

Jefferson County SWCD Board Minutes ~ February 24th, 2026

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

February 24th, 2026 - 12:00 pm

Jefferson Public Health Conference Room ~ Madras, Oregon (Virtually Via Zoom)

Members Present:

Board:

Lloyd Forman (Zone 4) - Chair
Rob Galyen (At Large 2)
Brad Klann (Zone 2)
Gary Richards (At Large 1)
Curt Locke (Zone 5)
Craig Weigand (Zone 3)

Community:

Scott Samsel

Staff Present:

Kate Haarberg
Adam Haarberg
Amber Herman
Ellen Hammond

Advisors/Partners:

Con Fed Tribes – David Stuart (remote)
Jeffco Weeds – Kelsey Josi
DRC – Grant Traynor
NRCS – Michelle Richwine

Call to Order:

February 24th, 2026, Jefferson County SWCD Board meeting was called to order by Chair Lloyd Forman at 12:04 PM with a quorum in place. Introductions were made around the room.

Approval of Jan 27th, 2026, Board Minutes. Minutes were emailed ahead of the meeting for review.

Motion #1: Motion made by Brad Klann to approve Jan 27th 2026, Board minutes. Seconded by Gary Richards. Motion carried unanimously with no Nays.

Approval of the February 2026 Financial Activity Report: Kate Haarberg went through the recent checking transactions, balance sheet, as well as the active grants.

Motion #2: Motion made by Rob Gaylen to approve the Jan 2026 Financial Activity Report. Seconded by Craig Weigand. Motion carried unanimously with no Nays.

Jeff Co SWCD Employee Handbook Review: Kate explained to the Board that our Employee Handbook was very outdated. She requested approval to add Juneteenth as a recognized employee holiday. She also asked that the jump to 15 days of vacation accrual (per year for full time) be moved up to accrue after 3 years instead of 5. Discussion was had about demonstrating more of the financial impact for such a move and inquires were made if there were a standard template that other SWCD's used. Kate explained how all the districts' rules and benefits vary greatly. It was decided to form a smaller group to develop and update the Employee Handbook.

Succession Planning Ellen – Board Input Requested. Ellen Hammond announced to the Board her intention to cut back hours beginning October, 2026. She would like Board in put to help put together what this may look like. Rob Galyen and Craig Weigand expressed interest in assisting.

Deschutes River Conservancy Cover Cropping Agreement w/JCSWCD: Grant Traynor said he would be taking over from Jim Bond, who is leaving. Ellen described the deliverables in the draft contract and felt they were reasonable. The Board did not have questions.

Staff Updates:

Adam Haarberg: Little Trout Creek Phase II: This grant has been awarded and Adam showed pics of his recent work to update the design. **HB Juniper Removal:** Only one landowner left to map and

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contract. Should have a little bit of funds leftover to redistribute to an already approved project that could easily add to their already approved acreage. **New Weather Station (IRA):** Adam showed pictures of the weather station and answered a few questions about the project.

Ellen:

- CCSIA monitoring Update – We have extended monitoring through 2026, but have reduced the number of samples.
- Chat w/ Merkley’s field Rep – Ellen spoke with Sen. Merkley’s Central Oregon Field Rep about potential projects. The Rep is very interested in meeting more with the SWCD to learn about our needs and work.
- Who wants to participate in the SIA2 monitoring discussions? Rob and Craig.
- Ranchlands mtg March 5: encouraged Board to participate. Lloyd and Brad are part of the group.
- Virtual Fence/Weed Day w/Wasco SWCD: hoping to offer a field day, but just learned that there will be something similar in Prineville in May. Will discuss at the Ranchlands mtg.
- Ellen’s priorities for work: irrigation modernization and succession planning.

Amber: Michel Richwine has taken over as acting DC for the NRCS for the next 4 months. Jenn Eatwell will still be helping and working on contracts in Jefferson County. A CREP opening is now available through March 20th . I have been working with a few landowners in hopes of getting at least one contract signed for this opening. The eligibility deadline for NRCS programs is coming up on March 13th so I have been working with my producers to complete eligibility and continue site visits.

Kate: Kate has reached out to Jefferson County Board of Commissioners and the Finance Director to reinstate the \$3500 contribution that the county has historically made prior to us holding the Weed Coordinator position. It’s looking good that we will get that again this next fiscal year.

Michelle Richwine: Michelle is the new temporary Jefferson County DC. Michelle reminded the Board of her history as former DC years ago and what she has been doing since then.

David Stuart: He had started working with SWCD and WC staff on potential monitoring projects, but BPA had requested a different focus. He is excited about being a partner with the SWCD.

Public Works Weed Coordinator – Kelsey Josi: Kelsey announced that she heard her recent OWEB grant would be denied. She felt she gained insight on ways to improve the grant moving forward.

NEXT BOARD MEETING – Next board meetings is set for Tuesday, March 24th at 12:00 pm.
Meeting Adjourned by Lloyd Forman at 01:40 pm