



Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District

40535 Highway 19, Fossil, OR 97830

(P) 541.468.2990 • (F) 541.468.2991

administration@wheelerswcd.org

Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes
November 30, 2023

Directors

James Collins

Jason Davis

Brent Johnson

Dave Hunt

Anna Thomas

Employees

Cassandra Newton

Ayla Morehouse

Kristen Neuburger

Others Present

The board meeting was called to order by Chair Collins at 6:13 p.m. by the clock on the computer.

1. Agency Reports

a. none

2. District Reports

a. District Manager, Cassi Newton

Cassi stated her report in the packet is current. She advised that a partial application had been received for the Office Assistant position and she was awaiting reference letters for the applicant. Cassi provided details of the fiscal tasks she was working on and that her and Ayla were preparing to work on revisions to the Long-Range Business Plan.

b. Conservation Manager, Ayla Morehouse

Ayla stated her report is current. She shared about the Know Your Enemy Contest that her and Kristen put together for the Wheeler Weed Warriors Program. Ayla also provided details about an ODFW site visit she attended on Butte Creek.

c. Conservation Technician II, Brooke Moore

Brooke is on maternity leave.

d. Conservation Technician I, Kristen Neuburger

Kristen stated her report is current. She advised that she completed some brush management inspections on and received Section 106 clearance on the CTWS juniper project. Kristen also provided details about the weed grant applications being submitted to ODA in December.

3. Monthly Business

a. Review and approve minutes

i. October 26, 2023 minutes

Director Ryno asked for details regarding the OWRD discussion from the October meeting. Cassi explained what was discussed.

‡**Motion** made by Director Davis to approve the board meeting minutes from October 26, 2023, Vice-Chair Thomas seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

b. Review and approve financial reports

i. November

‡**Motion** made by Director Davis to approve the financial reports from November, Director Johnson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

c. Review and approve Accounts Payable

i. November 15, 2023

Meeting Location: The Rock in Spray, Oregon

To Join from a computer or smartphone:

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/954414701> (Contact the office for meeting password)

To dial in using a phone:

(571) 317-3122 (Access Code: 954-414-701)

ii. November 30, 2023

‡**Motion** made by Director Davis to approve the check registers from November 15, 2023 and November 30, 2023 as presented, Director Hunt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Upcoming Meetings & Events

- a. Staff Meeting, every Monday
- b. **December**
 - i. **6th Wheeler SWCD Annual Meeting, 6pm**
 - ii. 13th JDBP meeting (virtual), 9am
 - iii. 25th Christmas (office closed)
 - **No Regular SWCD Board Meeting in Dec.**
- c. **January**
 - i. 1st New Year's Day (office closed)
 - ii. **25th Wheeler SWCD Board Meeting, 6pm**
- d. **February**
 - i. 21st LJDWG meeting, 10am
 - ii. **29th Wheeler SWCD Board Meeting, 6pm**

5. Upcoming Deadlines

- a. **December**
 - i. 15th ODA Noxious Weed applications
 - ii. 31st ODFW PFA applications
 - iii. 31st Annual Audit (submitted)
 - iv. 31st 22-23 Annual Report
 - v. 31st 22-23 AWP Accomplishments
 - vi. 31st Pesticide License Renewals
- b. **January**
 - i. 31st Long-Range Business Plan

6. District Management

a. Annual Meeting

Cassi advised that Envu representatives were not available to present at the Annual Meeting. She stated that the speakers will be Matt Wenick from Grant SWCD and David Helmricks from ODF. Cassi provided details of the rest of the agenda and organization of the Annual Meeting.

Cassi advised that Envu offered to come to Wheeler County late February or early March to present to landowners. The Board suggested hosting an invite prior to the February board meeting.

b. Employer's Association

Cassi stated that the District's membership to Cascade Employers Association is up for renewal. She suggested that the District do not renew the membership since there are no essential needs for the membership benefits at this time. The Board agreed.

c. John Deere Gator Warranty

Cassi explained that the standard warranty is ending on the John Deere Gator. She presented the chart of the extended warranty offerings. The Board requested that Cassi explore the 36-month extended warranty.

d. SDIS Longevity Program (business not listed)

Cassi advised that SDAO sent a notice that the last two fiscal years saw investment returns dip below targeted levels and as a result, the Trust has decided to put the Longevity Credit and Rate Lock Guarantee Program on hold until investment earnings return to levels they have seen in the past.

e. Property

i. WIG Status

Cassi presented the latest slide deck from LEVER Architecture. She also presented the preliminary promo video draft. The Board provided feedback for edits to the video.

7. Legislation

a. SB775

Cassi reminded the Board that SB775 changed the eligibility requirements for director elections. She explained that eligibility for Director Johnson is affected due to him residing in Zone 1. Cassi presented the zone map with a proposed revision of moving the border of Zones 1 and 5 north by one section. She advised that the Board will need to approve the revision and then she can submit it to ODA for final approval.

‡**Motion** made by Director Davis to approve the revised zone map as presented, Vice-Chair Thomas seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

8. Projects/Programs

a. Roundhouse Foundation

Cassi advised that she reapplied for funding from Roundhouse Foundation for the facility. She explained that the Foundation council was not willing to contribute to the construction cost of the facility, but instead offered to award funds towards local talent. Cassi stated that she accepted the award of \$25,000 to fund local talent to construct furnishings for the facility.

b. AgriMet

Cassi advised that OWRD worked with OSU to obtain legislative funding for 30 AgriMet stations across Oregon which includes one within Wheeler County near the town of Fossil and five others around the John Day Basin. She explained that BOR is seeking organization assistance from Wheeler SWCD for the John Day Basin area.

Cassi stated that she met with NRCS staff to discuss funding opportunities for Wheeler and Gilliams counties to install the additional planned stations.

c. HB2010 Juniper Removal

Cassi advised that she had not received any updates recently regarding next steps for implementing the legislative juniper removal funding.

d. BLM – Priest Hole Restoration

Cassi stated that there are some differences of opinions for necessary permit requirements for the Priest Hole Restoration project, so she is working with BLM and the county to obtain the proper documentation to satisfy OWEB requirements. She also stated that she is working with BLM to secure an engineer contractor.

e. NRCS/SNW – RCPP

Cassi provided an update on the collaboration between the SWCD, NRCS, and Sustainable Northwest regarding the Waterman RCPP application being drafted.

9. Partners

a. US-FS Ochoco

Cassi advised that the US-FS Ochoco staff reached out with a funding opportunity to do restoration and protection work around the city of Mitchell drinking water springs. She explained that US-FS is seeking partnership with the SWCD to also implement restoration work on private land along Bridge Creek. Cassi stated that she has communicated this with the City of Mitchell and Mitchell Water Committee to initiate project planning.

b. OWEB SGT RAC

Cassi advised that she volunteered to participate in the OWEB Small Grant Rulemaking Advisory Committee, but only one meeting had occurred to-date.

c. Monument SWCD

Cassi stated that Monument SWCD sought partnership for a project on Johnson Creek, which is predominantly in Wheeler SWCD boundary. She advised that a site visit occurred and funding is being sought for the project.

10. Business Not Listed

a. None


Next Meeting December 6, 2023 ANNUAL MEETING

The board meeting was adjourned by Chair Collins at 7:49 p.m. by the clock on the wall.

Respectfully submitted by Cassandra Newton



James Collins, Chair



Cassandra Newton, District Manager