



Missoula Conservation District
April 24th, 2026, 5:30 p.m.
1075 South Avenue West, Missoula, MT 59801 – with virtual option

Missoula Conservation District Attendees: Tim Hall (Chair), Robert Schroeder (Vice Chair), Travis Greenwalt (Treasurer), Art Pencek (Supervisor), Bart Morris (Supervisor), Martin Oakland (Supervisor), Radley Watkins (Staff), Bryan Vogt (Staff), Sonja Skovlin (Staff)

Absent: Libby Maclay (Supervisor), Josh Schroeder (Associate Supervisor), Karen Williams (Associate Supervisor)

Call Meeting to Order – Chair Hall started the meeting at 9:08 am.

Public Comment – No public comment was offered.

DNRC Accountability Assessment – Watkins displayed the annual DNRC Assessment on the screen for review. The Board reviewed each portion and reached agreement as to whether the CD was complying with the specific laws and regulations within those portions. Some questions within the assessment generated discussion regarding district operations and reporting, Supervisors, elections, and governance, and personnel management.

District Operations and Reporting: The Board discussed whether paying for the Box account was redundant, given that files are backed up through One Drive with the County. Watkins stated that the County's former IT Department Head was going to help the CD migrate Box files to the County when the CD moved to the Exploration Center. The current Department Head hasn't offered to do so. Watkins suggested that talking to the County about getting on SharePoint is not a priority issue and could be part of the Strategic Plan.

Supervisors, Elections, and Governance: The Board discussed that the CD ensures there are oaths of office signed for each elected Supervisor and that they have been sent to the County Clerk. If these actions have not taken place, the CD needs to remedy this at the next Board meeting.

Personnel Management: Watkins stated that it is common during weeks that Board meetings occur to work over 40 hours for each FTE and asked if the Board would give blanket approval for overtime (OT) during those weeks (at 1.5 x hours worked over 40 in a week as federal law requires). Watkins explained that per the CD policy, currently, staff are not allowed to accrue OT unless it has been approved by the Board or Personnel Committee prior and they are expected to adjust their work hours from regular hours, if they have longer workdays. Watkins explained that sometimes it is difficult for staff to arrive later than normal working hours or leave earlier because of workload or meetings, and that occasional OT might be an appropriate reward for staff that frequently work a 14-hour day once a month. Discussing OT, the Board generally agreed that in the exceptional instances that staff work over 40 hours per week, they prefer staff to take comp time. Watkins told the Board that the current staff all prefer comp time to OT pay. The Board discussed whether approval of overtime as comp time only be part of the new Employee Handbook, if procedures are established to make this policy compliant with what the law allows.

The Board discussed but did not decide whether OT should be more for unforeseeable circumstances rather than for known events outside of regular work hours of 40 hours per week. They also discussed whether the office could be closed on the Friday after Monday Board meeting nights. Board members expressed contrasting views, with some stating that a government office should never be closed during the regular week, and others stating that an office closure is



acceptable if it is regular, consistent, and noticed.

The Board declared that they were meeting all the requirements outlined in the DNRC Accountability Assessment, and that Chair Hall should sign the document and staff should return it to DNRC. Chair Hall moved to approve the 2026 Missoula CD Assessment as discussed at the April 24th, 2026 special Board meeting. Art Pencek seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor and the motion carried.

Board Expectations – Watkins distributed two training documents to Supervisors: CD Supervisor Manual and Project Development, both developed by Montana DNRC Conservation District Bureau. The Supervisor Manual outlines CD authority, and Supervisor roles and Responsibilities. The Project Development handout outlines how CDs can identify, develop, and fund conservation projects. Watkins discussed dialog he’s had with DNRC regarding how they would like CDs to grow staff and the expectations that now come with that. He stated that DNRC is now requiring CDs to play active roles in managing DNRC grants rather than acting as a “pass-through” between DNRC and another entity.

Chair Hall remarked on the importance of the staff and Board developing and operating within annual work plans that reflect the CD’s strategic plan.

FY 2027 Budget Expectations – Watkins reiterated his understanding that he will assess funding needs based off the existing year’s budget and propose a draft FY27 budget in May. He will provide this draft FY 27 budget to the Budget Committee for review and discussion. Then the Board will approve the draft FY27 Budget at the June Board meeting. Watkins will then provide this “approved budget” to the county by the required deadline. This approved budget will be reevaluated and modified by the Budget Committee and Board once the Certified Taxable Valuation Information is received from the Department of Revenue and the official Determination of Tax Revenue and Mill Levy Limitations form is completed.

Art Pencek stated that he would like to divide the proposed FY27 Budget into three categories: 1) required expenses; 2) amounts needed for programmatic purposes; 3) staff salaries and benefits. The budget committee can compare these amounts against income and adjust the budget. The Board agreed that the draft budget should be sent out to the entire Board prior to the Budget Committee meeting so that each Supervisor can ask specific questions about any budget item.

The Board discussed how outside grants impact staff workload and the budget.

Members of the Board commented that they didn’t know where to find the CD’s mission and vision. Watkins showed the Board where it was currently posted on the CD’s website, admitting that it is not prominently featured or easy to find. They discussed establishing a central online location on the website where they could easily access that information, as well as the current CD budget, CD policies, governance calendar, and other relevant documents.

Updating the MCD Strategic Plan – Watkins distributed the DNRC CDB Strategic Planning documents that explain the process of developing a plan and contracting with strategic planning consultants. This packet included a list of consultants and their contact information. Watkins stressed the benefits of working with a consultant through this process, which he noted would take place outside of regular board meetings. He provided the Board with a copy of MCD’s 2023-2026 strategic plan, and a list of priorities that the National Association of Conservation Districts has identified, stressing that across the country, CDs are widening their conservation scope from just soil and water to remain relevant and serve their tax paying constituents.



The Board agreed that Watkins should start working on securing a consultant. They recommended that he contact Terry Profota with Sage 4 Success Nonprofit Consulting, LLC, given her experience working with MACD and MCDEO, and that he contacts at least two other consultants as well. The Board would like Watkins to present three quotes at the May 11th, 2026 Board Meeting. They discussed the potential need to follow procurement laws, depending on availability and anticipated cost.

MCD Employee Handbook Revisions – Watkins distributed the existing employee handbook, a version that was last revised in January of 2015. He stated that he is working on updates based on the Model Employee Policies that the state of Montana developed to ensure that MCD is meeting state laws. The Board directed Watkins to send a handbook with proposed updates to the whole Board to review. The Personnel Committee will be responsible for final changes. The Board agreed that staff could provide feedback on the draft revisions to the Employee Handbook. They discussed that once Watkins provides the Board and staff with the draft by April 30th, the Board would establish a timeline to receive comments. Once the Board approves the updated Handbook, then John Hart will review it.

MCD Governance Calendar and Policy and Procedures Revisions – Watkins provided the Board with a DNRC CDB governance calendar guidance document and a draft template of an MCD Governance Calendar. Discussion focused on timing of drafting and approving a budget, and Personnel, Grants, and Equipment committee work that needs to happen in the months prior to drafting a budget so that budget line items are in line with the CD's mission and priorities.

The Board generally agreed on the following timeline:

December 31st: deadline for staff to submit self-evaluations to the executive director and to the personnel committee.

Early January: staff evaluations with the Executive Director.

Mid-January: Personnel Committee meets with each staff member for annual review.

January 31st: Staff submit work plans to the Personnel Committee for approval.

February Board Meeting: Board approves staff work plans.

End of April: upcoming FY draft budget is distributed to Board and Budget/Finance Committee to review.

Mid-May: Budget/Finance Committee meets to review draft budget. Committee will ascertain if additional meeting is needed before bringing budget to the Board for approval.

June Board Meeting: Draft FY budget approved, then sent to County on or before first Monday of July as statutorily required.

June: Personnel Committee meets for employee check-in. ED conducts staff check-ins and meets with the Personnel Committee.

Early September: Budget Committee meets to consider final budget numbers based on the Certified Taxable Valuation Information and the Determination of Tax Revenue and Mill Levy Limitations forms.

October: Board approves final FY budget.

The Board discussed staff work plan calculations. Each staff person should leave a percentage of hours to account for other work that materializes. They emphasized that work plans meet the agency's mission, goals, and priorities. The Board also discussed that Associate Supervisors could be



tapped to serve on committees to decrease workload for Supervisors, and to also take advantage of expertise that associates can share.

Work Plans – It was discussed that in prior years the Personnel Committee had met with each employee for their annual evaluation, and prior to approving work plans. Watkins explained that Vogt and Skovlin have requested time to meet with the Personnel Committee. These meetings were scheduled for Thursday, May 14th, from 9-11 am. Staff would like the practice the Personnel Committee meeting with each employee for annual evaluation reinstated. It appeared the Board agreed to this request, but no formal action was taken.

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned by consensus at 12:03.

The next regular Missoula Conservation District meeting is scheduled for **Monday, May 11th, 2026, at 5:30 pm** in the Gerald W. Marks Exploration Center, 1101 South Avenue West, Missoula, MT, 59801. A virtual option will also be offered.

Voting Record – CD Supervisor	IN FAVOR	OPPOSED	ABSTAIN
Tim Hall	1	-	-
Libby Maclay	-	-	-
Travis Greenwalt	1	-	-
Art Pencek	1	-	-
Robert Schroeder	1	-	-
Bart Morris	1	-	-
Martin Oakland	1	-	-

Robert Schroeder

5/11/2026

Minutes approved by
Sonja Skovlin

Date
 5/4/2026

Minutes prepared by

Date