

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

March 25, 2021

Meeting location: TELECONFERENCE

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

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/768298645>

To dial in using a phone:

United States: +1 (786) 535-3211

Access Code: 768-298-645

The board meeting was called to order by Chairman Holmes at 6:23 p.m. by his watch.

Directors

Jeremiah Holmes
Jason Davis
Kale Haberman
James Collins
David Hunt

Assoc. Directors

Rob Wade
Amy Derby

Employees

Chase Schultz
Cassandra Newton
Brooke Moore
Bodie Brown

Others Present

Debbi Bunch, MJDBCWC

OATH OF OFFICE

APPOINTMENT: Director Davis moved to appoint David Hunt to the Zone 1 position, Vice-Chairman Collins seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Holmes administered the Oath of Office for David Hunt (Zone 1). David Hunt and Chairman Holmes signed the oath document, which ODA will receive an electronic copy of.

AGENCY REPORTS

Mid John Day – Bridge Creek Watershed Council, Debbi Bunch: Debbi advised that the next LJDWG meeting will be held virtually on April 20th and the next MJD-BC Watershed Council meeting will be held on April 22nd but the location has not been determined.

DISTRICT STAFF REPORTS

District Manager: Chase stated that he has been working on new grant agreements. He advised that he provided a bid packet to Cassi for the Board to award. Chase explained that the project covers the first round of implementation of the BDAs on Butte Creek and there will be approximately 270 structures. The Board reviewed and discussed the bids received.

BID AWARD, 220-8208-17238: Vice-Chairman Collins moved to award the bid to John Day Basin Contractors, Director Haberman seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Field Tech II: Bodie was not present at the time of report updates.

Field Tech I: Brooke stated her monthly report is current; however advised that one of the landowners for an open solicitation grant application she was working on has backed out.

MONTHLY BUSINESS

MINUTES: The February 11, 2021 special meeting minutes, February 11, 2021 executive meeting minutes, and February 25, 2021 regular meeting minutes were presented for review. Director Davis moved that February 11, 2021 special meeting minutes, February 11, 2021 executive meeting minutes, and February 25, 2021 regular meeting minutes be approved, Director Hunt seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

BUDGET EXPENSE REPORT: The budget report dated March 16, 2021 was presented for review.

Chairman Holmes asked if additional funds will be received from Project Management on line 11 of the General Fund Revenue prior to the end of the fiscal year. Cassi advised that the budgeted amount is for all open grants, but the project management funds are not received until the grant is completed and closed. She further explained that most of the project grants are longer than a single fiscal year, so not all the budgeted funds will be received. She advised there are a few more projects that will be closing before the fiscal year end.

Chairman Holmes asked Chase how the District's cash flow is and Chase advised that it is okay.

Vice-Chairman Collins asked Chase what work was remaining on the RCPP. Chase advised there are a handful of open contracts with some project work to complete, but all funds have been received. Vice-Chairman Collins asked about the budgeted \$59,000 not being received and Chase advised that the last payment of \$54,000 was recently received. Vice-Chairman asked if the remaining \$5,000 would be received. Cassi advised that the discrepancy is likely the payment the District paid back.

At the February 25th meeting, *Director Davis stated the TA Contract Services/Wages on line 34 of the General Fund Expenditures has exceeded the budgeted amount and asked if there are additional expenditures the District will have before the end of the year.* Cassi advised Director Davis that she reviewed her notes for the budget and lines 33-36 are funds budgeted from all sources other than OWEB large grants. She stated she believes the over-expenditure is due to a miscalculation during the budget preparation between lines 35 and 36.

Vice-Chairman Collins **moved that the budget report dated March 16, 2021 be approved**, Director Haberman seconded the motion. The **motion carried unanimously**.

BILLS: The check register dated March 16, 2021 – March 25, 2021 was reviewed. Director Davis **moved that the bills dated February 17, 2021 – February 25, 2021 be approved**, Vice-Chairman Collins seconded the motion. The **motion carried unanimously**.

STOP PAYMENT: Cassi explained there was a miscommunication during the transition period following the new financial policy adopted in January. She stated she was not aware that the Visa payments were provided to Bank of Eastern local branch in Fossil and had mailed the payment to the address on the statement the past two months, which can take up to 30 days for the payment to be applied to the account. However, the payment mailed the first week of February had not been received. Cassi advised the bank suggested the District place a stop payment on the check and reissue the payment. Cassi provided the form for the Board to review and advised of the \$25 fee for the stop payment. She stated that upon approval, she will be taking the form and payments to the Fossil branch on Friday.

Director Haberman **moved that a stop payment be placed on check 5007 and a new check to be issued in the amount of \$2,868.93 be approved**, Director Hunt seconded the motion. The **motion carried unanimously**.

Cassi advised that the Board had approved a second date for bills to be paid, but there was no discussion of approving those mid-month bills at the board meetings. She asked if they would like the check register to be included in the board packets for approval. Chairman Holmes stated he would like to have the check registers in the packets to be approved at the board meetings.

OLD BUSINESS

LIFE INSURANCE: Cassi advised there was only one employee interested, so the District will not be looking into life insurance at this time.

BLUE MOUNTAIN LAND TRUST POLICY: Cassi explained that the applications submitted by BMLT for funding of conservation easements are scored with points. Points are awarded for the local conservation districts having a policy in place and long-range business plan that encompasses conservation easements. She advised that the current long-range business plan encompasses conservation easements, but she misunderstood that additional points are awarded for

also having a policy in place. Cassi explained that BMLT is pushing for the District to adopt a policy, so funding opportunities are greater. She stated that there is nothing in the policy template BMLT provided that the District does not already include in work plans or policies, but the application requires a standalone policy to be in place.

Vice-Chairman Collins abstained from voting due to conflict of interest.

Director Hunt **moved to approve and adopt the Agricultural Land Conservation Policy**, Director Davis seconded the motion. The **motion carried unanimously**.

CHILDREN IN THE WORKPLACE POLICY: Cassi advised that the changes made were the removal of the District Manager responsibilities and the option for exceptions.

Director Davis **moved to approve and adopt the Children in the Workplace Policy**, Vice-Chairman Collins seconded the motion. The **motion carried unanimously**.

MEETING LOCATION: Chairman Holmes advised that Cassi had spoken to Debbie Greninger and it was approved for the District to use The Rock as a meeting location on the last Thursday of each month through the end of June. Additional meetings will need to be approved in advanced, such as for interviews. He further advised that he met with the Spray City Council and it was approved for the new fire hall to have internet. He stated that he is providing the new fire hall as an option starting in August, as it would eliminate scheduling conflicts with other organizations since there are no other meetings occurring at the new fire hall.

Vice-Chairman Collins asked if Gorgenet was going to be accessible at Big Sarvice Corral in the near future. Chairman Holmes advised that the county has not found the means to expand the Gorgenet capabilities. He further advised that the satellite internet is expensive and poor quality, so he would not suggest expending the funds for Judy to install it for District use.

Director Davis **moved to approve moving the meeting location to The Rock in Spray through June 2021 with payment of \$50 per meeting and for the meeting location to be moved to the Spray Fire Hall starting in July 2021 with payment of \$50 per month**, Vice-Chairman Collins seconded the motion. The **motion carried unanimously**.

ANNUAL MEETING: After a brief discussion, the directors present suggested doing the annual meeting virtually and asked the staff's preference. The staff agreed that the virtual option would be best due to the uncertainty of continued pandemic restrictions. The date for the annual meeting was tentatively set for April 29th to allow time to approve and adopt a resolution and the staff to prepare for the virtual setting. Chairman Holmes suggested instead of having a speaker, having the Bodie, Brooke, and Debbi speak on the projects in place and any future plans. They agreed.

WATERSHED SFA: Chairman Holmes asked how the financials were looking as the biennium end nears. Debbi stated that the Watershed financials are looking really good and that she and Cassi have gotten the SFA formatted well. Debbi explained that the revenue funds recorded on the top of the spreadsheet are not consistent in the tracking staff receives. She stated that she has communicated with Judy about this concern and it should be corrected in the future. Debbi advised that there are two OWEB grants in the process of closing which have been paid recently, but have not been recorded in the tracking provided to staff, as well as additional funding from the Watershed Capacity Grant that will be received by the end of the biennium.

Director Haberman asked how many large grants the Watershed receives each year. Debbi advised that she puts in for two to three per year, which is all that she can manage as a single employee of the Watershed.

Chairman Holmes asked Debbi if she feels comfortable with the financial reporting that has been designed between the District and Watershed. Debbi stated that the reporting is much better than it was prior and she appreciates it. She asked

in return if the Board was comfortable with the reporting and if the reporting reflects the Watershed's success, in their opinion. Jeremiah stated that he believes that the work put into the reporting and the thoroughness of the information presented is a great asset in the partnership between the agencies.

Debbi advised that her and Cassi have developed a list of tasks that the Watershed completes for the District in conjunction with the \$15,000 through the District Capacity Grant. Cassi stated she forgot to print copies for the directors, so the topic was tabled until the April meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

POLICY RENEWAL – NRCS MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT: Cassi advised that there is an ongoing agreement between the District and NRCS. She received an email request from Damon Brosnan to have the agreement reviewed and updated signatures submitted due to the new RCPP through Gilliam SWCD that Wheeler SWCD is participating with. Cassi advised that the agreement has not been revised.

Vice-Chairman Collins asked Chase if the agreement should be reviewed and revised to eliminate the same issues that were faced with the last RCPP. Chase advised that the RCPP is Gilliam SWCD's, so the verbiage in the contract is not a concern of Wheeler SWCD. He stated that the an additional MOA will be drafted between Gilliam and Wheeler SWCDs which will outline the responsibilities of the District. Vice-Chairman Collins stated that if there is not a concern of repeating the same issues, he is comfortable signing the MOA as is.

Chase advised that the District does not intend on requesting funds from Gilliam SWCD during this year, as the District is utilizing the NRCS TA Grant already in place for the same area. He further advised that the work the District is currently doing is independent from Gilliam SWCD, but the districts are working together within the same area.

Debbi advised that the MOA says "Wheeler County SWCD" in the second paragraph, but all other locations are correct. Cassi stated that she had mentioned this error to Damon and that he was supposed to be present to discuss the policies with the Board. It was suggested to have the MOA corrected and approved in April. Chairman Holmes advised that Damon gave a deadline of March 31st to have the MOA returned.

Vice-Chairman Collins **moved to approve and adopt the NRCS Memorandum of Agreement with the correction made in the second paragraph to remove "County" from the District's name**, Director Haberman seconded the motion. **The motion carried unanimously.**

NEW POLICY – NRCS 1619, RCPP: Cassi advised that she had not reviewed this policy in detail, as Damon mentioned he would explain it. Chairman Holmes advised the policy was a disclosure agreement that the District will not disclose confidential information outside of the agencies and individuals involved. Cassi read Damon's email sent to her on March 5th to the Board,

"With the advent of the new RCPP, I would like to discuss this at the next meeting and get your signatures on it. This is the same agreement that the Board signed several years ago when doing the CCPI. It will be crucial, going forward, to know what is protected and the obligations on the Board and employees as pertains to the information you will be handling for the RCPP."

Vice-Chairman Collins **moved to approve and adopt the NRCS 1619 Agreement**, Director Davis seconded the motion. **The motion carried unanimously.**

RESOLUTION 2021-001 ANNUAL MEETING: Chairman Holmes advised the resolution is required by statute to establish the Annual Meeting.

Director Davis **moved to approve and adopt the Resolution 2021-001 Establishing Annual Meeting**, Vice-Chairman Collins seconded the motion. **The motion carried unanimously.**

HUMAN RESOURCE AUDIT(S): Cassi advised SDAO is recommending HR audits be completed for special districts, which she attended a webinar training that was held on March 4th about how the audits are conducted and the importance of the audits. Cassi explained that this process can be done as one overall audit or be broken into multiple small audits over an extended period of time. Cassi stated that she would like to continue working through the policies over the next couple of fiscal years and look to work with HR Answers, a free consulting service for SDAO members, in about two years to conduct an audit. Cassi further stated that she has already been in contact with HR Answers through the revision process of the personnel policy and has requested more details regarding HR audits to help prepare in the meantime.

MANAGER RECRUITMENT: Vice-Chairman Collins asked Chase if there was any update since he advised him of only having one applicant. Chase advised that there are two completed applications submitted thus far and there is one incomplete application waiting another letter of recommendation.

Cassi advised that all paid advertisements have expired, but the free advertisements are still active. She further advised that a recruiting agent had contacted the office to offer their service for a fee of 25% of the hired salary. Cassi then reached out to SDAO Consulting Services and received a quote of “*not to exceed \$4,500*”. She explained that SDAO handles the hiring process start to finish. She stated that the senior consultant, George Dunkel was available to join the meeting virtually, if the Board has specific questions. Cassi also advised that she researched the possibility of recruiting through the Indeed website. She found that it requires an account subscription which costs \$100 per month and can be cancelled at any time.

Vice-Chairman Collins advised that while attending the SWCC board meeting he learned that many of the agencies in attendance were not aware that the District was seeking applicants for the District Manager position. Cassi advised that it is posted on the SWCC list serve and stated it was discouraging that people are not being reached by the extensive advertising posted. Vice-Chairman Collins and Director Davis both suggested scheduling interviews with the current applicants. Vice-Chairman Collins further suggested that the District attempt to recruit independently through Indeed and Chairman Holmes agreed. Vice-Chairman Collins stated that he would prefer the District spend the \$4,500 instead of utilizing a recruiting service whose fee is based on percentage of the hired salary.

Chairman Holmes asked how much funds were spent thus far and Cassi responded with approximately \$700 without considering the time invested. Chairman Holmes stated his concern with a professional recruiting service is that ability to locate a candidate willing to reside in Wheeler County, in addition to the timeline of reviewing and preparing documents for the position that the District has already spent time doing. Chairman Holmes asked Cassi to attempt to call George Dunkel so that the Board could discuss the process in detail. Due to cell service being down, Cassi was unable to contact George Dunkel during the meeting.

Director Davis suggested that the Board interview the completed applicants. Chairman Holmes suggested that the District utilize the Indeed recruiting account and hold off on interviewing for another month to see if additional completed applications are received. The Board requested that Cassi setup the Indeed account and provide potential candidates to Chase to communicate with the Personnel Committee Chair, Vice-Chairman Collins. Director Haberman asked Cassi what the range of location she intends to search for candidates. Cassi advised she thought to search Oregon and southern Washington. Vice-Chairman Collins suggested that she include Idaho in her search.

OTHER BUSINESS NOT LISTED

SAM ACCOUNT REGISTERED AGENT: Cassi advised that Judy Potter is currently appointed as the District’s SAM account registered agent, which are required for the District to receive federal grant funds. She explained that the renewal is coming due at the end of May and Judy is in the process of trying to remove her information from the SAM and D&B accounts to have that appointment transferred to a staff member. Cassi that document is required to be submitted with any requested changes, which the only documentation option the District has is the Registered Agent filing with the Secretary of State, which is currently Chase. Cassi stated that Chase has requested that the Board appoint

someone else as the Registered Agent. Vice-Chairman Collins asked if Judy would be willing to remain the SAM account registered agent for another year. Cassi advised that Judy has been working to remove her information from the account and get this transferred for quite some time and believes Judy does not want to remain on the account.

Chairman Holmes asked the directors what their suggestions of who should be the registered agent of the District. Vice-Chairman advised he could add the District to his D&B and SAM account. Cassi advised that may be a conflict of interest since he is a voting member of the Board. Chairman Holmes asked Cassi if she would be willing to be the registered agent and Cassi stated she is.

Director Haberman **moved to appoint Cassi Newton as the registered agent of the District**, Director Hunt seconded the motion. The **motion carried unanimously**.

LETTER TO ODA: Vice-Chairman Collins advised that he was approached by a director from Crook SWCD regarding the SIA process. Vice-Chairman Collins shared with the director about the letter the District has drafted to ODA and the Crook SWCD director asked if the District would be willing to share a copy of the letter. Chairman Holmes suggested that the District shares the letter with all of the eastern SWCDs and advise they are welcome to share with others. All directors agreed and requested Cassi to share the letter.

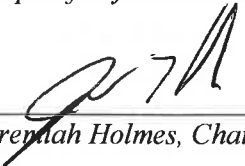
VACANCY ON BOARD: Chairman Holmes suggested that the Board consider reaching out to some persons who may be interested in filling the Zone 2 position on the Board. He state that the zone covers the Spray area and Cassi pulled up a map of the zones for the directors to review. Cassi advised that Dave Boise was interested. Chairman Holmes asked Cassi if her dad would be interested and Cassi advised that he had discussed it with him but due to the conflict of interest as she is an employee, it would make voting on many things difficult. Cassi suggested Becky or Bryon Clark, Dan or Anna Thomas, the lady who purchased the Kintz property. Vice-Chairman Collins stated he is in favor of adding the diversity to the Board and suggested to start by reaching out to Becky Clark and Anna Thomas.

Vice-Chairman Collins advised that the SWCC Board has been discussing possibly altering the requirements of qualifying to be a SWCD director. He stated that there was an elaborate discussion about the requirements, but no decisions have yet been made.


NEXT MEETING DATE: The next regular meeting will be held virtually on **April 29, 2021** following the Annual Meeting.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by Chairman Holmes at 8:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Cassandra Newton



Jeremiah Holmes, Chair



~~Chase Schultz, District Manager~~
Cassandra Newton, Office Manager