



West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District (WMSWCD, the District) Board Meeting Minutes 06/17/2025

1. Meeting Location and Time:

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

2. Introductions and Agenda Approval:

Directors Present: Oliver, Looney, Preeg Riggsby, Topaz, Sowder; Associate Directors Present: Spector, Foster, Elicker; WMSWCD Staff Present: DM Barlow, Williams-Conway, Mauser, Enstrom; NRCS District Conservationist Galland; Public Member: DeFuria (sworn in as Director during meeting); Directors Absent: Hamer.

DM Barlow introduced Sherman Enstrom as the new Budget & Fiscal Manager. Sherman expressed enthusiasm for joining the district, highlighting his background and previous roles. Williams-Conway, the outgoing Budget & Fiscal Manager, was acknowledged for her contributions.

Director Preeg Riggsby proposed moving the public comment period to follow introductions, which was approved unanimously.

3. Public Comment

Jim DeFuria, candidate for Zone 4 Director, introduced himself, describing his passion for conservation and his experience managing diverse natural resources on his property. He highlighted his professional experience at Intel and expressed his desire to actively contribute to the district.

4. Approval of May 2025 Board Meeting Minutes

The board reviewed the minutes from the May 20, 2025, meetingⁱ. Director Looney moved to approve the minutes as written, Director Sowder seconded the motion. The motion was approved with the following votes: Oliver – Yes, Looney – Yes, Preeg Riggsby – Yes, Topaz – Yes, Sowder – Yes. Director Hamer was absent, and the Zone 4 Seat had not been appointed yet at this point in the meeting.

5. Treasurer's Report & Financials

Director Oliver presented the financial overview^{ii iii, iv}, noting continued strong interest income from the Local Government Investment Pool (LGIP Account), which offset shortfalls in property tax collections. He explained timing discrepancies impacting revenue reporting, notably a delayed \$15,000 grant for the Sauvie Island Stables project and the exclusion of an anticipated NACD grant that was not awarded.

Minor expense overruns in forestry were balanced by the conservation funding pool. Oliver mentioned a \$4,500 partner grant funded in the previous fiscal year but expensed in the current one due to accounting methods. He confirmed the District's overall strong financial position, indicating more clarity on property tax revenues would be available by August.

6. Appointment of Zone 4 Director

The board reviewed and discussed two candidates, Jim DeFuria and Mike Houck, for the Zone 4 vacancy. Members praised both candidates, with Director Preeg Riggsby highlighting DeFuria's extensive experience with diverse land conservation projects. Directors Topaz and Looney supported appointing DeFuria, with Director Looney suggesting offering the other candidate an Associate Director position. Director Oliver concurred and clarified the appointed term requirements.

Director Looney moved to appoint Jim DeFuria as Zone 4 Director, seconded by Director Oliver. A roll-call vote was held, with directors Sowder, Preeg Riggsby, Oliver, Looney, and Topaz unanimously voting in favor. Director Hamer was absent. Subsequently, Director Looney moved to offer Mike Houck an Associate Director position, seconded by Director Oliver. The motion was approved with the following votes: Oliver – Yes, Looney – Yes, Preeg Riggsby – Yes, Topaz – Yes, Sowder – Yes. Director Hamer was absent.

Oath of Office:

Jim DeFuria was officially sworn in, reciting the oath of office publicly, enabling him to vote on subsequent board decisions.

7. NRCS Update

Kim Galland from NRCS updated the board about an upcoming Civil Rights Review involving the NRCS Beaver Creek office, which will include investigators speaking to a board member from West Multnomah SWCD. Director Preeg Riggsby volunteered to participate in the review. Galland also discussed preparations for her departure on June 30 and provided contacts for ongoing support. She announced Stephanie Payne's return in August to continue NRCS work. The board expressed gratitude for Galland's significant contributions and wished her well.

8. Approval of Annual Work Plans for FY '25-'26:

The board reviewed the District Annual Work Plans for fiscal year 2025-2026, as required by the Oregon Department of Agriculture. The board agreed to move the approval of annual work plans which are used to develop the budget annually to April each year rather than June. This will begin in April 2026 for FY27 Workplans. Director Sowder moved to approve the District Annual Work Plans for FY26, Director Looney seconded the motion. The motion was approved with the following votes: Oliver – Yes, Looney – Yes, Preeg Riggsby – Yes, Topaz – Yes, Sowder – Yes, DeFuria - Yes. Director Hamer was absent.

9. Resolutions:

Resolution 2025.06.17 A: Establishing the Reserve for Future Expenditures. After detailed discussions and clarifications provided by DM Barlow, Director Oliver moved to adopt the resolution as written. Director Sowder seconded the motion. The motion was approved with the following votes: Oliver – Yes, Looney – Yes, Preeg Riggsby – Yes, Topaz – Yes, Sowder – Yes, DeFuria - Yes. Director Hamer was absent.

Resolution 2025.06.17 B: Authorizing the District's Budget and Creating Expenditure Appropriations, Setting the Tax, and Imposing the Tax for the Fiscal Year 2025-2026. Following a thorough review of budget specifics, fund appropriations, and discussions led by Director Oliver, DM Barlow, and Staff Williams-Conway, Director Looney moved to adopt the resolution as written. Director Sowder seconded the motion, and the resolution was passed with the following votes: Oliver – Yes, Looney – Yes, Preeg Riggsby – Yes, Topaz – Yes, Sowder – Yes, DeFuria - Yes. Director Hamer was absent.

Resolution 2025.06.17 C: Setting the Annual Meeting Date for November 18, 2025. After brief discussion, Director Looney made a motion to adopt the resolution to set the annual meeting date as written. Director DeFuria seconded the motion. The motion was approved with the following votes: Oliver – Yes, Looney – Yes, Preeg Riggsby – Yes, Topaz – Yes, Sowder – Yes, DeFuria - Yes. Director Hamer was absent.

10. District Manager Highlight:

DM Barlow announced the next day quarterly DEI Committee public meeting, inviting directors and staff to join the discussion on the District's demographic survey results and their application in the next revision of the District's long-range business plan.

She provided an update on the ongoing recruitment process for the District Manager, with first-round interviews scheduled for next week.

DM Barlow also discussed recent guidance provided by the Oregon Department of Justice via our ODA partners regarding Oregon Immigration Law, highlighting Districts' responsibilities and the importance of having an internal procedure for handling related requests.

Lastly, she reported that Multnomah County had allocated \$40,000 toward OSU Extension agent positions, marking the first funding for such positions in over 20 years, reflecting positive steps toward expanded support.

12. Director & Associate Director Check-In

Associate Director Foster provided an update on efforts by volunteers, including himself, to investigate the feasibility of constructing amphibian habitat ponds in Forest Park to support red-legged frogs. He shared progress, funding status, and future financial needs, initiating a discussion about the potential use of District funds and processes for funding allocation. This prompted Chair Riggsby and DM Barlow to suggest a future agenda item for a detailed discussion on the use of Reserve for Future Expenditures.

Associate Director Elicker raised a concern about landowner inquiries regarding cow parsnip. Director Preeg Riggsby clarified the distinction between cow parsnip, a native species, and giant hogweed, an invasive species, recommending that concerned individuals contact Michelle Delepine, the district's invasive species specialist, or refer to the District's website for further assistance and resources.

13. Upcoming Meetings

The next Board of Directors Meeting is abbreviated and will be held on August 19, 2025, at 6pm in-person at Jane Hartline's property, and remote via Zoom.

14. Adjournment

With no further business, Director Preeg Riggsby adjourned the meeting at 8:03 p.m.

ⁱ WMSWCD Board meeting minutes May 20, 2025

ⁱⁱ WMSWCD Balance Sheet as of May 31, 2025

ⁱⁱⁱ WMSWCD Budget Performance Sheet as of May 31, 2025

^{iv} WMSWCD Financial Snapshot as of May 31, 2025

^v Staff Reports