



35285 Millard Road  
 St. Helens, OR 97051  
 Ph: 503.433.3205

www.columbiaswcd.com

**Minutes of the  
 Columbia SWCD Board of Directors  
 Meeting June 18, 2025**

**Directors Present:**

Debra Brimacombe, Vice Chair  
 Bill Eagle, Treasurer  
 Paul Gibbons, Secretary  
 Dave Freytag, Director  
 Jason Busch, Director

**Associate Directors:**

David Taylor  
 Barbara Travis

**CSWCD Staff:**

Taylor Murray, District Manager  
 Jennifer Chavez, Operations & Outreach  
 Coordinator  
 Amber Kester, Resource Conservationist  
 Crystalyn Bush, Resource Conservationist  
 Rebekah Gaxiola, Resource Conservationist  
 (via Zoom)

**Public:**

Claudia Eagle

**CALL TO ORDER OF REGULAR BOARD MEETING: 5:01 PM**

**Prior Month's Minutes:** Bill moved, and Paul seconded a motion to approve the Minutes from the Board meeting on 5-21-25 as presented. **Approved Motion passed.**

Vote Record: Approve May 21, 2025, meeting minutes as presented.

Director	Yes/Aye	No/Nay	Abstain	Motion	Seconded
Paul Gibbons	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Dave Freytag	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Debra Brimacombe	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Bill Eagle	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Jason Busch	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				

**Financial Report:** Bill read the Treasurer's report aloud. There was discussion regarding a cleared debit transaction of \$100,000 in the Local Government Investment Pool (LGIP).

**Jason moved, and Dave seconded a motion** to approve the Treasurer's Report from 5-31-25. Paul explained that he would not feel comfortable approving the report until it is clear where the \$100,000 is from. Bill combed through the bank statements. Further discussion ensued, and Bill explained that it was an electronic deposit from the US Treasury. Paul clarified it was moved from the LGIP to the Bank Account, Bill confirmed.

David Taylor noted that the reconciliation showed total deposits of \$125,000. It was explained that match funding was received in February for two projects that would equate to \$25,000, which were given to deposit at the end of last month. **Approved Motion passed.**



- **Staff Reports:** Crystalyn shared updates on several current projects:
  - Conyer's Creek Restoration:** An in-stream habitat restoration project on a Clatskanie River tributary is moving forward with funding from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) Private Forest Accord (PFA) grant. Permitting is underway, and implementation is anticipated for next summer. The project includes large wood placement, potential beaver dam analogs, bank laybacks, plantings, weed control, and an agricultural component through partnership with NRCS. Crystalyn noted this is a unique and multifaceted project, making it an ideal opportunity to develop professional outreach materials. The District has contracted with a videographer who has extensive experience producing project-focused videos for similar agencies. The goal is to create a video that tells the story of the restoration effort, educates the public about the value of this type of work, and features the voices of participating landowners to highlight their experiences working with CSWCD.
  - McBride Creek Fish Passage Improvement:** This is a smaller, fish-bearing stream that flows directly into the Columbia River behind Columbia City. The final fish passage barrier on the creek is a perched, undersized culvert beneath a private driveway. The SWCD assisted the landowner in applying for a Small Forestland Investment in Stream Habitat (SFISH) grant, one of the first awarded through this new program, which will help fund the replacement of the culvert with a bridge. The project is being designed by Lower Columbia Engineering (LCE). Crystalyn remains working closely with the landowner and LCE and hopes to expand the project to include in-stream restoration elements like large wood or post structures. She plans to pursue grant funding for this work in early August. Brief discussion followed regarding bridge and permit costs.
  - Oak Woodland Restoration (Scappoose):** This habitat restoration project is underway on roughly 8 acres of oak woodland near the Scappoose airport. Crystalyn described it as one of the coolest partner and education projects the District has worked on. Recently, the SWCD partnered with the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) to host an Air Curtain Incinerator demonstration, used to dispose of English hawthorn that had been removed from the site. The District is also working with ODF to hopefully organize a chainsaw training day for their crews later this summer. While significant progress has been made, the woodland remains overgrown with invasive weeds, so continued weed control is planned along with opportunities for volunteer involvement. Crystalyn explained that this will be a long-term project, with work continuing over the next several years. Bill inquired about signage at the site, and Crystalyn and Amber noted that while the District's existing corrugated signs could potentially be placed near the roadside, the property is private, and signage will depend on the site's future use and the Port's preferences. Brief discussion was held.
  - Weeds:** A brief update was provided on ongoing weed management efforts overseen by Crystalyn and Amber. They noted that while the Scappoose Bay Watershed Council (SBWC) has taken the lead on garlic mustard treatment at Veterans Park in Scappoose, the SWCD continues to provide oversight and support for the work being done.
  - Upper Clatskanie River Restoration:** Crystalyn shared that the first phase of this project will take place on land owned by Manulife Investment Management (formerly Hancock Forest Management). The plan is to enhance fish habitat and stream complexity by placing large wood into the channel, using material harvested directly from the property outside the riparian buffer. She emphasized the simplicity and efficiency of this approach, having materials available on-site rather than requiring transport, and expressed interest in pursuing similar projects in the future. Brief discussion followed.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

- **Welcome Taylor Murray, New District Manager:** Taylor introduced himself to the board and shared that his first three weeks at the District have been busy but enjoyable. He noted that he recently visited the OWEB office to reconnect with their staff and begin reestablishing relationships. He has also been meeting with District staff to begin charting a path forward.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

- **Paid Leave Oregon Policy:** Deb explained that the policy requires board approval. Taylor noted that it is a mandatory policy, and the District will pay a monthly premium toward it. Amber clarified that

while contributions are already being made, there is currently no policy in place.

**Bill moved, and Paul seconded a motion** to approve the Paid Leave Oregon policy as presented. Jason inquired how the policy compares to those of similar agencies. Jennifer explained that it was based on a template from the Special Districts Association of Oregon, with only minimal modifications such as percentages and multiple-choice selections. She also suggested considering the addition of a process to address how Paid Leave would be handled for an HR position, and who would oversee the District's responsibilities during that time. Brief discussion followed. **Approved Motion passed.**

Vote Record: To approve the Paid Leave Oregon Policy as presented.

Director	Yes/Aye	No/Nay	Abstain	Motion	Seconded
Paul Gibbons	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Jason Busch	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Dave Freytag	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Debra Brimacombe	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Bill Eagle	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Jason Busch	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				

- **Make Malysa LGIP Administrator:** Taylor explained that the LGIP is still under Nathan's name. A copy of Malysa's email thread with the Client Services Rep was provided to the Board for reference. Paul asked if Taylor should be included in the motion. Deb explained that by making Malysa the administrator, she will be able to remove Nathan and add Taylor to the LGIP. **Bill moved, and Paul seconded a motion** to make Malysa Legg the LGIP Administrator. **Approved Motion passed.**

Vote Record: To make Malysa the LGIP Administrator

Director	Yes/Aye	No/Nay	Abstain	Motion	Seconded
Paul Gibbons	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Jason Busch	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Dave Freytag	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Debra Brimacombe	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Bill Eagle	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Jason Busch	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				

- **Private Forest Accord Grant Requires Bond:** Taylor shared that he received an email from Malysa indicating that in order to receive the grant, someone associated with the project must be named on the bond. Paul asked about the requirements for that individual, and Bill inquired about the bond amount. Crystalyn noted that there are different coverage levels and shared that she also has several questions she hopes to discuss with Malysa. Deb recommended scheduling a special meeting, sooner rather than later, once more information is available. Amber suggested involving the District's attorney. The discussion was tabled until further details are received.
- **Amazon Purchase Update/Line of Credit:** Taylor reported that the District currently pays approximately \$130/year for Amazon Business Prime. SDAO now offers a program to host Prime accounts at no cost to the District. To participate, the District would need to open a line of credit and would be billed every 30-45 days, streamlining purchases by eliminating the need to reconcile each order individually. Brief discussion was held. **Jason moved, and Dave seconded a motion** to approve moving Amazon Prime under SDAO. **Approved Motion passed.**

Vote Record: To approve Amazon Prime with SDAO

Director	Yes/Aye	No/Nay	Abstain	Motion	Seconded
Paul Gibbons	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Jason Busch	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Dave Freytag	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Debra Brimacombe	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Bill Eagle	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Jason Busch	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

### **Committees**

Paul inquired about discussing the Personnel Committee. Deb suggested postponing the conversation until Michael is present. She explained that the committees have become “stale” and there have been discussions about reengaging board members. Deb would like Michael to review the committees and the members. Jason asked for a list of current committees, and Amber recommended creating board binders that include policies and committee information. Brief discussion was held. Deb plans to ask Michael to compile the necessary committee information to support future discussion.

### **Strategic Planning**

Paul recapped that he had provided an update last month and emphasized the need to hire a facilitator to initiate the strategic planning process. He spoke with Christopher Lapp, District Manager at Clackamas SWCD, who highly recommended Amy Stork, praising her work. Paul noted that Amy recently reached out, and her schedule is filling quickly. He stressed the importance of acting soon and shared that the Strategic Planning Committee unanimously supports hiring her.

Paul reported that Amy’s estimated cost is around \$14,000, which Lapp described as a great value. While Paul found it difficult to obtain quotes from other facilitators, Lapp had received three, with Amy’s falling in the middle range. Paul estimated facilitation costs typically range from \$10,000–\$60,000, depending on project scope.

During discussion, Bill expressed concern about participating in an overnight retreat. Paul acknowledged the value of overnight planning but said that format can be discussed later. He noted Amy has creative ideas to ensure full engagement. Jason asked if Paul believes hiring a facilitator is necessary for the District’s future success. Paul confirmed, adding that it’s a key step to repairing the District’s reputation in North County and addressing issues he has observed since joining the board. **Paul moved, and Jason seconded a motion** to approve hiring Amy Stork Consulting to facilitate the strategic planning process. Bill considered abstaining due to concerns over an overnight retreat. A vote was held, and Dave opposed without comment. **Approved Motion passed.**

Vote Record: To approve Amazon Prime with SDAO

Director	Yes/Aye	No/Nay	Abstain	Motion	Seconded
Paul Gibbons	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Jason Busch	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Dave Freytag		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Debra Brimacombe	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Bill Eagle	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Jason Busch	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				

Paul will loop Taylor into the conversation with Stork and let him begin to take the lead. Deb requested that the Strategic Planning remain as an agenda item moving forward.

### **BOARD REPORTS**

- Deb shared that she recently visited local schools, including Warren Kindergarten and Rainier School, where she led students on “bug safaris” to teach them about insects and ecology. She noted that the experiences were enjoyable and well-received.

- Jason reported that hay yields are significantly down this year due to reduced moisture levels, which will likely make for a difficult winter for agricultural producers. He also noted how dry conditions are across Oregon and shared that he was caught in the Gorge during the recent Rowena Fire last weekend. Brief discussion held.

**Bill moved, and Paul seconded a motion** to adjourn the meeting. Approved motion passed.

Vote Record: To adjourn June Board Meeting

Director	Yes/Aye	No/Nay	Abstain	Motion	Seconded
Paul Gibbons	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Jason Busch	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Dave Freytag	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Debra Brimacombe	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Bill Eagle	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Jason Busch	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				

**REGULAR MEETING ADJOURNED AT 6:14 PM**

Respectfully Submitted by: *Jennifer Chavez*  
 Jennifer Chavez, Operations & Outreach Coordinator

DRAFT