



West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District (WMSWCD) Board Meeting Minutes 01/23/2023

1. Meeting Location and Time:

Location: Remote via Zoom meeting. The meeting was called to order by Director Preeg Riggsby at 6:03 PM.

2. Introductions and Agenda Approval

Directors Present: Preeg Riggsby, Sowder, Looney, Miller, Wiley, Lightcap, Peterson (Muted), Hartline, Hamer (late); Staff Present: District Manager (DM) Barlow, Conway, Mauser, Greene; NRCS Staff: Kimberly Galland

The agenda was approved by acclamation.

3. Minutes

Board members reviewed the WMSWCD Board Meeting minutes from 12/19/2023ⁱ.

Director Sowder made a motion to approve the Board meeting minutes as written, and Director Looney seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a vote of 6-1 (Director Peterson was muted and abstained from this vote).

4. Review of Treasurer's Reports

Staff Conway provided a comprehensive financial overview of the district, covering the first half of the fiscal year. She introduced a newly developed report titled "Financial Snapshot," which utilized a range of graphs and charts to effectively illustrate the district's financial situation visually. Key highlights included balances in the bank account and LGIP savings account, with a notable 5% interest income on the LGIP savings account, and the district's positive financial standing, evidenced by a current year-to-date increase in fund balance of \$960,000. The report emphasized income versus budget comparisons, spending by department, overall expenditure patterns, and suggested the potential for format changes in future reports for better readability.

Director Lightcap commended the clarity of the report and proposed the creation of a reserve fund for unspent budget amounts to be earmarked for future major projects. This suggestion, along with the idea of rolling over unspent funds, was noted for future budget discussions. The board collectively appreciated the enhanced clarity and accessibility of financial data presented graphically, recognizing its effectiveness in communicating with the public. The presentation concluded with an acknowledgment of the recent audit report filing with the State of Oregon. The following report was reviewed:

- a) WMSWCD Financial Snapshotⁱⁱ

5. Public Comments

No Public Comments.

6. Resolution to appoint DM as Budget Officer in Perpetuity

Director Preeg Riggsby discussed and proposed a resolution to appoint the District Manager as Budget Officer in perpetuity. Staff Conway supported this with reference to ORS 294.331. DM Barlow noted this would bring us in alignment with practices in neighboring Districts. Director Lightcap made a motion to adopt Resolution 2024.01.23 – Appointing the District Manager as Budget Officer In Perpetuity^{iv}. Director Looney seconded the motion, and the motion was approved with a vote of 6-1 (Director Peterson was muted and abstained from this vote).

7. Acceptance of Budget Calendar

The Directors discussed the presented Budget Calendar^v for fiscal year 2024. After discussion, the board proposed the following changes:

- Moving the first Budget Meeting from April 16 to April 30
- Moving the second Budget Meeting from April 23 to May 7, if needed

Director Miller made a motion to accept the calendar with those changes; Director Looney seconded the motion and the motion was approved with a vote of 6-1 (Director Peterson was muted and abstained from this vote).

8. Resolution to Adopt Revised Public Contracting Rules

A resolution was discussed for adopting revised public contracting rules, as presented by Staff Conway. The resolution aimed to update the district's contracting rules to reflect recent statutory changes, particularly regarding the limits on public contracting, effective September 2023. These changes primarily involved adjusting the thresholds for personal service contracts. The document detailing these revisions was not immediately available for review, leading to a request by the board members for a copy to review. The board expressed a need to understand the details due to their fiduciary responsibilities. While there was general comfort in aligning with state statutes, the decision was made to defer the adoption of the resolution to the February meeting, allowing board members time to review the document. This would ensure informed decision-making and compliance with their governance roles. The matter will be revisited.

9. Outreach and Communications Coordinator Presentation:

Staff Greene, the new Outreach and Communications Coordinator, presented her work since joining the team in late September. She shared her background, including her role as Editor-in-Chief at Green American magazine and her involvement in environmental education. Staff Greene detailed her tasks since starting, such as finalizing the annual report, improving social media presence, learning about the budget, and preparing for a public hearing. Ongoing projects inherited from her predecessor include finalizing website edits, preparing for the annual Soil School in April, and continuing the communications plan. Future plans involve enhancing web content, conducting mailings for conservation projects, and further engaging with the conservation team. She presented statistics on social media followers, newsletter subscribers, and website traffic from October to December, highlighting the growth and engagement in these areas. The board, appreciative of Staff Greene's efforts, acknowledged the significance of her role as the first full-time coordinator in this capacity and showed interest in the presented statistics, recognizing the potential impact on the organization's outreach and communication strategies.

10. District Work Highlights

DM Barlow clarified the postponement of the Sturgeon Lake restoration easement public hearing, attributing it to the rescheduling of the regular board meeting due to bad weather, which led to the need for restarting the public notification process.

DM Barlow presented key district updates, including status of the Weyerhauser property acquisition and development, a subject of interest to Director Lightcap and the rest of the Board over the past approximately five years.

Focusing on the Weyerhauser property, she highlighted the Trust for Public Land's (TPL) application for USFS Forest Legacy Program (FLP) funding towards the acquisition of more than 3,100 acres. The project ranked highly within Oregon FLP applicants, and is now contending on a national level. DM Barlow's has two upcoming meetings with TPL and FLP staff to re-engage WMSWCD with the process as a supportive partner. Current plans for the property, if acquired, include transferring it to Oregon State University (OSU) for management as a combination of a demonstration forest and recreational space. The Metro Regional Government's commitment of \$3.5 million toward acquisition, along with previous interest from the Grand Ronde tribe and preliminary talks with the NRCS, were also discussed.

Directors Lightcap and Sowder shared their visions for the property. Director Lightcap underscored the importance of the district reevaluating its support level and proposed using the Soil and Water Conservation Commission for grant opportunities, with a focus on public education initiatives. Director Preeg Riggsby clarified the role of the Soil and Water Conservation Commission as an influencer rather than a funding body and recommended involving the district's Commissioner from the Soil and Water Conservation Commission in future discussions on the matter. Director Sowder supported OSU's ownership and WMSWCD's managerial role, expressing concerns over existing bicycle access arrangements with Weyerhauser. Director Hartline questioned OSU's readiness and ability to manage the property, a point DM Barlow agreed to address in her upcoming dialogues with TPL and OSU.

DM Barlow also discussed the district's engagement in the Sauvie Island ODA Strategic Implementation Area and the upcoming budget committee nominations.

11. Director and Associate Director Check-In

Director Preeg Riggsby raised awareness to a Tryon Creek Watershed Council event scheduled for March 9, likely at Lewis and Clark College. This community event involves multiple sites and volunteers for restoration work and community building. Another focus was the Jackson Middle School property, where West Multnomah SWCD has been working on habitat restoration. She highlighted the concerns that were raised about Portland Public Schools' plan to build sports fields with Astroturf on the property, potentially affecting stormwater management and creating a mini heat island. Efforts by the community led to a change in materials from toxic rubber pellets to a less harmful alternative. However, there was disappointment over the potential negative impact on the adjacent restoration area.

Additionally, the recent ice storm brought down several large trees, causing damage and raising concerns among the community about tree safety. Director Preeg Riggsby noted the need for proactive public education on the benefits of trees, particularly in preventing other types of property damage like landslides. This discussion highlighted the importance of communicating the benefits of trees to prevent

a reactionary tree-cutting campaign. Lastly, Director Lightcap touched on potential educational opportunities related to the Sturgeon Lake restoration project and the importance of public awareness of such conservation efforts. He suggested exploring opportunities to involve students in real-life projects related to these conservation efforts.

12. Announcements/Reminders/Upcoming Meetings:

- Next Board Meeting will be on February 20, 2024 via Zoom at 6pm.
- March Board Meeting: In person, location TBD, March 19, 2024, 6pm. Staff will present annual work plans
- April Board Meeting/First Budget Meeting – Virtual via Zoom, April 30, 2024, 6pm

Director Preeg Riggsby declared the meeting adjourned at 7:35 PM.

ⁱWMSWCD Board meeting minutes 12/19/23

ⁱⁱ WMSWCD Financial Snapshot

^{iv} Resolution 2024.01.23 – Appointing the District Manager as Budget Officer In Perpetuity

^v FY 2024 Budget Calendar