



Approved June 20, 2023

**Clackamas SWCD Special Board Meeting Minutes for June 6, 2023**

<b>PRESENT</b>	<b>Directors:</b>	Via Zoom: Jeff Becker (Chair), Roger Fantz (Treasurer), Don Guttridge (Secretary) Jim Johnson, Jesse Nelson (Vice Chair), Jan Lee, Joan Zuber
	<b>Associate Directors:</b>	
	<b>Directors Emeritus:</b>	
	<b>Staff:</b>	Tami Guttridge, Chris Lapp
	<b>Partners:</b>	
	<b>Guest:</b>	Al Hrynshyn (Soil and Water Conservation Commission, Upper Willamette SWCD)
<b>NOT PRESENT:</b>		

**1 – CALL TO ORDER**

- A. **Call to order** – Chair Becker called the meeting to order with a quorum present at 9:03 a.m., June 5, 2023, in the Clackamas SWCD conference room at 22055 S Beaver Creek Rd, Beaver Creek, Oregon.

Chair Becker stated the purpose of the meeting was to discuss and provide a letter of testimony on Senate Bill 775. The bill provides that zone directors on local governing body of soil and water conservation districts in counties with a population of 250,000 or more need only reside within the district and be registered voters.

**2 – Discussion**

- Director Lee reported that this bill was an amended bill from House Bill 2958 which had set a population limit of 50,000 and removed all restrictions for zone director eligibility. Lee noted that East and West Multnomah Districts are having difficulty finding enough people to run for office.
- Director Guttridge reported that the new bill placed an undue burden on other counties and Soil and Water Districts (SWCD'S). Experience with and empathy for impacts of programs is important, he is opposed to this measure.

- Director Fantz asked that we state the position and concerns. Fantz stated that he hasn't seen the SWCD position be politicized in Clackamas County. He wondered how you establish an interest in land and conservation, and who decides who is best to serve the communities. He is opposed to the bill as written.
- Director Lee is opposed to the bill, she noted that there is a mechanism for anyone who wishes to run for a position on the board. There are two at-large positions, and there is the Associate Director pathway.
- Director Zuber noted the bill would affect six Districts (Clackamas, East Multnomah, Lane, Marion, Tualatin, and West Multnomah). She is opposed to the bill and would like to see a letter sent to legislators. If this is a problem for Multnomah County, perhaps a bill focused just on that county would be appropriate.
- Directors Guttridge and Lee both noted that there have been several candidates who ran for CSWCD director positions based on wanting to build political resumes, and not having an interest in conservation or land management.
- Director Zuber and Lee both noted that the Clackamas SWCD has 4 directors who do not own or manage 10 acres of land. Two are at-large positions and two served as Associate Directors and have conservation plans.
- Chair Becker reported that the Soil and Water Conservation Commission spoke with Directors attending the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts annual meeting in November of 2022. Most did not seem to support the proposal.
- Director Lee noted that with the Senate not being in session, this bill will probably not pass.
- Chair Becker asked if all of the Directors felt the Bill should be accepted.
- Director Johnson stated that he agrees with the Board that the bill is poorly crafted but is conflicted regarding the landownership qualifications. They have been used in the past to restrict who can vote and as a way to prevent people from participating in forms of government.
- Director Nelson is opposed to the bill but does understand Director Johnson's concerns.
- Director Becker asked guest Al Hrynshyn to speak regarding the Soil and Water Conservations Commission not taking a stand at the OACD meeting. Hrynshyn reported that the Commission took testimony, but the vote at the meeting was a 50/50 split in favor/opposed, with the divided being mostly eastern districts vs. western district. Hence, they did not take a position.
- Director Lee noted that the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts took a poll regarding the original bill and 70 % of the districts were opposed to the bill, but the OACD Board did not take a position.

- Director Lee has sent several pieces of testimony to District Manager Lapp. Lee felt the District could pull some points from previous testimony to include in a letter opposing this bill. Lee noted that the hearing for this bill would be at 3:00 p.m. today, therefore, a letter needs to be sent probably by noon today.
- Chair Becker noted that recruiting associate directors needs to be a priority.
- The Board was in consensus to craft a letter opposing the bill, noting that there are already pathways for non-landowners to become board members, the current bill is too broad and does not meet the needs of individual districts.
- Chair Becker will craft a letter and forward it to District Manager Lapp, who will upload it to the Legislative review website.
- Suggestions were made for additions to the letter:
  1. Clackamas Soil and Water Conservation District does not support SB 775; the District feels that the current pathways for board membership are working.
  2. Describe how a member of the public can become eligible to run for a board position other than landownership.
  3. Point out that the Board of the Clackamas SWCD currently has four members who do not own or manage 10 acres of property and qualified through other means.
  4. That it is important that the district boards have people serving on them who understand agriculture.
  5. If there are changes to be made there should be discussion of better filters than just population size for deciding changes to the current statute.

## **ADJOURN**

There being no further business, Chair Becker adjourned the meeting at 9:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Tami L. Guttridge  
Office Administrator