



**Marion Soil and Water Conservation District (MSWCD)
Board of Directors October 10, 2024, Monthly Minutes**

6:34 PM to 9:01 PM

Facilitator: Chair Olson

Recorded by: Brenda Sanchez

Approved: 11-06-24

Directors & Record of Attendance	Associate Directors
At Large 1-Peggy Hart	Present
At Large 2-Scott Walker	Present
Zone 1-Vacant	Vacant
Zone 2-Vacant	Vacant
Zone 3-Darin Olson (Chair)	Present
Zone 4-Dave Budeau (Secretary-Treasurer)	Present
Zone 5-Rochelle Koch (Vice-Chair)	Present
Staff	Guests
Sarah Hamilton	Al Hrynyshyn
Susan Ortiz	Les Bachelor
Brenda Sanchez	
Cesar Zamora	

Note: All documents and materials displayed or referenced are retained in the Board of Directors Meeting file at the Marion Soil and Water Conservation District (Marion SWCD or District).

- 1. Olson Call to Order:** 6:34 PM
- 2. Announcements -** None
- 3. Agenda Additions or Changes**
 - Add as agenda item #13-Oregon Association of Conservation District (OACD) letter.

Minutes

1. Public Comment

Al Hrynyshyn representing member for Marion SWCD (Willamette Valley SWCDs) from the Soil and Water Conservation Commission (SWCC) and member of the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts (OACD) is here to say hello and provide a couple of updates. OACD conference is in Hood River October 14-16, 2024. The SWCC meeting is at 1:00 PM on the 16th, adding all are welcome from the public and SWCDs. Hrynyshyn states he will attend tonight's meeting and if there are any questions for him, he is here to answer them, adding that he put his email and contact info into the chat: (zone1uw@gmail.com)

2. District Snapshot

Sanchez expresses that they have been busy as usual and presents the power point slide with District work completed in September.

- a. Urban Ecology Class Presentation at Willamette University: Students Served: 20
- b. Homeschool Day at the Oregon Garden. Students learned about 5 distinct types of soil.
- c. 2024 Partner Grant site visits, and internal application review completed
- d. New Conservation Assistance Program (CAG) application cycle began on October 3
- e. Salmon Watch – Ended October 9
- f. Emerald Ash Borer found in our county; Planning w/ Yamhill and Clackamas SWCDs for outreach
- g. Sarah worked w/ Mid-Willamette Cooperative Weed Management Area to update the Weed Prioritization List
- h. Published the 2024-2029 Strategic Plan
- i. Completed our 2023-24 Financial Audit
- j. Produced “Saving the Great White Oaks of Marion County” by David Craig for September’s First Friday
- k. Cover Crop Assistance Program August 1 to October 31
- l. CATS-Moving to new server
- m. Analytics regarding Social Media, comments, and record retention.
- n. Researched ADA laws and how they apply to the district's website, specifically, having documents that are screen readable.
- o. Pesticide Stewardship Partnership sampling continues

Sanchez also brought up new rules regarding ADA accessibility and retention of social media site materials. Sanchez explains these are difficult management challenges and that there will be more to come on this, adding that there are services out there for hire to assist us with these issues and we need to research these opportunities further. Walker asks what happens if he asks a question on social media, what is the response. Sanchez explains we do not have those kinds of interactions on social media, but if we did, we would respond with the information or social media followers may answer the questions as well.

Sanchez stated that she has been looking into the process of an internal audit of our grant programs and she will follow up as she works it out. Olson agreed that this would be a good process to engage in.

3. Treasurers Report August 2024

Budeau began the discussion by noting that August is the second month of our current fiscal year, representing about seventeen percent of our way through the fiscal year, gives an idea of how we are progressing. And if you look down on the income related stuff year to date, you see that the previous year's levy taxes received is thirty-two percent of what was projected, indicating we are making up projected levied taxes from last fiscal year. Sanchez added that we received a letter from the county assessor stating we are projected to collect \$1,544,277 dollars this fiscal year and added there was another letter describing legal obligations regarding a court case they are holding a certain amount of taxes from last fiscal year to repay the litigants if they win.

Action: Hart motioned that the Board **accept as presented the August 2024 Treasurers Report**, 2nd by Walker. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 [Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau], Opposed-0).

4. September 4, 2024, Board Meeting Minutes

Budeau begins by saying he reviewed the draft minutes and returned edits. Sanchez adds that she saw a comment regarding the minutes and will do her best to send out Draft 2, so that the Directors can see it fully edited. Discussion ensued on the details of sending out the minutes. Olson directed Budeau and Sanchez to work out the details to send minutes to the board.

Action: Walker motioned that the Board **approve as presented September 4, 2024, Board Meeting Minutes**, 2nd by Hart. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 [Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau], Opposed-0).

5. United States Department Agriculture (USDA) and Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) Report

Bachelor begins by announcing that Jarrod Seamen is leaving Marion County NRCS to take the position of state Environmental Quality Incentive Program lead. He has been with Marion NRCS for seventeen years and he will be missed. NRCS drafted \$3,737,935 dollars in contracts this year and we have a similar number of sign-ups now; excellent work moving ahead. Ninety-five percent of the contracts are engineered projects. Bachelor added he attended the Small Farm School and it was well attended and saw the Marion SWCD staff there as well, doing a wonderful job.

6. Partner Grant Program (PGP)

Sanchez reviewed the internal PGP process for recommending and moving the applications to the Board. All ten applications were moved forward for the Board

to consider for award; \$133,489.63. Sanchez added that this was the first time using the revised process, Afterwards, Ortiz and Sanchez met and discussed challenges and successes related to the process and they will bring to the Board suggested improvements for the PGP process, as part of the lessons learned and pilot program adaptations. Sanchez noted that one application, OregonFlora, was recommended at a reduced amount. Olson asked if the applications are reviewed for their grant limitation cap. Sanchez responded that Ortiz conducts a review of eligibility and where an applicant is in their accumulated awards regarding the limitation cap; ensuring that these applications are complete and eligible, which these are. Sanchez proposed a discussion point regarding statewide projects applying for Partner Grant funds and that we need clarification on the intent of the grant and what requirements applications must meet regarding the District's physical mapping boundary and a more abstract conservation impact such awarding funds to statewide programs or projects. Sanchez has this on the list of PGP discussion points.

Directors further discussed the capacity grant and what are the needs for capacity. Walker asked if Claggett Creek Watershed Council was ever contacted regarding the Partner Grant. Sanchez replied yes, all our partners were invited to a Partner Meeting about three months ago. We only had one partner attend and it was not anyone from Claggett Creek. Sanchez adds that they will reach out more intently next year to get them to attend and hear about the PGP. Walker asked if Grant # 60-25-009 is inside the District boundary. Sanchez responds that Ortiz looks at whether projects are in the District boundary as she qualifies the applications. Sanchez added that she also looked up the project site and confirms it is in the District boundary. Sanchez displays an online map with the District boundary and the project site location.

Walker continues and asks if match has been identified for these projects. Ortiz explains that the new requirement the Board adopted is at the application stage they fill out a match form to show and demonstrate where match comes from. If it is from another grant, they must provide a letter that they have received the award prior to any disbursement of grant funds. If they cannot demonstrate that they have been awarded the grant they are using for match, then they are not reimbursed until they provide the required twenty-five percent match.

Walker moves onto Grant # 60-25-010, asking if these funds will be used in Linn County. Ortiz provides that the EDRR project has funding secured for Linn County and the Partner Grant funds would be used for the Marion County side.

Budeau began a conversation regarding Grant # 60-25-007, iMap Invasives. Directors discussed the application description of the project and Budeau felt that they did not really describe the project's intent and the use of the app in early detection. Directors discussed invasive plant management in Marion County and resources available to do the work. Hamilton (staff) added that she uses iMap often and knows that they need the funds to stay current and up to date with plant information. Staff, partners, and the public all use the iMap hotline. Budeau asks Hamilton to share her thoughts on why the Marion SWCD should contribute more than twenty-five percent of the project costs in Marion County. Hamilton responds that she thinks that is a missed opportunity by iMap to fully demonstrate their full funding and total project cost in the application. Directors with Hamilton further discussed the scope of the iMap and OregonFlora projects and whether to fund the projects. Olson says we should trust the recommendations and review process, even though we still have tweaks to the program to figure out.

Action: Hart motioned that the Board **award Partner Grant applications 60-25-001 through 008**, 2nd by Koch. No further Discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 [Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau], Opposed-0).

Action: Hart motioned that the Board **award Partner Grant application 60-25-009**, 2nd by Koch. No further Discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-4 [Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau], Opposed-1 [Walker]).

Action: Hart motioned that the Board **award Partner Grant application 60-25-010**, 2nd by Koch. No further Discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-4 [Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau], Opposed-1 [Walker]).

7. Administrative Committee

a. Salem Audubon Lease Renewal

Sanchez presented the new 2024-2027 lease renewal contract for Salem Audubon for approval. A three-year lease, rent increase to \$424 per month, updated office unit, and progressive annual rent increase of two percent. Directors discussed current commercial rental rates.

Action: Hart motioned that the Board **approve the 2024-27 Salem Audubon Lease reflecting a three-year lease, rent increase to \$424 per month, updated office unit, and progressive annual rent increase of two percent**, 2nd by Budeau. No further Discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 [Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau], Opposed-0).

b. Vehicle Policy

For time management this agenda item moved to November 6, 2024, Board meeting.

8. Education Committee

a. CLEAR Grants

Hart presented the two CLEAR grant recommendations from the Education Committee. The McKay School CLEAR grant is more than the approved programmatic amount of \$2,000 and the Board will have to decide if the added cost should be funded. Walker shares his concern that by approving the overage we would set a precedent for others to do the same. Hart responded that we should consider the \$2,000 cap and increase it to cover the higher costs of school bus drivers. Directors debated whether they should cover the extra costs.

Action: Hart motioned that the Board **approve the three CLEAR grants applications as presented and recommended by the Education Committee, 2nd** by Koch. No further Discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-4 [Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau], Opposed-1 [Walker]).

b. Stan Vistica Grants

Hart presented the revised Stan Vistica Scholarship process, which is to change the scholarship from an “auto-renew” to an “apply and compete” scholarship and transition to an offering of four \$2,000 scholarships, open to all students in relevant majors, regardless of year in school or whether they have received the scholarship previously. In scoring these applications, additional points will be allocated to applicants who have received the scholarship in previous year(s). Directors examined the proposed changes and asked clarifying questions.

Action: Walker motioned that the Board **approve a total of \$8,000 in scholarships for school year 25-26, four \$2,000 scholarships, open to all students in relevant majors, regardless of year in school. In rating these applications, applicants who have received the scholarship in previous year(s) will receive additional points, 2nd** by Hart. No further Discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 [Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau], Opposed-0).

9. Conservation Assistance Grants (CAG)

a. Extensions and Cancellations

Action: Walker motioned that the Board **approve the extension request for LAP-20-22-004 Oak Grove Pasture Renovation**, 2nd by Budeau. No further Discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 [Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau], Opposed-0).

Action: Walker motioned that the Board **approve the cancellation of grant CAG-20-24-030 Mill race Stabilization Project**, 2nd by Budeau. No further Discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 [Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau], Opposed-0).

10. Yamhill SWCD Inter-Governmental Agreement-Pesticide Stewardship Program Grant (PSP)

Olson announced that there was more information submitted in an email on 10/10/24 from Oregon Department of Agriculture regarding the PSP grant and the Chair would like Directors to have time to receive the added information. Agenda item moved to November 6, 2024, Board meeting.

11. Letter of Support

Sanchez stated that the Pudding River Watershed Council (PRWC) is seeking a technical assistance grant from OWEB for Oregon white oak project. They applied last year for the project but it was not awarded and they are trying again this year. Last year (2023) Marion SWCD provided a letter of support for the project and the PRWC is requesting a letter of support again for the project.

Action: Walker motioned that the Board **provide a letter of support for the Pudding River Watershed Council's Oregon white oak technical assistance OWEB grant application**, 2nd by Budeau. No further Discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 [Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau], Opposed-0).

12. Salem Knotweed Treatment

Hamilton (Staff) proposed another year of knotweed treatments and submitted contract for signature. Hamilton points out there is an edit in the contract that went out to the Board.

Action: Olson motioned that the Board **approve the Knotweed Contract with the amended edits and that Sanchez has the authority to sign**, 2nd by Walker. No

further Discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 [Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau], Opposed-0).

13. Oregon Association of Conservation Districts (OACD) Letter

Olson shares a copy of the OACD letter received today in the mail. Sanchez says the letter states that we are not in good standing and we are unable to vote for the upcoming OACD Board election. Hart asks if they acknowledged our grievance. Sanchez replies it is not noticeably clear but they do state that the by-laws will not allow us to be in good standing because we are short on dues and that the District gets out of the association with what they put into the association. Walker shares his concern regarding the dues structure, and suggests we wait until we see what they do with the fee structure. Olson says we can hold off on any action for now.

14. District Manager Review

Olson asked if Sanchez would like to conduct the District Manager Review in open or executive session. Sanchez requested executive session.

The Board then opened an executive session of the Board of Directors after Chair Olson, identified the statutory authorization for holding an executive session.

“Executive Session ORS 192.660 (i) To review and evaluate the employment-related performance of the chief executive officer of any public body, a public officer, employee or staff member who does not request an open hearing.”

After stating the statutory authorization, members of the public were excluded and the executive session was opened at 8:26 PM.

The Directors reviewed the results of the performance evaluation completed by employees, Directors, discussed progress regarding the District Managers performance. It was noted that a couple of the graphs did not have the correct number of respondents or there was an error in averaging. Sanchez explained she would have liked more time for a third person review to identify any mistakes she made in her math. Sanchez has gone in and corrected the noted errors. Points of discussion were related to results and comments in the survey, progress on District work, and what is coming up. Sanchez discussed items for improvement and Directors added in their experience with the District Manager.

Olson closed the executive session at 8:54 and reopened the public session.

Action: Walker motioned that the Board **based on the results of the performance evaluation, agrees that the District manager receive a rating of “exceeds expectations” for her annual performance evaluation, 2nd** by Koch. No further Discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 [Walker, Olson, Koch, Hart, and Budeau], Opposed-0).

Adjourn: Chair Olson adjourned the meeting at 9:09 PM



Marion Soil and Water Conservation District complies with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. If special physical, language, or other accommodation is needed for this meeting, please contact the District Manager at 503-391-9927 as soon as possible, and at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting.