



Marion Soil and Water Conservation District
Board of Directors February 8, 2023, Meeting Minutes
6:30 PM to 7:58 PM
Facilitator: Chair Darin 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-Peggy Hart	Present	Angela Plowhead	Brenda Sanchez	Les Bachelor
At Large 2- Scott Walker	Present	Leland Hardy	Kassi Roosth	Kathy Patterson
Zone 1-Vacant	Vacant	Mark Fields	Sarah Hamilton	
Zone 2-Vacant	Vacant			
Zone 3-Darin Olson (Chair)	Present			
Zone 4-Dave Budeau (Secretary-Treasurer)	Present			
Zone 5-Rochelle Koch (Vice-Chair)	Absent			

Note: All documents and materials displayed or referenced are retained in the Board of Directors Meeting file at the Marion Soil and Water Conservation District (Marion SWCD or District).

A. Olson Call to Order: 6:30 PM

B. Announcements - None

C. Agenda Additions or Changes

1. Public Comment - None

2. District Snapshot

Kassi Roosth joined us to say hello and introduce herself. Roosth is the District's new Urban Conservationist. She is looking forward to working at the District and taking on the Urban Program development.

3. Treasurer Report Ending November 30, 2022.

Olson begins by stating that the Treasurers Report will be moved to the next Board meeting in March. Olson requests that the Board wait to review the Treasurers Report because the issues with QuickBooks and the budget forms have been figured out and the Executive Summary has undergone formatting changes to better display the actual vs budget. Olson says we will spend about thirty minutes or so to review everything. The September, October, November, and December Treasurers Report will be available for review. Sanchez will send out the December Treasurers report in the printed packet and the previous months by email. Olson states if you have any question to call Sanchez. Walker adds that there is too much in the Treasurer Report some editing is needed. Focus on checks written, actual versus budget balance. Walker would like to focus on personnel expenses now that we are fully staffed.

4. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Services

Bachelor starts by asking Sanchez if she would like to have time on the agenda at the Local Work Group on February 24, 2023, 9:00 AM at the Salem Center on Hawthorne. Sanchez said yes, ten minutes. New Conservation Innovation Strategy to present at the LWG, soil health and has been well received by leadership. Good start on all the applications until there were issues at the national level, getting caught up with contracts. Six high tunnels, Nutrient plans for dairies. Still an open timeframe for the Conservation Incentive Contracts- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (CIC- EQIP). National has not announced a deadline for signups; we are getting quite a few here in the County. Our new engineer starts next week. Pheasants Forever agreement here in Salem now. Bachelor explains he has a long history with Pheasants Forever working in Wyoming and contracting shelter belts and windbreaks. It would be nice to get some pheasant habitat in place.

Walker shared his positive experience with attending the Local Workgroup and plans to attend the one in February. Walker asks Bachelor if his agency was working on anything relative to carbon capture farming? Bachelor responds by yes; we have Climate Smart. Comes out of the Inflation Reduction funding. Added to the CIC-EQIP contracts. Has lots of stuff with soil health.

Hart asks what the Local Workgroup is about. Bachelor says we go around the table and we identify our priority concerns. For the last twenty-three years the priorities have been water quantity, water quality and soil erosion. Wildlife and energy follow.

5. Review of January 11, 2023, Board Meeting Minutes

Walker would like to comment on a section of the notes related to the Cost-of-Living Adjustment policy that he commented on and would like the notes to include why this question was raised. Olson asks Walker to send his corrections to Sanchez, so she can correct. We will hold off on approving the minutes until the next Board meeting. Walker agrees.

6. Appoint a Budget Officer

Olson states that we need to appoint a Budget Officer.

Action: Walker motioned for the Board to **appoint Brenda Sanchez as the Budget Officer for the Marion Soil and Water Conservation District for the fiscal year 2023 to 2024**, 2nd by Hart. Olson asks Sanchez if she accepts. Sanchez says yes. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (unanimously: Aye-4 (Walker, Olson, Hart, and Budeau), Opposed-0).

a. Review 2023-24 Budget Process and Calendar

Walker provided some comments regarding the budget process. Sanchez displays a letter that will go out to the Budget Committee that includes the budget process and proposed budget calendar. Walker adds some points to remember and edits regarding the budget process. Olson asks that Walker submit his edits to Sanchez, and she can amend the letter.

b. Confirm Budget Work Session Date

Sanchez shares that February 16, 2023, is the best time for everyone except one associate director. Olson asks if this date will work. Agreed upon by consensus. Sanchez will work with the chair to draft an agenda for a Board work session on 2/16/23 and get that out as soon as possible.

7. Pesticide Stewardship Partnership 2023 to 2025 Grant

Sanchez shared that the Pesticide Stewardship Partnership (PSP) program that we have been engaged in with Oregon Department of Agriculture and the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality is up for a grant submittal to continue the PSP work in the Pudding River watershed. Sanchez is requesting approval to submit a PSP grant, due March 1. Sanchez adds that the typical PSP grant is anywhere from \$20,000 to \$60,000 award. The PSP grant can leverage our new Conservation planner-Soils Cropland, as they will be the lead. We can also loop in the Urban Conservationist and have a project that also includes urban users of pesticides.

Action: Walker motioned for the Board to **apply for the Pesticide Stewardship Partnership grant from ODA**, 2nd by Hart. Hart asked if we could use the money on any project? Sanchez replies that we can use the funds for outreach and technical assistance related to pesticide use; wages, materials but we must spend the funds in the Pudding River watershed. MOTION PASSED (unanimously: Aye-4 (Walker, Olson, Hart, and Budeau), Opposed-0).

8. Administrative Committee

a) Updated Organizational Structure and Job Descriptions

Sanchez displayed the updated Organizational Chart, explaining there have several changes since the last revision with a new Director, Associate Director, and staff. Walker asked if we could table this discussion until the next meeting. Olson asked Sanchez if there were any timelines to meet and Sanchez replied that she would like to see the Board review the Soil-Cropland planner position so she could start recruitment. Walker agreed.

b) Conservation Planner – Soil and Croplands ready to Recruit.

Sanchez displayed the Conservation Planner- Soil-Cropland job description. Sanchez explained how the position would fit into the team structure of the District and the needed technical assistance role it would fill. This planner would also work with the other ag planner to co-lead the Strategic Implementation Area, agricultural water quality program, and the PSP. Olson wanted to know if we were able to help small woodland owners. Sanchez responded that Chelsea Blank (staff) would be taking on the woodland work. Discussion continued regarding the types of projects that could be completed with this new planner.

Action: Walker motioned for the Board to **approve the Conservation Planner- Soils and Croplands position**, 2nd by Hart. Walker notes that the descriptions should state clearly that this is a team environment. Hardy adds that landowners should have one planner to work with and the planners work together to assist with the project. Sanchez adds that the technical team meets once a week, and they share their challenges and success working together as a team. Olson adds that it is a good idea to have others familiar with all the projects. Olson asks how this planner will help small and large farms. Sanchez adds that the planner will take on the irrigation projects and work to build relationships within the ag community just like Becky Pineda (staff) is working with local grower groups and associations, networking and building connections. Sanchez adds that part of technical assistance is knowing when to connect a landowner with another partner or organization when what they need is outside of our services. Discussion continued

regarding the challenge of engaging larger growers. Hart asks if this planner could work with carbon emissions. Sanchez replies that if the Board wanted to work with this planner to build such a program, then yes. Hart adds that the teamwork statement should go in all the job descriptions. Sanchez stated she would add that into all the job descriptions. Olson asks for further discussion. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (unanimously: Aye-4 (Walker, Olson, Hart, and Budeau), Opposed-0).

7:10 Fields joins the meeting.

c) Personnel Policy Handbook

Sanchez wanted to take a minute and update the Board on the Personnel Policy Handbook. Currently it is under legal review. The template that we were using has some issues. The lawyer will be drafting some new language so we are current with all the new laws and have a solid handbook. Once completed, it may go to the Admin Committee again to review any significant changes but after that it will be presented to the Board. Sanchez has put together a bullet list of significant changes. Sanchez said she will get the draft handbook out to Directors via email a couple of weeks prior to the meeting for approval so you have some time to review. The Admin Committee took four meetings to review and recommend, now a legal review for the final draft.

Walker shared his concerns from earlier attempts at personnel policy regarding guns in the building. Sanchez assures Walker that it is covered in the handbook. Olson adds that we can review that policy at the time for approval.

9. Education Committee

a) Salmon Watch Report

Walker reviewed the Salmon Watch Report completed by Heath Keirstead (staff). Report on file. 386 kids attended. Spent \$4,600 (under allocated budget). Walker states that Salmon watch is a long-standing program. Olson adds that Keirstead is considering an Adult Salmon Watch. Sanchez added that she is always looking for Salmon Watch volunteers.

10. Conservation Assistance Grants (CAG-FKA LAP)

a) January 5, 2023, CAG Applications

Sanchez displayed a table with seven applicants from the January 5, 2023, CAG cycle. Hamilton pointed out grant application 20-23-007 HFRS that it had some reviewer concerns. Budeau (a CAG reviewer) stated that his concerns were related to the budget. Discussion continued regarding the project. Hart asked why he only had verbal quotes from the contractor?

Hamilton explained that it has been very difficult to find a contractor to get a bid. The fires and ice storm created so much work that contractors specializing in this work are hard to schedule. Olson asks if the District requires a written quote. Hamilton replied “no”. This is a landowner application, and they will have to provide receipts to get reimbursed. Sanchez added that it is standard to not require written quotes for a grant application. If the applicant wants a strong application, they might get written quotes to submit or they may not. Discussion continued regarding grant process and budget requirements.

Olson asks if we delay this will it harm the project. Hamilton replies that this landowner would like to start as soon as possible. He is concerned about using mechanical equipment in fire season. So, he would like to get that work started now. Olson asks Budeau if we should wait. Budeau replies that as the application stands now, he could not support it. Walker asks if anyone knows what NRCS does regarding written quotes. There was no answer for that question. Discussion ensued regarding the review process. Olson asked Hardy for his review comments. Hardy replied that there were several issues discussed during the review committee; it just was not a smooth process for approving this application. Hart asks Budeau if it is possible to correct these issues. Budeau replies it is fixable. Hamilton will work with landowner to work on the budget and then bring back to the Board for a vote.

Action: Olson motioned for the Board to **approve all the grant applications except for the Sanders project**, 2nd by Hart. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (unanimously: Aye-4 (Walker, Olson, Hart, and Budeau), Opposed-0).

Olson added that there should be some internal process outlined to reduce these complexities. Sanchez adds already in discussion.

11. New Business-Special Districts Insurance Services (SDIS) Annual Premium

Sanchez is requesting approval to pay the SDIS annual insurance premium that covers the building, vehicles, and liability at \$22,876. Sanchez adds that she spoke with Walker earlier about this and he would like to see the District shop around for a better price; Olson concurs. Sanchez says she could get that done for next year.

Action: Walker motioned for the Board to **authorize Sanchez to pay \$22,876 to cover District insurance for the coming year**, 2nd by Hart. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (unanimously: Aye-4 (Walker, Olson, Hart, and Budeau), Opposed-0).

Walker adds that he, Hart, and Koch will be attending the Directors Training in Clackamas.

Olson adds that Keirstead shared with him an invite (Luckiamute Watershed Council event) on “How to co-live with Beavers” February 23, 2023, 6:30 – 8:00 PM, New Morning Bakery in Dallas. Hart asked for a copy of the invite. Olson will share the invite.

Adjourn: Chair Olson adjourned the meeting at 7:58 PM



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