



**Marion Soil and Water Conservation District (MSWCD)
Board of Directors April 03, 2024, Meeting Minutes**

6:33 PM to 8:49 PM

Facilitator: Chair Olson

Recorded by: Brenda Sanchez

Approved: 06-05-24

Directors & Record of Attendance		Associate Directors
At Large 1-Peggy Hart	Present	Leland Hardy
At Large 2-Scott Walker	Present	Mark Fields
Zone 1-Vacant	Vacant	Angela Plowhead
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		Hector Christine Diaz
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).

- 1. Olson Call to Order:** 6:33 PM
- 2. Announcements - None**
- 3. Agenda Additions or Changes**
 - Walker, Training
 - Sanchez, three letters of support

1. Public Comment – No Public Comment

2. District Snapshot

Sanchez began by reviewing the last month, the District completed its Strategic Planning Retreat on March 14. March 1 and 2 the Native Plant sale was conducted successfully. Sales started online and we were able to sell almost all the plants online with some sales on the day of. Sanchez displayed the preliminary sales data, compared to previous years, that showed a steady increase in profits over time. We have set the scholarship fund at \$6,500. Sanchez added that we had a successful partnership to host Dr. Daniel Lewis, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde to talk about Tribal Histories of the Willamette Valley. Staff

attended the SEDCOR Breakfast, an opportunity to meet and build relationships with agricultural businesses. A bottle of wine was given to the District (to all attendees that purchased tickets). The Board said let the staff have the bottle. Sanchez says staff reports will be sent out.

3. Treasurers Report February 2024

Budeau, referring to the February Report, pointed out that the District is two thirds of the way through the fiscal year at around seventy-seven percent of the budget. Budeau notes that the levied taxes income has slowed down and that we are still short of the estimated tax income. Directors discussed economics and tax restraints to payments. Budeau provided a couple of edits which Sanchez corrected; year to date total in previous grant payments and entering January credit card expenses. Hart asks why the Budling Reserve amount did not include the whole ADA project costs. Sanchez replied because we have not paid the second half of the contract. The Board will approve that this evening. Walker asked if we would have a cash overflow in the next fiscal year even though levied tax income is short. Budeau responded that there will most likely be a cash overflow because we are short on our projected spending this fiscal year.

Action: Walker motioned that the Board **approve the February 2024 Treasurers Report**, 2nd by Hart. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 [Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau], Opposed-0).

4. March 11, 2024, Draft 1 Board Meeting Minutes

Budeau reviews his edits. Mostly typing edits, nothing significant.

Action: Hart motioned that the Board **approve the March 11, 2024, Board Meeting Minutes as presented**, 2nd by Koch. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 [Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau], Opposed-0).

Olson asked about the Strategic Planning Retreat minutes. Sanchez will have for the next board meeting.

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

No Report

6. Strategic Planning Update-Post Retreat

Sanchez explains that the Strategic Planning Committee met and worked on the draft. Sanchez asked if the Board would like a Board work session to review the plan. Walker said he wants enough time to review. Olson and Budeau agreed that the Board needs time to review and discuss. Sanchez will send out an email to

schedule the Board work session. Sanchez opened conversation for any feedback regarding the Strategic Planning Retreat held on March 14, 2024. Walker asked about compliance with the state. Sanchez said that the Strategic Plan is the District's timeline, expecting to finalize at the June 5, 2024, Board meeting and the workplan components are due to the state by June 30. Directors discussed the timeline for review once more and Walker stressed that the Board needs enough time to fully review.

7. Partner Grants

a. Results of Partner Grant Cycle 1

Walker submits his questions (re: Partner Grants) in writing. Presentation by Susan Ortiz (Grants Coordinator) reviews the Partner Grant program and the applications submitted for a total of \$154,164. Ortiz displays a table showing the application types and briefly describes each application and the results of the committee reviews and funding recommendations.

b. Discuss program pros and cons, and tweaks to the program.

Olson asks if the Board has any feedback regarding the Partner Grant process and starts by sharing that the all the committee reviews were confusing, some applications were reviewed by more than one committee. Walker wants to know if staff goes on site to review the project and if the District must take the application based on its written merit? Sanchez explains that staff is only involved if the applicant request it or the District is involved in the project. Hart thinks there should be at least one site visit before payment of awards. Olson adds that the partners are established and are professional organizations that he feels does not necessitate the kind of follow-up Hart describes. Budeau adds that he is concerned that maybe two of them could have been Conservation Assistance Grants (CAG). Directors discussed when a project should qualify for the Partner Grant versus a CAG; Walker agreed that this should be clarified. Olson further added his concern regarding grant applications and area of service; suggests some kind of buffer. Walker adds that projects should be in our District. Hart asked Ortiz if she had notes from the committee meetings regarding any concerns. Ortiz can assemble the list at another time and make it available. Sanchez offers that the technical team can meet and hammer out some of these concerns. Koch replies that we should look at the Partner Grant Program and make revisions. Koch is concerned about broad approvals and micro-management of projects. Sanchez adds that this first year of the pilot program has ended. The next cycle begins next August and this is a good time to revise the grant program before it goes into the next year. Walker stresses that he feels it is important for project

review before payment. Koch added that she appreciated staff review and comments and discussing in committee to alleviate any concerns she may have. Walker brings up his concern regarding equipment purchases through grant funds. Directors discussed further grant budgets and costs.

Discussion centered around the Western Invasive Capacity Grant and whether that project is the best use of District dollars. Plowhead asks if the committee received the added information that was requested from Western Invasive. Ortiz explains that the information was shared with Sanchez and the committee chair. Plowhead finds the email with the response and sends it out. Sanchez displayed the table showing how Western Invasives budgets their time. Walker goes back to equipment purchases. Directors discussed equipment purchase versus paying for rental. Olson says that we will pull out the Western Invasives and Elderberry Farm for amendments to the award. Directors discussed the Western Invasive's budget to discern how much time is spent in Marion County versus the rest of the Willamette Valley. The discussion did not alleviate Budeau's concerns. Walker recommends a smaller grant award. Hart adds maybe the committees are not appropriate for the reviews.

Action: Hart motioned that the Board **award all the applicants except Elderberry Wisdom Farm, Western Invasive Network, and Pudding River Coolidge McClain Park Restoration Project**, 2nd by Budeau. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 [Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau], Opposed-0).

Action: Walker motioned that the Board award the Western Invasive Network Capacity Grant with an amended budget of \$5,000, 2nd by Budeau. Plowhead states, that although she does not have a vote recommends \$3,000. Olson asked Walker if would like to amend his motion? Walker states that he amends his motion that the Board **award the Western Invasive Network Capacity Grant with an amended budget of \$3,000**, 2nd by Koch. MOTION PASSED (Aye-4 [Walker, Olson, Koch, and Hart], Opposed-0, Abstained-1 [Budeau]).

Action: Walker motioned that the Board **award the Elderberry Wisdom Farm, with the condition that they show documentation to the District that they received the other project funds prior to awarding**, 2nd by Hart. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 [Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau], Opposed-0).

Sanchez asked if Ortiz was clear on the request, she asks that from the list of awards Elderberry provides, what does the Board want. Budeau clarifies that once they secure the match funds identified in the application then District funds would be made available. Ortiz wants clarification on the match funds, does the Board want the full amount of matched funds documented (which is more than required match) or just the required match (25%)? Budeau, makes clear that he wants the match confirmed that is listed in the grant application. Ortiz discussed pending versus awarded match funds. Directors discussed the details of the condition. The Board wants documentation from the USDA grant since funding has not yet been awarded.

Walker discusses equipment purchases in the Pudding River Coolidge McClain Park Restoration Project and whether the District should pay for equipment listed in the budget such as a generator. Walker in concurrence with Sanchez says we need to get this clarified for this project and future equipment asks. Equipment purchased and rental by the District is not supported by Koch.

Action: Koch motioned that the Board **award the Pudding River Coolidge McClain Park Restoration Project with an amended budget minus the generator at \$6,733**, 2nd by Budeau. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-4 [Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau], Opposed-1 [Walker]).

Olson checked in Walker to make sure we answered his questions. Walker says they have been answered.

c. Determine FY 24-25 Partner Grant Budget

Sanchez is putting the fiscal year budget for 2024-2025 and wanted to discuss next year's Partner Grant project and recommends it stays the same at \$255,000. Hart wants to make sure we can guarantee that amount. Walker reminds the Board that we can always move funds around if the line item exists. Budeau agrees that \$255,000 is a good amount. Olson shares his concerns regarding a second cycle and this should be discussed further during the Partner Grant improvements.

8. Administrative Committee

a. Pay Equity Analysis 2024 Report

Action: Walker motioned that the Board **accept the Pay Equity Analysis Report, 2nd** by Hart. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 [Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau], Opposed-0).

b. Fiscal Year 24-25 Budget Calendar Update

Sanchez wanted to make sure that the Directors see the budget calendar she added to the packet for their information and reminded that all of the Directors must be in person for the Budget Hearing on May 8 at 6:00 PM.

c. Multipurpose Reserve Fund

Sanchez raised the question regarding the Multipurpose Reserve Fund that was left somewhat unanswered last fiscal year and that is whether the Board wants the Multipurpose Reserve Fund to continued or be abolished. Directors discussed the reason for the fund. Sanchez states we could abolish the fund and move the funds to the General Fund.

Action: Hart motioned that the Board **abolish the Multipurpose Reserve Fund, 2nd** by Budeau. Sanchez says that we may have to do this via resolution. Olson says we can come back with a resolution. **Hart withdraws the motion.** Sanchez says the Board can meet to discuss the budget prior to the Budget Committee meeting on April 24, and at that time you can make the decision to abolish the fund or not. Directors decided to have a special meeting to discuss the budget and confirmed a meeting on April 10, 2024, at 9:00 AM.

d. ADA Ramp Construction Contract-additional charges-amend amount from Building Reserve

Sanchez shares that the ADA ramp project was completed. Sanchez requests authorization to pay the final half of the project because the project ended up costing more than the amount originally approved. We added glass windows to the doors and had to pay for an architect to draw up the final plans and work with the county to get the permit.

Action: Walker motioned that the Board **approve the final payment of \$22,775 for the ADA project and to use those funds from the Building Reserve, 2nd** by Hart. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 [Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau], Opposed-0).

Sanchez asks if it would be OK to add in the new landscaping budget to the fiscal year 24-25 budget. Directors agreed.

9. Natural Resources Committee

a. Conservation Grant FY 24-25 Budget Recommendations

Sanchez explained that she met with the Natural Resource Committee to discuss FY 24-25 grant award budgets. Sanchez states they (CAG, Cover Crops, and Specials Project Grants) will all stay the same. There is a line item to add funds for catastrophic natural events to assist the public with recovery etc. Directors discussed how the budget works and how the Board can move budget line items to cover costs in other line items. Hart explains that we are technically putting the cart before the horse and she would like a program plan in place before funding it. Funding would be more developed in next year's budget after the plan has been drafted. Directors agreed.

10. Conservation Assistance Grants Completed

Directors reviewed the completed grants.

11. Education Committee – No items

12. Letters of Support

Sanchez proposed three letters of support in which these requests came after the Board packets went out, one is for Elderberry Wisdom Farm for an Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) grant application, another is the State Weed Board grant requested by Yamhill SWCD, and the last one is regarding the North Santiam Watershed Council and an OWEB grant application to conduct "Plan for Your Land" with other councils in the valley. Hart adds that she favors the "Plan for Your Land" program.

Action: Walker motioned that the Board **support the Elderberry Wisdom Farm and the Oregon State Weed Board grant applications with a letter of support**, 2nd by Hart. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 [Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau], Opposed-0).

Action: Olson motioned that the Board **supports the Mid-Valley River Connections Partnership grant application with a letter of support signed by the District manager on behalf of the Board of Directors**, 2nd by Hart. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 [Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau], Opposed-0).

13. Training

Walker brings up an email that he received regarding training from Special Districts. Walker adds that he feels several Directors support the idea of Board training. SDAO

will come to a Board meeting and train us on special topics. Walker would like the Board to consider these training opportunities. Olson asks Sanchez to investigate Board training further and maybe in the fall we can schedule some training. Walker adds that these are general board conduct etc. training courses and that it would be better if all the Directors attended instead of one or two attending SDAO regional trainings.

Adjourn: Chair Olson adjourned the meeting at 8:49 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.