



**Marion Soil and Water Conservation District**  
**Board of Directors April 4, 2023, Meeting Minutes**  
6:31 PM to 8:43 PM  
Facilitator: Secretary-Treasurer Dave Budeau  
Recorded by: Brenda Sanchez

<b>Directors &amp; Record of Attendance</b>		<b>Associate Directors</b>
At Large 1-Peggy Hart	Present	Mark Fields
At Large 2-Scott Walker	Present	Leland Hardy
Zone 1-Vacant	Vacant	Angela Plowhead
Zone 2-Vacant	Vacant	
Zone 3-Darin Olson (Chair)	Absent	
Zone 4-Dave Budeau (Secretary-Treasurer)	Present	
Zone 5-Rochelle Koch (Vice-Chair)	Present	
<b>Staff</b>		<b>Guests</b>
Brenda Sanchez		Les Bachelor
Heath Keirstead		Brandin Hilbrant
Linda Lovett		Rich Rodriguez
Becky Pineda		Kathy Patterson
		Lindsey McClary

**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. Budeau Call to Order: 6:31 PM**

- Bachelor, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- Hilbrant, North Santiam Watershed Council (NSWC)
- McClary, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde (CTGR)
- Rodriguez and Patterson, public

**B. Announcements** - Darin Olson-Chair is not attending tonight. Dave Budeau will facilitate the meeting with Rochelle Koch.

**C. Agenda Additions or Changes**

- Agenda addition: Walker adds update to policies proposal
- Agenda change: COLA is moved to the May 2023 meeting, because the Chair (absent) would like to be included in the discussion.

**1. Public Comment** - None

## 2. District Snapshot

Sanchez starts by saying that to bridge staff with the Board, that she has asked the Chair to have on the agenda time during District Snapshot to have two employees to share highlights of their work. Staff now submit monthly reports to the District Manager. They are compiled and shared in the SharePoint board file. Sanchez adds that she will use the reports to put together the District Snapshot and every other month two staff will attend the board meeting during District Snapshot and provide highlights of the work they do; starting this month. Heath Keirstead (Communication and Education Specialist) and Becky Pineda (Agricultural Conservation Planner) presented highlights of their work.

Koch requests that staff reports are sent via email when available.

Keirstead highlights:

- Website launch and new features of website. Accessibility feature added for different options to make it more accessible for an individual with disabilities. Blog features.
- Native Tree and Plant Sale March 3 and 4, 2023. Added a new platform through the website's plant database. We offered 109 different species and sold 5,243 plants; 244 customers plus walk ups at sale.
  - Walker suggests we track staff time on plant sale to understand better the costs of the plant sale overall.
  - There was a discussion related to scholarship distribution and that it will be an agenda item at the next education committee meeting.

Chat Comment: Hilbrant- These new website features are great!

Pineda highlights:

- Discussed how she is working on outreach to rural communities.
- Provided technical assistance on Conservation Assistant Grants deadline April 6. There is a more diverse set of projects applying (8 clients).
- Oregon Department of agriculture programs. Strategic Implementation Areas Open House scheduled for April 24, 2023. SIA monitoring plan, starting this fall. ODA grant application is due in May for the 23-25 Capacity and ag water quality program. Pesticide Stewardship Partnership sampling begins April. The new planner will take on the PSP once hired.
- Education and outreach tasks hosting First Friday and Conservation Club series.
- Completed the Succession Planning workshop yesterday (4/4/23) with partners (Clackamas and Polk SWCDs, Marion County Farm Bureau, OSU Mid-Willamette Small Farmers, Oregon Agricultural Trust) Geared to ag landowners; Goal was 30 actual was 26 attendees.

- Been attending grower meetings for outreach.
- ACE Agriculture Conservation Education manure cover tarps -keep it covered campaign.

### 3. Treasurers Report January 2023

Budeau began by stating that Koch had noticed that the check reconciliation detail was not included in the report and that Sanchez emailed a copy of the check reconciliation to Directors this week. Hart asked what “Stripe” is, she was not aware of what Stripe is. Keirstead replied that is the application used for processing the sales of plants online. Walker is moving the Treasurers Report until next month because he was not able to review the check reconciliation detail. Next Board meeting will have the January, February, and March Treasurers Report to review.

Chat Comment: Rodriguez-Excellent financial summary and additive net revenues.

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

Bachelor begins with staff changes. Civil Rights checklist? Sanchez replies that Koch still needs to sign the checklist and commits to completing and getting it back to Bachelor as soon as possible. The Local Working Group meeting went well. Basin-wide IRA out in 2024 and the CIS budget may double, most headed to forestry. Done contracting first batch of EQIP. Start ranking after deadline 34 applications. Technical Service Providers’ funds are \$64,000, we now have a new engineer. Directors replied that Bachelor put on a good meeting, very informative and then finished with discussion on USDA programs.

### 5. Review of March 1, 2023, Board Meeting Minutes

Budeau starts by saying that he reviewed the minutes. The minutes that were in the Board packet are without Budeau edits. Sanchez displays the March 1, 2023, Board Meeting minutes tracked with Budeau’s edits and comments for Directors to review. Light discussion ensued regarding the edits.

**Action:** Hart motioned for the Board to **approve the March 1 Board Meeting Minutes**, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Koch. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (unanimously: Aye-4 (Walker, Koch, Hart, and Budeau), Opposed-0).

### 6. 2023-2024 Budget Update

Sanchez begins by stating that she has decided to continue the FY 23-24 budget in its current format. After much thought and discussion felt that the initially proposed “unified” format had its usefulness but an objective of Local Budget Law

is to have a consistent established process and since this format was introduced just two years ago, it is best to continue in this format and revise parts as needed to streamline and create a budget that works. Also, the Budget Committee electors have been engaged in this format and changing it could make it difficult to get the budget approved, especially with a new manager. Sanchez recommends that because we have a large carryover, more than last year, abolishing the Multipurpose Reserve Fund would not benefit the budget and it would be best to leave it as a Reserve.

Sanchez presents the draft proposed budget and reviews the differences between the current and proposed budget. Sanchez points out two major differences. One is in Natural Resources (page 10 of Proposed Budget), under Conservation Grants (line 9) there are now two lines (instead of one in current budget) for Conservation projects (line 12) and Special Projects Grants (line 16) and Conservation projects are funds carried over and can be used for fund requests outside of the District's granting program. The other difference is in the Not Allocated expenses where there is a new line item for Partner Grants (page 11, line 21, \$255,000), which is a proposed grant program for partners to apply for funds from the District for capacity, education, and outreach, technical assistance, or project implementation. The program is still under development but is another source of funds for the public.

Hart asks why the large carry over and Sanchez explains we only spent a portion of the budget for personnel, underestimated carry over from previous budget, streamlining costs, the discontinuation of the Waterflow Program, allocation of ODA budgets, facility expenses less than anticipated. Sanchez said after reallocating the budget for FY 23-24 there was over a million dollars still to be appropriated.

Discussion continued regarding the Partner Grant details. Sanchez adds that the Partner Grant framework is on the Natural Resources Committee agenda for discussion.

Walker adds that he would like to add more money to the Building Reserve Fund. Sanchez adds she thinks that the current Building Reserve would cover ADA cost and says it is up to the Board to make these decisions. Walker then says he would like \$50,000 added to the Building Reserve in anticipation of higher costs.

Walker would also like to see a line item added to Not Allocated for New Programs at \$10,000. Sanchez confirms she will do this.

Discussion then began over the “Not Allocated” term and whether that should be changed because it is misleading and confusing. Sanchez says that we use the state forms, and if we have the information required, we could use whatever format we want, so maybe we can change the title.

Discussion then changed to whether the Board needs to make a motion to add \$50,000 to the Building Reserve. It was determined this is a new budget and we can allocate where we need to.

Plowhead, points out we could be overly concerned and asks for clarification regarding the process for changing the budget after the budget committee approves. Walker reviews the process.

Budeau summarizes the Directors’ feedback and next steps.

Budeau raises the question regarding abolishing the Multipurpose Reserve Fund. Sanchez states they at least need to review the fund this year and decide if they want to abolish it. Directors discussed options.

Sanchez says she forgot to point out that she added \$175,000 to unappropriated funds (page 11, line 32) because the current \$200,000 would not be enough operating funds to cover the District for three months.

**Walker moves to abolish the Multipurpose Reserve Fund. No second. Motion dies.**

- 7. Request for Extension Letter - NSWC - ODA Weed Board Grant for Ludwigia**  
Hilbrant (NSWC) is requesting an extension of the ODA Weed Board Grant technical assistance matching funds for their aquatic invasive grant. NSWC was given an extension by Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board till the end of the year to complete. NSWC went through some staff challenges and needed the extension. Hilbrant is here to request an extension from the District for the matching funds. Grant includes control for yellow flag iris and ludwigia.

**Action:** Walker motioned for the Board **to extend the NSWC match funds for \$7,889 for aquatic invasive control grant, 2<sup>nd</sup>** by Hart. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (unanimously: Aye-4 (Walker, Koch, Hart, and Budeau), Opposed-0).

## **8. Letter of Support Requests**

### **a) Mid-Willamette Beaver Partnership**

Hilbrant is also here to request a letter of support (LOS) on behalf of Mary's River, Luckiamute, Ash Creek, North and South Santiam and the Calapoolia waterways; these are tributaries to the Mid-Willamette River. Submitting an ODA ag water quality grant to provide technical assistance for support and partnership. They are using a beaver assessment model by Utah State University that will integrate past data with assessments to be completed this summer. Request of the District includes a letter of support and staff time to review the beaver management plans once a year.

**Action:** Walker motioned for the Board to **approve a staff time and a letter of support for the Mid-Willamette Beaver Partnership**, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Hart. Koch raised her hand for discussion asking if there was staff time to complete. Sanchez agreed there is time. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (unanimously: Aye-4 (Walker, Koch, Hart, and Budeau), Opposed-0).

**b) Chahalpam Reforestation**

McClary (CTGR) HRE is here to request a letter of support for an ongoing project that the District has been in support of. There are two properties on the North Santiam River; a total of 400 acres. They are going to submit another grant to Bonneville Power Administration to continue reforestation at the Chahalpam site. The District has provided a LOS for an OWEB grant last summer that they did not receive and are now trying for this grant to complete the project. If awarded, the project would reforest 46.5 acres; CTGR is just seeking a LOS. CTGR has been an active Partner with the District. Directors discussed a few details of the project regarding plant acquisition and District commitment.

**Action:** Walker motioned for the Board to **approve a letter of support for the Chahalpam Reforestation Project**, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Hart. Hardy opens discussion by stating the letter mentions the LAP not Conservation Assistance Grants. The letter refers to District awards previously awarded as a LAP. Sanchez says she can add in the new grant name. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (unanimously: Aye-4 (Walker, Koch, Hart, and Budeau), Opposed-0).

**9. New Employee Introductory Period Completed**

Sanchez states that Linda Lovett has completed her six-month introductory period and Sanchez completed her performance evaluation and she exceeded. Sanchez recommends that the Board approve Lovett as a full-time regular employee of the District.

**Action:** Walker motioned for the Board to **approve Linda Lovett as a permanent employee of the Marion SWCD, 2<sup>nd</sup>** by Budeau. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-4 (Walker, Koch, Hart, and Budeau), Opposed-0).

#### **10. Proposed Cost of Living Adjustment**

Moved to May 3, Board Meeting agenda.

#### **11. Grant Limitations Policy**

Sanchez explains that the District's Grant Limitation Policy needs revision because we changed from LAP to CAG and added the Salmon Watch component and at the last Board meeting Directors requested more information as to why Salmon watch is listed as a grant and to move this to the April 5 Board meeting.

Sanchez explained that she discussed it with the tech team, and it was decided to have Salmon Watch as an indented bullet on the policy under CLEAR Grant to signify it is a component of the CLEAR Grant and not a separate grant. Sanchez displays the written policy with Salmon Watch as an indented bullet under CLEAR Grants.

**Action:** Koch motioned for the Board to **approve the revision to the Grant Limitation Policy, 2<sup>nd</sup>** by Budeau. Walker voices his concern regarding large projects and the \$45,000. No further discussion. MOTION FAILS (Aye-3 (Koch, Hart, and Budeau), Opposed-1(Walker)).

Discussion followed regarding the number of votes needed for a motion to die when there is only a quorum present.

#### **12. Policy Regarding Grants to Employees/Board**

Walker opens the discussion regarding first degree relatives of staff or Board members, associates will have to declare a conflict of interest and cannot apply for District grants. Walker would like to be clear about this and create a policy as written and submitted to the Board. Walker adds "On any vote that provides benefits to any employee, associate director, or voting board member or their relatives as defined by ORS 244, Walker will vote no if the District Manager does not state the grantee is not one of the aforementioned persons" Hart and Budeau raised concerns regarding community relationships and the potential to prevent individuals from running for a Director position. Directors continued debate the concerns related to the proposed policy

**Action:** Walker motioned for the Board **to approve a policy that restricts relatives from receiving grants from the District, 2<sup>nd</sup>** by Hart. Koch opens

discussion by stating she does not support the policy. Plowhead adds that individuals on commissions and boards often vote against each other and this is not a good argument for this new policy. Hart adds she does not agree with the policy. Plowhead asks is there a current policy. Walker says that current policy is guided by state law which requires the voting member or relative thereof, who would receive the benefit should announce the conflict and not vote on the motion Sanchez asked Walker to clarify what problem he is trying to solve. Walker responds that he has always felt that relatives should not receive grants. Sanchez asks if she had individuals sign a form when there is a conflict of interest to have on file, will that be, OK? Hart adds that the Board can decide to not approve any grant award and we are not susceptible to this form of corruption. No further discussion. MOTION FAILS (Aye-1 (Walker) Opposed-3 (Koch, Hart, and Budeau)).

### **13. Conservation Assistance Grants (CAG-FKA LAP)**

#### **a) Grants Completed**

Staff created a slideshow of completed projects for Directors to review. Presentation on file.

#### **b) Extension Requests**

Extension requested due to the unavailability of plants. Hart asks if the District can assist with getting plants for projects? Keirstead replies we do provide a list of native plant nurseries. Pineda adds that we have the Plants for Grants program where we will be able to purchase plants as a bulk order for CAG grant recipients. Program is coming soon and still needs the details to be worked out.

**Action:** Walker motioned for the Board to **approve the extension for the Invasive to Native Wildlife Habit LAP-20-22-021**, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Koch. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (unanimously: Aye-4 (Walker, Koch, Hart, and Budeau), Opposed-0).

Budeau asks Walker to share his thoughts regarding District policies. Walker states that everyone is not familiar with all District policies. He would like to see short summaries of each policy and discuss where policy updates are needed. Directors agreed. Sanchez adds that she has Tom Wilson (staff) creating a booklet with all our policies and she will get that to the board soon.

**Adjourn:** Secretary-Treasurer Budeau adjourned the meeting at 8:43 PM





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