



**Marion Soil and Water Conservation District (MSWCD)
Board of Directors July 12, 2023, Meeting Minutes**

6:37 PM to 10:06 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	Andrea Kreiner
Zone 1-Vacant	Vacant	Leland Hardy
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
Cesar Zamora		Jason Marshall
Sarah Hamilton		Ray Temple
		Stephanie Hazen

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: 6:37 PM

- Bachelor, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- Marshall, Pudding River Watershed Council and MSWCD SkillsBridge Volunteer Coordinator

B. Announcements - None

C. Agenda Additions or Changes

- Hart shares that the European Union has put a soil health proposal together and remarks it is interesting. Olson suggests that Hart send via email to Directors.
- Walker requested time at the end of the meeting for discussion.

1. Public Comment

Temple (Marion County resident) explains he sits on the policy advisory committee for Willamette Wildlife Mitigation Program (WWMP)-Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW)-Settlement with US Environmental

Protection Agency (EPA). Temple begins by handing out a flyer about the WWMP. Temple explains it has been difficult to place parcels in Marion County to be protected through the mitigation program. There is a lot of latent interest to enroll. The WWMP has a goal of 16,080 acres of protected habitat by 2025. WWMP has enrolled around 14,000 acres and will be able to achieve the goal this year (2023) with funds remaining. Temple explains that the way it works is that a sponsor submits their parcel to the WWMP. The technical review team reviews the technical merit of the parcel and the policy review votes on the acquisition. Willing sellers (and there are many), but not a lot of sponsors in this area. A seller is a landowner wanting to cash out or see their property managed in perpetuity as habitat. Sponsors are typically land trusts, treaty tribes, NGOs, or other mixed group that ends up holding the easements which are funded by EPA. Sponsors hold the property with a requirement to do restoration and the WWMP whole purpose is to acquire property that needs to be restored.

Temple continues by asking the MSWCD to consider being a sponsor. Budeau asks if there are funds set aside for operation and maintenance. Temple replies yes. Olson asks Sanchez to do more research regarding easements and report to the Board.

Kreiner begins by introducing herself as the new OACD Executive Director. Started in May 2023, moved from Delaware (2019), where she worked as the Governor's policy advisor on agriculture, environment, and energy; consultant working with USDA division of soil and water conservation and worked with SWCDs for many years. She goes on to say that she has started by reaching out to Oregon's SWCDs. Kreiner adds that she is finalizing the OACD Annual Conference Agenda scheduled for October 16, 2023. Kreiner states that her focus is member services, goal is to get strong and happy SWCDs. She is continuing the monthly OACD Newsletter, legislative advocacy, and collective voice during rule making. OACD Board elections are coming up.

Marshall begins with Pudding River Watershed Council (PRWC) updates. Kurt Berning is now working with Anna Rankin as a full-time Director. The Scotts Mill Dam removal project is up front; Berning created a public outreach document, and we are waiting for Marion County to support the project. The PRWC recently received from Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) capacity funding for the 2023-2025 biennium. On July 29, 2023, at Coolidge McClain Park, PRWC will have a get together to recognize a council director who is retiring, all are invited.

2. District Snapshot

Sanchez introduces Cesar Zamora, the District's recently hired Conservation Planner-Soils and Croplands. Zamora shares his background as an Oregon State University student, completing his master's degree in Soil Health/Science. Microbial Community Dynamics. Lived in Oregon for the last nine years, first as an undergraduate in microbiology. The Directors all voiced their welcome to Zamora.

Below are highlights from the past month:

- First Friday: Alternatives for Keeping Food & Yard Waste out of Landfills
- Oregon Garden class on weed ID and control
- Oak & Prairie Tour-30 attendees
- Outdoor Education-Water Quality Keiser Rapids Park
- Native Plants for Pollinators Homeschool Day - Ankeny Hill Nature Center
- Marion County Fair-Manure Managed Campaign
- Completed spring PSP Sampling, Summer sampling starts next week
- The team completed multiple site visits for technical assistance.
- Survey bumblebees at Heritage Seedlings
- Staff attended Cover Crop Field Day- Clackamas SWCD
- Emerald Ash Borer Conference
- Burned Area Tour for staff and partners
- Conducted in-person staff meeting
- Began an Organizational Self-Assessment related to racial equity.
- Team completed assigned trainings related to defensive driving, bullying at work, browser safety, wildfire smoke, and emergency preparedness
- Putting the final touches on the District's Policy Binder
- Reviewing FY 22-23 and preparing for the audit.
- Conservation Assistance Grants (CAG) Deadline was June 22: 9 applicants
- Review committee meets July 17 at 1PM

3. Treasurers Report May 2023

Budeau began by stating that we have the Treasurers Reports from May 2023; eleventh month in the fiscal year. Revenues slowed down, expected, because tax payments happen in November and we have reached 99.1 percent of expected tax revenue. Dividends were corrected to 423.7 percent from the report in the packet. Budeau discussed that dividends are higher than expected because interest has increased. Hart asked why we have money in the Local Investment Government Pool (LGIP). Sanchez explained that tax monies are distributed to the LGIP to secure higher interest rates. Walker notes that the monthly rent payments cover some portion of facility costs. Directors discussed further the tracking of finances.

Action: Koch motioned for the Board to **approve the May 2023 Treasurers Report, 2nd** by Walker. 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 saying they are finishing up contracting. Obligation date of July 28, 2023, working on extra funds' (e.g., cropland drought funds). NRCS has asked for \$550,000 for irrigation projects. Bachelor adds they are thankful for technical engineers such as LeLand Hardy who have been able to assist while NRCS has limited engineering technical assistance. Completed interviews for Wallace's prior position; hopefully in a couple months to fill. Yamhill Soil and Water Conservation District on August 25, 2023, hosts the Oregon Hazelnut Organic workshop in Stayton.

5. Personnel Policy Manual 2023 (PPM).

Directors began by reviewing Chapter 1 of the Draft PPM 2023. Sanchez corrected the title from handbook to manual to follow the previous title. Walker started the discussion and wanted to make sure that policy is clear regarding off-duty conduct. Sanchez explained that an off-duty conduct policy is needed and the lawyer added it. Negative off duty conduct can reflect the District and have potential to harm. Directors continued to discuss whether off duty conduct can be managed. Hart goes onto discuss the harassment complaint process versus conflict grievance and who an employee can report their complaint to. Sanchez explains that the harassment complaints are handled differently than grievance complaints. Directors continued to discuss the draft policy with added edits and suggestions to include ORS 244 language. Hart asked if Board Members are included in the policy, Sanchez replied yes, this manual applies to Board members, staff, and volunteers. Directors continued to debate policy-related examples, when the manual applies, and how staff would apply these policies to their work.

Time limited discussion and the PPM was continued to the August 2, 2023, Board Meeting. Budeau recommends that Directors with a lot of questions should contact Sanchez over the next month to address their concerns regarding edits and content.

6. Insurance Renewals

Sanchez starts by sharing that health care premiums went down by 40 percent last year and this year it was increased by 19.33 percent. Dental coverage rates remained the same, and life insurance is also on a rate hold. Directors discussed the different plan options. Sanchez asks that the Board authorize the insurance renewal as displayed. Directors discussed the cost of insurance and how we

should look for better deals in the future. Olson adds that we could but it is best to remain with the current insurance until better options are available. Plowhead adds that it can be good to shop around but you could lose your provider.

Action: Olson motioned for the Board to **approve all the current insurance for another year 2nd** by Hart. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-4: Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau; Opposed-1: Walker).

7. Oregon Association of Conservation Districts (OACD) Dues

Olson begins by stating the suggested OACD dues at \$4,324.51. Sanchez states that the due's amount is based on FY 22-23 income. Walker voices his concern related to how OACD dues are figured and that it is not fair for smaller districts. Directors discussed with Kreiner (attending) the possibility of memberships dues being collected more equitably. Kreiner replies that it is a goal of OACD. Hart returns to the District's dues discussion, stating this amount seems good.

Action: Walker motioned for the Board **to pay to OACD \$4,324.51 for this coming year 2nd** by Hart. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5: Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau; Opposed-0).

Kreiner requests that we put a memo or letter together raising the concern regarding the cap on dues. Walker wants to ensure a Board vote is not necessary to relate this concern. Olson says 'no', we all agree.

8. Education and Outreach Committee

- a) CLEAR Grant**
- b) Salmon watch Process**

Action: Hart motioned for the Board **to adopt the Salmon Watch streamlined process that was piloted last year to administer up to \$8,000 per year for transportation and substitute funding requests for schools attending Salmon Watch and approve the Oregon State Extension Service 4-H Outdoor Explorers Summer Program CLEAR Grant funding request in the amount of \$2,000, 2nd** by Budeau. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5: Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau; Opposed-0).

9. Natural Resource Committee

- a) Cover Crop Program (CCP)**

Action: Hart motioned for the Board to **accept the Natural Resources recommendation to make the Cover Crop Program permanent beginning FY 23-**

24, 2nd by Budeau. Discussion, Walker asks if the program is set up for seed purchase, Sanchez replies yes. Walker asks if these were first time users of cover crops and does the District want to cover this practice for them forever? Hart replies, that if the District grants a landowner to put in a cover crop annually, maybe neighbors will begin doing so as well, probably buying their own seed; Hart adds that this is not a policy concern for her. Koch asks if there is a limit to how many years a landowner can apply? Hardy adds that the history of the cover crop discussion resulted in the determination to have a two-year pilot program. Discussion continued regarding the use of cover crops and equipment issues in orchards. Walker adds whether there is a need for progressively applying cover crops year to year and the impacts on soil health. Walker suggests that a cooperator only be awarded every other year or every three years, specifically for soil health. Koch adds that she would like to discuss putting a cap of awarding three years of cover crop seeds for the same parcel and then they would have to take a break and could come back again if they really needed. Debate continued regarding the use of cover crops over time. Olson brought up the District's limitation policy and that the CCP would fall under these awarding limitations. Directors debated soil health benefits. MOTION PASSED (Aye-4: Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau; Opposed-1: Walker).

b) Annual Workplan for ODA

Sanchez states that this annual workplan is similar to last year's workplan. Sanchez states we are conducting our Strategic Planning for 2024-2029. She adds that Oregon Department Agriculture requires the workplan and that next year's annual workplan will be updated to reflect the new Strategic Plan.

Action: Koch motioned for the Board **to approve the FY 2023-2024 Annual Workplan**, 2nd by Budeau. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5: Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau; Opposed-0).

c) Proposed Partner Grant Framework

Sanchez displays a graph and table that compares the different grant programs and that Budeau had noted some errors, which are now corrected. Koch reminded everyone that the Directors were invited to the Natural Resource Committee (NRC) to discuss the proposed Partner Grant Program; Sanchez adds that she also sent out the recording of the meeting to the Directors in case someone missed it. Hart points out the payment recommendations and added that the NRC suggested the alternative for education, outreach, technical assistance, and restoration grants. Walker brings up the qualifications of 501(c)(3) under fiscal sponsorship and does not approve of this criterium. Sanchez explains that the fiscal sponsorship was added to address Walker's concerns regarding eligibility

and preventing just anyone claiming they are a non-profit to be eligible for District grants. Directors discussed further with Budeau adding he too was concerned and Hart clarified this would help with vetting applicants and that the NRC discussed this in detail; recommending the listed criteria. Walker states he understands but his emphasis is on the track record of an institution; are they active and committed? Conversation continued related to eligibility and track record concerns of an entity. Walker brings up another point related to whether these funds can be spent outside of the District boundary and deliberated that there could be instances where these funds could benefit the District, even if they are spent outside of the boundary. Olson adds that this is a pilot program and an entity can always contact the District for clarity.

Action: Budeau motioned for the Board **to approve the Partner Grants Program proposal with the amendment that we recommend the payment alternative proposal for education, outreach, technical assistance, and restoration as outlined on page 10 of 12, 2nd** by Hart. Discussion, Sanchez expresses we did not discuss the match decision. Walker says he wants it to be on the record his concerns regarding the program and that he did not have proper opportunity to review the proposal. Koch states that the Board was provided with ample opportunity to review, with invitation to join the NRC meeting, packet information, and a video of the NRC meeting discussion related to the Partner Grant program all prior to tonight's meeting. Sanchez returned to the match discussion of twenty-five percent of the grant award and how it is different from other District grant programs where there is a fifty percent match of the project total. Examples were discussed. Walker brings up award cycles for the Partner Grant and states he would prefer no deadlines. Deadlines were considered and having two application due dates for the pilot process was settled on. Committee review also came up talking about how the existing committees would be the review "committee" and that the NRC decided to not create another "review committee". Walker suggests strong criteria for evaluation. Sanchez ensures that the criteria is strong and displays the criteria set up in the proposal. Discussion continued between the directors related to criteria and the internal process for review. MOTION PASSED (Aye-4: Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau; Opposed-1: Walker).

Koch concludes the agenda item by thanking Walker for his original idea which resulted in this program.

10. Conservation Assistance Grants

a) Extension/ Cancellation Requests

Action: Olson motioned for the Board to **approve all grant extensions and cancellations**, 2nd by Walker. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5: Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau; Opposed-0).

b) Grants Completed

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

11. State Weed Board Letter of Support

Action: Hart motioned for the Board to **approve the letter of support for the State Weed Board**, 2nd by Walker. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5: Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau; Opposed-0).

12. Mid-Willamette Council of Governments Board Director Position

Chair moved agenda item to August 2, 2023, Board meeting.

Olson would like to move the land trusts discussion to the next meeting. Budeau would like more information. Budeau would like to understand the operation and maintenance.

Koch asked why Board minutes were not on the agenda? Sanchez explained she was behind and would have the June and August minutes at the September Board meeting.

13. District Manager Review

a) Executive Session- ORS 192.660 (8) to discuss the District Manager Review.

Olson moved the meeting into Executive Session at 9:45 PM under ORS 192.660 (8). Executive Session minutes on file with District Manager.

b) District Manager Proposed Step Increase

Out of Executive Session and back into regular session of the Board at 10:05 PM.

Action: Budeau motioned for the Board to **approve a one step-increase for Brenda Sanchez to be retro paid to anniversary of hire date of April 4, 2023**. 2nd by Walker. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5: Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau; Opposed-0).

Adjourn: Chair Olson adjourned the meeting at 10:06 PM



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