

Sherman County Soil and Water Conservation District

MEETING MINUTES

February 10, 2026

8:30 AM

USDA Service Center

Board Present

Jess Stutzman
Josh Hilderbrand
Brian Simantel
Ryan Thompson
Nick von Borstel

Others Present

Amanda Whitman, District Manager
Marylou Martin, Office Assistant
Taylor Bullock, Watershed Coordinator
Tatiana Taylor, Conservation Tech
Joan Bird, County Commissioner
Jacob Powell, OSU Extension
Misty Strayhorn, NRCS
Kara Lanthorn, FSA
Brent Smith, ODA (Call-in)
Jean Hulbert (Call-in)
Liam Caulfield (Call-in)
John Soininen (Call-in)

I. ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 8:30 am by chairman, Jess Stutzman

II. REVIEW/ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

None

III. MINUTES

Nick moved to approve the minutes from both the January 13th, 2026 and the January 22nd, 2026 meetings and Brian seconded. Motion carried with Nick-yes, Brian-yes, Ryan-yes, Jess-yes, Josh-yes.

IV. GUESTS/PUBLIC COMMENT

Joan Bird thanked Taylor and Marylou for giving a Watershed Council update to the Court.

Brent Smith from ODA talked about working on TMDL temperature renewal with DEQ. DMAs/partners are required to do shade gap analysis, 120-foot riparian buffer. ODA Hub-scope of work focus, it's a new system, lots of bugs. Working on monitoring in Buck Hollow. SWCD needs to submit SAP plan.

John Soininen wanted to check in to see if anyone had questions about the Speedway Project. He mentioned that all landowners who have lease agreements have submitted their permissions. They have been working with their consultants on the project design, and the application will likely be submitted with the DOE around April or May. They plan on scheduling a meeting at that point to go over the preliminary design and talk about questions and concerns. Jess asked when the construction would start and John stated that it would be mid to late 2027. It is a year-long process after the application is submitted.

V. TREASURERS REPORT

Financials and bank statements through January were presented and reviewed by the board. Nick moved to approve the financials as presented and Ryan seconded. Motion carried with Nick-yes, Ryan-yes, Jess-yes, Josh-yes, Brian-yes. Bills were reviewed. Nick moved to approve the bills as presented and Brian seconded. Motion carried with Nick-yes, Brian-yes, Jess-yes, Ryan-yes, Josh-yes.

VI. STAFF UPDATES

A. District Manager – See attached

- Weekly Staff Meetings
- Annual Meeting planning
- Neighborhood meeting planning
 - February 17th and 18th
- Attended Speedway and Biglow public meetings
 - Submitted letter for Biglow
- OACD Workgroups
 - Strategic Planning Workgroup
 - Board Workgroup
- Jones Canyon Fish Passage TA-submitted for \$105,158
- Partnered with Wasco Co SWCD on OWEB TA Grant
 - Three Canyons Riparian Habitat & Invasive Species Restoration Strategy (Oaks, Ferry, Macks)
- Small Grants
 - Team 16 (John Day) meeting
- Submitted Fund Requests
 - ODA-\$25,290.50
 - Council Capacity-\$27,843.85
- Working on Tree Sale
- Met w/ OR State Parks, Weed District, CWMA
 - Working on MOU to treat weeds and implement fuel breaks
- Attended Capacity Grant and Rulemaking Process meeting w/OWEB & ODA
- Meeting w/NRCS

B. Office Assistant—See attached

- a. Community Outreach

*Documents/attachments mentioned in minutes can be obtained by request

- Citizen Reporter
 - Sherman County Scholarships
 - Annual Meeting
 - SWCD Website & Facebook
 - Flyers around County-w/Tatiana
- b. Education Outreach (CAP)
- Conservation Awareness Program (CAP)-
 - Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (Andrew Meyers and Trent Gianella)
 - Biology Class and 6th grade
 - Watershed Model
 - K-12
 - i. Taylor-Watershed Model
 - ii. Marylou-water book and NRCS workbook
 - Homeschool-bugs
 - i. 8 students
 - ii. Special guest-Joan Bird
 - iii. Insect PowerPoint, bug bingo, nature journals and drawing bugs, bug trivia
- C. Watershed Technician—See Attached
- a. SG:
- 3 field visits planned this week
 - 2 applications submitted, 1 for teams 15 and 16
 - 1 completed
- b. CCS:
- Assisting Amanda and Tatiana-getting up to speed
- c. Education:
- Assisted Marylou-Watershed Model, K-1
 - PowerPoint for Bug-O Homeschool program
- d. NRCS:
- Soil erosion training 1/28-1/30 learning to use WEPs and RUSLE2
- e. Other:
- Watershed Council update at County Court
 - Working on Neighborhood meetings and locations for private meetings
 - Working on presentation for Annual Meeting and finding sponsors
 - Trying to get in touch with Herb with Gilliam SWCD to do drone flights
- D. Conservation Technician—See Attached
- a. Started January 5th
- b. Attended Small Grant site visit w/Taylor

*Documents/attachments mentioned in minutes can be obtained by request

- c. 3 staff meeting attended and January Board meeting
- d. Special Solar meeting-wow!
- e. Attended school w/Marylou-ODFW, Biology and 6th grade
- f. Homeschool-Bugs
- g. Edited Range Drill contract
- h. Assisted Amanda with OWEB TA grant for Jones Canyon Creek crossing for contracting out to design a solution

VII. ACTION ITEMS

- A. Personnel
 - a. Will do employee evaluations at next board meeting
- B. County Cost Share
 - a. No new applications
- C. Annual Meeting
 - a. Covered during Amanda's report
- D. Audit
 - a. Amanda presented the audit engagement letter for FY ending June 2026, needs to be signed by board. Amanda went over the letter. Ryan moved to approve accepting the engagement letter and Brian seconded. Motion carried with Ryan-yes, Brian-yes, Jess-yes, Nick-yes, Josh-yes.
- E. Board Trainings
 - a. The board training is set for March 17th, time still needs to be confirmed
- F. Range Drill Agreements
 - a. Tatiana updated the Range Drill Agreement, added proof of insurance from producers. Brian moved to approve the updated Range Drill Agreement, seconded by Nick. Motion carried with Brian-yes, Nick-yes, Jess-yes, Ryan-yes, and Josh-yes.
- G. Budget
 - a. The Budget Committee is set for March 16th at 1:00pm. Nick moved to appoint Trevor Fields, Brad Eakin, and Kevin McCullough as Budget Committee members, and Ryan seconded. Motion carried with Nick-yes, Ryan-yes, Jess-yes, Josh-yes, and Brian-yes.

VIII. AGENCY REPORTS

- A. NRCS-Misty reported that any solar questions for NRCS will be directed to public relations, and if needed, to the State Con. She can still talk to producers one-on-one about how solar will affect their contract. CRP sign-up is coming soon, NRCS will get help from SWCD. Misty is excited about MOU w/public ground for weeds/firebreak.
- B. FSA-Kara-just got the official word that they can do sign-ups for continuous CREP & CRP, includes HELI. 56 contracts will be reviewed for eligibility, anticipating ½ of them will get in. Hoping to hear about general CRP soon. Don't know the rental rate yet. If someone signs up for CP-2, but doesn't qualify, they can do a cost-share to enhance CP-1 fields. Don't have ARC-PLC sign up yet. ARC County/PLC in 2025-they will get

*Documents/attachments mentioned in minutes can be obtained by request

whichever is higher. Kayci and Kara are still helping out in The Dalles once a week. Their training for Bridge payment is on February 19th.

- C. OSU Extension-Jacob Powell reported that there is a free drone training at the OSU Extension office today from 1:00pm-4:00pm. This is a focused training for farmers wanting to purchase and use their own spray drone. On Tuesday, February 17th, there will be a CPR/Farm First Aid class from 8:30am-noon. The cost is \$40. A beginning OAT Farm Succession class is planned for March, and a more in-depth one planned for the fall. Jacob is hoping to get an estate attorney and/or financial advisor for the class.

IX. OTHER BUSINESS

Nick asked about sending the solar letter to State and Federal Representatives. Jess asked about our mission statement and Amanda read the mission statement and our vision out loud. The board discussed how to proceed with the letter and the SWCD's role.

Liam Caulfield mentioned that they are working closely with and having meetings with local fire chiefs and emergency services concerning fire, erosion, and water. They are reaching out to local municipalities on water concerns. They are very involved in the county and are talking to local stakeholders.

Amanda said she will forward Liam's contact info to all the board members if requested.

Jess showed concern that some things are not replaceable and the size of this project is a little scary.

Liam asks that anyone with questions or concerns, to please reach out to him. He also mentioned that they have worked on projects like this before in the Pacific Northwest. He has been in the county since 2021 working on this project.

The board further discusses whether or not to send the letter on to State and Federal Representatives. They discuss sending the letter on a personal level rather than as the SWCD. Nick would still like to send it on to representatives.

Liam Caulfield requests of the board to not send the letter right now, reminding the board that they have not submitted an application yet and are still very early in the process.

Jess asks for a show of hands for and against sending the letter on. There are 2 votes for yes and 3 votes for no. No further action is taken.

X. NEXT MEETING

Next meeting is March 10th at 8:30 am in the USDA Service Center conference room.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business the board meeting was adjourned at 10:38 am.

Respectfully,

Nick von Borstel, Secretary

Approved by the Board of Directors March 10, 2026:

Jess Stutzman, Chair