

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

The Oklahoma Conservation Commission met June 7, 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 Vice 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 at 9:00 a.m. on June 4, 2010, at the front entrance of the building.

ROLL CALL

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

Matt Gard, Chair - arrived at 9:50 a.m.
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
Karla Beatty, Education Coordinator
Brooks Tramell, Monitoring Coordinator
Candace Cunningham, Technical Write
Stacey Day, Senior Technical Writer
Greg Kloxin, Water Quality Assistant Director
Jeanette Lamb, Water Quality Specialist
Andrew DeCandis, Environmental Program Manager
Tammy Sawatzky, Conservation Programs
Gary O'Neill, Natural Resources Conservation Service Assistant State Conservationist
Steve Thompson, Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry Associate
Commissioner
Ryan Chaffin, Attorney General's Office
Bryan Smith, eCapitol.net
Kim Tweed, Executive Secretary

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Ms. Kidd led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

A motion was made by Mr. Stunkard and seconded by Mr. Lowrance to approve the minutes of the May 3, 2010, Commission meeting as written. Those voting aye were: Lowrance, Kidd, 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. Stunkard and seconded by Mr. Lowrance to approve district director appointments as listed with terms to expire as indicated. Those voting aye were: Kidd, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Mr. Lowrance abstained. 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. Stunkard to approve the claims and financial statement. Those voting aye were: Lowrance, Kidd, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITIONS

Jeanette Lamb, Water Quality Specialist, was recognized for 5 years of service and Tammy Sawatzky, Conservation Programs Deputy Director, was recognized for 25 years of service.

Mr. Gard arrived at 9:50 a.m.

RECOGNITION OF WATER QUALITY DIVISION STAFF

Ben Pollard, Assistant Director, stated that Conservation Commission staff received 2 Quality Oklahoma 2010 awards. The first award was for the "Landowner Outreach: Know Your Stream handouts" and those involved were Brooks Tramell, Wes Shockley, Leonard Moore, Jason Ramming, Jeanette Lamb, Jerry Carr, Ashley Rhea, Daniel Franks, Stacey Day, Candace Cunningham, and Greg Kloxin.

The second award was for the media campaign "Spotlighting Good Streams in Oklahoma" and those involved with the project were Shanon Phillips, Greg Kloxin, Stacey Day, Candace Cunningham, and Andrew DeCandis.

PRESENTATION OF AGREEMENTS

Mr. Pollard presented agreements for approval as listed in Exhibit #3. He recommended ratification of agreements listed as (a) and (b) as these were previously approved by Chairman Matt Gard. A motion was made by Mr. Lowrance and seconded by Ms. Kidd to ratify the 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 (c) through (h). A motion was made by Mr. Stunkard and seconded by Ms. Kidd 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 approval of amended agreements listed as (I) through (k). A motion was made by Mr. Lowrance and seconded by Mr. Rooker to approve the amended agreements as listed. Those voting aye were: Lowrance, Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

NACD SUMMER LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

The National Association of Conservation Districts Summer Legislative Conference will be held on July 16-20, 2010 in Washington, D.C. During the May 3, 2010 meeting Mr. Thralls stated no staff will be attending due to budget. Members agreed that no one would attend the meeting.

OUT OF STATE TRAVEL REQUESTS

Mr. Thralls presented travel requests for approval as listed in Exhibit #4. He recommended ratification of the request listed as (a) as Chairman Gard previously approved this travel. A motion was made by Mr. Lowrance and seconded by Mr. Rooker to ratify the request as listed. Those voting aye were: Lowrance, Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

Mr. Thralls recommended approval of the requests listed as (b) and (c). A motion was made by Mr. Stunkard and seconded by Ms. Kidd to approve the requests. Those voting aye were: Lowrance, Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

DISTRICT DIRECTOR ELECTED POSITION #3

Mr. Thralls presented District Director Elected Position #3 information as listed in Exhibit #5. A motion was made by Mr. Lowrance and seconded by Mr. Stunkard to certify candidates as elected where only one eligible candidate filed a Notification and Declaration of Candidacy as listed. Those voting aye were: Lowrance, Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Mr. Rooker and seconded by Mr. Stunkard to certify the results for Elected Position #3 where an election was held on June 1, 2010 as listed. Those voting aye were: Lowrance, Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

COST SHARE PROGRAM YEAR 12 SPECIAL REQUEST

Robert Toole, Conservation Programs Director, received a request from the Caney Valley Conservation District to add the following components to Brush Management (314) and recommended approval:

- a. Chemical Brush Control - all other chemicals - \$28.37 / AC
- b. Cutting & Spraying <30% canopy - \$88.91 / AC
- c. Cutting & Spraying >30% canopy - \$171.30 / AC

A motion was made by Mr. Stunkard and seconded by Ms. Kidd to approve the request. Those voting aye were: Lowrance, Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

COMMISSION'S FY2011 APPROPRIATION AND BUDGET

Mr. Thralls reported that the Commission received \$9,845,434 in general revenue for FY2011 which included \$2.2 million for the bond payment. Mr. Thralls warned that agencies could face rescissions if revenue enhancements and collections do not cover all of the budget as projected. Mr. Lowrance questioned if furloughs were being considered at this point and Mr. Thralls stated that no furloughs were being recommended.

REPORT FROM THE BUDGET AND ALLOCATION COMMITTEE

The Committee consists of Commission members Mr. Rooker and Mr. Stunkard, OACD board members Trey Lam and Kim Farber, and OACDE board member Bradley Hamilton. The Committee receives staff support from Mike Thralls, Ben Pollard, Lisa Knauf, Steve Coffman and Clay Pope. The Committee has met twice and has the following concerns: that rescissions are possible in FY2011; it may take 2 to 3 years for state revenue to recover; watershed rehabilitation match will be exhausted in approximately two years; watershed rehabilitation earnings are limited; agreements to generate money are year to year (i.e. Contributions); operation and maintenance bond money will end in 2 years and money is needed to keep watershed technicians; the Commission receives \$2.6 million annually from the Infrastructure fund and can use up to 30% for operations of the agency and conservation districts however it can use that amount for only four more years.

The Committee has been discussing efficiencies, employee positions and contract earnings. Mr. Thralls stated that furloughing the 16 Commission employees paid with general revenue and all district employees would be a savings of \$23,000 per day. They are discussing incentives to promote district consolidation; justifying open positions before filling them; looking particularly at equipment manager positions and filling them as non-benefitted; exploring shared positions amongst districts; reducing allocations to districts by \$1150. At this point, the Committee is leaning towards recommending a six month allocation to districts due to the possibility of budget rescissions.

Recommendations from the Committee will be made at the July Commission meeting.

Mr. Lowrance urged the Committee and the Commission to not furlough only 16 Commission employees stating it would hamper the Commission's ability to earn money. He also stated that he would be unable to support such recommendation.

Mr. Gard thanked the Committee members for their work.

LEGISLATION AFFECTING THE COMMISSION AND CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Mr. Thralls stated that a consolidation bill was laid over until the next legislative session. A bill consolidating all state agency attorneys into the Attorney General's office was defeated.

Mr. Coffman stated that a bill was passed consolidating the Employees Benefit Council, which handles state employees benefits, and the Oklahoma State Insurance Group Board, which handles district employees benefits. Staff is unsure how this will affect our employees at this time.

Mr. Coffman stated that a bill was passed capping the retirement portion at 15.5% this year.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

OKLAHOMA CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEMBERS

Mr. Lowrance participated in the Comprehensive Water Plan Town Hall meeting and a final report will be submitted to the Oklahoma Water Resources Board.

Mr. Stunkard, Mr. Rooker and Ms. Kidd attended the National Land and Range Judging Contest and banquet and enjoyed the event. They thanked all who helped.

Mr. Stunkard attended a teacher award presentation for Congressional District 1 at the Sperry High School.

Mr. Rooker attended a Seminole County Conservation District board meeting.

OKLAHOMA CONSERVATION COMMISSION STAFF

Administration - Executive Director: Mr. Thralls reported on attending the Water Plan Town Hall Meeting and the National Land and Range Judging Contest. He expressed appreciation to Mr. Stunkard and Mr. Rooker for serving on the budget committee. He expressed appreciation to Ms. Kidd for her years of service to the Commission.

District Services Division: Lisa Knauf, Director, prepared information for the budget committee this month. She stated that agreements are in place for July 1 with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Ms. Knauf stated they are working through challenges of filling district positions with retirements and resignations.

Water Quality Program: Shanon Phillips, Director, reported on a tour with EPA officials. She stated that staff met with the Court's special master to discuss the Stamper project. Ms. Phillips reported that Kevin Gustafson, Project Coordinator, did a segment on the Oklahoma Gardening show about green lawns and rain gardens.

Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Program: Mike Kastl, Director, reported on the Farley project under the 09 Grant. A final inspection was held for the Bronson project. Mr. Kastl stated that there are 20 days left to finish the Highway 270 emergency project.

Financial Management and Human Resources Division: Steve Coffman, Director, has been preparing data for the budget committee and attending the meetings. He completed the CORE payroll conversion and all went well. An audit is being performed on the 319 project. Mr. Coffman is in preparation of the FY11 budget work program. He thanked Ms. Kidd for her service to the Commission.

Information Technology Division: Mike Sharp, Director, attended a meeting where the new Chief IT officer spoke and he was very impressed as he is taking a cooperation approach in working with agencies.

Conservation Programs Division: Robert Toole, Director, reported that an agreement is in place with the Okie One-Call System to include all Watershed Flood Control Program dams in Oklahoma, with conservation districts as the Okie One-Call points of contact. Districts will be notified of any excavation that is going to occur within one-half mile of a watershed dam and will locate the watershed dam for the excavator prior to the start of excavation. Guidelines will be developed for this program.

Administration - Assistant Director: Mr. Pollard expressed appreciation to members for attending the staff meeting luncheon last month. He reported on attending the Team Quality Oklahoma event at the State Capitol where the Water Quality Division received 2 awards. Mr. Pollard reported on a meeting hosted by Secretary of Agriculture Terry Peach for the Deputy Secretary of Agriculture.

Mr. Pollard stated that Leon Russell, Hughes County Conservation District director, is retiring and is featured on the Commission's website. The Turkey Creek Site 3 dedication held in April was featured on the Horizon television show.

Mr. Pollard thanked Ms. Kidd for her years of service to the Commission and to the Department of Human Services.

OKLAHOMA ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

No representative present.

USDA-NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Gary O'Neill, Assistant State Conservationist, provided a written report. He stated that the Conservation Stewardship Program's second evaluation period was extended until June 25. July 2 is the date to get all funds obligated for the Environmental Quality Incentive Program.

Mr. O'Neill stated that an all employees meeting is scheduled next week in Oklahoma City. He stated that 2 significant audits will take place this summer.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND FORESTRY

Steve Thompson, Associate Commissioner, stated that Rick Maloney, Director of Market Development Services, is retiring in three weeks and Jamey Allen has been chosen to take his position. He stated that the department's general appropriation is 14.5% below last year and funding is uncertain because of some pass through money.

A clean up bill for the Ag Mediation Program was passed. Mr. Thompson stated that over 100 house interim study requests have been made. A bill regarding red cedar by Representative Morrissette was passed.

ELECT NEW OFFICERS FOR FY2011

A motion was made by Mr. Lowrance and seconded by Mr. Stunkard to elect officers for FY2011 as follows: Chair - Mike Rooker; Vice Chair - George Stunkard; Secretary - Dan Lowrance. Those voting aye were: Lowrance, Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the Oklahoma Conservation Commission will be held on Thursday, July 1, 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. Stunkard and seconded by Mr. Rooker to adjourn. Those voting aye were: Lowrance, Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 11:28 a.m.

Approved by the Oklahoma Conservation Commission on July 1, 2010.



CHAIR