

POLK SWCD BOARD MEETING MINUTES

July 12 - 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Recording and attachments available on request

 Draft
 X Approved

CALL BOARD MEETING TO ORDER: Chair Wilson called the meeting to order at 6:00PM at the OSU Extension Office, 289 E Ellendale, Dallas, Oregon. Introductions were then made.

DIRECTORS:	STAFF:	GUESTS:	ABSENT:
Michael (Mike) Wilson, Chair	Kevin Porter		
Chad Woods, Vice Chair	Hayley Iverson		
John (Jock) Dalton, Treasurer	Morgan Neil-Zoom		
Pryor Garnett, Secretary	Marc Bell-Zoom		
Eden Olsen	Beth Thiel-Zoom		
Lindsay McClary	Evelyn Conrad		
Donna Champeau			

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comment.

REVISION OF AGENDA

No additions or revisions were made to the agenda.

CONSENT AGENDA

Chad Woods pulled the balance sheet of the District Financial Report from the Consent Agenda for further discussion.

Pryor Garnett made a Motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Lindsay McClary Seconded. Motion Passed Unanimously. Items in the Consent Agenda include the June 14th Board Meeting Minutes, June 14th Budget Hearing Minutes, District Manager’s 6-month Introductory Period Letter, Staff Reports, and District Financial Reports.

Chad Woods stated that he would like to see a beginning balance and a balance sheet broken out into funds in the financial report. Pryor Garnett made a Motion to approve the balance sheet of the District Financial Report. Chad Woods Seconded. Motion Passed Unanimously.

DISTRICT MANAGER REPORT

Kevin Porter presented his report to the Board. Kevin Porter stated that the turnaround project at Smithfield Oaks is completed and has already been put to use. He stated that the past due grant reporting has been completely caught up and the District has already begun receiving those funds. He stated that the District has a summer intern currently and encouraged Directors to meet him when they come to the office. He also stated that there has been an increase in calls and walk-ins from the public on various matters.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Property Committee:

Lindsay McClary stated that the Committee has been discussing ownership of property by the District since May. She stated that there have been three different options discussed by the committee, with pros and cons listed for each. The District could keep both properties, divest both properties, or divest Smithfield Oaks and keep Cornerstone. She reviewed the mission and vision statements of the District. She stated that the District doesn’t currently have a value statement to direct the work being done, but having one

would be helpful in making this decision. She stated that there are pros and cons listed for each option. Options 1 and 2 tallied out at about the same, and option 3 had several more pros than cons. Donna Champeau gave input on the District creating a value statement and how they shape the work that the District does. Lindsay McClary stated that the Committee is leaning toward option 3 and would like to hear input from the rest of the Directors. Chad Woods reviewed the history of the stewardship funds for these properties and how the District made the decision to purchase them. Pryor Garnett questioned whether the stewardship funds could be used to pay for staff or for hiring staff to manage the properties. Kevin Porter stated that the stewardship funds could pay for staff time on maintenance of the properties. There was discussion about the staffing that would be required to keep both properties and properly maintain them. Kevin Porter stated that he doesn't want the Board to think that the committee is pushing in one direction. He stated that there are issues with the Smithfield Oaks property that need to be addressed if the Board decides to keep both properties and that a full-time property manager would have to be hired. He stated that he has talked to other Districts about owning property and it is all over the board. Evelyn Conrad reviewed how NRCS manages their properties. She stated that it will be a difficult decision for the Board to make and will be difficult to find someone capable and able to manage those properties. Eden Olsen asked why there wasn't an option 4 to keep Smithfield Oaks and divest Cornerstone. Lindsay McClary stated that Cornerstone was the first property purchased, it has more mature projects and that the District has a great relationship with the neighboring landowner. She stated that freeing up staff time to focus on one property would allow it to be a showcase for the District. Pryor Garnett stated that he feels that the District's purpose or vision is to show that we are good stewards of the properties. He stated that divesting while the job is half done or incomplete would be quitting and he doesn't feel good about that. He would like to see the stewardship funds used over the next 5 to 10 years to complete these projects. Marc Bell stated that in 2013 a 41-acre habitat restoration project was completed at Smithfield Oaks by OWEB and cost approximately \$100,000. He stated that he agrees that he would like to let go of one or both properties in perfect condition, but it would cost two or three times what is in the stewardship fund to complete that. That they aren't self-sustaining and would require constant work and funds. He reviewed how the BPA has encouraged the stewardship funds be used. Lindsay McClary noted that the funds are one time stewardship funds and that those funds can only be held in conservative investment funds and that the District isn't able to invest the funds in a way that would make them grow more substantially. She stated that she doesn't want divesting property to reflect poorly on the District. She stated that it could take decades to get Smithfield Oaks into the shape the District would want it to be in. Evelyn Conrad stated that the area Smithfield Oaks is in is very difficult to manage. Pryor Garnett stated that what he is hearing is that the District is underfunded to manage these properties. He questioned how much it would cost to restore these properties and maintain them. Lindsay McClary noted that other entities would have the capabilities to invest the stewardship funds and apply for grants in a way that the District isn't able to. Lindsay McClary also stated that Cornerstone has a BPA plan that is ready to be implemented and Smithfield Oaks doesn't. Marc Bell stated that BPA would like to take another look at the legality of the access to Smithfield Oaks. Beth Thiel stated that a partnership with a land trust could be an option for the District and that land trusts are very well equipped to take on these projects. She noted that knowing who the property was going to would maybe help the Board make a decision. Marc Bell reiterated the fact that the property being in someone else's hands would allow them to apply for grants that the District isn't able to. Morgan Neil stated that when she takes people to the properties, they love them and she would like to take people out to them more often and have more events out there if there was staff for it. There was discussion about when the next committee meeting would be and what the committee needs to tackle before bring the topic back to the Board. She would like the Directors to think about it more for discussion at the next Board meeting. Mike Wilson stated that he would like to have the problems at Smithfield Oaks fixed before handing it off. He stated that access to the property is the biggest issue and would like to see what the BPA comes back with. Chad Woods stated that volunteer work could be an option moving forward. Mike Wilson thanked everyone for their comments.

NEW BUSINESS

Mike Wilson reviewed a Personnel Committee Member change with the Board. He stated that Lindsay McClary is going to step down from the committee and Judy Beebe, Director Emeritus, will be replacing her.

Kevin Porter reviewed SAIF's time tracking requirements for staff, Directors, and volunteers. He stated that SAIF is the new workers comp provider for the District. He noted that they require that time be kept by all staff, Directors, and volunteers. He will be sending the Directors timesheets and will need them back at the end of each month. He stated that it may bring our policy down showing consistent timesheets.

Morgan Neil reviewed the Cultural Burn Event that took place at Smithfield Oaks. She stated that it was a very special day and there were 42 people there including staff, partners, and guests. She noted that it was a great opportunity for everyone involved. She stated that she has already been approached to do another burn event and an acorn harvest. Marc Bell stated that it was a wonderful event. He enjoyed bringing fire back to the property from a restoration standpoint and that it was deeply satisfying for him personally and professionally. Kevin Porter stated that the event went very well. Mike Wilson thanked staff for their work on this project and enjoys seeing the District partner with tribes for events like this.

Morgan Neil reviewed summer/fall events planned for the District and stated that she hopes to see Board members at these events. She reviewed the decisions made by the Ad Hoc Committee for awards. Kevin Porter stated that staff has a big commitment to the fair and would like the Board to consider not having an August Board Meeting and instead spend that time at the District's booth at the fair. Chad Woods made a Motion to not have an August Board Meeting and encourage the Directors to spend time at the fair. Lindsay McClary Seconded. Motion Passed Unanimously.

Evelyn Conrad reviewed the Civil Rights for Partners with the Board. She noted that this is an annual discussion for NRCS. She reviewed the expectations for partners with the Board. She reviewed the projects that the NRCS Dallas Service Center is working on currently.

Lindsay McClary stated that she will be out of state for the September Board meeting.

There was discussion on bills that did and didn't pass the legislature.

Meeting adjourned @ 7:45 pm by Mike Wilson.

Respectfully submitted,

Hayley Iverson
Administrative Assistant