



UPPER WILLAMETTE

SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, May 12, 2021 5 pm

APPROVED 6/8/2021

Meeting held via Zoom

Committee Members Present: Chuck Arrera, Mary Durfee, Al Hrynshyn, Ralph Perkins, Abel Kloster, Clinton Begley, Karen Wildish, Austin Meeks, Gary Jensen, Malcolm Wilson, Corrie Parrish, Craig Gibons. District Staff present: Dave Downing, Clarissa Berndt. Public Present: Eric Nusbaum.

1. Mr. Gibons called the meeting to order at 5:04 pm. It was verified that there was a quorum, and a majority was present. Mr. Gibons presented the May 5, 2021 Budget Committee Meeting minutes for approval. Director Hrynshyn move to accept the minutes as presented, and Director Durfee seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion was approved 11-0.

2. Mr. Gibons then turned to Clarissa to ask if any public comment had been received. Clarissa stated that no written comments had been received for this meeting, but Eric Nusbaum had requested to share verbal public comment at this time. Eric Nusbaum: Mentioned that although he is an associate director of the UWSWCD board, he wishes to speak as a public citizen and taxpayer. He urged the Budget Committee to request the full \$0.07 mill rate, and approve the Conservation Grant Special Revenue and Building Reserve Funds. **[Director Perkins joined the meeting at 5:06 pm.]** Eric feels that the proposed budget at a \$0.07 rate includes a very minimal operating staff paid for by taxes. The other staff is largely paid for by grants. From his personal analysis of the proposed budget, the technical staff funding is much more than the operational staff funding, which is good as this is not top heavy. Corrie had asked at the last meeting how we will pay for the 6 months of 2022 until the next tax payment comes in December, and Eric pointed to the Unappropriated Funds line. Eric also mentioned that \$0.05 won't cover necessary expenses, \$0.06 only gives a little money to start out, and \$0.07 maximizes what we can move forward with. He feels strongly that building fund is necessary to use the tax money wisely. As a tax payer, he has an above average assessed value on his house and the difference between \$0.05 and \$0.07 is less than \$3, and he is completely willing to pay that. To sum up, he strongly supports the \$0.07 and would encourage the Budget Committee to approve that rate.

3. Mr. Gibons then referred to Clarissa to explain the revisions she had made to the proposed budget. Clarissa explained that there were six revisions made:

- i. Added the estimated grant funding expected in 2022 (Page 1, Line 8).
- ii. Adjusted the Unappropriated Ending Fund Balance to be at least \$650,000 (Pg 2, Line 41). This number was calculated by taking the sum of the 21-22 Personnel Services, Materials, and Capital expenditures and dividing in half to account for 6 months.
- iii. Decreased the Conservation Reserve Fund to \$225,000 (Pg 2, Line 37). This was to account for the increased Unappropriated Ending Fund Balance mentioned in the last point.
- iv. Added in the Neighborhood Sustainability Program to the Special Revenue Fund (Pg 3, Line 13). This was to allow for the Budget Committee to appropriate funds to this program if so desired.
- v. The \$250,000 was evenly distributed between the six programs within the Conservation Grants Special Revenue Fund (Pg 3).
- vi. Added in the legal verbiage to the Conservation Reserve Fund, and lowered the amount to \$225,000 to match what was listed on page 2 under the transfer amount (Pg 4).

Dave added that we also added in the FTE numbers on Page 2, Line 11.

Mr. Gibons then asked Clarissa and Dave to discuss the answers to the budget committee questions that had been emailed. Clarissa and Dave discussed a few of them, and then Mr. Gibons asked the committee if they wished to continue with these explanations, or whether the document sent with the meeting packet was sufficient. The committee agreed that the document was sufficient.

Mr. Gibons then moved forward to discuss the proposed budget.

Director Wilson opened the discussion by proposing that the committee be more conservative, and more directed toward the focus of healthy soil and clean water. He put himself forward as the representative of the 40% that voted against the tax measure. He has no objections to money spent on well-defined core functions.

Ms. Wildish responded that there are essential functions that require a large chunk of money, and gave the example of agriculture and keeping farmers on the land producing food. She pointed out that long-term savings don't mean it's not going to core functions.

Ms. Parrish shared that when she voted for this tax measure, she was a grad student with very little income. She understands and certainly feels that every dollar matters. However, she is for the full tax rate because it is so important. Environmental programs are the lowest that get funded by grants. There is a lot of work to do and it requires a lot of money to do it correctly. She feels that the Conservation Campus is a genius idea, in that it provides one place for people to go to meet their conservation needs. She is all for the equity and soil/water issues that the higher tax rate will be able to address.

Mr. Begley feels that an operation heavy budget is riskier than asking for the full \$0.07. He feels that if we ask for less, it will be a delay in affecting change. As a part of the PAC last year, we showed an urgent need for this tax funding, and asking for \$0.05 would undercut that message to the public.

Mr. Meeks asked for more clarification on what would be under the Neighborhood Sustainability program. Dave explained more about the types of projects that would fit under that program. Mr. Meeks shared his concern about the marginalized communities, and the need for a stronger Neighborhood Sustainability program.

Director Arrera agreed that Neighborhood Sustainability is very important and feels that more personnel aimed toward that would be important.

Director Jensen addressed the challenge of establishing the foundation of staff capacity to get these programs off the ground. He urged the committee for action to get this funding to accomplish this, and not just continual discussion.

Director Perkins thanked all for the stimulating comments; even though all don't agree, they are all good points. He stated that he would support the full rate of \$0.07.

Director Kloster pointed out that the budget splits money between the two funds. He likes that both are fluid and able to meet priorities, and what rises to the surface as the greatest need. He looks at these as an investment that we are putting aside to use once we get the capacity.

Director Durfee thanked Clarissa for drafting up the sample budgets for \$0.05 and \$0.06 to compare to the proposed budget that uses the \$0.07. After considering the options, she is ready to support the \$0.07 rate.

Director Hrynshyn is concerned with planning for the future, not just the immediate needs of FY21-22. He mentioned that there was wavering support of the district in the rural areas, but strong support in the urban areas. He supports the \$0.07 rate in order to build strong programs to also support our urban areas into the future.

Mr. Gibons now allowed for anyone to add additional comment.

Director Wilson mentioned that EWEB will soon start charging the customers on their water bill to pay for the recovery work in the McKenzie, and he proposed to give some money from the budget to that effort directly.

There was no further comment by the committee.

4. Director Durfee moved that the budget committee of Upper Willamette SWCD approve the proposed budget as revised for the 2021-22 fiscal year in the amount of \$3,218,032. Ms. Parrish seconded the motion. With no further discussion, Mr. Gibons called for the vote. The motion was approved with a vote of 11-1, with Director Wilson voting against.

Ms. Parrish moved that the budget committee of Upper Willamette SWCD approve property taxes for the 2021-22 fiscal year at the rate of \$0.07 per \$1,000 of assessed value for the permanent rate tax levy. Mr. Meeks seconded the motion. With no further discussion, Mr. Gibons called for the vote. The motion was approved with a vote of 11-1, with Director Wilson voting against.

Mr. Gibons asked if there were any other matters wished to be discussed. Director Hrynshyn thanked the five public members of the committee for giving their time to this process. Dave echoed his sentiments and thought that all brought outstanding perspectives to the discussion.

Mr. Gibons adjourned the meeting at 6:33 pm.

Documents presented and discussed: FY21-22 Budget Message, FY21-22 Budget Message Summary, FY21-22 Draft Budget.

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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