



West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District (WMSWCD) Board Meeting Minutes 10/22/2024

**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; Associate Directors Present: Wiley, Hamer (6:08PM); Staff Present: DM Barlow, Delepine, Mauser; Budget Committee Member: Oliver

The agenda was approved by acclamation.

**3. Minutes:**

Board members reviewed the WMSWCD Board Meeting minutes from 9/17/2024<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 was not able to vote due to a technical issue and abstained, and Director Hamer, who had not yet arrived or taken his oath of office, was not eligible to vote.

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

Director Miller presented the financial report for September 2024, noting the District is \$121,000 ahead of budget for the first quarter. Director Miller reminded the Board that the District is operating on reserves until tax revenue begins arriving in November. Spending is on target, with the first round of partner grants paid and underspending in conservation personnel, which could be reallocated to future projects or serve as underspending for the year. Historical trends show a slight increase in the District's cash position over the past five years, reflecting sound financial management. The Board expressed gratitude for Director Miller's leadership as he prepares to step down from his position as Board Director in January.

The following reports were reviewed:

- a) WMSWCD-Balance Sheet as of September 30, 2024<sup>ii</sup>
- b) WMSWCD-Budget Performance Report for September 30, 2024<sup>iii</sup>

**5. Oath of Office:**

Jan Hamer was officially sworn in as a voting member of the Board of Directors after being appointed by the Board at the September 2024 meeting. He had been an Associate Director for many years. Due to technical difficulties, the oath of office was conducted over the phone, with Director Preeg Riggsby leading the process and Director Hamer repeating after her. The oath included affirmations to support the Constitution of the United States and the State of Oregon, and to faithfully discharge his duties as Director of the West Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District. Director Hamer will serve in the position previously held by the late Kim Peterson.

**6. Review of Auditors Report:**

Director Miller presented the 2023-2024 auditor's report<sup>iv</sup>, noting that the District sought proposals from multiple auditing firms and chose to retain their current auditor, Dougall Conradie, based on cost-effectiveness and satisfaction with their performance in past audits. The audit was performed on the year-end financial statements which were prepared using a modified cash basis method. This method was adopted mid-year at the recommendation of our auditor to provide more easily understood financial statements thus providing greater transparency. The audit opinion found the year-end reports presented fairly in all material respects and prepared in accordance with Oregon State regulations. After a brief discussion regarding the merits of the modified cash basis versus the accrual method, a motion to accept the audit was made by Director Lightcap. Director Sowder seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with Director Hamer casting his first vote as a newly sworn-in member.

#### **7. Conservationist & Invasive Species Program Coordinator Presentation:**

Staff Delepine, the District's Invasive Species Program Coordinator, provided an update on the program's recent activities. She highlighted several of the program's accomplishments, including surveying 3,900 acres of land, which is 5% of the District land area, focusing on riparian corridors, upland habitats, and shoreline areas along the Multnomah Channel and Scappoose Bay. The primary invasive species addressed were garlic mustard, knotweed, and phragmites, with a significant reduction in garlic mustard infestations. Staff Delepine also discussed ongoing partnerships, including collaboration with the Scappoose Bay Watershed Council and other regional and national partners, which have allowed for better management strategies and resource sharing. The program also secured \$53,910 in grant funding through the Oregon State Weed Board, which is a significant increase from the previous year's award.

Delepine further explained her leadership in regional and national efforts, including the Pacific Northwest Garlic Mustard Working Group, her involvement with the Oregon Invasive Species Council, and a recent presentation at the North American Invasive Species Management Association conference. She emphasized the importance of partnerships in amplifying the District's efforts and improving on-the-ground strategies. The Board expressed their appreciation for Staff Delepine's work.

#### **8. Resolution 2024.10.22A<sup>v</sup> – Resolution of Intent to Prepare Supplemental Budget:**

DM Barlow provided an update on the District's potential \$100,000 contribution toward the Trust for Public Land's (TPL) acquisition of a property to be managed by Oregon State University (OSU). She addressed the Board's previous concerns about using the District's contingency fund, clarifying that other budgetary sources had been identified to avoid using the contingency funds. A revised proposal detailing the new funding approach was included in the Board packet.

The Board's primary concern centered on ensuring that OSU would manage the property in line with the District's mission, including conservation, working lands, and recreation. TPL assured the Board that OSU's acceptance of grants from the U.S. Forest Service's Forest Legacy Program and Metro, which come with specific conditions, would likely bind OSU to an agreed management plan. However, TPL also emphasized that the District's \$100,000 contribution could not include formal restrictions, although they suggested the Board could wait for OSU's Board of Trustees' January 2025 meeting to confirm OSU's agreement with the stipulations of both the USFS Forest Legacy Program and Metro's funding agreements to add confidence to the Board's decision to donate \$100,000 toward the acquisition. Board members raised additional concerns, including a request for a written commitment from OSU outlining their intentions. Associate Director Wiley stressed the lack of financial protections for the District if the project does not proceed as expected. Director Lightcap emphasized the importance of the

District being viewed as a credible partner, suggesting the District wait for OSU's Board decision in January. Ultimately, the Board agreed to delay the decision on a resolution until after the January OSU Board of Trustees meeting, with DM Barlow asked to seek further assurances from OSU and TPL in the meantime.

**9. Resolution 2024.10.22B<sup>vi</sup> – Adopt the Board Duties and Responsibilities Manual:**

Director Preeg Riggsby introduced the updated manual, noting its alignment with guidelines from the Special Districts Association of Oregon and Oregon Department of Agriculture-Soil and Water Conservation Districts program. This update is especially relevant to the upcoming election of directors new to the board for the first time in several years. A motion to adopt the manual was made by Director Sowder. The motion was seconded by Director Lightcap and passed unanimously.

**10. Resolution 2024.10.22C<sup>vii</sup> – Adopt the revised Employee Handbook:**

The Board reviewed the revised Employee Handbook, which incorporated clarifying legal and staff input. This version addressed several editorial and housekeeping clarifications since the last major update, which the Board adopted in February 2024. A motion to adopt the handbook was made by Director Sowder, the motion was seconded by Director Hartline and passed with a vote of 6-1. Director Lightcap stepped away from the meeting during this vote and abstained.

**11. Resolution 2024.10.22D<sup>viii</sup> – Adopt the revised Business Continuity Plan:**

The Board discussed the updated Business Continuity Plan, which outlines how the District will continue operations in the event of a major disruption, such as an earthquake or other major emergencies. The revised plan simplifies the previous version and updates communication protocols post-pandemic. A motion to adopt the revised plan was made by Director Looney. Director Sowder seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously. The Board acknowledged the importance of having such a plan in place, particularly given recent events like power outages and potential natural disasters.

**12. District Manager Highlights:**

DM Barlow reported on an incident where a Green Workforce crew member was confronted by a landowner, mistaking the crew member for a trespasser. No one was physically harmed, but the crew and other staff were understandably shaken. The District staff, contractor, and Green Workforce organization debriefed, implementing new safety measures such as better communication on meeting locations and ensuring crew members arrive in marked vehicles or wear identifiable vests. The District Manager is coordinating trauma-informed care training to better prepare staff for future unexpected, traumatic incidents. Director Preeg Riggsby encouraged Board members to reach out to DM Barlow directly with any further questions about the incident.

**13. Upcoming Meetings:**

Director Preeg Riggsby reminded the Board of the upcoming Annual Meeting and abbreviated Board of Directors meeting on Tuesday, November 19<sup>th</sup>. These meetings will be held in-person at The Old Spaghetti Factory, 715 S Bancroft, Portland, OR. The abbreviated Board meeting starts at 4:30pm. There will be a remote option available, but in-person attendance is encouraged.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 PM.

<sup>i</sup> *WMSWCD Board meeting minutes September 17, 2024*

<sup>ii</sup> *WMSWCD Balance Sheet as of September 30, 2024*

<sup>iii</sup> *WMSWCD Budget Performance Sheet as of September 30, 2024*

<sup>iv</sup> *FY 2023-2024 Auditor's Report*

<sup>v</sup> *Resolution 2024.10.22A – Resolution of Intent to Prepare Supplemental Budget*

<sup>vi</sup> *Resolution 2024.10.22B – Adopt the Board Duties and Responsibilities Manual*

<sup>vii</sup> *Resolution 2024.10.22C – Adopt the revised Employee Handbook*

<sup>viii</sup> *Resolution 2024.10.22D – Adopt the revised Business Continuity Plan*

<sup>ix</sup> *Staff Reports*