

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

The Oklahoma Conservation Commission met Tuesday, January 4, 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 Acting Chair Dan Lowrance. 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 January 3, 2011, at the front entrance of the building.

ROLL CALL

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

Dan Lowrance, Secretary
Jim Grego, Member
Matt Gard, Member

Members absent:

Mike Rooker, Chair
George Stunkard, Vice Chair

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
Jim Leach, Water Quality Program Cost-share and Finance Director
Stacey Day, Awards and Recognition Committee Chair
Ann Craven, Water Quality Program Executive Secretary
Ron Hilliard, Natural Resources Conservation Service State Conservationist
Gary O'Neill, Natural Resources Conservation Service Assistant State Conservationist
Clay Pope, Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts Executive Director
Steve Thompson, Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry Associate
Commissioner
Clint Sloan, eCapitol.net

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

A motion was made by Mr. Grego and seconded by Mr. Gard to approve the minutes of the December 6, 2010, Commission meeting as written. Those voting aye were: Gard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

DISTRICT DIRECTOR RESIGNATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

Mike Thralls, Executive Director, stated that no recommendations were received so no action is necessary.

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. Gard and seconded by Mr. Grego to approve the claims and financial statement. Those voting aye were: Gard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

RECOGNITION OF CONSERVATION COMMISSION EMPLOYEES

The following employees were recognized as stated: Ann Craven, Water Quality Program Executive Secretary, for 15 years of service; Margaret Blevins, Water Quality Program Data Manager, for 25 years of service; and Jim Leach, Water Quality Program Cost-share and Finance Director, for being named Employee of the Quarter.

PRESENTATION OF AGREEMENTS

Ben Pollard, Assistant Director, presented agreements for approval as listed in Exhibit #3. He recommended ratification of agreement (a). A motion was made by Mr. Grego and seconded by Mr. Gard to ratify approval of agreement (a). Those voting aye were: Gard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

Mr. Pollard recommended approval of the amended agreement listed as (b). A motion was made by Mr. Gard and seconded by Mr. Grego to approve the agreement. Those voting aye were: Gard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

Mr. Pollard recommended approval of new agreements listed as (c) and (d). A motion was made by Mr. Gard and seconded by Mr. Grego to approve the agreements. Those voting aye were: Gard, 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. He recommended ratification of the request listed as (a). A motion was made by Mr. Grego and seconded by Mr. Gard to ratify the request. Those voting aye were: Gard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

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

CO-SPONSORSHIP OF THE 2011 NO TILL OKLAHOMA MEETING

A motion was made by Mr. Gard and seconded by Mr. Grego to co-sponsor the 2011 No-till Oklahoma Meeting, February 1-2, 2011 in Norman, Oklahoma. Those voting aye were: Gard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

KIOWA COUNTY CD REQUEST FOR CONSOLIDATION FUNDS

Mr. Thralls presented a letter from the Kiowa County Conservation District requesting consideration of consolidation funds as listed in Exhibit #5. He stated that the consolidation that took place last year with the Mountain View Conservation District does not make the Kiowa County district on county boundaries. A motion was made by Mr. Gard and seconded by Mr. Grego to table this item until February. Those voting aye were: Gard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

WAGONER COUNTY CD COST-SHARE PROGRAM YEAR 11B SPECIAL REQUEST

The Wagoner County Conservation District had requested approval of Cost-share Program Year 11B special request to add Animal Trails and Walkways (575); however, this request has been withdrawn and no action is necessary.

FY2011/FY2012 OK 319 WORK PLANS INCLUDING FY2011 319 SPECIAL FUNDING

Shanon Phillips, Water Quality Program Director, stated that the Commission has been awarded \$2.5 million in special FY2011 funds for the Illinois River, Eucha/Spavinaw and Honey Creek Watersheds. She is requesting approval of the work plans for this funding as well as the FY12 319 monies (Attachment A).

After discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Grego and seconded by Mr. Gard to approve the work plans. Those voting aye were: Gard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

REVISIONS TO PRIORITY WATERSHED COST-SHARE RATES AND PRACTICE SPECIFICATIONS

Ms. Phillips is recommending approval of revisions to the priority watershed cost-share rates and practice specifications in the Illinois River, Eucha/Spavinaw and Honey Creek Watersheds to expand CREP enrollment, increase practice adoption in critical areas, and ensure program consistency within conservation districts (Attachment B).

After discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Gard and seconded by Mr. Grego to approve the recommendations. Those voting aye were: Gard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

OKLAHOMA CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEMBERS

Mr. Gard reported that the KNID AgriFest will be held this week.

Mr. Grego reported that he worked the Commission's booth during the Tulsa Farm Show.

OKLAHOMA CONSERVATION COMMISSION STAFF

Administration - Executive Director: Mr. Thralls stated that the new governor will take office on January 10, as will the new Secretary of Agriculture. He is expecting a good working relationship with the new secretary. The Secretary of Environment has not yet been named.

Representative Jason Murphey held a study on consolidation. After the first meeting it is recommended that the Commission's water quality division and the Department of Agriculture's water quality division be consolidated into the Department of Environment Quality.

Senator Justice is holding meetings on invasive species.

Mr. Thralls handed out an article published by *NewsOK.com* on budget projections and improving collections.

District Services Division: Lisa Knauf Owen, Director, met with an IRS agent to finalize payment of penalty and interest on behalf of the Pittsburg County Conservation District. She discussed social security changes and the need to update district payroll. She will be auditing January payroll for districts. Staff is working with districts to prepare W-2s.

Ms. Knauf Owen stated that staff is looking at ways to streamline submission of minutes to the Commission.

Ms. Knauf Owen recommended conversion of three district positions to cash allocations creating a savings of benefits costs and approved 2 new hires in Pushmataha and Ellis County Conservation Districts.

Water Quality Program: Shanon Phillips, Director, reported that Chapparel Energy xx.

Ms. Phillips stated that a water quality staff retreat will be held on January 11-12, 2011 in Guthrie, Oklahoma at the Pollard Theater. Mike Bira with the Environmental Protection Agency and Clay Pope, OACD, will be attending. She invited Commission members to attend as well.

Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Program: Mike Kastl, Director, reported on completing a job in Sequoyah County and highlighted the written report.

Financial Management and Human Resources Division: Mr. Coffman reported on changes to the division with the retirement of Administrative Officer Jana Chicoine. He stated that 1099s will be distributed this month. Mr. Coffman stated that Brooks Tramell, Monitoring Coordinator, is now assisting with purchasing duties.

Information Technology Division: Mike Sharp, Director, reported working on the move of email servers. He stated that three new job descriptions have been submitted to the Office of Personnel Management for GIS positions in state government. The GI Council is undertaking a project to update color infrared photography.

Conservation Programs Division: Robert Toole, Director, provided an update of the rehab assessment project as follows: 108 dams - field reviews; 72 dams - breach analysis and mapping; 66 rankings - rehab alternatives and ranking; 32 dam reports - assessment reports prepared.

Administration - Assistant Director: Mr. Pollard reported that the Commission has reduced its staff by two with the departure of Jana Chicoine and Chris Dubois. The Commission is sensitive to changes made in the districts and is cutting its personnel as well.

OKLAHOMA ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Clay Pope, Executive Director, discussed consolidation recommendations of moving the water quality division to the Department of Environmental Quality. He reported on the carbon initiative stating over 35,000 acres are enrolled. He held a meeting with Oklahoma State University officials regarding a climate change grant.

Mr. Pope stated that the National Association of Conservation Districts requested OACD to be a partner on a Conservation Innovation Grant submitted to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. He is working with the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation on a grant for wildlife credits for prairie chicken habitat.

Plans on being made for the OACD state meeting, the NACD South Central Meeting and the National Watershed Coalition meeting.

Mr. Pope met with Representative Don Armes and Senator Ron Justice on the budget for conservation. He will be meeting with Representative DeWitt next week.

A TMDL meeting is being held in Oklahoma for the Illinois River.

USDA-NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Ron Hilliard, State Conservationist, reported that Becka Redding is on extended sick leave and may be out for an additional three to four months. He reported that Associate Chief Ginger Murphy is in Afghanistan for a one year detail and Homer Wilkes will be acting associate chief. Don Gohmert, State Conservationist in Texas, retired. Mr. Hilliard stated that Dean Cook, Watershed Engineer, and Paul May, District Conservationist in Durant, have retired.

Mr. Hilliard stated that January 26 is the date for the Sallisaw Site 18M Watershed dedication. He stated that a listening session is scheduled for January 11 at the MetroTech in Oklahoma City.

Mr. Hilliard stated that an irrigation specialist has been hired in Woodward and a geologist in Pauls Valley.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND FORESTRY

Steve Thompson, Associate Commissioner, stated that a farewell reception for Secretary of Agriculture Terry Peach will be held today at 2:00 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the Oklahoma Conservation Commission will be held on February 7, 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. Grego to adjourn. Those voting aye were: Gard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 11:25 a.m.

Approved by the Oklahoma Conservation Commission on February 7, 2011.



CHAIR