PO Box 848
530 Hwy 20 South, Hines OR 97738
Phone: 541-573-6446 admin@harneyswcd.net

Harney Soil & Water Conservation District Special Meeting
February 19, 2025

Present: Vice Chair (VC) Susan Doverspike, Secretary/Treasurer (S/T) Scott Franklin, Board Director (BD) Sue Ramsay; District Manager (DM) Jason Kesling, Sage Grouse Coordinator (SGC) Sarah Mundy, CWMA Tyler Goss; Admin Assist (AA) Barbara Pearson

Present, remote: Board Directors Carol Dunten, Stacy Davies, Board Chair (BC) Jeff Hussey

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 pm. S/T Franklin led the meeting because BC Hussey had not yet arrived and VC Doverspike assented.

Item #1: Meeting Agenda (action item)
BD Carol Dunten moved the agenda be approved as presented without additions. VC Doverspike seconded. All present who were eligible to vote were in favor and the motion passed.

Item #2: Swearing in Newly Elected Board Director
AA Pearson administered the Oath of Office to newly elected BD Sue Ramsay.

Item #3: Creation of New Position and Pay Scale (action item)
DM Kesling explained the purpose of the meeting. Recently federal employees who were in probationary periods or had been in their position for less than 12 months were terminated last week. One affected was former HSWCD Danielle Reynolds who transitioned to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in October 2024.

The HSWCD has two projects that could benefit from Danielle's work and NRCS/RCPP funding could be applied to her salary (sans sick time and vacation time which could be pulled from other sources). The specific projects are Northern Steens (project ending 2029) and Stinkingwater (project ending 2027).

DM Kesling recommended to the board to rehire Danielle Reynolds at step five, which was the step she was prior to moving to NRCS in October. He also explained the wages listed on the handout given to the board. Benefits were not included on the pay scale presented.

There was discussion on the RCPP funding, including if funds could be pulled back. Some districts have experienced this depending on the source of the funding (Inflation Reduction Act, for example).

At 3:33 pm BC Hussey joined the meeting. He said he had no input other than if the district could help and the money is there that would be great. "It sounds like it's something we ought to try to pursue to complete projects."

Other topics related to the discussion included the probationary period for health care, and a starting date. BD Ramsay moved that Danielle Reynolds be rehired to the HSWCD at step five (where she left in October) with no probational period for her benefits. BD Dunten seconded. All present who were eligible to vote were in favor. DM Kesling will contact Danielle and will extend an offer of employment, dated February 19, 2025.

Item #4: Public Comments

AA Pearson said she first considered emailing the board but decided instead to state her thoughts in the meeting so it is on the public record: Recently her husband had a heart attack and was flighted to Bend for treatment. They received the bill for the air ambulance and thanks to the MASA subscription offered to HSWCD employees it was substantially reduced. AA Pearson thanked the board for its support to staff and said she was very grateful. BD Dunten acknowledged the thanks and expressed her concern for AA Pearson's husband (who is doing well).

BC Hussey left the meeting at 3:59 pm.

BD Davies commented he is impressed with the large budget and thanked DM Kesling and SWCD staff.

Following other discussion on current topics BD Davies moved and VC Doverspike seconded adjourning the meeting. All present eligible to vote were in favor and the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Pearson, Admin Assist

_____ _____

District Representative Date