



West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District (WMSWCD) Board Meeting Minutes 05/21/2024

1. Meeting Location and Time:

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

2. Introductions and Agenda Approval:

Directors Present: Hartline, Looney, Miller, Peterson, Preeg Riggsby; Directors Absent: Lightcap (unable to attend due to poor internet connectivity), Sowder; Associate Director Present: Hamer (7:05 pm); Staff Present: District Manager (DM) Barlow, Conway, Kern-Korot, Khan, Mauser; NRCS Staff: Galland; Public Member: Rob Millis (6:06 pm)

The agenda was approved by acclamation.

3. Minutes:

Board members reviewed the West Multnomah SWCD Budget Committee minutesⁱ and Board Meeting minutesⁱⁱ from 4/30/2024.

Director Looney made a motion to approve the Board Meeting minutes as written, and Director Hartline seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a vote of 5-0.

Director Looney made a motion to approve the Budget Committee 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 presented the Financial Packetⁱⁱⁱ for April, including the Financial Snapshot visual aids. The District has an increase in fund balance of \$205,127 over budget for the fiscal year-to-date, and received an unexpected \$20,000 from a property tax revenue related to the Convention Center. The Local Government Investment Pool (LGIP) savings account holds \$1,705,731 as of April 30, with monthly expenditures at about \$185,000 per month. The LGIP interest rate stands at 5.25%, providing additional income of interest earnings. Director Miller clarified that funds are transferred as needed from savings to checking to maximize interest earnings, not due to revenue shortfalls, a process appreciated by Director Preeg Riggsby for its efficiency. There are anticipated conservation program expenses expected, but the fiscal year is projected to end positively.

The following reports were reviewed:

- a) WMSWCD-Financial Packet as of April 30, 2024ⁱⁱⁱ

5. Senior Conservationist Presentation:

Senior Conservationist Kern-Korot provided updates on her program activities, beginning with a video showcasing the award-winning Wetland Restoration Project on lower McCarthy Creek and recent developments on the Highway 30 wildlife crossing project. She discussed various planting and maintenance activities, including the introduction and monitoring of white alder trees. Additionally, she gave an update on the Emerald Ash Borer situation, highlighting the use of parasitic wasps for

containment of the borers and traps to track their movement across the region. She also outlined ongoing education and outreach efforts, such as presentations and publications.

6. GIS & Conservation Technician Presentation:

GIS and Conservation Technician Khan presented the data analysis comparing district demographic survey data with districtwide census data, emphasizing the alignment with the organization's Long Range Business Plan strategic goal of embedding equity and inclusion. He reviewed the development of the survey, which aimed to analyze staff and board demographics, comparing them with district and regional data. The survey, conducted anonymously and randomized to ensure privacy, revealed disparities in representation, particularly among BIPOC communities, languages spoken, and age groups under 45. Khan highlighted the need for ongoing demographic research and proposed forming a diverse advisory committee and setting diversification goals. He underscored the importance of addressing racial equity and engaging underrepresented communities to enhance the organization's outreach and impact. The presentation concluded with a call for further discussion on utilizing the data to inform future strategies.

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

NRCS District Conservationist Galland reported handling 28 EQIP applications moving towards contracts totaling nearly \$400,000. This year, no high tunnels were funded, but several forest management plans and organic transition plans are in progress, including one forest contract within the district. Galland also mentioned upcoming stewardship applications and the ongoing training of new staff members Kate and Drew. Additionally, she announced the hiring of Greg Becker as the new state conservationist for NRCS, bringing stability and leadership. Director Preeg Riggsby also shared a message from NRCS Urban Conservationist Stephanie Paine about urban fund pools and grants for BIPOC urban farmers, highlighting upcoming opportunities and ongoing urban resiliency projects.

8. Public Comment:

Rob Millis, a master's student at Oregon State University, expressed his interest in conducting a study on the district as part of his focus on water conflict and transformation. He would like to observe meetings, attend site visits, and potentially compile a report with recommendations. Director Preeg Riggsby acknowledged his request and suggested the need to discuss with DM Barlow, who might have the capacity to accommodate his involvement. Director Preeg Riggsby emphasized the district's openness to educational partnerships and proposed that Rob could attend board meetings, which are open to the public, and potentially engage with specific staff and projects. DM Barlow and Millis exchanged contact information in the Zoom chat for coordination.

9. Annual Meeting Date and Summer Meeting Date:

The board discussed and made two scheduling decisions. First, they confirmed the summer meeting date, deciding to meet on July 16th at Director Hartline's property on Sauvie Island, which will include a potluck. All board members present indicated their availability for that date. The board will NOT hold a meeting in August.

Second, the board scheduled the annual meeting for November 19th, which is the regular board meeting date and the week before Thanksgiving and will be in-person. This decision was based on the completion of the annual report and availability of board members. The location for the annual meeting

will be confirmed later, with the Old Spaghetti Factory being a potential venue. A resolution to set the Annual Meeting date will be presented to the board at the June 2024 Board of Directors meeting.

10. District Manager Update:

DM Barlow provided updates on the district activities and upcoming events. She highlighted the 2024 election for Soil and Water Conservation District board directors, noting the new law (Senate Bill 775) that removes the requirement to own a minimum of 10 acres to run for office in counties of 250,000 residents or more. The district will co-host an information session with other districts on June 13th, 2024, to educate potential candidates on the election process.

DM Barlow mentioned the upcoming tour of a commercial forest property for sale on June 20th, 2024, and updates on the ODA SIA project on Sauvie Island. She pointed directors to her Staff Report^{iv} for additional information. DM Barlow also discussed the recent application by PGE to clear 3-6 acres in Forest Park for power line installation, noting that the district will review and respond during the 30-day comment window.

Lastly, she informed the board that the district was not awarded the USFS Community Wildfire Defense Grant but received positive feedback encouraging the District to reapply next year. The board also discussed the impact and evaluation process for partnership grants, with a call from DM Barlow to involve board members in the scoring process next year.

11. Director and Associate Director Check-ins:

No director updates.

12. Announcements/Reminders/Upcoming Meetings:

Director Preeg Riggsby announced the following upcoming meetings/events:

- Next Board Meeting and Budget Hearing will be on June 18, 2024, virtually via Zoom.

Director Preeg Riggsby declared the meeting adjourned at 7:49 PM.

ⁱWMSWCD Budget Committee meeting minutes April 30, 2024

ⁱⁱWMSWCD Board meeting minutes April 30, 2024

ⁱⁱⁱWMSWCD-Financial Packet as of April 30, 2024

^{iv}Staff Reports