

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

May 27, 2021

Meeting location: TELECONFERENCE

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

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/914028101>

To dial in using a phone:

United States: +1 (872) 240-331

Access Code: 914-028-10

The board meeting was called to order by Chairman Holmes at 6:09 p.m. by his watch.

Directors

Jeremiah Holmes
Wayne Lindquist
Kale Haberman
James Collins
David Hunt

Assoc. Directors

Rob Wade

Employees

Cassandra Newton
Brooke Moore
Bodie Brown

Others Present

Debbi Bunch, MJDBCWC
Maria Snodgress, ODA
Marganne Allen, ODA

AGENCY REPORTS

Mid John Day – Bridge Creek Watershed Council, Debbi Bunch: Debbi advised that the next Lower John Day Working Group (LJDWG) meeting will be held virtually on June 15th to approve Step 4, the next MJD-BC Watershed Council meeting will be held on June 14th but the location has not been determined, and OWEB has scheduled the virtual site tour for the Watershed’s grant application on June 17th. Director Lindquist asked what was included in Step 4 for the LJDWG. Debbi advised that the publication was sent out in February and it includes the prioritization and information on the 46 strategies for the 20 critical issues. Director Lindquist requested that a completed copy be sent to him.

Debbi stated her and Brooke took the stream table to the Fossil Grade School and presented to grades K-5th. She advised that she has a couple of post-implementation status reports due in June, as well as the final report for the District’s Pine Hollow Shingle Creek project.

ODA, Maria Snodgress: Maria advised that the OWEB review team has scheduled the review team meeting for stakeholder engagement, technical assistance and monitoring applications for June 15th and the review team meeting for restoration applications for July 21st. Maria advised that she was attending the meeting to introduce Marganne Allen, the Program Manager.

ODA, Marganne Allen: Marganne introduced herself and provided her background with ODF prior to working with ODA. She acknowledge the letter the Board sent the District’s thoughts and feelings regarding the Strategic Implementation Areas (SIA) and not wanting to participate in the watershed selection process. She advised that it was a common theme from Districts. Marganne stated that she is looking forward to having a detailed discussion with the discussion in the near future regarding SIA(s).

Marganne stated it was nice to see a positive revenue forecast and many funds are better than anticipated. She advised that capacity grants are anticipated to be funded at sustained levels and likewise, SIAs will continue to be planned. Marganne further advised that there will be no definite knowledge on budgets until legislative sessions are done in the end of June.

DISTRICT STAFF REPORTS

Office Manager, Cassandra Newton: Cassi advised that she provided a monthly report as an overview of the district operations since a District Manager report is not included this month.

Field Tech II, Bodie Brown: Bodie was not present at the time of staff reports.

Field Tech I, Brooke Moore: Brooke advised that she turned in the last monitoring report due for May and it has been approved by OWEB. Director Haberman asked how large the burn on Juniper Butte was and when it will occur. Brooke stated it was 402 acres and will be happening in the fall. She advised there is a meeting scheduled on June 3rd with the landowner and an NRCS Burn Manager from Portland to review the area.

MONTHLY BUSINESS

MINUTES: The May 3, 2021 special and executive meeting minutes and May 18, 2021 special and executive meeting minutes were presented for review.

Director Haberman **moved that May 3, 2021 special and executive meeting minutes be approved**, Director Lindquist seconded the motion. The **motion carried unanimously**.

Director Lindquist **moved that May 18, 2021 special and executive meeting minutes be approved**, Director Hunt seconded the motion. The **motion carried unanimously**.

BUDGET EXPENSE REPORT: The budget report dated May 18, 2021 was presented for review.

Director Lindquist **moved that the budget report dated May 18, 2021 be approved**, Director Haberman seconded the motion. The **motion carried unanimously**.

BILLS: The check registers dated May 17, 2021 and May 27, 2021 were reviewed. Director Haberman **moved that the bills dated May 17, 2021 and May 27, 2021 be approved**, Director Hunt seconded the motion. The **motion carried unanimously**.

OLD BUSINESS

2021-2022 BUDGET: Cassi advised that she provided an updated budget draft in the packet, which reflects through April. She stated she reached out to Judy to review the draft and Judy has agreed to review the budget the first week of June. Cassi advised that she is trying to keep the line items and allocations in line with how Judy has prepared the budget in the past to ensure that the budget updates Judy provides is accurate with the adopted budget.

NEW BUSINESS

MOA WITH GILLIAM SWCD: Cassi advised that the MOA with Gilliam SWCD is for the partnership for the RCPP in Butte Creek and Thirtymile area. She further advised that MOA reflects the allocation of funding based on percentage of area of the project within each county, which Wheeler County land totals 25.11% of the project area. She stated that the funding is over a five-year period, which Gilliam created a spreadsheet of on the last page of the MOA.

Director Lindquist asked how much of the project work is taking place in Wheeler County. Cassi advised that she is unsure of the total number of applications and projects planned thus far, but that she can provide that information at the next meeting. Debbi advised that the District has an NRCS TA grant for the Butte Creek area that will assist with work with the RCPP.

Director Lindquist **moved that the MOU with Gilliam SWCD for the RCPP in Butte Creek and Thirtymile area be approved**, Director Haberman seconded the motion. The **motion carried unanimously**.

WAGE SCHEDULE: Cassi advised that generally the District Manager would make the decision on if a cost-of-living-increase (COLI) would occur and last year Chase chose not to approve a COLI due to the situation with COVID and not knowing the affect the pandemic was going to have on the District financials. Cassi stated that she needs the Board to make the decision due to the District Manager being vacant and she will need the data to complete the fiscal budget. Director Haberman asked what the standard COLI was. Cassi advised that typically it is between 2 to 3% and the 2021 National COLI is 1.3%. Cassi asked Chairman Holmes if the county approved a COLI for 2021-2022.

Chairman Holmes stated that it was split with some employees receiving a \$0.50 per hour increase and some receiving a 2.2% COLI. Director Holmes asked Debbi if the Council had met to discuss COLI for her position. Debbi advised that it is scheduled to occur in June so Cassi can complete the fiscal budget.

Chairman Holmes stated that his opinion is to approve a COLI between 2.5 to 3% considering no COLI was approved last year and the economic inflation. Director Haberman stated his opinion was approve a 3% COLI due to the considerations Chairman Holmes shared. Director Lindquist asked if the new District Manager position should be included. Chairman Holmes and Director Hunt stated they believe it should be for all employees.

Director Hunt moved that a 3% Cost-Of-Living-Increase for all employees be approved, Director Haberman seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

After discussion of moving expense reimbursement for the new District Manager, Director Lindquist **moved to amend the prior Cost-Of-Living-Increase and for approve a 3% Cost-Of-Living-Increase for the Office Manager, Field Technician I, and Field Technician II positions, Director Haberman seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.**

MJDBC WATERSHED MOU: Chairman Holmes advised that a copy of MOU with requested revisions is included in the packet. He suggested that the Board have a workgroup meeting and address the revisions in the same manner as last year. Director Haberman asked if the revisions in blue were requested from the Watershed Council. Chairman Holmes confirmed that all requested revisions in the copy provided is from the Watershed Council. Debbi advised that she would also like the task list be included in the MOU as an exhibit.

Chairman Holmes stated he is aware of the struggle endured last year during the revision process, but he is appreciative of the outcome and believes all parties and individuals involved have gained a better understanding of the relationship between the SWCD and the Watershed Council. Director Lindquist stated that he had been told for years that the whole relationship has not been in a good financial standing, but after reviewing the SFA the past few months, it appears that is not the case. After further discussion of schedules, Chairman Holmes, Director Haberman, and Director Lindquist agreed to participate in the workgroup session on June 7th at 6pm.

Director Hunt moved for the Board to appoint Chairman Holmes, Director Haberman, and Director Lindquist to the Watershed Council MOU workgroup, Director Lindquist seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS NOT LISTED

DISTRICT PICKUP REPAIR: Cassi advised that she received a call from Stacy Hunt regarding the pickup and he is unable to fix it. Cassi stated that Stacy informed her that the diagnostic codes are present due to disconnection between the ECU and the sensors that are throwing the codes. Director Hunt stated that they believe that the pickup needs a new ECU. Cassi advised that it is likely the same issue that we had last year with rabbits chewing the wiring. She stated that if it is wiring, it cost the District over \$1000 last year to have one injector wire fixed by Gruner's. Director Hunt suggested that the pickup be taken to Gruner's. Chairman Holmes agreed to take the pickup to Gruner's and advised that there needs to be discussion of how to avoid this matter occurring again, if it is wiring. Director Lindquist suggested that the hoods of the vehicles be left open to help prevent rabbits and packrats. Cassi suggested that the vehicles be pulled into the shop, if the hoods are going to be left open to reduce damage of weather elements and wind damage. Chairman Holmes asked if the Board would like to start looking for a new vehicle now or if it should wait for the new District Manager. Director Hunt stated that the new District Manager will be occupied with getting up to speed on everything else. Director Lindquist agreed with Director Hunt and stated that the cost of vehicles are increasing, so the sooner the better right now. Chairman Holmes stated that in the past, the District had purchased Chevy vehicles to support local businesses, but there is no longer a Chevy dealership in Wheeler County. He asked the Board if they would prefer the District to continue with only purchasing Chevys or if there is another preference. The Board was in agreement to keep the search broad to ensure all options are reviewed. The Board ask Cassi begin searching for a

vehicle now to see what is available. Cassi asked the Board if she should be searching for another pickup or a SUV. After discussion amongst the Board and staff, it was agreed that another pickup would be preferred.

JDBC CONTRACTOR AGREEMENT: Cassi advised that she has completed a draft of the Contractor Agreement for the John Day Basin Contractors (JDBC) for the Butte Creek Riverscape project that the Board awarded the bid on in March. Cassi asked the Board to review and approve the Agreement. Chairman Holmes asked when the work is scheduled to begin. Brooke advised that she met with the contractor and they would like to begin gathering and staging supplies June 15th. Director Lindquist asked for clarification on the structure and payment breakout in the Agreement. Cassi advised that she received the Agreement between JDBC and Gilliam SWCD for the BDA project on Thirtymile as a template and she had to revise the payment schedule based on linear foot instead of structures. Both JDBC and Gilliam SWCD did this through an amendment during the Thirtymile project after realizing that payment by structure was difficult to do.

Director Hunt **moved to approve the JDBC Contract Agreement**, Director Haberman seconded the motion. The **motion carried unanimously**.

REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST: Chairman Holmes advised that after Cassi provided Randy the offer letter, Randy thanked the Board for everything and accepted the offer for the District Manager position. He further advised that Randy inquired about the possibility of moving expense reimbursement. Chairman Holmes read Randy's request,

"Could you please inquire with the Board of Directors if there is a consideration and ability to assist with any portion of my moving expense to the District? I anticipate the U-Haul box trailer rental one way and mileage expense as a portion of our overall expenses to move. I very much understand if this is not available but if it is available it would meaningfully assist in our move and in getting established in the District"

Director Lindquist asked what the 3% COLI calculates to. Cassi stated that it would be \$1,800 for the year. Director Lindquist suggested providing the moving expense reimbursement instead of including the District Manager position in the COLI since he has not started in the District Manager position. Chairman Holmes agreed with Director Lindquist and advised the Board would need to amend the prior motion made for the COLI.

Director Lindquist **moved to approve a \$1,200 moving expense reimbursement for the new District Manager to be paid after his first date of work**, Director Hunt seconded the motion. The **motion carried unanimously**.

JULY MEETING: Chairman Holmes asked the Board if they would like to hold a July meeting to help aid in the transition with the new District Manager starting in June. The Board was in agreement to hold a meeting in July.

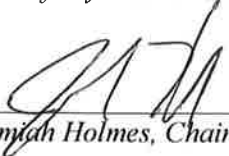
Director Hunt **moved to hold a July meeting**, Director Haberman seconded the motion. The **motion carried unanimously**.

WEED BOARD: Wheeler County Weed Board Chairman Haberman requested a Weed Board meeting on June 24th prior to the SWCD board meeting.

NEXT MEETING DATE: The next regular meeting will be held on **June 24, 2021**.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by Chairman Holmes at 7:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Cassandra Newton


Jeremiah Holmes, Chair


Cassandra Newton, Office Manager