

West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District

Board Meeting Minutes – July 21, 2026

Location: Online via Zoom

Directors Present: Terri Preeg Riggsby, George Sowder, Shawn Looney, Kat Topaz, Jan Hamer, Jane Hartline (associate)

Staff Present: Casey Jogerst; Jon Clarenbach, Kammy Kern-Korot, Scott Gall, Amy Stork (consultant)

1. Call to Order

Chair Preeg Riggsby called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Directors and staff introduced themselves.

2. Agenda Approval

Preeg Riggsby called for additions or changes to the agenda. Hearing none, the Board proceeded with the agenda as presented.

3. Approval of June 16, 2026 Board Meeting Minutes

Motion: Looney moved to approve the June 16, 2026 Board Meeting minutes as presented. Topaz seconded the motion.

Before the vote, the Board discussed the formatting of attendee names in the meeting minutes. Sowder noted that guest attendees had been listed by first name and last initial in the attendance section, while their full names appeared later in the body of the minutes. Looney commented that a consistent approach would improve readability and suggested listing all attendees by their full names in the attendance section. Jogerst agreed that the format should be consistent for both Directors and guests.

The Board reached consensus to update the format of future meeting minutes by listing all attendees with their full first and last names in the attendance section, while continuing to refer to individuals by their last names throughout the remainder of the minutes. Because a motion and second were already on the floor, the June 16, 2026 meeting minutes were approved without modification.

Motion passed 4–0. Ayes: Preeg Riggsby, Sowder, Looney, Topaz.

4. Public Comment

No members of the public were present, and no public comments were received. Preeg Riggsby noted that Board meetings are open to the public and encouraged community members to attend future meetings.

5. Treasurer's Report

In Treasurer Oliver's absence, Clarenbach presented the June 2026 financial reports and an unaudited year-end overview for Fiscal Year 2025–26. He reported that the District ended June in a stronger financial position than projected, with approximately \$2.41 million in annual revenue, \$55,000 in net income, and \$1.65 million in cash on hand. Property tax revenue remained consistent with the prior year, while grant revenue and interest income increased. Personnel costs remained under budget despite higher consulting and professional services expenses during staff turnover.

Clarenbach reviewed financial trends and historical comparisons, noting that expenses have stabilized over the past two fiscal years and that the District remains in a strong financial position heading into the new fiscal year. He also reported that the annual audit would begin in August and that he would work with District Manager Jogerst to develop recommendations for the Board to consider regarding the year-end surplus and the Reserve for Future Expenditures.

During discussion, Clarenbach confirmed that the District finished the fiscal year in a stronger position than both the previous year and the adopted budget had anticipated. In response to Looney's question, he explained that retained earnings are invested through Oregon's Local Government Investment Pool (LGIP) to maximize interest earnings.

6. Resolution 2026-07-21 – Annual Meeting Date

Preeg Riggsby presented **Resolution 2026-07-21**, establishing the date of the District's 2026 Annual Meeting. She noted that the Board adopts the annual meeting date by resolution each year and proposed holding the meeting on **Tuesday, November 17, 2026**, the Board's regularly scheduled November meeting date.

Motion: Looney moved to adopt Resolution 2026-07-21 establishing November 17, 2026, as the date of the District's Annual Meeting. Sowder seconded the motion. There was no discussion.

Motion passed 5–0. Ayes: Preeg Riggsby, Sowder, Looney, Topaz, Hamer.

7. September 2026 Board Meeting Date

Preeg Riggsby introduced discussion of rescheduling the September Board meeting, which will be held in person at Topaz Farm. Topaz explained that the regularly scheduled September 15 meeting date conflicted with her availability and suggested either September 8 or September 22 as alternatives.

Board members discussed the options and expressed support for moving the meeting to Tuesday, September 22, 2026, which accommodated the voting Directors in attendance. Preeg Riggsby thanked Topaz for hosting the in-person meeting at Topaz Farm.

Motion: Hamer moved to reschedule the September 2026 Board meeting to **September 22, 2026**. Looney seconded the motion.

Motion passed 5–0. Ayes: Preeg Riggsby, Sowder, Looney, Topaz, Hamer.

8. Long-Range Business Plan Process

Preeg Riggsby welcomed consultant Stork, who will facilitate development of the District's next Long-Range Business Plan. Jogerst noted that Stork has extensive experience working with conservation districts and other special districts and had already met with District staff to introduce the planning process.

Stork introduced the overall planning framework and explained that the strategic planning process will result in the District's next Long-Range Business Plan. She reviewed key planning concepts, including the relationship between the District's vision, mission, goals, strategies, values, and implementation actions. Stork emphasized that the Board's primary role will be establishing the District's strategic direction, while staff will be responsible for developing detailed implementation plans following Board adoption of the plan.

Stork outlined the proposed planning timeline. Initial orientation meetings with the Board and staff will be followed by Strategic Planning Committee meetings to refine key planning questions and stakeholder engagement strategies. During September, Stork will conduct research, interviews, surveys, and other outreach before preparing an assessment report to inform the Board and staff planning retreat scheduled for late October. Following the retreat, Stork will prepare draft plan documents for review by the Strategic Planning Committee and Board, with adoption anticipated in January so implementation planning can align with the District's annual work planning and budget process.

Stork explained that the Strategic Planning Committee will serve as a process advisory group rather than a decision-making body. Committee members will assist with stakeholder engagement, review draft materials, and provide feedback throughout the planning process, while all Board members will have multiple opportunities to contribute their perspectives and participate in developing the plan.

Stork then facilitated a discussion with Board members about the strategic questions they hoped the planning process would address. Topics raised included:

- How the District can remain resilient and continue to grow over the next five years amid changing conditions.

- Which natural resource issues should be prioritized.
- How diversity, equity, and inclusion principles should be reflected in the next Long-Range Business Plan.
- How to maximize the District's impact while remaining accessible to the communities it serves.
- How to balance the needs of rural and urban constituents.

The Board also discussed characteristics of a successful planning process and final plan. Members emphasized the importance of building on lessons learned from previous plans, incorporating measurable outcomes where appropriate, establishing a process for regularly reviewing progress toward strategic priorities, ensuring the plan provides clear direction for staff and the Board, and keeping the document practical and easy to use. Stork noted that conservation district strategic plans typically include broad organizational goals supported by measurable implementation actions and suggested that the October planning retreat include additional discussion about how the District will measure success over the life of the plan. Hamer encouraged keeping the plan simple and practical.

9. No-Till Seed Drill Proposal

Gall presented a proposal for the District to purchase a no-till seed drill to support soil health practices on local farms. He explained that the equipment allows seed to be planted without tilling the soil, reducing soil disturbance while improving seed establishment. Gall noted that the proposal remains in the planning stage and that staff are seeking Board feedback before selecting a specific piece of equipment. He reviewed the potential benefits for small farms, possible rental and storage logistics, and examples of similar equipment rental programs operated by neighboring conservation districts.

Board members expressed support for continuing to explore the proposal while discussing several implementation considerations, including equipment storage, transportation, user training, tractor compatibility, rental fees, and long-term program management. Gall agreed these were important factors and explained that staff are evaluating operational details and consulting with neighboring conservation districts before bringing forward a purchasing recommendation. Preeg Riggsby noted the Board's interest in continuing to explore the concept.

10. Healthy Streams and Special Habitats Program Update

Kern-Korot provided an overview of activities in the District's Healthy Streams and Special Habitats Program during the past fiscal year. She highlighted ongoing habitat restoration and invasive species management at 21 project sites, including work at the McCarthy Creek Wetland Reserve Easement, the Crabapple Creek watershed, and Elk Rock Garden. Kern-Korot also

updated the Board on efforts to protect Oregon oak and Oregon ash through monitoring, outreach, workshops, and statewide coordination related to invasive pests.

During Board discussion, Sowder asked about Elk Rock Garden and its ownership. Kern-Korot explained that the property is owned by a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving the site for public access, conservation, and education. Board members expressed appreciation for the District's partnership and the ongoing restoration work at the site.

11. District Manager's Report

Jogerst thanked Gall and Kern-Korot for their presentations and encouraged Board members to share any additional questions or feedback regarding the proposed no-till seed drill program as staff continue evaluating the proposal. She noted that staff will continue refining the proposal, including reviewing operational and legal considerations, before bringing additional information back to the Board.

Jogerst announced an upcoming Wildfire Ready Workshop and encouraged Board members to share the event with their networks. She also updated the Board on proposed federal grant administration rule changes that could affect future funding opportunities and noted that staff are monitoring potential changes to Natural Resources Conservation Service staffing and district organization. While the District has limited reliance on federal grants, Jogerst said staff will continue tracking these developments and assessing any impacts.

Jogerst reported that staff are finalizing the District Financial Assistance Program, with long-term partnership agreements remaining as the final component. She noted that staff will bring recommendations to the Board regarding eligibility and selection criteria for future long-term partnership funding. Preeg Riggsby encouraged Board members to review the staff reports and thanked Jogerst for completing employee evaluations and managing District operations.

12. Announcements

Hamer expressed appreciation for Jogerst's leadership and commended her work as District Manager. He also shared positive feedback on invasive knotweed outreach materials prepared by Michelle Delepine and noted his plans to participate in the program. Jogerst said staff would share his comments with Delepine.

Preeg Riggsby reminded Board members that there will be no August Board meeting, confirmed that the September meeting will be held at Topaz Farm, and encouraged everyone to reserve Friday, October 30, 2026, for the Long-Range Business Plan retreat.

13. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:58 p.m.