



West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District (WMSWCD) Board Meeting Minutes 09/19/2023

1. Meeting Location and Time:

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

2. Introductions and Agenda Approval.

Directors Present: Hartline, Looney, Miller, Preeg Riggsby; Directors Absent: Lightcap, Peterson, Sowder; Staff Present: District Manager (DM) Barlow, Conway, Delepine, Mauser, Razalenti; NRCS Staff: Kim Galland; ODA Staff: Karin Stutzman

The agenda was approved by acclamation.

3. District Highlights

This agenda item was moved up due to lack of quorum at the beginning of the meeting.

DM Barlow shared that staff are putting together the annual report. The first draft is out to the design consultant.

The third recruit since December, the Outreach & Communications Coordinator, has begun work. Her name is Eleanor and is onboarding with Staff Magyar through September. Staff Magyar is available for a few hours a week during the transition to transfer knowledge.

The District is currently revising the Employee Handbook to ensure compliance with HR laws and industry standards. The revision process, which has been more extensive than anticipated, involves removing outdated language and adding new language where appropriate. The most significant change is the introduction of a Flexible Paid Time Off policy, replacing vacation, personal, and comp time. This policy offers six weeks of Paid Time Off per fiscal year, which does not roll over and can be used for any scheduled or unscheduled time off. The policy also eliminates payout at separation from work, reducing the District's financial liability. Sick time will continue to accrue separately. This shift policy shift aims to promote staff health and wellness, encourage work-life balance, and reduce administrative burden. The District will need to pay out any remaining comp time, vacation time and personal time that employees have accrued at the time the board adopts the policy, a cost that has been included in the '23-'24 FY budget.

The revised handbook will undergo an Equity Audit for tone and inclusivity, followed by a legal review for compliance. DM Barlow aims to present it to the Board for adoption by calendar year-end.

Director Preeg Riggsby emphasized that the new policy encourages staff to use all their time off. Director Hartline requested an analysis of the new policy's impact on productivity and costs. Director Miller clarified that sick time will roll over with no buyout upon departure.

4. Minutes

Board members reviewed the WMSWCD Board Meeting minutes from 8/8/2023.

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

5. Review of Treasurer's Reports

Director Miller presented the August Treasurer's report, which included the July data^{ii, iii}. The August balance sheet showed a total of \$1.35 million in cash assets. The Budget Performance Report indicated that the District spent \$23,355 less than planned in conservation programs for the first two months of the year, which was normal for this period. The Report also highlighted that the District purchased a new fleet vehicle in August. The 2019 Toyota Tacoma purchase will replace the 2003 GMC Sonoma that has required multiple repairs over the past year. The District is in a strong financial position two months into the fiscal year.

The following reports were reviewed:

- a) WMSWCD-Balance Sheet as of August 31, 2023^{iv}
- b) WMSWCD-Budget Performance Report for August 31, 2023^v

6. Conservationist & Invasive Species Program Coordinator Presentation

Staff Delepine provided an overview of the new Aquatic Invasives Program as part of the Early Detection Rapid Response program. Highlights included target invasive plant species in the area surveyed, monitored, and treated. She noted the usefulness of the new motorboat and kayaks purchased with a grant from the Oregon Department of Agriculture while surveying areas around Sauvie Island and Scappoose Bay that were previously unreachable. The Aquatic Invasives Program would not have been possible without the assistance of the ODA grant.

7. Public Comment

No Public Comment

8. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Update

NRCS Staff Galland informed the board that they recently hired an Urban Conservationist named Stephanie Payne who will be working within the city limits of Portland. Their workload is undetermined until their onboarding is complete.

9. Yearly Reminder of Resolution no. 2019-12-17 –Prevention of Workplace Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation Policy

Director Preeg Riggsby emphasized that there is no need for a vote on the matter at hand. She reminded the board of the resolution^{vi} passed in 2019, which underscores the importance of mutual respect among staff and board members. She encouraged individuals to communicate any discomfort to their supervisor or DM. Director Preeg Riggsby praised the positive work environment of the District and urged everyone to uphold the values that foster such an atmosphere. She requested Staff Barlow to relay this message, especially to new staff members.

10. Resolution to set Annual Meeting Time & Date

Director Hartline made a motion to approve resolution 2023-09-19 Establishing the Annual Meeting^{vi} date for November 28, at 6:00pm. Director Looney seconded the motion, and it was approved with a

vote of 4-0. The Annual meeting will be held at The Old Spaghetti Factory in South Portland. The meeting will include the annual report and award ceremony for individuals who have done excellent work within the district.

11. Director and Associate Director Check-ins:

Director Hartline reported that initial steps are being taken for the Harborton Frog Shuttle underpass, with a contractor meeting scheduled for next week. However, completion may take several years.

Director Preeg Riggsby updated the board on the Highway 43 culvert project in collaboration with Tryon Creek Watershed Council. The project, funded by Portland Bureau of Environmental Services, is substantial and updates will be provided as more information becomes available. The USFWS has classified the watershed as healthy, which is a positive development, and not common for urban waterways. If fish passage is reinstated, it could lead to healthier fish populations in the creek.

Director Preeg Riggsby also discussed DEI outreach efforts in the West Portland Park neighborhood, which includes a multicultural fair on October 7. The event will feature kid-friendly activities, book giveaways by the Multnomah County Library, performances by the Massai tribe, and international cuisine. However, WMSWCD will not have a table at the event.

Director Preeg Riggsby updated the board on SB775 noting that it will be in place for the 2024 election cycle.

12. Announcements/Reminders/Upcoming Meetings:

Next Board Meeting will be October 24, 2023 (virtual) at 6pm.

Director Preeg Riggsby declared the meeting adjourned at 7:46 PM.

ⁱWMSWCD Board meeting minutes August 8, 2023

ⁱⁱ WMSWCD Balance Sheet as of July 31, 2023

ⁱⁱⁱ WMSWCD Budget Performance Sheet as of July 31, 2023

^{iv}WMSWCD-Balance Sheet as of August 31, 2023

^v WMSWCD-Budget Performance Report of August 31, 2023

^{vi} Resolution 2019-12-17 Prevention of Workplace Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation Policy

^{vii} Resolution 2023-09-19 Establishing the Annual Meeting

^{viii} Staff Reports