

**Marion Soil and Water Conservation District
Administrative Committee October 21, 2022 Meeting Minutes**

8:30 AM to 10:00 AM

Facilitator: Committee Chair Hsu

Recorded by: Brenda Sanchez

Meeting offered by video conference and by telephone.



Attendance

Committee Members

Terry Hsu – Director and Committee Chair

Linda Lovett – Staff

Brenda Sanchez – District Manager

Guests Jason Marshall – SkillBridge Intern

A. Hsu Call to Order: 8:34 AM

B. Agenda Additions or Changes: None

C. Announcements: None

1. Review of September 16, 2022, Minutes

Moved to next Admin Committee meeting.

2. SkillBridge Continuation

Sanchez introduced Marshall and provided background on SkillBridge, a Department of Defense internship program for retiring military personnel. The internship was set up when Amy Boyd was District Manager. At that time the District was put on the national SkillBridge database. Consequently, Sanchez has fielded inquiries not only from the Oregon Army National Guard, where Marshall serves, but from the Marines, Air Force, etc. The District needs to decide whether to continue hosting SkillBridge interns and, if so, how often because there are implications for staff, office space, etc.

Marshall expressed appreciation to the District for his internship, which started August 1st and ends January 20th. Sanchez created a training/familiarization plan for him, and he has been getting a lot out of the program. Marshall suggested that he could shut down the DoD hosting that advertises SkillBridge nationally if the level of interest is more than we can accommodate. If we only want to host Oregon Army National Guard soldiers who are familiar with the area and local issues, it can be done through the Army's career skills program. Marshall has followed up on some inquiries,

including from a Marine from Oregon who is currently based in California and available for three months next summer.

Sanchez said it's been a pleasure to have Marshall at the District. He has been very engaged and has created a conservation planner training template that future interns can follow. It is a benefit for conservation and the District to host these internships because we need experienced professionals doing this work.

The Committee agreed to recommend to the Board that MSWCD continue hosting one intern per year or every other year but to restrict it to the Oregon Army National Guard by removing the District from the national SkillBridge database. If the candidate from California is interested and seems like a good fit, we can pursue that for next summer. Sanchez will put this on the November Board agenda.

Marshall left the meeting at 8:49.

3. Paid Family Leave

Employees and employers will begin paying into Oregon's Paid Family Leave program in January 2023 and employees can start applying for benefits in September. Anyone who makes more than \$1,000 a year is eligible for up to 12 weeks of paid time off per year for a qualifying event (e.g., serious illnesses of self or family member, domestic abuse situation). The contribution for each employee is 1% of their annual salary, with the employee paying 60% and employers with more than 25 employees paying 40%. Since MSWCD has fewer than 25 staff it is not required to pay the 40%.

Paid Family Leave will be separate from the District's sick leave accrual policy. The District needs to decide whether to cover the 60% staff contribution as a benefit and whether to allow employees to take personal sick leave concurrently with Paid Family Leave. Covering the 60% would cost the District about \$4,000 per year.

Committee members supported having the District pay for the 60% employee contribution. Sanchez will update the cost estimate to include the potential salaries of the two new employees that will be hired and will put Paid Family Leave as an action item on the November Board meeting agenda. The Committee also agreed to defer a decision on whether staff can take personal sick leave at the same time as Paid Family Leave until after the state program is implemented so the District can monitor what other employers do.

4. Employee Policy Handbook—Part 2 Review

Sanchez revisited the following items from the previous meeting:

- **Dispute resolution procedure.** The Committee had decided that if the complaint was about the District Manager, an employee could submit a confidential written request for a review to the Administrative Committee. Sanchez wondered

whether the word “confidential” was necessary because the employee might not want it to be confidential. The Committee agreed to include “confidential” but to make the process more open if the complainant wants. The complaint will go to the Administrative Committee Chair, who can decide if the discussion should occur in the Committee or be referred to a third party to investigate. If the complaint is with both the District Manager and the Committee Chair, the complainant can submit it to the Board.

- **Reinstatement of sick leave.** The version of the handbook that Amy Boyd and Cascade Employers Association worked on included restoring the sick leave balance of any employee who leaves the District but comes back within 12 months. Committee members supported including this language but asked Sanchez to check with CEA to see if it is common practice.
- **Employment Record Keeping.** The Committee approved language about the District Manager’s personnel file.

New additions included changes to the following sections:

- **Communication and Software Systems.** The Committee approved revisions to the security of laptop and mobile devices and discussed the District’s file system. Sanchez has reorganized personnel and financial files on the shared drive and will create a work group to organize the rest to make the system easier to use.
- **Performance Management and Review.** The current employee handbook says employees be evaluated at their hire date; the revised one says annually. This would allow the District Manager to do all evaluations at the same time of year, making it easier to coordinate COLA and merit raises for the next fiscal year. It also would allow the Board to approve all evaluations at the same time. Sanchez asked if merit raises should be retroactive to an employee’s hire date or begin upon approval. Hsu said Sanchez should decide what is appropriate and bring it to the Board for approval. Implementation details for performance reviews will be outlined in the Salary Administration Plan.
- **Compensation.** Sanchez added language from the Salary Administration Plan saying pay increases are not effective until approved by the Board. She will also add that COLAs are not guaranteed but will be evaluated annually.
- **Credit Leave:** Added details about credit leave for exempt employees.
- **Telework or Telecommute.** This new section is based on policies that Tom Wilson found from other organizations. It specifies that telework is a privilege and that management can take an employee off telework if necessary. When working remotely, staff must comply with the Employee Handbook and meet all business standards: availability, responsiveness, deadlines, excellence, communication with manager and co-workers, a quiet and private workspace. Remote workers must still get approval for workday absences, such as doctor’s appointments. If the home environment does not enable an employee to perform their work (e.g., lack

of internet, family obligations), they will be required to return to the office. The District Manager has the discretion to relocate office space and create shared offices and to request the return of equipment at any time. All issued equipment and supplies must be returned within one week when leaving District employment or the employee will be held responsible for the cost.

5. Training Guidelines: Establish purpose and procedures for using District funds on training/ conferences training.

Moved to next Admin Committee meeting.

6. District Liability Insurance Coverage. Review of current coverage.

Moved to next Admin Committee meeting because insurance broker did not attend.

Adjourn: Chair Hsu adjourned the meeting at 9:14 AM



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