



# 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  
March 31, 2022

## Directors

Jason Davis  
Wayne Lindquist  
Anna Thomas  
David Hunt  
Kale Haberman  
James Collins

## Assoc. Directors

## Employees

Randall Williams  
Cassandra Newton  
Daniel Goodell  
Brooke Moore

## Others Present

Debbi Bunch, MJD-BCWC  
Kendall Derby, MJD-BCWC  
DelRae Ferguson, NRCS  
Maria Snodgress, ODA  
Carmen Oakes  
Ross Ryno

The board meeting was called to order by Chair Collins at 6:11 p.m. by the clock on the wall.

## 1. Agency Reports

### a. MJD-BC Watershed Council, Debbi Bunch

Debbie advised that both fall applications that she submitted to OWEB were recommended for funding.

### b. Wheeler County Weed Board, James 'Jim Bob' Collins

No update due to item later on agenda.

### c. RSI (Engineer), Gabe Williams

Not present

### d. NRCS, DelRae Ferguson

DelRae stated that the NRCS held their Local Workgroup Meeting earlier in March and had a great attendance, especially from Wheeler County. She shared that there was discussion of about current projects and future ideas. DelRae advised that 2023 funding applications will be open in the fall and will include a county wide livestock water funding pool and a woven wire removal project. She explained that for the woven wire funding pool, it will include cost-share for both removal and rebuild of fence.

### e. ODA, Maria Snodgress

Maria advised that there are a lot of staffing changes occurring at ODA, specifically in the Ag Water Quality (AgWQ) Department. She reminded the Board that the Mid John Day Biannual Review of the AgWQ Management Plan will be held sometime in June.

Maria also shared informational handouts for the ODA Oregon Disaster Assistance Program and agriculture statistics.

### f. Others

None

## 2. District Reports

### a. District Manager, Randy Williams

Randy stated his report is current.

### b. Office Manager, Cassi Newton

Cassi stated her report is current.

### c. Conservation Technician I, Brooke Moore

Brooke advised that the fall application she submitted to OWEB was recommended for funding. She also advised that the Butte Creek Riverscape CR report was submitted to SHPO.

### d. Conservation Technician II, Daniel Goodell

Daniel stated that his report is current other than ODA recently awarded the noxious weed grant that is in the Twickenham and Richmond area, but the Mitchell area grant was not awarded.

**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)

### 3. Monthly Business

#### a. Review and approve minutes

- February 24, 2022

‡Motion made by Director Lindquist to approve the board meeting minutes from February 24, 2022 as presented, Director Thomas seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### b. Review and approve budget report

- March 17, 2022

‡Motion made by Director Davis to approve the budget report dated March 17, 2022 as presented, Director Thomas seconded the motion. The motion pass unanimously.

#### c. Review and approve Accounts Payable

- March 15, 2022
- March 31, 2022

There was a question raised regarding payment to Pacific Office Automation after the cancellation of the service contact. Cassi advised that she received noticed of two outstanding invoices and after contacting their billing department, she learned that they were the final invoices of the service contract that Pacific Office Automation did not send out in December.

‡Motion made by Director Haberman to approve the check registers from March 15, 2022 and March 31, 2022 as presented, Director Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously

### 4. Upcoming Meetings & Events

- Staff Meeting, every Monday
- February
  - 23rd: OSWB Meeting, 1pm
  - 24th: OSWB Meeting, 8:30am
  - 24th: WCWB Meeting, 4:30pm
  - 24th: SWCD Board Meeting, 6pm
- March
  - 1st: AgriMet Coordination Meeting, 10am
  - 3rd: NRCS Local Work Group Meeting, 1pm
  - 24th: LJDWG Meeting, 10am
  - 31st: SWCD Board Meeting, 6pm

### 5. Upcoming Deadlines

NFWF Conservation Partners Program 02.23.2022  
Conservation & Rec. Fund App Deadline 02.25.2022  
General CRP Deadline 03.11.2022

### 6. District Management

#### a. Finance Manager Transition

Cassi advised that she received the data from Judy for entry into QuickBooks and a meeting has been scheduled with Judy to review the transition progress. She also advised that she scheduled time in May to meet with the auditor to review the employee setup and chart of accounts in QuickBooks. Cassi stated that she visited Grant SWCD and received some insight on how their finance management is setup, and that she is making progress on her certification.

#### b. Office Lease

Randy stated that Judy advised that she accepts the requests the District made for the revised lease and she anticipates having a draft available for the April board meeting.

#### c. Director Recruitment

The Board discussed the open positions and agreed to wait until the April meeting to appoint the At-Large 1 position. The other two positions will be considered depending on interested persons.

#### d. Employee Evaluations

Randy advised that employee evaluations were held and the Board officers actively participated. He explained the evaluation process and provided an overview of the evaluations. He stated that he has a recommended merit salary increase for each of the employees, as well as a recommended COLA.

Randy advised that he has also developed a revised position description for Cassi's position that includes a title change to Administrative Manager and it better depicts her current responsibilities.

Cassi advised that the motions for the recommendations would have to be tabled until April meeting due to not having the revised position description available for review. She explained that part of the revision to the position description is changing the position from non-exempt to exempt and that needs to be reviewed and approved before any salary changes are reviewed and approved.

**7. Legislation**

No items.

**8. Projects/Programs**

**a. AgriMet Weather Stations**

Randy advised that a coordination meeting was held on March 1<sup>st</sup> and that the follow-up data is included in the board packet. He shared the suggested locations for the stations and the funding opportunities.

**b. OWEB Open Solicitation**

No update.

**c. USDA Smart Commodities**

Randy explained the grant opportunity and that a landowner is interested in applying. DelRae and the Board discussed ideas of potential application components. Randy stated that the item was on the agenda to share the opportunity and that meetings are scheduled in the upcoming weeks to explore the District's potential involvement.

*Item 10.a was discussed at this time due to time scheduled for a notary to be present.*

**9. Partners**

**a. Contract with MJD-BC Watershed Council**

This item was tabled until April due to the workgroup not meeting with the Council, yet.

**b. BLM Acquisition(s)**

Randy stated that the comment period is open until April 1<sup>st</sup> for the BLM acquisitions, which includes both the McDonalds Ferry property and additional property along the John Day River. He advised that Sherman SWCD shared a position letter they submitted and Randy asked the Board if he should also submit a position letter. The Board reviewed the letters and map provided by the BLM.

‡**Motion** made by Director Davis to submit a position letter opposing the BLM acquisitions, Director Lindquist seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously

Questions were raised about opposing the Sutton Mountain National Monument proposal.

‡**Motion** made by Director Lindquist to submit a position letter opposing the Sutton Mountain National Monument, Director Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously

**10. Business Not Listed**

**a. Fraudulent Bank Charges**

*This item was discussed after item 8.c due to time scheduled for a notary to be present.*

Cassi stated that she received notice from the bank of suspicious activity on one of the checking accounts and after reviewing the documentation, she determined that two fraudulent checks totaling \$1,669.26 cleared the account. She explained that the bank has taken the proper steps in protecting the District's accounts and there are two affidavits that are required to be signed and

notarized by two bank signers. Cassi stated that she has sufficient information to file a police report and that she was advised by the sheriff to do so.

Cassi advised that the Bank of Eastern Oregon Fraud Department has recommended the District to enroll in a program called Positive Pay that implements additional security of items clearing the accounts. She explained that the recommendation was just made that day and she will have more details about the program at the April meeting.

‡**Motion** made by Director Davis to approve the affidavits to be signed and authorize Cassandra Newton speak to the police and bank regarding the fraudulent bank charges, Director Thomas seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously

*The Board took a recess (7:15-7:30 pm) to allow time for the affidavits to be signed and notarized.*

**b. Director Appointment to Weed Board**

Cassi advised that the County adopted the new resolution, rescinding the prior resolution, establishing the Wheeler County Weed Board with a board being comprised of one non-voting member from Wheeler SWCD Board of Directors, one non-voting member from the Wheeler County Court and three voting members from the public at large. She further advised that the Wheeler County Weed Board approved the adoption of the new resolution, which causes the Weed Board to be inactive without a quorum until Wheeler County appoints three members of the public.

Cassi explained that for at least the past 23 years, the District has administered the Weed Board, which consisted of all the administrative tasks of keeping the Board operating. The District has not received any funding assistance from Wheeler County for doing so. One March 16<sup>th</sup>, the Wheeler County Court did not express an interest in partnering with the District to fund an employee for the Weed Board to conduct the administrative tasks.

Randy and Cassi recommended to the Board that the District no longer administers the Wheeler County Weed Board on behalf of Wheeler County.

‡**Motion** made by Director Davis to no longer administer the Wheeler County Weed Board, Director Haberman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously

**Next Meeting** April 18, 2022

The Board left the open session to enter into executive session at 8:15 p.m. after a 10-minute recess.

**11. Executive Session**

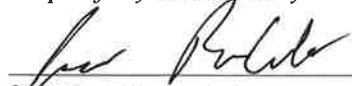
- a. ORS 192.610(2)(e)** To conduct deliberations with persons designated by the governing body to negotiate real property transactions.

The Board adjourned the executive session at 8:31 p.m. and returned to open session.

‡**Motion** made by Director Haberman to approve the non-binding letter of intent to be submitted, Director Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The board meeting was adjourned by Chair Collins at 9:07 p.m. by the clock on the wall.

*Respectfully submitted by Cassandra Newton*

  
James Collins, Chair

  
Randall Williams, District Manager