

## Meeting Minutes

Meeting Called to Order May 27, 2021 by Bill Reid, Chairman at 6:00 pm

### ATTENDEES

### ZOOM ATTENDEES

### ABSENTEES

William Reid	Patricia Downing	Alex Ponder
Don Young	Marcy Sowa	
James Gurley	Joy McEwen	
Robert Schmidt	Robert Webb	
Janice Denney	Gene Merrill	
Rhett Nelsen	Tracey Brandt (SWCD Staff)	
Carol Crawford	Joseph Kemper (OWRD)	
Arlyse DeLoyola (Staff)	Chris Hall	
Kevin O'Brien (staff)	Gordon Lyford	
Katrina Poydack	Nicole Resenbrink	
Janice Denney	Julia Raneri	
	Carl Summers	

### SCRIBE

Notes were taken by Arlyse DeLoyola

- **Minutes:** The minutes from the March meeting were presented to the Council for review.
  - **Jim Gurley made a motion to approve the minutes for March.**
  - **Rhett Nelsen seconded that motion.**
  - **The motion carried without dissent.**
  
- **Financials:** The Financial Reports from July 1, 2020 – April 30, 2021 were presented to the Council for review.
  - **Jim Gurley made a motion to accept the financial reports.**
  - **Carol Crawford seconded that motion.**
  - **The motion carried without dissent.**

### OLD BUSINESS

- **Council Appointment**
  - **Gene Merrill made a motion to appoint Alex Ponder to the Council**
  - **Rhett Nelsen seconded that motion.**
  - **The motion passed without dissent.**
- **Four Way Foundation Grant Application**

Arlyse announced that we were not selected to receive their grant this year.
- **Review of Organizational Capacity Assessment**

The results of the combined Organizational Capacity Assessments were reviewed and discussed.
- **Updated Water Resources Sheet**

Kevin presented the updated resource sheet and discussion was held on corrections. The list was corrected and made available on the website and in the office.

## NEW BUSINESS

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- **Congressionally Directed Funding Request (Wyden/Merkley)**
  - Kevin explained that he had applied for funds from the federal government through Senators Wyden and Merkley. An announcement was made with a deadline just days later for applications and he was able to submit a request. If approved, this could help with the Community Engagement effort.
- **IV Pilot Project**
  - Kevin announced that he had met with the Rogue Basin partnership and other partners who have interest in providing capacity funding for restoration projects in our area, focusing on Althouse and Sucker Creeks and the Upper East Fork of the Illinois River. He noted that this is all preliminary information and more meetings will be scheduled.
- **Joseph Kemper, Oregon Water Resources Department**
  - Joseph Kemper was introduced and explained what his position entails with OWRD. He noted that they are always looking for more unused wells to monitor for ground water data. He then fielded questions from those in attendance and promised to come to future meetings when he could.
- **State Budget Surplus**
  - Kevin shared that he had received an email from the Non-profit Association of Oregon regarding a billion-dollar budget surplus for the state. They noted that the legislature and governor preferred to make one-time payments with the surplus instead of creating new programs or services. NAO suggested writing letters to state officials to request more capacity funding for Watershed Councils and SWCDs. Kevin had a list of names and contact information that could be used to relay requests and encouraged all to submit letters. He offered to draft a sample that could be used.
- **Water Concerns related to Cannabis production**

Gordon Lyford was introduced and spoke about the effects of cannabis production in his area of O'Brien. Gordon served on the council for 10 years and stated that the statistics on Hemp farm inspections showed that one third of all sites inspected were mis-using water. He also estimates that 93% of marijuana grow water use is illegal.

Joseph Kemper was asked for comment on the situation and stated that there are 1000 acres in the Illinois valley with a ground water right (well). There are 10,000 acres in the IV with surface water rights. Less than 50 acres of the 1000 approved for ground water have been issued since 2015. Water use is a huge concern for OWRD and they have created a new position to audit Hemp grows.

He also noted that water level data has been collected and compared from the 80's 90's and 00's and showed that levels fluctuated seasonally, not year to year. In those decades, long term declines were not observed. He stated that now the wells do fill, but the rainy season is shrinking which causes a lack of recharge. Added to that the increased usage and the problem is exacerbated. He mentioned that well users with issues related to the fires can get a potable water program voucher for well testing.

Nicole Resenbrink spoke regarding the Citizens Against Cannabis Criminality organization and the movement to bring attention to our valley. She encouraged all to join.

Kevin wrapped up the discussion by stating that this crisis offers the Watershed Council an opportunity to connect with the community in a positive manner. Along with fuels reduction and fire issues, water is a topic that most every resident is concerned about. He suggested moving forward with a Water Quality and Quantity sub-committee which would include staff, board members and community members as advisors.

  - **A motion was made by Katrina Poydack to form a Water Quality and Quantity Subcommittee to meet, discuss and offer possible actions, solutions for community engagement, and recommendations to the board.**
  - **Janice Denney seconded the motion.**

- **The motion passed without dissent.**

## **CONTINUING**

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- **Staff and partnering agency reports were presented to the board:**
  - Kevin gave his report, updating that the Page Creek project may be able to be completed by the end of July, with timing dependent upon permitting and surgery date. He polled the council regarding new member orientation and plans to schedule it prior to his knee surgery.
  - Arlyse reviewed her report with no additions.
- Chairman Reid thanked everyone for attending and asked volunteer for the new subcommittee to contact Arlyse.

## **NEXT MEETING**

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The next meeting is to be held on **July 22** at 6:00 PM- at the office and via ZOOM. Details will be in your packets.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

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Meeting Adjourned by Bill Reid, Council Chairman, at 7:55 PM.

APPROVED MINUTES:     *Bill Reid*    

DATE:     7-22-2021

