Wasco County Soil and Water Conservation District
Board Meeting and Budget Hearing Minutes – June 10, 2026

Directors:	Bill Hammel	Jeff Crump	Bob Krein
	Stan Shephard	Larry Powell	Shawn Sorensen
	Phil Kaser (arrived at 2:30)		
Staff:	Shilah Olson	Abbie Forrest	Dana Woods
	Drake Gilbert	Allie Marker	

Staff via Teleconference: Karen Lamson

Guests:

NRCS:	Emily Huth, District Conservationist
FSA:	Lissa Biehn, County Executive Director
Wasco County:	Melissa Napoli, Wildfire Coordinator
Wasco SWCD:	Pat Davis, Director Emeritus
Guest:	Kendal Johnson

Guests via Teleconference: Michael Miller

1:00 PM Call to Order
Bill called the meeting to order and asked if there were any additions or changes to the agenda. Shilah noted that a revised agenda is included with the meeting handouts but that the original agenda on the goldenrod paper was still included because it has the schedule of events on the back.

Minutes: Bill asked if there were any additions or corrections to the May regular board meeting minutes or the Budget Committee meeting minutes. None were made. *Shawn moved to approve the May regular meeting minutes, and the Budget Committee meeting minutes as presented; Stan seconded. Motion carried with Bill, Jeff, Bob, Stan, Larry and Shawn voting in favor.*

Treasurer's Report: Shilah noted that a revised Treasurer's report is included in the meeting handouts. Shilah reviewed the May Treasurer's Report, noting beginning balance, income, expenses, account and fund balances. *Bob moved to receive the Treasurer's Report for May; Jeff seconded. Motion carried with Bill, Jeff, Bob, Stan, Larry and Shawn voting in favor.*

The loans payable/loans receivable report was also included for information.

Public Comment (5 Min. limit/person) – none

Action Items

a. District Cost Share Program: Review Applications and Set 26-27 Rates – Abbie presented four cost share applications:

J. Crump – This application was tabled at the May meeting due to lack of quorum. Application materials were included again for review. Application is for a fuels reduction project to remove dead and dying trees. Jeff Crump recused himself from the vote because he is the landowner for this project. The project requested amount is $6100. *Bob motioned to approve the fuels reduction cost share application; Shawn seconded. Motion carried with Bill, Stan, Larry, Shawn and Bob voting in favor.*

K. Johnson – This application is for an irrigation upgrade. The planned project is to install one wheel line and upgrade sprinklers on the remaining three wheel lines. The packet includes all vendor estimates. Requested amount is $2845.

J. Harth – This application is for haul road. This is a continuation of a previous project. The requested amount is $4500.

St. Mary's Academy – This application is for an irrigation system upgrade. This project Is partially funded through a secured Bonneville Environmental Foundation grant. St. Mary's staff and volunteers will provide the installation as part of their match. $7500 is the requested amount.

Shawn moved to approve the three district cost share applications as presented; Larry seconded. Motion carried with Bill, Jeff, Bob, Stan, Larry and Shawn voting in favor.

Abbie then presented the proposed FY 2026-2027 rates. She is proposing a 2.5% increase to the current rates. A new item included on the list this year is range seeding with an ATV. Abbie worked with NRCS to come up with a rate of $50/acre – seed not included. Bob asked if the equipment rates include operator and equipment. Abbie responded that yes, they do. *Shawn motioned to approve the proposed rates for 2026-2027; Jeff seconded. Motion carried with Bill, Jeff, Bob, Stan, Larry and Shawn voting in favor.*

b. Providing Input on Miles Creek TMDL – Drake provided the Board with a brief overview of the Oregon DEQ TMDL program. DEQ has released its draft Temperature TMDL for the Miles Creek Watersheds. Shilah and Drake are participating in the Rule Advisory Committee process along with ODA and other partners and can provide feedback on the draft by Friday June 12. One initial concern is the shade cover baselines along the creeks. Shilah commented that she wants to encourage them to keep the TMDL realistic based on our areas site capabilities and that she is concerned about DEQ setting unrealistic expectations. Currently, the draft DEQ documents state there is 27% shade coverage and the DEQ goal is to have 77% coverage, which was only based on a small fraction of the Miles Creek systems. Shilah noted that the TMDL process is a couple of years long. The draft DEQ materials can be found on the DEQ's project webpage.

c. Vehicle Replacement Policy – Following discussion from the May meeting, an updated vehicle replacement policy was distributed for consideration. The policy outlines the roles for the Safety Manager, District Manager and Board in tracking vehicle condition, evaluating

replacement needs and approving purchases. The policy also establishes a budget of $15,000 per year to be placed into a reserve fund for vehicle replacement. The reserve fund is capped at $70,000. The policy is to be reviewed each year during the budget process to ensure the reserve level and replacement criteria are aligned with operational needs and market conditions. *Shawn motioned to approve the Vehicle Reserve and Replacement Policy; Bob seconded. Motion carried with Bill, Jeff, Bob, Stan, Larry and Shawn voting in favor.*

d. Trailer and Towing Safety Policy – A draft policy was distributed for consideration. This policy is intended to supplement the existing Vehicle Use Policy. The draft policy outlines clear expectations for the safe towing and operation of all District trailers. The policy requires that only trained and qualified employees operate trailers. It also includes required training, pre-trip and post-use inspections, and procedures for reporting accidents and equipment issues. Jeff noted that item #10 in the policy should also state that any tickets should be reported to the District Manager. *Jeff motioned to approve the Trailer and Towing Safety Policy; Bob seconded. The motion carried with Bill, Jeff, Bob, Stan, Larry and Shawn voting in favor.*

e. Rental Account with Global Rental Co., Inc. (Altec) – Based on the current District financial policy, Board approval is required to open any new credit account. Shilah proposed opening a rental account with Altec/Global Rental Company to rent a self-loading reel trailer needed to unspool electrical wire on the Wassenmiller property for the Highline Ditch project. The landowner has the equipment to dig the trench and can unspool the wire himself which will save the expense of having Coburn electric perform that portion of the work. It is anticipated that the equipment will be needed for one or two days, with an approximate cost $53.57 per day. Jeff commented that the District policy could probably be updated so that accounts of less than $100 a year don't need Board approval. *Bob motioned to authorize Shilah to open a credit account with Global Rental Co., Inc. (Altec); Jeff seconded. The motion carried with Bill, Jeff, Bob, Stan, Larry and Shawn voting in favor.*

Convene Budget Hearing & Budget Discussion

Bill convened the budget hearing at 1:49pm. Shilah reviewed the budget, noting changes that have been made since the budget committee approved the draft budget. Projected cash on hand was updated to include an additional month of actual revenue and expenditure, along with current accounts receivable and payable, which also refined estimated interest income. Both the income and expense lines were increased by $20,000 for a pending grant for OCF funding for a drone purchase. The OWEB funded Bakeoven Uplands project was update on the income and expense sides based on the most recent billing as well as a payment made to a participant that is pending OWEB Reimbursement. The personnel budget was updated to reflect an assumed 3% mid-year COLA. The office supplies and postage line was increased based on current year actual projected costs. The District Cost Share (past years) expense line was reduced to account for a payment made in the current fiscal year. The Highline Ditch Elimination Project, the Lower Deschutes Rejuvra treatment and the USGS Mosier Creek stream gage projects were adjusted to reflect refined anticipated funding requirements. These changes resulted in a modest increase in the District's unappropriated ending fund balance.

Public Comment on Budget (5min. limit/person) – None at this time.

Close Budget Hearing and Pass Resolution Adopting the Budget, Making Appropriations, Imposing the Tax and Categorizing the Tax –
Bill closed the budget hearing at 2:02 pm and called for a motion on Resolution 260610-BGT: adopting the budget, making appropriations, imposing the tax, and categorizing the tax. *Shawn moved to approve Resolution 260610-BGT for the 2026-27 budget of $7,256,603.00; Jeff seconded. Motion carried with Bill, Jeff, Bob, Stan, Larry and Shawn voting in favor.*

Updates

a. Next Meeting – The next regular meeting is scheduled for July 8, 2026, at 1:00 PM, at the USDA Service Center and via Zoom.

b. Legislative Tour June 24 – The OACD and Wasco SWCD are hosting a restoration project site tour on June 24 from 8:30 a.m. to noon. The tour will highlight ODFW's rangeland restoration work on the Lower Deschutes Wildlife Area. Space is limited and attendees are asked to RSVP to OACD.

c. FY 2026-2027 Annual Plan of Work – written update provided.

d. Updating Long Range Plan – written update provided.

e. 15mile Managed Underground Storage & Water Budget & FAST – written update provided.

f. Mosier Groundwater Restoration & Mosier Million #2 – written update provided.

g. Highline Ditch Elimination – written update provided.

h. Fires: CWDG Grant, 2024 Larch Creek – written update provided.

i. Director Elections – Zones 2 & 4 & At-Large 2 are up in 2026 – written update provided.

j. SDAO Best Practices Checklist – Public Meetings Training Reminder – written update provided.

k. Board Duties & Responsibilities Handbook – written update provided.

Agency Reports

a. NRCS – Emily reported that they have received their first-round funding notification. 3 EQIP projects totaling $350,000 will be awarded and 6 CSP applications will be funded with around $1.8 million to be awarded.

b. FSA – Lissa reported that LFP is available in Wasco County for a one-month payment. CRP emergency grazing is also available. Currently, and subject to change, May 26th is the date of the disaster, being in D2 for 8 consecutive weeks. Producers will have until March of 2027 to sign up for LFP. Assistance for Specialty Crop Farmers (ASCF) is available for cherries, strawberries and pears. For producers that have a login.gov account, enrollment begins June 1st. For producers

without a login.gov account, enrollment begins June 8th at the FSA office. The ASCF deadline is August 7th. Lissa wanted to remind everyone that after the most recent rain event, cherry producers should contact their crop insurance company. Lastly, Lissa noted that base allocation letters have gone out and now is the opportunity to increase / adjust base allocation acres. Stan asked about the grasslands reserve program. Lissa responded that the deadline was May 29th and the rate is $10/acre. Stan then inquired about fencing rates. Lissa deferred to Emily, who responded that the NRCS rates are $2/foot this year.

c. Wasco County CWDG – Melissa Napoli, Wasco County Wildfire Coordinator introduced herself. She noted that she has worked with SWCD staff for the last two years on the CWDG Grant and expressed her appreciation of this Board and staff for their support of the program. Melissa reported that as of the end of 2025, the CWDG program had not only met its goals but surpassed them. She noted that the Roadside Fuels Advisory Working Group has been created to provide operational and technical support and to identify roadside fuels reduction opportunities. Melissa also reported that a community chipping program has been added as an opportunity for residents within the grant focus area to dispose of some hazard fuels. Lastly, she noted that the round 4 funding opportunity application process will open July 1. She intends to seek approval from the County to apply for additional funding that would support county wide wildfire mitigation work. Bill asked what happens to the chips from the chipping program. Melissa responded that the chips are distributed to folks in south county to use as soil enhancements.

d. Wy'East RC&D – Robert was not in attendance.

Informational Reports

a. Internal Financial Review – No updates at this time.

b. Facilities Status – No updates at this time. Pat offered to assist with contacting Darrin from AKS for a status update.

c. Watershed Council Updates – Drake noted that most of the councils take the summer season off, so he is using this opportunity to execute the councils' plans. He also mentioned that he should hear something soon about the MUS grant. OWEB will be holding their Board meeting in The Dalles in July if anyone is interested in attending. The dates are July 28th and 29th, with a tour scheduled for the 28th.

District Manager Report

a. Work Plan Progress & Grant Status – Shilah reported the grant status report is included in the meeting packet. The District currently has 38 active grants and eight pending applications.

b. Activity Reports and Schedules – No activity reports were presented; however, they are available for review upon request. The schedule was distributed with the agenda.

Adjourn Regular Board Meeting at 2:45pm

Convene Weed Board Meeting at 2:46pm

Bill opened the meeting. The members present were the same as those recorded at the preceding regular board meeting. The purpose of this inaugural meeting is to affirm that the Wasco SWCD Board will serve as the Wasco County Weed Advisory Board, reporting to ODA in accordance with Resolution 26-007, and to affirm the adoption of the Oregon State Weed Board list as the interim Wasco County Noxious Weed list. Scott is working on a draft of a proposed Wasco County Noxious Weed list which should be ready for the September meeting. Shilah suggested that the Advisory Board meet quarterly, on the heels of the regular Board meeting. Bob inquired whether, given that the Advisory Group is newly established, meetings should be held more frequently than quarterly – potentially on a monthly basis for the time being. Shilah noted that these meetings could be added as a standing check-in at the end of each regular board meeting. Shilah also noted that the District will provide education and technical assistance while Wasco County will retain enforcement authority. The Board reached consensus to affirm all items discussed during the Weed Advisory Board meeting.

Adjourn Weed Board Meeting at 2:57pm

Annual Meeting Immediately to Follow at Bargeway Pub where the Annual Report and Audit will be provided for review.

Dana Woods