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***East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District Board
of Directors **APPROVED** Meeting Minutes***

Monday, July 1, 2024

6:01pm- Call to Order

Zimmer-Stucky called to order the regular meeting of the EMSWCD Board of Directors at 6:00pm on Monday, July 1, 2024, at the EMSWCD Office in North Portland.

6:00pm- Introductions, Review/revise agenda, Review previous action items.

Zimmer-Stucky conducted introductions for the record. The following persons were present:

Board of Directors: Jasmine Zimmer-Stucky (At-Large 2 Director, Chair), Laura Masterson (Zone 2 Director, Secretary), Mike Guebert (Zone 3 Director, Vice-Chair), Jim Carlson (At-Large 1 Director, Treasurer), Joe Rossi (Zone 1 Director)

Staff: Kelley Beamer (Executive Director), Dan Mitten (Chief of Finance & Operations), Heather Nelson Kent (Community Outreach & Engagement Program Supervisor), Julie DiLeone (Rural Lands Program Supervisor), Asianna Fernandez (Executive Assistant), Alex Woolery (IT and Analytics Specialist), Matt Shipkey (Land Legacy Program Manager)

Guests: Al Hrynyshyn (Oregon SWCC) (virtual), Alisa Kajikawa (public)(virtual), Jim Morgan (public)

Changes to the agenda: N/A

Previous action items:

- **DiLeone** to send the Board and Staff the link to Roy Iwai's presentation. – Done.
- **Beamer** to send information about the SWCD Board Member online Session to Board. -Done.
- **Leadership Team** to report on annual goals and progress quarterly and revise the Rural Lands section of the FY 23-24 progress report. -Done.

6:01pm- Approval of minutes

MOTION: Guebert moved to approve the June 3, 2024, Board Meeting Minutes, Carlson 2nd. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

6:02pm- Public Comment: N/A

Jim Morgan has been a resident of Corbett for four years, owning 17 acres of farmland where he grows cut flowers, pasture, and vegetables, and he works with graduates from HIP. A lot of his neighbors do the same thing, work part time farming or are hobby farmers. Working with them, they've been trying to figure out ways to help each other. They've been finding challenges around the cost of equipment at 10-40/60 acres scale. In the past, farmers would buy equipment together and share, but this is becoming more problematic due to scale variation and prices. He's asking the Board to consider creating a program for hard-to-find implements for farming that can be made available to people in the district, enabling them to take care of the soil and water long term. Clackamas has a no-till drill able for farmers to rent out, and if folks in our district had the same availability, they would be able to do more in terms of building healthy long-term soil that doesn't need to be disturbed to introduce new grass seeds or other healthy grazing crops.

Al Hrynyshyn updated that the SWCC is meeting next week in Gold Beach for their quarterly meeting. Board and staff are welcome to tune in to the livestream. If the Board has any questions or concerns for him to take to the SWCC for consideration, please send it on to Beamer to send to **Hrynyshyn** so he can



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bring it up at the meeting. Reminded staff to let the Board candidates know of the election deadlines coming up!

6:08pm- ED and L-Team Updates

Beamer shared her Executive Director update:

- Attended a sustainable foods roundtable by Congressman Blumenauer, in partnership with EcoTrust, to connect the dots between farmland access and food systems.
 - There was a panel of community groups like Black Food Sovereignty Coalition, EcoTrust, Zero Footprint, and more.
- Creating the FY24-25 District Workplan.
- Worked with DiLeone, Mitten, and Steele to bring the HIP Bridge Award project into a more complete status to share with the Board at the Headwaters Farm Work Session.
- Kicking off the District's annual evaluation period.
- Our Orient Drive field office application that's been sent to the Multnomah County Planning Department included a conditional use permit stating that our field office would be permissible use in a rural center because of the community benefits.
 - Multnomah County sent a letter back saying that the application was incomplete, so we're working with our attorney, Peter Fry, to gather all the necessary materials to resubmit by November.

Guebert Congressman Blumenauer has been a champion for many of the things we stand for. Did he give any indication of how he plans to move that project forward after leaving office?

Beamer He didn't mention that, but since he's been part of the community for so long, she imagines he'll find another avenue for that.

Zimmer-Stucky asked about the July 3rd Public Hearing notice that she saw on the District's website.

Beamer In Oregon, there is a statute requiring public entities to publicly notice when funding this type of acquisition. We're still figuring out how to share info like that out aside from our legal public notices being published, even though we've never had anyone participate, as it is an open opportunity.

Mitten shared his Finance and Operations update:

- Working on office furnishing and equipment – will have the new Conference Room monitor installed soon, we have new Conference Room chairs, and the Conference Room table will be in before the next Board Meeting.
- FY 24-25 District Workplan- identified 3 specific goals and incorporated metrics.
- Finishing up the FY23-24 financial books and filing the FY24-25 adopted budget checklist items to TSCC and the budget with the State.

Shearin shared her Urban Lands update:

- Plant Sale planning, getting ready to put in our native plants order, as early as possible, to try to get some new species that we haven't been able to get in the past.
- McAllister attended a Juneteenth event by Play, Grow, Learn, and other local organizations.
- Bailey gave a walk and talk tour of the Conservation Corner recently and will be working to renew the contract with our landscapers for the next fiscal year.

DiLeone shared her Rural Lands update:



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- At Headwaters Farm, we're working to get through the contracting process for a crew who will come out to help the HIP farmers with their inter-row weeding, hopefully to start next week.
- Steele is planning to do an info session with current HIP farmers about the HIP Bridge Award. A couple of farmers should graduate at the end of this season.
- We were contacted by the OSU employee who works within the dry farming institute and applied for a PIC grant but didn't get funded, so we're trying to figure out how to get one of their projects on the farm. They brought some posters they made, and demonstrated how their produce tastes really good as well as saves water.
- Began planning the next Eat n' Greet follow up event in the Fall, since the farmers who attended want another chance to meet and chat.

Zimmer-Stucky If there are farmers in Corbett who would like to discuss more about a tool rental program, should they go to that post-Eat n' Greet event?

Dileone Yes, we wouldn't be able to say right away what we could do, but that would help us understand their needs better.

Kent shared her Communications, Outreach, and Engagement Team and Grants Updates:

CO&E:

- Finalizing the RFP to go out to bid for consultant services to update our website.
- Conducted two message training courses for staff. All staff members except one were able to attend, and Guebert attended as well!
- Julia has implemented a new social media content management tool for our social media. She's been doing some of the new social media posts, so it's exciting to see her voice come out and how she's coming into that role.

Grants:

- Attended a special partnerships agreement meeting with Johnson Creek Watershed Council to discuss their scope of work and hope to do a similar meeting with Columbia Slough Watershed Council.
- New PIC grants: 9 of 26 are signed within the first month.
- Awarded a SPACE grant to the Rocky-Butte Farmers Market for their next season, they moved to a new location.

Beamer added a grant update: We awarded an Equity Focused Strategic Opportunity Grant to the Urban League of Portland for a community garden project in the Mississippi district that helps provide workforce training, with intergenerational components focusing on the elderly community and outdoor curriculum for students. It'll help them transform their space into an active garden space.

6:28pm –Message Training Update

Kent shared a presentation on the message training that all staff attended and gave the Board time to come up with their own messages from some tough questions, as the groups did in their individual training sessions.

"Tough Questions":

1. How do you balance the needs of urban and rural residents?
2. Why are my taxes going to private landowners?

Guebert attended one of the training sessions and found that the exercise around tough questions was the most valuable part of the training. He explained to the Board that he learned that a Lifeline Statement reassures people that you've heard them and are buying time to come up with a more thoughtful answer



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or let them know you'll get back to them. It shows our mission but allows us to answer in a way that has some flexibility. Answering the two questions, he'd say that land doesn't vote, but if we want to do any work on the landscape scale, resources have to come from somewhere, so if we want to do work in a bigger area, we have to take money from here (the urban area) and spend it out there.

Kent asked the Board what their three key points are to help answer tough questions about the District?

Rossi usually replies, "we help people care for soil and water" and when asked about the urban vs rural divide, if the project affects a lot of people and protects a lot of land or water, it's worth funding, which we do in partnership with others. For question 2, we don't give money to landowners, but we apply it to land to protect soil and water for future generations, to preserve the viability of our land, which has been our mission and why our funding started a long time ago. These two points apply to a lot of things as well.

Masterson likes Rossi's replies. She usually starts with the fact that we do have programs for all constituents in the District. She often says that in our case, the rural areas are upstream, so the more we can do there to keep soil and water clean there, the better it can be down the pipeline into the urban area.

Zimmer-Stucky usually level sets first with the District's mission, then informs the person that most Multnomah County land is owned privately, so by supporting individuals, we're able to spread clean soil and water to everyone. Then she usually tries to connect the person she's speaking to, to a staff member for more information.

Kent Referring a constituent to a staff member for more resources really is a lifeline for each of the Board Members.

Beamer added that so much of the public benefits are on private lands, so our private landowners are the stewards of those public benefits.

Kent We're happy to provide a longer, more thorough training course for the Board if they'd like.

Beamer Kudos to the CO&E for all the work they've done on this. Starting with listening, then creating, then training all the staff members. We're all ambassadors for the staff and being able to talk about your own program is great, but the training has also helped up work on being able to speak across programs as well.

6:53pm- Pre-Approval for Website Design

Beamer In the FY 24-25 Budget and Workplan, launching the new website is a big project we have in place, ensuring that it's welcoming, accessible, and intuitive for visitors. The main team for building it consists of Mitten, Woolery, Kent, White-Brainard, and Beamer. The RFP is now in draft form which we're hoping to get out in July, working with a contractor starting in September, testing the website in early Spring of 2025, and then launching it in early Summer 2025. The project budget is up to \$80,000, over her signing authority, so she's asking the Board to approve giving her authority to sign and execute the contract.

MOTION: Guebert moved to approve Beamer's authority up to \$80,000 for the website redesign project, Carlson 2nd. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Masterson has some ideas for who to send the RFP to.



Action Item: Staff to send the website redesign RFP to the Board to send on to their contacts.

Jim Morgan (public) left at 6:58pm

6:56pm- Approve District Work Plan

Beamer presented the FY 24-25 Work Plan, at a higher level, showing what's the same and different from past plans. She aimed for a more simplified structure, for staff to use to identify goals, and measure success. It's focused a little less on staff positions, but more on programmatic goals, and where funds are going to. Last year's plan was 37 pages long, and very narrative heavy, but this year's plan is 16 pages, to be used as a tool for staff to hold themselves accountable. This plan follows the budget structure and our internal structure programmatically. It is comprised of the Strategic Plan Goals, but also highlights each program's top 3 goals for the year. The purpose is to use this as a framework for goals and benchmarks that will define our success, to use this as a common understanding across programs, to allow for new staff to jump into their job and see what their programs are focusing on, it operationalizes the District's strategic priorities, and meets the requirements to send in a work plan to the Oregon Department of Agriculture.

High level goal highlights:

- Equity Action Plan:
 - Developing an onboarding packet for new and onboarding Board Members, that would include a focus on our equity pillar in our Strategic Plan.
 - Start an Indigenous learning journey for staff, so we all have the cultural competency and understanding of working with tribal colleagues and partners in the district.
- Urban Lands:
 - Fish Passage – designing a dam removal project at the Mount Hood Community College and engaging the community around that.
 - Supporting new technology to monitor algae blooms in the Willamette and surrounding.
 - Reducing tire pollution (specifically 6PPDQ compound) in our waterways.

Masterson asked about an update on the culvert work that started a few years ago.

Shearin Part of the work has been done and the County just got funding to replace the access point or the corridor that traveled through the MHCC. The dam is one of the last things to remove. Johnson Creek and the County could likely give us better updates.

Action Item: Staff to provide an update on the District's culvert work for the Board.

- Rural Lands:
 - Showing up for the community by attending more events
 - Taking on climate change mitigation through a tree planting pilot project in an upland area where there's currently some invasive blackberry removal happening.
 - Implementing the Weed Management Plan at HWF
- HWF:
 - Finishing and presenting the Weed Management Report.
 - Increase the number of HIP applicants – 10 is the goal for this Fall.
 - Next steps on the Farmworker Assessment at HWF.
- LLC:
 - Complete three buy, protect, sell projects.
 - Complete three easement projects.
 - Developing the land capital grant program.



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Guebert wanted to share the importance of the StreamCare program. He had a project done on his land, and it brought back some beavers!

Masterson What watershed is being prioritized for StreamCare?

DiLeone Bonnie Brook and Buck Creeks. But it's still open to all other creeks in the District. When a property graduates (after five years), we do an exit site visit and let them know that we'll be checking in again and they can contact us if anything changes.

- CO&E
 - Launching the District's new website.
 - Creating accessibility standards for all events we attend.
 - Implementing our social media strategy.
 - Finalizing an outreach plan for the Land Legacy Program.
 - Collecting demographic information from all of our programs, to ensure we're serving all demographics in our district.

Kent reminded the Board that the Grants are also nested in this section.

- Annual review process for setting Partners In Conservation Grant goals
- Solidifying and standardizing the Equity Focused Strategic Opportunity Grants program
- Finding more funding streams to get out into the community.
- F&O
 - "We help the people who help the people care for land and water."
 - Resource evaluation development to see where allocations have gone, where we are underspending or overspending to help us plan out for a few more years.
 - Policy development – connecting with officials on a local and regional level and getting involved with some policy opportunities.
 - Leveraging technologies – analytics, website, CRM, etc. and how to track success.

Guebert shared his appreciation for this streamlined look of the whole plan, and it's nice to see the goals summarized, making it easy to go back and check in on them later.

Zimmer-Stucky This feels like the first real work plan with the new Strategic Plan, so she feels grateful for everyone's attention to detail and commitment to the Strategic Plan.

MOTION: Guebert moved to approve the EMSWCD FY 24-25 District Work Plan, Masterson 2nd. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

7:23pm- Approve Engagement Letter for Annual Audit

Mitten The Board is being asked to approve the Annual Engagement Letter to engage Rich Winkel of Conradie Dougall to audit our financials for FY23-24. These audits ensure we're utilizing accounting and fiscal best practices as well as being compliant with the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB), two separate ways of accounting.

MOTION: Carlson moved to approve the Engagement Letter for the Annual Audit, Masterson 2nd. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

7:25pm- Executive Director Performance Review Reminder and Update

Masterson Board and Staff should've gotten the Executive Director Performance Evaluation in their email today. The Board has two weeks (July 1st to July 15th) to fill it out and send it back to Critchfield. She will



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then collate all the feedback and use it for the review meeting, in conjunction with evaluations from staff and Beamer's self-evaluation. Then Zimmer-Stucky will meet with Beamer to relay the full evaluation.

Zimmer-Stucky confirmed the Board's availability for an executive session meeting with Critchfield: August 5th at 6pm.

7:30pm- May 2024 Financial Reports

Mitten This report was pulled on June 14th, so there are still more final payables coming through for FY23-24. There's been very minimal changes as of today from the 14th. The Balance Sheet is healthy, the checking and savings account shows \$13.6 million total which is 9.67% more than last year at this time. This is due mostly to Property Tax turnovers. Property Tax receivables have been higher this year than last year. Overall, the Balance Sheet shows a 2.9% increase from last year. Mitten noted that at the time of the report being run, all of the District's credit cards show a zero balance, but last year at this time there were balances. As we pay our balances off monthly and while this looks odd on the reports, it's simply a reflection that the balance sheet is a snapshot in time. In the Profit and Loss Budget Performance, there are not a lot of significant changes from last month. There's been a lot of invoices from vendors, but they weren't big enough to move the needle. As we get closer to the end of the year, you'll see the Profit and Loss get closer to the annual appropriation. Mitten noted that Office and Field Equipment for Capital Outlay shows some of the procurements we're doing at the end of the fiscal year. For Profit and Loss by Class, as we get closer to closing out the FY23-24 books, he'll send out the underspend report.

Masterson Did we underspend on Professional Services?

Mitten Yes, so far, we have. As you can see Contracted Attorney fees, which includes \$150,000 in Land Conservation Fund in case of legal needs during a land transaction, are underspent. Professional Services also includes all Contracted Services throughout the General Fund Programs, the Equity Team, and Special Funds. To date, we see Contracted Services under by about \$600,000 total. As we get closer to the end of the Fiscal Year, that gap should close significantly.

Guebert Refunds, Rebates, and Reimbursements are five times higher than before. What makes that up?

Mitten The majority of it is a rebate on the tractor purchased for HWF. The rebate has to go on this line and not directly offset the same expense line where it shows up in the HWF budget. This also includes some unused Grant money being returned to us. Since those rebates and refunds are unanticipated and therefore were not appropriated in the budget, they need to go in this line in the General Fund as an income source.

7:41pm- Board Discussion

Carlson gave an update on the **Portland Water Bureau Treatment Plant**: He attended a meeting on June 11th, held by the Cashwell Planning Organization. PWB has applied for a permit through DEQ to store and use excavated soil on site instead of trucking it to Hillsboro. Someone who knows someone on the CPO Board saw this on the DEQ site and called it out since the comment period was closing. Therefore, the comment opening has been extended through the end of July. There's DDT, DDE residues, arsenic, and other heavy metals in the soil there, where they've already begun excavating. If they keep it on site, they have to bury it and keep vegetation on top, or have one foot of clean till on top, covered with geotextile fabric, with contaminated fill on top. The levels of the contaminants are low enough to not endanger humans, but they can harm endangered species. Someone asked the project manager why they're excavating without the permit, but they dodged the question. DEQ asked folks to submit questions in writing, and said they'd get back to them. Carlson's talked to Larry Bailey from Multnomah County Farm



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Bureau about this, and if you didn't testify during the Multnomah County hearing process, you can't testify now. The contractor doing excavations has a poor safety record. Board action is not needed at this time.

DiLeone With the property drains leading into the base of Johnson Creek, it is listed as water quality listed for DDT, DDE, and arsenic, because of the sediment ending up in the creeks that have it on it. Almost all of the soil on the farms (and in urban sites) has these particles in them.

Rossi It is an average of what's in the ground due to pesticide use.

Masterson Some of the historical soil is contaminated, so as long as it stays out of the water, it should stay clean.

DiLeone The chemicals are bound tightly to the soil, so as long as the soil stays on the site and not in the river, she's not sure how much risk there is to the waterways.

Rossi shared his concerns about the water that flows through HWF's natural space.

DiLeone That has to do with previous erosion issues on the farm. We had a lot of fine silt in that soil that gets resuspended every year when it starts to rain. When we did those culvert removals at HWF, she had to do fish rescued at all three culverts, and the two where the culvert was too small was creating a big deep pond, and the level of sediment was so high.

Guebert shared an update on the **Ranching for Profit Conference** he attended a month ago. He appreciated the District support him attending. It was the best conference he's ever attended. They went over what you need to do to run a farm business in a way he's never seen taught before. He wants to figure out how to get the same information into the hands of our constituents. Maybe even a short presentation at the next Eat n' Greet or having their facilitators come out to do a workshop in the District. A lot of farm businesses in the District that raise animals on a small scale are probably not viable to support a full-time income and they might need to know that in advance before they get too deep into it.

Masterson Is there a reason to bring the Eat n' Greet down to a closer venue to help some of the HIP farmers?

DiLeone We don't think it'll help us reach the private property owners in this area. Most of the attendees were from East of the Sandy River, and they were more interested in creating community around farming and sharing resources. We're working with CO&E to figure out how to reach that group.

7:13pm- Announcements, Action Items, and Adjournment

Masterson is on the OAHP Rule Making Advisory Committee, and they're talking about easements on July 9th, in case anyone has input or want to chat about it. Happy to give a report after.

Rossi The next Multnomah County Farm Bureau Farmer BBQ event (theme: highlighting successful farmers) is coming up on August 2nd. Hamilton used to attend and chat with constituents, and the District is helping sponsor it. Legislators may attend the bus tour.

Action Items:

Staff to send the Website RFP to the Board to send on to their contacts.

Staff to provide an update on the District's culvert work for the Board.

Zimmer-Stucky adjourned the meeting at 8:03pm.