

Marys River Watershed Council

September 9, 2008

Meeting started at 6:32 PM

Board Members present: Thom Whittier (Chair), Mark Taratoot, Curt Seeliger, Jennifer Beathe (Secretary), Bud Laurent (Treasurer), Wayne Phillips, Ken Crouse, and May Dasch

Contractors present: Sandra Coveny and Karen Fleck Harding

Reports

Secretary

No corrections were made for the August notes.

Treasurer

No financial report at this time

Council Coordinator

Thom reiterated that it is important to have dates and name on all of our correspondence.

Thom asked for direction regarding the letter of support from the MRWC and the Benton County Water Policy and Supply Plan. He asked if it made sense for the letter to include support from the board for items that don't apply to us; should we drop certain phrases and just keep the information to supporting the general plan related to our mission.

Sandra commented that part of our mission is to support things like economic development and social well-being. Other board members concurred.

Bud commented that he would like to see wording that includes native species.

Thom asked Sandra to continue working on the draft. The board agreed and decided that it can vote on a final draft by email in the next few weeks.

Agreement between the City of Corvallis and the MRWC to form a cooperative relationship. Bud thinks the city needs to establish that they want to work with the MRWC. He wants the document to address that the MRWC is a nonprofit and can not do any projects that it doesn't have secured funding for. Sandra suggested wording that would make it clear that when there is an opportunity to work together an agreement has been made ahead of time.

Mark commented that we have a limited capacity due to budget constraints.

Sandra said that a willingness to work together is the main issue/purpose of the letter.

Thom asked Sandra to send out a final version that we can approve electronically.

Curt asked if the ODFW grants were being changed for Rock Creek and Powell Creek. Sandra said that the ODFW grants on Rock Creek are being extended until November.

Curt asked what information was gathered about financial policies of other councils. Sandra said that she talked to six other councils and that they are all grappling with the issue of financial policies. She said that we have an understanding of what a treasurer's report is and what it should look like but have not decided how to track money that is earmarked for specific projects. Other groups use an Excel matrix for projects and costs that supplements the Quick Books financial reports. The Middle Fork WC just announced a job that is similar to what Sandra thinks we need. They all have bookkeepers, accountants, and some also have the money to do audits. Some groups have more local funding.

Education and Outreach Coordinator

Karen sent out the August 2008 Education and Outreach/Project Management Report via email. She said that the council did get funding on the small grants for Dunn and Alba projects. Karen also told the board that Woods Creek landowners are eager to have their knotweed treated and some are contacting her.

Chair

Thom reported that during the meeting with the Pam Wiley of Meyer Memorial Trust, she said that she was pleased to meet with a member of the board in addition to the coordinators. After project site visits with Karen, Thom reported that he has a much clearer picture of what is involved in the current council work. Thom was impressed with Karen's ability to do quality control and project management.

Liability Insurance

Do we need or want this? Thom has the sense that, after reading the DOJ booklet and talking with Janet Magedanz, we don't need additional liability insurance as long as the board members do their due diligence.

Wayne added that our biggest liability right now is that we don't have a clear picture of our bookkeeping and financial records situation. Bud added his concern that we are not producing adequate fiscal documents. Ken asked if there is an option to get "one-of-a-kind" insurance for specific potentially high risk projects. Sandra said that it was her experience that "one-of-a-kind" insurance is more expensive. Curt added that River Network offers insurance. The board agreed that, at this point, we do not want to pursue liability insurance.

Benton County Water Project Community Water Meeting

Karen and May went to the meeting in Philomath that overlapped with this MRWC Board meeting. Karen said that concerns were raised that some people want to make sure that adequate water is left in the creek and that we need a better understanding of what amount of water that is. There seemed to be concern that the meeting did not allow enough time to address landowner questions. Benton County does not have the authority to regulate wells. Bud asked if there was much talk on conservation and Karen reported that there was not, just what the situation is now. There were questions about groundwater supply, monitoring, well water levels, potential growth and global warming.

Discussions with outside accountants

Bud got recommendations from Technical Assistance for Community Services (TACS) and River Network to meet with Ann White in Corvallis to help the MRWC with its bookkeeping and financial reporting. Sandra and Bud reported that the meeting with Ann went very well. She said that entering numbers in to QuickBooks is one thing, but she suggested that we need to develop questions that we will be asking the database for reporting purposes. The board is directed to come up with the questions that it needs to ask of the database. Ann will take a look at our financial files and see if she can work with them “as is” or if it would be better to start new from scratch. She can provide documentation and procedural understanding to the council and has worked with nonprofits for some time.

Bud would like approval from the board to create a working agreement between Ann White and the MRWC. Ann’s hourly rate is \$50 per hour.

Sandra said that we know we have approximately \$19,000 available and we need to do this.

Bud noted he would like to set up a time that Thom, Curt, Sandra and himself can sit down and meet with Ann. Bud commented that we may not need to have a sustaining relationship with Ann, but that her primary objective will be to get the Council up to speed regarding financial matters. The question was asked by Bud if Ann would consider hiring someone at a lower rate to do the data entry portion of the work of bookkeeper/financials/pay bills. Ann said she might have someone and would let us know once she has a clearer picture of our needs.

Wayne asked how many checks the council writes each month. The answer: 5-20. Karen said that the complexity is that we have multiple funding sources and making sure that we can balance the accounts.

Bud suggested that we send a letter of thanks for the current bookkeeper’s service during the last year.

Ken moved that the council terminate the relationship with the current bookkeeper and that the council offers to purchase her computer. Jennifer seconded the motion. Motion was approved by the board.

Meyer Memorial Trust meeting

Sandra said that the meeting was a culmination of two years of relationship building. The MRWC originally submitted a proposal but didn’t get funded. The proposal would have supported outreach funding for our programs. Sandra, Thom, Linda, Michael Cairnes (Luckiamute Watershed Council), Joseph Postman (Marys Peak Natural Resources Interpretive Center) and Karen met with Pam Wiley who is a consultant for MMT who advises their Board of Trustees on fund allocation for the Willamette Basin. Karen provided a tour of Newton Creek to show her a collaborative and education focused project of the council. It is the hope that Pam left with an understanding that our

watershed council is doing good work and is serving an important need in the community.

One program that MMT is unveiling is the Model Watershed program. This program will have funding of around \$100,000/year for 10 years, including an OWEB match. The program allows for project planning, implementation and monitoring among other things. This type of program could help the watershed council become financially sustainable. Sandra also met with Joseph Postman of Marys Peak Natural Resources Interpretive Center (MPNRIC) to talk about the center and the role that the center could play in the Model Watershed program.

In Salem, on September 23rd, MMT and OWEB will reveal their call for proposals for the model watershed in the tributaries of the Willamette River.

The interpretive center submitted a grant proposal to OWEB. It did not get approved or denied, but deferred. OWEB would like to see more evidence of internal capacity and outside funding partners. The OWEB staff recently changed that recommendation from Pending to Do Not Fund. The MPNRIC feels the timing of this decision could have dramatic and negative consequences and asked the MRWC to help them appeal that decision. The board agreed and Sandra was to write a letter of support for that appeal.

Thom commented that we can't finish all of our agenda because we have approached the end of our meeting timeframe.

Karen will send out draft for a Stewardship Group proposal for the City of Corvallis. The city would like MRWC to be the applicant and collaborate with the City on the project. The project would enhance riparian areas, create snags for wildlife and thin forest stands for improved wildlife habitat. Some members of the Board were concerned with the thinning component but supported submitting the proposal for the riparian and snag creation, as long as all the Council's costs are covered.

Integrated Resource Management is developing a Stewardship Group proposal for invasive weed control on roadsides. Karen has been asked if we would be willing to assist with outreach, if costs are covered. Locations include Rock Creek, Woods Creek and Tum Tum.

Meeting adjourned at: 8:35 PM