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**HSWCD Special meeting**

**December 14, 2023, Harney County Community Center**

Present: Board Chair (BC) Jeff Hussey, Vice Chair (VC) Scott Franklin, Board Directors (BD) Susan Doverspike, Stacy Davies, District Manager (DM) Jason Kesling, County Weed Management Agency (CWMA) Tyler Goss, Sage Grouse Coordinator (SGC) Sarah Mundy, Rangeland and AgWater Specialist (RAS) Breanna O’Connor, Admin Assist (AA) Barbara Pearson

Remote: BD Carol Dunten

Guests: Maria Snodgress, ODA; Andrew Donaldson, NRCS

Absent: BD Ryan Peila, BD Ken Bentz

Note: The normally scheduled monthly meeting in November would have fallen on Thanksgiving. The board held a special meeting earlier in November and scheduled the December meeting on the 14th, combined with a staff Christmas dinner.

BC Hussey called the meeting to order at 4 pm

**Item #1: Approve Meeting Agenda.**

DM Kesling had an addition to the meeting agenda, labeled 8a: Audit Report. BD Davies moved, and VC Franklin seconded approval of the agenda as amended. All present who were eligible to vote were in favor and the motion passed.

**Item #2: Approve October and November Financial Reports**

DM Kesling said that in general part of this financial quarter is almost always in the negative. The Baker Corral grant has been completed, $24,800 has been expended during this period. RAS O’Connor has submitted final report for this grant. The BLM rangeland well drilled in Krumbo will have to wait until spring for completion, but the contractor requested a partial payment. The complete payment to the contractor will be $78,000. There were no questions on the November finance report.

Regarding the October report, this is usually when first quarter reimbursements arrive (July-September) and there are a lot of deposits. The district collected $90K and expended $30K, mostly on staff salary. There were no questions. BD Davies moved to approve both October and November financial reports; BD Doverspike seconded. All present who were eligible to vote were in favor and the motion passed.

Sometime during Items 2 and 3 BD Dunten left the meeting.

**Item #3: Approval of October and Special November Meeting Minutes**

October was regular scheduled meeting; November was remote meeting to approve zone map (agenda item #4). Both meeting minutes were reviewed by the DM and AA. DM Doverspike suggested the November meeting minutes be amended with the statement “to allow more eligible people to serve on the board.” There was no further discussion or amendments suggested for November.

Regarding the October minutes, there was a suggestion to amend Item #5 to reflect discussion leading to the vote. Following this discussion BD Davies moved to approve the October and November meeting minutes as amended; VC Franklin seconded. All present who were eligible to vote were in favor and the motion passed.

**Item #4: Formal Adoption of the Rezoning Map and Submission to ODA**

A copy of the updated zone map was presented to board members. DM Kesling said shapefiles of the rezoning was presented to the ODA. ODA reviewed and agreed the boundaries were proper and consistent with their rules and regulations. Approval by the HSWCD board would be formal adoption by the State. BC Hussey asked if the map had significant changes, and DM Kesling said there were no changes from the meeting, and this would be considered the new map from this time going forward. More population was added to Zone 2; Zone 3 had a population reduced (but there are more tax lots in Zone 3 than Zone 5). BD Doverspike moved, and VC Franklin seconded formally adopting the Rezoning map and submitting it to the Oregon Department of Agriculture. All present who were eligible to vote were in favor and the motion passed. Chair Hussey signed the map for presentation to ODA.

**Item #5: Staff Christmas Bonus**

DM Kesling is asking for a bonus for staff prior to Christmas. The District is able to offer $1,000 pretax per employee. In the director’s meeting materials, the DM provided 3 options. There was brief discussion on pay raises during the year and how other districts might address a bonus. DM Kesling said the bonus will be processed during the December 20 pay period. BD Doverspike moved to present $1,000 gross bonus to employees; VC Franklin seconded. All present who were eligible to vote were in favor and the motion passed. Staff present thanked the board.

**Item #6: Approval of Transferring Fund into LGIP**

DM Kesling said the final paperwork to set up this account has just been completed and paperwork signed tonight will be submitted. Information on investment was provided by the board. BC Hussey and VC Franklin will be able to view investments and receive reports and statements. The SWCD board will receive hardcopies.

Presently ~$90,000 can be invested in this period. The district will still have $30,000 to purchase the building if the board later approves this. The Interest rate is unknown at this point; DM Kesling believed it could range from 3-9% depending on the market. He said he believed the investment is guaranteed like FDIC, etc. There is no penalty if need to pull funds, but the interest value would be lost. This investment was recommended by auditor Rob Gaslin. Additional funds could be added in the next month. Investing is not considered spending in terms of grant; it will need to be pulled out and spent within 5 years.

After discussion BD Davies moved and BD Doverspike seconded approval of transferring fund into the LGIP as presented. All present who were eligible to vote were in favor and the motion passed.

**Item #7: Schedule of Annual Business Meeting**

A resolution is required to meet ODA requirements. DM Kesling suggested Thursday, February 22, 2024 at 6 pm but acknowledged final decision was up to the board. Board directors discussed and checked their calendars. Additional discussion involved encouraging landowners to speak to the district about how the district could meet their needs. VC Franklin moved and BD Doverspike seconded scheduling the annual business meeting on the date suggested, Thursday, February 22, 2024, beginning at 6 pm at The Historic Central Hotel. All present who were eligible to vote were in favor and the motion passed.

At 4:33 pm, Andrew Donaldson arrived.

**Item #8: CWMA New Truck (reaffirm surplus of 1999 F-150)**

BD Davies moved and BD Doverspike seconded approval of using the 1997 pickup as trade in for the new CWMA truck.

In discussing the new CWMA truck, DM Kesling advised the board that sometime between last Saturday (December 9th and Tuesday, December 12th) the district was the victim of fuel theft and vehicle vandalism. The 2022 Ford, the 1997 Ford, and the new 2023 CWMA pick up and NRCS side by side had fuel removed and the HSWCD pickups sustained damage. The 2022 pickup has already been repaired. DM Kesling at the time estimated a total of $1500 to $2000 for repair and fuel replacement.

A police report was filed, and Hines Police have already caught one criminal. If the combined damage exceeds $500 then a warrant can be issued for the other suspect.

The board discussed security cameras and who would be responsible for installation. The board requested DM Kesling investigate security options for the next meeting. VC Franklin opined that if law enforcement is willing to investigate then the district should pursue pressing charges.

**Item #8a: Audit Findings**

DM Kesling heard back from Auditor Rob Gaslin; there were no significant audit findings. The district will have to write a correction plan for not acquiring 3 bids over $10K for the 2022 F-150. Mr. Gaslin will present at the January 2024 board meeting and the 2024 annual meeting in February. The DM reminded the board that in the future the district may be required to submit two audits. BD Davies suggested the DM speak to another potential auditor located in LaGrande to indicate district would be interested in him doing future audits if/when Gaslin is no longer available.

**Item #9: Public Comment**

ODA Snodgress said she has heard good reports about the district from state agencies. She also provided updates on ODA staff changes. The ODA received an EPA grant to address mercury issues in water and is applying for water smart grants. The Biennial review for the Local Advisory Committee was held earlier today. DM Kesling said he thought it went well, with landowners and board members present. It was also reported during the meeting that staff and community engagement is going well.

BC Hussey asked about when OWEB staff came to Harney County for a tour and how positive it was as OWEB could see how vast the area is. He was concerned because in the past it seemed many grant applications were unsuccessful. DM Kesling felt the tour and current rapport has led to good relationship.

BD Davies asked DM Kesling if additional staff was needed. DM Kesling replied no, but he could add more if desired. He does not want to consider staff additions for the next two to three years.

CWMA Goss said he applied to the county’s Weed Board Committee as an at large, pending county court decision. DM Kesling said the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife administers grants and has asked him to be on its grant board. Approval needs to go through governor.

**Item #10: Meeting adjournment**

VC Franklin moved, and BD Doverspike seconded adjourning the meeting. All present who were eligible to vote were in favor and the motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 5:18 pm. Other staff and guests arrived for the meal.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Pearson, Admin Assist

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| District Representative |  | Date |