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Harney Soil & Water Conservation District Regular Monthly Meeting

Present: Board Chair (BC) Jeff Hussey, Vice Chair (VC) Susan Doverspike, Secretary/Treasurer (S/T) Scott Franklin; District Manager (DM) Jason Kesling, Assistant Manager (AM) April Mack, SONEC Breanna O'Connor, SONEC Braden Morris, CMWA Tyler Goss, Admin Assist (AA) Barbara Pearson

Present, remote: Board Director (BD) Stacy Davies; landowner Rachel Beaubien

Guests: Oster Professional Group (OPG) Janae Trindle; Ducks Unlimited (DU) Gus Williams and James Sulser; Harney County Commissioner Robb Frank

Absent: BD Carol Dunten, BD Ken Bentz, BD Sue Ramsay

BC Hussey called the meeting to order at 3:38 pm.

Item #1: Meeting Agenda (action item)

No one proposed additions or corrections to the agenda. VC Doverspike moved, and S/T Franklin seconded, to approve as presented. All present who was eligible to move were in favor (no one opposed). The motion passed.

Item #2: Financial Reports (action item)

In previous meetings, BD Ramsay had asked about the difference between retained earnings and net earnings. OPG's Janae Trindle explained that retained earnings are accumulated income over time, as long as the District has been in existence. The earnings include negatives and positives.

The District Manager maintains accounts receivable and is always current. An invoice is created, and deposits are matched with it. An accounts payable balance report can be made available to the board. Currently, accounts payable is paid every 15 days. The District is up to date in paying bills, and as long as the board sees the profit and loss, it should be aware of accounts payable.

VC Doverspike asked if net income is for the current fiscal year to date and was told yes. If any of these funds are leftover, they are added to the net earnings.

VC Doverspike asked about payment allocations for the most recent pickup purchase and if the allocations are for a specific reason. OPG's Janae Trindle said certain grants will pay for assets and are expensed to that budget. DM Kesling said 15% of a grant is allocated toward admin. He applies these funds toward budget gaps.

Following discussion, VC Doverspike moved, and S/T Franklin seconded to accept the financial report as presented. All present who was eligible to move were in favor (no one opposed). The motion passed.

Item #3: August 2026 Meeting Minutes (action item)

There were no proposed corrections. S/T Franklin moved, and BD Davies seconded, to approve the minutes. All present who was eligible to move were in favor (no one opposed). The motion passed.

Item #4: Ducks Unlimited Riggs Dam Bids (action item)

DU representatives Williams and Sulser introduced themselves and provided a project overview to design a check dam to replace the existing structure, which is part of the Foley Slough. DU is partnering with the District.

ODFW (Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife) requires a fish ladder to be included with the design; it will allow for passage during times of high and low water. VC Doverspike asked how much more the inclusion of a fish passage (hydraulics) adds to the dam's budget and was told it added 30 to 40% more.

The control of invasive carp in local water sources was discussed. DU's Williams quoted ODFW's Dave Banks that there are Redband trout in the stream and the agency wants to provide mobility to the fish. The ladder is for this species.

DU Williams said seven contractors presented bids. A list of bidders was distributed to the attending board directors (all board members received an electronic copy before the meeting). DU Williams said he received good references on the lowest bidder, JTN (from Andy's Custom Work), but he has not worked with him. He has no report on the contractor's previous work. DU always goes with the lowest bidder and not on best value or review.

DM Kesling said the landowner (Rachel Beaubien) would also go with the lowest bidder. Ms. Beaubien clarified that she and her husband were not just endorsing the lowest bid. She has spoken to people who promoted the contractor, and they also wanted to go with a local contractor to support the economy.

BD Davies said it made sense to go with the lowest bidder. DM Kesling said the bid process involving DU is different than other projects involving HSWCD. DU will do the initial review and ranking; the board will codify. DU Sulser said DU requires contractors to possess a certificate of insurance. DU's contract states that a certificate of insurance is required, but if this contractor is not able to provide insurance, DU would then award to the next lowest bidder. DM Kesling suggested the board make the motion to award the project to the lowest bidder if all criteria are met.

VC Doverspike moved to award the Riggs Dam project to JTN, provided there is necessary bonding. Otherwise, the award will go to the next lowest bid. BD Davies seconded. All present who was eligible to vote were in favor; no one was opposed, and the motion passed.

DM Kesling said the board awarding the bid to the lowest bid contractor will allow more projects to be completed; "this is a good thing for the basin." He added these projects are in a partnership with DU and the High Desert Partnership and will also fund SONEC Morris' position.

At 3:55 pm, Harney County Commissioner Frank arrived; DU Williams and Sulser departed the meeting at 4:05 pm

Item #5: Forest Service bid for 2024 Fire Fence Repair (action item)

CWMA Goss presented the project, which involves 7.51 miles of fencing, south of Myrtle Canyon. He expanded on the geographic region. Thirty contractors attended the bid meeting. CWMA Goss thought the distance of the project being five miles or more generated project interest. The lowest bidder (AtlasCor) pulled their bid upon realizing he would need to remove the old fence as well as install new fencing.

The next lowest bid received was from a contractor not recommended by the U.S. Forest Service due to a change of leadership. CWMA Goss said that Josh Giles of USFS suggested going with local contractor, Steve Basey.

BD Davies said he would submit his scoring sheet at a later date. CWMA Goss added that contractor Carpenter is from Klamath Falls, has not worked here, but has received favorable recommendations.

There was discussion about the project requirements. DM Kesling said the USFS requires the same material to be used when replacing fences. CWMA Goss totaled the scoring sheets, and Steve Basey received the highest score. Based on this, VC Doverspike moved, and S/T Franklin seconded, to award the bid to

Steve Basey. All who were eligible to vote were in favor. No one was opposed, and the motion passed.

OPG's Janae Trindle left the meeting with the board's thanks.

Item #6: Public comment:

- 1) DM Kesling met with the County Board today in a special meeting. SWCD's current contract will run out in 2027, which allows the BLM to provide fire recovery monies. The BLM and he scrambled to find the best agreement for the District and community and decided on a Good Neighbor Authority. Counties and states are eligible to participate in this; the District is not. The county will receive funds and disburse them to the District for projects identified by BLM. This will be a ten-year agreement (instead of other agreements that run two or five years). He said that when a disaster such as fire or flood hits, the District/county can help BLM spend the funds more efficiently. The County approved this agreement, and he (representing the District) signed on. It still needs to be awarded. The county will write checks directly to contractors. This will significantly decrease the money going through the District and would prevent the need for a federal audit (which the county probably already does).

Commissioner Frank said he appreciated the DM's work on this. He thought it would get money on the ground faster. VC Doverspike asked if this would include BLM, and the lack of staff with the BLM and government funding was discussed. Commissioner Frank said he liked the Good Neighbor Authority. He provided an example of work with Curry County.

Commissioner Frank requested a short list of proposed projects involving DU and flood irrigation. He said the county has a dilapidated irrigation system.

VC Doverspike asked if Harney County has a good winter (i.e., high snow level), what will keep the county from getting a flood like 2024? Commissioner Frank said the county has done no flood mitigation work. "If we get a substantial winter, there is still a chance of flooding." VC Doverspike opined that more trees and grasses need to be planted to prevent flooding.

There was discussion about Five Mile Dam and how improvements to the structure (widening, replacement, culverts) to the dam and other

structures. DM Kesling said Five Mile Dam is a FIP project with the water council. There is a potential project in 2030. Commissioner Frank said there is discussion between BLM and the county for a land trade involving Five Mile Dam.

Item #7: Adjournment (action item)

BD Davies moved, and VC Doverspike seconded, to adjourn the meeting. All eligible to vote were in favor; no one was opposed. The meeting ended at 4:32 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Pearson, Admin Assistant

District Representative

Date