



**Marion Soil and Water Conservation District (MSWCD)
Board of Directors October 4, 2023, Meeting Minutes**

6:40 PM to 8:26 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	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		Kurt Berning
Sarah Hamilton		Brandin Hilbrant
Drew Donahue		Kathy Patterson
Cesar Zamora		
Heath Keirstead		

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: 6:40 PM

- Berning, Pudding River Watershed Council (PRWC)
- Hilbrant, North Santiam Watershed Council (NSWC)
- USDA Conservation Plan Review Policy

B. Announcements - None

C. Agenda Additions or Changes

- North Santiam Letter of Support

1. Public Comment

Koch wanted some time to address the concerns she had with last month's Board meeting conduct and would like to read into the record. As stated, "I would like to read a statement into the minutes. Last month at our September 6th meeting we engaged in several discussions that became heated. While these types of discussions can often lead to healthy debates and the opening of new perspectives, it's important for us to remember to always maintain a level of

professionalism and mutual respect in our interactions with one another. As board members, our conduct should always be in alignment with our organization, maintain a positive attitude and remain committed to serving our community to the best of our ability.

During last month's meeting there were three CREP projects to be approved. I was surprised to see my CREP project which is vetted by the USDA and it is not part of the Marion SWCD programs. Our approval of these projects are a checks and balance of an antiquated program. What was even more shocking was one of our board members, Scott Walker, voted against my project, not based on the project's merit but rather out of personal anger on another issue. I was attacked personally instead of the project being evaluated objectively. It is disappointing to see such unprofessional behavior from a leader and to let personal feelings interfere with our responsibility to move forward with important projects. This project had already required many hours of planning and it was disrespectful and rude to not even have a discussion as to why it was not deserving of approval.

I am submitting this grievance because as a board member, we have a responsibility to uphold a code of conduct. We are responsible for the funds spent, which come from public monies, and we must ensure that our decisions are based on the merits of the programs, rather than personal interests or emotions. The act of voting against the standards of professionalism that we should uphold in our position. It is essential that this type of behavior is not tolerated and we must ensure that our Board functions with integrity, fairness, and responsibility,
Sincerely Rochelle Koch-Director Zone 5

Walker responds by saying it was a clear violation of the District policy not having a copy of the request two days before the meeting. Walker said, "I did not read the request and I have a personal policy for which I have stated again and again. Which is, I do not believe Board members should receive financial benefit from the District." Walker adds that he respects Koch, but his personal policy is important to him. Walker says he spoke with Les Bachelor at NRCS and has since learned more about the role of the Board regarding these project approvals and would like to review the District's policy regarding those responsibilities.

Berning states that he wanted to say hello and thank you from PRWC. He has been working with Heath Keirstead (staff) on a blog regarding a dam renewal project. He is currently conducting outreach to get county commissioners to support the dam removal project. Link to Scotts Mills Dam Videos Series https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLJwn25D1-Z0yeR_A8WyVel3LBrNcgFRG7

2. District Snapshot – Staff Presentations

Hamilton begins with a presentation describing the work she has been doing regarding the native and invasive plant programs. Highlighting her work regarding program workplans, native plant autumn bulb sale, Pollinator Symposium (10/21/23), Aquatic Invasive Species Summit (10/24/23), Geographic Information System (GIS) and ArcMap training and acquisition of new applications and working with Kassi Roosth (staff) to complete a landscape design for our office site. Hamilton is completing a weed list that prioritizes weeds on a landscape level in her work with the Mid-Willamette Cooperative Weed Management Area.

Zamora begins by highlighting his work on the Strategic Implementation Area monitoring project stating he is ready to conduct the seasonal sampling starting this October. Zamora is taking water samples from three sites on Howell Prairie Creek to measure total suspended solids (TSS) and looking at the sediment amounts entering the creek and using TSS to assist with mercury measurements regarding the state's Total Maximum Daily Load for mercury, which is bound to sediment particles. Zamora shares that he has completed the summer Pesticide Stewardship Partnership sampling. Data from the previous season show pesticides below the Aurora site, this will be addressed in the first Strategic Planning meeting with partners to decide on outreach strategies.

3. Treasurers Report August 2023

Budeau starts by stating that the August Treasurer's Report looks good (and is pleased with the formatting changes). Sanchez adds we finally received some grant funds in August. Discussion centered around Oregon Department of Agriculture grants and where the funds come from.

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

4. September 6, 2023, Draft Board Meeting Minutes

Budeau explained that he reviewed both Drafts. Sanchez could not display Budeau's edited version. Walker stated he did not think the September Board minutes captured his thought accurately regarding committees. Walker wants to add that the Board makes decisions not the committees and that the minutes do not express this. Sanchez added the language to the minutes. Other than Walkers amended language and Budeau's minor edits, there were no other edits or changes to Draft 1.

Action: Hart motioned for the Board to **approve the September 6, 2023, Board Meeting minutes, 2nd** by Budeau. Discussion. Budeau states he added edits and comments and Draft 2 has those included. Walker states he has some edits and would like to work with the District Manager to have included. Olson tabled motion until the next Board Meeting. **Motion tabled.**

New Agenda Item: United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Conservation Plan Policy

Discussion began regarding the District's United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Conservation Plan Policy. Walker would like it reviewed. Olson said he would like it to go to the Admin Committee. Hart reminds that individuals can attend committee meetings as needed/interested to engage in a more detailed discussion regarding Board agenda items.

Donahue added that this is a Farm Services Agency program and not a Natural Resources Conservation Services Program (CREP). Donahue stressed that any questions regarding Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program be directed toward her or the CREP tech. It is in FSA policy that the District must sign the Marion plans. The District Manager can sign the plans in lieu of the Board. The manager can review and sign off on plans. Walker asks if this policy is a state or national rule? Donahue responds that this is a state rule and is not sure if it is national. Olson states the Board would have to delegate the signing to the manager because it is a legal signature.

Action: Walker motioned for the Board to **reconsider the Whole Circle Farm plan 2nd** by Hart. Discussion; Hart states that it was unfortunate that the information regarding federal funds was a consideration and now knowing different a revote is justified. Budeau supports a revote because there was no opposition to the plan and it is held up because there is no signature. Koch abstains. Walker is requesting a revote because he did not understand. MOTION PASSED (Aye-4 (Walker, Olson, Hart, and Budeau), Opposed-0, Abstain-1 (Koch)).

Action: Walker motioned for the Board to **approve and sign the Whole Circle Farm CREP project plan, 2nd** by Hart. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-4: Walker, Olson, Hart, and Budeau; Opposed-0: Abstain-1: Koch). Koch asked Donahue how much time it takes to put a project together. Donahue replies that it takes considerable time and includes a lot of paperwork and planning, and many hours to complete and includes other staff work as well.

5. United States Department Agriculture Services Report

No report this month.

6. Elderberry Wisdom Farm Partner Support – Canceled due to internet issues. Re-scheduled for next Board meeting in November 2023.

7. Foundant Renewal & Authorization to Pay

Sanchez displayed the Foundant invoice for a two-year renewal and is requesting authorization to pay the renewal cost for the District's Grant program's online application software and allow Sanchez to sign the agreement.

Action: Walker motioned for the Board to **authorize Sanchez to sign the Foundant agreement and pay \$16,500**, Walker amends his motion **by adding that Sanchez can transfer funds from the Natural Resources budget to cover \$8,500 of the renewal cost**, 2nd by Budeau. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5: Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau; Opposed-0).

8. ADA Contract

Sanchez displays the selected contractor contract regarding the new ADA ramp. Sanchez explained that she followed the contracting process. Landing with Leupitz Contractors Inc. Sanchez vetted the company by contacting prior clients and received great feedback including that they were a quality company. The cost of the contract is \$43,550.

Action: Walker motioned for the Board to **authorize Sanchez to sign the \$43,550 contract from Leupitz Contractors Inc. for the ADA Entrance and to spend from the Building Reserve Funds consistent with the Building Reserve purpose**, 2nd by Koch. Discussion. Hart inquired about the lead testing and was concerned that we could encounter a larger expense if lead is found. Sanchez explained that the testing is automatic because the building was built before 1970. Sanchez also adds that the construction footprint only impacts the door frames around the current doors, therefore not expecting any lead constraints or added costs. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5: Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau); Opposed-0).

9. Strategic Planning Meeting & Consultation Proposal

Sanchez reviewed the Strategic Planning meeting agenda on October 10, 2023. Sanchez then displayed a proposal from Amy Stork Consulting. Stork has worked with other SWCDs and was forwarded by the Clackamas SWCD. She explains there are two sections of the proposal. We can hire Stork for pre-planning only or to conduct the entire planning process. Sanchez said she wanted the Board to

decide. Directors discussed the work she would complete and different aspects of Strategic Planning.

Action: Koch motioned for the Board to **hire Amy Stork Consulting at \$10,800 to conduct the Strategic Planning facilitation** 2nd by Hart. Discussion. Walker asked for some clarity regarding what we were hiring Stork for. Hart and Olson explained that the Board motion is for Phases 1 and 2 as proposed in the proposal. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5: Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau; Opposed-0).

10. Education Committee

a) CLEAR Grants (3)

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

Keirstead noted that we have expended almost all the allocated funds for the CLEAR grant program and the Board will need to consider what we would do for any other incoming CLEAR grants.

11. Conservation Assistance Grants

a) Grants Completed

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

12. Oregon Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) Application and Letter of Support

Sanchez explained that at the end of 2023 we will lose our current CREP technician. Yamhill and Marion SWCD is partnering to apply for a CREP tech through an OWEB grant.

Action: Walker motioned for the Board to **authorize a letter of support for the CREP technician OWEB application with \$3,500 of in-kind match**, 2nd by Budeau. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5: Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau; Opposed-0).

13. Schedule Annual Meeting

Sanchez request that the Board officially decide upon the annual meeting date.

Discussion regarding the venue, meeting details, and when to meet ensued. The Board would like the monthly board meeting held after the annual meeting.

Action: Budeau motioned for the Board to **schedule the fiscal year 22-23 Annual Meeting on February 7, 2024, 2nd** by Hart. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5: Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau; Opposed-0).

14. North Santiam Watershed Council Request for Letter of Support OWEB Grant: Postfire Resource Assessment and Prioritization Guide

Hilbrant reviewed the proposed project to conduct effective long-term ecosystem recovery; an inventory of the post disturbance landscape is needed. Partners of the North Santiam and local community stakeholders will identify the high priority actions needed to recover the ecosystem processes based on a post wildfire landscape assessment by the NSWC. Hilbrant only requests a small amount technical assistance from staff as a match.

Action: Hart motioned for the Board to **authorize a letter of support for the proposed funding by the North Santiam Watershed Council request for OWEB Postfire Resource Assessment and Prioritization Guide grant, 2nd** by Budeau. Discussion. Walker asked for clarification on how we decide to provide technical assistance MOTION PASSED (Aye-5: Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau; Opposed-0).

15. Oregon Association Conservation Districts Board Ballot – District Vote Needed

The board decided to move this agenda item to next month.

16. Marion SWCD Board of Directors Meeting Guidelines DRAFT

Directors discussed how the board would work with these guidelines. Walker would like to review the guidelines. Sanchez shared a copy of the current Board meeting policy that does outline board conduct. Olson asks that everyone review the guidelines and bring back any feedback to the next Board meeting.

Adjourn: Chair Olson adjourned the meeting at 8:26 PM



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