



**Marion Soil and Water Conservation District (MSWCD)
Board of Directors December 6, 2023, Meeting Minutes**

6:34 PM to 9:19 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
Kassi Roosth		Greg Houle
Chelsea Blank		Becky Shively
Becky Pineda		Amy Stork
Heath Keirstead		Anna Rankin
Brenda Sanchez		
Pamela Pontello - Intern		

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: 6:34 PM

- Greg Houle-Sustainable Northwest
- Becky Shively, Sustainable Northwest

B. Announcements - None

C. Agenda Additions or Changes - None

1. Public Comment - None

2. District Snapshot.

Kassi Roosth (Staff-Urban Conservation Planner) is here to launch the new "Little Habitat Program" with the Board. Roosth begins by displaying the new page on the District's website for the project and describes how the project is designed to certify participants in five areas with three different levels to achieve. Participants

can request a site visit for TA and then they fill out the online entry form. Roosth explains that there are seventeen new participants in the program. Walker adds that he is supportive of the project but wanted to understand the amount of staff time involved. Roosth replied that there a few ways to manage staff time such as the website page is created so that a participant can drive themselves through the process with no need for staff time or a site visit, there is also getting others (through volunteers) to assist with certification and assist participants, and there is also a waiting list and will only accept so many participants per cycle. Hart adds that the website is informational and people may use the information to achieve theses backyard habitat goals on their own. Roosth navigates through the web page pointing out the resources and processes lined out and adds that the project focuses on soil, water, biodiversity, connecting people to nature, and engaging communities that may not have been involved before in conservation. Roosth completed her presentation with photos from backyard projects recently enrolled in the pilot start up.

Pamela Pontello introduced herself to Directors. She is the SkillsBridge intern. Pontello shared that she just retired from the Marines and is excited to participate in the SkillsBridge internship to learn more about conservation and working with District. Pontello is here until late February.

3. Treasurers Report October 2023

Budeau starts by stating that he missed the pie chart. Budeau points out that current levied taxes are still zero but will be different in November because taxes are due in November. He adds that we are still under budget at twelve percent under budget.

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

4. 2024-2028 Strategic Plan

Amy Stork, the hired planning consultant, introduces herself. She lines out that she is here tonight to review the strategic planning process with the Board and to discuss what is important to Directors regarding strategic planning. Stork displays a slide show. She starts by sharing that she has worked 20 years as a consultant working both in the public and private sectors and then proceeds to explain the planning process of starting with a vision and mission statements, followed up by goals, objectives, and activities to achieve your vision and mission. Stork continues with the timeline for conducting the planning process which leads us to an April 2024 Board approval of the new plan. Stork explains that she will

interview all the Directors, staff and many partners and then provide a response in a summary. There will be a retreat where the vision, mission, and goals will be worked on by the staff and Board together resulting in a draft plan. Stork explains that some work has been started and that she will be working with what has been drafted. Directors had a few follow-up questions regarding the process and planning to ensure that we all have a part in the process. Walker stresses that the Board must be engaged in the vision. Stork then asks “What is at least one strategic question you are hoping to get answered in the process”? Koch begins by stating that she would like more time to answer but for now her concern is with artificial intelligence and how should be a part of our conversation as we plan. Olson adds that he would like to know how the vision or goals will staff be able to fulfill those goals, in the past goals have been established that the staff could not handle? How will we meet those goals? Budeau asks, how can we be fiscally responsible to our constituents and how are we can provide good technical resources in a fiscally responsible way. Hart further reflects that we should evaluate the effectiveness of what we do. Walker adds that he too would like more time to provide meaningful feedback, but maybe we should think beyond water and soil and broaden our vision to have greater reach of activities to consider. Hardy agrees to Walker’s broader view. Sanchez ends by stating that she would be sending out a Doodle Poll to schedule the retreat.

5. November 1, 2023, Draft Board Meeting Minutes

Budeau explained that the September 6, 2023, draft minutes were sent back for edits via Walker and Sanchez. Sanchez explains that the September minutes are not edited yet and that she will have at the January meeting. Budeau then went to say he reviewed November Draft 1 minutes and returned with just a few minor edits and suggested changes. Draft 2 was sent out in the packet and that included his edits and states the minutes are in order. Hart suggested some general improvements to the minutes such as adding links for more information.

Action: Hart motioned for the Board to **accept the November 1, 2023, Board Meeting minutes, 2nd** by Koch. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 [Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau], Opposed-0).

6. United States Department Agriculture Services (NRCS) Report.

No report.

7. Western Oregon Cascadia Recovery Effort Regional Conservation Partnership Program.

Chelsea Blank (Staff-Natural Areas Conservation Planner) begins by introducing the Western Oregon Cascadia Recovery Effort Regional Conservation Partnership

Program (RCPP) and presenting the program basics. The NRCS program is to “promote coordination of conservation practices with partners that offer value-added contributions to expand our collective ability to address regional natural resource concerns.” This program targets funding on specific resource concerns within a specific geographic area. This RCPP is administered by Sustainable Northwest to address ongoing restoration efforts for small nonindustrial and nonfederal forestland owners in the 2020 Labor Day wildfires footprint. Sustainable Northwest applied for a five-year RCPP; it was awarded in August of 2022, and will end in 2027. No current partners in Marion county to help administer Lionshead and Beachie Creek burn footprint. Blank explained the District is looking for Board approval to partner in this RCPP.

Action: Walker motioned for the Board to **approve that the District agree to Partner in the RCPP** 2nd by Budeau. Discussion: Koch and Hart responded that they wanted more information and time to understand what the details are and what the commitments of the District will be; the contribution required by the District is not well understood before voting. Olson asked Sanchez her thoughts and she shared that partnership is exactly what we do and a great way to leverage the tax base and get more services and funding to landowners. Director Hart and Koch asked if Walker would withdraw his motion. **Walker withdraws his motion. Budeau agrees.** Olson would like a draft of the scope of work with more details establishing the District’s commitment. and Budeau asked that Directors seek more information from Sanchez before the next Board meeting regarding clarifications.

8. Salary Administration Plan

Sanchez explains that the Salary Administration Plan (SAP) was a topic moved to this meeting from the November meeting. SAP was ready for approval but a comment noted that the SAP states that when a promotion is given, the employee would be elevated to the next higher Range at Step 1. Which could mean that an employee could get a lower wage than what they were earning at the time of promotion because of how the ten-step table is designed. Sanchez explained that the Board asked for Sanchez to correct the wording to say that an employee will be promoted to a step that is higher than their current wages and bring the corrected SAP back to the next Board meeting. Sanchez restated the language to say, “The employee would earn another approved Range and be elevated in pay to that Range and at a Step higher than their current pay”.

Action: Hart motioned for the Board to **approve the Salary administration Plan.** 2nd by Koch. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 [Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau], Opposed-0).

9. Conservation Assistance Grants (CAG)

- a) **CAG Cycle 2.** Directors started by discussing some of the details of the CAG grants that were forwarded to the Board by the Review Committee for approval. Walker asked if any staff had conflicts of interests. Sanchez states that there were no “conflicts of interests” claimed. Becky Pineda (Staff-Ag Conservation Planner) helped to answer some of the questions regarding submitted projects such as permanent cover crops and soil moisture data subscriptions.

Action: Hart motioned for the Board to **approve all the Cycle 2 CAG applications**, 2nd by Budeau. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 [Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau], Opposed-0).

10. Education Committee

a) CLEAR Grants

- i. Heath Keirstead (Staff-Communication and Education Specialist) Requests to move \$14,150 into the CLEAR Grant program to cover additional grant awards. The current CLEAR grant budget has been committed (\$22,000) and there is still another six months in the fiscal year; this would increase the CLEAR budget to \$36,150.
- ii. The Education Committee recommended two CLEAR grant for approval:
 - a. \$1,750 for the Outdoor Classroom - an ongoing, year-round program at Community Roots School, a public charter school that serves grades K-6 in Silverton. The "Outdoor Classroom" is made up of a large school garden for growing veggies, herbs, and pollinator plants, a native garden, chicken coop, small fruit orchard, greenhouse, compost area, water catchment system, and workbench.
 - b. \$1,200 - (\$600 for transportation and \$600 for instruction/fees) for 100 second grade students from a Title I school to watch and experience wildlife at Minto Brown Park or Willamette Mission Park on a field trip June 4th and June 5th.

Action: Hart motioned for the Board to **increase the CLEAR Grant budget and approve the two CLEAR Grant applications, all recommended by the Education Committee** 2nd by Koch. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 [Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau], Opposed-0).

Action: Walker motioned for the Board to **approve the request to move \$15,000 in funds from the Conservation Grants budget to increase the CLEAR budget** 2nd by Hart. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 [Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau], Opposed-0).

Keirstead finishes by reviewing all the CLEAR grants for the year with the Board to update them and compares them to last year's CLEAR Grant Awards.

11. Audit Scope of Work

Sanchez explained that the audit scope of work letter needs to be signed by the Board. The letter describes the audit process.

Action: Hart motioned for the Board **to authorize signing the audit Scope of Work letter**, 2nd by Budeau. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 [Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau], Opposed-0).

12. EverFab Tax Exempt Letter Signature

Sanchez explained that this is a tax-exempt request through state law that delegated to cities and counties the authority for exempting taxes in qualified areas and that this request is through a new rural industrial tax exemption. The request is for three years at an amount of around \$30,000 per year. EverFab will begin paying taxes on the new building after three years. Directors discussed tax exempt status and the role the District plays in this decision. Sanchez explained that they (EverFab) need 75 percent of all taxing Districts to agree to the exemption, if they do not get 75 percent then the county will amend their decision and will not grant the exempt status. The exemption is to assist the business during construction time to reduce their burden as they bring more rural jobs.

Action: Walker motioned for the Board **to agree to the EverFab tax exemption, and sign the letter**, 2nd by Hart. No further discussion. MOTION FAILS (Aye-3 [Walker, Olson, and Budeau], Opposed-1 [Koch], Abstain-1 [Hart]).

13. Board Meeting Guidelines

Walker requests this subject be moved to the January Board meeting. Board consensus to move.

14. Board Officer Election

Olson states because we are still unsure of Olson's status as Director (regarding the new law regarding Director eligibility) that he would like to nominate Koch as Chairman to cover if there is a loss in Directors and a chair. Walker states that we should wait until January and only vote if Olson is not director. Hart asked if there

were only four Directors, would the Board still function? Olson replies yes, but then all four Directors must agree for the motion to be approved.

Action: Hart motioned to elect **Koch as Chairwoman and Budeau remain as Secretary-Treasurer**, 2nd by Olson. No further discussion. MOTION PASSES (Aye-4 [Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau], Opposed-1 [Walker]).

Hart asked if she could represent the Board as her role with Sustainable Silverton and be able to share information. The Board discussed that it is OK to share information but you need Board approval prior to presenting any position of the Board.

Adjourn: Chair Olson adjourned the meeting at 9:19 PM



Marion Soil and Water Conservation District complies with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. If special physical, language, or other accommodations are needed for this meeting, please contact the District Manager at 503-391-9927 as soon as possible, and at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting.