



Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District

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Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes
May 25, 2023

<u>Directors</u>	<u>Assoc. Directors/Emeritus</u>	<u>Employees</u>	<u>Others Present</u>
James Collins		Cassandra Newton	Austin Reimer, ODF
Jason Davis		Brooke Moore	
Ross Ryno		Kristen Neuburger	
Zach Bruce			
Brent Johnson			
Dave Hunt			

The board meeting was called to order by Chair Collins at 6:08 p.m. by the clock on the wall.

1. Agency Reports

a. Oregon Department of Forestry, Austin Reimer

Austin introduced himself and advised he was attending on behalf of Matthew Brown, Wheeler County Stewardship Forester. Austin provided an update on staffing and funding opportunities.

2. District Reports

a. District Manager, Cassi Newton

Chair Collins asked Cassi to provide a verbal overview of her report that was included in the packet. She apologized for sending out the packets on a short notice and provided an overview of her report.

b. Conservation Technician II, Brooke Moore

Brooke stated that her report is current. She advised that she has been focused on developing the West Branch survey database the past few days and working on prepping CREP contracts and applications for the fall. Brooke also advised that she will be taking maternity leave of absence beginning in September.

c. Conservation Technician I, Kristen Neuburger

Kristen stated her report is current.

3. Monthly Business

a. Review and approve minutes

- April 27, 2023 minutes

‡Motion made by Director Davis to approve the board meeting minutes from April 27, 2023, Director Hunt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

b. Review and approve financial reports

- May

Director Davis asked what the fraud charge was. Cassi advised that there was an unauthorized charged on the District's Visa card that occurred from Wix.com and explained that Wix.com is a website host. She stated that she processed a fraud claim on May 15th.

Cassi also advised that Bank of Eastern notified of an attempted charge on the closed checking account and the charged was declined.

‡Motion made by Director Davis to approve the April financial report, Director Johnson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

c. Review and approve Accounts Payable

- May 16, 2023
- May 25, 2023

‡Motion made by Director Davis to approve the check registers from May 16, 2023 and May 25, 2023 as presented, Director Hunt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

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)

4. Upcoming Meetings & Events

- Staff Meeting, every Monday
- **May**
 - 25th SWCD board meeting, 6pm
 - 29th Memorial Day - SWCD office closed
 - 30th Candidate meet & greet, 6pm
- **June**
 - 8th FSA County Committee meeting, 10am
 - 13th-14th ODA board meeting
 - 15th WB stakeholder event
 - 29th SWCD board meeting, 6pm
 - 30th Tree School East (Baker), 8:30am-4:30pm

5. Upcoming Deadlines

- **May**
 - 31st ODA Capacity
- **June 30th**
 - Annual Work Plan
 - Annual Budget

6. District Management

a. 2023-2024 Annual Budget

Cassi presented a draft of the 2023-2024 budget and asked the Board for and edits. The Board requested Cassi to make the following changes:

Added line item for *recruitment* \$5,000

Increase line item for *legal* to \$2,500

Increase line item for *utilities* by 10%

b. 2023-2024 Annual Work Plan

Cassi provided an overview of the 2023-2024 Annual Work Plan. Director Davis advised that the director terms need to be updated with the 2022 election terms. Cassi apologized for overlooking that revision and advised she would update it prior to submitting to ODA.

‡**Motion** made by Director Hunt to approve the 2023-2024 Annual Work Plan with corrected terms, Director Johnson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

c. 2023-2024 Wage Schedule

Cassi stated that the federal inflation rate is 8.7%. She reminded the Board that the approved 2022-2023 COLA was 5%. Cassi recommended that the Board approve a 3% COLA for both the Conservation Technicians. She explained that she is not recommending her position to be included in the COLA due to recently receiving a salary increase when she accepted the offer of the District Manager position.

‡**Motion** made by Director Hunt to approve a 3% COLA for the Conservation Technicians and the 2023-2024 Wage Schedule as presented, Director Bruce seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

d. Fee Schedule

Cassi stated that IT was able to get the plotter printer linked to all the laptops and desktops. She explained that the plotter printer allows for large-scale printing, such as maps for landowners who are participating in projects and outreach materials. Cassi recommended that a fee schedule be adopted to allow the District to provide this service and others to the general public. The Board agreed and requested that a fee schedule be presented for adoption at the June meeting.

e. Caterer Request

Cassi presented a written request from the caterer for an increase of \$50 to \$250 per board meeting.

Director Hunt abstained from discussion and vote due to conflict of interest.

‡**Motion** made by Director Davis to approve the caterer an increase to \$250 per board meeting, Director Johnson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

f. Staffing – Conservation Manager

Cassi advised that the candidate agreed to the meet and greet interview for May 30th. Cassi asked the Board what time they would like to schedule the interview. The Board agreed to noon at the District office. Cassi advised she will be spending the day showing the candidate around Wheeler County and project sites.

g. Employee Evaluations

Cassi advised that per policy, employee evaluations should have been conducted in January, but due to not having a District Manager and short capacity, she did not schedule any. She recommended that the evaluations occur in August after the new-hire arrives due to that position being the supervisor of the Conservation Technicians. The Board agreed.

h. SDAO Trainings

Cassi provided a printout of the upcoming SDAO trainings available to board members and staff. She recommended that the Board attend if able.

7. Legislation

None.

8. Projects/Programs

a. OWEB

Cassi advised that the Headwaters of Keyes Creek project was awarded. She further advised that the Quant Ranch project was not awarded, but the portion funded by CTWS was still contracted.

b. BLM

Cassi stated that the Priest Hole Restoration project status is that the NEPA notice for public comment has closed and is currently in an appeal period. She explained that once the NEPA is fully completed, then BLM will send funds to OWEB and the District can submit an official OWEB application to initiate the agreement.

c. ODA AgWQ

Cassi advised that an application was submitted for monitoring on Butte Creek as a continuation of the work that Gilliam County SWCD has been conducting in the Thirtymile Watershed.

9. Partners

a. Spray Rodeo Booth w/ FSA

Cassi stated that she was able to plan a booth with FSA for Friday and Saturday of the Spray Rodeo.

b. Grant County SWCD Rejuvra Tour

Cassi advised that Grant County SWCD has sent out an invitation to Rejuvra project tours and presentation on June 21st. She stated that the staff will all be attending and asked that the directors advise her if they are interested in attending, so she can RSVP.

c. OSU Field Days

Cassi advised that Oregon State University is partnering with USDA to co-host some field days in Pendleton and Sherman. She stated that the agendas and information is included in the board packet for anyone interested in attending.

10. Business Not Listed


None.

Next Meeting May 30, 2023 (Executive Session)
June 29, 2023

The board meeting was adjourned by Chair Collins at 7:21 p.m. by the clock on the wall.

Respectfully submitted by Cassandra Newton


James Collins, Chair


Cassandra Newton, District Manager