



West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District (WMSWCD) Board Meeting Minutes 6/18/2024

**1. Meeting Location and Time:**

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

**2. Introductions and Agenda Approval:**

Directors Present: Hartline, Looney, Lightcap, Miller, Preeg Riggsby, Peterson, Sowder; Associate Directors present: (none); Staff Present: DM Barlow, Conway, Mauser; Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Staff Galland, Payne.

The agenda was approved by acclamation.

**3. Minutes:**

*West Multnomah SWCD Board Meeting minutes from 5/21/2024<sup>i</sup>*

Director Looney made a motion to approve the May 16, 2024, Board meeting minutes as written, and Director Sowder seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a unanimous vote of 6-0.

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

Director Miller reported that the district is in a great financial position, detailing the financial status of the district. He highlighted that the district has had an increase in fund balance of \$268,030 as of May 31, 2024, which is more than expected at this point in the year. The increase is largely due to higher property tax revenues and a substantial amount of savings interest income in the Local Government Investment Pool (LGIP) account. The district currently has \$1.8 million in the cash accounts, which is slightly down from previous periods but still reflects a healthy financial position. He noted that conservation spending is catching up with predictions.

Director Lightcap inquired where the extra revenue came from, and Director Miller further explained that the additional revenue was primarily driven by an increase in property values and a lower than anticipated delinquency rate in property tax payments. This resulted in the district receiving \$106,000 more from Multnomah County property taxes than initially budgeted. The positive variance in the financials indicates that the district is in a strong financial position, with an overall budget surplus for the fiscal year-to-date.

The following reports were reviewed:

- a) WMSWCD-Balance Sheet as of May 31, 2024<sup>ii</sup>
- b) WMSWCD-Budget Performance Report for May 31, 2024

**5. Public comment period:**

No public comment.

## **6. NRCS Update:**

NRCS Urban Conservationist Stephanie Payne provided a detailed update on recent NRCS activities and achievements. She discussed the high tunnel applications, explaining that due to the removal of the payment cap, the program could now fund larger and multiple high tunnels per applicant. This change led to significant applications with values up to \$60,000. Stephanie noted that seven out of twelve Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) applications had been successfully obligated, and a recent Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) deadline resulted in 12 out of 14 urban farming applications moving forward, with a total funding of approximately \$750,000. Additionally, Stephanie shared exciting news about the approval of two Conservation Implementation Strategies (CIS) proposals aimed at urban resiliency and rainwater harvest initiatives. These programs, funded for the next five years, will support urban producers with a budget of \$3 million.

District Conservationist Kim Galland reported on several ongoing initiatives in Clackamas County. She mentioned the delivery of new equipment that would enhance their operational capabilities and the strategic action plan with Mount Hood National Forest, which might evolve into a joint chief's proposal. Kim also highlighted the water quality initiative funding request for the Molalla River, focusing on reducing sediment load and pollutants.

## **7. Approve District Annual work plans for Fiscal Year 2024-2025<sup>iii</sup> per ODA Requirement (ORS 568.554):**

The annual work plans for the fiscal year 2024-25 were discussed, with members having previously reviewed and discussed them in detail during earlier meetings.

Director Lightcap moved to approve the work plans, which was seconded by Director Miller. The work plans were approved with a unanimous vote of 6-0.

## **7. Budget Hearing for Fiscal Year 2024-25:**

Staff Conway addressed a correction on the LB-1<sup>iv</sup> form that had been published. On the LB-1 the FY23 Adopted Budget column incorrectly identifies \$25,000 as Contingency and \$50,000 as Reserved for Future Expenditures. The correct amounts for FY23 Adopted Budget column are \$50,000 in Contingency and \$25,000 in Reserved for Future Expenditures. These errors have been corrected in the Budget Message and all other relevant documentation.

Director Miller then presented the revised budget for the fiscal year 2024-25, which totaled \$4,144,026. The budget was revised to reflect a reduction in funding for a grant that the District was unsuccessful in securing, which totaled \$1,851,500. Both income and related services were removed from the budget. The budget presented for adoption includes \$2,950,239 allocated to the general fund, \$50,000 set aside in contingency, and \$1,143,787 designated for unappropriated and reserve amounts. The budget reflects careful financial planning to ensure the district can meet its operational and programmatic goals.

Director Miller highlighted the importance of the budget in maintaining the district's financial health and its ability to support ongoing and future projects. He also noted that the revised budget incorporated adjustments based on the latest financial data and projections.

Director Miller made a motion to adopt the revised budget for FY25 in the amount of \$4,144,026, representing \$2,950,239 in the General Fund and \$50,000 Contingency and \$1,143,787 in Unappropriated and Reserve amounts as noted in Resolution 2024-06-18 A. In addition, he made a motion to impose the property levy at the full rate of 0.75 per \$1,000 of assessed property value as noted in Resolution 2024-06-18 A. Director Lightcap seconded the motions. The motions were then opened for discussion, during which board members expressed their support for the budget and appreciation for the detailed financial planning. With no further questions or comments, the motion was put to a vote and approved with a unanimous vote of 6-0.

A resolution<sup>v</sup> to adopt the revised budget, make appropriations, and declare and categorize property taxes for Fiscal Year 2025 was approved and signed by Board Chair Preeg Riggsby and Board Secretary Looney on June 19, 2024 (Resolution# 2024-06-18 A).

#### **8. Resolution 2024-06-18B<sup>vi</sup> – Setting the Annual Meeting Date:**

The board discussed the importance of setting the annual meeting date to ensure that it accommodates all board members and aligns with other significant events.

Director Hartline moved to set the annual meeting date for November 19, 2024, which is the date of the regular monthly board meeting. Director Looney seconded the motion. The motion was then put to a vote and approved unanimously by the board.

#### **9. District Manager's Report:**

DM Barlow provided updates on ongoing district projects and initiatives. The recruitment process for the urban conservationist position is advancing well, with first-round interviews scheduled for early July. This role is essential for urban conservation efforts and community engagement.

She also addressed the district's recent unsuccessful application for the US Forest Service Community Wildfire Defense Grant. Despite not receiving the grant, the feedback was positive, and the score was close to the funding threshold. Encouraged by the Oregon State Fire Marshal's Office to reapply, she plans to strengthen the next application based on the feedback. A meeting with the Oregon Department of Forestry is also scheduled for additional insights.

An update was given on the upcoming site tour that will include DM Barlow, Director Sowder, Forest Conservationist Laura Taylor, and other project stakeholders and the Trust for Public Land (TPL) on June 20, 2024, to visit a 3,500-acre commercial forest property. TPL is securing funding to purchase the property, with the intention to convey the property to Oregon State University to manage as a demonstration working forest.

Lastly, she gave an update on the PGE application to clear up to six acres of pristine forest land on an existing PGE easement to install additional powerlines within Forest Park. The application is under review by the city's Bureau of Development Services, with a 30-day public comment period to follow once the BDS completeness review is completed.

## **10. Directors' and Associate Directors' Check-in**

Director Lightcap discussed his ongoing experiments with ivy management and collaboration with WMSWCD Staff Delepine. He highlighted efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of a new treatment formula for ivy and its potential benefits for long-term vegetation management.

## **11. Announcements/Reminders/Confirmation of next Meeting:**

Director Preeg Riggsby noted the following upcoming meetings/events:

- Next Board meeting will be July 16<sup>th</sup> at Director Hartline's home. This will be an abbreviated meeting followed by a summer potluck with WMSWCD Staff.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:48 p.m.

<sup>i</sup>WMSWCD 5/21/2024 Board Meeting Minutes

<sup>ii</sup>WMSWCD-Balance Sheet as of May 31, 2024

<sup>iii</sup>District Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Annual Work Plans

<sup>iv</sup>LB-1 Form

<sup>v</sup>Resolution no. 2024-06-18 A Authorizing the District's Budget for Fiscal Year 2024-25, Creating Expenditure Appropriations, Setting the Tax, and Imposing the Tax

<sup>vi</sup>Resolution 2024-06-18 B – Resolution Setting the Annual Meeting Date