



UPPER WILLAMETTE

SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday May 11, 2021 3:00 pm

APPROVED 6/8/2021

Meeting held via Zoom

Directors Present: Al Hrynyshyn, Gary Jensen, Abel Kloster, Chuck Arrera, Mary Durfee, Ralph Perkins. Associate Directors Present: Eric Nusbaum. Staff Present: Dave Downing, Lily Leitermann, Clarissa Berndt. Partners Present: Sydney Nilan, UWSN; Tom Snyder, NRCS. Public Present: Karen Wildish, Taylor Larson, Nellie McAdams.

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 pm by Chair Hrynyshyn.

1. **A. Approval of Agenda:** Chair Hrynyshyn asked if there were any amendments to the agenda. Director Arrera added an employee's annual review as an action item under Personnel Committee update (3B). Dave added a draft budget discussion to Other Reports (7A). Director Perkins moved to accept the agenda as amended, and Chair Hrynyshyn seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion was approved with a vote of 6-0.
B. Public Comment: Chair Hrynyshyn asked if there were any comments from the public related to items on this agenda. Hearing none, Chair Hrynyshyn moved on to reviewing the board minutes.
2. **A. Board Minutes – April 13, 2021:** Director Kloster moved to approve the minutes as presented, and Director Durfee seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion was approved with a vote of 5-0, with Director Perkins abstaining due to his absence at that meeting.
B. April Financial Reports: *[Reports reviewed and discussed: Balance Sheet, Check Register, Fund Balance Spreadsheet, Profit & Loss Budget v. Actual, Profit & Loss by Class, Profit & Loss Previous Year Comparison.]* Director Jensen shared his concern of the commitment and cost of hiring a Fiscal Officer, when the bridge loan is still not signed and in place. He passed the discussion over to Dave to fill the board in on the latest news of hiring a Fiscal Officer. Dave mentioned that the Hiring Committee had met and selected Paula as the new Fiscal Officer for the district, with the agreement that she will come on as a consultant in May. She will then be hired on as a full time employee of the district once the bridge loan funds are in the account. Director Arrera moved to accept the April financial reports as presented, and Director Perkins seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion was approved with a vote of 6-0.
C. Bridge Loan Resolution: Dave summarized the Authorizing Resolution 01-2021. Director Durfee moved to table the discussion until later in the meeting, and Director Kloster seconded. After further discussion, Director Durfee withdrew her motion. Director Arrera moved to adopt Resolution 01-2021 as presented, and Director Perkins seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion was approved with a vote of 6-0.
D. Reserve Fund Resolution: Chair Hrynyshyn read Resolution 02-2021 regarding the establishment of the Conservation Campus Reserve Fund. This fund is intended to be used for a district facility. Director Perkins feels that it should be named Building Reserve Fund. Sydney mentioned that the partners are excited about the prospect of a Conservation Campus, and that many are on board with the idea. Director Kloster shared his concerns about the gradual use of tax funding instead of using the whole \$0.07/\$1,000 right away, and using a substantial amount of those funds up front for internal needs rather than public. He is looking for flexibility with the use of those funds rather than putting all toward our own infrastructure. Director Perkins moved to change the name of the fund to Conservation Reserve Fund, and Director Kloster seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion was approved with a vote of 6-0. Director Kloster moved to accept Resolution 02-2021 as amended, with the name changed to Conservation Reserve Fund and with the beginning fund amount to be determined by the Budget Committee. Director Perkins seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion was approved with a vote of 6-0.

3. Committee Reports:

A. Transition Committee Report: No meeting since last report.

B. Personnel Committee Report: Director Arrera summarized their last meeting which reviewed the District Manager's annual review, and recommended a salary increase. Director Arrera moved that the District Manager be moved up one wage step, retroactive to April 1, and paid upon the deposit of the bridge loan. Chair Hrynyshyn seconded the motion. With no discussion, the motion was approved with a vote of 6-0.

C. Finance Committee Report: Director Jensen said that there have not been any new meetings since the last report. The RFP has been sent out to the banks, and we are now waiting for a response to see which banks are interested. Director Jensen hopes that we will have the funds in our account by the end of the month.

D. Project Committee Report: Chair Hrynyshyn said that there have been no meetings since the last report. However, he did want to update the board that Leena from Greenway Guardians reached out to him to set up a discussion. He agreed to sit in on a meeting, but made clear that the district will not and has not committed to anything.

Dave asked about updates regarding finding office space. Chair Hrynyshyn said he had not had time to look at anything, and Director Durfee also said she had not.

Director Kloster wanted to add that Karen Wildish had mentioned that the Lane County Advisory Committee is interested in talking, so he reached out to his contact there and is moving forward with connecting with that organization. Taylor mentioned that they want to partner with the district on a Climate Action plan in the future.

E. JEDI Committee Report: Director Kloster said that the committee is working where they can to update policies. The committee is looking to hire consultants to review the policies (once the bridge loan is in place) and then the committee will bring them forward to the board for approval. Currently the focus is on the new hiring policies, since that is the main need of the district at this time.

Director Kloster also shared the JEDI Committee Charter so that the board can be familiar with it. Eric mentioned that if it's going to be an official role of the committee that it needs to be authorized by the board, and then it will become board policy. So the board needs to be careful not to set precedence that they won't be able to or want to follow through on. He feels that all of the main operating committees should take the time to go through this process and develop charters so that it is clear for all what authority each committee has versus the board or management.

F. Hiring Committee Report: Dave summarized again the Fiscal Officer situation. He also mentioned that the Conservation Tech position closes Friday and that we currently have 37 full applications for that position. The Restoration Specialist position was posted yesterday, and will close on the 24th. He will be pooling these applications with the Conservation Tech applications to see if there may be a good fit among all of the applicants.

4. Correspondence: We have received an email from Nationwide requesting confirmation or updates to our current Employer and Trustee roles. Director Jensen suggested that either the Fiscal Officer and/or the District Manager be put in those roles. Since the Fiscal Officer will not be an employee of the district by the due date, it was agreed to have the District Manager set as both of the roles.

5. Staff Report Summary: Dave summarized the office work that has been done within the last month, with most of the focus on completing the FY21-22 Budget and all the documents and meetings that go along with that. He then deferred to Lily to summarize her work the last month. Lily summarized the tree planting that has now been completed, and mentioned that she is now transitioning to fuels reduction work under the ODF grant. This involves invasive vegetation removal, trimming up trees, etc. She and other partners are working with the NWYC to do that work.

6. Partner Reports:

A. NRCS Report: Tom updated the board on the CIS that Taylor has been working on. It has been approved for submittal, and we will know by June/July whether it has officially been approved. Tom has been focusing on working on EQIP. Taylor added that they have received an outreach grant for the CIS for a digital outreach campaign.

7. A. Other Reports/Discussion:

Draft Budget Discussion: Dave wanted to discuss with the board why the focus of the budget is so much on water quality for the next fiscal year. He mentioned that the main reason is that the projects that the district has already committed to and received funding for are within the Water Quality program. The other large section of the budget is under District Operations, and this is to develop the infrastructure and capacity

necessary to move forward. Dave feels the district needs as much funding as possible this year to keep our current commitments and to develop proper infrastructure to build new programs as we move forward through the years. He feels we need to tax the full \$0.07 to start with momentum.

Eric also wanted to share his feelings on why he would argue for \$0.07. He mentioned that it is crucial to create infrastructure. The proposed budget includes only a bare bones operating staff of 3.5. And with Dave transitioning away from the field and with the additional fire recovery workload, there is a large gap needed to fill with more techs in the field, thus the 4 CT staff positions for the next fiscal year. There is also the need for new IT infrastructure, computers, a larger office space that will need to be accounted for within FY21-22. He mentioned that one concern he is hearing is that we need a programs person to begin building those relationships and partnerships within the community to be able to implement programs when we get to that point, and he emphasized that that will be a part of Dave's job as the District Manager within the next FY. He would argue that the district should use the full \$0.07 to being saving for a building while we have the funds to do so, as owning our own building would save the taxpayers money in the long run and would be a good investment of their funds.

Public Comment: Chair Hrynshyn called for the public to make general public comment if they desired.

Karen Wildish said that she just wanted to listen in to see/hear the discussions on the board level. Being no further comments, Chair Hrynshyn mentioned the next meeting is set for June 8th at 3 pm via Zoom.

Chair Hrynshyn adjourned the meeting at 5:18 pm.

All supporting documents mentioned in the minutes are a part of the official record, and are available upon request. Please contact the office at admin@uwsxcd.org to request copies.

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