

**Hood River Soil & Water Conservation District  
Minutes from September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024 District Board Meeting**

Present: Directors: Brian Nakamura, Annie Alsheimer, Andrew Halliday, Pete Siragusa, and Ben Saur

Associate Directors: Chuck Gehling, Chal Oates

District and NRCS Staff: Heather Hendrixson, Kris Schaedel, Cheryl Rice, Carly Heron (NRCS), and Cal Dwyer (NRCS)

Visitors- Lissa Biehn- USDA (provided updates on the end of the fiscal year, statewide fire grants through ECP and EFRP, acreage reports around the corner, and the loss of Josh Thompson)

**Consent agenda** – Andrew moved, and Pete seconded:

- To approve the minutes of August 1st, 2024, as written.
- To accept the August 2024 Profit & Loss statement and Balance Sheet as distributed. As of August 31<sup>st</sup>, the balance in the bank accounts (including the CD) was \$244,863.20. Income of \$34,398.53 included \$18,652.00 from the ODA PSP grant, \$15,000 from OWEB for the McNerney Irrigation Improvement Project, and \$746.53 in expense reimbursement from the HRWG.
- Expenses were those authorized at the August meeting.
- To approve payment of bills #5502-5514 and bank transfers to Lease Direct, ADP, and Ascensus as follows:

Bills to be Paid		September 5, 2024	
Check No.	Payee	Account	Amount
DD/EP	staff	staff wages and liabilities (not SIMPLE IRA)	\$17,677.24
5502	MCAREC	office rent (May 1, 2024 rate increase)	\$1,164.20
5503	US Bank	Clicktime, Zoom, drysuit, workshop supplies	\$3,610.50
5504	Century Link	Office phone service	\$213.16
5505	Kris Schaedel	misc. expenses reimbursement	\$57.63
5506	Cheryl Rice	misc. expenses reimbursement	\$267.15
5507	Heather Hendrixson	misc. expenses reimbursement	\$102.48
5508	Tim Woosley	OWEB small grant 14-24-008	\$13,308.00
5509	McNerney Farms Inc.	OWEB small grant 14-22-012	\$13,454.00
5510	Fir Mountain Orchards LLC	OWEB small grant 14-24-002	\$8,013.00
5511	Columbia Gorge News	legal notice for election (\$63) 2 year subscription (\$75)	\$138.00
5512	Washington Assoc. of Conservation Districts	plant deposit for plant sale	\$397.50
5513	Gorge Interpreting & Translating	pesticide workshop descriptions translations	\$191.80
5514	Pacific Office Automation	copies - invoice #432809	\$40.45
EP	ADP	payroll services	\$58.46
EP	Lease Direct	copier lease	\$73.44
EP	Ascensus SIMPLE IRA	Simple IRA	\$2,030.78
		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$60,797.79</b>

The motion passed unanimously.

Heather explained that staff wages went up due to the addition of Cheryl. If additional funds are needed, money can be transferred from the 3 CD's. The group was supportive.

**Old Business:**

N/A

**New Business:**

NACD Urban Agriculture Grant Agreement- since it is over \$25,000, needs Brian's signature approval. Andrew moved to approve the signing of the NACD Urban Agriculture Grant Agreement, Annie seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Kris met with Rep. Helm's Chief of Staff regarding legislative action for funding bilingual pesticide education positions at Oregon Department of Agriculture. It was indicated that they would like to see support for this initiative by various organizations providing their logo on a letter of intent. Kris sent out a letter of intent along with a 2 pager to various organizations requesting logos to demonstrate support. On September 13<sup>th</sup>, OACD will submit the letter. OACD is leading this effort, and Kris will continue to be the informational contact. The group was supportive.

**Other Business:**

Cal presented on the NRCS Civil Rights Roles and Responsibilities. This presentation was to inform the SWCD board members and district. Civil Rights come into play through Federally Assisted Programs and Federally Conducted Programs both in employment issues and program delivery. SWCDs need to focus on public postings and notices, non-discrimination (short and long versions) and equal opportunity. The group thanked Cal for her presentation.

**Informational Reports –**

Cal reported that she and Carly toured the Clear Branch Dam watershed project at Laurence lake. She scheduled 5 new site visits from Forest Landowner Information Night. She also completed the initial site visits for 3 new forestry landowners seeking wildfire preparedness. She assisted with 6 site visits requesting practices for forest stand improvement and herbaceous treatment. Cal started ArcGIS Pro training and made plot maps for inventories with Andy Dwyer from ODF.

Carly reported that she hosted a tour of Uintah Farms to look at how they have used EQIP funds for Air Quality, irrigation efficiency and for pollinator habitat. She hosted a conservation buffer project tour with a biologist at the WNTC. She attended a 2-day employee meeting in Redmond. She helped review and update the draft Joint Chiefs proposal that the Forest Service is moving forward with. She announced that she received a \$4 million WaterSmart Grant for East Fork Irrigation District. The entire county is now open to upgrade irrigation projects. Carly assisted in with interviewing a potential GS-11 planner for The Dalles.

Cheryl reported she received onboarding for the programs she will be working with. The Free Mobile Chipping dates were determined by MARS and HRSWCD; 15 people have been scheduled for the October 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> dates. There will be 2 additional chipping dates in the spring to fulfill the grant. For the native plant sale, Cheryl updated and created potted plant fact sheets along with a plant sale flyer for tabling events. She scouted The Heights and downtown Hood River for community boards and placed 15 flyers up for the August puncturevine pull event at the waterfront. She also scouted the waterfront for puncturevine. Cheryl organized, prepped, and participated in the puncturevine pull event along with Kris, and 9 volunteers. She created a completion report for an OWEB small grants irrigation project, assisted in PSP sediment sampling and participated in 3 spawning surveys with CTWS. She attended the rush skeletonweed working group, OSU's The Heights Front Yard Garden Tour, Quarterly PSP, Workforce Development with Ash Creek (took minutes) and the Columbia Gorge CWMA meetings.

Kris reported that she continued to work to develop the OWEB FIP application where combined irrigation projects total ~\$375,000. There are 26 agricultural training days between November-May, so Kris is developing upcoming orchard programming and getting the classes up and running. Kris initiated a meeting with Ash Creek Forest Management and local Natural Resource Agencies. She explained the Mid-Columbia Region has no work crews and crews must be brought in from the Portland Metro Area to work on natural resource projects. Kris will be presenting and participating in an ODFW Commission Tour. She worked on getting the testing center functional here at OSU Extension.

**Heather** reported she met with Ed Salminen to secure a GIS subcontractor for irrigation status mapping project. She attended the OrCP's webinar on Oregon land use and rules (a history and where we are now). Heather attended the OACD strategic planning retreat with OACD board members and executive director. She is assisting in picking speakers for the OACD annual conference in October here in Hood River. Heather met with Oregon Ag Trust and Carly to discuss the potential for partnering on an RCPP proposal to NRCS for easements and other projects to improve farmland. The ODA AgWater Quality Meeting will be held in March. Heather is beginning to work on the HRSWCD annual report.

**Directors' reports –**

**Chuck** reported about participating in the puncturevine pull event at the waterfront. Bernadette and a volunteer have been watering plants by Indian Creek from this past spring planting. A Watershed Group volunteer created shade areas to protect the conifer trees. The HR Watershed Group will be hosting a tour about the Neal Creek Project in August.

**Pete** reported summer pear harvest was uneventful and will begin harvesting winter pears. FID will be shutting down at the end of this month. Wildland fire fighters have gone back to the fairgrounds to set up their headquarters. They were concerned with the heat and wind this week, but the Whiskey Creek fire doesn't appear to be growing. Currently there is a USDA wildlife biologist in the area who has funds earmarked for encroachment problems with bears, deer, elk, etc. He is working within HR, Wasco and Sherman counties. Contact Pete if you know of anyone who is having problems.

**Chal** begins picking winter pears tomorrow. FDA is doing a FSMA inspection tomorrow. SQI audit today.

**Annie** will participate in the Special Districts Association of Oregon's board member training on the 18th. There is a Climate Resiliency study on water quality (projections for the future, recharge, creating infrastructure) kicking off in a couple of months.

**Andrew** reported summer pears are done and winter pears starting.

**Brian** has a contractor working on piping. He has finished harvest for summer pears, peaches, and nectarines.

**Permits** –One permit for powerlines out by East Side Road. Replacing power poles and updating transmission lines. The board had no comments.

The next meeting will be on Thursday, October 3<sup>rd</sup> at 4 p.m. at the OSU extension office conference room.

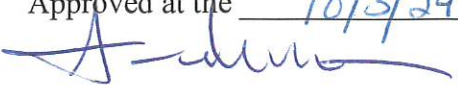
**Summary of Actions Taken:**

- ✓ Moved, seconded, and approved consent agenda.
- ✓ Moved, seconded, and approved to sign the Grant Agreement of the NACD Urban Agriculture Grant

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Rice, Conservation Technician

Approved at the 10/3/24 meeting of the Hood River SWCD.

  
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Brian Nakamura, Chair

