

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

The Oklahoma Conservation Commission met Thursday, May 3, 2012, at the Agriculture Building Board Room located at 2800 N. Lincoln in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m. by Chairman George Stunkard. 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 on May 1, 2012, at the front entrance of the building.

ROLL CALL

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

George Stunkard, Chair
Dan Lowrance, Vice Chair
Jim Grego, Secretary (arrived at 2:05 p.m.)
Karl Jett, Member
Mike Rooker, Member

Others in attendance were:

Mike Thralls, Executive Director
Ben Pollard, Assistant Director
Steve Coffman, Financial Management and Human Resources Director
Tammy Sawatzky, Conservation Programs Assistant 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
Janet Stewart, General Counsel
Monty Ramming, North Canadian River Project Coordinator
Ed Crall, Caddo County Special Projects Supervisor
Ron Hilliard, Natural Resources Conservation Service State Conservationist
Jeff Crosby, Land Legacy Director of Conservation
Kim Tweed, Executive Secretary

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

A motion was made by Mr. Lowrance and seconded by Mr. Rooker to approve the minutes of the April 2, 2012, Commission meeting as written. Those voting aye were: Jett, Rooker, Stunkard, and Lowrance. 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. Rooker and seconded by Mr. Jett to approve district director appointments as listed with terms to expire as indicated. Those voting aye were: Jett, Rooker, Stunkard, and Lowrance. 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. Lowrance and seconded by Mr. Jett to approve the claims and financial statement. Those voting aye were: Jett, Rooker, Stunkard, and Lowrance. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

RECOGNITION OF CONSERVATION COMMISSION EMPLOYEES

Ed Crall, Caddo County Special Projects Supervisor, and Monty Ramming, North Canadian River Project Coordinator, were each recognized for 10 years of service. It was noted that they began their employment with the Commission on the same day ten years ago.

2:05 pm - Mr. Grego arrived.

PRESENTATION OF AGREEMENTS

Ben Pollard, Assistant Director, presented agreements for approval as listed in Exhibit #3. He recommended approval of the amended agreements listed as (a) through (c). A motion was made by Mr. Grego and seconded by Mr. Lowrance to approve the amended agreements as listed. Those voting aye were: Jett, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

Mr. Pollard recommended approval of new agreements listed as (d) through (g). A motion was made by Mr. Jett and seconded by Mr. Rooker to approve the new agreements as listed. Those voting aye were: Jett, 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 #4. A motion was made by Mr. Grego and seconded by Mr. Lowrance to approve the requests as listed. Those voting aye were: Jett, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

DECLARATION OF ABANDONED COAL MINE EMERGENCY FOR THE BOOTH STATE EMERGENCY

An AML Emergency was declared as listed in Exhibit #5 and, as required, is needing ratification from the Commission. A motion was made by Mr. Grego and seconded by Mr. Rooker to ratify the emergency as listed. Those voting aye were: Jett, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

DIRECTOR ELECTIONS FOR POSITION #2

The filing period for District Director Elected Position #2 is the first two weeks in May and staff is recommending that the Commission authorize the Assistant Director to:

- a. certify eligibility of candidates Filing a Notification and Declaration of Candidacy

- for District Director, Position #2 during the filing period from May 1-14, 2012;
- b. approve polling places in those conservation districts that will be holding elections for District Director, Position #2 on June 5, 2012.

After discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Lowrance and seconded by Mr. Grego to grant authorization to the Assistant Director as listed above. Those voting aye were: Jett, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

KIOWA COUNTY/WASHITA COUNTY CD BOUNDARY CHANGES

Mr. Pollard stated that staff has been working with the Kiowa County and the Washita County Conservation Districts regarding boundary changes since the Mountain View Conservation District consolidated with Kiowa County three years ago. He stated that the two boards have both taken action recommending that their district boundaries be changed. As required by statute the Commission has drafted an Administrative Order to accomplish the boundary change (Exhibit #6. Mr. Pollard is recommending approval of the Administrative Order for the Kiowa County and the Washita County Conservation Boundary Changes. A motion was made by Mr. Lowrance and seconded by Mr. Rooker to approve the Administrative Order as listed. Those voting aye were: Jett, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

Mr. Pollard then stated that because of the boundary changes two directors serving on the Kiowa County Conservation District board will no longer reside within the district boundaries and therefore are ineligible to serve. The district has submitted the following names for replacements for terms to begin on July 1, 2012 with terms expiring as indicated. A motion was made by Mr. Rooker and seconded by Mr. Jett to appoint the following directors to the Kiowa County Conservation District effective July 1:

- Don Payne to replace Jim Leitner in Elected Position #1 - June 30, 2014.
- Keith Anderson to replace Robert Fobes in Elected Position #3 - June 30, 2013.

DELAWARE COUNTY CD REQUEST TO DESIGNATE SEVERAL SOIL TYPES IN DELAWARE COUNTY AS SOILS OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE

Mr. Pollard stated that there is a significant amount of water quality work ongoing in Delaware County. The Commission has the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program in the Eucha-Spavinaw Watershed. The Land Legacy Trust also is working in the watershed obtaining conservation easements to improve water quality. The Delaware County Conservation District at its April 2012 board meeting designated several soil types in the county as soils of local importance. They also requested that the Commission designate seven soil types in Delaware County as soils of statewide importance (Exhibit #7). By making this designation land in Delaware County with these soil types would become eligible for participation in the NRCS Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP).

Mr. Pollard stated that the Land Legacy was interested in securing additional conservation easements in the Eucha-Spavinaw watershed through the FRPP. He also stated that FRPP easements could be obtained in the Delaware County watersheds like the Illinois River and the Honey Creek arm of Grand Lake in the future. He recommended the approval of the soils listed in the Exhibit #7 as soils of statewide importance.

After discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Grego and seconded by Mr. Lowrance to designate soil types in Delaware County as listed. Those voting aye were: Jett, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

OKLAHOMA CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEMBERS

Mr. Rooker reported on attending the Payne County Conservation District annual banquet, Conservation Day at the Capitol activities, and the Lt. Governor’s Turkey Hunt.

Mr. Lowrance attended Conservation Day at the Capitol and the Blue Room Ceremony. He also participated in a video conference with NRCS Chief Dave White and states across the nation to discuss the Field Office of the Future.

Mr. Grego attended Conservation Day at the Capitol and had good visits with legislators. He attended the Valliant Conservation District board meeting. Mr. Grego agrees with Frank Acker, Little River Conservation District Manager, that his district needs a full-time secretary and feels like the Valliant District does not. He stated that personal conflict will not allow employees to work together between the two districts. Mr. Pollard stated that if the Commission is ready to reduce allocations in quiet presence offices, staff could look at a 40-hour employee at Little River and a 20-hour employee at Valliant.

Mr. Jett reported on attending the Oklahoma Lesser Prairie Chicken Committee meeting to discuss the action plan. He also attended the Woodward County Conservation District banquet.

Mr. Stunkard attended Conservation Day at the Capitol and had good visits with legislators.

OKLAHOMA CONSERVATION COMMISSION STAFF

Administration - Executive Director: Mr. Thralls participated in Conservation Day at the Capitol and the Blue Room Ceremony and stated that it went very well. He appreciated the recognition for retiring OSU Dean Bob Whitson during the event.

Mr. Thralls stated that the legislative session is winding down and that a tax cut will probably not be approved this year. The Commission will have a level budget for the next fiscal year but may gain additional funding for water quality monitoring, around \$400,000.

District Services Division: Mr. Pollard stated that Lisa Knauf Owen, Director, is attending the OACD Executive Board Meeting. He reported on the prescribed burn program stating that an additional \$145,000 will be coming to the Commission from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Staff is working with the Prescribed Burn Association to get training procedures in place to help secure liability insurance. Darrel Dominick is the Commission’s representative working with the Association.

Water Quality Program: Shanon Phillips, Director, stated that on Monday, May 7 at 10:30 a.m. a press conference is being held to discuss the 2012 success stories. She stated that on May 9 Tom Christensen is touring the Illinois River Watershed to look at 319 and CREP projects.

Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Program: Mike Kastl, Director, stated that formal protests have been filed by the contractor on a construction project in Sequoyah County.

Financial Management and Human Resources Division: Mr. Coffman met with the Department of Central Services Risk Management Division to discuss the liability and directors errors and omissions renewal and stated that the premiums are at a level cost.

Information Technology Division: Mike Sharp, Director, stated that a written report was in the packet and he then yielded for questions.

Conservation Programs Division: Tammy Sawatzky, Assistant Director, stated that a written report was in the packet and she then yielded for questions.

Administration - Assistant Director: Mr. Pollard stated that a written report was in the packet and he yielded for questions.

OKLAHOMA ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

No representative present. Mr. Pollard stated that the OACD Executive Board is meeting today as well. He stated that the Gross Production Tax bill which extends funding through 2016 is awaiting the Governor's signature.

USDA-NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Ron Hilliard, State Conservationist, attended the Land and Range Judging Contest. He stated that on May 15 at 10:30 a.m. there will be a ceremony at the State Capitol celebrating the 150th anniversary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Mr. Hilliard provided a written summary of activities and stated that page 6 of the report shows tornado damage to the offices in Woodward County.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND FORESTRY

No representative present.

NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the Oklahoma Conservation Commission will be held on June 4, 2012, 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. Grego and seconded by Mr. Rooker to adjourn. Those voting aye were: Jett, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 3:02 p.m.

Approved by the Oklahoma Conservation Commission on June 4, 2012.


CHAIR