



Marion Soil and Water Conservation District (MSWCD)
Board of Directors August 2, 2023, Meeting Minutes
6:30 PM to 8:51 PM
Facilitator: Vice-Chair Koch
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	Mark Fields
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
Kassi Roosth		Marilyn Newman
Linda Lovett		Robert Newman
Chelsea Blank		
Heath Kierstead		
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. Koch Call to Order: 6:30 PM

- Bachelor, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- Newman, Burnt River SWCD Director and Marion County landowner, with his wife.

B. Announcements - None

C. Agenda Additions or Changes

- Walker requested time at the end of the meeting to discuss District grant programs, training and travel for Directors, and Board meetings.
- Authorize to switch the QuickBooks company file from Amy Boyd to Brenda Sanchez
- Marion SWCD Policy Binder

1. Public Comment

Newman begins by discussing that he had a small farm in Mehema sharing that he has had some issues regarding his right to farm with neighboring properties and wanted to know if we could provide him with resources. Sanchez shares that he could contact Jim Johnson at Oregon Department of Agriculture. Olson adds that he should also contact the county commissioners to ask questions as well. Sanchez provided contact info for Newman.

2. District Snapshot

Sanchez states that we have two staff (Lovett and Roosth) here to highlight their work.

Lovett begins by sharing that we have been working on establishing procedures and balancing responsibilities. Lovett has been working on streamlining account payables, initiating electronic payments where paper checks are still being sent. Lovett is writing operational procedures to add to what Sanchez has completed for continuity in procedures and staff-duty changes. Lovett explained how she assisted Sanchez with the budget and getting QuickBooks in order as we learn the software and search for areas where corrections are needed. Lovett goes onto say that she is prepping for the financial audit preparations. She ends by saying that she enjoys working with the team on the many items they work on.

Roosth shares that she has been very busy and her first six months went by swiftly. Working on urban projects. Calls have related to soil health and invasive plants. Participating in education and outreach events and the Education/Outreach Committee. Roosth just completed her first solo event on wildfire preparedness and resiliency. Roosth shared the blog she wrote for the District website as a follow up to the wildfire event. Roosth finished with an update on the Backyard Habitat Improvement Program sharing that she has been working on the workplan and framework for the program.

3. Treasurers Report June 2023

Sanchez begins by stating that she sent out the Draft June 2023 Treasurers Report and requests the Board wait to approve because she was still working on bookkeeping edits, which may change these numbers a little bit. Sanchez wanted to get the draft report out so that Directors can see where we are at the end of the fiscal year. Sanchez says she will bring back the June Report in the next meeting for approval. Budeau adds that he has a suggestion to improve the formatting for ease in reading. Sanchez replies she is working on a new excel sheet for the new fiscal year and will take care of the formatting concerns.

4. June 7, 2023, Draft Board Meeting Minutes

Budeau explained that he reviewed Draft 1. Sanchez excepted Budeau's edits to create Draft 2. There were no other edits or changes to Draft 1.

Action: Olson motioned for the Board to **approve the June 7, 2023, Board Meeting minutes Draft 2, 2nd** by Hart. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5: Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau; Opposed-0).

5. United States Department Agriculture Services Report

Bachelor began by saying he really enjoyed the District's website blog on Director Budeau and acknowledged Heath Keirstead's (staff) website work is great. They are still writing Conservation Incentive Contracts (Drought Program) contracts. They put in for another \$159,000 for the Mid-Willamette CIS; 2024 looks to have a bit more contracts. We have new people who have never had a CIS; word is getting out. They have developed new signage for entering conservation planning zones as outreach. He is also seeking an additional year for AFO/CAFO and CIS Irrigation for another year. Bachelor would like to work with dairies before he retires. Discussion regarding dairies and the loss of dairies ensued.

6. Personnel Policy Manual 2023 (PPM).

Sanchez displays "exhibit A - PPM". Walker began with his concern related to staff and negative comments to or about other District personnel. Walker requests language that clearly notifies District personnel not to badmouth the District or other personnel. He feels it would go along way with Board, volunteer, and staff relations.

Hart stated the resolution, **Whereas, The Marion Soil and Water Conservation District (Marion SWCD) requires the Board of Directors to create personnel rules by resolution; and whereas the Marion SWCD adopted a Personnel Policy Manual in 2011 and has amended the personnel policies; and whereas Oregon Statute related to employment practices have dramatically changed over the last twelve years; and whereas the Personnel Policy Manual sets forth the policies, practices, and procedures that are followed by the Marion SWCD in the administration of its personnel program, and authorized by the Board of Directors; therefore, be it resolved, The Marion SWCD Board of Directors Resolves as follows:**

- **Section 1 Adopt the Marion SWCD Personnel Policy Manual (exhibit A)**
- **Section 2. Staff is directed to codify this policy according to past administrative practices**
- **Section 3. Prior versions of the Personnel Policy Manual are repealed.**

2nd by Olson. Walker asks if the resolution reflects the changes. Budeau notes that the resolution states “appealed” but it should be “repealed”. Sanchez corrected. Hart asks if we could include Walker’s language. Sanchez says she will add Walker’s language. Koch placed the discussion on hold until Sanchez can add the language. PPM will come back for discussion later in the meeting. Meeting returned to the PPM. Sanchez displayed where she added the language regarding badmouthing the District/personnel. Walker reviewed and agreed to the language.

Resolution PASSED (Aye-5: Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau; Opposed-0).

7. Education and Outreach Committee

a) Stan Vistica Scholarship

Keirstead begins by saying that there is more money in the budget for the Stan Vistica Scholarship this fiscal year; last year there was \$4,500 and this year \$6,500, after admin fees allows \$5,700 to be allocated for scholarships this year. The Education and Outreach Committee met and discussed several ways to distribute the funds. The committee recommends that for the 2023-24 school year, Stan Vistica Scholarships in the amounts of \$2,000 for one first-year applicant, \$2,000 for one second year applicant, and \$1,500 for one third-year applicant. Walker asks if the checks are sent to the school, and then to the student? Keirstead replied we send the money to the Office of Student Access and Completion and they provide the student with the funds. Hart asked if we have at least one first-year applicant, Keirstead replies yes, and Budeau adds that this will be the first time we award a third-year student.

Action: Olson motioned for the Board to **authorize for the 2023-24 school year, Stan Vistica Scholarships in the amounts of \$2,000 for one first-year applicant, \$2,000 for one second year applicant, and \$1,500 for one third-year applicant.**, 2nd by Hart. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5: Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau; Opposed-0).

Hart adds that it was good work at the native plant sale to get more money for the scholarship fund.

8. Conservation Assistance Grants

a) Summer Cycle CAG Applications

Ortiz begins by saying that there was eight applications covering twelve practices. Funding requested totaled \$62,260; matched over half one million dollars. Projects spanned eight watersheds and 8.56 acres of conservation on the ground

which really covers a much larger area; two projects are composting facilities and acreage is applied to the area of the facility. Ortiz went on to share that we are now including the watershed councils on the review. Ortiz displays the table with the grants recommended for approval. Ortiz explained there were some projects where the review committee requested some changes. Ortiz says that the planners have worked with applicants on those requests. Walker shares his concerns regarding Highway Fuels project and is concerned with the small acreage they work with, no grinder on the project, and "compost tea". Walker states he is concerned that composting is new for the District, and that the District would benefit from an independent technical review of the project. Walker is also concerned about smells and the District awarding "poor projects". Ortiz replies that we do ask if they have a permit and large compost fac are required to have a permit. This project has a permit in place and are working with an engineering firm to complete the project. Ortiz adds that we have awarded around ten composting facilities (aerated and non-aerated) and if you include manure storage facility would raise that number to around 50. Always required to use engineered plans and to follow the composting plan to ensure there is no runoff from the facility. Directors discussed the concerns.

Budeau raised the concern regarding forest management and project CAG 20-24-006. Budeau remembers that the committee asked the landowner to either work with a forest planner or complete a forest plan. Budeau expresses he did not understand, from the application, the details, and conditions on the ground. Budeau expresses he would not vote on this project because of his concerns. Directors discussed the concern. Sanchez added that Blank had discussed with landowner, it is not clear as to why we are requiring this applicant to have a plan over other applicants. Blank adds that she did speak with the landowner and he has had a forester come out and plan the project with him. The landowners stated that the forester agreed with the work the landowner did in phase 1 of the project. The forester has referred the landowner to another forest planner and he plans on connecting with the new planner to further discuss the work. Hart asked Blank if she felt phase one was completed correctly. Blank replies yes, work looks good and new plantings are taking. Walker asks for clarification on the approval process. Budeau adds that he was not aware of the changes to the project. Ortiz says she added the emails to the board packet. However, the board packet did not include the recent conversation between Blank and the applicant previously referenced. Budeau, although it is not in writing, is more comfortable with Blank's update. Discussion continued regarding forest planning and the time it takes to complete.

Olson reminds that the Directors should declare a conflict of interest regarding any of the applicants before voting. No conflicts were noted.

Action: Olson motioned for the Board to **approve Conservation Assistance Grant awards for June of 2023 for projects 002, 003, 004, 005, 007, 008, and 009**, 2nd by Hart. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5: Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau; Opposed-0).

Directors discussed future requirements for forest management plans for these types of projects. Olson suggests that the Natural Resource Committee should discuss and provide directions regarding forest management and the need for management plans so that this issue does not come about again. Budeau adds he is somewhat relieved and has more confidence in the project since learning that the landowner has walked the two acres and did some planning with a forester. Hart agrees with Olson to let the Natural Resource Committee work on the policy.

Action: Olson motioned for the Board to **approve Conservation Assistance Grant awards for June of 2023 for project 006 with stipulations**, 2nd by Hart. Budeau confirms that the stipulation for 006 is to provide evidence that they consulted with a forester. MOTION PASSED (Aye-4: Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau; Opposed-0; Abstain-1: Walker).

Budeau pointed out another project that Blank had in the this round of applications and appreciated the work that the landowner went into. Koch asks should we consider a change in policy? Hart adds that some landowners are better at applications than others.

b) Grants Completed

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

9. New Employees Introductory Period Completed

Sanchez presented Blank and Roosth for approval for regular full-time status and a one step pay increase based on their six-month evaluation. Sanchez discussed that both new employees were exemplary and have already contributed greatly to the district in their short amount of time. Sanchez explained that she conducted their performance evaluation and both performed exceeding expectations and that we are lucky they chose to work for the District.

Action: Olson motioned for the Board to **approve Chelsea Blank and Kassi Roosth as regular full-time employees**, 2nd by Hart. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5: Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau; Opposed-0).

Action: Hart motioned for the Board to **approve a one-step pay raise; retro paid to their six-month after hire date for Chelsea Blank at 6/12/23 and Kassi Roosth at 7/17/23.**, 2nd by Budeau. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5: Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau; Opposed-0).

10. Mid-Willamette Council of Governments (MWCOG) Board Director Position

Sanchez explained that the MWCOG has in their by-laws a Director seat for the Marion SWCD. Terry Hsu (previous Director) held that position until he left. Sanchez was asked to attend two or three meetings and report back to the District about the business of the MWCOG and commitment for the District. Sanchez went on to say she attended three meetings and MWCOG has an eleven-million-dollar annual budget and they provide services to local governments for anything from map making to background checks. The MWCOG Board is comprised of local leaders. They meet once a quarter. Sanchez states that the position could be filled by our chair or the chair could delegate others to attend. Walker says he would do it if no one else would like to. Olson states he would like the position.

Action: Hart motioned for the Board to **approve Darin Olson to take the Director seat on the MWCOG Board of Directors.** 2nd by Koch. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5: Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau; Opposed-0).

11. Authorize Purchase of Outdoor Storage Shed

Sanchez explained that she could authorize the shed purchase but wanted to make sure the Directors were OK with purchasing a shed for around \$4,000. Sanchez displays a photo of the shed she would like to purchase for equipment storage. Koch states that Sanchez is already authorized, so go ahead and purchase.

12. Possible site for Strategic Planning Meetings and Dates

Sanchez states that we have our Strategic Planning coming up and that she is looking at the Chemeketa Ag Complex. Directors agreed that place would be fine. Olson says to send out a Doodle Poll to set up the dates.

Walker asks if the forest management plans would be sent to Natural Resources Committee for discussion? Plans are important and should work with projects. Walker would like to make sure that the committee takes this subject up for discussion.

Walker brings up the SDAO trainings and asked about Director policy regarding training. Sanchez explained that he could be reimbursed for mileage. Walker

asked about the Oregon Association of Conservation District conference in Redmond and wanted to know who else is going. Olson explains our travel policy is behind and needs revision. Olson explains that the District will pay for registration, mileage, per diem, and lodging. Work with Sanchez to get reimbursed or to register for conferences. Directors continued to discuss travel policy and when a Director needs Board approval to advocate for the Board.

Walker wants the Board to operate by Roberts Rules of Order and would like clarification on this. Olson replies that the Board has used a more casual version of Robert's Rules, the Board could decide to take on a more formal Robert's Rules. Directors discussed further Robert's Rules and which ones are more applicable. Sanchez explained that when she put the committee procedures together, she crafted a Roberts Rule table, maybe the Board could agree to follow this simplified table of rules. Sanchez will submit it in the next Board packet and place it on the next meeting agenda for the Board to consider.

Walker changes the subject and brings up committee structure. Walker states that he is not comfortable with the new committee structure and that agenda items should be discussed and debated at the Board meeting. Hart asked Walker to be more specific. Hart shares that there is substantive discussion in the committees and that the topic comes to the Board in a balance, and yes, the Board is also a place for debate, discussion, and decisions but there is a balance. Hart declared that having staff in the discussion is beneficial. Walker responds that the board does the critical thinking. Olson added in the history of why there are committees; Directors discussed their opinion regarding committees.

13. Authorize to switch the QuickBooks Company File from Boyd to Sanchez

Sanchez explains that she is ready to take on the cumbersome task of switching the QuickBooks company file from Amy Boyd to Sanchez. Sanchez states that she was advised to have the Board formally approve the switch, to further back our effort to change over the principal user.

Action: Walker motioned for the Board to **authorize Sanchez to transfer over the QuickBooks company file from Amy Boyd to Brenda Sanchez.** 2nd by Hart. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5: Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau; Opposed-0).

14. Marion SWCD Policy Binder Volume 1

Sanchez next handed out the new Policy Binder Volume 1, while explaining that Walker prompted this effort when he wanted a summary of each of our policies. The Binder includes all the District's policies organized by topic and transcribed

into this binder for ease in access and query. Sanchez walked the Directors through the Binder, showing how each policy is summarized in the table of contents and then each policy is inserted. Sanchez is also sending a digital copy of the Binder in their e-mail. Sanchez adds that the Binder will be updated as policies are revised or added. Plowhead adds that this is one of the most impressive documents she has ever seen. Sanchez adds that we have all the original policies on file, with signatures.

Adjourn: Vice-Chair Koch adjourned the meeting at 8:51 PM



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