

SPECIAL DISTRICT BOARD PRACTICES ASSESSMENT

**Board: West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District
July 20, 2021, 6:20 PM**

KEY PERFORMANCE AREAS	RATING			ASSESSMENT
	Good	Caution	Danger	
Board Duties and Responsibilities				
Adherence to standards of good stewardship				The board is confident that the public, and partner organizations have a high level of trust in their ability to be good stewards of the responsibilities entrusted to the board.
Demonstration of good governance practices				The board is widely viewed by other districts as an example of good governance and board practices. Boards often seek advice and guidance from the district because of their well-respected practices.
Operational Compliance				
Overall regulatory compliance				The board confirms that compliance deadlines are met and any issues are highlighted for them by staff. The trust developed between the board and the staff coupled with open lines of communication between the two groups ensures the board is aware of all compliance requirements.

Timeliness of compliance reporting				The board has confidence that all reports and deadlines have been met within established timelines.
Potential compliance challenges				The district does not have any compliance challenges on the horizon. A recent mistake in noticing the annual meeting was the first challenge of any type in many years.
Budget and Finance				
Consistency in budgeting to meet needs				The board described the budget process starting in December of each year with the development of sound and realistic forecasts based on annual work plans. The program managers then work with the District Manager on their budgets prior to the board review and ultimate approval of the budget. The board is confident in the budgeting process and having a budget to approve each year that meets the needs of the district. The long-range business plan recently approved has brought more clarity to the fiscal health of the district and informs and supports the development of sound budgets and reliable financial information.
Soundness of financial practices				The board receives monthly financial reports in advance of board meetings. The reports are reviewed in meetings affording the board an opportunity to ask questions and review financial transactions and

				budgets.
Customer Relations				
Management of service problems				Service problems typically go directly to the District Manager. The board is confident that while these issues are very infrequent, either the staff resolves the problem, or the board is made aware and a plan of action is discussed.
Improvements to customer service				A major component of the long-range plan is the diversity, equity and inclusion plan which is focused on improving relationships and outreach to new audiences. One of the main themes of the DEI plan is to improve access to programs and services.
Personnel Administration				
Staff morale and work climate				Morale is high and the work climate is very positive. There are many opportunities for staff to be heard and their input valued. There are a couple notes of caution regarding work climate. First, as the district comes out of COVID 19 remote work conditions, there is a need to watch for behavior changes or “ripples” that may emerge as the work group shifts back to a more traditional environment. There is also caution around the new pay scales that have recently been approved. Salaries have been adjusted so the majority of employees have limited room for salary growth in

				their current positions.
Management of employee performance				Performance evaluations are administered on an annual basis.
Alignment of positions with work assignments				Jim, Michele, and Randi were acknowledged for doing the heavy lifting of reviewing all position descriptions, validating alignment with similar positions in similar organizations, and ensuring that the descriptions align with the strategic business plan.
Policies and Procedures				
Soundness of administrative policies				The board reports that a number of administrative policies have been updated lately in conjunction with the long-range plan development. On the to-do list are a board handbook and board policies.
Consistency between work practices and policies				This district relies on consistency between work practices and policies to guide their work. The staff are actively involved in regularly updating and reviewing polices to ensure they accurately reflect how the organization works.
Efficiency of staff and work systems				Work systems were efficient prior to COVID 19, and as a result of safety measures implemented during the pandemic, new efficiencies were realized. Board members stated that they would like to adopt permanently some of these new efficiencies such as the ability to use electronic

				means to approve documents and conduct banking duties. The conservation staff use an app to document work, post data and share information with others, which is a very efficient means of communicating.
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