

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

May 27, 2020

The board meeting was called to order by Chairman Holmes at 6:25 p.m. by the clock in the Big Sarvice Corral meeting room, located at 40280 Hwy 19, Fossil, Oregon.

Directors

Jeremiah Holmes
Wayne Lindquist
JimBob Collins
Jason Davis
David Hunt

Assoc. Directors

Rob Wade

Employees

Chase Schultz
Cassandra Newton
Brooke Moore
Bodie Brown
Debbi Bunch

Others Present

Crystal Rey
Kendall Derby

AGENCY REPORTS

Kendall Derby, MJDBCWC:

Kendall stated the only item he had to advise on was the watershed council is currently looking to alternative funding sources aside from OWEB.

DISTRICT STAFF REPORTS

District Manager: Chase stated that his report was current and had nothing to add.

Is COVID19 affecting field work? There are fewer field visit, but projects are still in good standing and on track for completion dates.

Administrative Assistant: Cassi did not have any additions to the report she provided.

Watershed Council: Lower John Day Work Group will be held virtually on June 23rd and the notice was emailed to the Directors. The John Day Basin Partnership will also be holding their June meeting virtually.

Debbi stated that she hopes to have a newsletter out next week.

Field Tech II: Bodie stated landowner agreements were sent out for the 2020-21 weed grant.

Field Tech I: Brooke stated that the all the PISRs will be submitted and approved on time this month, keeping the District from having any reports marked as late.

MONTHLY BUSINESS

Minutes: The April 22, 2020, minutes were presented for review. Director Lindquist **moved that the minutes from April 22, 2020 be approved**, Director Davis seconded the motion. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Budget Expense Report: The budget report dated May 16, 2020 was reviewed. Director Collins **moved that the budget report dated May 16, 2020 be approved**, Director Hunt seconded the motion. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Bills: The check registers dated April 1, 2020 to April 30, 2020 and May 1, 2020 to May 31, 2020, were reviewed. Director Hunt **moved that the check registers dated April 1, 2020 to April 30, 2020 and May 1, 2020 to May 31, 2020 be approved**, Director Davis seconded the motion. **The motion carried unanimously.**

NEW BUSINESS

LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (LAC) MEETING: Due to COVID19, the LAC Biennial Review has been postponed. Maria Snodgrass mentioned via email rescheduling for July and indicated that this is a light review and does

not necessarily need to be tied to a Board Meeting. Chase has advised against this idea because OWEB grant application due date is now in July and we don't hold a Board Meeting in July due to everyone's busy schedules. **The Board requested that Maria be contacted to request the LAC meeting to be in June or August.**

Director Collins advised that he would be willing to be a member of the Committee. The Board had a brief discussion of possible candidates for the LAC.

It was decided that when the LAC meeting takes place, prime rib would be served and the District would offer Ginger the option of cooking and/or serving.

BUDGET: The Board had minimal questions pertaining to the budget.

Capital Outlay- Vehicle, increased – The District has had one or both vehicles in need of repair consistently for the past six or more months. The District would like to purchase a vehicle to replace the Tahoe in the near future and surplus the Tahoe while it has a reasonable resale value.

The Board discussed the options of purchasing vehicles and what type would best suit the District.

Personnel was budgeted in the Weed fund, removed – This was removed due to not having a weed employee and funds not being utilized for over three years.

NRCS OWEB TA Costs, removed – Improper billing to NRCS resulted in repayment of funds.

APHIS, new funds – Acronym stands for Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service and the funds are from a USDA grant for weed and biocontrol.

The budget will be revised with June financial details and presented at the June Board meeting for review and adoption.

RETIREMENT ADDITION TO PERSONNEL POLICY HANDBOOK: An addition to Personnel Policy Handbook pertaining to the employee retirement plan was reviewed. Director Davis **moved that the addition to the Personnel Policy Handbook be adopted**, Director Hunt seconded the motion. **The motion carried unanimously.**

NRCS CIVIL RIGHTS RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PARTNERS CHECKLIST: This was emailed to Directors in March and explained by Damon Brosnan at the April meeting. Due to only receiving two responses, this was made an action item for the May meeting.

All present Board members signed and dated the form for Cassi to return to Damon.

OLD BUSINESS

EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT FUNDS: Last month (04.22.2020), the Board approved a reduction from 5% (deposit) to 3% (match) and approved to offer a Simple IRA retirement plan to employees through Edward Jones.

Discussions tabled for May:

Employee requested that the 2% reduction be given as equitable raise

This would be difficult to do because of wages already being confirmed and submitted to SDIS for the fiscal year 2020-2021.

Availability of previously budgeted funds

The funds budgeted for FY 18-19 would no longer be available. Without having a retirement account in place for the FY, the funds could not be spent and the district was not obligated to disburse the funds because the board had not adopted/established a retirement program.

Funds for FY 19-20 will be available until June 30, 2020.

The Board discussed the sum of funds 2% and 3% would amount to and suggested that a lump sum bonus be given to employees in June, in lieu of not having the retirement accounts set up for the current fiscal year.

Direct Collins **moved that a bonus in the amount of 3% of each employee's wage be given to employees in June 2020**, Director Davis seconded the motion. **The motion carried unanimously.**

NOVEMBER 2020 ELECTIONS: Cassi offered a printout of frequently answered questions provided by ODA. She also reminded those present of the important deadlines being listed in the meeting packet. Director Holmes advised the Board and staff that he will not be rerunning for his position.

PUBLIC CONTRACT TRAINING: In February, Cassi advised that SDAO does not have any training scheduled at this time. Cassi was able to locate a video recording on the SDAO website of a prior training that Eileen Eakins conducted on the Foundations of Public Contracting. She was able to obtain a copy of the PowerPoint presentation and asked the Directors if they would be interested in spending the time to watch the training. The Directors present in February were all interested, but tabled further discussion of scheduling until the March meeting when all Directors are present. Due to COVID19, this item had not been revisited.

The Board requested that this training be scheduled prior to a Board meeting in the alternate month that LAC is not scheduled – either June or August.

REVISED DISTRICT POLICIES: There are no major changes to any of the policies, mostly only formatting changes.

Pertaining to the Board of Directors By-Laws and Policy – There was discussion about changing the meeting date to the first Thursday of each month; however, not all Directors are available on Thursdays. The Board chose to table the idea until after the November 2020 election.

Director Davis **moved that the revised Board of Directors By-Laws and Policy, revised Director Overview, revised Public Meeting Policy, revised Hazard Communication Plan, and revised Ethics Policy all be adopted**, Director Lindquist seconded the motion. **The motion carried unanimously.**

OTHER BUSINESS NOT LISTED

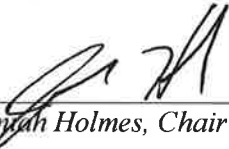
ENGAGEMENT LETTER FROM AUDITOR: Chase received a letter of engagement from the auditor, Barnett & Moro for the current fiscal year, ending June 2020. The base fee is \$5,893, plus any increase in the June 2020 Consumer Price Index.

Director Collins **moved to accept the letter of engagement from Barnett & Moro**, Director Lindquist seconded the motion. **The motion carried unanimously.**

NEXT MEETING DATE: The next meeting date will be on **June 24, 2020** at 6:00 pm. This meeting will be in person, at the Big Sarvice Corral Meeting Room, unless otherwise determined.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by Chairman Holmes at 7:42 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Cassandra Newton



Jeremiah Holmes, Chair



Chase Schultz, District Manager

