

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

The Oklahoma Conservation Commission met January 4, 2010, 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 Matt Gard. 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 December 28, 2009, at the front entrance of the building.

ROLL CALL

Lisa Knauf, District Services Director, took roll call and the following members were in attendance:

Matt Gard, Chair
Mike Rooker, Vice Chair
George Stunkard, Secretary
Dan Lowrance, Member
Virginia Kidd, 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, District Services Director
Mark Harrison, Information Representative
Janet Stewart, General Counsel
Stacey Day, Awards and Recognition Committee Chair
Karla Beatty, Education Coordinator
Ron Hilliard, Natural Resources Conservation Service State Conservationist
Clay Pope, Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts Executive Director
Whitney Weingartner, Assistant Attorney General
Shawn Ashley, ECapitol.net

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

A motion was made by Mr. Stunkard and seconded by Ms. Kidd to approve the minutes of the December 4, 2009, Commission meeting as written. Those voting aye were: Lowrance, Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. 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. Stunkard to approve district director appointments as listed with terms to expire as indicated. Those voting aye were: Lowrance, Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. 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. Rooker to approve the claims and financial statement. Those voting aye were: Lowrance, Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

RECOGNITION OF EMPLOYEE OF THE QUARTER

Karla Beatty, Education Coordinator, was recognized by Stacey Day, Awards and Recognition Committee Chair, for being named the Employee of the Quarter.

PRESENTATION OF AGREEMENTS

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

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

Mr. Pollard recommended ratification of the amended agreement listed as (k) which was approved by Chair Gard prior to the meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Stunkard and seconded by Ms. Kidd to ratify approval of the amended agreement as listed. Those voting aye were: Lowrance, Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

OUT OF STATE TRAVEL REQUESTS

Mr. Thralls presented travel requests for approval as listed in Exhibit #4 noting that Dianne Ireton would not be attending the AML meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Stunkard and seconded by Mr. Rooker to approve the requests with the change in attendance as noted. Those voting aye were: Lowrance, Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

COST SHARE PROGRAM 11B SPECIAL REQUEST

Robert Toole, Conservation Programs Director, presented a request from the Pushmataha Conservation District to add Tree/Shrub Establishment (612) as a practice. He advised the Commission that the request does not fall within the guidelines established by the Commission for Program Year 11B. A motion was made Mr. Lowrance and seconded by Mr. Rooker to deny the request as listed. Those voting aye were: Lowrance, Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

COST SHARE PROGRAM YEAR 12 TO ADD PEST MANAGEMENT

Mr. Toole requested approval to add Pest Management (595) to the approved conservation practice list for Cost Share Program Year 12 as listed in Exhibit #5. A motion was made by Mr. Lowrance and seconded by Ms. Kidd to approve the practice as listed. Those voting aye were: Lowrance, Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

OPENING OF THE RULE-MAKING RECORD FOR THE AML PROGRAM

Janet Stewart, General Counsel, requested approval to open the rule-making record for the promulgation of amended rules by the Commission and staff entitled Oklahoma Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Program cited in Title 155, Chapter 15 of the Oklahoma Administrative Code in compliance with the requirements of the Administrative Procedures Act, 75 O.S. Section 250 et seq. Ms. Kidd questioned if there were significant changes to the rules and was told there is not.

A motion was made by Mr. Stunkard and seconded by Mr. Lowrance to open the rule-making record as stated. Those voting aye were: Lowrance, Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

OKLAHOMA CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEMBERS

Ms. Kidd reported on meetings she attended in December.

Mr. Lowrance stated that former District Conservationist for Stephens County Earl Weisner underwent a heart procedure and was recovering nicely.

Mr. Gard reported on attending a Wind Energy Tour, the Grant County Conservation District Open House for the new Service Center, Winter Crop School at OSU, and the media event in Blaine County for the North Canadian River project. The No-till Conference will be held the first week in February.

OKLAHOMA CONSERVATION COMMISSION STAFF

Administration - Executive Director: Mr. Thralls attended the event in West Caddo for the rehabilitation of Sugar Creek Site 43. He also attended a media event to show improvements in water quality by ag producers and the value of riparian buffers in Blaine County.

Mr. Thralls stated that budget issues continue. The Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry is furloughing employees 3 days in the month of January. The Commission currently has enough contract earnings in house to cover the shortfall. Staff is looking at all open positions in conservation districts as well as at the Commission. He does not anticipate furloughs if the budget does not worsen. Mr. Thralls thanked the NRCS for the ability to manage its contracts.

District Services Division: Lisa Knauf, Director, worked on billing preparations for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service agreement and the development of district agreements. Staff continues its in depth review of the Pittsburg County Conservation District's finances.

Staff will be assisting districts on the completion of their audits as well as auditing payroll and assisting districts with W2 preparations.

Water Quality Program: Shanon Phillips, Director, updated the Commission on the North Canadian River project stating that 20,000 acres have been converted from convention to no-till and that 5 miles of riparian area has been installed.

Ms. Phillips stated that Tashina Kirk gave birth to a baby boy.

Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Program: Mike Kastl, Director, thanked Janet Stewart, General Counsel, for her assistance with the rules process. Mr. Kastl stated that the 2010 grant was awarded in the amount of \$2.47 million.

Mr. Kastl reported on the emergency program stating the Commission sent out a news release on the Highway 270 emergency. The Daily Oklahoman called and ran a front page article.

Staff is conducting interviews for the program engineer.

Financial Management and Human Resources Division: Steve Coffman, Director, and Mr. Thralls appeared to present the Affirmative Action Plan and it was approved.

Mr. Gard questioned if there was a way to restructure the bond repayment schedule. Mr. Coffman stated that staff is looking at the possibility of refinancing.

Information Technology Division: Mike Sharp, Director, reported that Chris Hise, The Nature Conservancy, will be giving a presentation at the Geographic Information Council meeting on GIS and the lesser prairie chicken.

Mr. Sharp reported that the state is announcing the creation of a Chief Information Officer to begin the process of looking at state IT services and management of agency computer issues.

Conservation Programs Division: Robert Toole, Director, stated that the watershed assessment project has been launched with the performance of seven field reviews. He reported on agreements being managed stating that \$36 million of watershed project work is in progress on rehabilitation, operation and maintenance, and assessments. Mr. Toole informed the Commission that districts have developed detailed O&M plans that identify \$22 million in O&M needs. He noted that watershed operations and maintenance (O&M) needs remained significant in spite of the \$7.1 million in bond funding, which will address only one-third of the needs.

Mr. Toole commended Karla Beatty, Education Coordinator, for her work in the conservation education arena.

Mr. Toole stated that a report on House Bill 1884 has been completed and he provided copies and an overview to the Commission.

Administration - Assistant Director: Mr. Pollard stated that the Commission is making a concerted effort to increase media coverage.

Mr. Pollard attended an open house and celebration of mortgage payoff at the Cotton County Conservation District and will be attending the January board meeting of the newly formed Kiowa County Conservation District.

OKLAHOMA ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Clay Pope, Executive Director, has been focused on the state budget and developing a plan for the upcoming legislative session making the case for conservation being a critical service in the state.

Mr. Pope stated that it was a good media event in Blaine County for the North Canadian River project.

State meeting plans are in progress and the agenda is being finalized. Chesapeake Energy has again donated a pickup truck for auction. NACD Vice President Earl Garber is confirmed for attendance and that NRCS Chief Dave White has been invited.

Mr. Pope stated that a bill is being introduced to change the Ethics Commission requirement for conservation district directors. He also stated that a bill is being introduced on using red cedar wood products.

Mr. Pope reported on working with the City of Enid for feasibility of rehabilitation of dams to increase the city water supply.

USDA-NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Ron Hilliard, State Conservationist, stated he is proud of the partnership and coordinated efforts on the watershed program. The Turkey 3 and Kadashan sites should be complete in the next few weeks.

Mr. Hilliard stated that the following employees retired: Baker Eads, Loren Zweiacker, Larry Caldwell, Jimmy Ford, Duane Crider, Sam Viles, Ken Matlock, Larry Ferguson, Jon Hise and Lester Ligons.

Mr. Hilliard reported that payments on the old CSP should be out by the end of January, that there is \$7.6 million available in the new CSP, and that EQIP obligations are due April 1.

USDA-FARM SERVICE AGENCY

No representative present.

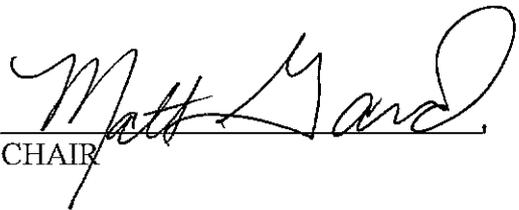
NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the Oklahoma Conservation Commission will be held on Thursday, February 4, 2010, 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. Rooker and seconded by Mr. Stunkard to adjourn. Those voting aye were: Lowrance, Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 10:54 a.m.

Approved by the Oklahoma Conservation Commission on February 4, 2010.


CHAIR