

Sherman County Soil and Water Conservation District

MEETING MINUTES

March 12, 2019

8:30 AM

Old Moro Elementary School

302 Scott St. Moro, OR 97039

SWCD Board Meeting

Board Present

Clint Moore
Jess Stutzman
Trevor Fields
Thad Eakin

Others Present

Amanda Whitman, District Manager
Jacob Powell, Watershed Coordinator
Emily Huth, NRCS
Dan Son, Deschutes CWMA
Joan Bird, Sherman County Commissioner
DelRae Ferguson, NRCS
Kara Lanthorn, FSA

I. ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 8:31 am by chairman, Jess Stutzman.

II. MINUTES

Clint moved to approve minutes from the February 19th board meeting. Thad seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

III. ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

There were no additions to the agenda.

IV. GUESTS/PUBLIC COMMENT

No guest or public comment

V. TREASURES REPORT

Amanda handed out the updated financial reports. There was discussion on what to do for another account. Amanda had talked to Bank of Eastern Oregon and the interest rates there were very low. She also looked back into the Local Investment Pool through the state because that is what Special Districts suggested. The interest rate for that is 2.75%. The Board asked about other options like Edward Jones. Amanda will contact the Districts rep for them. Nothing was decided on a new account because the Board wanted to see a few more options. This discussion was tabled until next months meeting. Bills were reviewed. Clint moved to approve the bills and Trevor seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

A. Watershed Council Updates – See Jacob’s report

a. Grant Updates – See Jacob’s report

i. Large Grants

1. All Monitoring Reports are up to date
2. Completion Reports – Up to date
3. Fund Requests – Up to date
4. New Grants – Council Support Grant submitted

ii. Small Grants

1. Monitoring – Monitoring reports are up to date
2. Completion – One completion report was submitted
3. Fund Request – One fund request were submitted

- B. County Cost Share – There were no new applications. Amanda reported that there is a balance of \$9,036.07. There was discussion on budgeting more for the County Cost Share this next fiscal year.
- C. ODA Capacity Grant – Amanda reminded the Board that the Lower John Day LAC meeting is rescheduled for March 21st, 2019 at the Extension Office in Moro from 10am-12pm. She also said we would be seeing the grant application for next funding cycle in May.
- D. Office Personnel
 - a. Vacant Position – Amanda passed out the job description for a Watershed Program Assistant. She talked about why the staff thought this would be a better fit for the office rather than filling the Conservation Technician position. There was discussion on where we would post the position and the Board asked that Amanda advertise immediately.
 - b. Employee Evaluations – Amanda reminded the Board that we should do employee evaluations prior to budgeting and asked when they would like to have those. Jess asked that she conduct Jacob’s evaluation and report back to the Board at the next meeting where they will conduct her evaluation.
- E. Scholarship Fund – Amanda had not heard back from the Scholarship Committee.
- F. Annual Meeting – Everything is set for the rescheduled annual meeting on March 27th. Amanda asked what the Board thought about the Lower John Day Working Group giving a short presentation on the Place Based Planning efforts they have been working on. The Board all agreed that would be fine and they will present prior to Bob.
- G. FY18-19 Budget
 - a. Supplemental Budget – A supplemental budget hearing was had prior to today’s meeting. There was no public comment on the budget changes. Clint moved to approve the supplemental budget resolution for the added income and expenses for Fire EQIP. Trevor seconded and the motion passed unanimously.
- H. Tree Sale – Staff had decided to make some changes to the tree sale format this year because Amanda would be the only one able to attend the sale. This year will just be pre-orders and they are due March 15th. Amanda will take her horse trailer down to pick up the trees on Friday March 22nd. She asked that a couple Board members be available to help unload trees and on Sat. March 23rd for order pickup. She will send out a reminder text to ensure a couple members could attend.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. FY19-20 Budget – It is time to start thinking about scheduling our first budget meeting. There was discussion on when we should do this. Jess asked if Amanda could have a proposed budget ready by the next Board meeting on April 16th. She thought that would be doable as long as we were good on our advertising requirements. The first Budget Meeting is scheduled for April 16th at 8:15am.

VIII. NRCS REPORT

DelRae gave an update on the Local Work Group meeting that had 8/9 producer/landowners in attendance. Some of the project suggestions were fire breaks and access roads. She will try and add access roads to the current Pine Hollow/Jackknife CIS. She also said there was a little talk about different options for croplands like drones and other precision ag options. She also stated that there has been some interest in the CRP CIS and she went over some of the options for that CIS. It was designed to give money to facilitate grazing On expired CRP. It will fund fencing, water developments, seeding and weed control to name a few. Expired CRP ground or CRP that will expire in a 1 from sign-up in Sherman and Wasco Counties are eligible. Sign-ups will be 2019-

2021. The EQIP signup deadline is April 19th. DelRae also said they are hoping to fly the DC position for this office soon. She will be filling in until the end of April.

IX. AGENCY REPORTS

- A. FSA – Kara gave updates on CRP. She said that the CRP acres are supposed to be at 27 million by 2023, including CREP acres. Grazing is going to be added as a mid-management plan and the nesting season is being shortened. She said if you have mid-management practices that need done (ie mowing) you can request to do it during nesting season. She did not have any update on CREP but thought it would be one of the first things they would be able to work on. Some new Farm Bill updates include changes to the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) Programs. Producers may make a new election to obtain either ARC or PLC for the 2019 crop year, which will also apply for the 2020 crop year. Can do County but not IC (Individual). Production of farms that is grass, etc is not eligible on those acres which will affect CRP acres coming out. If you need farm loan assistance you will need to contact the Heppner or Umatilla offices. She also stated that the definition of family has changed to include more relatives. Thad asked about the TIP program. Kara didn't have any specific information but thought the program would be reauthorized. FSA is providing a handout for the new Farm Bill in their office.
- B. Weed District – Dan came to give an update on the Lower Deschutes Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA). He was gearing up for field work but the snow has set them back. He had been hoping to get started the first of March and stated that last year they started spraying March 6th. He handed out a presentation to the Board and gave updates on where the project is at. This year State Parks is funding \$10,000. Dan would like to try and get a couple big group efforts lined up for this spring and then follow up in the fall. He feels that would be a more productive approach. There will be 3 seasonal employees this year that will be on from spring to fall. He stated that BLM did not sign an agreement last year with the CWMA therefore their land did not get treated. He was hopeful that there will be cooperation this year as he has made a few more contacts within the agency. There will be a partner meeting on Thursday, March 14th and should have representation from BLM, State Parks, ODFW along with Sherman & Wasco SWCD. One goal for this year is that he would like to see better communication and coordination between partners. Dan noted that this year's budget has gone up due to aerial work from ODFW. They were also able to receive emergency funding last fall from Sherman County for \$20,000. This ensured fall treatment on the burned areas. Dan said that skeleton weed was already noticeable in the fall after the fires and will likely come back very thick and in areas we haven't seen in previously. He feels they were able to get good control on some areas that were infested with blackberry and scotch thistle. Jess wanted to know if this project was still a good investment for the District or are we funding a lost cause. Dan was very optimistic that the work has been beneficial. He said that the infestation acres are going up as a whole throughout the project area but the acres that have been previously treated are drastically decreasing. He is planning for more volunteer efforts this year. One other thing he would like to accomplish is to get a good survey on the entire corridor, so we have good data. There was some discussion on where we go from here. The Board suggested going "higher" up than he has been for support/funding. And contact Walden or another congressperson's office. We need funding but we also need more man power which is hard to get in this remote area. He is working on a couple grants to be turned in soon and is looking for funding for housing of the seasonal workers. The seasonal are on for 35 weeks.

X. OTHER BUSINESS

- A. Sign Timesheets – Timesheets were reviewed and signed by the Board

*Documents/attachments mentioned in minutes can be obtained by request

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

No executive session was held.

XII. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be April 16th following the Budget Meeting (around 9am).

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business of the board meeting was adjourned at 10:35 am.

Respectfully,

Thad Eakin, Secretary

Approved by the Board of Directors April 16, 2019:

Jess Stutzman, Chair