



**Marion Soil and Water Conservation District (MSWCD)
Board of Directors February 5, 2025, Monthly Minutes**

6:40 PM to 8:40 PM

Facilitator: Vice-Chair Plowhead

Recorded by: Brenda Sanchez and Peggy Hart

Approved 03-25-25

Directors & Record of Attendance		Associate Directors
At Large 1-Peggy Hart (Secretary-Treasurer)	Present	Leland Hardy
At Large 2-Scott Walker	Present	
Zone 1-Noah Justice (Appointed 2/5/25)	Present	
Zone 2-Nik Ochinnikov	Present	
Zone 3-Darin Olson (Chair)	Absent	
Zone 4-Angela Plowhead (Vice-Chair)	Present	
Zone 5-Rochelle Koch	Present	
Staff		Guests
Brenda Sanchez		Theresa Brehm-NRCS Al Hrynyshyn-OACD Ellie Winkleman Carmen

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).

Minutes

Vice-Chair Plowhead Call to Order: 6:50 PM

Announcements - None

Agenda Additions or Changes - None

Public Comment - No Comments

1. District Snapshot

Sanchez provides a brief overview of recent District activities, noting that much of her time has been dedicated to budget preparations.

ADA Remodel:

The District is in the process of hiring a contractor, builder, and designer to lead the ADA bathroom remodel. Sanchez emphasizes the importance of this approach, stating that, as she is not a contractor, securing specialized expertise is necessary to ensure the project's successful completion.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCP):

The project is partially on hold due to funding uncertainties. However, technical assistance efforts, led by staff member Chelsea Blank, continue as planned.

District Office Mural:

Updates on the mural project were provided, detailing ongoing progress and next steps.

2. Treasurers Report December 2024

Hart presented the Treasurer’s Report.

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

3. Board Meeting Minutes – December 4, 2024, and January 8, 2025

Sanchez presented the draft meeting minutes to the Board, incorporating amendments and corrections.

Action: Koch motioned that the Board **accept as presented and edited the December 4, 2024, Board meeting minutes, 2nd** by Walker. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 [Walker, Ochinnikov, Plowhead, Koch, and Hart], Opposed-0).

Walker noted that he had been recorded as Absent in the January meeting minutes but had, in fact, been Present. Additionally, the spelling of Nik Ovchinnikov’s last name was corrected in the draft.

Discussion and Clarifications:

It was clarified that Ovchinnikov had voted Against—rather than For—the failed motion proposed by Walker regarding Taylor Meyer’s CAG grant applications.

Further Review of Taylor Meyer Applications:

Hart and Sanchez provided a summary of Taylor Meyer’s applications, which will be included in the packets for further discussion in the upcoming Education and Outreach and Natural Resources Committee meetings.

Action: Koch motioned that the Board **accept as presented and edited the January 8, 2025, Board meeting minutes, 2nd** by Walker. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 [Walker, Ochinnikov, Plowhead, Koch, and Hart], Opposed-0).

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

Theresa Brehm (NRCS) announced that the Marion County Local Work Group Meeting is scheduled for 9:00 AM on February 28, 2025, at the USDA/NRCS office, 650 Hawthorne Avenue, Suite 130, Salem, OR 97301.

In previous years, the local work group primarily focused on agency updates. However, this year's meeting has been restructured to engage directly with landowners and the agricultural community. The goal is to gather input on priority concerns to help adjust and guide NRCS funding allocations. A separate meeting later in the year will provide agency updates and facilitate discussions with partner organizations.

Staffing Challenges:

NRCS in Marion County is currently understaffed, operating with only two employees instead of four, in addition to an unfilled administrative position. The federal hiring freeze halted the hiring process for two additional staff members, leaving the office short-staffed.

Funding Update:

- Farm Bill funding (Environmental Quality Incentives Program) remains secure.
- Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funding is uncertain, creating challenges for the 2023-2030. 59 contracts under the IRA are pending until further notice.
- Conservation Stewardship Program still available applications are pending.
- NRCS will continue working under the assumption that funding may be reinstated.

5. **Appoint Zone 1 Director**

Action: Walker motioned that the Board **appoint Noah Justice as Zone 1 Director**, 2nd by Hart. No further discussion MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 [Walker, Ochinnikov, Plowhead, Koch, and Hart], Opposed-0).

Plowhead administered the oath of office to Noah Justice, marking the beginning of his service with the Marion SWCD.

Oath: I, Noah Justice, do solemnly swear that I will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Oregon, and that I will

faithfully discharge the duties of the office of Director of Marion Soil and Water Conservation District upon which I am now about to enter.

6. Greenscaping Project-Contract Agreement

Sanchez provided an overview of the decision to hire Green Acres Landscaping for the installation and ongoing maintenance of the new landscaping. The selection was based, in part, on the company's commitment to hand weeding and the use of integrated pest management (IPM) practices, aligning with the District's sustainability goals. The project will be completed in two phases:

1. Phase One – Immediate implementation: This phase includes clearing, weed control, planting, and paver installation.
2. Phase Two – Streamside restoration: Work along the stream, including additional planting and weed control, will follow in the second phase.

Coordination with the Santiam Water Control District has been an integral part of the planning process. Their requirements and concerns have been reviewed and discussed, and Sanchez has committed to ensuring that all landscaping efforts comply with their guidelines.

Action: Koch motioned that the Board **approve the Green Acres Landscaping contract for \$13,280, to complete services for the District's facility, 2nd** by Justice. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-6 [Walker, Ochinnikov, Plowhead, Justice, Koch, and Hart], Opposed-0).

7. Employee Step Increase

Action: Hart motioned that the Board **approve a one-step increase for Kassi Roosth, 2nd** by Walker. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-6 [Walker, Ochinnikov, Plowhead, Justice, Koch, and Hart], Opposed-0).

8. Conservation Grants

a. Grant Extensions and Cancellations

Action: Hart motioned that the Board **approve the cancellation of Zacher Family Farm CAG-20-24-014, 2nd** by Justice. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-6 [Walker, Ochinnikov, Plowhead, Justice, Koch, and Hart], Opposed-0).

b. Grants Completed

Board reviewed completed grants.

9. Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments (MWVCOG)

- a. **Update on District MWVCOG Board Seat:** MSWCD has completed its term and Yamhill SWCD will fill the seat for the next term.
- b. **Hosting Oregon Government Ethics Commission Training**
Public Meeting Law – Mandatory, approved training is required of all Board members. Opportunities:
 - April 1, 2025 from 3:30-6 pm – Live Webinar
 - March 4 at 10 am in Tualatin – in personSanchez will register all Directors for the April 1, 2025 webinar.

10. Appoint Secretary-Treasurer as Signer-District's Checking Account

Action: Walker motioned that the Board **appoint Secretary Treasurer, Margaret (Peggy) Hart, as Signer for the District's checking account, 2nd** by Justice. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-6 [Walker, Ochinnikov, Olson, Plowhead, Koch, and Hart], Opposed-0).

Hart signed necessary paperwork after the meeting.

0. Admin Committee

No Report. Next meeting February 14, 2025

0. Education and Outreach Committee

No Report. Next meeting February 18, 2025

0. Natural Resource Committee

No Report. Next meeting February 12, 2025

Adjourn: Vice-Chair Plowhead adjourned the meeting at 7:58 PM



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