



6/5/2023

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

Monday, June 5, 2023

6:02pm- Call to Order

Zimmer-Stucky, called to order the regular meeting of the EMSWCD Board of Directors at 6:02pm on Monday, June 5, 2023, at EMSWCD's Office.

6:03pm- 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), Laura Masterson (Zone 2 Director, Secretary) (virtual), Jim Carlson (At-Large 1 Director, Treasurer), Joe Rossi (Zone 1 Director)

Staff: Nancy Hamilton (Executive Director), Dan Mitten (Chief of Finance & Operations), Kathy Shearin (Urban Lands Program Supervisor), Julie DiLeone (Rural Lands Program Supervisor), Heather Nelson Kent (Grants Program Manager), Matt Shipkey (Land Legacy Program Manager), Asianna Fernandez (Executive Assistant)

Guests: Scott Ekstrom (public) (arrived at 7pm), Larry Bailey (Multnomah County Farm Bureau), Amanda Welker (USDA)

Changes to the agenda: Delay Public Comment

Previous action items:

Action Item: Fernandez to send Past Plan for Guerrero property's office building to Board Members. –In Progress

Action Item: Fernandez to send all FY 23-24 Board and Committee meeting dates to Carlson and Rossi and schedule meetings as stated. -Done

Action Item: Staff to make necessary edits to the Board Handbook before finalizing. -Done

6:04pm- Approval of minutes

MOTION: Guebert moved to approve the May 1, 2023, Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, Masterson 2nd. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

MOTION: Guebert moved to approve the May 1, 2023, Budget Committee Meeting #3 Minutes, Masterson 2nd. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

6:05pm- Executive Director and Leadership Team Updates

Hamilton shared the ED Updates.

Looking Back at May:

- TSCC hearing was finished, and it went well. Rossi and Carlson attended the hearing, representing the Board. The Q&A are in the packet.
- Land Legacy Committee (LLC) Meeting: We spent most of our time reviewing the Gordon Creek property valuation, and real estate issues under Executive Session.
- Office building upgrades: Three interested contractors. Their proposals are due to us by mid-June. Two of the GCs grew up in the area and used to come to the building when it was a funeral home and have a good understanding of the neighborhood as well.



6/5/2023

- Staff changes: Lucas moving to Wisconsin with his family, had his last day with the District on June 2nd. Now looking at recruitment structures and how to go forward. Should have an update by the PC Meeting. He will be missed!
- Staff Appreciation Day: Staff participated in Creole chocolate making and had lunch together. Thanks to Schwenk for planning it all!
- Performance Evaluations are underway. The Board will be meeting to discuss Hamilton's with Critchfield in a couple weeks. The Leadership Team now has all of the staff evaluation templates. Hamilton has seven evaluations to write this year since she's supervising the Conservation Legacy Team.
- Multnomah County Farm Bureau BBQ: June 23 at 6pm at Rossi Farms. EMSWCD is assisting/sponsoring the event for food and beverages at \$25,000. There is a tour of the farm from 1-5pm.
 - **Action Item: Fernandez to send the Multnomah County Farm Bureau BBQ invitation and tour details to the Board.**
 - Need a representative from the District to join the tour, would like someone from the Board to do that, but can send someone from staff if needed.
- SB 775 had a hearing on May 23rd and will have another hearing on June 6th. The Republicans aren't in the building so there's hundreds of bills stacked up waiting for a hearing and will likely not be moved. Many of the Rules Committee members didn't know about the law until the hearing and were thrilled to see Senator Fredrick bring it forward.
- CO&E Team: Has begun meeting weekly, ready to begin work on July 1st. Working with a communications firm on developing an RFP plan, which will include a 2nd contractor opportunity for HIP Farmer recruitment improvement.
- The packet includes a couple of times the District was mentioned by the press recently.

External Meetings in May:

- Ted Labbe of Urban Green Spaces: Discussed community engagement and our strategic plan. He was excited to hear our core priorities. He and some of his colleagues are also supportive of SB 775 and are planning to testify in favor of it.
- SWCD DMs quarterly meeting: Up to 10 DMs are now attending these meetings. Share ideas, documents, policies, protocols, etc. The SWCD CFOs are also meeting quarterly now too.
 - Jon Blasher attended part of the meeting with some of the Districts to discuss how SWCDs can work more closely with Metro on land access and restoration-related issues.
- Larry Bailey of Multnomah County Farm Bureau and runs a Nursery: Has also received a CLIP grant from the District. He gave some feedback on the program, and shared some ideas on how we can continue to work on mitigating some of the hesitation established farmers have in working with the District.
- Heather King of Columbia Slough Watershed Council: They've done some great fundraising work. Columbia Slough is very urban, so they discussed urban issues affecting the water and surrounding areas, as well as how to get the public out onto the water to enjoy.
 - Asked Shearin to step down from the Columbia Slough Watershed Council, and DiLeone from the Johnson Creek Watershed Council simply due to staff time allocation and priorities. They can't vote anyways since the District partners with both of them.
- Lynn Barlow, Executive Director at West Multnomah SWCD: Planning to discuss a Harbor cleanup project, and how other Districts can help.



6/5/2023

- Jay Udelhoven of Multnomah County Farm Bureau: Discussed the BBQ, and how we can share Farmer names for technical assistance opportunities.
- Andrea Weiner, Oregon Association of Conservation Districts (OACD): Comes from Delaware, acted as an introductory meeting. As an SWCD, we haven't gotten much from the OACD, and while we don't need anything from them, we would like to remain at the table, especially when it comes to policy issues.
 - She will be meeting with the SWCD DMs list as well, at the next meeting in August, with Nellie McAdams from Oregon Agricultural Trust (OAT).

External Meetings planned for June/July:

- Steve Fancher – City of Gresham
- Adena Long – City of Portland
- Candace Avalos – Verde
- Tony DeFalco – Latino Network
- Sara Grigsby – Corbett Gran
- Derron Coles – Blueprint Foundation

Leadership Team Updates

Hamilton shared the Conservation Legacy Team updates: last month of this team existing.

- Headwaters Farm Program:
 - Held a farmer meeting on May 26th to address strong frustration that some farmers had expressed around the lease, and to introduce DiLeone as Steele's new supervisor. Steele, DiLeone, and Hamilton met recently to discuss next steps as well.
 - Raptor Workshop on site as a Rural Lands project.
 - No-till drill testing.
 - Innovative Tools workshop
 - **Action Item: Fernandez to send the Board the invitation to the Innovative Tools Workshop**
 - **Guebert** Is the sewer system in the works yet? **Hamilton** is unsure.
 - **Rossi** What were the farmers' concerns? How many farmers are there this year? **Hamilton** One or two of the farmers were unhappy that we were asking them to move some things around on their plots at the last minute for safety concerns. There are 14 farmers, 11 farms.
 - **Masterson** Are there some business and budgeting lessons or workshops coming up for the farmers yet? **Hamilton** Yes, they happen every year, Rowan has two professionals coming in to sit down with each farmer to help them in a more personalized way, during the slower time of the year.
- Grants Program: All the SPACE Grant money has been allocated for the year. All PIC Grants are out the door. Through EFSOG, we're funding Black Oregon Land Trust (BOLT) and iUrbanTeen.
 - **Zimmer-Stucky** How much is being allocated to each organization through EFSOG? **Hamilton** \$25,000 this Fiscal Year, each, which will go up another \$25,000 next FY based on increased budget approved by Board.
 - BOLT: Own a farm property and will be using the funds for improvements on it, and to secure tenure for a long-term lease.
 - iUrbanTeen: Teaching high school students about GIS, carbon sequestration, restoration, etc.
- Land Legacy Program:



6/5/2023

- The Gordon Creek property is now on the market. Shipkey has reviewed some responses to the evaluation methodologies for easements. Meeting with OAT tomorrow. Still working on Oxbow Well situation. Still working on getting survey results. Thanks to Carlson and Rossi for reaching out to those who haven't responded to the survey yet.

Shearin shared the Urban Lands updates:

- Planting with Partners: the second one of the year happened.
 - Wisdom of the Elders.
 - Zenger Farms Interns.
 - Native Gathering Gardens at Cully park: 50 attendees, and we had someone from each EMSWCD team attend to help.
- PBS was referred to by Bureau of Environmental Services (BES) and reached out to the District asking for help to find someone for their next episode of This Old House, where they were looking to install a raingarden into a Portland resident's yard. The District will be leading the rain garden installation and acting as a spokesperson for the episode.
- Wood Village is updating their Water Management and Conservation Plan and asked for feedback on the water conservation section. She has let them know about some of the District's other services if they wanted to implement anything else or share information with their community.

Mitten shared F&O updates:

- TSCC Hearing finished.
- Schwenk is now our official Notary Public. These services are not available to the public or to staff/Board for personal matters.
- SWCD CFOs have also begun meeting monthly.
- Timesheet/payroll process changes: We're moving the pay period from the current first of the month to the last of the month, to the 24th of the month to the 23rd of the following month. Doing so streamlines the whole process and makes it quicker and easier for everyone.
- The Employee Handbook updates are to be presented at the Personnel Committee Meeting in July.
- Fiscal Policy updates are finished, and the full document is available for review in the Packet and online.
- The Truck purchase from the State did go through.

DiLeone shared RL Updates:

- Awarded a CLIP Grant for an upgraded irrigation system at a nursery. Started as a small project, and with trust building, it has grown pretty well.
- Lucas did a great job in setting the District up for the summer and fall without him after his departure. Everything is organized well for whomever takes over.
- Weeds and garlic mustard control is almost done, very early in the year. Our next focus will be on false brome and spurge laurel.

Something to Celebrate- Budget Completion and TSCC Success

Hamilton Leadership Team agreed that we should take a moment to celebrate that the budget process went well this year. The TSCC hearing went well, and our budget is certified. Referencing everything



6/5/2023

against the Strategic Plan was very helpful. Doing narratives in writing instead of Power Points was helpful in articulating the why and how of our next fiscal year's budget. Thanks to Mitten!

6:40pm- Legislative Updates

Hamilton There's not a lot to report, HB 3021 is dead.

Guebert OACD went to oppose HB 3021.

Hamilton SB 751 also died. The bill on soil health initiatives is continuing to move forward. HB 3016A, led by Verde, is running very strong. Thinks it would be a great change to the law if it hits the floor. SB 538 got many great reviews and is now waiting for floor votes. The last day of session is June 25th.

Guebert Some of them won't get votes this year due to what's happening in Salem, hoping some of them can be reintroduced at the short session.

Masterson Are we still tracking Oregon Heritage Program's bill? There was some confusion about what grants have and haven't been spent, so they ended up allocating less funds than requested.

Hamilton The Board has already approved support on this, we can submit the letter to the right committee once the hearing comes up.

6:45pm- Grant Policy Updates (including CLIP)

DiLeone The District's Grants policies included very small aspects that weren't necessary to remain policy, so Kent came up with a new policy format for all the grants.

DiLeone and Kent walked the Board through all of the changes that are laid out in the provided tables (Item 5a in the Packet).

Zimmer-Stucky Were the recommendations from some of the programs included in these changes?

Hamilton No, these are just the policies, we will continue to make staff level procedure changes.

Masterson How often do we expect the Board to review the policies? Could see this information in the packet included in the onboarding packet for new Board Members. Would like to continue to see high-level Grants updates presented at Board Meetings as well as a few necessary smaller updates.

DiLeone/Kent: Only as necessary for most of them. For EFSOG, since it's still in the pilot stage, we may bring it back in a few years for review.

Hamilton Kent could start to add Grants updates to Leadership Team updates.

Zimmer-Stucky Agreed that it's a great idea since the recent Budget cycle has allocated more to Grants as well.

Masterson Are we at capacity for number of projects? Is there a reason we're not doing more outreach?

Rossi Any ideas on more outreach?

DiLeone We are doing outreach, but because things are expensive right now, believes people are hesitant to start projects. Don't want to advertise it in certain ways, so that we only get the higher quality projects. Staff is presenting the opportunity to farmers. We are also working on some targeted marketing.

Guebert We got a lot of applicants from the Lunch with Farmers event.

Masterson The new communications team could help too.

Kent The new EFSOG wasn't in a policy format yet, but now is. Will post it on website for everyone to see how everything's set up and who's making decisions.

Zimmer-Stucky Under the duration recommendation about either cementing the pilot program or amending it after two or three years or after a meaningful number of projects have been funded and completed, do you have a sense of which of those you're leaning towards?



6/5/2023

Kent One of the questions we're still considering is are we filling a gap, or just adding another place for people to get funds that could come from one of our other grants?

Action Item: Kent to start giving Grants updates in her Leadership Team updates.

MOTION: Carlson moved to approve the Grants policy updates as presented, Guebert 2nd. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

7:05pm- Mosaic Ecology LLC Contract Approval & Signature

DiLeone went over the memo included in the packet. The contracted amount is over the Executive Director's signing limit. The District is contracting with Mosaic Ecology LLC for weed control and StreamCare work with contractors while we're in between staff, after Lucas' absence. They will also be doing boating associated to the work, starting July 1, 2023. It's for do not exceed \$100,000 in the Fiscal Year.

Action Item: DiLeone to forward the full Mosaic Ecology LLC contract to the Board.

MOTION: Guebert moved to approve the Executive Director's signature on the contract with Mosaic Ecology LLC, Carlson 2nd. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

7:10pm- Time reserved for public comment.

Amanda Welker introduced herself as the new Farm Service Agency Urban Conservation County Executive Director for USDA. Worked with NAS before. Glad to be back in the Agricultural sector, in this brand-new USDA position. There are 17 pilots across the country, 3 are fully staffed. Making farming programs equitable and available. New York, Texas, and Georgia are fully staffed. Confident that committee input will get sent up to the top, creating a pretty direct line in the USDA.

Masterson How can we keep up with the program?

Wilkinson The first few emails will be sent out to the email list soon. There will also be an opportunity to join the committee soon.

Action Item: Fernandez to get USDA information from Welker to the Board.

Scott Ekstrom introduced himself as a fourth-generation farmer, who has used EMSWCD's services to save some of his crops through technical help and water projects. He appreciates working with the District in those ways. He is the first generation of his family to know/utilize the District and is still becoming more familiar with the services. The District bought land from Ekstrom's neighbors for the Headwaters Farm Incubator Program (HIP). Ekstrom was originally looking forward to greenhouses going up, and some other projects happening on the property, and was interested in joining the program but was told he didn't fit the required niche. Ekstrom's father met with the HIP staff and was also told that he is not the target audience for the program. Finds that weeds are being blown into his fields often because it's not being properly manicured. EMSWCD also bought the neighboring piece of land, south of Headwaters Farm (HWF), which Ekstrom was interested in buying, but the deal was closed and signed internally to a HIP graduate. Long ROI for Ball and Burlap farmer. Felt like he missed an opportunity, as he didn't see the property going up for public sale. When a piece goes up for sale on the, most farmers would like to know about it. Many people asked why he didn't pursue the land when it was up for sale. Saw the house going up, which Ekstrom thinks is great, but not sure how much of the property was sold. What was the sale process and why wasn't the sale made public? Lease topics seem to have been muddled lately. Not sure if this is against tree farmers/b and b farmers specifically. Leasing ground is the best way for farmers to further their business, maintains farmer relationships in the area,



6/5/2023

and is beneficial to the landowners. Has done the same thing (leased land) himself as a 22-year-old. Does EMSWCD have a philosophical bent against the strategies of b and b farmers, or do you not like leases with b and bs? Ball and Burlap farms are some of the most profitable revenue generators for Oregon every year. It seems like EMSWCD has a bent against leasing farmland. Has been leasing himself for over 45 years, and it helps the landowners as well, especially with taxes. The HIP farmers are leasers, but only veggie and flower farmers. Feels like the District is picking and choosing who they want to work with. If HIP farmers don't take care of their crops, he has to deal with their blow in weeds when they're done harvesting for the year. Not excited about farming the urban edge, his family farmed 420, now he farms 220 due to the urban edge growing.

Zimmer-Stucky We do have a policy about not responding to public comment in the meetings, would like a chance to follow up soon. The questions will go on the record. But also continued to give Ekstrom the floor, even though it went over the allotted time.

Masterson hopes Ekstrom feels heard by the Board and would also like to have time to look over the questions provided before responding.

Ekstrom continued. This is all making it harder to farm, as HIP's neighbor. At HIP, you don't have to produce a product, but he has to and can make a profit from that land. Is there a way we can work together? Who is the target farmer you're looking for? Saturday Market side hustle or legacy farmer? Feels hurt. Studied soil and water conservation Kansas strategies, visited a conservation district presenter in Kentucky. Does appreciate the benefits of Guffey and Baker's work on his properties on various projects, but he is already down a large revenue now due to not being able to farm there now during the finishing of those projects. Has almost lost two tractors in the field because it's not passable December through April. Also, the District saving certain trees is making his work more expensive. Constantly looking for ways to improve his soil, entirely at his own cost. Would love to have access to more tools and equipment for conservation techniques. Can't rest ground due to productivity issues. Needs more access to ground in this competitive market. Has spent \$50k on equipment. Would like to reduce carbon footprint. Would like a guarantee on ROI on all his investments. Shared a story about friend who now does hydroponics in a different district due to being pushed out. Doesn't want to have to move his farm business to another district, but he continues to be pushed out by urban sprawl. Multnomah has high land value, which makes it hard for farmers. As the only generation of his family who took on farming as a lifestyle, he is continuing a family legacy. Not saying the side hustle people are bad and that people shouldn't have the opportunity to start, but if the goal is to only support and wedge out niches, as opposed to those who have been working their family farmers overtime every week, it's not right. Has helped neighbors with managing problems and has been welcomed onto the HIP farm but hasn't been given any opportunities from them. HWF land purchase manipulated the market and added labor and costs to those in the market. His expansion dreams have been stifled by deep pockets. Believes the District doesn't see the butterfly effect that is now hurting him, due to ideology. Thank you for listening, does feel listened to. Appreciates feeling heard.

Bailey added to Ekstrom's message. Ekstrom is the person you want around. He works with Ekstrom's farm on a regular basis, sees his passion. Has owned the property he works on for many years. Thanked the District for the changes he's seen in the way the District wants to interact with the local farmers. Scot's family is holding back from the urban growth from going further. Will still reach out to people who haven't finished the District's survey, but to the ones he has reached out to, has found that many of them have similar stories to the one Ekstrom shared. Understands the District gets grouped into



6/5/2023

government agencies, which is hard to battle, but the fear/hesitancy is real. Appreciates the District's sponsorship of the Farm Bureau BBQ.

7:45pm- Board Handbook Review

Zimmer-Stucky Confirmed that there were a few minor changes throughout the handbook and that there's a key code now that distinguishes between policy and law.

Mitten It was adopted already based on previous changes, but in making those changes, he found a few other errors and added updates that were not part of the previous adoption. Advises the Board to adopt this final draft.

MOTION: Masterson moved to approve the Board Handbook, Guebert 2nd. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

7:47pm- Offsite Board Meetings Recommendations

Zimmer-Stucky asked the Board to individually make their vote on the handouts given at the beginning of the meeting.

Rossi feels like he'd only offer an uninformed decision, so would accept staff's recommendation instead. Hopes it's not too many offsite meetings.

Hamilton The hope is to get three or four of these scheduled, evenly throughout the District.

7:50pm- Executive Session under ORS 192.660(2)(e) held for real estate negotiations.

Began 7:50pm

Ended 8:13pm

8:14pm- TSCC Hearing Update

Mitten gave a brief overview of the materials included in the packet; Q&A and the Tax Certification Letter.

8:15pm- Resolution to Adopt FY 23-24 Budget, Make Appropriations, and Impose Tax Limit

Mitten gave a brief overview of Resolution No 2023-06-01 for the Board to approve.

MOTION: Guebert moved to approve Resolution 2023-06-01, Masterson 2nd. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

8:16pm- Monthly Financial Reports- April 2023

Mitten April looks great; nothing on the balance sheet worth mentioning To note, our balance sheet is 1.67% higher than last year at this time. On the P&L Budget Performance, our interest on our bank accounts is \$252,000, which is \$174,000 ahead of projections. Interest rates are now at 4.05. On Line 4700, Sale of Real Property, the \$275,294 is the Mainstem sale. Masterson asked if the Mainstem proceeds sit in the Land Conservation Fund. Mitten said yes and was incorporated in the FY23-24 budget. On Line 9020 (Vehicles) those funds were the purchase of the two trucks from DAS. The P&L by Class looks healthy and in line with YTD spending.

8:18pm- Updates to Fiscal Policy

Mitten The cleaned-up version is in the packet, but the redlined version was attached in an email to the Board. Most of the changes coincide with the Board Handbook, mentioned on page 3. Page 4 is about referencing the Operations Administrative Assistant rather than the non-existent Office Manager position, but also to incorporate that position's involvement in the payroll and payables process., which is shown on Pages 10-12. Page 14 shows a large change around the position levels, classifications, and



6/5/2023

increased spending authorities for each position. Page 17 shows the payroll process changes. Page 26 updated the reference to existing grants.

DiLeone found a typo on page 13. The Program Manager's purchasing/signature authority is placed at \$5,000 but is referenced at \$3,500. It should be \$5,000. Mitten will make that correction.

MOTION: Guebert moved to approve the Fiscal Policy with the correction for the Program Manager purchasing authority, Carlson 2nd. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Masterson requested some kind of list explaining how all the policies are linked to each other and to know where each policy can be found, and how each one connects to each position.

Kent All of the policies are on a policy page on the website: <https://emswcd.org/about/organizational-resources/policies/>.

8:25pm- Board of Directors Discussion

Board agreed to cancel the August 2023 Board Meeting.

Action Item: Fernandez to ensure that there is a clear cancelled message on the website for the August 2023 Board Meeting.

Board agreed to hold a special Board meeting on June 21st at 4pm to discuss the sale of Gordon Creek under Executive Session.

8:30pm- Announcements, Action Items, and Adjournment

Action Items:

- **Fernandez** to send the Multnomah County Farm Bureau BBQ invitation and tour details to the Board.
- **Fernandez** to send the Board the invitation to the Innovative Tools Workshop.
- **Kent** to start giving Grants updates in her Leadership Team updates.
- **DiLeone** to forward the full Mosaic Ecology LLC contract to the Board.
- **Fernandez** to get USDA information from Welker to the Board.
- **Fernandez** to cancel the August Board meeting and schedule the June Special Board meeting about the Gordon Creek sale.
- **Fernandez** to ensure that there is a clear cancelled message for the August Board Meeting on the website.
- **Zimmer-Stucky** to work with **Hamilton and Julie** on a response to Scot Ekstrom.

Zimmer-Stucky adjourned the meeting at 8:33pm.