



Marion Soil and Water Conservation District
Board of Directors November 2, 2022, Meeting Minutes
6:30 PM to 8:13 PM
Facilitator: Chair Olson
Recorded by: Brenda Sanchez

Attendance

Meeting offered in-person at our location in Stayton, OR, by video conference, and by telephone.

Directors & Record of Attendance		Associate Directors	Staff	Guests
At Large 1-Scott Walker	Present	Mark Fields	Brenda Sanchez	Peggy Hart
At Large 2-Terry Hsu	Present	Angela Plowhead	Becky Pineda	Darrell Smith
Zone 1	Vacant			Les Bachelor
Zone 2-Kyle Ross	Absent			Suzette Boudreaux
Zone 3-Darin Olson	Present			Paul Howard
Zone 4-Dave Budeau	Present			
Zone 5-Rochelle Koch	Present			

Note: All documents and materials displayed or referenced are retained in the Board of Directors Meeting file at the District.

A. Olson Call to Order: 6:30 PM

B. Agenda Additions or Changes:

- Olson added, as 8b, Director Event Attendance Procedure/ Policy
- Walker added, as 9d, Additional efforts in education programming

C. Announcements - None

1. Public Comment - None

2. District Snapshot

- Conservation Planner and Urban Conservationist positions:
- 16 applicants for Conservation Planner; Scheduled 6 applicants for an interview week of 11/7
- 10 applicants for the Urban Conservationist. Scheduled 6 applicants for an interview week of 11/7
- First Friday -Next one is this Friday (11/4) Harvest for the Holidays/ Jason Hibbard-Swanson OSU Extension Master Food Preserver. Speaking about

putting up the harvest and using garden produce for Thanksgiving and other seasonal celebrations.

- Salmon Watch - Completed
- 2021-2022 FY Audit starts 11/3/22
- Cover Crop Program closed 10/31/22
- Keirstead tended a booth at Marion County Fall Festival ~ 4,000 ppl. attended
- Willamette Valley District Managers created a workgroup. We meet quarterly.

3. Treasurers Report Ending September 30, 2022

Sanchez explained that the September Treasurers Report is delayed because of significant QuickBooks issues after upgrading to new subscription. Checks that were already printed, sent, and paid were missing from the check register, payroll checks in the missing data as well as still unknowns. Sanchez has been spending time entering the missing data and checks. Sanchez affirmed that online banking and all other banking processes are working. Koch asked how much time Sanchez has spent on the fixing the errors, Sanchez replied that she had been working on this consistently, including working the last two weekends, also working with the QuickBooks consultant to see if the data is really missing or locked up somewhere. Walker asks if QuickBooks has a process for upgrades? Sanchez replies they do, but I do not think he backed it up correctly. Sanchez assures that she will have the treasurers report within the next week or so. Budeau shares his concern about the vulnerability of QuickBooks and if QuickBooks is backed up. Sanchez states that it is backed up daily. Discussion continued concerning QuickBooks issues. Sanchez affirms she will figure out the issues and complete the reports. Olson adds that Sanchez has been updating him and Budeau regarding the QuickBooks issues since it arose.

4. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Services

USDA/ Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) has quite a few applications for the next round (November 18, 2022-cutoff date). Quite a bit of funding in Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Conservation Incentive Contract (CIC) for cropland drought, the last two years we completed a pilot project (2020 and 2021). Local workgroup February 25, 2023. Meeting is in-person at the NRCS office. No Zoom, from 9 AM-12 PM. Dairy Association and Seed League conventions, are coming up for NRCS to do outreach. Bachelor confirmed that January 2023 will be the Civil Rights training for the District Directors. Hart asked if the carbon sequestration money is from NRCS? Bachelor

explained the EQIP has been focused on irrigation, NRCS has a soil health incentive coming up and will be discussed at the Local Workgroup meeting.

5. Review of October 5, 2022, Board Meeting Minutes

Budeau noted that he submitted edits to Sanchez, and they were incorporated. Sanchez displayed the draft minutes.

Action: Olson motioned for the Board to **approve the October 5, 2022, Board Meeting Minutes.** 2nd by Koch. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (unanimously: Aye-4 (Walker, Olson, Koch, and Budeau), Opposed-0).

6. Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) Grant Amendment-2021-23 Capacity Grant

Sanchez explained that at the end of the midterm biennium fiscal year 2021-2022, OWEB distributes remaining funds to all the District capacity grants. We received \$29,000.00 to spend within our capacity and ag water quality program budgets. Sanchez requests approval to sign the amended agreement.

Action: Walker motioned for the Board to **approve the agreement with OWEB for \$29,000.00 in additional funding.** 2nd by Koch. Olson adds that the motion should include that Brenda Sanchez has the authority to sign. Walker added to the motion **and Brenda has the authority to sign.** 2nd by Koch, MOTION PASSED (unanimously: Aye-4 (Walker, Olson, Koch, and Budeau), Opposed-0).

7. Associate Director Application – Julia Battle and Peggy Hart

Olson stated that two people applied. Sanchez shared that Battle wrote her and stated she would be at the meetings starting in January.

Action: Koch motioned for the Board to **appoint Peggy Hart and to holdoff on Julia until she attends a couple meetings.** 2nd by Budeau. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (unanimously: Aye-4 (Walker, Olson, Koch, and Budeau), Opposed-0).

8. Administrative Committee

a) Oregon’s Paid Family Leave

Sanchez presented the new State of Oregon Paid Family Leave (PFL), explaining that any employee in Oregon working will be eligible for twelve weeks of family leave to tend to serious illness for themselves or a family member or the birth of a child or other circumstances such as domestic abuse. Each worker will pay sixty percent of one percent of their annual

wages into the state fund. Wage withholding begins from the January 2023 payroll. Employees can begin requesting PFL in September 2023. Sanchez went on to discuss further details of PFL. Sanchez displayed a poster of the PFL facts. Plowhead clarifies that the “pot” of money is paid into by all working employees and that the “pot” of money should be deep enough to be available to those employees who need to take PFL.

Sanchez continues that she is proposing the District consider, as a benefit, to pay the sixty percent of one percent coverage. Sanchez displays a spreadsheet showing the salary of each position and the total PFL for all positions paid over the year. Sanchez went on to say that the Admin Committee does recommend the Board consider this opportunity to provide a benefit to staff. Sanchez reviewed the spreadsheet and conveyed that the cost to cover the sixty percent for all positions, for one year, including the two new ones coming on board, would be around \$4,061.71. Plowhead added there may be away to get reimbursed for covering the employee shares; she looks up the website and reviews the PFL assistance grants for the Board. Koch asks if a decision is needed tonight. Olson replies no we can take time to decide. Directors debated the benefits of the PFL, as well as working out the details of the PFL program, and what the cost would be to the District. The group continued to discuss the proposed benefit. Olson states that we should table this to next month, take some time to think about. Budeau ends discussion noting that he is concerned about an employee getting both District sick leave and PFL at the same time, especially if the District, as an additional benefit, is paying the employee portion of the PFL.

b) SkillsBridge Internship

Sanchez reviewed the SkillsBridge (SB) Internship that we have been participating in. A program for retiring and transitioning military to work as an intern for participating employers. Jason Marshall is our intern. He and Amy Boyd (past District Manager) worked to get Marshall here as an intern Sanchez detailed that the objective for the intern is to train so they would meet the skills and knowledge for an entry level Conservation Planner position and maybe apply for jobs in conservation. Sanchez goes on to say that Marshall has been an exceptional intern and has brought much to the District such as a new training guide for Conservation Planners, that we can use after he is gone to train any new planners.

There has been much interest in the internship here at Marion SWCD because when Marshall and Boyd set up the opportunity, the District was

then listed on a national database, and we have since been getting calls from military personnel interested in an internship with the District. Marshall has taken us off the national list but kept us on the Oregon National Guard list to manage and lessen the requests to the District. Currently there is an individual interested and would want to join us next year in late summer. Sanchez is seeking support and guidance on how to move forward. Should we continue the SB Internship and if so, how many a year to accept? Sanchez suggests limiting it to one per year, as it takes a commitment by staff to train, but a great program for us to continue support. Walker asks if the SB has been a hinderance. Sanchez replies no, Marshall has been a benefit. Olson suggested this can be left to the manager to determine, the Board should not be involved, since DM has the best understanding of staff time commitment and District benefit. Olson asks that Sanchez drafts up policy and bring it back to the Board.

c) Annual Meeting

Sanchez provides two dates for the Annual Meeting and would like the Board to determine which would our annual meeting date. January or February 2023. Sanchez explains that it would just be a meeting, we would like to have a bigger in person meeting, but we are short with time and capacity. Walker asks if the District has considered having a large dinner like before. The group agreed that we keep it simple and just maybe a small event at the Stayton office. The group discussed options for future events that involve the staff and board. It was considered to have an event in the spring.

Action: Walker motioned for the Board to **approve February 2, 2023, as the annual meeting.** 2nd by Koch. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (unanimously: Aye-5 (Walker, Olson, Koch, Hsu, and Budeau), Opposed-0).

d) Director Attending Conferences and Trainings

Olson would like a policy that allows Directors to attend trainings and conferences and that the District Manager can approve on her own, maybe under \$500.00. The group discussed reimbursement and what and who can attend different trainings and when a Director needs Board approval to participate in conferences. Olson instructs Sanchez to put a policy together regarding Director cost and attendance at trainings and conferences with manager approval for the Board to consider.

Olson starts a new discussion regarding the January 4, 2023, meeting and suggests that the Board consider moving the meeting to January 11, 2023, to get

out of way of the post-holiday rush back-to-work. Board, through consensus agreed to the new date.

9. Education Committee

a) CLEAR Grant; Cascade View

Action: Walker motioned for the Board to **approve the Cascade View \$2,000 CLEAR Grant for Outdoor School.** 2nd by Koch. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (unanimously: Aye-5 (Walker, Olson, Koch, Hsu, and Budeau), Opposed-0).

b) CLEAR Grant Policy Change

Walker explains that an established cooperator has a series of projects that would exceed the \$2,000.00 CLEAR grant limit (the applicant would have to submit multiple grants to seek funding for the series of projects). Walker asks could an established cooperator apply for CLEAR grant for a larger amount, such as \$5,000.00 and still stay within the annual limit of \$7,500.00. Walker shares that the committee recommends (from committee notes) that if a CLEAR grant program participant has received funding for three consecutive years, then they can request up to the full \$7,500.00 amount in one request: still be the maximum allowable to that recipient in one year.

Budeau points out that the CLEAR grant budget has not always been fully spent in years past and is OK with this change if that were to remain, but if we get to the point where the available budget is obligated by these larger grants, then there would be less available for new participants. Olson agrees that this will be OK if CLEAR grant funds are available, if it becomes an issue we can always revert. Conversation continued with the group regarding the details of the proposed change.

Action: Walker motioned for the Board to **approve that CLEAR grant instructions be modified for cooperators with more than three years' experience can apply for up to \$5,000 but no more than \$7,500.00 a year.** 2nd by Koch. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (unanimously: Aye-5 (Walker, Olson, Koch, Hsu, and Budeau), Opposed-0).

c) CLEAR Grant Change to Final Report

Walker explained that the Education Committee would like to request a sample of student work from grantees. Olson agrees that this is an added

procedure within the authority of the committee and does need Board approval and the suggestion of requesting a sample of student work is supported by the board.

d) Additional Efforts in Education Programming

Walker begins with an example of when a teacher would like to conduct environmental education but does not feel equipped to complete. Walker is asking for board approval to scout around and do a market analysis on potential new education programming. Budeau responds that Heath Keirstead is new and that he would like to hear Keirstead's thoughts. Olson adds that we used to do trunks [provide plastic bins with educational materials] and Sanchez confirms. Olson goes on to say that teachers must get approval for curriculum, and it is not an easy task to complete. Walker agrees. Olson suggests that the Board let Walker have access to past efforts. Walker agrees that he would like to review the districts past and see what has been done. The group discussed further ways to engage in more educational opportunities and how the District can assist such as working further with Straub Environmental or developing training for teachers. Walker states that he wants to explore all these ideas. Olson ends discussion by saying that Keirstead can assist Walker, but she needs time because she is working on the website. In the meantime, she can provide information and files to Walker to get started with.

10. Program Committee

Pineda began with a Cover Crop Program (CCP) report. CCP closed applications on 10/31/22; 5 applications were submitted, awarding \$17,880 (out of \$37,500.00 budget) and totaling 390 acres of cover crop. Two applicants were in the Focus Area (Pudding River), and 3 out of the 5 applicants are new cooperators.

a) Partial Payments

Pineda starts by saying that the Program Committee is looking to the Board for direction on whether staff time should be used to research and develop a partial payment policy for the District's grant programs. Staff would like to do this but only if the Board will consider a partial payment policy for the District. Pineda provides that currently if a cooperator has multiple practices, they could submit receipts and request payment for a completed practice, even though work remains on the other practices. Pineda continues that in 2013, the topic of partial payments was discussed by the Board and suggested that up to 50 percent of the grant amount could be paid, if receipts and invoices

were submitted within 120 of the advanced payment, and only one partial payment per grant. This would make it more equitable for those cooperators with reduced funds for conservation and open a way to get more conservation on the ground.

Olson provides some history on how this started with the District; a project had some financial problems and the district advanced them the funds to cover the cost of the supplies, so they could complete the project. Discussion followed that once you advance applicant the funds there is no way to guarantee that they would buy the product. The Board was OK with early payments [not an “advancement”, but an early reimbursement if receipts are required]. Walker asks if this is solving a problem? Budeau replies that yes, it allows for more participation because it helps with out-of-pocket costs for some applicants. Discussion continued regarding what issue is being solved. Walker asks how many cooperators does this impact? Pineda responds we cant’s truly answer that because the up front out of pocket expenses can be a hardship for some, so they never even apply. Koch states she is one hundred percent in support of looking into it. Budeau adds he would support it to, and Olson also supports but with concerns regarding pre-payment. Koch agrees on the concern. Plowhead shares that she is in support but would be concerned about putting the diversity, equity, and inclusion standards that could exclude individuals. Olson affirmed that the only thing the District considers is whether they are within the District boundaries. The grants are open to all and so would this policy. Olson ends by stating the Board supports staff moving forward with investigating partial payment methods.

b) Watershed Council Support Grant

Pineda shared that the October Program Committee met to review the Watershed Council Support Grant framework. The committee is meeting again to finalize the application. The main point to consider is what are we going to ask watershed councils to submit as a report.

11. Conservation Assistance Grant (FKA: Landowners Assistance Grant (LAP))

a) Completed – Closed Projects

Staff created a slideshow of completed projects. Presentation on file.

b) LAP Extension Request

Action: Walker motioned for the Board to **approve the LAP Extension Request for Kuenzi 2nd** by Koch. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (unanimously: Aye-5 (Walker, Olson, Koch, Hsu, and Budeau), Opposed-0).

Adjourn: Chair Olson adjourned the meeting at 8:13 PM



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