



West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District (WMSWCD, the District) Board Meeting Minutes 12/16/2025

To access any materials referenced in these meeting minutes, please contact info@wmswcd.org with the subject line "Request for board meeting materials".

1. Meeting Location and Time:

Location: Remote via Zoom

Time: 6:00pm

2. Introductions and Agenda Approval:

Directors Present: DeFuria, Preeg Riggsby, Oliver, Sowder, Topaz, Hamer (arrived at 6:30pm); Associate Directors Present: Elicker; Directors; Absent: Looney; WMSWCD Staff Present: DM Jogerst, Taylor; Guests Present: Rick Cowlshaw (ODA), Isabelle Koerner (Budget Committee Applicant)

The agenda was approved by acclamation.

3. Minutes:

Board members reviewed the WMSWCD Board Meeting minutes from 11/18/2025ⁱ

The board reviewed the draft minutes from November 18, 2025. Chair Riggsby noted that the November meeting was brief due to the Annual Meeting and reviewed the purpose of that meeting for new attendees. Director Oliver moved to approve the November 18 meeting minutes. Director Sowder seconded the motion, and the motion carried with the following votes: DeFuria – Yes, Preeg Riggsby – Yes, Sowder – Yes, Hamer – Yes, Oliver – Yes, Topaz – Yes. Director Looney was absent from this meeting and was unable to vote.

4. Review of Treasurer's Reports:

Treasurer Oliver reviewed the monthly financial reports and highlighted that the District is showing an approximate \$396,000 negative net cash position on a modified cash basis, largely due to budgeted grant revenues that were not received, most notably the \$1.03 million Community Wildfire Defense Grant. Treasurer Oliver discussed the consideration to correct the budget and resubmit to TSCC, noting that doing so would require a formal budget committee process and would not be beneficial at this point, and instead agreed to correct the discrepancy in the next budget cycle. Treasurer Oliver explained that several grants are reimbursement based or came in below projections, property tax revenue may be about \$80,000 under budget due to compression, and interest earnings from the LGIP remain strong despite an expected rate decrease. Overall expenditures are tracking well, with personnel costs under budget offsetting higher temporary professional services costs, the contingency fund remains fully intact

at approximately \$50,000, and balance sheet depreciation issues were clarified as accounting artifacts rather than financial concern. Directors asked clarifying questions, and no formal action was taken.

The following reports were reviewed:

- a) ⁱⁱ *WMSWCD Financial Statements for period ending November 30, 2025*
- b) ⁱⁱⁱ *WMSWCD Balance Sheet as of November 30, 2025*
- c) ^{iv} *WMSWCD Budget Performance Sheet as of November 30, 2025*

5. Public Comment Period:

Isabelle Koerner stated she had no public comments and was attending to observe and learn.

6. Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Implementation Update and Q&A Presentation :

Cowlshaw of the Oregon Department of Agriculture provided a detailed update on ODA initiatives relevant to the District, beginning with the Sauvie Island Strategic Implementation Area (SIA). He reported that monitoring and assessment planning is underway and that a Sampling and Analysis Plan has been submitted to the Monitoring and Assessment Group. Cowlshaw noted that restoration grant funding within SIAs has increased from \$15,000 to \$30,000 per project, expanding opportunities for voluntary water quality improvements, and stated that ODA will notify the District when the next call for proposals opens.

Cowlshaw also described broader statewide efforts, including ODA's new centralized reporting hub, which districts are now using for biennium reporting. This system is intended to improve consistency, transparency, and statewide storytelling around agricultural water quality work. He then provided a presentation^v and outlined the replacement of the Willamette Basin temperature TMDL, adopted in May 2025 following litigation that removed the "natural conditions" clause. ODA has 18 months to develop an agricultural implementation plan, with a focus on increasing effective riparian shade along waterways. The plan must be finalized by November 2026 and will include annual and five-year progress reporting. Approximately 20 percent of the Willamette Basin falls under ODA's agricultural management authority.

Cowlshaw also addressed landowner engagement challenges, noting that the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) public comment period for the TMDL was very short and resulted in no landowner participation. He acknowledged the need to rebuild trust through improved outreach, monitoring, and collaborative implementation, and discussed concerns related to the default 120-foot riparian buffer that applies where no streamside evaluation occurs, which ODA is seeking alternatives to avoid. He shared that ODA has developed a landowner survey to gather input, which Chair Preeg Riggsby requested be shared with the District for broader distribution. Board members raised concerns about baseline data, equity for agricultural producers, capacity constraints, and interagency coordination, and Cowlshaw emphasized ODA's commitment to continued dialogue and collaboration.

7. Forest Conservation Presentation:

Taylor, the District Forest Conservationist, provided an update on the District's forestry program, outlining activities that include stewardship planning, project implementation, grant coordination,

contractor management, and wildfire risk reduction partnerships. She reported that forestry projects covered approximately 200 acres across nine properties in FY 2024, with seven projects totaling about 158 acres underway in FY 2025 to date, including work on invasive species removal, erosion control, forest thinning, and replanting with disease-resistant species. Taylor noted that new tools and workflows have improved efficiency in forest measurements and plan development, highlighted a wildfire preparedness workshop held in May with approximately 60 participants and 13 partner organizations, and shared that an additional wildfire mitigation grant application has been submitted to the Oregon Department of Forestry. She also noted completion of a partnership video highlighting collaboration with Natural Resources Conservation Service, which will be shared with the Board. Board members expressed appreciation for the scope and impact of the forestry program.

8. Resolution 2025.12.16 – Extending the Long-Range Business Plan by One Year^{vi}:

Chair Preeg Riggsby discussed the proposed resolution to extend the District’s Long-Range Business Plan and the context prompting the request. Given recent leadership and staffing transitions, including changes in the District Manager and Budget & Fiscal Manager roles, additional time is needed to thoughtfully evaluate the District’s long-term priorities, organizational capacity, and strategic direction. Extending the current plan by one year will allow staff and the Board to stabilize core operations, complete ongoing recruitment and onboarding, and engage in a more deliberate and inclusive planning process rather than rushing an update under transitional conditions.

Chair Preeg Riggsby emphasized that the extension is intended to preserve continuity and provide flexibility, not to delay strategic thinking. During the extension period, staff will begin preliminary work on the next iteration of the Long-Range Business Plan, including evaluating consultant support options. Following discussion, the Board approved a resolution extending the existing Long-Range Business Plan by one year to ensure adequate time for a comprehensive and well-aligned update.

Chair Preeg Riggsby asked for a motion to adopt resolution 2025-12-16 to extend the long-range business plan to the start of fiscal year 2028. Director DeFuria moved to approve to adopt the resolution. Director Hamer seconded the motion, and the motion carried with the following votes: DeFuria – Yes, Preeg Riggsby – Yes, Sowder – Yes, Hamer – Yes, Oliver – Yes, Topaz – Yes. Director Looney was absent from this meeting and was unable to vote.

9. Budget Committee Citizen Member Appointments:

The Board discussed the appointment of citizen members to the Budget Committee^{vii}, emphasizing the importance of community representation and strong financial oversight in the District’s budget development process. Chair Preeg Riggsby reviewed the role of the Budget Committee, noting its responsibility to work collaboratively with the Board and staff to review the proposed budget, consider public input, and recommend a balanced budget in accordance with District priorities and Oregon Local Budget Law.

Following discussion, the Board approved the reappointment of **Sherry Rader** to a three-year term ending December 31, 2029, in recognition of her continued service, institutional knowledge, and contributions to prior budget cycles. The Board also approved the appointment of **Isabelle Koerner** to a three-year term ending December 31, 2029, welcoming her interest in public service and participation in

District governance. Director Oliver moved to approve both appointments, and Director Topaz seconded the motion. The motion carried with the following votes: DeFuria – Yes, Preeg Riggsby – Yes, Sowder – Yes, Hamer – Yes, Oliver – Yes, Topaz – Yes. Director Looney was absent and unable to vote.

10. Board Acceptance of the Budget Calendar FY26-27 ^{viii}:

The Board reviewed the proposed FY 2026–27 budget calendar, which outlines the key milestones and timelines for developing, reviewing, and adopting the District’s annual budget in compliance with Oregon Local Budget Law. Chair Preeg Riggsby explained that the calendar establishes dates for Budget Committee meetings, public notice and hearing requirements, Board deliberations, and final budget adoption, providing a clear and predictable framework for staff, the Board, and the public.

Board members discussed the importance of the calendar in supporting transparency, public engagement, and timely decision-making, particularly as the District prepares for the upcoming budget cycle following recent staffing transitions. The calendar allows adequate time for staff analysis, Budget Committee review, and Board consideration while meeting all statutory requirements. Following discussion, Director Sowder moved to approve the FY 2026–27 budget calendar, and Director Topaz seconded the motion. The motion carried with the following votes: DeFuria – Yes, Preeg Riggsby – Yes, Sowder – Yes, Hamer – Yes, Oliver – Yes, Topaz – Yes. Director Looney was absent and did not vote.

11. District Manager update:

District Manager Jogerst provided a comprehensive update on District operations, staffing, and planning efforts. She reported that the new Budget and Fiscal Manager is scheduled to begin on December 29, 2025, and that interim financial support will continue with the NowCFO contractor through the onboarding period to ensure continuity and stability in financial operations. District Manager Jogerst noted that this overlap is intended to support a smooth transition, provide institutional knowledge transfer, and reduce risk during a critical time in the fiscal year.

District Manager Jogerst also shared that preliminary work has begun on planning for the next Long-Range Business Plan update. This early work includes outreach to peer districts to better understand best practices and exploring consultant support options.

Additionally, District Manager Jogerst reported progress toward launching a revised Partner Grant Program under the District’s Financial Assistance Program (DFAP), which is intended to strengthen partnerships and expand conservation impact. It was also noted that staff work plans for the upcoming fiscal year are currently in development and will be brought to the Board for review in a future meeting, ensuring alignment between strategic priorities, staffing capacity, and program delivery.

12. Director Check-In:

Director Topaz alerted the Board that severe weather was forecasted for Sauvie Island, with wind gusts expected to exceed 50 miles per hour and a strong likelihood of power outages. Chair Terri Preeg Riggsby thanked her for the notice and noted that staff would monitor impacts to landowners and partners, particularly the morning following the storm, and provide updates if issues arose. Chair Riggsby also reminded Directors that any email communications to the full Board or Associate Directors must be sent as blind copies to avoid inadvertently creating a non-public meeting, reiterating the Board’s obligations under public meetings law.

13. Upcoming Meetings:

The next regular board meeting is January 20, 6–8 pm remote via Zoom.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:01pm.

ⁱ *WMSWCD Board meeting minutes November 18, 2025*

ⁱⁱ *WMSWCD Financial Statements for period ending November 30, 2025*

ⁱⁱⁱ *WMSWCD Balance Sheet as of November 30, 2025*

^{iv} *WMSWCD Budget Performance Sheet as of November 30, 2025*

^v *ODA Warm Streams and the Willamette Temperature TMDL presentation*

^{vi} *Resolution no. 2025.12.16 – Extending the Long-Range Business Plan by One year*

^{vii} *Appointment of Budget Committee Citizen Members*

^{viii} *Acceptance of Budget Calendar*

^{ix} *Staff Reports*