



**Marion Soil and Water Conservation District
Board of Directors June 7, 2023, Meeting Minutes**

6:32 PM to 8:17 PM

Facilitator: Chair Olson

Recorded by: Brenda Sanchez

Directors & Record of Attendance		Associate Directors
At Large 1-Peggy Hart	Present	Angela Plowhead
At Large 2-Scott Walker	Present	Leland Hardy
Zone 1-Vacant	Vacant	
Zone 2-Vacant	Vacant	
Zone 3-Darin Olson (Chair)	Present	
Zone 4-Dave Budeau (Secretary-Treasurer)	Present	
Zone 5-Rochelle Koch (Vice-Chair)	Present	
Staff		Guests
Brenda Sanchez		Les Bachelor
Chelsea Blank		
Susan Ortiz		

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: 6:32 PM

- Bachelor, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

B. Announcements - None

C. Agenda Additions or Changes

- CAG extensions.
- Walker requested time at the end of the meeting for discussion.

1. Public Comment

None.

2. District Snapshot

Sanchez begins that we have two staff joining us and they will highlight their recent work.

a. Chelsea Blank (Conservation Planner-Natural Areas)

- Completed Vegetation Management Plan for rock quarry

- Recorded first interview for Conservation Spotlight. Partner with KMUZ (100.7), Willamette Wake Up. Airs every third Wednesday of the month, hosted by Oregon State University Small Farms and Polk SWCD. Blank interviewed the founders of Growing Oaks.
- Completed an Invasive Plant Trainings
- Conducted an Oak Woodland Tour, 30 people attended.
- Conducted technical assistance site visits and worked with Hardy at some sites.

b. Susan Ortiz (Grants Coordinator)

- End of the fiscal year and the biennium work.
- CAG open for Letters of Interest are due June 8. Three weeks for staff to review.
- Cover Crops Program headed to NR Committee for 2023 funding recommendation to the Board for approval.
- Coordinating Plants for Grants with Hamilton (Native and Plants Specialist-Staff)
- SPGs have some with final reports coming soon
- Partner Grants program framework
- CLEAR grant set up for next year, including deadlines. Marion County Extension ready to apply.
- Set the Salmon Watch
- Assisted Keirstead (Communication and Education Specialist-Staff) with the process for awarding Stan Vistica scholarship.
- Pesticide Stewardship Partnership grant budget tracking and reporting.
- Oregon Department of Agriculture Ag water quality and Capacity grants submitted, waiting on OWEB to pass the budget.
- OWEB Small Grant Team (Ortiz is the Team Leader) finishing up the end of the biennium work.

3. Treasurers Report April and May 2023

Budeau began by stating that we have the Treasurers Reports caught up with the submission of the April and May 2023 reports. Budeau asks Sanchez to look at April's report on the current levied taxes to see why it is still the same as the previous month. Sanchez replies that she will correct the report and make sure May's reflects the correct amount.

Walker asks for clarification regarding the actual budget versus adopted budget. Budeau and Sanchez explains that the actual budget is July 1, 2022, cash on hand plus all income since July, minus all expenses since July equals what is the actual budget (operating budget) for June 2023. Walker requests that the report show

the portion of the budget that was spent. Discussion continued regarding what amounts display and what items should be in the report. Sanchez replies that she can add in the percentages to each program to show how spending is for each program area.

Action: Koch motioned for the Board to **approve the April and May 2023 Treasurers Report, 2nd** by Hart. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 (Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau), Opposed-0).

4. United States Department Agriculture Services Report

Bachelor begins by sharing that the public scoping meeting went well with the Santiam Water Control District (SWCD) structural modernization project. The plans were completed by the Farmers Conservation Alliance; converting 115 miles of the current delivery system to a piped system. Seeking 64 million from Natural Resources Conservation Services. Project still a way off, we are in step 2 of 6. The project documents are available online. It has been a busy year with many contracts. Bachelor is working on a report he will share to show what work was completed. Marion County fared well in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program applications. Walker asks how many farmers will benefit from the SWCD project. Bachelor replies 460 patrons covering 18,000 acres. Olson adds it is also the golf courses, Salem, and not just farmers. Bachelor says there is still time to submit comments.

5. Review of April 4 and May 3, 2023, Board Meeting Minutes and May 3, 2023 Budget Hearing Minutes

Sanchez displays Draft 3 of the April 4, 2023, minutes to display the changes Walker had requested. Walker reviewed the correction in two places and accepted. Walker adds that he will restate his position again at the next meeting so they are entered into the July minutes.

Budeau then reviewed the Budget Meeting and Hearing minutes, stating they were good and straightforward.

Hart, regarding May minutes, asks about the volunteer work Calkins (office Coordinator-Staff) has been working on. Sanchez replies we have been meeting and would like to develop a volunteer database and then move forward from there.

Action: Koch motioned for the Board to **approve the April 4 Draft 3, May 3 Draft 2, 2023, Board Meeting Minutes and May 3, 2023 Budget Hearing Minutes** 2nd by Hart. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 (Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau), Opposed-0).

Walker requested assurance that his statement is in the April minutes for approval. Olson stated that it is.

6. Performance Evaluations and Proposed Step Increases

Koch starts by asking if they could review the policy over the next month and move this request to the next meeting. Sanchez explains that this request falls under our current policy, that Sanchez sent in the Board packets. The new policy will be implemented once the Personnel Policy Guidebook is approved, which is scheduled for the July 2023 board meeting. Hart asks if moving this would delay staff from getting their increase. Sanchez replies yes. Walker asks to discuss this policy. Plowhead joins in by adding that the Admin Committee discussed this in detail. Plowhead noted that staff performance evaluations are conducted soon after their annual hire date, because Sanchez just started last April, she was unable to conduct reviews because she had not yet worked with staff enough to conduct a proper and meaningful review. Sanchez was able to get all the evaluations that had been stacking up since July 2022, completed this past March and because we were late in conducting the reviews, she is requesting that step increases are retro paid to their annual hire date. Directors continued to discuss the step increases and performance evaluation details. Budeau adds that he would like some clarification regarding past step increases and how they were paid. He remembers that in the past they went back to one date for retro pay. Discussion ensued regarding as to why Sanchez was requesting to retro pay to their anniversary of hire date. Sanchez explained that the evaluation are conducted soon after their evaluations and any step increases should be started on their annual hire date. Sanchez adds that for pay equity we would retro pay to hire date not to one date. Discussion continued regarding how to conduct the retro pay.

Action: Walker moves to **postpone the decision on step increases for staff**, 2nd by Koch. Discussion continued regarding retro pay and why we were moving the proposal to the next meeting. Olson suggests we have the lawyer review for legal accuracy. Sanchez explains again why she has proposed retro pay to hire date. Koch asked for more time to debate the proposal. Discussion continued regarding the different scenarios of when step increases apply. Plowhead states we should think of this as an employee, and you were hoping to get a step increase at your

evaluation, but if it does not happen, how would you feel? Plowhead experiences video connection issues and drops off. It was noted that in the proposal that one of the dates for retro pay was incorrect. This helped clarify pay equity. Olson states there is a motion. Vote of yes postponed, vote of no means we keep discussing. MOTION Declined (Aye-1 (Walker), Opposed-4 Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau).

Olson continued discussion regarding the step increases. Budeau shares he feels if the retro pay dates are now correct, he feels it is fairer and changes his perspective.

Action: Hart motioned for the Board to **approve the recommendations of the District Manager's Proposed Step Increases as amended** 2nd by Budeau. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-4 (Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau), Opposed-0, Abstain-1 (Walker)).

Hart adds that the evaluation criteria is a good outline for review. Olson says the manager chooses the format.

Olson adds that he and Budeau completed Sanchez's review and the review will be added to the next Board Meeting agenda. Olson adds that the Board has yet to approve Sanchez as a fulltime regular employee. He recommends that they add it to this agenda item or wait until the next Board meeting.

Action: Olson motioned for the Board to **make Sanchez a permanent position as the District Manager** 2nd by Hart. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 (Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau), Opposed-0).

Olson adds that the Board will conduct Sanchez's next annual review with Board and staff.

7. Personnel Policy Handbook-DRAFT

Sanchez wanted to take the time to discuss the review process for the Personnel Policy Handbook and how the Board would like to move forward and conduct the review. Sanchez reviewed the revision process and the work the Admin Committee did to recommend the guidebook to the Board for approval. Sanchez explained that she will be sending out the guidebook a month before the next meeting, along with a crosswalk that details significant changes. Directors took some time to discuss the progress of policy, particularly handguns and whether they can be carried by personnel. Sanchez suggest we can discuss this when we

get to that section of the Handbook. Walker wanted to discuss further, however Olson upheld that this will be discussed at the Handbook review.

8. Conservation Assistance Grants

a) Extension/ Cancellation Requests

Sanchez explained that June 30 is when many grant agreements terminate. Staff is working to close out grants.

Action: Budeau motioned for the Board to **approve grant extensions for the Wenona Leeder and Delany Family Inc, and Cancellation of grants for JKL Enterprises and City of Aurora, and one practice for Scenic Valley Farms 2nd** by Koch. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 (Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau), Opposed-0).

Discussion followed regarding extension requests after a grant agreement expires. Sanchez states that we will have to make the decision to cancel awards if they do not return communication to the District, extensions have been granted after an agreement expires, but only when the grantee is communicating their progress and delays with the District.

b) Grants Completed

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

Walker updates the Board regarding the ADA entrance. The gas company came out and it could cost \$5,000 to move it but then we are required to update the system to current standards, which could cost another \$5,000. Cost could exceed \$10,000 so we decided to work around the meter.

Walker states that he wants to state for the record his personal policy "I Will vote 'no' on any vote that provides benefits to any employees, associate directors, voting board members, or their relatives as defined by ORS 244. I will vote 'no' if the District Manager does not state that the grantee is not one of the forementioned.

Olson confirms that this will be in the minutes as stated.

Olson would like to move the July 5, 2023, meeting to July 12, 2023, to avoid the holiday. The board unanimously agreed to move the meeting to July 12.

Sanchez shared an email that Mr. Blackman, a CAG grantee, expressed to Ortiz what a great job Ortiz and the planners did.

Adjourn: Chair Olson adjourned the meeting at 8:17 PM



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