



West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District (WMSWCD) Board Meeting Minutes 12/19/2023

**1. Meeting Location and Time:**

Location: Remote via Zoom meeting. The meeting was called to order by Director Preeg Riggsby at 6:05 PM.

**2. Introductions and Agenda Approval.**

Directors Present: Hartline (Late), Looney, Miller, Preeg Riggsby, Lightcap, Sowder, Peterson; Associate Directors: Wiley, Hamer; Staff Present: District Manager (DM) Barlow, Conway, Mauser, Logalbo; NRCS Staff: Stephanie Payne

The agenda was approved by acclamation.

**3. Minutes**

Board members reviewed the WMSWCD Board Meeting minutes from 11/28/2023<sup>i</sup>.

Director Looney made a motion to approve the Board meeting minutes as written, and Director Sowder seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a vote of 5-1 (Director Hartline joined the meeting late and was not part of this vote, Director Peterson was stuck on mute and unable to vote).

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

Director Miller reported on the November Treasurer's activities, indicating that 5 months of the way into the fiscal year, the District saw a substantial increase in property tax revenue, amounting to \$1,263,296, which is around \$600,000 more than the previous year. This boost in revenue, after drawing from savings, has favorably positioned the District financially. Education and Partner Funding is underspent by \$15,000 due to one partner's inability to complete the scope of work associated with their contract due to staffing issues. These funds will be rolled into next year's operations if not spent on Partner Funding for the current year. Current spending on Conservation, Operations, and Payroll is either at or slightly below expected levels. Director Hamer inquired about contingency funds, to which Director Miller confirmed the existence of a \$50,000 contingency, yet to be tapped. Budget discussions for the next fiscal year are set to begin around February/March.

The following reports were reviewed:

- a) WMSWCD-Balance Sheet as of November 30, 2023<sup>ii</sup>
- b) WMSWCD-Budget Performance Report for November 30, 2023<sup>iii</sup>

**5. Public Comments**

No Public Comments.

**6. District Work Highlights**

DM Barlow reported that the District is preparing to apply for the NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) in the upcoming spring. The application will involve collaborations with NRCS Urban Conservationist Stephanie Payne, NRCS Staff Kim Galland, and other partners to ensure a competitive proposal. The optimal project scope is being determined, whether covering either the entire county, specific forested and agricultural areas, or just WMSWCD district. The team will have 120 days to submit the application once the window opens, but is beginning the application process now. Significant funding is anticipated which may enhance existing projects like the Strategic Implementation Area on Sauvie Island or wildfire risk reduction efforts in the private forests of the Tualatin Mountains. Director Hamer inquired about the available funding, and DM Barlow indicated that while exact figures weren't available, the funding would be substantial and available over five years. Further financial details will be provided nearer to the application. DM Barlow also updated on the Sturgeon Lake Restoration Project, particularly the progress on the DSL Easement and plans for interpretive signage funded by the Oregon Wildlife Foundation. Director Preeg Riggsby emphasized the need for culturally inclusive narratives on the signage.

#### **7. Urban Conservationist Presentation:**

Staff Logalbo provided updates on various Urban Conservation projects, including internal grant programs focused on community and partner engagement. She highlighted the People's Garden Grant progress, involving collaborations with Unite Oregon and Portland Parks & Recreation. Mary also discussed the Land Care Collective group's efforts towards cultural competency in land care; the hiring of the District's new demographic data analyst intern in partnership with Portland State University; and vegetation management projects with green workforce organizations. Mary answered questions from the Board, and positive feedback on the presentation's content and visual aids was noted. Staff Logalbo remains available for further discussions and questions post-meeting.

#### **8. NRCS Update**

NRCS Urban Conservationist Stephanie Payne presented her role covering the Portland metro area, as one of the 17 urban service centers nationally. She addressed misconceptions about the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), clarifying that agricultural operations of various types, including subsistence growers and backyard gardeners, are eligible without minimum income requirements.

NRCS Urban Conservationist Payne also discussed the lack of a specific urban agriculture fund in Oregon and her efforts to establish one by 2025. She illustrated how urban producers can engage with NRCS programs and potentially secure substantial funding through an organic initiative contract. Her duties include site visits, planning, outreach, and coordinating with other agencies. Her upcoming outreach activities were also highlighted, and she encouraged further inquiries and discussions after the meeting.

#### **9. Resolution to Approve Updated 2021-2025 Long Range Business Plan**

Staff Logalbo discussed and proposed minor updates to the organization's Long Range Business Plan for 2021-2025. The updates focused on enhancing readability, clarifying language, and revising performance measures, including a map revision for better clarity and an updated land acknowledgment statement. A potential error, labeling Newberry Road on the map as Germantown Road, was identified and marked for review.

Director Miller made a motion to adopt Resolution 2023.12.19 – Adopt Revised 2021-2025 Long Range Business Plan. Director Looney seconded the motion, and the motion was approved with a vote of 6-1 (Director Peterson was muted and not able to participate in the vote).

## **10. Acceptance of FY '22-'23 Independent Auditors Report**

Director Miller and Budget and Fiscal Manager Conway presented the FY '22-'23 Auditors Report<sup>iv</sup>. The audit concluded with a clean report, confirming the financial statements prepared internally and presented for audit were fairly stated in all material facts. The auditor evaluated payroll entries, accounts payable, receivable transactions, deposits, and transfers between accounts, confirming that the sampling of transactions were appropriate and approved.

Director Miller moved to accept the report, and Director Looney seconded the motion. The report was accepted with a vote of 6-1 (Director Peterson was muted and not able to participate in the vote), with plans to file the approved statements with the state of Oregon. It was discussed that as a best practice, the organization should issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for future audits to explore potential other auditors.

## **11. Director and Associate Director Check-Ins**

No Director and Associate Director check-ins.

## **12. Announcements/Reminders/Upcoming Meetings:**

Next Board Meeting will be on January 16, 2024 via Zoom at 6pm.

Director Preeg Riggsby declared the meeting adjourned at 7:33 PM.

<sup>i</sup>WMSWCD Board meeting minutes November 30, 2023

<sup>ii</sup> WMSWCD Balance Sheet as of November 30, 2023

<sup>iii</sup> WMSWCD Budget Performance Sheet as of November 30, 2023

<sup>iv</sup> Independent Auditor's Report on Financial Statements for the Year Ended June 30, 2023