



West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District (WMSWCD) Board Meeting Minutes 5/17/2022

1. Meeting Location and Time:

Location: Held via Zoom meeting. The meeting was called to order by Director Preeg Riggsby at 6:02 PM.

2. Introductions and Agenda Approval

Directors Present: Hartline, Lightcap, Looney, Miller, Peterson, Preeg Riggsby; Directors Absent (excused): Sowder; Associate Directors present: Hamer; Staff Present: Kern-Korot, Levis, Magyar; Portland State University (PSU) Institute for Sustainable Solutions (ISS) Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (LSAMP) Climate Change Intern: Russell; Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) staff: Galland

The agenda was approved by acclamation.

3. Minutes:

West Multnomah SWCD Budget Committee Meeting minutes from 4/19/2022ⁱ

West Multnomah SWCD Board Meeting minutes from 4/19/2022ⁱⁱ

Director Looney made a motion to approve the April 19, 2022 Budget Committee meeting minutes as written, and Director Miller seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a vote of 6-0.

Director Hartline made a motion to approve the April 19, 2022 Board meeting minutes as written, and Director Lightcap seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a vote of 6-0.

4. Review of Treasurer's Reports

Director Miller presented the Treasurer's Reports.

The following reports were reviewed:

- a) WMSWCD-Balance Sheet as of April 30, 2022ⁱⁱⁱ
- b) WMSWCD-Budget Performance Report for April 30, 2022^{iv}

Director Miller reviewed the Balance Sheet, noting a strong cash position as of April 30th. He also noted our revenue received to-date of over \$2 million will help us finish out the year strong. Regarding conservation program spending, it is running closer to budget this year compared to past years. Director Miller closed the presentation by noting that WMSWCD is in a healthy financial state and gave recognition to staff on the good work. Director Preeg Riggsby echoed the recognition for staff and also recognized Director Miller for his significant contributions of time and energy to the District's fiscal health. In response to a question from Director Lightcap, Director Miller stated the District receives the bulk (more than 95%) of property tax revenue in November and December every year.

5. Public Comment

No public comment.

6. Staff presentation: Improving Climate Resiliency and Management Practices in Conservation Planning

Climate Change Intern Russell presented a new Climate Lens developed in response to the District's Long Range Business Plan strategic direction 8: *promote resilient environments and communities in the face of climate change*. Climate change and system impacts, methods for reducing impacts, management practices and priorities, system management, urban heat island impact, and communities of concern were covered in the presentation.

Questions and discussion included clarification that the research was based on long-term climate predictions; it can be expected that we will see some variability in weather patterns, including increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather, decreased stability in reliable climate patterns, and more frequent changes in weather. Director Lightcap requested the final Climate Lens report mention these expectations.

Director Miller noted for urban areas and low income communities greater impact from weather events is to be expected; some communities will have difficulty dealing with mitigation, for example trimming trees to prevent storm damage. Director Miller also cited an example of a program that soil and water conservation districts could get involved with: bringing a wood chipper to communities to clean up damaged trees, leaving mulch behind for use.

Questions and discussion also included the reliability of climate change models and impacts that are certain to happen, including rising temperatures, drier summers, wetter winters, and more frequent heat waves resulting from higher temperatures.

Director Lightcap noted the increased likelihood of wildfire and recommended partnering with neighboring Washington County's Tualatin Soil and Water Conservation District (Tualatin SWCD) on fire mitigation and safety measures for properties. Staff member Kern-Korot confirmed the District is already partnering with Tualatin SWCD on forest and wildfire-related issues. Kern-Korot also noted landowners concerned about ice storm damage are prematurely cutting down damage-prone oak trees. This is an area of concern for the District.

The board supported the report and presentation being posted on the WMSWCD website along with WMSWCD's plans for climate mitigation efforts.

Director Lightcap requested the report make specific mention of partnerships on fire preparedness; Climate Change Intern Russell confirmed the report does include discussion of partnerships and that the presentation slides can be altered to include the same.

Director Preeg Riggsby asked board members to contact Climate Change Intern Russell with further questions or suggestions for the project.

7. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) – Civil Rights Responsibilities for Partners Checklist

NRCS staff member Galland gave an overview of the NRCS Civil Rights Responsibilities for Partners checklist, which the board is asked to review and sign annually. Staff member Razalenti will send this checklist to the elected board directors to complete with DocuSign.

NRCS staff member Galland noted the associated Memorandum of Understanding has been updated with current NRCS representatives and that the District's work on diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives exceeds NRCS requirements.

NRCS staff member Galland also provided updates on NRCS staffing changes in her department and on NRCS Urban Agriculture work.

8. Board Meetings – Options for In-Person Meetings

Director Preeg Riggsby called for input from directors about holding upcoming meetings in person or by Zoom. Director Lightcap suggested the board meet in-person once per quarter. Director Miller recommended an outdoor meeting be held this summer and also noted board business is not adversely impacted by meeting via Zoom. Director Preeg Riggsby closed the discussion with the decision to meet via Zoom in June; at the June meeting, a decision can be made about an outdoor board meeting to be held in July or August.

9. Succession Planning

Director Preeg Riggsby stated that the District would meet in executive session pursuant to ORS 192.660(2)(a), which allows the District to meet in executive session to consider the employment of an employee, and called for a motion. Director Lightcap made a motion to meet in Executive Session and Director Looney seconded. The motion was approved with a vote of 6-0. The Executive Session began at 7:06 PM. Everyone in the meeting other than Board members and Associate Board member Hamer were asked to leave the meeting. Director Preeg Riggsby noted that no decision would be made in executive session, only discussion would occur. Those leaving the meeting were asked to return at 7:35 PM.

At 7:35 PM, Director Preeg Riggsby reopened the public discussion session on succession planning and called for a motion to fill the interim District Manager position and to create an ad hoc personnel committee to oversee recruitment of a new District Manager. Director Miller made a motion to appoint staff member Levis to serve as Interim District Manager, and Director Looney seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a vote of 6-0.

Director Preeg Riggsby called for discussion on the second motion to create an ad hoc personnel committee. The board was in support of Director Preeg Riggsby appointing members to this committee. Director Miller made a motion to create an ad hoc personnel committee to recruit the District's next District Manager, and Director Hartline seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a vote of 6-0.

Director Miller noted that due to capacity limits, an external agency might be needed to manage the recruitment. Based on information staff member Levis had gathered from a neighboring SWCD that had undergone a similar recruitment, Director Miller recommended that a maximum of \$40,000 be allocated for this purpose, with the hope and intent that the full amount would not be needed. Director Lightcap made a motion to approve up to \$40,000 for the purpose of recruiting a new District Manager, with the use of funds to be determined by the ad hoc personnel committee. Director Looney seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion moved forward with a vote of 5-1. Director Peterson voted no.

Director Preeg Riggsby asked all board directors and associate directors who are interested in serving on the ad hoc personnel committee to let her know within the next week. She also stated she will work with staff member Levis to incorporate staff input and participation. Staff member Levis confirmed that staff will be available to support the ad hoc personnel committee. WMSWCD will incorporate into the recruitment process its equitable hiring practices and recruitment policies rooted in diversity, equity, and inclusion principles.

10. Directors' and Associate Directors' Check-in

Director Miller shared with the Board of Directors that he had voluntarily self-reported to his employer, Oregon State University (OSU), that he made a mistake by not disclosing a potential conflict of interest in his dual roles as an OSU public employee and as an elected Director of WMSWCD. In his role as an elected Director of WMSWCD, he voted to approve a budget that included funding of an OSU program in 2021 and earlier. Going forward, if matters come up for which Director Miller has a potential or actual conflict of interest, he will disclose the conflict of interest and recuse himself from voting on matters where required. The letter from Director Miller to OSU documenting the conflict of interest^{vii} in his dual roles is submitted as an attachment to these minutes and included in the public record.

11. Announcements/Reminders/Confirmation of next Meeting:

Director Preeg Riggsby noted the following upcoming meetings/events:

- Budget Hearing and Board Meeting 6/21, at 6pm
- Staff Equity Training (Zoom) 5/26, 9am-12pm (Board Welcome – RSVP to staff member Razalenti by May 19th)
- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee Meeting 6/14, 1pm-3pm

The Board adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

ⁱWMSWCD 4/19/2022 Budget Committee Meeting Minutes

ⁱⁱWMSWCD 4/19/2022 Board Meeting Minutes

ⁱⁱⁱWMSWCD-Balance Sheet as of April 30, 2022

^{iv}WMSWCD-Budget Performance Report for April 30, 2022

^vNatural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) – Civil Rights Responsibilities for Partners Checklist

^{vi}Staff Reports

^{vii}Letter from Director Miller, dated 5/12/22, regarding conflict of interest