

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

The Oklahoma Conservation Commission met Monday, June 4, 2012, at the Agriculture Building Board Room located at 2800 N. Lincoln in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The meeting was called to order at 9:33 a.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 May 31, 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
Karl Jett, Member
Mike Rooker, Member

Others in attendance were:

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
Janet Stewart, General Counsel
Dennis Boney, Watershed technician
Stacey Day, Water Quality Program Senior Technical Writer
Jill Ashbrenner, Spavinaw Creek Project Coordinator
Debi Carnott, Conservation Plan Writer/Education Coordinator
Shellie Willoughby, Awards and Recognition Committee Chair
Judith Wilkins, Environmental Projects Coordinator
Mike Thralls, Executive Director (attending as guest)
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
Phyllis Stunkard, Guest
Angela Reinschmiedt, Guest
Donovan Rogers, Canton Schools
Brock Hutchison, Canton Schools
Hanna Hood, Canton Schools

Dora Fuquae, Canton Schools History Teacher
Penny Heath, Canton Schools History Day Coordinator
Tina Rogers, Canton Junior and Senior High Science Teacher
Kim Tweed, Executive Secretary

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

A motion was made by Mr. Grego and seconded by Mr. Lowrance to approve the minutes of the May 3, 2012, Commission meeting as written. Those voting aye were: Jett, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

DISTRICT DIRECTOR RESIGNATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

Ben Pollard, Assistant 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. Jett to approve district director appointments as listed with terms to expire as indicated. Those voting aye were: Jett, 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. Rooker and seconded by Mr. Grego to approve the claims and financial statement. Those voting aye were: Jett, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

RECOGNITION OF COMMISSION EMPLOYEES

Jill Ashbrenner, Spavinaw Creek Project Coordinator, was recognized for 5 years of service; Stacey Day, Water Quality Program Senior Technical Writer, for being named Employee of the Quarter; and Dennis Boney, Watershed Technician, for being named Employee of the Year.

PRESENTATION OF AGREEMENTS

Mr. Pollard presented agreements for approval as listed in Exhibit #3. He recommended approval of the new agreements listed as (a) through (c). 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.

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

OUT OF STATE TRAVEL REQUESTS

Mr. Pollard presented travel requests for approval as listed in Exhibit #4. A motion was made by Mr. Rooker and seconded by Mr. Grego to approve one member to attend the meeting listed as (a). Those voting aye were: Jett, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

Mr. Pollard stated that no information was available for the meeting listed as (b). This item will be brought before the Commission in July.

A motion was made by Mr. Grego and seconded by Mr. Lowrance to approve travel listed as (c) through (e). Those voting aye were: Jett, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

At 10:00 a.m the Commission took a short recess to allow the Canton, Oklahoma 6th Grade Class to set up and perform their Dust Bowl Performance "6 Million Tons: Earth's Revolt that Inspired Reform." The class will be attending the National History Day competition at the University of Maryland and members wished them well.

CONSERVATION DISTRICT DIRECTOR - ELECTED POSITION #2

Mr. Pollard recommended that those individuals that were the only one filing a Notification and Declaration of Candidacy as listed in Exhibit #5 be declared elected to Position #2. A motion was made by Mr. Jett and seconded by Mr. Rooker to certify the individuals as listed. Those voting aye were: Jett, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

Mr. Pollard recommended that the Commission authorize the Executive Director and/or Assistant Director to declare candidates receiving the highest number of votes during the district director elections on Tuesday, June 5, 2012 as elected to Position #2. A motion was made by Mr. Grego and seconded by Mr. Rooker to make that authorization as listed. Those voting aye were: Jett, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

FY2013 CONSERVATION DISTRICT JOINT PLANS OF OPERATION

Lisa Knauf Owen, District Services Director, recommended approval of Joint Plans of Operation as listed in Exhibit #6. A motion was made by Mr. Lowrance and seconded by Mr. Rooker to approve the plans as listed. Those voting aye were: Jett, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

COMMISSION'S FY2013 APPROPRIATION AND BUDGET

Mr. Pollard provided a summary of the Commission's general appropriation over the past five years (see Attachment A). He stated that Senate Bill 1975 appropriates \$10,061,684 to the Commission however, this includes \$2,220,423 to be used for the repayment of the Conservation Bond. Mr. Pollard also stated that it includes \$500,000 in new money for the water quality monitoring program. The new money helps the program as it has seen a twenty percent reduction in Clean Water Act funds over the past few years.

Mr. Pollard reported that House Bill 2928 extends the gross production tax apportionment of \$2,627,702 through FY2016. This money supports watershed rehabilitation, watershed operation and maintenance, priority watershed cost-share and the locally led cost-share program. The Commission also has the authority to use thirty percent of these funds for Commission operations.

REPORT ON LEGISLATION AFFECTING THE OCC AND DISTRICTS

Mr. Pollard stated that there were no specific legislative bills impacting the Commission and the districts. He stated that there are continued efforts to consolidate agencies. Mr. Pollard stated

that the two insurance boards providing benefits for the state employees and district employees have been merged with the Office of State Finance, effective November 1, 2012. He also stated that the legislature froze the benefits allowance for employees for FY13.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mike Thralls, Executive Director, is on sick leave recuperating from health issues, stated that he enjoyed the Canton classes presentation. He appreciates the thoughts during his recovery and plans to return to work in about three weeks.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

OKLAHOMA CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEMBERS

Mr. Jett attended the Drummond FFA banquet for the OACD Outstanding Teacher presentation.

Mr. Grego reported that his district moved into their new building.

Mr. Rooker attended OACD Outstanding Teacher presentations in McLoud and Norman. He also attended his Senate confirmation hearing where he has been appointed to the Commission for another five year term.

Mr. Stunkard attended the OACD Outstanding Teacher presentation in Wagoner and stated that Karla Beatty, Education Coordinator, attended the presentation in Claremore.

OKLAHOMA CONSERVATION COMMISSION STAFF

Administration: Mr. Pollard stated a written summary was in the meeting packets and yielded for questions. He reported on Public Employee Recognition Week activities sponsored by the Awards and Recognition Committee as well as a full staff meeting held at the Arcadia Conservation Center in Edmond.

Mr. Pollard stated that a tour for the Farm Bureau board members of the North Canadian River Project was postponed to July 18 due to weather. Mr. Grego expressed interest in attending.

Mr. Pollard stated that the Oklahoma Horizon television program dedicated a show to conservation activities and segments highlighted nonpoint source success stories, the watershed program and the National Land and Range Judging Contest.

Mr. Pollard reported on prescribed burn activities stating the Ms. Knauf Owen manages the program with Darrel Dominick serving as the liaison to the Prescribed Fire Council.

District Services Division: Lisa Knauf Owen, Director, stated a written report was in the meeting packet. She reported on attending the 150th anniversary celebration of the USDA at the Capitol, participating in Outstanding Teacher presentations and working with the Creek County Conservation District on a new prescribed burn association for that county.

Ms. Knauf Owen stated that ninety-one percent of the districts have performed personnel evaluations and she will be contacting those districts that have not. She reported that the flood-plain easement program is moving forward.

Water Quality Program: Shanon Phillips, Director, stated that a written report was included in the meeting packet. She then thanked the OACD for its help with obtaining the new funding for water quality monitoring. This covers the cuts the program has seen and frees up 319 money for future water quality projects.

Ms. Phillips provided information regarding a webinar scheduled for June 14 where three states, with Oklahoma being one them, will highlight their success stories.

Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Program: Mike Kastl, Director, stated that a written report was in the meeting packet. He reported on three active sites in the 2010 grant, a final inspection in the 2011 grant, and a new project in the 2012 grant.

Mr. Kastl stated that the Booth emergency is under review by the Office of Surface Mining. He then stated that he will provide a status report of the Northeastern Oklahoma State University project at the July meeting.

Financial Management and Human Resources Division: Mr. Coffman stated a written report was in the meeting packet. Staff is preparing for the new fiscal year and have begun closing out the current fiscal year. Mr. Coffman will be meeting with division directors regarding their FY2013 budgets and will also be working on district allocations and the budget work program.

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

Conservation Programs Division: Robert Toole, Director, stated a written report was in the meeting packet. He reported that the City of Kingfisher has received a FEMA Hazard Mitigation grant and will begin the acquisition phase of the project.

Mr. Toole reported on the cost-share program and stated that the education arena had a very busy month. A work order has been released for the last ARRA rehabilitation project which has to be completed by September 30, 2013.

Mr. Toole stated that he has received all operation and maintenance plans from districts for FY13 and the total request is \$10.3 million with \$8.6 million for low-hazard sites.

OKLAHOMA ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Clay Pope, Executive Director, stated that with a flat budget and only \$500,000 of new money now is the time to start building the case for additional funding for the next fiscal year.

Mr. Pope will be participating the Field Office of the Future meeting. With pressure on the federal budget, discussions need to be on how districts and the Commission can do more with farm bill delivery and matching federal dollars. Mr. Pope stated that the farm bill will be coming up this

week in the Senate and the House Ag Committee would like to get it done before the July 4 recess.

Mr. Pope reported on meeting with the Oklahoma Education Television Authority about a dust bowl documentary scheduled for airing on November 17-18.

Mr. Pope reported on calendar events stating that the NACD South Central meeting is scheduled for August 5-7, 2012, the farm bureau board tour is scheduled for July 18, and a meeting with the Oklahoma River Boathouse Association is June 12. OACD will also be participating in a July 4 event along with river.

The OACD meet with the Western Farmers Cooperative to thank them for participation in the pilot carbon program. He also participated in outstanding teacher presentations and the 150th anniversary of USDA. The OACD will be awarding the first round of its micro-grants in the near future.

USDA-NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Ron Hilliard, State Conservationist, provided a written summary of activities and highlighted the article on Page 1 of the report regarding the NRCS National Water Quality Initiative in North Central Oklahoma.

Mr. Hilliard will be participating in a teleconference regarding the budget. He stated that should budget sequestration go into effect and the NRCS could lose eleven percent of funding for FY2013 as well as 1300 employees nationwide. Mr. Hilliard stated that conservation districts participate at different levels across the state delivering farm bill programs.

Mr. Hilliard participated in a tour where senders was demonstrated to control mesquite.

Mr. Hilliard stated that Kenny Hitch is now the (Acting) Assistant State Conservationist (Field Operations) for Zone 3. Caleb Stone will be the Resource Conservationist (Programs).

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND FORESTRY

Blayne Arthur, Associate Commissioner, reported that the Commercial Pet Breeders Board was disassembled and those responsibilities will now be at the Department. She stated that the Department's budget appears to have increased however, \$2 million is pass through funding. Ms. Arthur stated that staff will be looking at creative financing after obtaining the pet breeders because any increases in fees have to be approved by a House Joint Resolution. This is also affecting the laboratory fees as there is a nationwide shortage of helium which has caused the cost to rise by 400 percent.

The board will be meeting on June 19 and will discuss emergency rules.

APPROVAL OF OFFICERS FOR FY2013

A motion was made by Mr. Grego and seconded by Mr. Rooker to approve rotation of for FY2013 as follows: Dan Lowrance, Chair; Jim Grego, Vice Chair; Karl Jett, Secretary. Those voting aye were: Jett, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

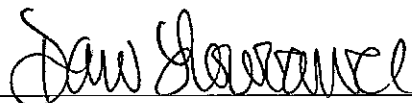
NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the Oklahoma Conservation Commission will be held on Monday, July 2, 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. Jett to adjourn. Those voting aye were: Jett, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Grego. Nay votes: none. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 11:23 a.m.

Approved by the Oklahoma Conservation Commission on July 2, 2012.



CHAIR

FY-2013 APPROPRIATION LEGISLATION

SB 1975 (section 103) appropriates \$10,061,684 to the Conservation Commission for fiscal year 2013. From this amount, \$2,220,423 will be used for the repayment of the Conservation Bond. The remaining amount reflects an increase of \$500,000 in general revenue appropriation.

HB 2928 (section 1004.5 (e) (1) (b)) extends the apportionment of \$2,627,702 to the Conservation Commission through the fiscal year ending June 30, 2016 (fiscal year 2016).

