

South Santiam Watershed Council Board Minutes

March 16, 2016

Present: Eric Andersen, Nancy Gilmore, Nancy MacHugh, Richard bates, Katie Kohl

The group met at 3pm at Los Arbolitos in Lebanon. This was a business meeting only and served the purpose to keep the group updated.

We reviewed the January minutes. Katie Kohl had some comments that were incorporated into the minutes. Everybody was in agreement that the minutes could be approved.

The financials for 2014-2015, 2015-2016 and the recent quarter were presented to the board for review. They were sent out prior to the meeting. One of the main questions was why it appears that the council was running a deficit. This is due to the way the council is reimbursed from OWEB. The Council is usually not advanced money on a grant. There are cases when the Council advanced money from a grant however. Generally, the Council staff will work on a project and charge time and then request the reimbursement. For example time worked in January may not be paid out until March. In the past the council has usually requested reimbursements on a quarterly basis. We will try to change this from quarterly to bi-monthly or even monthly in the future. This will help with cash flow.

An issue related to our financials was the hiring of Marilyn Saunders as our new book keeper and payroll person. Marilyn has extensive experience in QuickBooks, which is our financial software and performs similar duties for local businesses. She was recommended by our accountant. Marilyn is hired as a contractor and comes to the office 2 times per month. She is paid out of our existing grants in the grant administration allotment. We are trying the arrangement out on a trial basis this spring and hope she wants to continue as it has been a big help. Nancy Gilmore, our treasurer, has performed these duties for many years and has wanted to step back now that she is a grandmother. Nancy will still be treasurer and is on the Council's Financial Committee and will continue to provide financial oversight. We really appreciate all her time she has invested in the Council over the years!

HB 2960. It is not clear how this will affect the SSWC and its employees. House Bill 2960 was created and signed into law in 2015. It created the Oregon Retirement Savings Board to oversee a retirement plan for Oregonians who don't have a 401(k) or other formal plan through their employer. It is an option for SSWC employees to utilize if desired. It is voluntary for employees to opt out. The Council provides salary employees a benefit stipend to be used at the discretion of the employee, but hourly employees do not receive the benefit stipend. The council should inform itself and its employees about this law.

A strategic plan for the council was discussed as a possibility for 2016. OWEB pays for planning such as this. A strategic plan is not the same as an action plan, which the council does have. The Council may have a strategic plan from years past but this most likely out of date. The Council staff, project loads, program emphasis and funding streams have changed significantly in the last 5 years. It may benefit the council to chart a course for the next 5 - 10 years. This would allow the council to be less reactionary and more proactive in defining the organizations direction.

Eric Andersen gave a winter projects update. Three new sites were planted and 1 old site had additional plantings (e.g. interplanted). The plant lists show that 76,750 trees and shrubs were planted winter 2016! Joe Thompson is the shared project manager between the North Santiam and the south Santiam Watershed Councils. He has taken over for Sarah Dyrdaahl and Lance Wyss. Joe worked with our planting contractor Rosario Franco to get the plants in the ground.

Eric and Scott Marlega put out a time lapse camera at upper Crabtree Creek to take photos of the side channel project site. The side channel was working well. The time lapse camera showed some of the high water events as well as the snow storms. The site did have some tree blow down, but that shouldn't affect the project. Eric has converted the photos into a short video that will be posted to our council webpage at some point.

The next Watershed Council meeting will be Tuesday April 19 from 6 - 8pm at the Lebanon Public Libray. The Youth Watershed Councils will present.