



Grant Soil and Water Conservation District
Kenneth H. Delano Agricultural Service Center

721 S. Canyon Blvd. - John Day, OR 97845 - Phone (541) 575-0135

MINUTES OF GRANT SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT'S
March 2, 2023 MEETING

Attendance

Directors Attending:

Rick Henslee – Director
Pat Voigt- Chairman
Phil St. Clair – Director via telephone

Roger Ediger – Director
Joanne Keerins – Director via telephone

Staff Attending:

Kyle Sullivan – District Manager
Matt Wenick – Weed Control Coordinator

Pat Holliday – Program Assistant

Visitors:

Aaron Roth – Natural Resources Conservation Service
Hailey Hughes – OR Water Resources

John Rowell – Grant County Commissioner
Shannon Wenick – Farm Service Agency

ADMINISTRATION

1. Call Meeting to Order – Pat Voigt called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.
2. Approval of Minutes – Pat Holliday stated the February 2, 2023 draft meeting minutes contain an error. Item 2, Approval of Minutes states the minutes approved were from the January 5, 2022 meeting. The date should have been January 5, 2023. **Roger moved to approve the February 2, 2023 meeting minutes with the correction. Joanne gave the second with the motion passing unanimously.**
3. Introduction of Visitors – There were no visitors to introduce.
4. Public Input – There was no public input.

REPORTS

5. NRCS – Aaron said he would provide the NRCS information in his report under District Business.
6. FSA – Shannon stated the office is tying up last year's drought payments for the 2022 Livestock Forage Program as well as working on acreage reports for NAP coverage. Two new revenue loss programs have been introduced to assist producers with financial losses.
7. South Fork John Day Watershed Council – The Council has conducted interviews for a summer job and decided not to hire anyone at this time. The staff is waiting for the weather to improve to be able to get out in the field and work on projects.

DISTRICT PROGRAMS

8. Grant Weed Control – Matt reported a slow month with the wet weather conditions. An agreement has been finalized with the Umatilla Forest to provide \$30,000 of noxious weed control and with the Ochoco Forest for \$7,500. He is still working on the new Title II agreement with the Malheur Forest. Matt reported he and Nate have met with several new landowners regarding noxious weed control. Matt, Nate and Neil attended the OR Vegetation Management Agency conference held in Seaside. Kyle and Matt, as well as Kent Pittard, Justin Hossfeld and Harry Quicke of ENVU received the 2023 Collaborative Effort Recognition Award for work accomplished with the Upper Landscape Resiliency Project. Matt stated he has been contacted by the Vale BLM District office regarding the possibility of them donating a spray unit to the Weed Department. He should know the specifics in a few days. Matt stated after the Board approved the purchase of a new pickup, he ordered one with the expectation of receiving it in March. He recently received information that there is no definite timeline for the pickup to be available. He was notified by Burns Ford that they have in stock a 2022 550 chassis with 690 miles, for \$75,000. The Directors discussed the need for the pickup and taking advantage of the opportunity to acquire it. **Roger moved to approve the purchase of the 2022 Ford 550 chassis for \$75,000. Rick gave the second and the motion passed unanimously.**

9. District Programs – Kyle stated the Program Status Report was included in the Board packet. OR Dept. of Fish and Wildlife recently hired Chris Holsclaw to replace Russ Powell in the Habitat Program. Kyle has met with several County representatives to discuss the District providing GIS services to the County on an as needed basis. The District will submit a proposal to the County on April 5th.

DISTRICT BUSINESS

10. NRCS Update on Activities – Aaron handed out an updated Oregon Drought Monitor map and an Oregon Snow Water Equivalent map as of March 1, 2023. The maps did not show much change from the one presented in February. Aaron reported the Soil Conservationist and Forester employment announcements came out today. The John Day office will be adding new office space to accommodate the new positions. Aaron presented the current Memorandum of Agreement between Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), OR Dept. Agriculture and Grant Soil & Water Conservation District for the Directors annual review.

Aaron provided an update on NRCS programs including the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCCP) and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). A new Conservation Implementation Strategy (CIS) program has been approved for Annual Grass Control and Drought and Wildfire Watering Strategy. Applications are being taken now with the first round of funding to be available in 2024. Information on the Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership Southern Blues Restoration Project was presented. The Joint Chiefs' Project will reduce and mitigate wildfire threats to communities and landowners, protect water quality and supply for communities and industry and improve habitat conditions for at-risk species. The 2023 application deadline is April 7, 2023. Information was also presented on future funding NRCS expects to receive from the Inflation Reduction Act. Aaron stated the 2nd Annual Natural Resources Fair will be held Tuesday, April 18th from 3 to 8pm at the Trowbridge Pavilion.

11. Board Civil Rights Review – Aaron presented a Power Point presentation on Civil Rights and SWCD Districts.
12. River Democracy Act – Kyle provided information and an update on the position the District has taken on the River Democracy Act. The new version of the Act has attempted to address concerns many had as well as reduce the number of proposed candidate streams both in Grant County and beyond. However, Kyle stated it appears the Act seems to be unnecessary as streams on public lands are already afforded a high level of protection and any additional designations can only bring more delay and red tape to good conservation on public lands. Kyle asked the Directors how they would like to proceed with its current comments expressing the District's views. Rick said he felt a new letter could get more specific with the District's concerns. It was the consensus of Directors to have Kyle write a second letter communicating the District's specific concerns with the Act.
13. Other – Kyle stated the District is changing the date of the 2023 Annual Meeting from March 2nd to April 6th. This change means a new Resolution setting the date of the District's Annual Meeting needs to be passed. **Joanne moved to approve the Resolution to hold Grant Soil & Water Conservation District's 2023 Annual meeting on April 6, 2023 at 4:00pm. Roger gave the second and the motion passed unanimously.**
14. Other -

FINANCIAL BUSINESS

15. Financial Report/Financial Summary – Financial reports for the month of February 2023 were reviewed.
16. Approve Bills – **Joanne moved to approve the bills and financial reports for the month of February 2023. Roger gave the second with the motion passing unanimously.**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:25 pm.


Board Chair

4-6-23
Date


District Manager

4-10-2023
Date