



# Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission

## DRAFT Meeting Minutes

### March 10, 2020

Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board  
775 Summer St NE, Suite 360  
Salem, OR 97301

Commissioners attending: Sam Angima, Ken Bailey, Nathan Jackson, Barbara Boyer, Mary Wahl, Bruce Taylor, Doug Krahmer, Lois Loop, Woody Wolf.

Staff attending: Meta Loftsgaarden, Liz Redon, Eric Williams

Public attendees: None

#### 1. Welcome, Housekeeping, Introductions, and Commissioner Updates

There were no updates.

#### 2. Review and Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the September 24, 2020 meeting were approved. Moved by Woody Wolf, seconded by Ken Bailey. Motion approved unanimously.

#### 3. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

#### 4. Debrief from 2020 Legislative Session

Meta provided a summary of the 2020 legislative session. There are two components to the update: 1. OAHP funding; 2. the carbon bill. There was no bill for OAHP program funding; our partners requested \$5 million as part of the omnibus spending bill. There were productive conversations among partners and legislators during the entire month of the short session. One week prior to session end, the spending bill was posted. Even though the bill did not pass, its contents are an indicator of what would likely be included in a special session budget bill if a special session is called. OAHP funding was not included in the proposed bill.

There were multiple carbon bills at the beginning of session. One of the bills specifically allocated a portion of funding directly to OAHP. Another bill mentioned OWEB generally with the same intent. The bill(s) did not pass, but Meta noted that the funding amount outlined in the various bills for work that could be done through OWEB and/or OAHP ranged between \$10 – 40 million annually.

Regarding next steps, the OAHC has a statutory requirement to meet at least once annually. Neither OWEB staff nor our partners are ready to give up on funding, knowing that it often takes several years to achieve funding for new programs. OWEB staff will again recommend \$10 million in program funding to the OWEB Board through the agency request budget process. If the commission agrees, we will include this recommendation in the budget proposal reviewed by the OWEB board in April.

Doug expressed appreciation for inclusion of funds in the OWEB request budget. He noted the commission may have to come up with an independent funding source outside of agency budgets and would like to work on a bill for the next legislative session.

Ken agreed with an OWEB budget request. He noted there is some traction with the carbon bill and the commission should stay in touch with that process.

Lois noted that a lot of time has been invested to this point, and that the efforts should continue.

Mary agreed that efforts should continue, and asked if there are specific reasons funding was not included in the omnibus bill.

Ken asked whether it was not included in the omnibus bill because it was expected to be included in the carbon bill. Meta said that she had no indication that was the case.

Meta confirmed that the commission is comfortable with OWEB proceeding with a \$10 million agency budget request.

Regarding the reasons for funds not being included in the bill, Meta noted that the legislature and the governor set aside half of the fund balance at the beginning of the process. Most of the remainder, over \$400 million, was immediately set aside for wildfire, Oregon Health Authority, and foster care. That left a small amount for all of the remaining identified needs. Requests over \$1 million received a lot of scrutiny. While there was some concern about conservation easements, there was bi-partisan support for the program.

Meta noted, the governor issued an Executive Order on climate expanding targets for clean fuels, reducing emissions from stationary sources, and reducing emissions from fuels. Under the order, DEQ can cap emissions, but does not have authority for the 'trade' part of a cap and trade program, which is the mechanism identified to fund working lands programs. It is unclear what a carbon bill would like in the next session at this point in time.

The Commission cannot formally move bills through the legislative process that are not included in the Governor's Recommended Budget in November 2020. Until the Governor's budget is released, the commission can pursue other options for funding. Commissioners can individually participate in any initiatives at any time that they choose.

Mary asked whether a budget request will be dead on arrival without a legislative champion. Meta noted that there a number of supportive legislators who could potentially fill that role.

Meta noted that climate, wildfire reduction, and water are the three highest priorities for the governor. With regard to water, Bruce Taylor has been selected to co-convene a Water Future Advisory Council. Natural infrastructure, or natural systems that provide human benefit, will be a key component to this work in the future. The Council will focus on an investment strategy for natural water infrastructure as well as built infrastructure. Meta has been messaging that OAHP is a good fit for natural infrastructure work. Funding for these programs is likely to be considered in the future, perhaps in 2023. This is a good example of a potential funding vehicle outside of the carbon bill, and that we should be receptive to such potential vehicles.

Ken said that this is why the commission needs to remain active in exploring funding options.

Lois noted that clean water needs are not particularly controversial as a top priority need, and presents a good option for OAHP.

Lois requested that staff continue to keep the commission posted about funding opportunities that arise in the future.

Ken suggested that the commission meet more frequently than annually to continue these conversations, perhaps within 3-6 months.

Mary noted that there will be a look at climate resiliency, and other states, Washington and California in particular, are developing strategies. The commission would appreciate being kept up to date on those efforts.

Sam asked whether we have a mechanism to accept donated funds. Meta said that the statute authorizes acceptance of funds; however, donations are not tax deductible.

The commission discussed whether a committee is appropriate for determining next steps. This will be an agenda item on the next call. The chair will work with staff on structure for the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.