



1/3/2024

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

Wednesday, January 3, 2024

6:00pm- Call to Order

Zimmer-Stucky called to order the regular meeting of the EMSWCD Board of Directors at 6:00pm on Wednesday, January 3, 2024, at the EMSWCD Office in North Portland.

6:02pm- 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), Dan Mitten (Chief of Finance & Operations), Heather Nelson Kent (Community Outreach & Engagement Program Supervisor), Julie DiLeone (Rural Lands Program Supervisor), Kathy Shearin (Urban Lands Supervisor), Asianna Fernandez (Executive Assistant), Whitney Bailey (Senior Urban Conservationist), Alex Woolery (IT & Analytics Specialist)

Guests: Kelley Beamer (COLT), Clair Klock (Public), Micah Meskel (Portland Audubon)

Changes to the agenda:

- Add Kent as a speaker in Item 7.

Previous action items:

- **Shearin** to send an invite for the MHCC planting to the Board. -Done
- **DiLeone** to send Steele's HIP maps to the Board. -Done
- **Kent** to give highlights on the Communication Plan to the Board at a future Board Meeting- especially language on how to talk about the District. -In Process.
- **Hamilton** to send OSU Extension proposal to the Board. -Done
- **DiLeone** to reach out to potential financial partners to gauge interest. -Done.
- **Fernandez** to send future Farm Bureau meeting invites to Board and Staff. -In Process.

6:02pm- Approval of minutes

MOTION: Guebert moved to approve the November 30, 2023, Special Board Meeting and FY22-23 Annual and December 4, 2023, Board Meeting Minutes, Carlson 2nd. Motion passed unanimously (4-0, Masterson absent).

6:03pm- Public Comment

Beamer said hello to all and gave her gratitude for being invited to the meeting tonight and that she's looking forward to working with Staff and the Board soon.

6:04pm- Hamilton Change in Employment

Hamilton will be moving to a part-time, hourly, position (¾ time), through the middle of February.

MOTION: Guebert moved to have Nancy Hamilton continue her employment with EMSWCD on a part-time basis, either 3/4 or 1/2 time from January 1st, 2024, through part or all of February 2024. Her pay will become the hourly equivalent of her current salary beginning 1/1/2024. All vacation, wellness, and holiday accruals will be pro-rated." Carlson 2nd. Motion passed unanimously (4-0, Masterson absent).



6:06pm- ED and L-Team Updates

Hamilton shared her Executive Director update:

- Moving many things off of her plate and focusing on wrapping up her tenure.
- Putting together an onboarding document for Beamer (new Executive Director).
- Spent time ensuring the recent Land Legacy Committee and Personnel Committee meetings included any near-term issues so that Beamer wouldn't have to be caught up to speed on them, as they are urgent.
- Had knee surgery. Recovering well!
- Has been working on the next steps on the OSU Extension Proposal, which are now underway. Working with DiLeone in reached out to West Multnomah SWCD, Oregon Association of Nurseries (OAN), and the Multnomah County Farm Bureau to gauge their interest in supporting the project. Waiting to hear back from OAN.
- Will be working on the Budget process with Mitten in January.
- Will be working with Beamer to ensure she's up to speed and helping with introductions to staff and partners.

Shearin shared her Urban Lands Program updates:

- Plant Sale: Email Announcements sent out today. We also sent around 26,000 postcard reminders, which we're using as a hook to get people to the website.
 - The online sale will open on the evening of January 17th.
 - Pick up day and Plant Sale event will be on February 17th.
 - The Board is encouraged to attend.
- Urban CLIP: This lot is bigger than usual, on a 4.5-acre lot, tackling blackberry and other invasive plants, and restoring native plants. The person living there did a lot of work already but could use more help along the creek.
 - **Bailey** It was a project given to her from Wagner as it was located right where StreamCare stops. While it's only on one property, the owner has good relationships with his neighbors who will likely also want to do some work on their land. The City of Gresham has long term plans to try to get trout habitat reestablished in and around this site.
- Something to Celebrate: Mount Hood Community College Planting Event
 - Some MHCC students and faculty attended and helped plant trees.
 - The Leadership Team decided to cancel that week's Staff Meeting so that staff members were able to attend.
 - In total, 38 trees were planted throughout four different parking lots.
 - (Photos of the event were shared vis projector screen for Board Meeting attendees to see.)

Mitten shared the F&O updates:

- The FY 2024-2025 Budget cycle planning has already begun.
 - Scheduled a meeting with Hamilton, Beamer, and the TSCC.
 - Property Tax Revenue projections are higher than normal. At the February Board Meeting, the Board will review the Budget calendar and appoint a Budget Officer.
- CRM cleanup has been completed, admin users have been set up, and all the users attended an initial training. Further testing and usage will be handled soon.
- Building construction is coming to an end shortly, with only a few odds and ends left to finish.



- At the February Board meeting, the Board will be able to tour the finished new building.
- Working with Rural Lands and the CO&E Team on their current hiring processes.
- Working with Hamilton and Beamer on all Executive Director transition documents and paperwork.

DiLeone shared her Rural Lands Program updates:

- Hired Peter Fry, a consultant who also helped the District buy our current office building, to help us convince Multnomah County that we should be able to put a community asset/ Government office in the rural center zoning, instead of using Exclusive Farm Use (EFU) acreage to build it. Depending on how much the County pushes back, we'll have to take it to the planning committee.
- We are now advertising to fill our Weed Control position on Staff.
- Headwaters Farm: Steele is in the process of approving the new farmers who will be joining HIP this year. For those he declined, he helped create connections for them to join programs that were a better fit for them on other farms.
 - Interviewing three candidates now, and those who are chosen will join in April.

Kent shared her Community Outreach and Engagement (CO&E) program and Grants program updates:

- FY 22-23 Annual Report wrap up and promotions:
 - The team is working on finishing up the website, social media, email, and mail outreach.
 - Testing a postcard mailing to advertise viewing the report.
- HIP recruitment outreach: Meeting with Steele to discuss how to move forward with outreach for next year, based on what has and hasn't worked this and last year. Also looking into what other outreach/education projects we can do on the farm that tie into HWF activities.
 - White-Brainard is writing up a plan now for the year.
 - Having Susan Laarman contracted to work on our HIP social media campaign worked well, and it shows that we need year-round visibility to get more new farmers to apply.
- Finished finalizing the Communications Plan.

Grants:

- PIC 2024: 48 total applications, asking for a total of \$2.5 million.
 - The budget has not been established for 2024 yet.
 - This is the most applications we've ever received.
 - Doing due diligence to ensure every application is complete.
 - The orientation for PIC Grant review members online begins next week.
 - We have 15 members approved for this cycle.

Zimmer Stucky How much did we allocate for PIC last year?

Kent \$950,000 total.

Clair Klock left at 6:26pm.

6:27pm – Summary of PIC Grants Applications

Kent presented key take-aways for the 2024 PIC Grants Applications so far:

- Eight of the applicants are new organizations, or less than five years old.
- Encouraging review committee to read for content and ideas, since some applications look better than others, especially if some organizations have grant writers while others might not.

Guebert Do you think the District's recent outreach is what lead to more first time applicants?



Kent The projects that we've funded over the last few years have inspired other organizations to see that they can apply too. So now we're seeing more organizations that serve culturally specific communities, black-led organizations, etc., partially because a lot of those kinds of organizations have been emerging more in the last couple of years, but also because they see us now as a potential partner for them.

Hamilton added that one of the things that Jamie Stamberger's report of PIC grantees and our accessibility/commitment to equity revealed to us was some of the kinds of barriers that prevent smaller organizations from applying, so we've modified the applications to address those issues. Also, Kent has been doing a lot of great outreach that also likely contributed to the increase in applicants.

Zimmer-Stucky It seems like most of the applicants work in the urban agriculture and community garden sector.

Kent 31 applicants were in urban ag and community gardens category. There's a big shift compared to last year. It's been interesting trying to figure out which review members should be reviewing which applications.

Zimmer-Stucky How do you see the Portland Clean Energy Fund (PCEF) playing a part in this year's grant cycle?

Kent believes that the Portland Energy Fund might also contribute to the reason more smaller organizations are emerging, as previously mentioned. A lot of these new applicants are from the Portland area, but not all of them. There are some applicants that may meet our grant goals and requirements, but it's up to the committee to determine how strongly they do. For the review committee, she plans on putting Zimmer-Stucky and Guebert on different groups. Zimmer-Stucky does have a conflict of interest with Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership's application, which means we'll declare that for the record and ensure she will not review that application, which is the same to another review member who might have a conflict of interest.

Hamilton Our guess was that we'd get more applicants from outside the city of Portland because of PCEF funding more organizations within Portland, but that doesn't seem to be the case. We were thinking that maybe next year there should be directed outreach to those organizations who are outside of the city.

Meskel Timing has also been a part of this since there's been a postponement for PCEF of a few months. Since there's a lot of overlap of the goals between ESWMCD and PCEF, is there a way to share opportunities for PCEF with these applicants?

Kent We have had a lot of conversations with the PCEF staff, specifically around urban ag, and we have learned that we are one of the only funders for community gardens and urban ag in East Multnomah County and Portland. METRO doesn't fund those kinds of projects yet. PCEF's agriculture-related program is creating a different program for those urban-ag projects. There are some interesting groups who have very specific niches; it's interesting to see what people are coming up with.

Kent The review period will begin shortly after the Review Committee's orientation. The PIC Review Committee meetings will begin in March. There are a number of applications coming from organizations who provide transitional spaces within the city that people are living in (shelters, temporary housing communities, etc.). There are about five applications from these kinds of organizations.

6:40pm- Communications Plan Overview



Kent created a high-level presentation of the Communications Plan and shared it with the Board. We had a great consultant team led by Mike Wesling (Espousal Strategies) and had to change reins a couple of times as the consultant moved around to different companies, but we followed him to each since he has a lot of experience working with government entities in strategic marketing planning.

- They started out by taking a landscape scan of all of the different kinds of outreach we create.
- They did interviews with some of our partners and community-based organizations who know the District and our position in the community pretty well.
- They did a comparative analysis with some of the other SWCDs.
- Audience mapping by program area: who are we talking to vs. who do we want to talk to?
 - Who do we have programs for?
- Goals of the plan:
 - Raise awareness and drive-up participation.
 - Reach audiences and participants who would benefit from our programs but haven't been in contact with the District yet.
 - Build a consistent narrative about the District's mission, offerings, and the value we're providing to the community.
- Strategic Assumptions:
 - Focusing on our value instead of thinking about what we aren't doing.
 - Recognizing that there is some mistrust within some of our audiences, which is not unique for government entities.
 - Historically marginalized communities bare disproportionate burden from environmental issues, and to participation with the District.
- Priority Audiences:
 - Community organizations and grantees
 - Farmers and nursery growers
 - Residential landowners and land managers
 - Institutional and commercial landowners
 - Renters (We don't have many programs geared toward this community, but even though they don't own their property, they might still be taking action to improve their environment, either at their home or within the community.)
- Strategies and Tactics:
 1. Consistent Messaging.
 2. Connect with audiences.
 3. Boost digital presence.
 4. Show up where your audiences are.
 5. Earned Media (neighborhood news, online news, television, etc.) opportunities.
- Top 10 Recommendations from the consultants
 - We did get a lot of great positive feedback about some of the marketing tactics the District has already been implementing.

Kent The next step is that we will be contracting with Espousal Strategies to create some high-level org-wide and program specific messages, as well as doing some media and message training for staff to take part in. We would like the opportunity to have the Board's participation in some of these training courses too. It'll likely be in March or April, as long as we do our community engagement in January or February.



Hamilton is very excited that the CO&E team is now working with Espousal Strategies. It is Black-owned and was founded by Johnell Bell, who used to work with Senator Merkley and Multnomah County. He has a great understanding of the public sector's needs, as well as requirements and laws.

7:00 pm- Personnel Committee Recommendations

Zimmer-Stucky The Board just needs to approve the Personnel Committee recommendations.

Hamilton The recommendation is to approve two job descriptions:

- 0.5 FTE Communications Assistant on the CO&E Team who will focus on social media, calendaring, outreach, and other work to help move some projects out the door.
- Headwaters Farm (HWF) Operations Specialist, which serves as a promotion for the current HWF Assistant, Nick Pfeil, and includes more responsibilities and a salary bump.

Zimmer-Stucky If it's approved tonight, how quickly can the CO&E Communications Assistant job listing be published?

Kent If not this week, by early next week.

MOTION: Guebert moved to approve both job descriptions as recommended by the Personnel Committee, Carlson 2nd. Motion passed unanimously (4-0, Masterson absent).

7:03 pm- Land Legacy Committee Recommendations

Shipkey The Land Legacy Committee made two recommendations to the Board:

- The disposition of a property for purchase (motion)
- Acquisition of an easement (resolution)

MOTION: Guebert moved to approve the recommendation from the Land Legacy Committee made on December 13, 2023, as it relates to property that is currently in contract to purchase, Carlson 2nd. Motion passed unanimously (4-0, Masterson absent).

MOTION: Guebert moved to approve Resolution 2024-01-01, Carlson 2nd. Motion passed unanimously (4-0, Masterson absent).

7:05 pm- OSU Extension Next Steps

DiLeone has emailed OAN (to assess their interest in contributing to the project) but hasn't heard back yet. Emailed Larry Bailey of Multnomah County Farm Bureau, who sounded interested in contributing, and agreed to help reach out to OAN if needed. West Multnomah had a lot of questions that we won't have answers for until OSU Extension does their initial assessment, but Lynn Barlow (WMSWCD Executive Director) sounds interested in contributing and will present the opportunity to her Board of Directors. If they do decide to help fund this, we will ask OSU Extension to include the farmers on Sauvie Island in the plan, which might also end up costing a little more. Next step is for the Board to decide if you all want to move forward with getting the assessment done, or if we should find more contributors first.

Hamilton doesn't believe we'll receive very many extra contributions from partners. It would be wise to expect EMSWCD to plan on paying the biggest bulk, but it's nice to have all of these partners on this project. The Board will need to make an amendment to the budget in February for this project.

DiLeone Depending on how much contribution we get, or how long it would take to hear back from some of our partners, it might be wise to make the amendment for full amount for now.



Rossi believes the Farm Bureau will be interested in what's in the scope of work for the needs assessment. There's a Farm Bureau meeting next week, so we'll discuss this topic then.

Hamilton All of the necessary information is included in the document she sent the Board via email last week. It is very general.

7:10pm- November Financial Reports

Mitten The Balance sheet through November 30th looks very healthy. The District's LGIP account held \$10.5 million last year at this time, and now currently holds \$14.2 million. This increase is due primarily to property tax receivables being over \$3.5 million in November alone, and as a note another \$1.3 million in December. The Balance Sheet shows little to no liabilities, and the District holds no debt. Also on the Balance Sheet, the post audit adjustments include accounts receivable, some of the depreciations, expenditures, and the Grants Fund as well as the Land Conservation Fund (LCF) have changed on the liabilities page under Board designated restrictions. These show the ending fund balances for FY22-23. The Land Conservation Fund went down by \$420,000, and Grants fund went up to \$518,000. Accounts Payable shows \$120,000 vs. \$18,000 from last year at this time, which is simply due to the timing of when payables go out the door. Accrued compensation absences increased by \$10,000. The Balance Sheet shows 17.64% higher than this time last year. Profit & Loss budget statements show Property Tax at \$3.6 Million, just under our projections for the year to November. By the end of the year, he projects \$5.7 Million, but he predicts we'll get more. Interest rates are over 5%, so interest is higher than anticipated. Would like to appropriate more towards interest revenue since without appropriating it through an amendment, it would have to sit and be untouched until next fiscal. Overall total income comes to \$4.7 Million. For Profit & Loss budget performance, there's not much to note. All lines are within acceptable variances. As a note for when Beamer joins the team, he will go over the financial reports monthly with her and as he notes to the Board, any variance over 100% is flagged, reviewed, and noted. The Profit & Loss by Class is in line, and currently underspent in all programs; however, year-to-date (as of 11/30), F&O spent 91% of its budget mainly due to the building construction and the new Executive Director search. But compared to the entire F&O annual appropriation, F&O is only at 34% of its budget.

7:19pm- Announcements, Action Items, and Adjournment

Guebert brought eggs from his farm for everyone!

Guebert The Special Districts Association of Oregon (SDAO) Newsletter mentioned new state laws that could apply to the Board. For any organization that has over \$1 Million in expenditures, every Board Member is required to take a Board Training Class.

Action Item: Hamilton and Mitten to look at the SDAO Newsletter for Board Member Training requirements.

Zimmer-Stucky recently saw the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts (OACD) Legislative Advocacy Committee newsletter and asked if the District plans to stay on that committee.

Carlson There is new information on the Portland Water Bureau (PWB) Filtration project: Multnomah County has approved the contract with conditions, though he's not read up on those conditions yet. There are also five to six entities suing the city of Portland, which will go to the State, then to Court Appeals, and then go to Supreme Court. Clackamas approved their portion of it, but the city of Portland wanted full access to the site, but PWB limited it to emergency access only.

Action Items

- **Hamilton and Mitten** to look at the SDAO Newsletter for Board Member Training requirements.

Zimmer-Stucky adjourned the meeting at 7:23pm.