



Marion Soil and Water Conservation District
Board of Directors December 7, 2022, Meeting Minutes
6:30 PM to 9:02 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	Peggy Hart	Brenda Sanchez	Jason Marshall
At Large 2-Terry Hsu	*Present	Mark Fields	Linda Lovett	Anna Rankin
Zone 1	Vacant	Angela Plowhead		Les Bachelor
Zone 2-Kyle Ross	Absent	LeLand Hardy		Julia Battle
Zone 3-Darin Olson	Present			Kathy Patterson
Zone 4-Dave Budeau	Present			Amy Watts
Zone 5-Rochelle Koch	Present			

* Hsu arrived at the meeting at 6:55 PM

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: 6:33 PM

B. Agenda Additions or Changes:

C. Announcements - None

1. Public Comment - None

2. District Snapshot

In lieu of a snapshot, Sanchez wanted to recap the "Pause" that ends in December. The original intent of the pause was to get caught up on work, get new staff hired and trained, and update our grant processes where needed. Sanchez stated that she discussed with staff their thoughts on the pause and they said it was very needful, although they were unable to complete all the items, we wished to complete we were able to get the core pause tasks completed such as hiring, closed out several Landowner Assistance Program (LAP) grants, updated and entered all current client data into the Conservation Assistance Tracking System (CATS) database for tracking grants, we built a new website, updated

grant program process and procedures and our now ready to take on new clients. Sanchez went on to say although we had one staff leave, staff took up the slack and got the job done. Very good work.

Sanchez added that we have two new hires. Chelsea Blank, Conservation Planner – Natural Areas and Kassi Roosth, Urban Conservationist. Blank starts December 12 and Roosth starts January 15. Background checks and onboarding scheduled.

Inquiry: Walker asked what hybrid means in terms of the District. Sanchez replied it is all laid out in the new Personnel Policy Handbook (Telecommuting/ Teleworking) and when it comes out in January, all should review. Sanchez added that some individuals work in the office more than others and it works out well. Olson added, we have left this to the District Manager.

Sanchez added we started our annual report. Koch added that she would like to see the upcoming strategic planning be scheduled. Olson replied that is coming and will be scheduled. He would like to have a work session to start planning and working on the budget. Walker discussed his ideas regarding the budget and concerns that the District Manager could get too busy. Directors discussed and determined that February was chosen for the work session and that Walker can get with Sanchez to discuss the budget ideas.

3. Treasurers Report Ending September and October 30, 2022.

Budeau started by noting we had two months of treasurers' report (September and October) to review. He went on to say that October represented 1/3 of the fiscal year and the District is under budget and next month taxes will be coming in. Budeau went on to say that in looking at expenditures, the District appears to be in good shape, however Budeau noted some discrepancies such as the September's Treasurers Report total resources in the executive summary differs from the total in the Resources Table and they should be the same. Budeau noted some other items to be corrected and would like to wait to approve once they are corrected, adding that he had discussed the discrepancies with both Lovett and Sanchez prior to the meeting. Sanchez replied she would make the corrections and from now on label the Treasurer's Report as Draft until it is approved. Hart asked if the percentages in the report that are low, is because spending is low? Olson shared that the percentages are correct but is not usually the case, but spending has been down. Sanchez added that spending has increased over the last two months.

4. **United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Services**

Bachelor delivered his report starting with the Civil Rights training scheduled for the Board on January 11, 2023. Bachelor continued by adding that they will be at the NW Ag Show and Dairy Convention in March. The Local Work Group is scheduled for February 24, 2023. Started ranking applications (33) for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program that have been submitted, still taking them. We still have a full staff, and it has been good to get work done, although still short an engineer, puts a bind on irrigation projects. Bachelor adds that the Basin Team Leader wants to visit with the District and will schedule with Sanchez.

Olson adds that the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) contract is added to the agenda. Olson shares a copy of the contract with the Directors to review and discuss later in the agenda. Sanchez did not realize that the Board had to vote on the contract.

5. **Review of November 2, 2022, Board Meeting Minutes**

Budeau noted that he submitted edits to Sanchez, and they were incorporated. Sanchez displayed the draft minutes. Budeau wanted to clarify when Hsu arrived and when he first voted; Hsu confirmed he joined after the OWEB agenda item. Budeau added one edit to page 8. Sanchez will correct. Walker clarified that for the annual meeting discussion, he asked if there “would be” not directing to have a “big meal”.

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

6. **2021-2022 Fiscal Audit**

Lovett described the Board packet items provided which is an engagement letter, which lays out the auditor’s responsibilities and what they will be reviewing as well as the District’s responsibility to provide documents and answer questions. Lovett noted that in her experience, the auditor usually provides these documents, which are standard, long before the audit occurs, but the auditor supplied these at the audit. Lovett added the audit needs to be finalized and then sent off to the State. These documents will need to be signed.

Action: Walker motioned for the **Chair to sign the letter of agreement for Jarrard, Siebert, Pollard, and Co. LLC related to their and ours responsibilities for conducting the audit.** 2nd by Budeau. MOTION PASSED (unanimously: Aye-5 (Walker, Olson, Koch, Hsu, and Budeau), Opposed-0).

Olson added that it might be good for the District Manager to consider a new auditor every few years as a best practice.

Sanchez asked Lovett when the audit has to be sent to the state. Lovett replied by December 31.

Action: Walker motioned that **Olson and Budeau will review and when they sign off the audit will be submitted to the state.** 2nd by Hsu. MOTION PASSED (unanimously: Aye-5 (Walker, Olson, Koch, Hsu, and Budeau), Opposed-0).

7. CREP Contract

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

8. Pudding River WC Large Wood

Anna Rankin Reviewed the Large Woody Debris project on the Abiqua Creek. Presentation on file. Directors followed the presentation with discussion relating to the impact and the stability of the logs. Rankin replied that the large wood is held down very strongly. Habitat in the Pudding is more for Steelhead than Chinook but has the opportunity to increase spring Chinook populations. Rankin invites anyone interested in volunteering for steelhead surveys.

Action: Walker motioned for the Board to **authorize the expenditure of \$12,500 when staff has determined the project has been completed.** 2nd by Hsu. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (unanimously: Aye-5 (Walker, Olson, Koch, Hsu, and Budeau), Opposed-0).

9. Administrative Committee

Olson requests that Directors consider all the following information before taking any action.

a) Oregon Paid Family Leave

Administrative committee reviewed again Oregon's Paid Family Leave opportunity for the District to cover the cost as an added benefit to staff. The Committee has no recommendation.

b) 2023 Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) and Pay Raises

The Admin committee recommends that every year the District Manager will consider three sources to determine if a COLA is needed, Consumer Price Index

(CPI), property tax revenues, and state and federal COLAs. Based on these indices, the District Manager would propose a COLA, if any, to the Board in February, which would take effect in July of the new fiscal year; it can then be budgeted for. Lovett asks if she could review what she has researched regarding the three sources of information. Lovett shares that; 1) we should look at the regional CPI because the national CPI is very different, 2) counties have not created their budgets yet but do have in their current budget a broader assessment of expected taxes, and 3) Federal COLAs are different and the state COLA is caught up in collective bargaining. Budeau recommended a cap on the COLAS. Sanchez said between zero to five percent COLA could be the range. Directors continued the discussion regarding the indices, process for a COLA, and budget considerations.

Olson begins the discussion regarding pay raises. Sanchez reviews some of the ways the District could consider pay raises outside of the established process for determining raises based on performance evaluation such as an automatic Step increase every two years based on two good evaluations or adding a staff level based on seniority that elevates their position up a pay Range. Directors discussed pay raise approaches, including performance evaluations and the impact it would have on a pay raise and the difference of promotions. Hsu asks about the Pay Equity Act. Sanchez says she is learning it. Olson adds that all employees must be paid equally. Hardy added that COLAs should be considered every year.

Paid Family Leave was discussed further, however Directors chose to take no action on the proposal.

10. Education Committee

Walker discussed the proposed CLEAR grants.

a) CLEAR Grant; North Salem High School and Turner Elementary

Action: Walker motioned for the Board to **approve the North Salem High School and the Turner Elementary Reach the Beach field trip CLEAR Grants.** 2nd by Koch. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (unanimously: Aye-5 (Walker, Olson, Koch, Hsu, and Budeau), Opposed-0).

Budeau asks for a clarification regarding the votes on committees, in the Education Committee notes, it reads there are six votes, more than he believed was in the committee process. Olson replies that we are working on this very item and is on the Board agenda for January.

11. Program Committee – Watershed Council Support Grant

Koch asks Walker to clarify why he wants only full-time executive director as a requirement to receive the grant. Walker replies he wants to keep it simple and capacity money is not sufficient at current wages to pay directors and salary consumes the budget almost in entirety. Directors continued the discussion including watershed council definition by Oregon’s Watershed Enhancement Board and why would the District change the definition. Olson adds in a compromise that there is a tiered approach from full time executive director councils to those without; more funding to the full-time director council and less to those without staff. Directors discussed this option further.

Olson suggests this draft proposal go back to the Program Committee. Koch proposes a Program Committee meeting in December and the Board reviews again at the January meeting. Hardy would like to see action on the proposed council draft. Directors conveyed that they want a fair process and continued to discuss the proposed grant and the application criteria.

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

a) LAP Extension Request

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

b) Completed – Closed Projects

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

13. Mid-Willamette Council of Governments (MWCOG) Member

Olson states that Hsu has been attending the MWCOG, representing the District as a member. Hsu shares that the District uses their services for GIS work and their in-house lawyer. Hsu goes on to add that he first attended their Board meetings because they were in the process of hiring a general manager and he wanted to see what their process was. There is a variety of mayors and city reps attending. The Board meets at 3:30 in person or Zoom. Hart asks what the commitment is for a Director is to attend. Olson says any Director can attend but they do not represent the District.

Action: Olson motioned **to appoint Sanchez as the District Representative at the next three MWCOG Board meetings** 2nd by Koch. No further discussion.

MOTION PASSED (unanimously: Aye-5 (Walker, Olson, Koch, Hsu, and Budeau), Opposed-0).

14. Number of Associate Director Position Policy

Olson proposes a policy that limits the number of associate directors and propose four associates moving forward. Olson wants to manage the amount so that Directors are not outnumbered. Directors discussed the proposed policy further.

Action: Olson motioned **to instruct staff to create a policy that limits Associate Directors to four**, 2nd by Hsu. Walker adds that he does not approve of selecting arbitrary number. Olson states that the Board can change the policy if needed..

MOTION PASSED (unanimously: Aye-5 (Olson, Koch, Hsu, and Budeau), Opposed-1 (Walker)).

Olson ends the meeting recognizing Terry Hsu for his service as Director for several years with a letter signed by the District Manager and all the Directors. Hsu responds that he will miss the relationships he has with Board and that he is moving on to focus on other interests.

Adjourn: Chair Olson adjourned the meeting at 9:02 PM



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