

POLK SWCD BOARD MEETING MINUTES

August 10, 2022 - 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Participation is via hybrid style meeting at OSU Extension Service
289 E Ellendale Ave. Suite 301

Join Zoom Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87159127253>

Meeting ID: 871 5912 7253 Passcode: Claudia

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Recording and attachments available on request

____ Draft

CW X Approved

CALL BOARD MEETING TO ORDER: Chair Woods @6:01PM

<u>DIRECTORS:</u>	<u>STAFF:</u>	<u>GUESTS:</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Chad Woods, Chair	Working at County Fair	Jane Keppinger via Zoom	
Judy Beebe, Vice Chair			
Mike Wilson, Secretary			
John (Jock) Dalton, Treasurer			
David Simmons via Zoom			
Pryor Garnett			
Brad Ford			

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comment.

REVISION OF AGENDA

Wilson asked to discuss, in more detail, the hiring of employees be added to the agenda in addition to what will be mentioned under the Personnel Committee report. Chair Woods added it under new business.

TREASURER'S REPORT

No Finance Committee meeting in August. Treasurer Dalton reported on financial activity over the last month but there was no physical treasurer's report to have the board vote on to approve. Mentioned the contracted accountant was working on closing out last fiscal year in preparation for the audit.

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Garnett moved and Wilson seconded the motion to approve the minutes as submitted. All in favor, motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS

2021-2023 ODA Capacity Grant: OWEB has allocated additional funds in the amount of \$21,555 to be added into his biennium's capacity grant thru ODA. Chair Woods stated it has to be used for Capacity and recommended the additional funds be added into Administration Overhead including salary/wages. It could be used for training too. No motion needed but the board provided consensus as to using the additional funds in Administration.

UPCOMING NOVEMBER DIRECTOR ELECTIONS

Ford stated he is not running, Simmons is running again, Wilson is unsure at this time if he is running again, Beebe is not running. Staff mentioned there are individuals running for each open position.

Deadline for turning in candidate paperwork to run is August 30, 2022 to Oregon Department of Agricultural.

MONTHLY REPORTS

County Fair: Staff has been manning a booth

Bell has been working hard on reports, White was collecting soil to show at fair.

Garnett commended the staff on all the work they have accomplished besides handling their own workload with the staff shortage.

POLLINATOR GARDEN

Glenn Gibson Watershed Council is putting in a pollinator garden on Oak Savannah property in West Salem. Pictures were included in director notebooks.

POLICY HANDBOOK

Garnett asked Chair to lay aside the discussion on the Policy Handbook to a later date and go into the hiring of employees process.

EMPLOYEE HIRING

Personnel Committee Report: Committee Chair Wilson reported on the employee merit increases for staff from last meeting. Bell is the only employee having been with the SWCD for more than a year and is eligible to receive a merit wage increase. The Board performs the evaluation for the manager, the manager evaluates the employees. Wilson will ask the board to give the Personnel Committee the authority to set the merit increase percentage based on the quality of the work he has done and award him the increase. Wilson made the motion to give the Personnel Committee, in consultation with the Board Chair and Budget Officer, the authority to set and award the merit increase consistent with how it has been done in the past and consistent with the budget. Dalton seconded the motion. All in favor, motion passed.

Wilson mentioned the SWCD has three vacant positions open and needs to fill these positions soon with the current employee workload increasing. Wilson mentioned using Cascade Employers Association to contract with to assist in the hiring process.

Their member rate \$175 per hour, non-member is \$263 per hour. Membership to join is about \$700. A contract could be up to \$5,000. Discussion followed. Wilson made a motion to give PC the authority to contract, in consultation with the chair, with Cascade Employers Association to provide assistance with the hiring of employees with a limit of up to \$5,000. Ford 2nd the motion so discussion could occur.

Garnett asked if this was for one position or all three positions as the total amount allowed may need to be increased. Cascade mentioned they could do either one or up to all three positions depending on the SWCD's needs. The SWCD board can participate in the process as much as they want and are available.

Dalton stated the board would want to make the final hiring decision. The more the directors are involved, the less it may cost them since it is an hourly rate. Ford asked what the total cap was again and stated give them a capped amount and they may spend up to the cap. Garnett stated for the board's motion should show a capped amount. Dalton stated he thinks the Administrative Assistant position is the priority to hire first. Beebe mentioned she thought the District Manager was the priority so NRCS could have a say in the Administrative Assistant hiring since it is a shared position. Chair Woods said to do the Administrative Assistant and the District Manager at the same time. Beebe asked to repeat the motion, due to changes that were accepted by both the maker and who seconded, which was to give the Personnel Committee the authority to spend up to \$10,000 to hire Cascade Employers Association to help with the hiring process. All in favor, motion passed.

Wilson then asked about making any needed decisions as they arise and could it be done by email among the board? The answer was no. Further discussion followed about job descriptions and who may participate in the interviews. Wilson suggested that the Personnel Committee meet as often as needed to try to answer questions to keep the process moving forward. Ford asked Chair Woods about hiring an interim District Manager as he was authorized to do. With the time constraints in place now this may not be possible. Keppinger, guest, commented and then stated that she was willing to help the SWCD during this transition to assist with either office work or to help Cascade Employers Association if needed. Woods then mentioned there are grant funds and other monies that need to have items submitted for reimbursement by the end of the calendar year and to help with overall office items right now. Chair Woods had thought about Keppinger or Tom Wilson helping the SWCD at this time and says he was open to wanting the help. Dalton concurred. Garnett asked Personnel Committee if they could find names for temporary personnel and bring back recommendations to board in a one or two weeks. Ford mentioned that Chair Woods already has the authority to make decisions to hire any temporary help if needed in the interim. Garnett suggested having more than one set of eyes on the matter. Beebe provided clarification as to having the Personnel Committee involved in the process already has more than one person involved with the situation but they have the preapproved authority to make decisions on behalf of the board. Chair Woods is on the Personnel Committee so he and/or the Committee will make the decisions on hiring temporary help.

Chair Woods will make a decision by the following Monday as to who to hire so if anyone else has other names please submit to Woods and he will contact. Woods will be in contact with Keppinger and send her some items to review.

Wilson asked about a future meeting of the Personnel Committee and Beebe suggested he send out an email any the information from Cascade Employers Association and then decide if a meeting is necessary. Chair Woods wants to know if he has approval to send names to Cascade Employers Association of individuals who may be interested in the position and might not hear or see the announcement. Wilson asked for clarification and yes, these individuals would need to apply for the position but to let Cascade Employers know they are potential interested in it. Simmons said he would like to see a good admin person hired first as it would allow more time to hire the District Manager. Wilson stated that the market may allow for the hiring of one position over another depending on the current job market. He will give direction to Cascade and discuss with them all the positions.

POLICY HANDBOOK

Simmons asked the board members how they wanted to proceed with reviewing the handbook. Woods then started reviewing page 3, 4, 5, 6 and was asking for questions. Wilson asked if this copy incorporated all previous comments from board members. Simmons replied, this is the version that if the board members have no changes it would be the final version. Chair Woods then asked Garnett about using the word Authority or Appointing Authority. Garnett said it was an ambiguous term and has many meanings depending on the application. Further discussion followed. Garnett stated he would interrupt the word authority as having the ability to take action. Beebe than stated that in certain places there was further explanation as to what the authority means and may list limitations or exceptions. Beebe then mentioned one area not addressed. On page 13 about the Treasurer, and it has been add into policy they have plenary authority and should establish that the person having plenary authority, as recommended by SDAO, has a background check. She also recommends that anyone who has signing authority involving SWCD funds, should also have a background check. Dalton stated that any background check report for the SWCD should not have any personal identifiable information on the report. This can be redacted. Ford asked about the report and who reviews it, then what is done with the information if there is criminal activity listed. Beebe suggested asking SDAO if they could review the background check and report the findings. Further discussion followed. Dalton says he was already Treasurer and is now the Fiduciary. Chair Woods explained having a Fiduciary is required by the banks and allows for doubling the FDIC coverage.

Back to Policy Book. Garnett asked about the information in red on page 14. Discussion followed. Ford mentioned the ability to have District Manager be able to hire and fire employees. Simmons said he thought this should say the District Manager could not fire an employee and it should go through a second level like the Personnel Committee and that the District Manager could suspend them with pay and allow for a cooling off period. Ford read further on and said to strike firing from beginning of the section and add in discharge and discipline at the end. More minor changes were discussed and made. Dalton proposed other language and Garnett disagreed with his proposed wording. An explanation then followed regarding an incident of a previous summary firing and this is where the concerns on specific wording were discussed. Ford then stated that the proposed word changes did not change the intent or the significance of this section.

Wilson then had a concern farther down the same page (14) regarding the following:

- For personnel positions not currently established: to make changes to the approved budget at the category level (*Jump to 4 Financial Controls*).

Wilson thought there may have been old wording left as this didn't make complete sense.

Chair Woods wanted this line item removed and felt that the Board is the one to make the decision to change or move funds from one category level to another and not allow the .

Wilson then brought up an item on page 13, where it says the board grants general authority to the directors to:

- Be District spokesperson for public presentations, media, etc.

His comment was this appears to be quite broad in scope. Dalton then mentioned the third bullet which states:

- Express opinions publicly that are consistent with the established board policies

This does limit what directors would be allowed to say.

Garnett then asked Wilson if there was specific language that he wanted to see. Wilson replied that if the above statement was followed it should not be a problem. Chair Woods said that if the five bullets are consider than it should not be a problem.

Beebe has been looking through entire Policy Book and in there is not enough information in the Policy Book regarding what the District Manager can do in certain places because it references procedures listed in the Employee Handbook. Dalton said there was wording and sections missing in the policy book. Chair Woods stated that he doesn't want to see items in the policy handbook contradict with what may be in the Employee Handbook and vice versa. Garnett agreed with Beebe that there was language missing and needs to be added where it applies.

Garnett mentioned that the employee handbook was supposed to be reviewed along with the policy book and he felt that this has not been done yet. This would help to ensure that both handbooks were consistent and did not contradict. Board asked when Simmons would return in order to hold another policy meeting. Simmons and Dalton can review the handbooks to see if they can find the discrepancies. Simmons felt that this version of the Policy Book may not be the latest version and will ask Tom Wilson. Simmons will use the minutes of this meeting or the recording to ensure all the changes and concerns discussed at this meeting would be captured. Chair Woods will look through the financial section again for compliance.

Chair Woods will work on the hiring of temporary help and asked Keppinger to send him her contact information.

Meeting adjourned at 7:57 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Keppinger

Jane Keppinger, Administrative Assistant (Temporary)