

**WHEELER SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES**

June 24, 2021

Meeting location: TELECONFERENCE

To join the meeting from a computer, tablet or smartphone:

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/687707325>

To dial in using a phone:

United States: +1 (872) 240-3311

Access Code: 687-707-325

The board meeting was called to order by Chairman Holmes at 6:38 p.m. by his watch.

Directors

Jeremiah Holmes

Jason Davis

Kale Haberman

James Collins

David Hunt

Wayne Lindquist

Anna Thomas

Assoc. Directors

Employees

Cassandra Newton

Brooke Moore

Bodie Brown

Randall Williams

Others Present

Debbi Bunch, MJDBCWC

New Board Director Appointment: Chairman Holmes advised that Anna Thomas has agreed to join the District's Board of Directors. Vice-Chairman Collins **moved to appoint Anna Thomas as a board director in Zone 2**, Director Davis seconded the motion. The **motion carried unanimously**.

Chairman Holmes conducted the Oath of Office for Anna Thomas.

AGENCY REPORTS

Mid John Day – Bridge Creek Watershed Council, Debbi Bunch: Debbi advised that the Watershed Council conducted an employee evaluation directly before the SWCD board meeting. She stated the next Council meeting will have a meeting on July 8th and the next Lower John Day Working Group meeting will be July 20th. She advised that the LJDWG completed Step 4 and is working on Step 5, which the anticipated completion date is February 2022.

DISTRICT STAFF REPORTS

District Manager, Randall Williams: Randy introduced himself and stated that everyone has been very welcoming and helpful. He advised his currently focus is understanding the connection of the partnering agencies and funding sources, as well as meeting with each of the employees to understand their individual roles and responsibilities. He further advised that his current goals are to (1) become familiar with all aspects of the District to help aid him in conducting his responsibility to ensure the District runs smoothly, (2) to determine areas of concerns within the District, (3) and setting a good work ethic example. He expressed his excitement and gratitude to be here in Wheeler County and with the District. He invited the directors to attend any of the staff meetings or contact him with comments or concerns any time.

Office Manager, Cassandra Newton: Cassi stated that her report provided extensive detail and is current.

Field Tech II, Bodie Brown: Bodie stated his report is current. Cassi advised that the renewal of the BPA contract from 2021-22 was approved.

Field Tech I, Brooke Moore: Brooke state her report is current.

MONTHLY BUSINESS

MINUTES: Cassi advised that Sandi Hiatt from ODA contacted her with a correction of the dates recorded from Maria's update. Cassi stated that the corrected May 27, 2021 meeting minutes were provided for review.

Director Davis advised that he was not present at the May 27th meeting as was recorded in the meetings.

Debbi advised that the grades she presented the stream table to and the number of Lower John Day Working Group strategies recorded in her update were incorrect.

Director Lindquist **moved that May 27, 2021 meeting minutes be approved with corrections**, Director Hunt seconded the motion. The **motion carried unanimously**.

BUDGET EXPENSE REPORT: The budget report dated June 15, 2021 was presented for review.

Vice-Chairman Collins asked what about the status of the current weed grant. Bodie advised that he will be wrapping that grant up in the next week and requesting the remaining funds.

Vice-Chairman Collins asked what about the status of the old RCPP. Cassi advised that Brooke is scheduled to meet with NRCS on the 28th to determine the current status on all contracts. Chairman Holmes advised that there is a national shortage of pipe available which is hindering the ability to complete the pipeline portions of the contracts.

Cassi advised the Board that in the packet provided at the meeting was a document that she has developed in conjunction with the weekly staff meetings. She explained that the document has all pertinent details and "To Do" lists for all the District projects separated by the staff who is taking the lead, as well as a financial overview of each project. She further explained that she updates this document weekly after the staff meeting and provides it to the staff to use throughout the week, and she will provide a copy of the latest update in the monthly board packets going forward.

The directors thanked Cassi for creating the document and expressed how helpful it is for them. They also thanked the staff for their work in organizing the project management over the past few months.

Director Davis **moved that the budget report dated June 15, 2021 be approved**, Vice-Chairman Collins seconded the motion. The **motion carried unanimously**.

BILLS: The check register dated June 15, 2021 was reviewed. Cassi advised that bills were not prepared for the board meeting due to the fiscal year end and that bills will be processed on June 30th for review at the July meeting. Director Lindquist **moved that the bills dated June 15, 2021 be approved**, Director Thomas seconded the motion. The **motion carried unanimously**.

OLD BUSINESS

2021-2022 BUDGET: The final draft of the 2021-2022 was presented for review. The following line items were discussed and changes made: Staff Mileage (no change), Equipment Maintenance (no change), Vehicle Purchase (increased), RCPP Project (no change), and Board Mileage (no change).

Vice-Chairman Collins **moved to approved and adopt the 2021-2022 budget with adjustments**, Director Davis seconded the motion. The **motion carried unanimously**.

2021-2022 WAGE SCHEDULE: The 2021-2022 Wage Scheduled was presented for review. Debbi advised that her position title has changed. Cassi stated her position title changed too and both will need to be corrected.

Director Lindquist **moved to approved and adopt the 2021-2022 Wage Schedule with corrections**, Director Thomas seconded the motion. The **motion carried unanimously**.

MOU W/ MJD-BC WATERSHED COUNCIL: Chairman Holmes advised that an extension is needed on the MOU renewal with the Mid John Day – Bridge Creek Watershed Council and the work group will meet on July 14th.

Vice-Chairman Collins **moved to approve an extension to July 29, 2021 for the MJD-BC Watershed Council MOU renewal**, Director Hunt seconded the motion. The **motion carried unanimously**.

SAM AGENT: Chairman Holmes advised that the Finance Manager has successfully updated the point of contact for the SAM and D&B accounts and has requested the Board appoint Cassi as the SAM agent.

Vice-Chairman Collins **moved to appoint Cassandra Newton as the District's Registered SAM Agent**, Director Thomas seconded the motion. The **motion carried unanimously**.

NEW BUSINESS

2021-2022 ANNUAL WORK PLAN: The 2021-2022 Annual Work Plan was presented for review.

Vice-Chairman Collins **moved to approved and adopt the 2021-22 Annual Work Plan**, Director Hunt seconded the motion. The **motion carried unanimously**.

ODA TRAINING OPPORTUNITY: Chairman Holmes advised that Eric Nusbaum with ODA has applied for a waiver that will allow him to conduct the New Employee Training for Randy in person. He explained that to help in supporting the waiver application Eric suggested also conducting a short board training during the July meeting. Cassi advised that Eric suggested the topic of executive sessions, but the Board may choose any topic. The Board was in agreement that executive sessions would be a helpful training topic.

NEW DM, DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY: Cassi stated that she provided in the packets a Delegation of Authority that mimicked the Delegation of Authority held by the previous District Manager. Cassi asked the Board if they would prefer to temporarily revise any part of the authority being appointed to Randy, such as bid award limits, for the duration of his employment probationary period. Chairman Holmes asked Randy if he would agree to lower the bid award limit during his probationary period. Randy stated he is used to a Board needing to approve any bid document and is comfortable with a lower bid award limit. Randy suggested lowering the limit to \$25,000. Chairman Holmes stated that involving the Board in the bid process will aid in keeping the Board updated on the projects.

Director Lindquist **moved to approve and appoint the Delegation of Authority for Randall Williams with the edit of the bid award limit of \$25,000**, Director Davis seconded the motion. The **motion carried unanimously**.

Chairman Holmes stated that the District has appointed Cassi with a Delegation of Authority which is still in place. He advised that the Board needs to decide if that is going to be terminated, revised, or remain as is. Cassi stated that she believes there needs to be some sort of Delegation of Authority appointed as the District's Registered Agent, with the responsibility of ensuring the District meets and complies with all laws and regulations. Chairman Holmes suggested that the Board not make a decision on Cassi's Delegation of Authority and the Board requested that Randy and Cassi provide a recommendation to the Board in July after they've reviewed and discussed what would be best. Chairman Holmes stated that he would like to see Cassi hold a Delegation of Authority that will allow for District Business to continue in Randy's absence.

NEW DM, BANK SIGNER: Chairman Holmes suggested that this item also be tabled until July contingent on Randy and Cassi's recommendation for the Delegation of Authority and whether Cassi will remain a signer or be removed. Cassi advised that she intends on meeting with the District's auditor to discuss the segregation of duties to determine if she can even remain as a signer.

NEW DM, CARD USER AUTHORIZATION: Chairman Holmes advised that Randy needs to be authorized to use the fuel and bank cards. Randy asked what the limits of the cards were. Cassi advised that the bank card has a limit of \$5,000 combined with all cards and any purchase over \$500 has to have prior approval by the District Manager.

Director Hunt **moved to approve Randall Williams as a card user**, Director Davis seconded the motion. The **motion carried unanimously**.

LANDOWNER FOLLOW-UP: Chairman Holmes stated that something he brought to the staff's attention during a staff meeting was that landowners have mentioned to him that there were things they would have not have done or would have done differently on projects had they known they had a choice. Chairman Holmes explained that it is important that the District does these projects but it is more important that the landowners are happy with them once they are completed.

Chairman Holmes provided the following example – A project took place that consisted of pipeline with risers. The risers used were plastic and the landowner is now having to replace each riser at his own expense not long after the project was completed due to the risers not holding up. The landowner has stated that he/she was persuaded into the project and the components of it.

Chairman Holmes stated that the District may not always be able to fix or alter projects, but the District has a responsibility to make certain the diligence is made in communicating with the landowners and ensuring they are happy with what is being done. He suggested to the Board that a procedure, standard, or policy is developed that requires the District follow up with landowners after the projects are completed to help maintain relationships with landowners and improve future projects.

Director Davis stated that the time required to follow up with landowners to determine what worked well and what can be improved is valuable use of time. Cassi stated that Debbi had mentioned in the staff meeting possibly scheduling mid-project reviews with the landowners. Director Lindquist suggested not doing mid-project reviews due to liability issues of projects being cancelled part way through completion and Vice-Chairman Collins agreed. Chairman Holmes stated that another benefit of doing after project follow ups would be the District obtaining a review of the work completed by the contractor to ensure that the District is utilizing the best contractors for the specific jobs. Randy stated that in the OWEB training he attended, the project manager advised that an important section in the project completion reporting that is not utilized to the full potential is the "Lessons Learned" narrative. Director Lindquist suggested that the staff maintains a list of preferred materials used in specific project components to aid in project planning.

Chairman Holmes stated that he is not concerned about all the landowners and all the projects, but he has heard from a couple landowners and felt it needed to be discussed as a Board. He advised that there does not need to be a determination of the process or details at this time. He suggested that the topic be revisited in the near future.

OTHER BUSINESS NOT LISTED

JULY MEETING: Chairman Holmes advised that the fire hall has a few more things to finish before the District can meet there, so at least the next three monthly meetings will need to be held at The Rock. Cassi stated that she will contact Debbi Greninger to confirm The Rock is available.

AGENCY NEWSLETTERS: Cassi advised that Randy would like to offer all pertinent agency newsletters and notices to the directors. Cassi asked if the Board would like those to be emailed or provided at the meetings. The directors agreed for them to be emailed.

DRONE PURCHASE: Cassi stated that the staff has been brainstorming on ideas for utilizing the funding available through the NRCS TA grant due COVID hindering Brooke from being able to accompanying NRCS in the field as the grant was originally intended for. Cassi advised that she had the idea to requesting approval to purchase a drone and the necessary equipment and software. She also included some other some other field technician equipment and supplies

such as digital camera, backpacks with water bladders, tie downs for the UTV, and a gas can in the request. We are currently waiting for a response.

Director Lindquist stated that a gas can is a safety risk. Cassi advised that the card reader in Mitchell does not always read the card and sometimes only allows the card to be read once. Director Hunt stated that he did not think that a government agency could legally carry a gas can in the vehicle. Vice-Chairman Collins suggested that the District look into getting a fuel tank at the office. Cassi stated that there is a lot of research and planning required before getting a tank at the office because it is not the District property, insurance eligibility and other things would need to be looked into. Director Hunt stated that a double-walled tank could be purchased and Chairman Holmes stated that is what the Spray School District purchased. Director Lindquist and Chairman Holmes both stated that the purchase and setup of the tank would be paid for with the funds saved by purchasing fuel in bulk. Chairman Holmes advised that the use of a gas can as a temporary fix for the reading error of the fuel cards would likely fall to the District Manager to make the decision.

Director Lindquist asked what the drone would cost. Cassi advised that she has requested \$9,750 which \$3,350 is for the drone and \$3,600 is for the software. The other portion of equipment is for an iPad and camera while \$1,000 was requested for materials and supplies. Director Davis stated that all items requested will assist the field technicians in efficiently and safely conducting their work and he believes the purchases are valid.

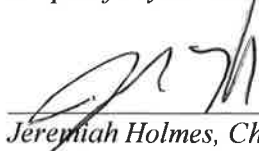
VEHICLE PURCHASE: Cassi provided the only half-ton pickups she located on state surplus and some examples located at dealership. She advised that there were not many available. During the budget discussion, directors discussed purchasing a brand new vehicle to refrain from extensive repair and maintenance costs. Chairman Holmes asked if state purchasing was looked into. Cassi stated she was unaware that new vehicles were included in the state purchase and advised she would look into it.

DISTRICT PICKUP REPAIR: Cassi advised the Board that the pickup is still at Gruner's and they found two sections of rodent damage in the wiring harness. She stated that Gruner's explained that one section of damage was right at the connector, so they had to order that connector. Cassi stated that Gruner's anticipated having the pickup for another 7-10 days due to waiting for the part and the cost was currently \$640.

NEXT MEETING DATE: The next regular meeting will be held on **July 29, 2021**.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by Chairman Holmes at 8:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Cassandra Newton


Jeremiah Holmes, Chair


Cassandra Newton, Office Manager

