Minutes

# Lake County Umbrella Watershed Council Minutes

June 16, 2020

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Tom O’Leary at 10:03am

## In attendance

Colleen Withers, Tom O’Leary, Matt Withers, Roger Linton, Pete Talbott, Brandi Neider, Jack O’Leary, Autumn Larkins, John Taylor

## Approval of Minutes

Pete asked about Accounts Payable discussion from the December 2019 minutes. Colleen explained the Enter Bills method of accounting and confirmed that she visited with Don Liddycoat, CPA and he has helped her make some valuable changes to her methods in Quickbooks. There were no further questions about the minutes. Jack moved to approve the minutes as read. Matt seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

## Financial Reports/Discussion

Colleen re-visited the accounting discussion. She will be meeting with Don Liddycoat this summer to transition from a cash-basis method of accounting to an accrual method of accounting. Don believes this an accrual method of accounting is a better fit for the LCUWC as a grant-funding non-profit. Colleen will keep the Board updated as this process progresses.

Colleen reported that she has renewed the Board Liability for another year. The premium of $1,088 will be due in August. Tom asked what is the liability amount per board member within the policy. Colleen was unsure of the dollar amount, but would examine the policy and report back to the Board.

Colleen, Brandi, and Autumn explained that they are all finding the LCUWC office in the Lakeview Marius building is working out well for them and our LCUWC partners. Some partnering organizations have used the office as well. The Board and the Contracted Staff agreed to rent the office for another 6 months. Colleen reported the expenses associated with the office are Spectrum Internet and the office rent itself.

Colleen asked the Board how E-signing invoices is working for them. Signing members agreed the process is working just fine. Brandi, Autumn, and Colleen believe the E-signing has greatly decreased the amount of time it takes to get payments to contractors. Colleen showed the Board what a digital signature looks like on an invoice. She also showed the audit report created by the e-signing software after an invoice is digitally signed. She expressed that she is excited about having a quality paper trail for all of the Council’s transactions.

## New LCUWC Business

No report from Maria Snodgress, ODA (Maria is still working remotely, and will hopefully be able to attend the Council’s next meeting).

Colleen, Autumn, and Brandi explained the series of events that initiated a re-examination of the Council’s governing documents. Autumn’s experience with a FIP application, Brandi’s experience with multiple contractors, and the increasing complexity of Council projects has created a need to ensure the Council’s governance is clear and appropriate.

Brandi handed out a document summarizing her research on Bonding and Prevailing Wages. A discussion ensued to determine if the LCUWC should require contractor bonding and prevailing wage expectations. Brandi felt that contractor bonding would help reduce the risk involved with the Council’s larger and more complex projects, but after a discussion about prevailing wages, the Board agreed the Council is not directly involved with prevailing wages. The Board agreed to put the Prevailing Wage discussion on the table until it is absolutely necessary, but encouraged Brandi and Autumn to determine the contractor bonding language and requirements they feel comfortable with as Project Managers operating on behalf of the LCUWC. Once they determine the requirements, they can present it to the Board for a vote at the next meeting.

Within the next quarter, Brandi, Autumn, and Colleen will spend their time reviewing and editing the entire Fiscal and Procurement policy document. They will track all changes and submit the document to the Board for review and voting via email.

Autumn presented a final copy of the By-laws that were edited, reviewed, and approved. The document was passed around the table for each Board Member’s signature.

Autumn presented a Bid Evaluation Template she created. She explained this document is based on an unbiased point system and will assist she and Brandi in making fair and informed decisions when hiring contractors for projects. She expects the template to be used by a decision committee. Brandi asked if the Board or a Board Member should be a member of the committee? John asked if the landowner has any influence on the decision to hire a particular contractor. Autumn explained the bid template and bid selection process is fairly flexible. Project managers, Board Members, landowners, and any member of the Council’s Technical Advisory Committee (see Council by-laws) can be members of the selection committee. Autumn also suggested that as project managers, she and Brandi work diligently to develop a strong enough relationship with landowners that they all can agree on which contractor is the best fit for a project.

Pete was concerned about the point system on the bid evaluation template. He wondered if the point system could potentially be “learned” by contractors, who may take advantage of the system. He also questioned the efficiency of using the bid evaluation template and asked if it would take too much time to evaluate each bid? Brandi explained the template is meant to be a guiding principle. Sometimes, the Council only receives one bid proposal and no scoring is necessary. This will be a tool to use on high-risk, larger projects ($30,000 or more), or those who receive more than a few bids.

Autumn led a discussion regarding a conflict of interest form among the various parties involved with Council projects. She presented a document outlining some “conflict of interest” language. She explained the document is a rough idea and wanted the Board’s feedback and consideration. Brandi added that in a small county like ours, there is often a conflict of interest. The Board suggested that any party could excuse themselves from the bid evaluation process if there is an existing conflict of interest. Autumn will revise the document and file it as a useful tool should any requirement arise.

Brandi and Autumn led a similar discussion asking the Council’s opinion regarding when the LCUWC should advertise a bid proposal or when it is simply inefficient to do so? After discussion, the group decided to set a dollar threshold for advertising requests for bid proposals.

Pete moved to raise the requirement of a competitive bid process to $100,000. John seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. After more discussion, Pete moved to amend the motion to add “bid evaluation tools may be used.” Matt seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Colleen will add this language upon initial editing of the Fiscal and Procurement policy document.

Colleen presented a succession plan to the Board. She explained that this developed after the initial re-examination of all the Council documents. Autumn added that the OWEB FIP committee has been strongly emphasizing the importance of showing strong partnerships and forward planning via clear organization policies. Colleen explained the document shows the LCWUC process initiated with both a temporary and a permanent absence among the Contracted Staff. Pete suggested visiting with the Council’s accountant and asking about his role in the Contracted Staff succession plan. For example, what kind of records is he keeping regarding the Watershed Council’s books? Colleen will ask Don about this during their summer meeting.

Autumn shared information about the SWCD and LCUWC small grant program. Currently, the SWCD is always the fiscal agent for small grant awards, even when the LCUWC is the “grantee.” She and Brandi believe this system to be inefficient since the LCUWC has contracted its own Fiscal Administrator (Colleen) to fulfill fiscal agent responsibilities. Colleen reported that she is prepared to handle the extra workload and agrees that it always more efficient when the Council can manage all facets of the grant and project. Autumn added that she has already spoken with the SWCD Director and he does not see an issue with a request for change.

Tom suggested that the Board write a letter to the Small Grants team respectfully requesting to be the fiscal agent for the Council’s own small grant projects. John moved to have a letter drafted to the Small Grants Committee. Roger seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Since the FIP is postponed, Autumn set the additional staff for FIP discussion on the table and instead provided the Board with an update regarding OWEB’s fiscal status as it has been drastically affected by the COVID-19 shutdown during the first quarter of 2020.

Autumn reported that OWEB will be “borrowing” money from already awarded FIP’s to spread out project funding. This is not all negative as other, small LCUWC projects have been funded with this funding. There is still some uncertainty in the future of OWEB funding since lottery dollars are fickle, especially during economic struggles. OWEB will not open spring or fall solicitation. Autumn and Brandi are hopeful, this may give more time for funding to recover.

From a fiscal perspective, Colleen reported that she feels confident when it comes to the Council’s self-sufficiency. The group has a large contingency fund and also has a large number of projects already funded. Autumn also added that she and Brandi are continually tapping into funding sources other than OWEB, which allows the LCUWC to be resilient during difficult times.

Autumn also passed out brochures for the Forest Health projects. Due to the uncertainty with OWEB, she and the KLFHP will refrain from mailing these brochures to landowners for now.

## Final Discussion

Brandi provided a brief update regarding her involvement with the Network of Oregon Watershed Councils. She reported that she is happy to participate and sees it as a benefit to our Council by providing a “voice” for rural, isolated Councils. She will have more to report at the next meeting since she will be attending a virtual, NOWC meeting later this week.

Autumn also provided a KLFHP update and her involvement in the Lake County Cooperative Weed Management Area Board. She is a member of the Board and is helping them navigate some personnel changes. She also discussed another effort she is participating in as a result of the FIP application process. She and some partners are working together to create a “blanket” monitoring plan for upland projects.

## Next Meeting

September or October 2020, unless otherwise necessary.

Meeting adjourned at 12:24pm