



# Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District

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Board of Directors

Meeting Minutes

October 30, 2024

## Directors

Dave Hunt

Brent Johnson

Anna Thomas

Jim Bob Collins

## Employees

Cassandra Newton

Brooke Moore

Kristen Neuburger

## Others Present

Eric Nusbaum, ODA

Kevin Fenn, ODA

Karin Stutzman, ODA

Brent Smith, ODA

Alex Makic, USFS-Ochoco

Lisa Greene

The board meeting was called to order by Chair Collins at 6:14 p.m. by the clock on the wall.

### 1. ODA TMDL Presentation

Kevin Fenn and Karin Stutzman presented on TMDLs.

### 2. Agency Reports

#### a. USFS-Ochoco, Alex Makic

Alex provided an update on wildfire recovery in the Ochocos. He also shared an overview of a PFA application being submitted in partnership with Sustainable NW.

#### b. NRCS, DelRae Ferguson

DelRae provided pertinent deadlines and a funding pool update. She also provided a staffing update.

#### c. ODA, Brent Smith

Brent introduced himself as the new AgWQ Lead for the John Day Basin. He shared his background and expressed his excitement to participate in Wheeler SWCD's work.

#### d. Karin Stutzman

Karin introduced herself. She provided updates regarding reporting formats and requirements, indirect cost rates, and match requirements.

### 3. District Reports

#### a. District Manager, Cassi Newton

Cassi stated that her written report is included in the packet. She shared photos and details of the furniture purchased through the Roundhouse Foundation grant. Cassi stated that she submitted another NACD staffing assistance grant application. Cassi advised of two difficulties and the board provided direction moving forward.

#### b. Conservation Technician II, Brooke Moore

Brooke stated that her report is current. She advised that she is working with Cassi to submit a PFA application before the November 13<sup>th</sup> deadline because she has a forestry training that starts that day in Sisters.

#### c. Conservation Technician I, Kristen Neuburger

Cassi advised that Kristen has a written report but was unable to attend the meeting. Cassi provided an overview of an education grant application and another small grant application that Kristen submitted. Cassi advised that Kristen is working on two ODA/OSWB grant applications and has been trying to catch up on treatments since the

**Meeting Location:** Fire Hall in Spray, Oregon

**To Join from a computer or smartphone:**

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/954414701> (Contact the office for meeting password)

**To dial in using a phone:**

(571) 317-3122 (Access Code: 954-414-701)

wildfires caused difficulties during her spray season. Cassi also advised that the treatment team completed the second treatment of the BLM Tree of Heaven.

**d. Office Assistant, Maria Rey**

Not present.

**4. Monthly Business**

**a. Review and approve minutes**

**i. September 26, 2024 regular minutes**

‡Motion made by Director Hunt to approve the board meeting minutes from September 26, 2024, Director Johnson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**b. Review and approve financial reports**

**i. October**

**ii. Quarterly Financial Report**

‡Motion made by Director Johnson to approve the financial reports as presented, Vice Chair Thomas seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**c. Review and approve Accounts Payable**

**i. October 17, 2024**

**ii. October 24, 2024**

**iii. October 30, 2024**

‡Motion made by Director Johnson to approve the check registers from October 17, 2024, October 24, 2024, and October 30, 2024, Vice Chair Thomas seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**5. Upcoming Meetings & Events**

**a. Staff Meeting, every Monday**

**b. November**

**i. 14<sup>th</sup> Wheeler Stockgrowers, Spray 6pm**

**ii. 21<sup>st</sup> Wheeler SWCD Board Meeting, 6pm**

**iii. 28<sup>th</sup> Thanksgiving, OFFICE CLOSED**

**c. December**

**i. JDB Coordination Meeting, 9am *virtual***

**ii. 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> ODA INW Symposium, Corvallis**

**iii. 11<sup>th</sup> JDBP Meeting, 9am *virtual***

**iv. MJD LAC Meeting, Spray 12pm**

**v. 17<sup>th</sup> Wheeler SWCD Board Meeting, TBD**

**6. Upcoming Deadlines**

**a. November**

**i. 13<sup>th</sup> Private Forest Accord Applications**

**ii. 13<sup>th</sup> WaterSMART Water Efficiency app.**

**iii. 29<sup>th</sup> EQIP (fire)**

**iv. 29<sup>th</sup> RCPP (30/Butte)**

**b. December**

**i. 5<sup>th</sup> FSA Emergency Conservation Program**

**ii. 6<sup>th</sup> OSWB applications**

**iii. Annual Audit to ODA/SOS**

**iv. Annual Report to ODA**

v. Annual Accomplishments to ODA

**7. District Management**

**a. Staffing**

Cassi reminded the Board of the discussion and decisions made in September to not proceed with hiring until at least spring 2025. She advised that with the RCPP award, there is concern both internally and partnering agencies about the workloads of Wheeler SWCD staff. Cassi stated that she recommends that the GIS focused Conservation Technician position remain open and that a fourth Conservation Technician position be built that will focus on the RCPP project workload, as well as assist the USDA focused Conservation Technician position. She provided an overview of what she envisions the fourth position to include. The Board agreed with the concern of workloads and agreed that a fourth Conservation Technician position be built.

Cassi advised that legal counsel directed her to include the remaining discussion planned pertaining to staffing to be done in executive session.

**(moved to the end of the agenda following the executive session)**

**b. December Meeting**

Cassi advised that a board meeting should be scheduled for December since the Annual Meeting was moved to January. The Board agreed to hold a regular board meeting on December 19<sup>th</sup>.

**c. Annual Meeting**

The staff and directors discussed potential speakers for the topic of wildfire restoration and resiliency. Cassi provided an update on planning efforts.

**d. Property**

Cassi advised that there are no update on the projects and planning of the property aside from the Roundhouse Foundation grant ending in November.

**8. Legislation**

**a. none**

**9. Projects/Programs**

**a. RCPP-Waterman**

Cassi advised that the Greater Waterman Landscape Resiliency RCPP project was awarded with an earmark of \$21.25M! Cassi and DelRae provided an overview of the steps moving forward.

**b. Fire Recovery**

Cassi provided an extensive overview of fire recovery efforts including USDA assistance that staff have been working on, FEMA assistance being sought, OWEB fire recovery, and other funding opportunities explored.

**c. OWEB Fall Solicitation**

Cassi and Brooke shared metrics and details of the three restoration and one technical assistance applications submitted for the OWEB Fall Cycle.

**d. BLM-Priest Hole Restoration**

Cassi advised that construction contractors mobilized to the site on October 1<sup>st</sup> and construction is under way. She stated that she hosted a tour with OWEB and BLM on

October 28<sup>th</sup>. She also stated that she is still waiting on execution of funding agreements for the irrigation portion of the project.

**e. BLM-Ag Fields**

Cassi advised that this funding has been awarded with \$134,000 allocated. She further advised that the funding is earmarked to aid in completing the Priest Hole Restoration project. Cassi stated that there has been discussion of BLM utilization this agreement to allocate funding for Wheeler SWCD to assist with landowner agreements, as well.

**f. US-FS Ochoco- City of Mitchell**

Cassi and Alex advised that no update is available on this project. Cassi advised application is due early January.

**g. TBD-City of Spray**

Cassi stated that she has not found a funding source yet to fund the feasibility study, but she is working with the City to determine details of the potential project.

**h. OISC Weed Education**

Cassi provided an overview of the metrics and details of the application Kristen submitted.

**10. Partners**

**a. RCPP-Tractor Replacement**

Cassi advised that she was approached by Umatilla SWCD to participate in a tractor replacement RCPP. DelRae provided an overview of what is included. The Board agreed that local interest likely would not be great enough to trigger participation. DelRae advised that she can discuss alternative options for landowners who express interest.

**11. Business Not Listed**

**a. None**

*Chair Collins called a recess at 8:18 p.m., returning at 8:25 p.m.*

*Chair Collins called an executive session at 8:26 p.m.*

**12. Executive Session**

**ORS 192.660(2)(b)** To consider dismissal or discipline of or complaints against an officer, employee, staff, or agent

**ORS 192.660(2)(i); ORS 192.660(8)** to evaluate the performance of an officer, employee, or staff member

*Chair Collins returned to open session at 8:53 p.m.*

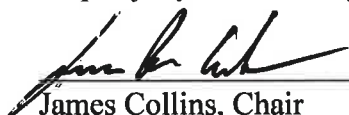
**7.a Staffing, continued**

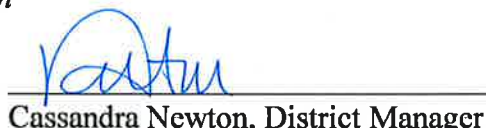
‡**Motion** made by Vice Chair Thomas to approve the part-time work schedule and Performance Improvement Plan for the Office Assistant, Director Hunt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Next Meeting:** Thursday, November 21, 2024

The board meeting was adjourned by Chair Collins at 8:54 p.m. by the clock on the wall.

*Respectfully submitted by Cassandra Newton*

  
James Collins, Chair

  
Cassandra Newton, District Manager