



**Marion Soil and Water Conservation District (MSWCD)**  
**Board of Directors May 7, 2025**  
**Budget Hearing and Monthly Minutes**

6:00 PM – 6:30 PM Budget Hearing

6:30 PM – 9:10 PM Board Monthly Meeting

Facilitator: Vice-Chair Plowhead

Recorded by: Brenda Sanchez

Approved:

<b>Directors &amp; Record of Attendance Budget Hearing</b>		<b>Associate Directors</b>
At Large 1-Peggy Hart (Secretary-Treasurer)	Present	
At Large 2-Scott Walker	Present	
Zone 1-Noah Justice	Absent	
Zone 2-Nik Ovchinnikov	Present	
Zone 3-Darin Olson (Chair)	Absent	
Zone 4-Angela Plowhead (Vice-Chair)	Present	
Zone 5-Rochelle Koch	Present	
<b>Staff</b>		<b>Guests</b>
Brenda Sanchez		Brent Stevenson
Susan Ortiz		Teresa Brehme

<b>Directors &amp; Record of Attendance Board Meeting</b>		<b>Associate Directors</b>
At Large 1-Peggy Hart (Secretary-Treasurer)	Present	
At Large 2-Scott Walker	Present	
Zone 1-Noah Justice	Absent	
Zone 2-Nik Ovchinnikov	Present	
Zone 3-Darin Olson (Chair)	Absent	
Zone 4-Angela Plowhead (Vice-Chair)	Present	
Zone 5-Rochelle Koch	Present	
<b>Staff</b>		<b>Guests</b>
Brenda Sanchez		Brent Stevenson
Susan Ortiz		Teresa Brehme
Cesar Zamora		Kat Bethea ODF
Becky Pineda		Matt Mills ODF
		AnnaRose Adam

**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).



## **Budget Hearing**

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**Call to Order:** 6:03 PM

**1. Presentation of Proposed Budget**

Sanchez displayed the LB-1 Form with the approved fiscal year 2025-2026 budget and stated the budget totals.

**2. Public Comment:** No members of the public were in attendance and no comments (verbal or written) were received.

**Secretary-Treasurer Hart adjourned the Public Hearing:** 6:30 PM

## **Board Meeting**

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**Vice-Chair Plowhead Call to Order:** 6:34 PM

### **Public Comment**

### **Announcements**

Stevenson stated that he was pleased with how the budget process is going and that the work the District and staff did to create the latest budget is very good. Clear information and a nice change moving forward. Hart agreed.

### **Agenda Additions or Changes**

Walker would like to discuss the long-term budget to reduce risk. Plowhead will add to the budget agenda item.

**1. District Snapshot**

Ortiz prepared a presentation for her staff report to the Board. Ortiz presented and overview of District grant programs (both as a grantee and a grantor), the grant process, and the role of the grant's coordinator. She reviewed the District's grant programs, the year's budget for grants we award, and the amount actually awarded for each grant program. Ortiz also discussed the grants we receive and reviewed the amounts. See Ortiz's presentation on file for details. Walker had a question regarding Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) grants and wanted to know if OWEB small grant money is being spent. Ortiz responded with OWEB grant details and stated that approximately \$60,000 out of \$100,000 has been awarded. Ortiz ended by describing the OWEB Small Grant Program.

Sanchez gave a quick update on District work. The mural is moving forward and she is waiting for a cost proposal to complete the mural. The Admin Committee is meeting to finish up the Salary Administration Plan and the new Salary Table. Sanchez has worked on a professional Growth Support policy. Sanchez completed



the new office position description ready for the Board to approve. Framework for pilot programs is in draft almost ready and will work with staff to refine and present to the Board. Sanchez and Ortiz have been working on the Grant Entity and CAP policy. Present at June Board meeting. Sanchez finished by stating she is putting a plan together to review the Strategic Plan and will be working with the Admin Committee to draft an annual Budget Process that works for all the moving parts that it entails.

## **2. Treasurers Report March 2025**

Hart starts by saying that she was able to review the report and noted that there are some rounding influences that do not add up correctly as written. Sanchez will address the rounding errors. Transaction list by vendors is new; maybe helpful to show where money is being spent.

**Action:** Koch motioned that the Board **accept as presented the March 2025 Treasurers Report**, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Plowhead. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 [Walker, Ovchinnikov, Plowhead, Koch, and Hart], Opposed-0).

## **3. Draft March 5, 2025, Board Meeting Minutes**

**Action:** Walker motioned that the Board **approve the March 5, 2025 monthly board meeting minutes as presented**, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Plowhead. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 [Walker, Ovchinnikov, Plowhead, Koch, and Hart], Opposed-0).

## **4. United States Department Agriculture Services (NRCS) Report.**

Brehme provided an update on the current application and contracting cycle. The team received 55 program applications, with 8 pre-approved for funding. Two applicants declined, leaving 6 contracts moving forward this year, totaling close to \$1 million. These include:

- 2 forest management plans
- 2 large irrigation system installations
- 2 soil health projects (including compost application on hazelnuts and integrated practices in hops)

Additionally, 13 stewardship applications were received. One applicant declined, and 3 have been unresponsive, leaving 9 active applications. Field inventory is complete for 4. These stewardship projects—requiring full-field evaluations—focus on habitat establishment (wildlife, monarch, pollinator), crop rotation, soil health, and intensive cover cropping, especially in hazelnuts.



There are also 46 active contracts from prior years, some dating back to 2020, covering irrigation, soil health, forest management, and habitat restoration. Several are expected to close by the end of this fiscal year.

Lastly, Brehme shared a major development outside of Marion County: a conservation easement in Linn County was recently approved after five years of work, with restoration funds secured, totaling several million dollars in habitat restoration. A brief Q&A followed regarding how stewardship assessments are conducted. Brehme clarified that landowners may request enhancements or staff may suggest improvements based on field evaluations. Brehme reviewed staff levels at local NRCS offices. They are down and there is a hiring freeze. There is a federal level reorganizing plan in the works.

## **5. Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget Adoption**

Walker starts off by suggesting a change to the budget.

Walker makes **a motion to move the special projects grant line removed**. No second was provided, Motion failed.

### **a. FY 24-25 Budget Resolution**

Hart delivers Resolution No. 050725 reading **"Be it resolved that the Board of Directors for the Marion Soil and Water Conservation District hereby adopts the budget for 2025-2026 now on file at the District's facility at 408 N Third Ave. Stayton, OR in the sum of \$5,071,855.\*"**

**BE IT RESOLVED that the amounts for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025, and for the purposes shown below are hereby appropriated as follows:**

<b>General Fund</b>	<b>\$3,227,943</b>
<b>Multipurpose Reserve Fund</b>	<b>\$316,271</b>
<b>Building Reserve Fund</b>	<b>\$283,715</b>
<b>Total Appropriations All Funds</b>	<b>\$3,914,929</b>
<b>Unappropriated Amount</b>	<b>\$1,156,926</b>
<b>Total Adopted Budget</b>	<b>\$5,071,855*</b>

**BE IT RESOLVED that the following ad valorem property taxes are hereby imposed upon the assessed value of all taxable property within the district for tax year 2025-2026 at the rate of \$0.0500 per \$1000 of assessed value for permanent rate tax.**



**BE IT RESOLVED** that the taxes imposed are hereby categorized for purposes of Article XI section 11b as: Permanent Rate Tax \$ 0.0500/\$1,000. Excluded from Limitation \$0.00

**b. Adoption of FY 25-26 Budget Resolution**

**Action:** Hart motions to adopt Budget Resolution No. 050725 as read, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Koch. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-4 [Ovchinnikov, Plowhead, Koch, and Hart], Opposed-1 [Walker]).

**6. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Bathroom Remodel Contract Approval**

Sanchez presented the ADA bathroom contracts explaining that she conducted the public contracting due diligence and as a result is presenting the contract for award. Leupitz Construction.

**Action:** Walker motioned that the Board approve the contract with Leupitz Contractors INC for \$49,995 to complete the construction of the ADA bathroom, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Hart. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 [Walker, Ovchinnikov, Plowhead, Koch, and Hart], Opposed-0).

**Action:** Walker motioned that we hire architect to complete the plan, review, and permit at \$5,000, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Hart. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 [Walker, Ovchinnikov, Plowhead, Koch, and Hart], Opposed-0).

**Action:** Walker motioned that the Board approve a contingency of \$7,500 for unforeseen construction costs and approve to pay from the Building Reserve Fund a total of \$62,500, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Hart. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 [Walker, Ovchinnikov, Plowhead, Koch, and Hart], Opposed-0).

**7. Natural Resource Committee**

**a. Cattleman's Association Wildlife Damage Prevention and Compensation Program**

Zamora reported that the committee recommended the District not sign on to the project, citing a lack of capacity and the necessary staff expertise to carry out the work.

**Action:** Walker motioned that we decline Cattleman's request as recommended by the Natural Resources Committee, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Hart. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 [Walker, Ovchinnikov, Plowhead, Koch, and Hart], Opposed-0).



Plowhead asked if there was a way to contribute to the project in some way? Sanchez said she could refer them to another entity to assist. Koch asks Sanchez to respond back to Cattleman's.

**b. Pesticide Stewardship Partnership Application**

Zamora updates the Board that the Pudding River Watershed Council will be able to take on the PSP project. Zamora will work with them to transition the project.

**c. Oregon Department of Agriculture Grant for 2025-2027 Biennium**

Zamora reports that the committee recommends (agreeing with staff) to continue with the Focus Area approach but move it to the watershed currently under the Strategic Implementation Area project to continue building upon the relationships and projects that have come about from the SIA effort as that projects ends in December 2025. Pineda adds that we would like to continue the total suspended solids sampling and maybe add temperature monitoring. Also, there will be a focus on cover crops in orchards for the scope of work plan.

**d. Landscape Scale Restoration Competitive Grant Proposal for Emerald Ash Borer-Introduction and Discussion**

Sanchez explained that at this time the Pudding River Watershed Council is asking for Marion SWCD to be listed as a contributing partner in the Grant Pre application, and then, in June or July. Kurt Berning from Pudding River Watershed Council will request a match amount at that time. No financial commitment now.

**Action:** Walker motioned **that we partner with the Pudding River Watershed Council and have Marion SWCD be listed as a contributing partner in the Landscape Scale Restoration Grant pre-application, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Koch.** No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 [Walker, Ovchinnikov, Plowhead, Koch, and Hart], Opposed-0).

**8. Conservation Assistant Grant Program and Cover Crop Assistance Program**

**a. CAG Application Components**

Ortiz explained that the application was shared with Directors for review and feedback on potential improvements to enhance clarity and efficiency. The goal is to address Board-raised concerns regarding how entities are defined and how conflicts of interest should be handled. Koch commented that the



application is thorough, though there may be some redundancy to resolve, and had no additional suggestions.

Sanchez added that input was also requested on what information Directors would like included in the Board packet to support their grant award decisions. Walker noted that the discussion requires more time than was currently available and proposed setting a deadline to submit comments.

Koch summarized the concerns raised, and Directors engaged in discussion about possible approaches to address conflicts of interest and ensure transparency in the information provided to support case-by-case award decisions.

Plowhead proposed that Directors submit written feedback to Sanchez. Sanchez will compile the comments and work with Ortiz to develop recommended solutions, which will be presented at the June Board meeting. Directors are asked to submit comments by 2:00 PM on Monday, June 12.

**b. Cover Crop Special Circumstance**

Removed from Agenda. Special circumstance was avoided.

**c. CAG Extension Requests**

**Action:** Hart motioned that the Board **approve the request for extension for LAP-20-24-002 Cattle HUA at gates and troughs**, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Walker. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 [Walker, Ovchinnikov, Plowhead, Koch, and Hart], Opposed-0).

**d. Grants Completed**

No discussion.

**9. Education Committee**

Hart reported on how the District could work with community gardens and Saturday markets. Deciding it would have to be on a case-by-case basis regarding those request.

**a. CLEAR Grants**

**Action:** Walker motioned that the Board **approve moving \$5,000 from the Educational Projects budget line item to the Clear Grant program**, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Koch. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 [Walker, Ovchinnikov, Plowhead, Koch, and Hart], Opposed-0).



**Action:** Walker motioned that the Board **approve the \$5,000 CLEAR Grant for Rooted Resilience-Olde Moon Farmland Stewardship**, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Plowhead. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 [Walker, Ovchinnikov, Plowhead, Koch, and Hart], Opposed-0).

#### **10. Letter of Support-Mid-Willamette Aquatic EDRR Surveys and Treatment 2025**

**Action:** Walker motioned that the Board **approve the 50 hrs. of staff time and Letter of Support-Mid-Willamette Aquatic EDRR Surveys and Treatment 2025**, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Hart. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 [Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau], Opposed-0).

Walker expressed concern about the five-year forecast and the trend of declining cash carryover. He suggested the development of a policy or guideline to prevent the cash carryover from falling to an unsustainable level. He recommended identifying the target cash carryover amount and determining where adjustments could be made to maintain that target. Ovchinnikov clarified that Walker is asking for a consistent year-to-year cash carryover benchmark. Directors discussed possible approaches for sustaining an adequate cash carryover. Sanchez noted that this topic falls under the purview of the Administration Committee and invited all Directors to participate in the upcoming committee meeting where this will be discussed.

**Adjourn:** Vice-Chair Plowhead adjourned the meeting at 8:50 PM



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