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Harney Soil & Water Conservation District Regular Monthly Meeting
May 23, 2025

Present: Board Chair (BC) Jeff Hussey, Vice Chair (VC) Susan Doverspike, Secretary/Treasurer (S/T) Scott Franklin, Board Directors (BD) Carol Dunten, Ken Bentz, Sue Ramsay; HSWCD District Manager (DM) Jason Kesling, CWMA Tyler Goss, Sage-grouse Coordinator (SGC) Sarah Mundy, Admin Assistant (AA) Barbara Pearson

Present, remote: Oregon Department of Agriculture Maria Snodgress

Guests: Alfred Dunten, Harney County Commissioner Robb Frank

Absent: BD Stacy Davies

BC Hussey had not yet arrived, so VC Doverspike began the meeting at 3:32 pm.

Item #1: Meeting Agenda (action item)
DM Kesling requested an addition to the meeting's agenda: Possible surplus of the District's solar trailers. There were no other changes or additions requested. BD Bentz moved and S/T Franklin seconded approving the meeting agenda as updated. VC Doverspike, S/T Franklin, and BD Ramsay and Bentz were in favor; the motion passed.

Item #2: County Commissioner Robb Frank (County NRAC)
Note: At the previous month's meeting the DM said he had been requested by Harney County Commissioner Rob Frank to attend and participate in the county's Natural Resources Advisory Committee (NRAC) and the board requested Commissioner Frank attend this meeting to provide additional information as to why he believes this would be a good use of the District Manager's time.

Commissioner Frank distributed to the board copies of the most recent NRAC meeting minutes (copy attached). He explained the committee's purpose. He said the Committee recently endorsed a resolution on wolf management and would have included local opinion for the county and state level. He said the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife usually attends these committee meetings and provides input. He also discussed public input with the community-based water planning and would like the District to play a role with the plan formulation. The Blue Mountain Forest District is also readying a plan. The Wildfire Collaborative was also at the last meeting and treatment of noxious invasive weeds was discussed as part of fire prevention. Another upcoming topic for the committee will be treatment of Mormon Crickets.

Commissioner Frank was asked what would be the role of a District staff or board member who participates in these meetings? He responded that the committee is an advisory committee, advising the county board. It is comprised of landowners, business interests, the Eastern Oregon Agriculture Research Center (EOARC), and various agencies who participate and all have an equal say.

BC Hussey arrived 3:38 pm.

Commissioner Frank said he was not well versed on HSWCD, but when landowners and agencies meet issues important to both are discussed. He asked for a brief overview of the District's role in this, and DM Kesling provided this information.

VC Doverspike asked how often the committee met and Commissioner Frank said it was the first Tuesday of the month, but not year around—the Wolf Advisory meets in the months the NRAC doesn't. He said it is usually nine months out of the year and takes up about an hour. Meetings are held in the basement conference room of the Harney County Courthouse.

BD Ramsay asked if a professional or conduit would be needed to pass information to and from the committee, and Commissioner Frank said any form of advisement is welcome that would make the committee be well rounded on a subject (information on noxious weeds for the Blue Mountain plan for instance. The wording focused on native plants, but not all native plants are invasive).

DM Kesling asked what value the HSWCD could obtain from committee meetings, and Commissioner Frank said as the committee is comprised of landowners and agency members lobbying for more work and the District may derive value from it. He used CWMA Goss's facilitating with last years' Mormon Cricket treatment reimbursement as an example. A District representative

would have its hand on the pulse of issues. He couldn't provide exact statistics and facts, but he thought continued participation with Mormon Cricket and Grasshopper treatment and monitoring wolf populations would benefit the District and its constituents.

VC Doverspike asked if the board would receive an agenda to determine who would be the best (staff or board director) to attend the committee meeting and best contribute. Commissioner Frank said he would arrange for agendas to be sent a week in advance for the SWCD to review. He offered to include the District on the committee's distribution list. He also suggested if board directors in reviewing committee meeting minutes had something to add that would also be beneficial. BD Bentz said that would be better.

SGC Mundy arrived 3:46 pm.

Commissioner Frank advised there may need to be more meetings regarding wolves in Harney County. He said he would keep DM Kesling in the loop regarding meeting agendas and minutes. DM Kesling said he can report quarterly regarding his participation, not only with the NRAC, but other meeting the SWCD attends.

VC Doverspike also suggested to Commissioner Frank that if he saw something with the agenda or meeting minutes that the District has some expertise in to contact the District directly, "Pick up the phone." DM Kesling added an email would also be beneficial.

Commissioner Frank said the ODA will meet in June regarding Mormon Crickets. He believed in the past the NRAC had "meetings for the sake of meetings" but when the committee had to redo goal five in the comprehensive plan it made the meetings more important. Commissioner Frank was thanked for coming to the meeting and was asked to remain for the balance.

Following this discussion, VC Doverspike turned the meeting leadership to BC Hussey.

Item #3: April Finance Report (action item)

DM Kesling explained the report, and prior to the meeting board directors were given electronic copies. Expenditures were mostly on salary; there was some profit that came in. He said the Rangeland BLM 23 Project has three different components. He would explain in more detail when agenda seven of the meeting was discussed.

The 2023 pickup is now paid for. DM Kesling said, "Nothing owed on vehicles" but another vehicle may also be needed. SGC Mundy said she used her personal vehicle today for a site visit and sustained rock damage to the windshield. VC Doverspike was concerned SGC Mundy would be financially responsible for the damage, but DM Kesling said SGC Mundy would report the damage to her insurance company and the District would pay the deductible.

In returning to expense report discussion, BD Ramsay asked about "ordinary income—" is that only received to date? DM Kesling said that is what is received this month. The new fiscal year will begin in July, and agenda item 7 should give an idea of expenditures for next year. He updated agenda item 7 report eight days ago.

Following additional discussion, S/T Franklin and BD Ramsay seconded approving the financial report as presented. All present eligible to vote were in favor.

Item #4: April Meeting Minutes (action item)

Minutes were electronically distributed about two weeks prior. BD Ramsay said that it was VC Doverspike and not her that asked about frozen grants (page one, last paragraph). This will be corrected. BD Bentz moved and S/T Frank seconded approving the April meeting minutes as corrected. BC Hussey, VC Doverspike, S/T Franklin, BD Bentz and Ramsay voted in favor; BD Dunten abstained. The motion passed.

Item #5: Public Records Request Letter to CCAA Landowners

DM Kesling provided background information to board directors who were not present at the last meeting. It is documented the CCAA and the Fish and Wildlife will contact individual landowners as to what information they want redacted. The director notebooks has a form regarding this, an authorization to allow the landowner to indicate who he/she wants to work with and a copy of HB093. This package will be sent to landowners. He asked in particular the first page, the letter. He wondered what the board's thoughts were on this.

Discussion followed. BD Ramsay suggested adding verbiage if the landowners choose to not respond. DM Kesling said the District staff would follow up through attempting to contact the landowners directly. DM Kesling said the letter has already been sent out to Crook County CCAA members.

Suggestions for edits were made. It was the board's consensus to not take action and vote but to follow CCAA protocol already in place.

Item #6: LGIP Investment (discussion)

DM Kesling updated the board on the District's investment. Investing money requires board action; money can be removed at any time to pay for grant programs. He said the District will need to begin pulling SOWR funds. Currently the investment is paying 4.5 to 5.5%

BD Ramsay asked where rangeland drills were and was advised the solar trailers and drills were currently stored on Oregon Fish and Wildlife property.

Item #7: 2026 Budget Spreadsheet

DM Kesling provided an overview on the grants administered by the District. He offered to go over each grant individually at the board's request. Currently $1.6 M is identified as salary and over $4.9 M for overall budget, including salary and implementation. In addition, some admin salary is set aside "for a rainy day" under the admin funding.

BC Hussey asked if any projects need to be discussed—does CWMA Goss or SGC Mundy have anything to add to the discussion (no)? DM Kesling said the recent BLM Rangeland 23 includes funding for juniper thinning and fencing projects. The Forest Service is close to signing an agreement on fencing projects from last summer's fires (the Falls and Telephone Fires), so he is anticipating another $3M (BLM/FS). VC Doverspike asked if the Forest Service plans to replace interior fencing. DM Kesling said it plans to first replace the perimeter fencing and then interior. VC Doverspike then asked if this would be with solar fencing and DM Kesling said "real fence."

In the past no grant funds were reserved for monitoring, but once a grant is completed there needs to be monitoring to ensure the work was accomplished and successful. There is now one grant remaining that requires monitoring funds where it has a zero balance for monitoring. "We have turned that ship around," and now HSWCD grant applications include monitoring costs with the grant said DM Kesling.

CWMA Goss said there is an upcoming project for broadleaf treatment along Highway 20 that will allow spraying on private land. The cost share will be with the Forest Service and the private landowner. If anyone is interested in additional information board directors can speak to him. He is attempting to discuss state land weed control with Randy Wiest.

DM Kesling explained HSWCD's plans for treating noxious weeds and juniper thinning. He also explained funding channels. He suggested board directors are interested in a specific project to reach out to him. He also explained the

criteria of the recent emergency flood infrastructure repair and other HDP Legislature funded projects.

Item #7a: Solar Trailer Discussion

The District used to have five solar trailers; it now has three and two of them are operational. DM Kesling said there has been no interest in landowners using them in the past two years, which he believes is due to the District moving into more permanent solar projects for landowners (in recent years the District has funded 14-16 solar project per biennium). Based on this he wanted to ask for discussion on either upgrading (repair) or surplus the trailers.

CWMA Goss explained the original purpose of the solar trailers. Through the years parts have disappeared or been worn out. To get the trailers back in repair would require a lot of work and some funds. DM Kesling said solar pump technology has improved so the pumps should be replaced. Some solar panels are cracked; the trailers are in good shape. All the troughs are damaged. He didn't think the District needed to continue to the program, "Just haven't seen the need for mobile water."

Present and new technology was discussed. It was suggested to surplus two and keep one in working order and available, and CWMA Goss provided the pros and cons. The board was asked if it was needed in the community? BD Ramsay said she does as she knows some people actively looking for pasture and may need a water supply. She asked CWMA Goss to provide financial information on repairing the trailers.

No action was taken; the issue was tabled pending further information for next meeting.

Item #8: Public Comment

VC Franklin asked if there would be a Grasshopper program through the state this year. CWMA Goss said it would be through the county and he hasn't heard anything yet. Funds leftover from last year went into monitoring this year. There will be discussion on the subject in June. Commissioner Frank said it would be coming out after Memorial Day. DM Kesling suggested the District send letters to Oregon Legislature to request continued funding. He will have a draft prepared for the next meeting. CWMA Goss explained the process for applying for reimbursement.

Item #9: Meeting Adjournment (action item)
S/T Franklin moved and VC Doverspike seconded adjourning the meeting. All present eligible to vote were in favor. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Pearson, Admin Assist

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District Representative Date