



West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District (WMSWCD) Board Meeting Minutes 6/20/2023

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, Lightcap, Miller, Preeg Riggsby; Directors Absent (excused): Peterson, Sowder; Associate Directors present: (none); Staff Present: Conway, Razalenti; Staff Absent (excused): District Manager Barlow (vacation); U.S. Department of Agriculture Staff: Galland (Natural Resources Conservation Service), Welker (Farm Services Agency)

The agenda was approved by acclamation.

3. Minutes:

West Multnomah SWCD Board Meeting minutes from 5/16/2023ⁱ

Director Lightcap made a motion to approve the May 16, 2023 Board meeting minutes as written, and Director Miller seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a vote of 5-0.

4. Review of Treasurer's Reports

Director Miller reported that the District is in a great financial position, with not much change from last month. Spending for conservation increased in May and will continue to ramp up for the end of the fiscal year. It is anticipated that there will be a large carryover for the upcoming fiscal year as was projected.

The following reports were reviewed:

- a) WMSWCD-Balance Sheet as of May 31, 2023ⁱⁱ
- b) WMSWCD-Budget Performance Report for May 31, 2023ⁱⁱⁱ

5. Public comment period

No public comment.

6. Oregon Department of Agriculture's (ODA) Capacity Grant Application for the 2023-2025 Biennium^{iv}; Approve District Annual work plans for Fiscal Year 2023-2024^v per ODA Requirement (ORS 568.554)

Director Preeg Riggsby gave an overview of the District's Annual Work Plan for fiscal year 2023-2024. These are the same plans that were presented to the Board in March and all program budgets in the approved budget were based on these work plans. The District is legally required per Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) 568.554 to submit the Board approved annual work plans to the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA). The District's annual work plans are more robust than the requirement. Director Lightcap noted that he would like to make sure that staff work plans allow for agility as things come up.

Director Hartline made a motion to approve the West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District annual work plan for Fiscal Year 2023-2024. Director Looney seconded the motion, and the motion was approved with a vote of 5-0.

Director Miller presented the District's ODA Capacity Grant application for the 2023-2025 Biennium. Director Looney noted that the dollar amounts on page 7 of the application packet were incorrectly recorded and need amending.

Director Looney made a motion to approve the West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District's application for the ODA Capacity Grant for the 2023-2025 Biennium with the edit of listing \$135,232.00 under the heading *Dollar Amount to be dedicated to District SOW* and listing \$57,956.00 under the heading *Dollar amount dedicated to District Operations*. Director Lightcap seconded the motion, and the motion was approved with a vote of 5-0.

7. Budget Hearing for Fiscal Year 2023-24

Director Miller reported that the Budget Committee approved the fiscal year budget for 2023-2024 on April 18, 2023. The Tax Supervising and Conservation Commission (TSCC) reviewed the 2023-2024 approved budget and confirmed compliance with Oregon local budget laws^{vi}. There have been no recommended adjustments to the approved budget: Updated cash projections, forecasted revenues and expenditures were consistent with estimates that were made for the Approved Budget.

Director Hartline made a motion to adopt the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Budget in the amount of \$4,124,665, representing \$2,857,435 in the General Fund and \$1,217,230 in Unappropriated and Reserved Amounts, and with the property tax levy at the full permanent rate of \$0.0750 per \$1,000 of assessed value. Director Looney seconded the motion, and it was approved with a vote of 5-0.

A resolution^{viii} to adopt the budget, make appropriations, and declare and categorize property taxes for Fiscal Year 2024 was approved and signed by Board Chair Preeg Riggsby and Board Secretary Looney on June 20, 2023 (Resolution# 2023-06-20).

8. U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA), Urban Conservation County Executive Director Introduction

New FSA Urban Conservation County Executive Director Amanda Welker introduced herself and reported that a new initiative for urban agriculture projects, part of the 2018 Farm Bill, is just getting up and running. There are only three offices that are fully staffed nationwide, and Portland is about to join that group, as they are almost fully staffed.

The main goal of the initiative is to make the programs more equitable for urban farmers. FSA staff member Welker noted that elections will be coming up in July and August. Anyone that identifies as an urban agriculturalist can register to vote for this. The criteria for what defines "urban agriculturalists" was deliberately left as a grey area, as they are seeking to learn more to see what is out there. Underrepresented communities are a focus area for this initiative. The main goal in the first year is to do outreach, to help get the word out, and to understand gaps and opportunities that they can bring to urban agriculture.

The Advisory Committee for this initiative is interested in expanding the committee, developing internships, and promoting concepts such as vertical agriculture. The Committee's main job currently is

to make awareness of this new committee at USDA. For Multnomah County there are currently three Advisory Committee members. Director Lightcap noted he would appreciate a quarterly report about this program, and FSA staff member Welker will work with NRCS staff member Galland to join and do regular reporting to the District.

Farmers.gov/urban is where a lot of information can be found about the urban agriculture program, and FSA staff member Welker can be reached at Amanda.welker3@usda.gov.

9. Discuss Board Stance on Current Legislative Issues

Director Preeg Riggsby reported that republican senators had the longest walk out in history, and have come back, with floor sessions starting back up. House Bill 2527, which would make tax deferrals possible for landowners to devote part of their land for wildlife, passed unanimously on the House side. The hearing for this bill for the Senate is coming up. Chair Preeg Riggsby emailed Oregon Senators directly to urge them to add HB 2527 to the Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue docket. The Board also received a copy of this letter. Chair Preeg Riggsby sent the current legislative bills that Oregon Association of Conservation Districts (OACD) are tracking to all Board members as well.

10. Directors' and Associate Directors' Check-in

Director Lightcap shared that he found a wilderness beach in Cape Cod, and there was much dead marsh. There is a related project in action that he is involved with that he will send more information about.

Director Looney has a group she is working with called Tank the Tanks that is working hard to get the fuel tanks along the Willamette River moved which are currently on liquefiable soil. Three billboards have been put up on St. Helens Road to make awareness on this issue, and they have a website tankthetanks.org to get the word out. They are getting awareness from the county and DEQ.

Director Preeg Riggsby shared this article via Zoom chat that is related to this issue:

<https://www.multco.us/multnomah-county/news/%E2%80%9C-deepwater-horizon-disaster-minutes%E2%80%9D-new-report-tallies-billions-damages-fuel>

Director Preeg Riggsby noted that the District is supportive of this effort and should put this on as a future agenda topic to look at tackling this issue as a District.

Director Preeg Riggsby reported that the Highway 43 Culvert Removal project is moving forward and is in the design phase now. There is a cool water refugia for fish in the area, but it's so long and steep that the fish can't get into the area because of this culvert.

11. Announcements/Reminders/Confirmation of next Meeting:

Director Preeg Riggsby noted the following upcoming meetings/events:

- Next Board meeting will be on August 8th at Director Hartline's home. This will be an abbreviated meeting followed by a farewell celebration for staff member Levis.
- No Board meeting in July.
- Staff health benefits insurance change: benefits will begin the first of the month after the date of hire without a wait of 30 days. With the proposed change of NOT waiting 30 days, this could mean that a new hire's insurance may start as soon as the next day. For example, if their first day was on

the last day of the month, health benefits would begin the next day on the 1st. This has a very nominal impact on the District's budget and a huge benefit for new employees.

Director Lightcap moved to adjourn the meeting, and Director Preeg seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a vote of 5-0.

The Board adjourned at 7:29 p.m.

ⁱWMSWCD 5/16/2023 Board Meeting Minutes

ⁱⁱWMSWCD-Balance Sheet as of May 31, 2023

ⁱⁱⁱWMSWCD-Budget Performance Report for May 31, 2023

^{iv}ODA Capacity Grant Application and Scope of Work for 2023-2025

^vDistrict Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Annual Work Plans

^{vi}TSCC FY23-24 Budget Certification Letter

^{vii}Recommended Adjustments to Approved Budget

^{viii}Resolution no. 2023-06-20 Authorizing the District's Budget for Fiscal Year 2023-24, Creating Expenditure Appropriations, Setting the Tax, and Imposing the Tax

^{ix}Staff Reports