



DESCHUTES COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Minutes of Board of Directors' Meeting – March 19, 2020

Meeting location: via conference call

Current Board Members

Director Zone 1 (Redmond)	Leslie Clark, Treasurer
Director Zone 2 (Sisters)	William Kuhn, Co-Chair
Director Zone 3 (Tumalo)	Jeff Rola, Co-Chair
Director Zone 4 (Alfalfa)	Susan Altman, Secretary
Director Zone 5 (South County & La Pine)	Colin Wills
Director At-Large #1	Robin Vora
Director At-Large #2	Gen Hubert

Directors present: Susan Altman, Leslie Clark, Colin Wills, William Kuhn, Robin Vora, Gen Hubert, Jeff Rola

Staff present: Todd Peplin, district manager

Other attendees: Lars Santana, NRCS; Eric Nusbaum, ODA; Teresa de Bardelaben, ODA; Paula Latasa-Kinser

Order of business:

1. Call to order & introductions: Meeting was called to order at 9:07 a.m.; all present introduced themselves.
2. Public comments: No public comment.
3. Agency/partner reports: Eric Nusbaum commented on the status of the meeting being held via conference call due to the Corona virus. We did put it on the website and posted to the public as much as possible. This is an unprecedented situation and we did the best we could.
 - a. Lars Santana: Corona virus has put the service center in a position of having employees work from home. The service center is open, but the doors are locked in order to meet with people by appointment only and they will be screened before coming into the office. Had quality assurance review. Special thanks to Colin and Bill who participated in that with the partnership liaison. Lars is supposed to review the MOU between NRCS and the district annually, so we'll need to have that as an agenda item in the near future. Have a heavy workload of applications in Jefferson County and they are in the process of reviewing and ranking them. Still working with Three Sisters Irrigation District in Deschutes County. Robin questioned if there's going to be a pull-back of any unspent funds. NRCS received their farm bill allocation already (back in November/December 2019) so they are in pretty good shape in terms of the farm bill money. Lars & Chris Mundy are the two DCs in the office and will be the point-people to hear if the service center would be shutting down.
 - b. Teresa: The biannual review meeting for the Upper Deschutes Agricultural Water Quality Management Plan was scheduled for March 30th but it has been postponed. ODA is still pursuing compliance cases (though hasn't received any new ones).
4. Approval of minutes – February 2020:
 - a. **Motion #1 made by Jeff Rola, seconded by Gen Hubert:** Approve February 2020 minutes as presented – unanimous approval.
5. Financial status report / approval of bills: Leslie presented the transaction summary for income and expenses since the last meeting. The beginning balance was \$24,689.41 and the ending balance is \$9,018.59. Leslie is requesting approval to pay Tank Law \$175.00, which would leave the balance as \$8,843.59. Todd said we will be

receiving some money from the OWRD grant for seeding for \$2,488.43; this will be reimbursed based on the landowner's receipts for seeding. A portion of the \$2,488.43 will go to payroll. The ODA SOW grant money will come in in April.

- a. **Motion #2 made by Jeff Rola, seconded by Susan Altman:** to approve the payment of the bills as presented – unanimous approval.
 - b. **Motion #3 made by Jeff Rola, seconded by Gen Hubert:** to receive the treasurer's report – unanimous approval.
6. Grant status: Todd reviewed the grant update he sent out ahead of the board meeting. NRCS/OWEB – there has been no activity on this grant. Todd will be developing protocols for a Private Irrigation Lateral Association (PILA) for the Tower ditch and Lundy ditch. ODA/OWEB – most of the time was spent developing and coordinating the IWM workshops. Three workshops were scheduled, two of them were cancelled due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Todd has been working with a landowner and COID on possible small grant. A small grant was submitted for potential funding. Todd met with USFS and ODA looking at potential projects addressing invasive species in Indian Ford watershed, he also has been trying to contact Black Butte Ranch to partner in a similar projects and riparian work. OWRD Tower Ditch – The scoping analysis is completed; Black Rock Engineering will be assisting in developing alternatives and cost analysis. OWRD Lundy Ditch – All patrons have confirmed to proceed with the feasibility study Black Rock Engineering will start survey work late spring. OWEB SIA – Todd has been working with property owner on the confluence of Indian Ford and Wychus Creek to do a seeding project (that is fund request noted above of \$2,488.43). There was a lot of administration time to reconcile previous fund requests and tracking record for the SIA. The tracking sheet is required when submitting fund requests to OWEB. Funds requested are now reconciled however work needs to be done to track in-kind expenses. Financial information will be needed when submitting the final report in September. Colin said he's happy to have his team help fly a drone for any projects in order to help with a media presentation. Robin asked about the OWEB grant due April 27th. Todd is going to see if he can pull something together regarding Indian Ford watershed analysis. The grant would be looking at Indian Ford as a sub-watershed and identifying data gaps and prioritizing projects.
7. District manager search: Hiring committee report from Jeff. The district received close to 20 applicants for the district manager search. We have narrowed it down to two finalists and did our first interviews with these two candidates. We are pulling our ads from a couple locations, or changing the categories where it is posted to concentrate on natural resources as opposed to business experience.
- a. What we've seen in the past week with the Corona virus calls into question how to proceed with hiring a district manager. We need to decide this first before moving forward with candidates. Eric Nusbaum spoke to this point with the information he has from the ODA. OWEB funds are constitutionally dedicated so there is minimal to no chance that the OWEB funds would be re-dedicated for other purposes. Our current grants are all safe. One thing that is likely to happen is that no one is playing the lottery right now, so future funds will be minimized. In the past in a similar situation, funding to districts was not eliminated. Bottom line is our funding is secure. He doesn't anticipate issues with getting that money to the district – the money will keep flowing as long as the district submits reports. Regarding public meetings, at this time we can only do our best due to these extenuating circumstances. Don't be afraid to cancel meetings; technically, we only need to hold an annual meeting. If we do cancel meetings, we will want to make sure to have the chair & treasurer do more regular check-ins to understand funds and transactions. We will want to think about a workplan for staff in case the county is called to shelter in place. What are other things that can be worked on at home? Within the scope of work, see how money could be moved around (for example, from supplies to payroll). We are not stuck with the budget we put together at the beginning of the biennium. Eric will be part of a discussion today about minimum-maximum funds spent in certain categories. In terms of how long Eric expect this semi-shutdown to last, he's looking at through April, pending the Governor's direction. Suggests looking at our workplan and how to move money around and fill that time with other projects (outreach via newsletter or website, or writing policies) so that we don't have to do layoffs.

- b. Robin expressed an interest in seeing the candidates' resumes ahead of time. Susan said that she thought it appropriate to bring both candidates in before the board so the full board has an opportunity to interview them. Leslie is concerned about hiring before April due to the money we have on hand. Robin thinks it might be a good idea to wait until June given our finances, but would like to talk about bridging the gap between now and then. Jeff said the committee needs direction from the board on how to proceed. Jeff Rola and Robin Vora will sit down with Todd to discuss intermediate needs.
 - c. **Motion #4 made by Leslie Clark, seconded by Robin Vora:** to postpone hiring a permanent manager until after June 1 – unanimous approval.
- 8. Quickbooks update: We are looking much better. Leslie sent the transaction detail to Todd and he corrected a couple of transactions; they will meet to get it squared away. Leslie, Todd, and Bronwyn Bailey (COID's accountant working under the MOA that was signed at last month's board meeting) will meet to make necessary corrections. We need to pay \$45/month to Quickbooks software until we get a bookkeeper to manage Quickbooks and payroll.
- 9. Audit status: Richard Winkel asked for a current list of our board of directors and our 2019-2020 budgets – Leslie has provided him with this information and Bronwyn answered all of his question.
- 10. Report: IWM workshops. There were three workshops scheduled, one March 7th in Terrebonne for COID patrons; the second March 14th in Tumalo for AID, SID and TID patrons; and the third in Sisters for TSID patrons. The workshop in Terrebonne was a success with 37 patrons in attendance. The evaluations were very positive (evaluations were presented to the board). Due to the COVID-19 outbreak the other two workshops were cancelled. Todd hopes to re-group with the irrigation districts and presenters to discuss possibility to have workshops later in the year. This possibly could be an annual event with February being a good time to hold the event. Jeff said that February and October tend to be good times for those types of events. Jeff also suggested hosting meetings via webinars; he will do some research into providing virtual education experiences for the public.
- 11. Deschutes River Basin Collaborative Working Group: Todd distributed a PowerPoint handout to the board about the Deschutes Basin Water Collaborative Working Group. The Deschutes Basin Water Collaborative is a mechanism for stakeholders to collaborate on critical water allocation and management issues in the Deschutes Basin, and develop strategies to meet stream flow, agricultural, and community needs for water. The DBWC has a two-tiered structure to guide actions: 1) a planning team that will facilitate deliberation on key issues, set agendas, develop proposals, and keep the process moving; and 2) the Deschutes Basin Working Group that will allow for very broad stakeholder engagement in the process and outcomes. The planning team consists of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs; Deschutes River Conservancy; irrigation districts; a representation from each of Crook, Deschutes, and Jefferson Counties; and local environmental organizations. The working group is comprised of several stakeholders where the Deschutes SWCD is identified. The goal of the group is information-sharing and coordination, along with advocating changes in state legislation. Todd sees this group as being very instrumental in looking at changes in statute for Oregon when examining on-farm irrigation and water-saving improvements. The group will meet quarterly with the next meeting on April 27th, Todd suggested that a designated board member along with Deschutes SWCD staff should participate in these meetings.
- 12. Selection of board chair(s), secretary, and treasurer for 2020: Jeff thinks that leadership should change and that the positions should rotate. Do we want to keep the same format of two co-chairs, a secretary, and a treasurer? Leslie thinks it is important that we maintain those positions, especially with the virus and hiring being in limbo. William said if we didn't have co-chairs then we'd have a chair and vice chair. Lars commented that appointing an acting district manager should be something to consider until the vacancy is filled. Jeff asked if title matters – chair/co-chair vs. manager – Lars said yes, it helps for communication for other partners. Could call that position and acting or interim manager. Susan expressed favor for appointing such a position; Robin said it could still be a chair/co-chair. William expressed concern about changing the treasurer position right now while things are still not settled with accounting and Quickbooks. Leslie is willing to continue as treasurer through the end of the year while we get everything up and going. William asked if the board feels comfortable keeping the status quo for another two or three months. General agreement. Jeff suggests that perhaps we postpone this change in officers to the annual meeting, which will be June 18.

- a. **Motion #5 made by Jeff Rola, seconded by Susan Altman:** to elect officers at the annual meeting on June 18 – unanimous approval.
 - b. **Motion #6 made by Colin Wills, seconded by Susan Altman:** to appoint Jeff Rola as acting district manager to work with NRCS until we hire a permanent manager – majority approval (Jeff Rola abstained).
13. Board elections / annual meeting: to take place June 18 at the annual meeting.
14. Directors' reports:
- a. Colin Wills – Arnold Irrigation District has no changes in their operations; he will be at work as much as possible but will be working from home if necessary.
 - b. Gen Hubert – the Deschutes River Conservancy office is closed and employees are working from home and are not supposed to attend meetings.
 - c. Jeff Rola – thanks Susan and Gen for participating in the hiring committee. We will be learning a new set of procedures and policies because of the Corona virus pandemic. The one issue we have going forward over the next couple of months will be grant application deadlines and grant application duties. If anyone has any suggestions for opportunities, please pass them along.
 - d. Leslie Clark – COID's office is closed to the public. If someone needs to turn-in any documents they may come to the door but not in the building. Have been asked not to attend public meetings and people who can work from home are doing so. COID has no changes in their operations.
 - e. Susan Altman – works from a home office and so not out in public much; everything is going fine. Reminded the board that we will need to find a meeting space for the rest of the year and/or use Colin's conference call system if/when necessary.
 - f. Robin Vora – participated in Sagegrouse LIT meeting via conference call. Sagegrouse populations have declined considerably, about 40% in Oregon between 2018-19, and are in need of an emergency declaration. Group is similar to water collaborative in terms of forming committees. Next meeting is in May.
 - g. William Kuhn – Lars Santana had asked board members to participate in a quality assurance review of NRCS to be conducted on Monday, March 9, to understand if the board feels that NRCS is responding to board needs. Julie MacSwain conducted the 30-minute interview and once Lars had left the room, William and Colin were able to share their encouragement that NRCS is doing a nice job; there were no negative comments. William has also been helping neighbors and supporting clients through financial fears.

The next board meeting will be on April 16 at 9 a.m. Pending Corona virus pandemic status, it will be held via conference call or a to-be-determined location.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

Susan Altman

Susan Altman, Secretary



**Addendum: Motions of the Board of Directors' Meeting
March 19, 2020**

Motions made:	Vote result
<p><i>Motion #1 made by Jeff Rola, seconded by Gen Hubert:</i> Approve February 2020 minutes as presented.</p>	<p>Unanimous approval</p>
<p><i>Motion #2 made by Jeff Rola, seconded by Susan Altman:</i> Approve the payment of the bills as presented.</p>	<p>Unanimous approval</p>
<p><i>Motion #3 made by Jeff Rola, seconded by Gen Hubert:</i> Receive the treasurer's report.</p>	<p>Unanimous approval</p>
<p><i>Motion #4 made by Leslie Clark, seconded by Robin Vora:</i> Postpone hiring a permanent manager until after June 1.</p>	<p>Unanimous approval</p>
<p><i>Motion #5 made by Jeff Rola, seconded by Susan Altman:</i> Elect officers at the annual meeting on June 18.</p>	<p>Unanimous approval</p>
<p><i>Motion #6 made by Colin Wills, seconded by Susan Altman:</i> Appoint Jeff Rola as acting district manager to work with NRCS until we hire a permanent manager.</p>	<p>Majority approval (Jeff Rola abstained)</p>