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Harney Soil & Water Conservation District Regular Monthly Meeting

March 27, 2025

Present: Board Chair (BC) Jeff Hussey, Vice Chair (VC) Susan Doverspike, Secretary/Treasurer (S/T) Scott Franklin, Board Directors (BD) Stacy Davies and Sue Ramsay; CWMA Tyler Goss; HSWCD staff NRCS Partner Biologist (NPB) Danielle Reynolds, NRCS Partner Biologist (NPB) Kaylee Littlefield, SONEC Partner Biologist (SPB) Braden Morris, and Admin Assist (AA) Barbara Pearson

Present, remote: Guest Andrea Kreiner, Oregon Association of Conservation (OACD) District Executive Director

Note: District Manager (DM) Jason Kesling was out of the office for the week and NPB Reynolds filled in for him during the meeting. The Trump Administration did some budget restructuring, and this was mentioned in the course of the meeting. Noted for historical purposes.

BC Hussey called the meeting to order at 3:33 pm

**Item #1: Approval of Meeting Agenda**

BD Davies asked to add discussion about Laura Schroeder visit. It was labeled as agenda item 5a. VC Doverspike moved, and BD Davies seconded approving the meeting agenda as amended. This motion passed unanimously

At approximately 3:35 pm Andrea Kriener from OACD joined remotely

**Item #2: January and February Financial Reports**

NPB Reynolds relayed from DM Kesling that finances were “business as usual,” but if there were specific concerns it would be best to address upon his return. Susan Doverspike asked if the federal government froze any grants. NPB Reynolds said the new HDP RCPP and anything with IRA ties/climate-smart money has been frozen. CWMA Goss said the new LIT position was frozen for hiring, so the District is not currently hiring. Other than what was noted there is nothing specific to the District.

NPB Littlefield added that funding for the Pheasants Forever position has been affected, and she has been moved to the North Steens RCPP. She is still waiting for her NRCS Linc Pass and has been doing juniper inspections. After further discussion, VC Doverspike moved to approve the financial reports for January and February as presented. S/T Franklin seconded. All present eligible to vote were in favor and the motion passed.

**Item #3: January Meeting Minutes**

There were no questions about the meeting minutes. BD Davies moved, and VC Doverspike seconded approval of the January meeting minutes as presented. The motion was unanimously approved.

**Item #4: February Special Meeting Minutes**

There were no questions about the meeting minutes. BD Davies moved, and S/T Franklin seconded approving the February Special Meeting Minutes as presented. All present eligible to vote were in favor and the motion passed.

**Item #5: Increasing Credit limit on HSWCD credit card**

The reason behind the request is the DM made a large purchase in 2024 on his personal credit card on behalf of the District, which the auditor counseled against the staff doing. NPB Reynolds advised the District’s credit card limit is presently $10K and the purchase was $16K, which necessitated the DM using his personal card. CWMA Goss said the purchase was for items needed for a BLM project. After brief discussion VC Doverspike moved and S/T Franklin seconded approving the request to increase the HSWCD’s credit card credit limit to $20K. All present eligible to vote were in favor and the motion passed.

**Item #5a: Visit by Laura Schroeder**

BD Davies said he is in communication with Laura Schroeder, a water rights attorney. Ms. Schroeder has volunteered to come to Harney County at no expense to conduct a water rights seminar. Someone or a group would need to sponsor (publicize) the event and reserve meeting space. BD Davies said the Watershed Council is in favor. BC Hussey asked if her visit would be included in a regular monthly meeting and BD Davies advised it would be more for public information and the District could advise of her visit. S/T Franklin expressed the need to advertise it well, and a meeting participant noted the HSWCD could use the website and Facebook in addition to other sources.

NPB Reynolds said the District has funds for the visit. BC Hussey suggested personal invitations. BD Davies said if the District is willing to pursue this then DM Kesling and Ms. Schroeder could work out the date and details.

After further discussion BD Davies moved and S/T Franklin seconded for the District to sponsor a water rights seminar with Laura Shroeder, to be scheduled by DM Kesling and Ms. Schroeder. The motion was unanimously approved.

**Item #6: Delegation of Authority**

NPB Reynolds explained this is a review item; no action by the board is required. There was a question at the last meeting of where authority lies with each board member. The Delegation of Authority lines out what board directors can do. NPB Reynolds said the Delegation of Authority includes verbiage on Administrative and Program Committees. Neither committee have been used in a while but felt it would be good to keep them listed in the event the need ever came up.

Discussion followed as to what necessitated bringing this up. BD Ramsay said she often attends County Court meetings and was concerned if a subject pertinent to the District comes up. If she spoke during a County Court meeting, would she represent the District? Should the DM attend meetings? BD Davies suggested reviewing the County Court agenda and if there is an item pertinent to the District then a representative may want to attend; otherwise, there is no need for someone to attend all meetings.

CWMA Goss said that he and BD Dunten regularly attend County Weed Board meetings and SPB Morris attends community meetings related to water.

BD Davies acknowledged including the Delegation of Authority in the meeting packet was a good reminder for board directors to not speak on behalf of the District.

**Item #7: OACD Meet, Greet and Discussion**

OACD’s Andrea Kriener was present remotely. She wanted to discuss some changes to the OACD’s dues structure. She is the Executive Director (ED) of OACD, taking the role in May 2023. She wanted board and staff to be aware of a survey that will be coming out next week to assist the OACD in knowing districts’ needs. Presently, the OACD does networking and training through webinars. If a board director or staff haven’t received the survey, please let DM Kesling know so she will add them to her mailing list.

The next item from Ms. Kriener regarded dues. After she assumed the ED role, she received complaints about dues caps and how higher income districts were paying less due than other districts. She allowed for a year to review and see how much money it cost to run the OACD. Dues were then evaluated (see letter in board packet). She is now able to address. No district should pay more than .3%. Based on this, HSWCD’s dues should decrease about $2K. We are the second district she has been able to inform of a decrease.

**Item #8: Public Comments**

BD Davies and AA Pearson attended a Harney County Food Systems meeting the night before which featured meat producers in the area. Local meat shop Buermann’s Meats will open a satellite building on Snow Mountain Avenue (across from Harney Electric) that will federally, and state inspect processed animals. Their open house will be Monday, March 31st at 1 pm.

NPB Reynolds said she had expressed this at the at February’s Annual Meeting, but also wanted to let the board know her gratitude for their prompt action during the recent staff reduction of NRCS. “It was a bit stressful, and you alleviated a lot of it. I think SWCD is a better place to be.”

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Pearson, Admin Assist

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| District Representative |  | Date |