relate or lead to an actual purchase of property, that rate would apply and be charged for his time spent on counsel. Hsu said, you were all sent copies of the

agreement, what are your thoughts? He asked the Board for their **approval to consult with an Attorney** to review/approve the agreement. He added, and once reviewed if there are any issues or concerns found he will bring those findings back to the Board for discussion. He also advised that a call had been made to Attorney, Aileen Aiken and how he was awaiting her reply. Walker asked if this matter could be **added as an Action Item**. Hsu responded, yes and we can make it item **M** on the agenda.

c) **Education Committee – S. Walker, Chair**

Walker indicated the Committee did not meet, therefore nothing to be reported.

d) **Landowner Assistance Program Review – L. Hardy**

Hardy was not present therefore it was asked of Dave Budeau, Associate Director, if he might speak about the meeting, of which he had attended. Budeau indicated he had nothing to say other than Staff did a tremendous job in vetting applications for review

Hsu then mentioned that he wished to discuss the **Cover Crop Program**, saying that a year ago when the program was established the Board had agreed to **review the new program** one year later. He wished to add the one-year review under **Action Item G**.

1. Funding Landowner Assistance Program Cycle 3 Grant Applications Recommendation

e) **Program Committee – D. Krahmer, Chair**

Krahmer advised the Board that the Committee had reviewed all LAP applications received, that they were requesting the Board approve funding them all, and how additional monies had been found that could be used in support of that funding.

1. Funding LAP Grant Applications Cycle 3

f) **Present Financial Report – S. Walker, Secretary/Treasurer**

Walker advised the Board to pay close attention to disbursements (seen on the report before each of them) and if there are any questions or concerns to voice them. He reminded everyone that there remains to be three months until the end of this fiscal year. He then asked Keppinger if she would please provide the Board her standard presentation. Keppinger reviewed the financial documents with them noting the following:

- Balance in LGIP (Local Government Investment Pool) as of 3/31/2020: \$2,514,316.56
- One sheet shows the operational costs for March
- The last sheet are the checks issued for the month of March 2020.

ACTION:

Hsu motioned for the Board to accept and approve the financial report for March 2020 as submitted.

Walker indicated he seconded the motion however he also wished to discuss it.

DISCUSSION:

Walker advised the Board that within their board packets was a separate document, that he had asked Keppinger to include in the report. This document, however, lies separate from the report within your Board Packets. (Entitled Find Report") it lists the invoices sent to and the payments received from the Santiam Watershed Council each month from 8/27/2019 to 4/21/2020. The District receives about \$3,100.00 each month from the Santiam Watershed Council, he said, and the monies are used in support of S. Hamilton's salary – and covers approximately 80% of it. This is a great benefit to the District, he shared.

ACTION:

Hsu thanked Walker for the information, then again asked if the Board wished to accept and approve the March Financial Report?

Motion Passed: 6 to 0 Vote. *Note: Audio delays created play over of Ayes. Hsu confirmed votes received by asking for clarification whether there were any Nay votes. None were disclosed.*

5. **DISCUSSION ITEMS** (May lead to an approval or action on any item)
 - a. **District Manager Performance Evaluation Update** – Chair Hsu
Hsu recapped that during their last meeting there was a discussion about the distribution of time spent on the various duties of the District Manager. We concluded we should leave the chart as it is, but we would wait a month to consider whether any changes are wanted. Have you any changes to make or add? As no one provided a response, Hsu said he would like to move on as he had no concern with this, he would simply ask Dee Rubinoff to utilize the existing document. Krahmer wished to know which document Hsu referred to. Was it the original, or the revised document whereby the percentages had been changed? Hsu replied, it was the original – and it will stand.

6. **ACTION ITEMS** (Motion to approve, accept or postpone an item):
 - a. **March 11 and April 1, 2020 Board Meeting Minutes** – Chair Hsu
ACTION:
Walker moved that the Board approve the meeting minutes for both the March 11 and April 1, 2020 Board Meetings. 2nd by Krahmer.
Motion Passed - 6 to 0 Vote.

 - b. **NRCS Conservation Plans (if presented)** – Chair Hsu
No plans to approve.

 - c. **Discuss 2020-21 Property Tax Amount and Budget Instruction** – Chair Hsu/J. Keppinger
DISCUSSION:
Keppinger was asked to explain the documents she had prepared. She indicated there were discussions about asking for \$1 Mil, \$1 Mil plus, and \$1.24 Million. Her recommendation is to take \$1.1 Million. The District's expenditures are about \$1.3 Million, she said. Each year there is an amount we do not receive, as tax dollars are not collected – as in taxes not paid, and other things. It was agreed by Hsu and Keppinger, that with COVID-19, the tax revenue for next year is a total guessing game. Walker reminded everyone that the District chose to take a lesser amount in 2018. Walker indicated he had provided two documents which were included in the board packets, one being a note which shows the impact the District's reduced taxation amount had on his personal tax bill back in 2018. My tax bill was \$5,455.00 and the \$2.50 savings did not make any particular difference to me... and we are a small player in the tax game. Hsu wished to hear Olson and Krahmer's thoughts on the subject. Krahmer indicated he was in favor of a reduction in tax collection – as a good will gesture to the landowners served. He explained how the District created the Catastrophic/Reserve Fund "or whatever it is now called" for times like this. It (COVID-19) is a catastrophic event for the County and has affected many landowners he affirmed. Krahmer encouraged the Board to consider taking only 2 to 3 cents versus \$.05 for every \$1,000.00 assessed value received now. As I do not have a calculator with me, he said, I would guess it would be about \$700,000 to \$800,000.00 in tax revenue we would receive. Then we backfill the amount needed with funding from the Catastrophic fund/Reserve fund - which it had been created for (events like this). Bielenberg was also in favor of a smaller fixed amount something under the \$1.1 Million, perhaps 3 to 4%. Keppinger asked the Board what is their intent? Do you wish to reduce your carryover amount? Get into your reserve funding? Or save the tax-payers money? Hsu responded his intent was to save the taxpayer money. When Olson was asked his thoughts, he indicated he had not made up his mind and was considering what was being said. Koch indicated she figured \$.04 versus \$.05. Walker again noted that last time we capped to \$1 Million – no one noticed. Reducing tax income does not help others out financially, it is merely a public relations action. We restrict income, we place a straight- jacket on ourselves. Hsu responded it goes both ways. Bielenberg pointed out that each year there has been a carryover into the next year. Let us cut back to what we are actually using, he said. Hsu stated we will collect the full \$.05 unless we vote otherwise. Olson explained, the Budget Committee

will take our vote and then they will decide. Things can change in two weeks. How about we ask Jane to prepare two budget proposals? One based on the standard \$.05, the other taking a \$.03 cut. Keppinger responded, the Budget Committee must provide the Board with Budgets to approve. Walker added, and ultimately it is a Board decision. Keppinger and Hsu both noted that the District's operation costs had exceeded its revenue last year, and that they anticipate it will again this next year, and how the District's carryover funds have started to be used – that the District's expenses are exceeding its revenue. Keppinger replied, yes, it did last year. And that is why you are beginning to use the carryover. Walker asked, do we need a motion? Koch stated, then we need to keep our tax rate the same, and no motion will be needed, as no changes are needed to be made. Based on the projections, leave it as it is. Hsu asked if anyone had a motion to the contrary. No response was given. Hsu then said, then we stick with the same thing, and ask the Budget Committee their thoughts, do they wish to do any differently? It was agreed the tax amount would remain the same, and that they would be open to comments/suggestions from the Budget Committee.

d. **SWCD Budget Committee Meeting Update** – J. Keppinger

Keppinger advised that the meeting will be held either Wednesday May 20, or Thursday May 21. Once the date is finalized, she will inform all Board members and will also send out a second reminder prior to the meeting date/time.

DISCUSSION – Reallocation of funds to create New Building Fund

Walker revealed there was a desire of the Board to have both the Catastrophic and Unanticipated Funds reallocated/combined into one Building Fund. Olson thought the matter might be addressed during the Budget Committee meeting. Keppinger indicated she wished she had been informed of this desire prior to now, so that she could have created the necessary Resolution document that is required before such changes can be enacted - to either dissolve a fund, or move to the General Fund, or to create a new Building Fund. It was discussed how the Budget Committee could be updated to the desires of the Board, that several budgets be prepared and presented to the Committee. The Committee could then decide which budget they would recommend the Board to accept and approve. If the Committee agrees that reallocation of Catastrophic and Unanticipated funds to a Building Fund is acceptable, they could stipulate that their approval is contingent upon the Board first establishing a binding Resolution as needed. Keppinger reminded the Board that the Budget Committee is comprised of thirteen individuals (Board members included) and that an approval requires that eight out of thirteen members agree, and that the Board cannot access large sums of money from the budget without the consent of the Budget Committee. It was confirmed when Krahmer asked about the Catastrophic Fund and the Unanticipated Expenses Fund that both are held within the same Fund (Line Item). Keppinger stated, yes, there are two expenditure funds within the one fund, and both were created having equal shares. Hsu added, the Board desires to have a fund for a new building created. If monies could be taken from one fund - perhaps the Unanticipated to get the new building started, and the second fund remain in-tact – that would be fine. We could then proceed. Walker added, if that would be allowed, the following year the Board could tap into the second fund and put those dollars toward the new building purchase as a second payment as well. Krahmer voiced, we have not voted on this as a Board – and I have not agreed to it. Keppinger explained, how a budget will be created using a \$.05 tax base. The Budget Committee will be informed about the Board's discussion and a desire to establish a new Building fund for purchase of a new building and they can then hold a discussion themselves about the possibilities.

DISCUSSION – Create New Line Item for Creation of Videos for Distance Learning

In-light of COVID-19 there is great need for distance learning Walker contends. On this basis, he would like to see the Board create a separate fund for creating educational videos on nature related issues, that target Mid-School aged students. Videos that could be used year after year. He proposed allocating \$20,000.00 to this new fund, which will be a message to the public that the District considers educational videos important/a high priority. It is a statement of policy and denotes what we should be doing. Keppinger responded, there are ample monies available through other budgeted line-items like: Education, Outreach and Advertising that could accommodate this activity. She also mentioned how Jenny Ammon is currently

working to create videos with others and videos are being uploaded to Facebook and Youtube.com already. She found it interesting that Ammon, the District's Natural Resources Educator had not relayed to her (Keppinger, District Manager) in their conversation earlier today, that she was having on-going discussions with Walker about video creations. Walker responded that the Education Committee had a discussion on expanding topics for Education, and videos had been discussed. He was not aware of any new video(s) being created and had not seen any. Hsu was in favor of the idea, saying folks are clamoring right now to find videos of interest on-line, and schools are searching for content. He also thought it a good idea for the Education Committee to look-into it. Walker responded it was important that a line-item be added to the Budget now, otherwise new videos would not be created until the following year. Keppinger again mentioned how Ammon is partnering with CTTV and others. It would be best to have content and structure established first she said, as we will want to produce a quality product. And we should not assume what the public wants. Bielenberg interjected, there are ample monies available in the budget now under Marketing, Public Outreach, and Education. Olson agreed Walkers idea was good, however based on monies are available a new line-item could be added next year. Koch appreciated how Walker was being pro-active, supported Walker's idea and agreed it made a statement to the public that the District is serious about providing on-line education. Taking programs to home schoolers is a great idea she said. Krahmer felt the policy change to be too last minute, and how it should have been discussed earlier. Not to say he was not in support of idea, but he would vote no at this time. Olson was not sure if \$20,000.00 would be fully utilized. Monies could be used elsewhere, but the idea was good. Walker said before any dime is spent, it shows there is a commitment by the District. The amount chosen was arbitrary, he felt \$2,000.00 was not enough, that \$20,000 showed the public the District is serious about its importance. Olson asked where the money would come from? Keppinger responded, if the Board does not wish me to rob a line item, then it would come from the Tax Assessment (\$1.2mil). Bielenberg reminded the Board, this past year the District has only used 13% of the Special Grants money, 10% of the Education fund, and 21% of Public Relations monies. There are ample monies already available that can be used for this. Walker responded, it is not a question of whether-or-not funding is available, but rather making a statement of policy and District priorities.

ACTION:

Hsu motioned for the Board to approve allocating \$20,000.00 to a new line item for creating educational videos for distance learning and on-line education. 2nd by Walker.

Motion died: AYE – 3 Votes (Hsu, Koch, Walker); **NAY – 3 Votes** (Olson, Krahmer, Bielenberg)

- e. **Allocated Additional Landowner Assistance Program Funds** – Chair Hsu/J. Keppinger
Keppinger advised the Board that LAP Cycle Three brought in eighteen applications. Both the LAP Review Team and the Program Committee recommend that the Board approve all applications, which total: \$99,022.00. There are, however, not enough funds remaining in the LAP fund to cover. They are recommending that the Board take from the following line items to make up the difference:

Cover Crops (remaining balance) -:	\$6,020.00
Previous Year(s) LAP carryover (remaining balance):	\$28,427.00
OWEB Council Support Money (not used or requested this year) -	-
	<u>\$25,000.00</u>
	\$59,447.00

Combined with LAP leftover, there will then be enough to cover all eighteen funding requests received.

DISCUSSION:

Walker asked for a little more information on the OWEB dollars. Keppinger replied these are your Watershed Council support dollars, for the OWEB grant. The match dollars. None of the money was requested this year from the Councils.

ACTION:

Hsu motioned for the Board to secure the dollars needed to fund the eighteen applications for LAP Cycle Three, taking monies from the line items Keppinger has suggested (Cover Crops, LAP previous year(s) carryover, and OWEB Council Support Monies). 2nd by Krahmer.

DISCUSSION:

No further discussion:

Motion passed: 6-0 Vote.

f. **Fund Landowner Assistance Program Applications for Cycle 3 – Chair Hsu**

ACTION:

Hsu motioned for the Board to approve funding the eighteen applications received under LAP Cycle Three. 2nd by Koch.

DISCUSSION:

None.

Motion passed: 6-0 Vote.

g. **Cover Crop, LAP, OWEB, SPG, Payment/Extension Request – Chair Hsu**

ACTION:

Hsu motioned for the Board to accept and approve the Cover Crop, LAP, OWEB and SPG payment/extension requests as submitted. 2nd by Krahmer.

DISCUSSION:

None.

Motion passed: 6-0 Vote.

h. **iMap Invasives Request for Support (\$5,000 awarded in past years) – Chair Hsu**

When asked by Hsu to provide some background - Keppinger advised the Board that the District has supported this program in the amount of \$5,000.00 over the past four to five years, and that a copy of the written request received from iMap Invasives was included within their Board packets along with a list of iMap's accomplishments this past year. It is a two-sided document she said. After some search, Hsu acknowledged the document was found.

ACTION:

Krahmer motioned for the Board to approve funding support in the amount of \$5,000.00 to iMaps Invasives. 2nd of Olson.

DISCUSSION:

None.

Motion passed: 6-0 Vote.

i. **Mid-Willamette Valley COG Agreement for GIS Services – Chair Hsu**

It was discussed how this was a general agreement for the District to enter into allowing the District to use the GIS Services offered by Mid-Willamette Valley COG, and to reimburse COG according to their disclosed fee structure: The first Fiscal Year at an hourly rate of \$89.00; second Fiscal Year: \$95.00 per hour.

ACTION:

Hsu motioned for the Board to accept and approve entering into the agreement with Mid-Willamette Valley COG to use their GIS Services as outlined. 2nd by Walker.

DISCUSSION:

None.

Motion passed: 6-0 Vote. *Note: Audio delays created play over of Ayes. Hsu confirmed votes received by asking for clarification whether there were any Nay votes. None were disclosed.*

j. **City of Salem Grant Application for Upland Knotweed Control Project – Chair Hsu**

Keppinger advised this is a grant request from MSWCD to the City of Salem asking for funding to support the Ash Creek project. The grant would also support Staff time devoted to that project.

ACTION:

Walker moved that the Board approve the Grant Request to the City of Salem for the Upland Knotweed Control Project. 2nd by Hsu.

DISCUSSION:

None.

Motion passed: 6-0 Vote

k. **Oregon Ag Trust Lease Amendment** – Chair Hsu

Keppinger advised that Oregon Ag Trust has requested that they suspend paying their rent/lease until July as they are not currently occupying their office here due to COVID-19. They hope to be back, she added. Walker asked, this would be an amendment to their sub-lease. Correct, Keppinger replied. Is there a dollar figure here? Walker asked. Keppinger responded, their rent is \$575.00 per month, so times that number by three (\$1,725.00).

ACTION:

Hsu motioned for the Board to approve suspending the lease/rent payment for Oregon Ag Trust until July of 2020. 2nd by Walker.

DISCUSSION:

Olson voiced he did not understand why we would allow this, as there are expenses to be paid: lights, water, etc. Walker understood Olson's concern, however also felt we should assist these, our brothers/sisters (partners) in our efforts, and we should not be difficult. Bielenberg responded he believe they (Oregon Ag Trust) are responsible to pay their lease. If we approve this, what is to keep our other tenants from also not paying their lease. Olson agreed, and added we are still paying our lease. Hsu said, that is true. Krahmer said he would probably support the suspension. Koch said she agreed with Scott.

Motion passed: 4-2 Vote (Nay: Olson and Bielenberg)

l. **Review of Marion SWCD Current Policies (at each meeting)** – Chair Hsu

Review Revised/Suggestions for Delegation of Authority Policy

Keppinger indicated this was a return to a previous discussion held about the Delegation of Authority Policy which has been on-going for last three to four months. Walker responded he understood its importance, however, he would prefer to hold the discussion at a later-date. Once the discussion could be held around some tables and could proceed more easily.

ACTION:

Walker **moved to hold this item over until the next meeting**. Hsu asked if there were any other thoughts. Krahmer replied, **I move we adjourn this meeting**.

Meeting Adjourned: Hsu said, that was an interesting motion and added that that was totally acceptable and responded saying we will adjourn the meeting. Thank you everyone.

Walker said, we still have some things to do.

Approx. 8:09 PM: **Krahmer and Bielenberg's phones disconnected**. (They departed from the telephone conference).

Koch jumped in saying, before we tie this up... Keppinger responded, I am sorry, but we just lost Doug (Krahmer) and Tim (Bielenberg). (Their phone lines were disconnected). Koch asked how work was progressing with Staff. Keppinger responded that with employee's working at home and many are responsible to take care of children, as there is no school and no ability to have baby-sitters, there have been many adjustments to make. Schedules have become more flexible. Keppinger voiced a concern she has for the psychological impact this may have on a few staff members. Overall, everyone is adopting and adapting. Are workloads being met? Koch asked. Keppinger replied, yes. A good example being on the number of LAP applications we have received. Typically, we could expect ten or eleven, but we have received eighteen. With the onslaught of this sudden change, new environment perhaps the socializing aspect found in an office setting has been eliminated – and productivity has increased. If this continues, and these changes become more long-term, more permanent, we may have to have some discussions about

equipment, how we are going to structure things, and if Staff are going to work from home 80-90% of the time what and how will we do things. There are on-going discussions, but nothing is laid out yet.

Walker addressed Hsu saying, **we are going to discuss Item M now are we not?** Hsu responded, oh that is right. **The Ethic's Commission.** Have you contacted the Ethic's Commission yet Jane? (Keppinger). She replied, no. Due to COVID-19 we have postponed any further action. Walker agreed she was correct.

What we were going to discuss is the Realtor issue, Walker added. Oh yes, the Realtor issue, Hsu said.

m. **Hire Real Estate Attorney to Review/Approve Real Estate Contract**

It was noted by Walker and Koch that there were still four Directors present and how they could move forward. Olson did not agree. Hsu indicated the meeting was adjourned and said, this did not seem kosher and should be discussed later. Walker said you did not call the meeting adjourned. **Hsu thought on the matter, indicated he did have the authority to spend up to \$1,000.00 and therefore he could go ahead and get Eileen Aiken's (Real Estate Attorney) opinion on moving forward with the Realtor Contract or not – Terry Hancock Realtors.** The point is, Walker said, you didn't call the meeting adjourned – they decided to leave. Hsu hesitated, then added that is true. Koch asked, do you think we can get Doug and Tim back on the line? Keppinger was asked to see if it were possible, by Hsu, and she replied she would try to reach them.

Koch spoke of three bald eagles having visited her property, overhead – very fun and exciting. Walker spoke of his creating a sheet about the **Cover Crop Program**, where it had been asked if the participants had ever had a cover crop in place before. Keppinger advised she was able to reach Tim (Bielenberg) but not Doug (Krahmer). Hsu asked if they wished to continue the conversation about Cover Crop or, do they wish to wait until Doug (Krahmer) can be present? Well we can have a brief conversation, Hsu said. What is the point Olson asked? Let's hold off (Olson). Koch asked Walker if he could hear what is being discussed. Do we need to make a decision before the Budget Committee meets? She asked. Walker replied it would probably be better if this could be addressed at the next meeting when Krahmer is present, as it is his baby. **Walker felt it best for the Cover Crop Program be put back into/under the LAP program.** Olson felt it more important to target Soil Health and it could be a practice under that. Hsu added LAP can address all of these projects: Soil Health, Cover Crops and agreed it could be added under LAP. All agreed to table the subject until next month.

7. **Board Member or Staff Reports/Meetings/Updates – Directors/Staff**

None.

8. **MEETING WAS ADJOURNED (Again) BY CHAIR HSU AT 8:12 PM.**

Minutes submitted by Janice Calkins, Office Coordinator.

UPCOMING MEETING DATES:

Next Regular Board Meeting:

June 3, 2020 beginning at 6:30 PM

Location:

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

Note: The District expects to continue using online meetings until Marion County modifies their requirement for social distancing, as a result of- COVID-19. The number of individuals within the Marion SWCD meeting room will

be limited to six, and each attendee will maintain a distance of six feet between themselves. Advance notice for attendance is required. Please contact: office@marionswcd.net. Thank you.

The Marion Soil and Water Conservation District complies with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and does not discriminate in employment based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, political affiliation, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, disability and genetic information, age, or membership in an employee organization. Anyone who wishes to attend a meeting but needs special accommodations, please telephone the District office 48 hours in advance at 503-391-9927.