



West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) Board Meeting Minutes 05/18/2021

### **1. Meeting Location and Time:**

Location: Held via Zoom meeting. The meeting was called to order by Director Preeg Riggsby at 6:04 PM.

### **2. Introductions and Agenda Approval**

Directors Present: Hartline, Looney, Miller, Peterson, Preeg Riggsby, Sowder; Directors Absent (excused): Lightcap; Associate Directors Present: Hamer; District Manager (DM): Cathcart; Staff: Logalbo, Razalenti; NRCS Staff: Galland

It was announced that the Board meeting would be recorded. The agenda was approved by acclamation.

### **3. Minutes:**

*West Multnomah SWCD Board Meeting minutes from 4/20/2021<sup>i</sup>*

Director Miller made a motion to approve the Board meeting minutes from 4/20/21 as written, and Director Looney seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a vote of 6-0.

*West Multnomah SWCD Budget Committee Meeting minutes from 4/20/2021<sup>ii</sup>*

Director Looney made a motion to approve the Budget Committee meeting minutes from 4/20/21 as written, and Director Miller seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a vote of 6-0.

### **4. Review of Treasurer's Reports**

Director Miller reported that the District is still short of tax levy funds by about \$43,000, but is well underspent in conservation programs, and will be in good shape heading into the new fiscal year.

The following reports were reviewed:

- a) *WMSWCD-Balance Sheet as of April 30, 2021<sup>iii</sup>*
- b) *WMSWCD-General Fund Budget Only Budget Performance April 30, 2021<sup>iv</sup>*
- c) *WMSWCD-Sturgeon Lake Fund Budget Performance April 30, 2021<sup>v</sup>*

### **5. Public Comment**

No public comment.

### **6. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Agreements**

NRCS staff Galland gave the Board an overview of the updated Memorandum of Agreement between NRCS, the District, and Oregon Department of Agriculture<sup>vi</sup> as well as the Unfunded Cooperative Agreement between NRCS and the District<sup>vii</sup>. NRCS staff Galland also gave an update that staffing levels will be going up for NRCS soon, and that carbon farming and regenerative agriculture are going to get a lot of focus in the near future.

Director Hartline made a motion for West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District to sign the Memorandum of Agreement with Natural Resources Conservation Service and Oregon Department of

Agriculture as well as the Unfunded Cooperative Agreement with NRCS. Director Looney seconded the motion, and all approved with a vote of 6-0.

## **7. Long Range Business Plan (LRBP), 2021-2025<sup>viii</sup>**

Staff member Logalbo noted the “homework” that DM Cathcart laid out for the Board to look at in advance of the meeting and announced that the following questions would be asked of all board members, as well as giving the board members an opportunity to get any clarifications or final feedback before asking the Board to approve at the June meeting.

- (1) What is it you like best about the LRBP?
- (2) What elements or sections of the LRBP need further discussion or where you have questions/clarification needed?
- (3) Any other comments or feedback?

Director Sowder reported that he liked how thorough the LRBP was, and would be proud to have it as a five-year plan.

Director Preeg Riggsby liked that there was deliberate messaging about diversity, equity and inclusion as well as having specific tactics, and liked that new items were highlighted in yellow. She also liked that the tactics are achievable and did not have any clarifications.

Director Looney liked the strategic directions, and mentioned that the words “tragic history” (listed in goal 1.2) needed to either be more specifically described as to why it is a tragic history, or take out the word “tragic”. Director Looney also pointed out that the document sometimes references “people that” when the correct terminology should be “people who”. Director Looney had also caught some minor typos, and staff member Logalbo asked to get a copy of the edits.

Director Miller reported that he was happy to see strategic direction 1C, to devote work time to diversity, equity and inclusion in staff’s annual workplans. Director Miller also appreciated the improvements in the LRBP regarding school and community gardens, with the addition of collaborating with partners, as well as securing necessary funding for this work, and addressing access opportunities for those that do not own land. Director Miller felt that the strategy to make connections and work with partners that already have land access programs in place was the best approach. Director Miller felt it would be good to have a copy editor review the LRBP before finalizing.

Associate Director Hamer reported that he supports the document, and thinks it is great. He had some comments written electronically but had since lost the document, but reported that he would email comments to staff member Logalbo as needed after the meeting.

Director Hartline liked that there is a section on wildfire risks and climate change since this is currently a hot topic on peoples’ minds, and was also happy to see the reference to include herbaceous plantings on page 18 of the LRBP. Director Hartline was also happy to see flood plain and wetland projects mentioned.

Director Hartline noted some items that may need further discussion; one item being that there was language taken out that the District is nonpartisan and nonpolitical, and some of the farmers may likely feel more comfortable if this language was kept in. DM Cathcart explained that this was taken out because the Board does engage in political activity by signing letters and giving testimony about bills, etc. which can be seen as political, but the District does try to remain nonpartisan in doing so by focusing comments on the substantive matter at hand without worrying about being aligned with any particular party affiliation or position. Director Hartline indicated comfort in how this is worded in the LRBP after DM Cathcart’s explanation.

Director Hartline noted that goal 5.2 “improve soil health on farmland” is an example of something that the District has always done, and was not sure it says much. Director Hartline felt it would be good to look through everything that needs a little more aspirational text and revise. DM Cathcart noted that this would be a good area to address regenerative agriculture, for example.

Director Hartline also felt the Executive Summary could use more pizzazz, and also mentioned that the formatting and typeface is not inviting to read and would like that to be looked at.

Director Peterson referenced several goal numbers that she liked, and felt that it would be good to shorten the LRBP if possible. Director Peterson also felt it would be good to track the progress in the Measures of Success section under each goal so it would be clear when they get done.

Staff member Logalbo let the Board know that once the LRBP is a final draft, it will be looked at by a professional designer for readability, format, etc.

DM Cathcart summarized the major changes that he noted:

- ‘Tragic history’ – explain why it is tragic or use a different word
- Go through sections that need an “aspirational lift”, using goal 5.2 as an example

Director Miller made a motion that staff is directed to finalize the Long Range Business Plan document and bring to the Board for adoption at the June Board meeting. Director Looney seconded the motion, and all approved with a vote of 6-0.

#### **8. Trust for Public Lands’ Skyview/Tualatin Mountains Proposed Private Forestland Acquisition<sup>ix</sup>**

DM Cathcart reported to the Board that Skyview Forest property could be sold for conservation purposes and Trust for Public Lands is working on the acquisition. The District was approached to partner in this. This is 3,000 acres that the District could have influence on how it would be used for conservation. Trust for Public Lands doesn’t want to be the owner of the land, and is working with the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde to see if they would possibly want to be the owner, but the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde need more time to evaluate this opportunity. The District could become the owner in the interim and potentially turn it over to the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde should they want it. The District would be co-managers of this project regardless if the District remained the owners. Trust for Public Lands will raise the funds for purchasing the land. The funds for the staff needed for this project would have to come in as an endowment. This does not cover restoration funding, which would need to come through grants or other programs. This opportunity is consistent with many of the goals and strategic directions in the upcoming LRBP. Director Hartline noted that she would like DM Cathcart to consider the pitfalls for taking on this project. Director Miller expressed concern regarding the financial cost to the District over the long-term and whether the endowment monies provided would be sufficient to cover the District’s responsibilities as owner.

#### **9. District Manager Report**

DM Cathcart reminded the Board to read the staff reports<sup>x</sup>. While staff member Taylor fills the interim role for the forestry program, the interim position for school and community gardens is currently vacant. The candidate that DM Cathcart was in touch with to fill the interim school and community garden role has taken on a permanent position elsewhere. Many of the functions for this position will be filled by staff member Logalbo until the interim role can be filled.

#### **10. Directors’ and Associate Directors’ Check-in**

The Directors and Associate Directors did not have anything to report.

## **11. Announcements/Reminders/Confirmation of next Meeting:**

Director Sowder noted the following upcoming meetings/events:

- Diversity Equity & Inclusion Committee Meeting, 1pm June 8th
- Budget Hearing & Board Meeting – June 15, 2021 [DM Cathcart announced that the Board meeting will be held first and the Budget Hearing will be held afterward]
- Meeting Date During the Summer – July 20<sup>th</sup> (Special Districts Association of Oregon Board Assessment)
- Three Year Sturgeon Lake Restoration Project Celebration – Sept. 10, 2021

The Board adjourned at 7:45 pm.

<sup>i</sup>WMSWCD 4/20/2021 Board Meeting Minutes

<sup>ii</sup>WMSWCD 4/20/2021 Budget Committee Meeting Minutes

<sup>iii</sup>WMSWCD-Balance Sheet as of April 30, 2021

<sup>iv</sup>WMSWCD-General Fund Budget Only Budget Performance April 30, 2021

<sup>v</sup>WMSWCD-Sturgeon Lake Fund Budget Performance April 30, 2021

<sup>vi</sup> Memorandum of Agreement between NRCS, WMSWCD, and ODA

<sup>vii</sup>Unfunded Cooperative Agreement between NRCS and the District

<sup>viii</sup>Long Range Business Plan 2021-2025 draft

<sup>ix</sup>Skyview Forest Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife WWMP Project Application for FY 2023 Funding

<sup>x</sup>Staff Reports

<sup>xi</sup>Long Range Business Plan progress report