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

Monday, June 3, 2024

6:01pm- Call to Order

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

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), Laura Masterson (Zone 2 Director, Secretary), Mike Guebert (Zone 3 Director, Vice-Chair) (virtual), Jim Carlson (At-Large 1 Director, Treasurer) (virtual), Joe Rossi (Zone 1 Director)

Staff: Kelley Beamer (Executive Director), Dan Mitten (Chief of Finance & Operations), Heather Nelson Kent (Community Outreach & Engagement Program Supervisor), Julie DiLeone (Rural Lands Program Supervisor), Asianna Fernandez (Executive Assistant), Alex Woolery (IT and Analytics Specialist), Matt Shipkey (Land Legacy Program Manager)

Guests: Kimberly Galland (NRCS)(virtual), Spence Kiddle (public)

Changes to the agenda: N/A

Previous action items:

- **Fernandez** to add a Work Session Planning topic to the June Board Meeting Agenda. -Done
- **Fernandez** to send the 2022 Agricultural Census PowerPoint to Masterson. -Done
- **DiLeone** to send the 2022 Agricultural Census Report to the Board. -Done
- **Fernandez** to work with Staff to finalize a date for the Headwaters Farm Board Work Session. - Done

Jim Carlson arrived 6:02pm

6:03pm- Approval of minutes

Rossi noticed a typo on page 7 of the May Board Meeting Minutes. He requested to change “approve” to “improve,” in his offer to the Headwaters Farm farmers.

MOTION: Masterson moved to approve the May 5, 2024, Board Meeting Minutes as amended, Rossi 2nd. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

MOTION: Masterson moved to approve the May 5, 2024, Budget Committee Meeting #3 Minutes, Rossi 2nd. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

6:05pm- Public Comment: N/A

Galland NRCS has about 28 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) applications that are moving into contract, ranging from pasture to forestry. There are not too many high tunnels applications going through this year, compared to the number of applications received. They’re also working on moving 20 Conservation Stewardship Program applications into the ranking step soon. Five of those are in EMSWCD’s boundaries, but none of the applications in equipment are in the EMSWCD’s boundaries. NRCS only had around 200k in tunnels, while the ask was closer to \$2million, though out nine counties.



6:35pm- ED and L-Team Updates

Beamer shared her Executive Director update:

- Attended Center for Equity and Inclusion's (CEI) "Reframing Racism" 3-day training.
- Attended Oregon Community Foundation Annual Lunch.
- PCEF Grants applicants for regenerative agriculture: the grant guidelines have a new component, strongly encouraging applicants to partner with a government entity. We were approached by NAYA, Park City PTA, and ECOTRUST to fill that role. We will be joining two letters of interest (NAYA and Ecotrust), but the partners will be taking the lead on the rest of the application process.
- Leadership Team retreat held at the Nestwood Natural Area – looking forward at the next Fiscal Year, based on the Strategic Plan and making SMART goals to incorporate into the FY 24-25 District Workplan.

Zimmer-Stucky asked about the Sandy River Watershed Organization.

Beamer DiLeone will talk about it in her update.

Masterson Where are we at with the Conditional Use Permit?

Beamer It has officially been accepted. Peter Fry, as our point of contact, will let us know about the hearing officer and what the next steps are. We anticipate working on it through the next year. Once the application moves forward and the public comment period is announced, we'll share the outreach plan and how to let neighbors and the community know, for letters of support.

Mitten shared his Finance and Operations update:

- The TSCC Hearing has taken up most of our time this month. Starting tomorrow, we'll also begin the Budget adoption process, getting it submitted to TSCC and then the State in time for July 1st.
- Sasha Schwenk, our Operations Admin Assistant, helped with setting up and facilitating the Leadership Team retreat. She did a phenomenal job!
- We've been having a lot of District-wide technology and network infrastructure updates. We're upgrading our server licenses and server OS system.
- The HIP automated invoicing forms are complete, and the devices are almost ready to be used! This reduces manual entry and human input errors. It makes the process of getting checks, making payments, and renting equipment faster and easier for farmers and staff. The devices utilized around the farm will be completely solar powered as well.

DiLeone shared her Rural Lands update:

- **Headwaters Farm:**
 - The additional 20 hours a week of contracted help from a HIP Graduate is making a big difference on the farm already. All of the areas that had winter cover crops were turned in and prepped for summer cover (perennial grasses might have some weeds coming through that will need to be mowed)
 - The piglets have arrived and are beginning to find the nutsedge and dig it out.
 - The Weed Management team is working on an assessment of the areas we manage, including the pigs' areas, and we're trying to figure out how to do weed assessments on sites that are all full, once we get more sunshine.
 - Most of the HIP farmers have prepared and planted beds and prepped for future plantings. Steele has put a section aside with planted crops for the farmers to practice using the cultivating tractor.



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- Two recent cost-share grants awarded to commercial farmers:
 - Drip irrigation on six acres of vegetables
 - Sprinkler irrigation on 8.5 acres of nursery farm pots, and micro sprays within pots, as well as a gravel road.
- 1 CLIP application was put on hold by the nursery as they needed time and money for other things, but they should come back to us once they're ready.
- The Sandy Watershed Council Meeting went well as a community meeting with a lot of interest in moving forward. The main limiting factor is people's time, with most of their interest in the community connections to the watershed instead of big riparian projects. Roy Iwai will present his findings online on June 6th.
 - **Action Item: DiLeone to send Board and Staff the link to Roy Iwai's presentation.**

Kent shared her Communications, Outreach, and Engagement Team and Grants Updates:

- CO&E:
 - Gearing up for the new website project. The team is getting ready to put the RFP together.
 - Message Development Team: the framework is finalized and they're getting ready for the trainings that are coming up on 6/14 and 6/19. They will both be in person only.
 - **Masterson and Zimmer-Stucky** are not available for either. They would love to hear how the trainings go and get a presentation about the next phase after.
 - **Masterson** How is the messaging that we currently have changing?
 - White-Brainard has taken the lead in developing a marketing strategy for HIP.
 - Kent has taken the lead in developing a marketing strategy for LLP.
 - Working with other SWCDs on an online information and training session about how to run as an SWCD Board Member, which will be on June 13th.
 - **Action Item: Beamer to send information about the SWCD Board Member online Session to Board.**
 - **Zimmer-Stucky** ODA is also hosting a couple of training sessions for staff and Board members around what they can and cannot do during election season, on work time.
 - **Beamer** The training session's audience is the Districts who have been affected by SB 775.
- Grants:
 - All PIC grantees have been notified about whether or not they've received awards. One contract has been signed already, and we're still working on closing out other grants.

Beamer Something to Celebrate: Garlic Mustard Team! Garlic Mustard exudes a toxic chemical from its roots that kills other places, so Aldassy and Rojas have been working everyday are eradicating it at 220 sites (twice during the season, each) in the forests, scenic areas, and other places in our district. If it was allowed to proliferate, we would have a mono-scape in the understory.

6:43pm –FY 23-24 Annual Goals & Progress (as of April 2024)

Zimmer-Stucky Next month, we will review the Annual Workplan (for FY 24-25) that gets sent to ODA. Prior to creating that new workplan, we're looking at the one created last year to compare to objective measurements of success.



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Beamer This is a summary that streamlines our goals and outcomes, and we're hoping to continue making the District Plan more goals and outcomes based, instead of narratives, all based on the programmatic objectives. She then shared a few highlights:

- One big project she learned about in this process is that the Urban Lands Team worked on a project at Mount Hood Community College, where they removed over 6800 square feet of asphalt.
- The Urban Lands team responded to over 120 technical assistant requests and had 1600 workshop attendees.
- The Community Outreach & Engagement Team implemented the Communications Plan, including a communications calendar, and building the new team.
- There were 28 New PIC grantees and 38 new SPACE grantees.
- The Rural Lands Team worked on cost share projects with two significant nurseries to improve farm roads, improved three farm irrigation systems, and maintained 168 acres of riparian area on 41 properties.
- The Finance and Operations Team completed the Audit, developed the FY 24-25 Budget, oversaw the office renovation, and offboarding and onboarding of Executive Directors.

Zimmer-Stucky In the Rural Lands section, she feels like it's lacking data in how many technical assistant projects we did vs. how many we wanted to do, as well as a lack of Land Legacy Program data. Asked staff to revise that section.

Masterson A challenge of the District has always been how do we turn talking to new landowners into impact reports, in the urban and rural areas. Will we get these updates quarterly?

DiLeone apologized, as this is not the time of year where she usually collects information and data like this from her team, so she didn't have those numbers prepared yet.

Beamer agrees that quarterly updates can work.

Action Item: Leadership Team to report on annual goals and progress quarterly and revise the Rural Lands section of the FY 23-24 progress report.

Spence Kiddle (public) arrived at 6:44pm.

6:51pm- Land Legacy Committee Recommendations

Shipkey The Board will be deciding on the Woodard and Division properties.

MOTION: Masterson moved to approve Resolution No 2024-06-02, Carlson 2nd. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

MOTION: Masterson moved to approve Resolution No 2024-06-03 as recommended to the Board by the Land Legacy Committee, Guebert 2nd. Motion passed (4-1 Rossi).

Spence Kiddle (public) left at 6:55pm.

6:55pm- TSCC Hearing Update

Mitten It was a good hearing, with well rounded questions, and well attended. All of the commissioners came.

Zimmer-Stucky They probably would've liked to talk to us more, as there was so much interest in how the work that we do applies to them personally and professionally. We unfortunately ran out of time.



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Beamer Staff took them on a tour of the office, showing that our building is one of the ways that we are living out our mission. They had a Strategic Plan in front of them, but they also leaned into the key performance indicators, which we will focus more on next year.

Mitten At the end of the hearing, they had no objections or recommendations to the Budget, approving and certifying it.

Rossi enjoyed how they complimented Mitten on his time dedicated to the Budget.

7:00pm- Resolution to Adopt FY 24-25 Budget, Make Appropriations, and impose Tax Limits

Mitten

MOTION: Masterson moved to approve Resolution No 2024-06-01, Rossi 2nd. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

7:01pm- April 2024 Financial Reports

Mitten The Balance Sheet as we come to the end of the Fiscal Year looks very healthy. The two operational accounts are at \$14 million, dropping from \$16 million several months ago. Undeposited funds at the end of April were \$47,849, compared to \$2,700 last year at this time. This reflects the Portland Water Bureau funding that has been received in QuickBooks but is collected and combined into a batch deposit to the bank at a different time. Assets are \$21.1 million compared to \$19.9 million last year at this time. Nothing significant to note about that. The Profit & Loss Budget performance, shows Property Tax Revenue at \$5.9 million, meaning we've received more than we budgeted for to-date. City and State (ODA) grants received are \$47,070, for operations and admin and rural lands. The rest of the Profit & Loss has remained largely unchanged since the last report. Profit and Loss by Class shows the spend with 83% of the full fiscal year being completed. Spend velocity for each program is shown from the total annual appropriation, as well as appropriations to-date (through April, 2024).

Masterson Where does the over budget funds from interest go to?

Mitten It sits in the Ending Fund Balance until it is allocated. Since I was aware of this excess interest early in the year, we did a budget amendment to appropriate the overage of interest for most of it. Since it was early in the budget process for the FY24-25 budget, I included those estimated interest rates and amounts in 24-25. For the estimated property tax revenue for 24-25, I used the formula and recommendation utilized by the TSCC in calculating estimated tax revenue.

Mike Guebert and Carlson left at 7:03pm.

7:12pm- Board Discussion: FY 24-25 Work Session Dates

Zimmer-Stucky We set one work session for the middle of June at Headwaters Farm. Of the rest of the topics discussed that haven't been planned for yet, are there any that the Board wants to push forward now? She is okay with coming back to those later since this summer is so busy.

Rossi is okay with coming back to those work sessions later but would like to advocate for a session on Strategic Planning to be one of the topics discussed as soon as possible.

7:13pm- Announcements, Action Items, and Adjournment



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Zimmer-Stucky It was hard to miss the Capital Press article. Her statement in return: On May 23, 2024, the Capital Press published a story titled “Diversity, Equity, In-fighting: Conservation district confronts urban-rural divide.” The news story begins by categorizing the East Multnomah SWCD as “hardly ordinary.” I not only agree with this assessment, I value it. Helping People Care for Soil and Water – EMSWCD’s mission – applies to the entire district, urban and rural. Each environment provides distinct challenges and opportunities to help people care for soil and water. EMSWCD’s “hardly ordinary” approach represents our “hardly ordinary” district. No single community – rural or urban – should singularly shoulder the entire burden of caring for water and soil. It is a shared responsibility. I applaud the staff at EMSWCD for understanding the shared responsibility and for developing a large suite of targeted programs that meet the needs of all the district’s taxpayers. Choosing a career in public service is an honorable path to take. Naturally, the path of public service is more heavily scrutinized by members of the public and elected officials. In light of the May 23rd news story, it is important that I share my opinion about the public service employees at the EMSWCD: thank you for doing your work. I see the challenges you face, watch you adapt and grow to overcome them, and apply your passion and creativity to your jobs. Thank you. As for the other topics covered in the news story, I don’t see merit in responding to the personal grievances of individuals. They are entitled to their perceived experience, even if it is not the same as mine. However, it is important that I state that the district’s easement program has already created many affordable, forever farms for farmers in its district and the Headwaters Incubator Program has helped to launch many successful farm operations. These are cutting-edge programs that experienced both success and setbacks. They continue to evolve, learn from each completed cycle, and grow to meet the needs of all of EMSWCDs constituents. And as the number of acres of farmland continues to shrink, while the number of people who rely on farmland to grow food to eat increases, these programs will become even more important.

Masterson seconded that.

Rossi seconded a lot of that as well. He felt like there was an accurate balance of representation in the article. We’re the district that faces these issues first and as the District becomes more urbanized, he is concerned about keeping a balance. Urban and rural shares resources, and he believes urban resources are mis-applied at times, and we don’t have any rural-facing people who the agricultural community can relate to, and that’s a struggle for the District. He’s concerned with SB 775, with the landowner requirement getting taken away, and he already feels like his rural viewpoint is misunderstood at times. There are things in the rural community that we’re underserving for the historic members of the farming community, but we’re doing a good job at many things. Mateuse seemed fair, and while he did mention interviewing other people who weren’t mentioned in the article, he could be of good use to the District in order to understand where we are.

Masterson The article did not reflect what the majority of the Board has decided to do. He did not choose to highlight some of the good highlights that she suggested he had the opportunity to show. As Zimmer-Stucky expressed in her letter, the District is doing great work, we have great staff, and sure there’s always room for improvement, but she found it disappointing that he didn’t represent any of that. This one piece of press is not important, the good work we’re doing here is the important things.

Action Items:

- **DiLeone** to send the Board and Staff the link to Roy Iwai’s presentation.
- **Beamer** to send information about the SWCD Board Member online Session to Board.
- **Leadership Team** to report on annual goals and progress quarterly and revise the Rural Lands section of the FY 23-24 progress report.

Zimmer-Stucky adjourned the meeting at 8:07pm.