



Wasco County Soil and Water Conservation District
Board Meeting Minutes – November 8, 2023

Directors: Bill Hammel Shawn Sorensen Phil Kaser

Directors via Teleconference: Bob Krein Stan Shephard Ken Bailey

Directors Absent: Larry Powell

Associate Directors Absent: Bryce Molesworth

Staff: Shilah Olson Josh Thompson Jennifer Sampson
Abbie Forrest Drake Gilbert

Staff via Teleconference: Ryan Bessette Karen Lamson

Guests:

Wy'East RC&D: Michael Kluz, Rural Energy Project Manager

1:04 PM Call to Order

Bill called the meeting to order and asked if there were any additions to the agenda. None were made.

Minutes: Bill asked if there were any additions or corrections to the October board meeting minutes. None were made. *Ken moved to approve the October meeting minutes as presented; Shawn seconded. Motion carried unanimously.*

Treasurer's Report: Shilah reviewed the September Treasurer's Report, noting income, expenses, account and fund balances. It was suggested that the District should be shopping bank rates since many of them are raising interest rates. *Phil moved to receive the September Treasurer's Report; Shawn seconded. Motion carried unanimously.*

Public Comment (5 Min. limit/person) – None at this time.

Action Items

a. FY 2022-23 Audit Deficiency Plan of Action – Shilah reported the plan of action was emailed to the board, and the full audit presentation will be at the December meeting. The audit identified a deficiency, which is the same as has been noted in previous audits. The deficiency is that the District does not have the professional staff to prepare the annual financial statements at the level required for an audit, so RTO prepares the statements on their behalf. The Plan of Action states the deficiency is acknowledged by the District, and the solution that the District will provide oversight of the financial statements as prepared by RTO. If approved, the Plan of Action

will be filed with the Secretary of State. Phil inquired about the previously reported errors in QuickBooks that RTO noted. Jennifer explained that with the budget restructuring in the 2023-24 fiscal year, the accounts in QuickBooks were restructured to match, and a few accounts did not get properly realigned. Jennifer worked with Carol at RTO and corrected these errors. *Ken moved to approve the Plan of Action for the 2022-23 financial audit; Shawn seconded. Motion carried unanimously.*

b. Cost Share Requests – Abbie presented one cost share application:

Stevens & Maduro – This is an application for a rain water harvesting system that is intended to be used for drinking water, as opposed to irrigation water. They do not have any garden or yard of any kind, so this rain water system is strictly for the house. They live in Mosier and their existing well is not dry, but the water levels have dropped significantly, and they continue to drop. Discussion ensued on rain water harvesting and how this could be a trend in the future. The board acknowledged that they have not previously approved funding projects for house drinking water specifically.

Abbie led a discussion on a rain water harvesting project that will be presented at the December board meeting. This application involves a landowner who has already completed the project and will be requesting funding post-project.

Josh shared that he has been working with the Warnock family, who completed a project under NRCS guidelines, except that it will not pass their certification as it wasn't done to engineering standards. Discussion ensued.

Phil moved to approve funding the Stevens & Maduro cost share application. Motion died for lack of a second.

Ken moved to table the Stevens & Maduro cost share application until the December board meeting; Shawn seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Updates

a. Next Meeting - The next regular meeting is scheduled for December 6, 2023, at 1:00 PM, at the USDA Service Center and via Zoom.

Drake reported he has received a lot of interest from landowners interested in instream leasing on Fifteenmile. While the SWCD does not currently have funding for that, he's hopeful they can work out some sort of cost share in the future. He is currently in conversation with Freshwater Trust in an effort to get a copy of their documentation of prior instream leases to use as a template going forward.

Adjourned: 1:42pm

Jennifer Sampson