



Klamath
Soil & Water
Conservation District

541.883.6924 | 1945 Main Street, Suite 200 | Klamath Falls, Oregon 97601 | www.klamathswcd.org

KSWCD BOARD MEETING MINUTES

November 8th, 2023

In Attendance:

Board Members: David Kent, Earl Miller, David Cone, Martin Kerns, Ken Masten

District Staff: Will Natividad/DM, Sam Fletcher/PM, Alex Sharp/PM

Community: Michelle Sharp/SBC

Meeting called to order at 12:38pm – Chairman Ken Masten

Agenda Additions/Changes: None.

Old Business:

- Approve October Financials
- Approve October Minutes

Motion 1: Motion to Approve October Financials.

Motion: Cone

Second: Miller

Discussion: David Cone asked who Brandon McBride was since the district had checks to sign made out to him, and Will and Alex clarified he is a contractor for the CWRR Grant in Keno doing fire mitigation work. It was also clarified that the other check made out to an individual was for one of the new interns, Makenna Shamion, and the other intern is Teegan Running. The board also asked about the interest due on Nick Trapper's account for the No-Till Drill, and SBC sent out a letter to him this past Monday about the balance, and removing interest charges if it was paid. David Cone also mentioned it would be helpful if the checks and invoices sent over had the grant names on them, instead of just grant numbers, so that the board is clearer on what checks are for and which grants.

Vote: 5 Yes - Unanimous, Motion Passes

Motion 2: Motion to Approve October Minutes.

Motion: Cone

Second: Kent

Discussion: None.

Vote: 5 Yes - Unanimous, Motion Passes

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Motion 3: Motion to Approve discussed changes to the Employment Handbook (see attachment).

Motion: Cone

Second: Kerns

Discussion: All of these proposed edits have either been approved in a previous meeting, suggested by the HR Department at SDAO, or are to keep the handbook in compliance with any state or federal regulations.

Vote: 5 Yes - Unanimous, Motion Passes

Motion 4: Motion to purchase virtual meeting equipment, the “Owl”, for the district.

Motion: Cone

Second: Kerns

Discussion: The district doesn’t really have any functioning AV or virtual meeting equipment for large meetings, like the Biennial Review meeting coming up for ODA that the SWCD is hosting. The board discussed their experience in the past using the “Owl” and how it was quite useful. The board would like partner organizations in the building, including the FSA and NRCS, to help contribute to the cost of the “Owl”, which is approximately \$1,000, if at all possible.

Vote: 5 Yes - Unanimous, Motion Passes

Motion 5: Motion to Approve a raise for Will Natividad, District Manager, from \$27 to \$36 per hour, after a positive evaluation, effective this pay period beginning November 1, 2023 and to be reflected on the next paycheck.

Motion: Cone

Second: Kent

Discussion: The District Manager’s annual evaluation was completed on October 23rd, with overall very positive feedback. It was a 360 Evaluation, per Eric Nusbaum at ODA’s suggestion, involving feedback from employees, coworkers, partners, etc. The board overall agreed Will has done a great job at the district, and made a lot of progress since he started and a raise was deserved. The board considered salary and wage rates for other managerial level positions in the state for similar fields in districts or organizations without a tax base, and it was determined that \$36 per hour fell within those ranges and would be an appropriate number.

Vote: 5 Yes - Unanimous, Motion Passes

Motion 6: Motion to vote in the OACD BOD Election for Tim Newton for the East At-Large position, and Stan Dean and Scott Walker for the two regular At-Large positions.

Motion: Cone

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Second: Miller

Discussion: The board favored the incumbent, Tim Newton, for the East At-Large position. They believe he has been doing a good job, and has a great amount of relevant experience. For the East At-Large, the board agreed that they liked Stan Dean's engineering and work experience, as well as perspectives. They also discussed and approved of Scott Walker's ideas for changing the dues structure of OACD and removing the dues cap. The board believed districts with tax bases, bringing in substantially more money than some without tax bases, should not have an upper cap on their OACD dues.

Vote: 4 Yes - Unanimous, Motion Passes

Reports:

SBC Report: Michelle Sharp

Things have been going well with grant tracking. Michelle transferred \$125,000 from the Checking to Money Market account so the district can earn a better interest rate, which is currently 0.10%. Ken Masten brought up the fact that Umpqua pays him a significantly higher rate. The board was unsure if the SWCD should look into getting a higher interest rate, or if there are any regulations or limitations to interest rates that can be earned on money from grants. It was determined that the district will look into this, and contact Sandi Hiatt or Eric Nusbaum for more information before Ken asks the bank about it. Will also clarified that the reason the Deming Long Term Temperature Monitoring grant appears to be over budget is because ODA has not sent us the renewed grant agreement yet, that technically started at the end of the last biennium, since they have had so much turnover and are behind. The amount that appears to be over budget will actually be attributed to the new grant, since this is a long term monitoring grant with ODA that is supposed to continue for several years. Michelle also did point out that an error was made almost paying employees their gross paychecks instead of net, but it was reversed before the transaction was completed. However, it will still show on the statements.

NRCS Report: Henry Robinson

Ali has left NRCS and started a new job with USGS, so NRCS is now just two employees (Henry Robinson and Josh Elke). The application deadline for fiscal year 2024 EQIP applications is coming up soon, November 17th, 2023. They also still have the Lost River CIS Program, which is about 240,000 acres total and includes the entire Lost River Watershed. They have about 15 applications for this CIS, but most likely will only be able to fund 5 or 6 projects. For the Irrigation CIS, there are about 30 applicants and funding for about 3 projects.

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FSA Report: Laura Hall

This week the Emergency Relief Program for 2022 was rolled out. This program will be structured similarly to the previous 2021 program. There will be two different program tracts. One is a “top-up” payment in addition to insurance. If the producer’s losses are not reflected through insurance, there is a second tract of the program. This involves more paperwork and requires the producer’s tax records. There is also a potential government shutdown on the November 17th, in which case the FSA will be completely unavailable and the building will be closed. There is also a Continuing Resolution in effect, which is causing a hold on a lot of programs, including CRP enrollments, CREP, and a variety of payments to landowners. The Livestock Forage program is also still going on for cattle producers to provide financial assistance for feed. However, it is only about 20% of what has been paid in the past.

ODA Report: None

District Staff Report: Will Natividad

- The district staff submitted three grants this fall cycle so far. There was an OWEB Open Solicitation grant for Technical Assistance for an assessment of the Yellow Flag Iris from Lake Ewauna down 47 stream miles of the Klamath River, spanning 5,500 acres for \$46,000. This would be a partnership between the SWCD, CWMA, and Oregon Tech to use drones to map out the area with the noxious weeds. This will be just one phase of the larger project, with grants planned for treatment after this assessment is completed. The other OWEB Open Solicitation grant was for a restoration project along the Buck River in partnership with NRCS. This grant application is for approximately \$160,000 total and involves irrigation upgrades, riparian fencing, and off-stream stock watering facilities. This grant is already in the process of being scheduled for a Technical Review Team site visit sometime between November and the beginning of January. The third grant is an ODF Small Forestlands grant, to continue fire mitigation work in the Keno area, partnering with the Keno Rural Fire Protection District to prioritize efforts and maximize impact. This grant would also include the purchase of fire mitigation equipment to be donated to the local Tool Library, where landowners can access it for a nominal fee of just \$20/year. This grant application is for \$300,000. These grants together total \$506,000, which if approved, would most likely be the most KSWCD has ever been awarded in a single grant cycle.
- Work is in progress at Algoma, approximately 50% complete but with a hold up due to more materials being needed before installation of flashboard risers.
- Hanna and Will have completed NRCS Prescribed Grazing Field Inventory Training.
- Two new part time interns have been hired who will primarily be working on putting together field monitoring data packages and researching the upcoming SARE grant next year.

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- There are currently no red flags for OWEB reporting per Sandi Hiatt, and so there are no holds on signing for future grants.
- The district is evaluating different potential project areas for the various juniper removal funding, including in Langell Valley and property near the Upper Klamath Lake.
- The LAC Biennial Review of the Klamath Headwaters Agricultural Water Quality Management Area Plan is coming up December 7th in the government building downtown.

Chair Report: Ken Masten

Ken attended the annual OACD conference last month in Redmond. There was a lot of focus on the Oregon Agricultural Trust (OAT) and Biochar. The Biochar was supposed to be very effective and better for the atmosphere, but the cost was almost \$1,500 per day. The OAT will pay landowners to put a permanent lien on their property, so that it may only be used for agricultural purposes. At the board meeting during the conference, they also discussed the removal of the dams along the Klamath, and USFWS claimed that salmon will be in Annie Creek by next fall. Irongate dam is currently being drained, Ken visited the area this past week. The plan for all the sediment that will be remaining after the drawdown is to haul it off and use it for agricultural purposes, so it doesn't wash downstream and negatively impact the habitat for native fish species.

New Business:

- The board will need to do a budget review soon, which will be added to the December meeting agenda. The board will need a copy of the most current budget from SBC prior to the meeting.
- The letter regarding the management of water to legislature will be sent to the Oregon Senate and House Representatives, Cliff Bents, Werner Reschke, and Emily McIntire. The district manager will work with input from the board to draft this letter.

Public Comment: None.

Meeting is adjourned at 3:25 pm – Chair Ken Masten.

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Minutes Approved as Written or Amended:

KSWCD Chair

Date

KSWCD Secretary/Treasurer

Date

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