



West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District (WMSWCD) Board Meeting Minutes 09/17/2024

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, Lightcap, Sowder (6:14pm); Associate Directors Present: Hamer; Staff Present: Williams-Conway, Gall, Mauser, Scipioni; NRCS Staff: Payne. DM Barlow was excused from this meeting due to a trip scheduled before her tenure at the District started.

The agenda was approved by acclamation.

3. Minutes:

Board members reviewed the WMSWCD Board Meeting minutes from 6/18/2024ⁱ.

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 Sowder was absent for this vote.

4. Review of Treasurer's Reports:

Director Miller provided a financial report covering the district's financial performance for June, July, and August 2024. As of August 31, the district is underspent according to budgeted projections by \$85,000, which is expected this early in the fiscal year as projects and contracts take time to ramp up. The balance sheet shows the district in a strong financial position, with \$1.142 million in the LGIP savings account. Two line items were emphasized: \$50,000 allocated to the general operating contingency and \$25,000 reserved for future expenditures. These funds were highlighted as they were to be discussed further in relation to upcoming resolutions on the property acquisition project. Director Looney noted a typographical error on the Financial Snapshot that Staff Williams-Conway will correct.

The following reports were reviewed:

- a) WMSWCD-Balance Sheet as of August 31, 2024ⁱⁱ
- b) WMSWCD-Budget Performance Report for August 31, 2024ⁱⁱⁱ

5. Resolutions 2024-09-17A & Resolution 2024-09-17B to allocate funding for support of Tualatin Mountains property acquisition:

The board discussed a proposal to commit \$100,000 toward the Tualatin Mountains property acquisition project, a collaboration between the Trust for Public Lands (TPL) and Oregon State University (OSU). TPL is seeking to purchase the land from Weyerhaeuser, and OSU plans to manage the property as a demonstration forest. The board had previously expressed support for this project, which aligns with the District's mission of promoting sustainable forestry practices and educating the public. However, concerns were raised regarding the financial logistics and OSU's management plan.

The funding proposal included two resolutions: Resolution 2024-09-17A, which would transfer \$50,000 from the contingency fund to be available to TPL immediately, and Resolution 2024-09-17B, which

would commit to developing a Supplemental Budget in order to provide an additional \$50,000 for a total of \$100,000. In the supplemental budget, \$25,000 would be sourced from funds allocated to future reserves and the other \$25,000 would be from either property tax income that exceeds District budgeted expectations or underspending within the current budget. The supplemental budget would be drafted in December 2024 when the District is six months into the fiscal year and better able to determine the best source of funding. Director Miller expressed concerns about using the contingency fund, citing the importance of maintaining reserves for unforeseen emergencies. He recommended seeking funding through a supplemental budget rather than depleting the contingency fund this early in the fiscal year. Additionally, Director Hartline raised concerns about OSU's long-term commitment to managing the property and requested a presentation or copy of the management plan for review.

The board agreed that more information was needed before making a final decision. This includes understanding why Metro withdrew its funding commitment for the project and reviewing the management plan for the property to ensure it aligns with the District's goals. It was decided to delay the vote until the October meeting, allowing time to gather the necessary information and reassess the funding options. During this period, board members were encouraged to direct any inquiries to DM Barlow, who has been in contact with TPL and OSU.

6. Farm & Soil Conservationist Presentation:

Staff Gall provided updates on two main initiatives: the Strategic Implementation Area (SIA) project and the Sturgeon Lake restoration. He discussed the SIA project, which is being carried out in partnership with the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) to ensure compliance with agricultural water quality rules. The project covers areas like Sauvie Island and parts of the West Hills. ODA evaluated 670 tax lots using publicly available data, identifying 16 properties for potential compliance issues. ODA is working with landowners to encourage voluntary compliance, focusing on water quality concerns such as mercury and nitrate runoff. The project will continue over a five-year period.

He also shared an update on the Sturgeon Lake restoration project, which reconnected the lake to the Columbia River through Dairy Creek. This reconnection has allowed fish, including juvenile Chinook salmon, to access the lake. He mentioned the installation of PIT tag arrays to track fish movements, with data showing fish from various locations using the waterway. The project continues to monitor fish passage and water quality as part of the restoration effort.

7. Public Comment:

No public comment.

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

Stephanie Payne, Urban Conservationist with NRCS, provided an update on the fiscal year, reporting 11 EQIP contracts secured, totaling \$780,000, with 10 new participants. She announced two new urban funding pools for FY 2025 and discussed a potential workshop on rainwater harvesting systems. She also noted NRCS's acquisition of a handheld metal detector for soil testing and the creation of a 10-year long-range plan for the Portland Metro area. Stephanie invited the board to a local working group meeting on January 16, 2025, and mentioned her upcoming maternity leave in February, during which a substitute will fill her role. The board thanked her for the update.

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

Director Preeg Riggsby emphasized that there is no need for a vote on the matter at hand as this review was for informational purposes only. The board was reminded of the district's Prevention of Workplace Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation policy, adopted in 2019. As part of an annual review, board members were encouraged to revisit the policy, which outlines the commitment to maintaining a respectful and professional environment, free from discrimination, harassment, or retaliation, for both employees and board members.

10. Discuss Prosper Portland's proposed Westside Tax Increment Finance District Plan and any impacts to District tax base. Discuss response to Prosper Portland:

The board discussed Prosper Portland's proposal for a new West Side Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District. Director Preeg Riggsby explained that TIF districts redirect incremental property tax revenue into redevelopment projects within the district for a specified period, which can temporarily reduce tax income for other entities, such as the District. The documentation provided outlines financial impacts over the 35-year span of the proposed TIF district, showing potential reductions in tax revenue for the District over the life of the project totaling nearly \$4M. The most significant annual revenue reductions will occur in the later years of the project, with a projected loss of \$245,000 in the fiscal year 2059-2060. The board briefly discussed the long-term implications of TIF districts, including potential successes and challenges, referencing examples like Belmont, Hawthorne, and Lents. Ultimately, no board member expressed interest in submitting formal comments, and the discussion concluded without action.

11. Appointment of Zone 1 Director, Discussion on Zone 2 Election:

The board discussed the vacancy for the Zone 1 Director position, which was recently left vacant after the passing of a long-term board member. Associate Director Hamer submitted his name for election on the upcoming November 5, 2024 ballot, and Director Preeg Riggsby suggested appointing him to fill the role until the election is finalized. Director Lightcap made a motion to appoint Jan Hamer as Zone 1 Director, which was seconded by Director Looney. The motion passed with a vote of 6-0, and Jan was thanked for his years of service as an Associate Director and welcomed as a voting member.

The board also noted that no candidates submitted their materials for the Zone 2 position, though a Zone 2 resident had expressed interest. Due to a procedural oversight, they will be conducting a write-in campaign. The board discussed efforts to support this campaign and encouraged communication with local voters to ensure the candidates' election. Additionally, the board expressed appreciation for Director Hartline's long service. Director Hartline stated her intent to step down and noted the importance of bringing new voices to the board.

12. Rescheduling the October and November 2024 Board Meeting:

The board discussed rescheduling the October meeting from October 15th to October 22nd due to the overlap with the OACD Annual Conference. Director Preeg Riggsby encouraged board members to attend the OACD meeting, noting the importance of participation. She then proposed the new meeting date of October 22nd and checked for quorum availability. After confirming that a quorum was available, Director Miller made a motion to reschedule the meeting, which was seconded by Director Hartline. The motion passed with a vote of 6-0, and the October meeting was moved to October 22, 2024.

The board also discussed rescheduling the abbreviated board meeting that coincides with the annual meeting, set for November 19, 2024. Staff suggested that the board meet before the social gathering instead of after, given that last year's meeting was held late in the evening after the social event. Director Preeg Riggsby proposed that the board meet at 4:30 PM before the annual gathering, instead of 8:30 PM. She asked for a show of hands to confirm availability for the earlier time. A quorum was confirmed, and the board will proceed with the early meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 PM.

ⁱWMSWCD Board meeting minutes June 18, 2024

ⁱⁱ WMSWCD Balance Sheet as of August 31, 2024

ⁱⁱⁱ WMSWCD Budget Performance Sheet as of August 31, 2024

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

^vStaff Reports