

Marion Soil and Water Conservation District
BOARD MEETING
08/05/2020

Due to COVID-19, this meeting was held by Zoom Video Conference

Location: Marion SWCD Conference Room
338 Hawthorne Ave. NE, Salem, OR 97301
Date: Wednesday August 5, 2020
Time: 7:10 PM (40:30) to 8:42 PM (2:04:03)

APPROVED MINUTES:
Recorder: Janice Calkins
Chair: Terry Hsu

TELEPHONE/VIDEO CONFERENCE (VIA PHONE & ZOOM MEETING) ATTENDANCE:

<u>DIRECTORS</u>	<u>ASSOCIATES</u>	<u>STAFF</u>	<u>COMMITTEE MEMBERS</u>	<u>GUESTS</u>
Walker, Scott	Budeau, Dave	Keppinger, Jane		Chong Kee Tan
Koch, Rochelle	Fields, Mark	Ortiz, Susan		Stevenson, Brent
Hsu, Terry		Bishop, Brandon		
Olson, Darin		Ammon, Jenny		

- 1. CALL TO ORDER / INTRODUCTIONS / ANNOUNCEMENTS – Chair Hsu: (40:30)**
Roll call not taken as it was noted Zoom records attendance. Meeting opened. No announcements made.
- 2. PUBLIC COMMENT - Public: (Moved to Item 3)**
No comments made.
- 3. AGENDA APPROVAL/CHANGES (if items are added, include under Discussion or Action Items) – Chair Hsu:**
Walker wished to hold a discussion about soil health under item 7. Hsu replied he would add this as Item A1 under Discussion, and Foundant would be re-designated as Item A2.
- 4. DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION (DEI) PRESENTATION – Guest Speaker**
Hsu announced that the guest speaker had to cancel attending the meeting, and that he/she desires to attend a later Board meeting. Hsu asked if anyone had any questions or concerns to voice based on the memo they had all received. No comments were made, other than Hsu saying he was okay awaiting a future update from the DEI Committee.
- 5. AGENCY and/or MSWCD COMMITTEE REPORT**
 - a) **NRCS Report – L. Bachelor**
NRCS representative not present. No report.
 - b) **ADHOC Building Committee – ~~R. Koch, Chair~~ – S. Walker, Chair**
Koch deferred to Walker (she had recently given up her position and appointed Walker in her stead.) Walker had no updates to provide.
 - c) **Education Committee – S. Walker, Chair**
Walker indicated that the minutes from the Education Committee's last meeting was included in the Board packet. The request for funding for Salmon Watch, now listed on the agenda had not been discussed previously by the Committee as it had not yet been received at that time, he said. There was nothing else to report.
- 6. Present Financial Report – S. Walker, Secretary/Treasurer**
Walker deferred to Keppinger. Keppinger advised the ending balance in the Local Government Investment Pool (LGIP) for the month of June 2020, was: \$2,236,925.26. The ending balance for the District's regular checking account was: \$164,348.37. This was due to the fact we were paying out funds to a lot of LAP (Landowner Assistance Program) applicants, and many had not cashed their checks before June 30th. You can see by the Reconciliation Report that both figures match she said. She included figures for the checking account for both months: May and June. You can see we wrote quite a few checks during this time, she said, and she welcomed any questions. The last five sheets show our monthly activities and how we ended the year. The first page shows Resources. The Native Plant Sale income exceeded our estimated amount by about \$500.00. Our interest and previously levied taxes were at 73% and 80%, line 17 shows we exceeded our estimated income by about

\$60,000.00 in collected taxes. Before COVID-19 hit, everybody paid their taxes, which was good. So, we ended with 105% more than we had anticipated. Had we not lost the rental payments from our partner groups at year's end, I believe we would have hit our projected income. The remaining two to three pages show our monthly activities for the month of June, personnel, operating and our conservation program costs. Our unanticipated projects fund balance ended with:\$1,067,243.55 in it. A portion of this fund was moved into the Building Fund this year for your new purchase. Keppinger ended by saying, that is it.

ACTION:

Hsu moved that the Board accept and approve the financial report for May/June 2020 as presented. 2nd by Walker.

DISCUSSION:

None.

MOTION PASSED. 4 to 0 vote

7. DISCUSSION ITEMS:

A1. Soil Health – Scott Walker, Secretary/Treasurer

The Cover Crop Program was all about soil health Walker began. There have been concerns however about the structure of the Cover Crop program. I wish to get the Boards thoughts, he said. As we know, cover crops are an approved practice under the Landowner Assistance Program (LAP). LAP however operates in three or four cycles and requires technical reviews. I would like to see Cover Crops become an integral part of the LAP program but drop the requirement of having technical reviews for this practice, giving the program greater flexibility. He was open to other's ideas, he said.

DISCUSSION:

Koch asked Walker, do you propose this would be a 2 to 3-year program? Walker replied he knew that soil health would see an improvement in the second year, and again in the third year if the practice were continued. He reminded everyone I believe the intent of the LAP program is to encourage use of new practices. We do not want to sustain practices already being done. I would like everyone to give thought to how the structure might be changed, and for new soil health practices to be encouraged.

Yes, he would like to see one Program and expand the number of soil health practices under LAP and restructure it to eliminate the need for a tech review for this practice. Everyone will give it thought. It was agreed that a decision for change would be needed tonight - if a change were to be enacted this new fiscal year.

A.2. FOUNDANT Program Update – Susan Ortiz, MSWCD Staff (1:00:01)

Ortiz reported that in-light of the current pandemic, having implemented Foundant's grant application platform has proven to be a bonus for both staff and clients, making the application process easy and accessible. LAP (Landowner Assistance Program) went live on June 16th, and the CLEAR Grants a week later she advised. As of 5:00pm tonight, the LAP application first cycle was closed. We received twenty-one applications, exceeding last year's total of sixteen. Technical staff, along with Jane and myself appreciate how this new program/platform allows us to easily overview what is in process with applications, and how it is streamlining data entry.

DISCUSSION:

Hsu indicated he felt a short visual presentation of how Foundant works would be appreciated. Ortiz replied saying she would prepare something for the Board to see and present it during the September board meeting. Hsu thanked her, saying it will be great to see how it works, based on the wonderful reports he has heard about it. Walker questioned if Staff are having to assist the cooperators in completing the application. If yes, how much time are staff devoting? A little, or a lot? For the most part, the cooperators are completing the applications fully themselves, Ortiz said. The LAP application requires Tech staff to review the applications, and input related data like: where the property lies within a watershed, identify parcel and lot numbers (mapping), and add specifications required by ODA which identify each land management practice that will apply. The cooperators themselves, list the problems they are having on their land(s) and what their goals/objectives are, Ortiz advised. Keppinger commended Susan for her work, her perseverance and patience, which all helped to ensure the roll-out of this new platform was done in a timely and efficient manner. Susan worked along with Foundant to produce an application process that meets the District's specific and unique program needs, it was a tedious and time-consuming endeavor she said. As with all new programs, there are, and will continue to be some things we will need to work out and refine.

B. Watershed Councils-OWEB (Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board) Technical & Stakeholder Engagement

Grants Info – J. Keppinger, District Manager (1:06:29)

Keppinger advised the Board, that she had received a memo from Rebecca McCoun of the N. Santiam Watershed Council, apprising the District about a project the Council is looking to do together with the Luckiamute Watershed Council. It relates to beavers and conducting a beaver restoration assessment amongst other things. They have applied for both a

Stakeholder Engagement grant and a Technical Assistance grant, Keppinger said, and the applications were due in July around the 27th of the month. If grant funding is approved, they hope the District will be open to their asking for additional support to address components of their research, technical assistance, or perhaps doing some restoration work within the District's jurisdiction here in Marion County. They look forward to continued conversations on the subject.

DISCUSSION:

Hsu indicated he was in favor of restoring beaver habitat, saying beavers are beneficial to the environment and they are cost effective because unlike man, they are not required to file for permits to do the work they do – providing structure to streams and enhancing stream habitat. Hsu is strongly in favor of the work project and looks forward to hearing again from the Council(s) about any progress made. Keppinger added that much of their funding comes from OWEB and changes have been made to what is now fundable. OWEB is looking for projects that are out-side the box, so to speak, therefore chances are good they may get the support they are asking for. Walker voiced concern that Luckiamute is outside of Marion County (in Polk County). Hsu did not feel that an issue, as beavers are not confined by borders. There is no action asked of the Board at this time.

C. District Manager Evaluation – Next Steps – Chair Hsu

Hsu advised he had given a proposal for timeline on Manager Review. He asked the Board to approve it - if it met their expectations and seemed acceptable. If modifications are needed, simply let me know. Hsu advised he had also created a questionnaire through Survey Monkey and had shared it with both S. Walker and R. Koch. If others wished to see it, he would send it their way. Koch spoke up and said she would like to see the response time extended to a two-week period, saying a one-week deadline seemed too short. No one voiced any opposition to the timeline created. Hsu indicated that the questionnaire would be sent to Staff asking about operational related things, and select Partner Groups would receive a questionnaire, as will Jane (Keppinger) herself. And then all responses will be received, and we will move forward.

8. ACTION ITEMS (Motion to approve, accept or postpone an item)

a) Approve NRCS Conservation Plans (if presented) – Chair Hsu

No plans were received for approval. No action taken.

b) Appoint New Associate Director – Chair Hsu

Hsu advised the District has received an application for Associate Director from Mr. Chong Kee Tan. Would the Board like Mr. Tan to speak? Hsu asked. Yes, please – Koch replied.

Chong Kee introduced himself saying he had a background in Academia. He taught at both a University and a National University in Singapore. He then went into the private sector working in Real Estate Development. He had obtained a PHD in the USA and came back a number of years later, to work in the Silicon Valley for a couple of years. He relocated to Oregon about four years ago to do organic farming. He has worked to improve the infrastructure on his land and to grow food. He has had experience on boards: and has worked as Board Chair in Singapore for the National Trade Association which governs bartering, and he serves as Chair for Dancing Rabbit Eco-Village (Missouri). He is involved with the community and supports conservation on farmlands and other habitats. Tan said he looks forward to helping Marion SWCD in the work of conservation and habitat improvement. Hsu asked if there was any opposition, if not - he wished to instate Mr. Tan as an Associate Director. Olson, Walker and Koch responded they were in favor/good with the idea.

ACTION:

Hsu appointed Chong Kee Tan, Associate Director and congratulated him accordingly.

c) July 2, 2020 Board Meeting Minutes – Chair Hsu

ACTION:

Walker moved that the Board approve the minutes for the July 2, 2020 Board Meeting. 2nd by Koch.

Motion Passed: 4 – 0 Vote.

d) Discuss/Approve Video Services for 2020 Salmon Watch Program – J. Ammon, MSWCD Staff

Ammon advised the Board that this is the first time ever, in the 13 years that Salmon Watch has been offered that the District will not have the outdoor activity in the fall (due to COVID-19). This will affect twelve participating schools, and the 400 to 500 school students that participate each year. Each year the District has spent between \$5,000 to \$6,000.00 for just staff time, training volunteers and supplies. Much thought has been given on how to navigate forward with Salmon Watch in 2020 and I feel what better solution is there, than to partner with the World Salmon Council who created the curriculum, the volunteer training guides and other resource materials that we use each year. They have connections with

lots of video producers. Within your Board packets a list of six video producers are listed (obtained from the Council) along with their prices. It is my hope, she said, that the District have videos plus hybrid class sessions to offer the public this fall – utilizing google meets or something similar. I ask for your support/approval and will answer any questions you may have.

DISCUSSION:

Hsu asked if Ammon might provide more information about World Salmon Council. Ammon responded that they are the ones who have provided us the curriculum, training guides for volunteers, pre-and post-event learning materials. They basically took over the program from *Fresh Water Trout Unlimited* about 10 years ago, or so. They are running the program now. And they provide their affiliates with the information and curriculum that goes out to the teachers. Walker asked, couldn't they simply, apply for a CLEAR grant? Ammon responded back saying the District has been involved with the program for more years than the World Salmon Council has, and therefore she feels it would be better to partner with them. She has also attended many of the Council's program planning meetings, providing input and guidance. The World Salmon Council will still be contributing \$10 to \$15 K toward the video productions, and we (the District) will maintain paying the normal cost of \$5 to \$6 K towards it. We will not have the videos available in September, however I would hope they will be available by our November timeline, for the teachers who have signed up to participate. Walker indicated again; he would like to see an application for CLEAR grant. Koch asked, if we were providing the funds in support of this program each year already, why can't we simply give her the funds now? Keppinger advised, that the funds would either come out of Jenny's Education budget or from Contractor Services. In fact, that is what we are trying to do – contract for services. Services in creating videos that will take the place of going out in person to see and learn about Salmon, their life cycle. We are asking now for your support/approval because next month is when the Salmon will come in and begin spawning and we need to be ready to go in and film the different segments so that videos may be produced and distributed to the teachers probably by November. The teachers have found value in the program, and we do not wish to disappoint them this year. Hsu agreed there would be a timing issue, if a CLEAR grant application were required a decision would need to await the next Board meeting for approval. Further discussion ensued.

ACTION:

Koch moved that the Board support the Salmon Watch Program. And later withdrew the motion. Walker moved that the Board approve funding support of \$2,000.00 to the World Salmon Council. 2nd by Hsu.

DISCUSSION:

None.

Motion Passed. 4-0 Vote.

e) Updates/Discussions/Decisions about Potential New Office Space – Chair Hsu

Hsu asked Walker for an update. As I said earlier, we hope to finalize numbers during our next Board meeting. There is still the need to obtain a good estimate for remodeling costs. Jane has suggested, and I think the idea wise, to schedule **another executive session** for possible discussions/updates that may be needed, prior to our next Board meeting. If not needed, it can be cancelled. I do not expect the results from the Environmental report to be received prior to months end, Walker added. Hsu agreed another meeting scheduled would be pro-active. Walker suggested a meeting be held in two weeks-time, again saying it would be unlikely that all questions will be answered by that time. Hsu asked Jane if she could arrange a meeting. She responded it would be **set-up for August 19th**.

f) Approve CLEAR grant for Robert Frost Elementary School for \$2,000.00 to Purchase Supplies for Expanding School Garden Perimeter with New Fencing and Pathways – Chair Hsu (1:41:07)

ACTION:

Walker moved that the Board approve the CLEAR grant for Robert Frost Elementary School in the amount of \$2,000.00. 2nd by Hsu.

DISCUSSION:

None.

Motion Passed. 4-0 Vote.

g) Approve USGS Invoice for 3rd Federal Quarter of \$6,675.00 for Flow Data – Chair Hsu

ACTION:

Walker moved for the Board to approve payment of invoice in the amount of \$6,675.00 for water flow data to USGS. 2nd by Hsu.

DISCUSSION:

None.

Motion Passed. 4-0 Vote.

h) Landowner Assistance Program – Payments/Extensions/Cancellations – Chair Hsu

ACTION:

Koch moved for the Board to **approve the five requests for payment to LAP recipients:** Natasha Hays, G and C Farms, West Cherry Farm, LLC, Evergreen Farm LLC and Kraemer Farms, LLC. 2nd by Olson.

DISCUSSION:

None.

Motion Passed. 4-0 Vote.

ACTION:

Hsu moved for the Board **approve the LAP extension request** of Paul Knopp. 2nd by Olson.

DISCUSSION:

None.

Motion Passed. 4-0 Vote.

COMMENT – LAP – Jane Keppinger

Keppinger added, as Susan Ortiz has already reported, we closed the First Cycle for 2020-21 LAP having received 21 applications using the new Foundant platform, requesting funding in the amount of \$163,039.00. The anticipated match overall will be \$392,033.00 which exceeds our last round in June whereby there were 18 applications. And June had been a previous record-breaking cycle, she said. Kudos to staff! Hsu agreed the numbers were impressive and he thanked Jane for sharing the information.

i) Modify Office Lease Extension for Salem Audubon to Month to Month – Chair Hsu

Keppinger indicated that she had not understood earlier that Salem Audubon wished to have the lease go month to month.

ACTION:

Walker moved that the Board approve the lease agreement with Salem Audubon be changed to a month-to-month agreement. 2nd by Olson.

DISCUSSION:

None.

Motion Passed. 4-0 Vote.(1:45:29)

9. BOARD MEMBER OR STAFF REPORTS/MEETINGS/UPDATES – ALL DIRECTORS/STAFF

Soil Health:

Hsu asked for any additional thoughts held about a new soil health program. Walker repeated his thought, that Cover Crops be subject to the same rules of LAP except that there be no technical review. When the process is completed, it will be reviewed by the Program Committee and then get approved by the Board. This we could pass, here and now he added. Olson was in favor of this, saying we need to keep the program going and make a compromise. Hsu asked for any other thoughts on the matter.

DISCUSSION:

No further comments made.

ACTION:

Walker motioned that the Board modify the LAP program for Cover Crops so that they do not have to go through the technical review process. 2nd by Olson.

Motion Passed. 4-0 Vote (1:56:40)

CREP Technician Update – Jane Keppinger

Keppinger advised that Yamhill, Clackamas, and Marion SWCD went through an interview process via Clackamas SWCD, as they are going to be the employer on record for the new Tech position. With the OWEB monies they had received, there are about seventeen months left on the contract. They have a new person hired and I believe she will start work tomorrow - her name is Drew Donahue. She is a recent college graduate and I believe she is the applicant who has been working with the Johnson Creek Watershed Council. It was over a month ago, that we interviewed everyone, and I can't recall every candidate and their backgrounds at this moment. She was very enthusiastic, and we believe she has a good

base and understanding of what she will get herself involved in, in having to work with not only the Conservation Districts but also ODA (Oregon Department of AG) and landowners. With the onset of COVID-19 we lost a couple of months. Clackamas is excited to be partnering up to have a CREP Tech, which they have not had before. In the past it was Yamhill and Marion. Funding will keep the Tech in position through December of 2021, though we hope there can be negotiations made with OWEB before that date which will allow the position to be continued longer. We appreciate being able to get more conservation on the ground through this Federal Program Keppinger ended saying.

Update on City of Silverton – Scott Walker

Walker wished the Board to be aware that the City of Silverton is applying for a grant to conduct a feasibility study for installing an ASR (Aquafer Storage Recovery system). Feasibility relating to geology and the systems these cities currently have, this is not an implementation strategy he added. An ASR will benefit both the City of Silverton and the City of Mt. Angel. Silverton is blessed with a lot of water however it has inadequate storage. Mt Angel lies in a water restricted zone and they have difficulties. Six years ago, I brought the situation to the attention of the Board on behalf of the City of Silverton and requested support from Marion SWCD. \$17,000.00 was approved by MSWCD but never used. This effort is going forward now, it is a priority of the City of Silverton Council, and the Staff at the City of Silverton are enthusiastic about the idea. There is the probability that the City of Silverton will be approaching the District again for funding assistance in the future. This would be an opportunity for the Board to assist some urban areas deal with their water issues. Walker indicated that the City of Salem has 700 million gallons of water stored underground, and 39 million above ground. When municipally treated water (drinking water) is added down, resident water is pushed out. State regulations will not allow more than 85% of stored water to be released, to prevent the aquifer from being depleted. Walker ended by saying, if anyone had any questions about the matter, he would be happy to answer them on an individual basis, after the meeting.

OACD Director Eligibility Survey Update – Rochelle Koch

Koch reminded the Board she had been tasked to do the survey. I have not received input yet from Darin and ask now that you send your comments my way she said, speaking to Olson. And Terry, your notations in red are not legible. I hope you will reply-back to the email I sent you, so that I can complete the work at hand.

10. MEETING ADJOURNED by Chair Hsu: Time: 8:42 PM (2:04:03)

Minutes submitted by Janice Calkins, Office Coordinator.

UPCOMING MEETING DATES:

Next Regular Board Meeting: **September 2, 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.

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