

# West Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District

## Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

**Date:** February 17, 2026

**Location:** Virtual (Zoom)

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

Board Members Present: Looney, At large (Board Secretary); Hamer, Director Zone 1; Topaz, Director Zone 2; DeFuria, Director Zone 4; Sowder, Director Zone 5

Board Associate Directors Present: Elicker, Associate Director

Staff Present Jogerst, District Manager; Clarenbach, Budget and Fiscal Manager; Greene, Outreach and Communications Coordinator

### 1. Call to Order

Looney called the meeting to order at **6:00 pm**.

### 2. Agenda Review<sup>i</sup>

Looney asked if there were any additions or changes to the agenda. Hearing none, the agenda was accepted as presented.

### 3. Approval of Board Meeting Minutes<sup>ii</sup>

Looney invited a motion to approve the prior meeting minutes.

**Motion:** Sowder moved to approve the meeting minutes as presented.

**Second:** Hamer.

Looney asked if there was any discussion. Hearing none, the Board voted.

**Vote to approve:** Looney, Hamer, Topaz, DeFuria, Sowder. The motion passed unanimously.

### 4. Public Comment

Looney announced the five-minute public comment period. No members of the public were present. The public comment period was closed.

### 5. Treasurer's Report<sup>iii</sup>

In the absence of Treasurer Oliver, Clarenbach presented the Treasurer's Report and provided a financial overview through January 31, 2026.

Clarenbach reported a year-to-date fund balance of approximately \$711,000, exceeding budget projections. Property tax revenue and interest income were above budget, with interest earnings reflecting continued strong performance of the Local Government Investment Pool.

Grant revenue was below projections due to the loss of a federal forestry grant and delays related to grant compliance and reimbursement timing. Clarenbach emphasized that these shortfalls reflected timing and compliance issues rather than programmatic cuts and noted that staff are actively working to resolve reporting requirements so reimbursements can resume.

Expenses remained below budget, contributing to the District's positive financial position. Clarenbach also noted that the District currently holds approximately twelve months of operating expenses in reserve. No questions were raised by the Board.

**Next steps:**

- Staff will continue addressing grant compliance and reimbursement timing issues

## **6. District Financial Assistance Program Overview**

Jogerst presented an overview of the District Financial Assistance Program, or DFAP, to provide context following recent Board questions about grant terminology and partner funding and ahead of upcoming staff presentations.

Jogerst explained that DFAP is intended to advance the District mission by providing financial support for conservation work while improving equity and consistency in how funding opportunities are distributed. The program framework was developed under prior leadership and continues to be refined.

Jogerst outlined five DFAP funding components and noted that staff would present additional detail as each program is launched.

**Long-term partner funding:** Ongoing support for select partner organizations advancing shared conservation goals. Current awards are limited to existing partners, with funds distributed in two installments. Staff plan to revisit criteria to broaden future access.

**Ripple Grant:** Formerly referred to as partner grants, this program supports community-led projects. \$100,000 is available, with awards ranging from \$10,000 to \$25,000. The program recently launched, with awards expected next fiscal year following an external review process.

**Splash Grants:** A smaller grant program supporting short-term projects and event or sponsorship requests. \$14,000 is budgeted for the current fiscal year.

**Rebate program:** A reimbursement program with \$20,000 budgeted, providing up to \$2,000 per applicant per year for eligible purchases, with expansion planned across program areas.

**Cost-share program:** An established program, primarily within forestry, supporting higher-cost conservation projects through shared funding. \$104,000 is budgeted for the current fiscal year.

## **7. Splash Grant Program**

Greene presented an overview of the Splash Grant program and briefly highlighted recent outreach accomplishments, including growth in email subscribers, expanded community engagement, and completion of the Dairy Creek interpretive sign.

Greene explained that the Splash Grant program was created to replace informal sponsorship funding with a more equitable and transparent process. The program supports small, mission-aligned community projects within the District.

Splash Grants are available to nonprofits, community groups, schools, tribes, and government agencies, with awards ranging from \$100 to \$3,500 per application and up to two applications per year. A total of \$14,000 is budgeted for the current fiscal year. Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis, and funds are awarded as available.

Topaz asked about the timeline for the Dairy Creek interpretive sign installation. Greene noted that siting challenges and coordination with the property owner contributed to delays.

## **8. District Manager Update**

### Staff reports in the Board packet<sup>iv</sup>

Jogerst invited Board feedback on the usefulness and format of monthly staff reports, noting interest in reducing duplication and staff time while maintaining value. Directors shared that the reports are useful for staying informed about District work, with several noting they regularly read program-specific updates relevant to their interests. Suggestions included exploring a one-page highlights format. Jogerst stated she would discuss any potential changes with Chair Riggsby and return to the Board as appropriate, and would share Board feedback with staff.

### Tualatin Research Forest draft management plan

Jogerst reported that the draft management plan discussed at the prior meeting has been received. Staff will prepare comments, and the draft will be shared with directors by email for optional individual feedback due to a short response window.

### Budget and finance transition

Jogerst reported that Clarenbach has been in role for approximately six weeks and that reliance on NOW CFO is decreasing as he assumes primary responsibility for day-to-day finance functions. Remaining contractor support is focused on budget preparation, and the transition is proceeding smoothly.

### Administrative position update

Jogerst reported that the Office Coordinator position was eliminated in December and that a new administrative position description is being drafted, focused on administrative duties without financial or payroll responsibilities. The draft will be shared with staff for input prior to recruitment.

### Intern hiring

Jogerst reported that the District is hiring two summer interns, with interviews scheduled and a planned start date in early April. She noted the internship program continues to be a strong support for staff and professional development for participants.

### Upcoming meetings

Jogerst noted that the annual meeting focused on staff work plans will be held virtually, and that the April meeting will be in person and coincide with the first Budget Committee meeting.

### Grant budgeting and compliance discussion

In response to a Board question about budgeted but unreceived grant revenue, Jogerst explained that some variances reflect unsuccessful grant applications rather than discontinued work. She noted that staff are addressing grant compliance and reporting issues that affect reimbursement timing and are working to bring grant management fully back on track.

### Other matters

Jogerst confirmed there is no lawsuit activity related to the former Office Coordinator and invited directors to follow up with questions by email.

## **9. OACD Advocacy Video and Discussion**

Jogerst introduced a training video produced by the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts addressing advocacy roles, legal requirements, and ethical boundaries.

Following the video, the Board discussed personal versus official advocacy, emphasizing the importance of clearly distinguishing individual testimony from District positions. Directors noted that identifying oneself as a board member can lend perceived authority and should be done cautiously unless authorized.

Jogerst stated she will review existing advocacy related board resolutions and share relevant materials, including a resolution adopted in February 2023, with directors.

#### **Next steps:**

- Jogerst will circulate the existing advocacy resolution to the Board
- Board may revisit advocacy policy at a future meeting if updates are needed

## **10. Director Check Ins**

Looney shared that the Linton Neighborhood Association was awarded a \$5,400 Metro Central Enhancement Grant to host a Resilience Fair on May 16 from 1:00–5:00 pm. The event will include emergency preparedness education, speakers, tabling organizations, and the distribution of 100 emergency go bags to eligible residents.

No additional director check ins were offered.

## **11. Meeting Close**

Looney announced that the next regular board meeting will be held virtually via Zoom on March 17, with staff work plans on the agenda. No additional announcements were made.

*The meeting adjourned at 7:36 pm.*

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<sup>i</sup> Board Meeting Agenda, Board packet page 1

<sup>ii</sup> January 2026 Board Meeting minutes, packet pages 2-5

<sup>iii</sup> Financial Statements, pages 6-16

<sup>iv</sup> Staff Reports, pages 17-28