



**Columbia
Soil & Water
Conservation District**

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**Minutes of the
Columbia SWCD Board of Directors
Meeting February 18, 2026**

Directors Present:

Michael Calhoun, Chair (via Zoom)
Debra Brimacombe
Bill Eagle, Treasurer
Paul Gibbons, Secretary
Alex Devin, Vice Chair
Jason Busch, Member

Public:

Claudia Eagle

**Lower Columbia River Watershed Council
(LCRWC):**

Rachael Barry

Associate Director:

Alison Charbonneau
David Taylor
Rachell Meyers, SBWC (via Zoom)

CSWCD Staff:

Taylor Murray, Executive Director
Rebekah Gaxiola, Working Lands Conservationist

Michael called the regular board meeting to order at 5:00 PM

Prior Month's Minutes: Jason moved, and Bill seconded a motion to approve the Minutes from the Board meeting held on 01/21/26, as presented. **Approved Motion passed unanimously.**

Vote Record: Approve January 21, 2026, meeting minutes as presented.

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

Financial Report: Bill presented the Treasurer's Report. **Bill moved, and Debra seconded a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report from 1-31-26. Approved Motion passed unanimously.**

Vote Record: Accept the Financial Report for January.

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

Bills to Pay: No bills were submitted for review.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

REPORTS

- **NRCS:** NRCS Staff are out sick and were not present for the meeting.
- **LCRWC:** Rachael reported that she had attended a recent Oregon Capitol short session “Water Day” in Salem and had met with Senator Suzanne Webber related to conservation issues. A bill to watch is 1.25% for Wildlife to support species and habitat conservation across the state. Additionally, Rachael discussed being active at recent Clatskanie Chamber of Commerce Meetings, as well as having actively met with Rainier and Clatskanie City Managers. Rachael discussed current funding for the LCRWC and expressed thanks to the CSWCD for the recent funding bridge. In terms of funding, Rachael explained she was seeking OWEB grant money for Clatskanie Basin landowners, and Federal Readiness Funds for Fox Creek. Rachael explained she was working through Small Grants with the CSWSD team. She announced that the LCRWC Board has been redefining their mission statement. Lastly, Rachael shared that her future LCRWC Board Meetings would include guest speakers and educational events. There is a volunteer planting opportunity on 2/21 to assist planting Fox Creek in partnership with LCEP.
- **SBWC:** Rachell explained that SBWC had received their technical assistance grant funding, which will help properties off Dutch Canyon Road, along S. Scappoose Creek. Additionally, SBWC is engaged in work along Salt Creek, potentially daylighting it, removing the culvert, and installing a bridge. Small grant planning for planting along the headwaters of S. Scappoose Creek, on BLM land. Rachell explained that there are some FEMA rules that are changing that could have a major impact on in-stream work, in some watersheds. Discussion followed, Jason expressed that this new rule could deter landowners from participating. Rachell stated that she was still trying to figure out what the impact of the new rule would have on the work SBWC and CSWCD do, and that she was working to get a meeting scheduled with the County next week to see how the County would interpret this new rule. The City of Scappoose is currently holding back on implementing these new rules. Rachell stated that WC’s and the CSWCD were all hoping to have these meetings so we can figure out how to move forward with projects. There is a volunteer planting opportunity in Scappoose at Veterans Park in partnership with LCEP on 2/28. ODFW has recently updated priorities related to amphibians and reptiles. There will be a turtle/amphibian forum on March 11.
- **Staff:** Taylor reported that the personnel policy was nearing completion after 5 weeks of work, and should be available for approval at the March Board Meeting. Taylor explained that primarily he and Jenn had been working to finalize the 88-page personnel document, and that other staff had also participated in getting it completed. Taylor reported that the first policy meeting had occurred to review the personnel policy, and that all policy committee members were present for the meeting. The next policy that will be addressed is the board policies. Taylor also explained that the budget policy committee had met earlier in the week to discuss the budget for 2026-2027. Taylor explained that the approach this year will be to ensure that all needed budget lines are available in our budget, and that we determine over the next two months what our requests will be for large capitol items, such as shop upgrades. Taylor stated that this would allow for a thoughtful and accurate budget for the next year. Taylor explained that given the quick turn-around for all this desired work to be completed, that he was exploring hiring a consultant or contractor who could help get our budget created in a more thorough and meaningful way than previous years, similar to the budget of Marion County, which is tailored for an SWCD. Taylor expressed that since we have just completed the migration from QuickBooks desktop to QuickBooks online, that it would be a perfect time to design our budget the way that we want, and the perfect time for Malysa, Jenn and Taylor to get trained on this new QuickBooks system, while a consultant helps build the system and budget that we want. Bill asked whether the staff will be attending the CONNECT event in Seaside and Taylor responded that the staff will be attending that conference the end of March and beginning of April. Taylor invited any board or associate members to join him for the Scappoose Town Hall event on March 7, where CSWCD will be hosting an outreach booth, and will be set up next to SBWC. Thanks to Deb for volunteering!

NEW BUSINESS

- **Cost of Living Increase 2026:** Taylor explained that the CSWCD was requesting a 2.5% cost of living increase for FY26, which would be effective as of July 1. Taylor explained that research has shown that the average cost of living increase for county workers in Columbia County is 2.5% for 2026. **Bill moved, and Debra seconded a motion** to approve the Cost-of-Living Increase for 2026 at 2.5%. **Approved Motion passed unanimously.**

Vote Record: Approve a 2.5% COLA for 2026

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

- **Legal Representative Agreement:** Taylor explained that the district's attorney, Eileen Eakins, had taken a position with a new firm, Cable Huston. Taylor explained that the district's attorney would still be our representative at the same rate if we so desired, and that he believed it wise to keep her as our legal representative given her years of experience working with special districts, and soil and water conservation districts. A motion was made requesting that the Legal Representation Agreement be signed, ensuring that we maintain our current legal representation of Eileen Eakins. **Deb moved, and Dave seconded,** a motion for Taylor to sign and return the Legal Representative Agreement to Cable Huston. **Approved Motion passed unanimously.**

Vote Record: Approve Executive Director signing Legal Representation Agreement

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

OLD BUSINESS

- **Strategic Plan – Amy Stork:** Taylor explained that the staff had completed their second meeting with strategic consultant, Amy Stork, and are excited for the direction that the process is taking us as an organization. Taylor explained that staff were working to populate the activities related to each of the 5 goals, which will create a 1 through 5-year plan for the district moving forward. Taylor stated that some of the next steps involve a meeting with him, Amy and Malyssa, to complete goal 5, and that a meeting would also be scheduled for the personnel committee Board members. This meeting will be hosted for the board members on the strategic planning Committee and is designed to help provide board direction as the CSWCD moves forward as an organization. Taylor remarked about how the strategic plan is a powerful tool that is bringing new clarity and direction for the staff.

BOARD REPORTS

Paul reported that he would be in India in May for a 3-week consultancy.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 5:32 PM

Respectfully Submitted by: *Taylor Murray*, Executive Director