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

Monday, February 6, 2023

6:00pm- Call to Order

Zimmer-Stucky, called to order the regular meeting of the EMSWCD Board of Directors at 6:00pm on Monday, February 6, 2023, at EMSWCD's Office.

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), Mike Guebert (Zone 3 Director, Vice-Chair), Jim Carlson (At-Large 1 Director, Treasurer), Joe Rossi (Zone 1 Director)

Board of Directors Absent: Laura Masterson (Zone 2 Director, Secretary)

Staff: Nancy Hamilton (Executive Director) (virtual), Dan Mitten (Chief of Finance & Operations), Kathy Shearin (Urban Lands Program Supervisor), Julie DiLeone (Rural Lands Program Supervisor), Lucas Nipp (Senior Rural Conservationist), Heather Nelson Kent (Grants Program Manager), Jeremy Baker (Senior Rural Conservationist), Katie Meckes (Urban Lands Planner), Asianna Fernandez (Executive Assistant)

Guests: Al Hrynshyn (SWCC) (virtual), Kimberly Galland (NRCS)

Changes to the agenda:

- Item 6: should be a Decision Item.
- Add between Item 8 & 9: Decision Item: Guebert to represent the Board at a Farm Bill meeting held by Earl Blumenauer.
- Item 4: Not reviewing CLIP policy. Only proposing two policies to become procedures.

Previous action items:

Fernandez to get information on the Local Worker Group Meeting and Regional Partnership Group Meeting from Galland and send information to Staff and Board.

Hamilton to structure future Executive Director Updates using the 10 highlighted priorities from her Workplan.

Fernandez to schedule the February 17th Work Session and send invite to all Board Members.

Fernandez to add Carlson to the Personnel Committee Meeting invites.

Fernandez to check with Rossi and Shipkey about moving the LLC Meeting on January 30th to January 23rd.

6:03pm- Approval of minutes

MOTION: Carlson moved to approve January 4, 2023, Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, Guebert 2nd. Motion passed unanimously (4-0, Masterson absent).

6:04pm- Time reserved for public comment.

Hrynshyn is the representative for the Soil and Water Conservation Commission (SWCC). There are a lot of water funding opportunities right now. OACD Newsletter highlights those opportunities. Talk to NRCS rep for more information as well. Funding seems favorable for ODA right now; we're currently in the political climate that favors conservation efforts.

The next SWCC Meeting is this week and there is another Bill in the works on director eligibility; will report back on this after the meeting.



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6:06pm- Executive Director and Leadership Team Updates

Hamilton shared the ED Updates.

External Meetings:

- Tara Wilkinson- Intertwine
- Jon Blasher- Metro: They purchase land with Bond money, and are sometimes required to purchase whole properties, which means they cannot sell back to the public sector. They have good ones in Clackamas and Washington counties. Blasher's open to looking into short/long term leases for HIP Grads. Preet Gujral is also updating Metro's full list of properties.
- SWCD District Manager half day retreat- Upper Willamette, Marion, Yamhill, Tualatin, Clackamas, West, East Multnomah SWCD. Adding Polk next. Working on a lot of the same documents and policy updates. Working together with Andy at Yamhill to do a presentation on Easements for other SWCDs- don't have a consecutive or common easement template across all districts.
- Terri Preeg Riggsby- WMSWCD Board Chair: discussed SB 775. Only impacts 10 out of 45 of the districts right now. Looking to create common language on topic.
- Jim Middaugh- MCDD: working on consolidating small districts into a big district. Will likely be purchasing property that could be used for farms but needs to create floodplains. More opportunity to place HIP Grads on farmable land.

Zimmer Stucky Will Metro be providing only data on their properties within Multnomah County?

Hamilton Gujral is working on collecting data throughout Metro's boundaries, we can consider all of it for HIP Grads as we don't mind if they farm outside of our District.

Looking Forward:

- Board Handbook- We were waiting for word from Eric Nusbaum but decided not to wait for him to finish anymore. Nusbaum informed us (SWCD District Managers) that there aren't any changes being made on Board details. Should have a finished draft in March.
- Complete Office Modernization/Updates- Splitting conference room to add an ADA accessible kitchen and lounge area. Turning the upstairs kitchen into a conference room. Cheaper option than elevator. Taking out skinny stairs that lead into the copy room, turning it into storage space. We have renderings from Harka Architecture now. We should have placeholder numbers and renderings to share at the March Budget meeting.
- Strategic Plan Next steps- finished inventorying current programs against priorities, creating ideas on how to evolve current programs and new program ideas. The Board will have narratives on each program by the March Budget Committee Meeting. Will show how all the programs meet our strategic priorities. Some work will begin this next fiscal year but could take multiple years to complete or reach goals.
- No website redesign yet.
- Investigating possible Federal Grants and strategic partnerships that may be available, starting with the USDA Local Working Group meeting. Focusing on Federal IRA funds instead of state funds since the District does have a tax base and other SWCDs in the state don't.
- No Lunch & Learns yet.
- CRM program update from Mitten in F&O update.
- Continuing external meetings- mentioned earlier.
- Attending two Conferences- TBD, assuming CONNECT as one of them.
- Senate Bill 775 introduced by Sen Fredrick.
- Developing communication strategy for whole District- preliminary discussion underway, will likely have budget implications, to be discussed at the March Budget meeting.



Rossi In working with METRO on locating usable parks and farmland, outside our boundary, is there a Board decision on that?

Hamilton We'd only refer HIP grads and other farmers to METRO. We wouldn't have any management or financial stake.

Rossi Would like to see a cost benefit analysis on spending money on the current office building vs. renting office space elsewhere. Did the Board make a decision?

Hamilton We haven't come back to the Board with a report yet, but we did do research into the market and made an internal decision for the moment. This house is much cheaper, we have necessary storage space, and we own it, making it a better option than renting elsewhere. We looked at other purchasable properties as well, but prices are too high.

Rossi We are still assuming the opportunity cost of carrying an asset worth money. Would feel better if he had more information. Suggested engaging a broker in the market, find a comparison. Run two parallel budget tracks to come to a decision point.

Guebert Doesn't think we'll find a better option elsewhere, doesn't suggest that.

Zimmer-Stucky Open to hearing from a broker on needs of this building, including parking, storage, central location, etc.

Hamilton This house is also a live demonstration project. With Budget Committee process underway, getting that report might take a little while. We can have a placeholder in the budget for staying in the building at the March Budget meeting.

Action Item: Hamilton and Mitten to bring broker recommendations and budget information on the current office building to the Board. Proceed with current budget including placeholder for current office with redesign for the March Budget meeting.

Something to Celebrate

Nipp presented the StreamCare Success story: He recently graduated the first StreamCare site, located on Klock's Blueberry Farm, a 27-acre U-pick blueberry farm owned by Clair Klock, in Corbett. It is now called Columbia View Blueberry Farm, owned by Klock's family friend. The program came in at the right time to save the property's forest, as it was on its way to becoming overtaken by invasive blackberry. This farm was enrolled in the Big Creek Watershed which now has seen over 60% of the eligible stream miles restored through the StreamCare Program. Klock greatly helped propel the program in the Corbett area through guidance towards interested landowners and through word of mouth, making direct outreach unnecessary for many years since the community ended up coming to us for help instead. The farm has also worked with EMSWCD on multiple CLIP grants prior to StreamCare and has undertaken many conservation practices and projects on their own.

Rossi Clair is an amazing man; he loves sharing knowledge. He used to volunteer with EMSWCD a long time ago. He pioneered a new blueberry farming technique, the "Klock Chop," which he enjoys teaching other growers and the public about. He's a hub for information and outreach.

Guebert Are we still bringing farms into the program?

Nipp Yes. The word of mouth has been a huge help in getting farmers throughout the District to trust us.

Leadership Team Updates

Hamilton shared the Conservation Legacy Team updates:



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- Steele is back from Paternity Leave. He will be working a 4-day workweek through the end of this Fiscal Year. Thanks to Pfiel and Wood for filling in any gaps at Headwaters Farm during that time.
- Three Partners in Conservation (PIC) review teams confirmed and received their applications to review. The 3 dates in March confirmed. 3 Board members sitting on those committees.
- The Land Legacy Program is about to launch a press announcement about Emily's purchase of Full Cellar Farms and local farmer events going on this Spring.

Shearin shared the Urban Lands updates:

- Partnerships with Portland Nursery: UL will be giving several presentations for the Portland Nursery's Conservation for Gardeners series and educating folks through them.
- Partnerships with Portland Garden Club: They're considering clubs and nonprofits to partner with. We offered several ideas for organizations that they could potentially work with as part of a "Partnerships for Plants" grant opportunity through Garden Club of America.
- Clean Rivers Coalition: 60+ organizations across the state, working to encourage folks to have clean water behaviors. Meckes (staff) is on the committee, and recently announced the Eco-film festival at Hollywood Theater on April 15th.
- Plant Sale 2023: Sorting starts next week. Sold over 90% of the plants we purchased. Just under \$50k in sales. Invited the Board to attend on February 18th from 8am to 3pm.

Mitten shared F&O Updates

- TSCC's new Executive Director, Allegra Willhite, Tunie Betschart, TSSC Budget Analyst, Mitten, and Hamilton had the annual meeting with TSCC staff at the office to go over FY23-24 budget themes, overview of the strategic plan and how that may inform our budget, overall revenue and expenditure forecasts, as well as a general outline for the Budget hearing in May with potential hearing topics and questions from the Commissioners. Commission Hearing by TSCC on May 16th at the office from 4-5pm. Gave them a tour of the office and landscape with emphasis on demonstrating the conservation efforts on the property, which they were impressed by and put a small story about it in their weekly newsletter. Two new TSCC commissioners (4-year term) are being recruited now.
- Budget: preparing budget templates, worksheets, and documents, informed by the Strategic Plan, to send out to the Leadership Team and key staff members to begin the budget development process, including key items for the content of the budget message. Customer Relations Management (CRM) software: The acquisition and use of a CRM for EMSWCD that'll work within all our programs consistently and in one system will help us enhance our district-wide collaboration as well as manage data and contacts in a more efficient and effective manner. Benefits of these platforms include keeping all our contacts, partners, constituents, and targeted demographics in one place, that can be easily resourced by any staff for tailored outreach or initiatives. At this point we are researching options, developing needs analysis by program and initiative as well as potential vendors and cost once the framework is determined. As we collaborate internally at the program level and with the Equity team, we will provide updates and estimations to be considered in the budget process.
- **Guebert** suggested planning Board's tour of the office in Spring.
- **Action Item: Asianna to add Board tour of the Office to the June Board Meeting Agenda.**

DiLeone shared RL Updates

- Baker (staff) had an idea for an event at the Columbia Grange in Spring: District Open House for farmers. Q&A, food and beverages, information sharing and reminding folks about the District's services we provide and allowing farmers to interact with each other. Board is invited. Will bring



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details to Board once we know more. Maybe will have NRCS, was thinking about it being District wide.

- The Local Working Group will be funding other things than equipment, FSA as well.

6:53pm- Personnel Committee Recommendations

Zimmer-Stucky introduced the Personnel Committee Recommendations: Two Policies to be changed to Protocols and Two Temporary Staff to be changed to Permanent Staff.

Mitten explained the staff recommendation of changing the two policies to protocols, (Emergency Action Plan Policy 1.1.12 and Employee and Public Safety Policy 1.1.11). The recommendation is based on eliminating the need to bring any minute changes to the policies to the board for approval. Will still share information and changes with Board members for transparency as they come up, though.

MOTION: Guebert moved to move policies 1.1.11 and 1.1.12 to protocols, Carlson 2nd. Motion passed unanimously (4-0, Masterson absent).

Hamilton explained the two temporary positions (Asianna Fernandez and Tiffany Mancillas) being recommended to change to permanent positions. Both positions are fully funded in the Budget, the only minor changes include adding life insurance, short term & long term disability, and participation in the District's 457 retirement plan which has a 6% match by the District.

MOTION: Guebert moved to approve Asianna Fernandez and Tiffany Mancillas be moved from temporary to permanent positions, Carlson 2nd. Motion passed unanimously (4-0, Masterson absent).

7:00pm- Update on Step Increase vs. Merit Research

Mitten introduced the discussion on their Step Increase vs. Merit pay research. The District signed a \$4k contract through June 2023 with Compensation Connections who recently gave the Leadership Team (L-Team) four step-increase scenarios, discussed what kind of step-increase evaluations are available to choose from, and walked through the District's current salaries/staff/etc. Ruled out one scenario. Mitten provided Compensation Connections with our current classifications and salary ranges as though all staff receive a 3% merit increase and if the COLI reaches the 5% max. They will present further findings to the L-Team at a subsequent meeting and will keep the Board updated. Will have all necessary information, including if the changes will bring major budget implications, during the Budget process.

7:03pm- Strategic Opportunity Grant Framework

Zimmer-Stucky thanked Kent for the memo on this Framework. Is asking staff for more in-advance memos like this for Board and Committee packets instead of lengthy presentations.

Hamilton introduced the Strategic Opportunity Grant Framework. Reminder that the Board approved funding for this equity focused grant idea during the last fiscal year. Didn't use any of it at that time. Board approved it again this year and is looking to staff for framework on how we see the work done in the field. Jollee Patterson of Miller Nash reviewed it to let us know if we're taking unreasonable risks in comparison to other Districts and City/County. Risk is low in her opinion.

Kent and Shipkey had legal consultation beforehand to ensure the language and approach used is legal for Government grant processes. Our language is a little broader than that used at the City/County level.

Zimmer-Stucky What's the turnaround time for this grant?

Kent Since we're still approaching partners and looking for people to submit project ideas to us, we're not sure yet. Some projects seem eligible already. Once criteria and process are established, then we can circulate internally to find candidates. Having flexibility around timeline makes it more responsive



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than PIC, which is a great benefit in equity work. It operates on a rolling basis. Anticipating a proposal form and rules for administering funds in addition to policy and selection process, using a staff-driven approach to developing project proposals with our partners.

Guebert One challenge seems to be if a proposal comes in early, how do you fund it partially?

Kent We could fund some this year already and then have the fund replenish next fiscal year to fund more.

MOTION: Guebert moved to approve the proposed Strategic Opportunity Grant Framework, Carlson 2nd. Motion passed unanimously (4-0, Masterson absent).

7:11pm- FY22-23 Budget Committee Planning

First Budget Committee Meeting: March 6th at 4pm at the EMSWCD office.

Appoint Budget Officer: Dan Mitten CFO

MOTION: Guebert moved to appoint Dan Mitten as Budget Officer, Carlson 2nd. Motion passed unanimously (4-0, Masterson absent).

Approve Budget Calendar: Presented in the packet. Requirement for budget law. Outlines full process through proposed to adoption. Green lettering is the regular Board meetings held at office. Red lettering is Budget Committee meetings and TSCC hearing held at office. Board Members are encouraged to attend the TSCC hearing on May 16th from 4-5pm.

Zimmer-Stucky and Guebert are unable to attend the TSCC Hearing.

Carlson and Rossi may be able to attend.

MOTION: Guebert moved to approve the Budget Calendar as presented, Carlson 2nd. Motion passed unanimously (4-0, Masterson absent).

7:16pm- Monthly Financial Reports- December 2022

Mitten presented the December 2022 Financial Report: Balance Sheet, P&L Budget performance, and P&L by Class. Balance sheet shows to be very healthy, almost to the exact percent as last year, just a little higher in revenue. Total Assets over \$20M. Liabilities: Doesn't show anything concerning. Right after receiving large amounts of property tax revenue, you'll see a boost in the Balance Sheet. P&L budget performance: Property tax received through the first six months of the fiscal year is \$5.2M with our annual budget being \$5.4M. Interest rates have gone up from 3.35 to 3.75% in our LGIP account. Overall, nothing's changed significantly. P&L by class: halfway through the year, percentage of appropriations spent is averaging 37-44% per program with 50% of the fiscal completed. Budget numbers do not include most recent budget amendments. Those will be shown on the next month's report.

Guebert The increase of interest is much more that we budgeted for, so that goes into the beginning fund for next fiscal year?

Mitten Yes, any revenue received that is not budgeted for remains untouched until the next budget cycle where it becomes part of the beginning fund balance to be able to be appropriated.

7:20pm- Board Discussion

Guebert was invited to attend the Farm Bill meeting held by Earl Blumenauer again, next Friday. Went to this meeting 5 years ago to present ideas on the Farm Bill. Asking for approval to represent the Board at this meeting and if the Board has any ideas they would like to be presented.

Action Item: Board to send Guebert any ideas/points to bring up to the Farm Bill Meeting with Earl Blumenauer.

Hamilton Blumenauer is more interested in urban farming and community gardens, etc. as opposed to large industrial farms in the Midwest which is what the USDA is generally thinking about. We're getting



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some funding for these kinds of urban farm plans in the East Multnomah District. The hope is to give him some ideas on smaller scale/urban farms for Blumenauer to bring back to the committee.

Zimmer-Stucky suggested bringing the District's synopsis of the PIC grants as an idea of where the constituents in this District are headed in terms of agriculture.

MOTION: Carlson moved to allow Mike Guebert to represent the Board at the Farm Bill Meeting with Earl Blumenauer, Zimmer-Stucky 2nd. Motion passed unanimously (4-0, Masterson absent).

7:25pm- Board Discussion

Zimmer-Stucky If Board Discussion time and Work Sessions feel redundant, the Board can reevaluate if either are necessary.

Rossi started a conversation about the Mission in context. On page 6 of the Strategic Plan on the Mission in Context. Remembers approving a visual of Soil and Water as a box as the first priority and climate action and equity and inclusion linked below it as priority lenses. In the final plan, it's shown instead as three circles overlapping, which implies parity (like three legs of a stool) of the three topics, or that the bottom two lenses can outvote the top core mission topic. Believes the core mission needs to be above the priority lenses.

Guebert Board agreed to keep mission statement as is, focusing on soil and water, which is still above everything else.

Zimmer-Stucky From a graphic design aspect, understands Rossi's point. The order is clearly soil and water health up front. Suggesting a redesign of the graphic?

Rossi Yes, that's one idea. Would like Soil & Water Health to be above by themselves and priority lenses with the other three priorities.

Guebert wonders about changing the strategic plan after it's been adopted since it's something we must submit to the ODA.

Zimmer-Stucky is open to pursuing it. In next Board Discussion, suggested having more of an arrow graphic with Soil and Water pointing down to the two priority lenses (climate action and equity and inclusion). If it doesn't cause a whole ripple effect throughout legal world, could see it being changed. If it does cause an issue to change the graphic, suggested the District continues holding ourselves accountable to what we know is true. Would like to hold off on this topic until April Board Meeting for staff time consideration.

Guebert started a conversation on the upcoming Work Session agenda. (February 17th from 4-6pm).

Zimmer-Stucky General topic of the work session is Legislative Session. OACD plans to attend to present overlapping things between District is legislature. Hoping to decide on which topics to support/take position on at the March meeting and allowing someone to testify on behalf of the Board.

Mitten Since they're special Board Meetings, the Board can make decisions and motions at the Work Sessions.

Hamilton and Guebert attended the OACD Advocacy Committee meeting, and they presented the Bills that they're tracking, some of which don't apply to the District. Hamilton has been sorting through them to find the ones that do apply to us. Also received info on other bills from ORCAN and other partners, which will be sent to the Board in the meeting Packet to go over at Work Session. For some bills, OACD are declining or neutral and are just watching, instead of supporting.

Rossi asked for time at the March Board Meeting for a generic cost benefit analysis for the Office.

Action Item: Mitten to put together a high-level cost analysis for the Office at the March Board Meeting.



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Zimmer-Stucky March Board Meeting will be a big meeting, including staff workplan, which is decided by Executive Director. Asked for brief summaries instead of PowerPoints in advance for staff workplans. Planning to spend a few hours looking through that and the Budget in the March Board Meeting and Budget Committee Meeting Packets.

7:44pm- Announcements, Action Items, and Adjournment

Hamilton Looking to swap upcoming LLC and PC Meeting dates. There are PC items in the budget that need to be sorted sooner.

Guebert will be away for the rest of the month.

Action Item: Asianna to update LLC and PC Meetings invites.

Action Items:

- **Asianna** to add Board tour of the office to the June Board Meeting Agenda.
- **Board** to send Guebert any ideas/points to bring up at the Farm Bill Meeting with Earl Blumenauer.
- **Hamilton and Mitten** to bring broker recommendations and high-level cost analysis budget information on the current office building to the Board. Proceed with current budget including placeholder for current office with redesign for the March Budget meeting.
- **Staff** to determine if there's time to look into page 6 graphic redesign on Strategic Plan.
- **Asianna** to update LLC and PC Meetings invites.

Zimmer-Stucky adjourned the meeting at 7:48pm