

## MINUTES

### CALL TO ORDER

The Oklahoma Conservation Commission met May 2, 2011, at the Agriculture Building Board Room located at 2800 N. Lincoln in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by Chairman Mike Rooker. He stated this was a regularly scheduled meeting in accordance with the Open Meeting Law, Title 25, Sections 301 and following as amended. The agenda for this meeting was posted April 28, 2011, at the front entrance of the building.

### ROLL CALL

Kim Tweed, Executive Secretary, took roll call and the following members were in attendance:

Mike Rooker, Chair  
George Stunkard, Vice Chair  
Dan Lowrance, Secretary  
Jim Grego, Member  
Matt Gard, Member

Others in attendance were:

Mike Thralls, Executive Director  
Ben Pollard, Assistant Director  
Steve Coffman, Financial Management and Human Resources Director  
Robert Toole, Conservation Programs Director  
Shanon Phillips, Water Quality Program Director  
Mike Kastl, Abandoned Mine Land Program Director  
Mike Sharp, Information Technology Director  
Lisa Knauf Owen, District Services Director  
Mark Harrison, Information Representative  
Johnny Pelley, Watershed Technician  
Dennis Boney, Watershed Technician  
George Moore, Watershed Technician  
Eldon Merklin, Cost-share Program Coordinator  
Ron Hilliard, Natural Resources Conservation Service State Conservationist  
Clay Pope, Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts Executive Director  
Blayne Arthur, Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry Associate  
Commissioner  
Stephanie McIntosh, eCapitol  
Kim Tweed, Executive Secretary

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Stunkard led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

A motion was made by Mr. Stunkard and seconded by Mr. Grego to approve the minutes of the April 4, 2011, Commission meeting as written. Those voting aye were: Gard, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

## **DISTRICT DIRECTOR RESIGNATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS**

Mike Thralls, Executive Director, presented recommendations for appointment of conservation district directors as listed in Exhibit #1. A motion was made by Mr. Grego and seconded by Mr. Lowrance to approve district director appointments as listed with terms to expire as indicated. Those voting aye were: Gard, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

## **DISTRICT DIRECTOR ELECTED POSITION #1**

To meet requirements for Conservation District Director Elections for Position #1, a motion was made by Mr. Stunkard and seconded by Mr. Gard to authorize the Executive Director to certify eligibility of candidates filing a Notification and Declaration of Candidacy for District Director, Position #1 during the filing period from May 2-13, 2011 and to approve polling places in those conservation districts that will be holding elections for District Director, Position #1 on June 7, 2011. Those voting aye were: Gard, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

## **CLAIMS/FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

Steve Coffman, Financial Management and Human Resources Director, presented the claims and financial statement as listed in Exhibit #2. A motion was made by Mr. Grego and seconded by Mr. Stunkard to approve the claims and financial statement. Those voting aye were: Gard, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

## **OUT OF STATE TRAVEL REQUESTS**

Mr. Thralls presented travel requests for approval as listed in Exhibit #3. A motion was made by Mr. Stunkard and seconded by Mr. Gard to approve the requests as listed. Those voting aye were: Gard, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

## **NACD LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE**

Mr. Thralls stated that the National Association of Conservation Districts Summer Legislative Conference is scheduled for July 17-19, 2011 at the Washington Court Hotel in Washington, D.C. Approximate cost for attendance is \$1600 per person. Mr. Thralls stated that the Commission will be receiving a budget cut somewhere around \$300,000 to its general revenue and therefore is not recommending staff attendance at the meeting. After discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Stunkard and seconded by Mr. Lowrance to table this item to the June meeting. Those voting aye were: Gard, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

## **AMENDED AGREEMENT WITH KINGFISHER COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

Robert Toole, Conservation Programs Director, presented an agreement with the Kingfisher County Conservation District, No. OCC-214, Amendment #1, to reduce flooding and flooding impacts in the City of Kingfisher. The agreement is being amended to allow the district to serve as the local property management agency to oversee the management of Commission properties in the

City of Kingfisher, to revise the administrative fee, and to extend the period of the agreement. (Exhibit #4). A motion was made by Mr. Grego and seconded by Mr. Lowrance to approve the amended agreement as presented. Those voting aye were: Gard, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

#### **PAULS VALLEY WATERSHED O&M SHOP**

Mr. Thralls stated that staff is requesting to use up to \$150,000.00 from bond proceeds for the purchase of property and construction and equipping of a watershed dam operation and maintenance shop in Pauls Valley, Oklahoma. Mr. Toole answered questions and stated that two shops have been constructed, one in Clinton and one in Chickasha. A motion was made by Mr. Grego and seconded by Mr. Lowrance to approve the request. Those voting aye were: Gard, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

#### **COST SHARE PROGRAM YEAR 11B SPECIAL REQUEST FROM DELAWARE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

Mr. Toole stated that the Delaware County Conservation District submitted a request to add Spring Development (574-1), Pipeline (516), and Watering Facility (614) for its Cost-share Program Year 11B. After discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Lowrance and seconded by Mr. Grego to approve the request. Those voting aye were: Gard, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

None.

#### **OKLAHOMA CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEMBERS**

Mr. Gard attended OACD legislative days, an Oklahoma Ag Leadership Program class, the Lahoma Canola Field Day and Fairview's Eggs and Issues breakfast meeting.

Mr. Grego also participated in an OACD legislative day.

Mr. Lowrance attended OSU's Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources Day at the Capitol.

Mr. Stunkard attended the Cherokee County Conservation District board meeting to discuss the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program and the 319 Program. He also attended Wagoner County's 56<sup>th</sup> annual stewardship breakfast.

Mr. Grego asked the status of the Wister Lake 319 project. Mr. Thralls stated that agencies met to discuss the PVIA proposed contracts with the USGS to develop a watershed plan.

Clay Pope arrived at 10:00 a.m.

## **OKLAHOMA CONSERVATION COMMISSION STAFF**

*Administration - Executive Director:* Mr. Thralls reported on legislation stating that SB 629 grants the Commission authorization to have general counsel because another bill, HB 1223, if passed, would remove the authorization. He stated that the consolidation bill with the Oklahoma Scenic Rivers Commission is dead; however there is still an active bill to consolidate some agencies into a large administrative agency. In addition, Mr. Thralls stated that information technology consolidation is still active.

Mr. Thralls stated that the Commission will probably receive a three percent cut but the bond payment will be held harmless.

Mr. Thralls reported on attending an outdoor classroom dedication held by the Kay County Conservation District and that Congressman Lucas attended.

*District Services Division:* Lisa Knauf Owen, Director, reported on visiting districts in southeast Oklahoma with NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations, Jamey Wood. They discussed the contributions agreement and technical services provider. They also attended the state forestry contest and a land judging contest.

*Water Quality Program:* Shanon Phillips, Director, stated that Oklahoma was selected to host the 2012 National Nonpoint Source Monitoring Conference that will focus on success stories. The date and location of the conference will be determined.

Ms. Phillips reported on meeting with the Nonpoint Source Working Group to review proposals the state is submitting to the Environmental Protection Agency for special funds.

Ms. Phillips stated that staff is surveying flood damage to conservation practices in northeast Oklahoma. She was questioned about the Stamper Project and Ms. Phillips stated that the project and the Noble Foundation will be jointly applying for an EDGE grant.

*Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Program:* Mike Kastl, Director, stated that heavy rains have shut down construction on three active sites. He stated that staff is negotiating with two engineering firms for sites in Rogers County and Wagoner County.

*Financial Management and Human Resources Division:* Mr. Coffman stated that the Commission's audit would be completed by the end of the month. He and Mr. Pollard met with Risk Management to discuss the renewal of liability insurance for conservation districts.

*Information Technology Division:* Mike Sharp, Director, reported on reviewing the State Chief Information Officer's IT Consolidation Study and identified errors in the amount the Commission spent on IT sources in FY2009. Mr. Sharp made the CIO aware of these errors. He stated that the company preparing the report went through CORE to identify IT expenditures however some of those identified expenditures included construction costs because of the codes used.

Mr. Sharp reported on IT consolidation, SB 867, stating that an agency would not be consolidated if it can show consolidation would increase costs or the costs are with non-appropriated funds.

Blayne Arthur arrived at 10:23 a.m.

*Conservation Programs Division:* In the interest of time, Robert Toole, Director, stated that a written report was included in the meeting packet. Mr. Thralls then reported on the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers' landmark that has been placed on the front lawn of the Agriculture Building to commemorate the USDA Small Watershed Program. A dedication is planned during the upcoming national watershed conference.

*Administration - Assistant Director:* Mr. Pollard stated that the National Land and Range Judging Contest begins this week with the banquet on May 5. On May 13 there is a media event being held for the Sugar Creek Watershed L44 site rehabilitation project.

Mr. Pollard stated that this week is Public Employee Recognition Week and several activities are planned for staff including a staff meeting today at the Chesapeake Boathouse. On Thursday, May 5 a ceremony is being held at 2:00 p.m. at the Capitol for Quality Team Day. The commission submitted three projects for recognition: the Water Quality Division's work with the Ag Lab, the watershed program, and the Awards and Recognition Committee.

## **OKLAHOMA ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS**

Clay Pope, Executive Director, spoke about the budget saying he does not want conservation cut more than any other agency. He stated that the bill, SB 629, to allow the Commission to have general counsel passed the House 95-0.

Mr. Pope also reported on the National Land and Range Judging Contest and applauded Mark Harrison for his work with the program. He also thanked Don Bartolina and the Oklahoma County Conservation District, the NRCS and Oklahoma State University for their support. The OACD Executive Board meeting will be held on May 5 at the Biltmore Hotel. The OACD continues to monitor the federal budget and he stated that the watershed program dodged a bullet with the help of Congressman Lucas. The OACD is participating in the National Watershed Conference and is preparing for the NACD South Central meeting being held in Oklahoma in August. Mr. Pope reported on meeting some folks from Africa and taking them on a tour of watersheds and wildlife habitat.

Mr. Pope attended outdoor classroom dedications in Kay County and Oklahoma County. He reported that the OACD received a \$300,000 grant from the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation for wildlife credits in conjunction with the carbon program for the lesser prairie chicken.

Mr. Pope stated that the Farmers Royalty Company has committed \$5,000 for the OACD youth contests for the next three years.

## **USDA-NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE**

Ron Hilliard, State Conservationist, provided a written report and urged members to read the front story regarding wetlands. Mr. Hilliard stated that the NRCS Chief will be attending the national watershed conference. He stated that the new state conservationist in Texas is Salvador Salinas. Mr. Hilliard answered questions regarding the RC&D program that was recently zeroed out of the federal budget.

## **DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND FORESTRY**

Blayne Arthur, Associate Commissioner, stated that advertisement for a new State Veterinarian will conclude in two weeks. They continue to monitor the budget situation at the state and federal levels and are also looking for an avenue to keep their general counsel.

## **NEXT MEETING**

The next regular meeting of the Oklahoma Conservation Commission will be held on June 6, 2011, in the Agriculture Building Board Room, 2800 N. Lincoln Boulevard, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma beginning at 9:30 a.m.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business a motion was made by Mr. Gard and seconded by Mr. Stunkard to adjourn. Those voting aye were: Gard, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 10:48 a.m.

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Approved by the Oklahoma Conservation Commission on June 6, 2011.

  
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CHAIR