



DESCHUTES COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Minutes of Board of Directors' Meeting – April 16, 2020

Meeting location: via Zoom

Current Board Members

Director Zone 1 (Redmond)	Leslie Clark, Treasurer
Director Zone 2 (Sisters)	William Kuhn, Co-Chair
Director Zone 3 (Tumalo)	Jeff Rola, Co-Chair
Director Zone 4 (Alfalfa)	Susan Altman, Secretary
Director Zone 5 (South County & La Pine)	Colin Wills
Director At-Large #1	Robin Vora
Director At-Large #2	Gen Hubert

Directors present: Susan Altman, Leslie Clark, Colin Wills, William Kuhn, Robin Vora, Gen Hubert, Jeff Rola

Staff present: Todd Peplin

Other attendees: Lars Santana, NRCS; Teresa deBardelaben, ODA;

Order of business:

1. Call to order & introductions: Meeting was called to order at 10:15 a.m.; all present introduced themselves.
2. Public comments: No public comment.
3. Agency/partner reports:
 - a. Teresa said that due to Covid-19, ODA is allowing to move funds around as budgets necessitate.
 - b. Lars said that NRCS is still operating under Covid-19 guidelines at the service center. They are still open but by appointment only. Impacts to Todd are limited working hours in the office; NRCS doesn't want people working there all day, though employees can come in and get items necessary to tele-working. Lars sent two documents via email prior to this board meeting related to CIS projects – get back to him with comments, ideas, suggestions. Jeff was on a call with OACD discussing new grant opportunities for NACD and CIS was part of the priority system NRCS has in reviewing grant opportunities. If we have a CIS in place that will help us seek funding and getting extra staff to take advantage of available funds. Robin wonders what the timeframe for the two CIS proposals is and how will that help the district? Lars says the CISes are still under development and in draft phase. They will eventually have to be reviewed by the leadership team. Once NRCS gets approval for funding they will accept applications from interested participants; would get obligated likely June of 2021, then implemented thereafter. Lars explained the contract cycle. They start funding from top-ranked applications until they run out of money. We can start planning projects ahead of time and they can be implemented later on – there's a lot of planning that has to happen before a project can begin. Jeff said NACD grant opportunity is set up to supplement/enhance technical assistance opportunities we would get from NRCS.
4. Approval of minutes – March 2020:
 - a. **Motion #1 made by William Kuhn, seconded by Leslie Clark:** Approve March 2020 minutes as presented – unanimous approval.
5. Financial status report / approval of bills: Leslie reviewed the transactions since the beginning of March. The audit with the Secretary of State's office is done. We received two funding transactions from OWEB for \$17,068.43. Leslie presented a list of checks that need approval: IWM Printing, Todd Peplin mileage

reimbursement, Secretary of State, Kerry Newell for project reimbursement, CNA Surety for bond insurance, and Tank Law for our monthly payment, for a total of \$3,222.80. Thanks to Bronwyn of COID for helping the district get our financial reporting in order; this MOA is up at the end of the month. Susan asked how many hours Bronwyn suggested it would take in order to maintain the books now that they are correctly set up. Leslie said maybe 16 hours per month. Bronwyn also suggested a pay range of \$20-25 per hour for a limited hour contract bookkeeper. Jeff suggested asking COI for a one-month extension for continued help and perhaps seeing if we can contract with them on an ongoing basis for this purpose. William thought it good to have someone with grant writing experience as a bookkeeper. Todd thought that it is not necessary based on his experience in working with Bronwyn. Leslie agreed – money management and governmental accounting is good but grant writing experience is not a necessity.

- a. **Motion #2 made by William Kuhn, seconded by Gen Hubert:** to receive the treasurer's report – unanimous approval.
 - b. **Motion #3 made by Susan Altman, seconded by William Kuhn:** to approve the payment of the bills as presented – unanimous approval.
6. District management: Jeff discussed that we need to have a presence available in operating as a district even though our funds are limited at this time. In order to maintain continuity of the district, we need somebody. Todd has been that somebody who has kept the district going during this difficult time. The hiring committee discussed the applicants we have and who should proceed in meeting with the full board. We had four candidates and chose our top-three to proceed in meeting with the board. We need to decide how we will proceed – with full-time versus part-time and/or “permanent” versus “short-term.” We also talked about retaining Todd and if we can bring him back on part-time at a reduced rate. Jeff said we discussed keeping Todd on starting back up in the month of May until we have a manager. Robin is wondering about the OWEB grant due May 11th and if we'd be able to pull that together. Robin is also wondering if there would be a crisis if we essentially closed down the district until the end of May. Todd said we have an OWRD grant that will sunset at the end of June and that needs to be managed – same with water quality work with ODA and the other OWRD grant that has to be administered. There's also an SIA grant that needs continued reporting. Todd doesn't think it makes sense to just close up shop. We have an NRCS grant where we would want to continue that work. The phone keeps ringing, there are still people who need service; there is work that needs to be done. There are also grant applications that have a deadline of June 1, per Jeff. Robin asked what Todd would be able to accomplish for a few weeks in May. Todd's opinion is that working with NRCS would be the top priority. We have funds that are allocated for us but we have to do the work before we get reimbursed. Robin thinks that Todd makes a convincing argument for going half-time in May. Susan clarified that the hiring committee is proposing that Todd continue half-time in May as a contractor, not a district employee. Jeff said we discussed a full-time rate of \$3,500/month, which works out to around \$20/hour. Gen confirmed that we would propose a contract for \$1,750/month for the month of May. Todd added comments about the amount of funding that will come in from grants for various projects. Todd thinks we need a full-time person to run the district – there is more work than what part-time hours can accomplish and something will fall by the wayside with just part-time work for May. Todd suggested \$35/hour for his work for the month of May. Gen said that would equate to \$70,000/year for a technician position and we also need to hire a manager; we need concrete numbers rather than just back-of-napkin penciling it out. Robin is questioning if Todd is an employee or a contractor. Gen said we have been paying employee taxes for Todd, which technically makes him an employee, though he had a contract for an end-date, which is where the confusion comes from. Todd's “contract” has ended. Jeff said at this time, Todd is no longer on the payroll. Lars said there is some support set up for district employees from NRCS (access to building, federal computer) which might not be available to a “contractor.” Jeff said we are proposing half-time in May. Robin said that equals 11 working days in May. Colin asked for Todd's feedback. Todd said he would like to see full-time for the month of May; half-time won't cut it for the amount of work that needs to be done. Doing the math, Colin said that is about \$21.88 per hour in May. Susan commented that Todd has been invaluable for the district and that his help will be needed past June (or whenever a manager starts) in order to transition a manager.

Jeff mentioned the two candidates whose resumes were shared this morning – Erin Kilcullen and Steve Johnson. The third candidate is not going to be named to the board at this time. References will be checked after the next interview. We will schedule an executive session meeting for interviewing the candidates. Leslie, Robin, William, and Colin will come up with questions for the candidates. Susan will be moderator to keep the interviews moving along. The interviews will be via executive session on April 30 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

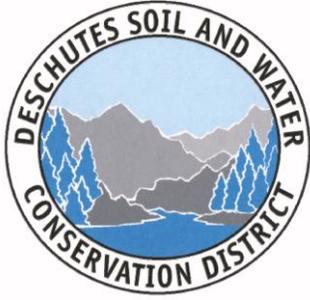
- a. **Motion #4 made by Jeff Rola, seconded by Gen Hubert:** to hire Todd for \$3,500/month at full-time hours for the months of May and June. There was discussion about having a specified time period for Todd's employment, which essentially makes it more of a "contract" time period versus an "at-will" employee who is subject to budgeting, as would any other employee. Susan said if we put restricted dates on his employment then we will have to come back and do this all over again if we want to extend his job. We should therefore not have dates or a time-period specified. The motion failed.
 - b. **Motion #5 made by Susan Altman, seconded by Jeff Rola:** to hire Todd Peplin starting May 1, 2020 as a full-time, temporary employee at a fixed rate of \$3,500/month for full time hours as the district budget allows – unanimous approval.
7. Bookkeeper update: Do we want to extend contract with COID, see if we can sub-contract Bronwyn, or seek an independent bookkeeper? Leslie doesn't think that COID would support sub-contracting Bronwyn. Robin suggests that we not continue to use COID or anyone in the water world as a long-term bookkeeper given the DSWCD may be working in a financial partnership with an irrigation district in the future and so there could be a perception of conflict of interest for the district. Jeff asked if we could do without a bookkeeper until a manager comes on. Leslie said we wouldn't have any payroll or payroll tax reporting until May. Leslie suggests that once we do hire a bookkeeper if we ask COID if they would be willing to allow Bronwyn to train the bookkeeper on what she has been doing? Susan quickly found a bookkeeper online. Leslie thinks it best to hire an independent bookkeeper versus having the manager do it. Susan said that none of the manager candidates had Quickbooks experience so we should go with an independent bookkeeper, at least to start. Several board members had names of bookkeepers referred to them and will share them with the rest of the board.

The next board meeting will be on May 21 at 9 a.m. Pending Corona virus pandemic status, it will be held via conference call or a to-be-determined location.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

Susan Altman

Susan Altman, Secretary



**Addendum: Motions of the Board of Directors' Meeting
April 16, 2020**

Motions made:	Vote result
<i>Motion #1 made by William Kuhn, seconded by Leslie Clark:</i> Approve March 2020 minutes as presented.	Unanimous approval
<i>Motion #2 made by William Kuhn, seconded by Gen Hubert:</i> To receive the treasurer's report.	Unanimous approval
<i>Motion #3 made by Susan Altman, seconded by William Kuhn:</i> To approve the payment of the bills as presented.	Unanimous approval
<i>Motion #4 made by Jeff Rola, seconded by Gen Hubert:</i> To hire Todd for \$3,500/month at full-time hours for the months of May and June.	Motion failed
<i>Motion #5 made by Susan Altman, seconded by Jeff Rola:</i> To hire Todd Peplin starting May 1, 2020 as a full-time, temporary employee at a fixed rate of \$3,500/month for full time hours as the district budget allows.	Unanimous approval