

## MINUTES

### CALL TO ORDER

The Oklahoma Conservation Commission met September 1, 2009, 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 at 8:45 a.m. on August 31, 2009, 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  
Mike Rooker, Vice Chair  
George Stunkard, Secretary  
Dan Lowrance, Member  
Virginia Kidd, Member

Others in attendance were:

Mike Thralls, Executive Director  
Steve Coffman, Financial Management and Human Resources Director  
Robert Toole, Conservation Programs Director  
Tammy Sawatzky, Conservation Programs Deputy 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  
Steve Thompson, Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry  
Ron Hilliard, Natural Resources Conservation Service State Conservationist  
Clay Pope, Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts Executive Director  
Kelsey Kemp, eCapitol  
Mike Wofford, Citizen  
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. Stunkard and seconded by Mr. Rooker to approve the minutes of the August 3, 2009, Commission meeting as written. Those voting aye were: Lowrance, Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

**PRESENTATION TO ROBERT TOOLE**

Mr. Lowrance recognized Robert Toole for his service as Vice-Chairman of the National Watershed Coalition.

**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 Ms. Kidd to approve 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. Stunkard to approve Exhibit #2. Those voting aye were: Lowrance, Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

**PRESENTATION OF AGREEMENTS**

Mr. Thralls presented agreements for approval as listed in Exhibit #3. A motion was made by Mr. Stunkard and seconded by Mr. Lowrance to approve the amended agreements listed as (a) through (j). Those voting aye were: Lowrance, Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Mr. Lowrance and seconded by Mr. Rooker to approve the new agreement listed as (k). 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. A motion was made by Mr. Stunkard and seconded by Mr. Rooker to approve the requests as listed. Those voting aye were: Lowrance, Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

**FY2010-2014 LONG RANGE PLAN FOR MAYES COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

Lisa Knauf, District Services Director, recommended approval of the FY2010-2014 Long Range Plan for Mayes County Conservation District. A motion was made by Mr. Stunkard and seconded by Mr. Rooker to approve the long range plan for Mayes County Conservation District. Those voting aye were: Lowrance, Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

**JOINT PLANS OF OPERATION FOR FISCAL YEAR 2010**

Ms. Knauf recommended approval of joint plans of operation for Lincoln County, Cherokee County, Creek County, Jackson County and Kiowa County/Mountain View Conservation Districts. A motion was made by Mr. Stunkard and seconded by Mr. Rooker to approve the plans as recommended. Those voting aye were: Lowrance, Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

## **LOCALLY-LED COST-SHARE PROGRAM - PROGRAM YEAR 11B GUIDELINES**

Robert Toole, Conservation Programs Director, presented the Locally-led Cost-share Program - Program Year 11B Guidelines for approval as listed in Exhibit #5. These guidelines are cost-share practices funded by the conservation bond. A motion was made by Mr. Stunkard and seconded by Mr. Rooker to approve the guidelines as listed. Those voting aye were: Lowrance, Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

## **CONSERVATION PROGRAMS DIVISION REPORT**

Mr. Toole gave his report at this time. He stated that his staff was busy attending board meetings this past month. Mr. Toole stated that with the bond money and American Reinvestment and Recovery Act funds that staff is scrambling to complete designs for remedial, rehabilitation and Emergency Watershed Program projects. He stated that a contract in the amount of \$4 million was let for Sallisaw 18M and is the largest project to date that has been contracted and overseen by the Commission.

Mr. Toole reported that the National Watershed Coalition is hosting a National O&M Workshop in Oklahoma City on September 14-16.

## **RESOLUTION APPROVING/AUTHORIZING APPLICATION TO THE OWRB FOR ARRA GREEN PROJECT FUNDS IN THE EUCHA/SPAVINAW AND ILLINOIS RIVER WATERSHEDS**

Shanon Phillips, Water Quality Director, presented a formal resolution for approval authorizing an application to the Oklahoma Water Resources Board for American Reinvestment and Recovery Act Green Project Funds in the total aggregate principal amount of \$2,000,000.00 for streambank stabilization in the Eucha/Spavinaw and Illinois River Watersheds as listed in Exhibit #6. She stated that the initial application was approved during the July Commission meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Lowrance and seconded by Mr. Rooker to approve the resolution as listed. Those voting aye were: Lowrance, Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

## **RESOLUTION APPROVING/AUTHORIZING APPLICATION TO THE OWRB FOR ARRA GREEN PROJECT FUNDS IN THE COW CREEK WATERSHED IN PAYNE COUNTY**

Ms. Phillips presented a formal resolution for approval authorizing an application to the Oklahoma Water Resources Board for American Reinvestment and Recovery Act Green Project Funds in the total aggregate principal amount of \$2,000,000.00 to work with Oklahoma State University for streambank stabilization in the Cow Creek Watershed in Payne County as listed in Exhibit #7. The Commission will receive a fee for administering this project. A motion was made by Mr. Lowrance and seconded by Ms. Kidd to approve the resolution as listed. Those voting aye were: Lowrance, Kidd, Gard, Rooker and Stunkard. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

## **FY2010 BUDGET RESCISSIONS AND POSSIBLE ADOPTION OF A FURLOUGH PLAN**

Mr. Thralls stated that he and Clay Pope, Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts Executive Director, met with Senator Myers to discuss budget rescissions and Mr. Thralls met with Representative Dewitt. The state collections are running about 20% short. The Commission received a five percent rescission in August amounting to \$39,885. The Commission has over

\$200,000 in contract management earnings and will receive additional monies as work is completed. Mr. Thralls stated that additional rescissions may be announced in the coming weeks. The Commission is asking the legislature to hold harmless cuts to funds for the bond payment. Mr. Thralls will not ask the Commission to approve a furlough plan at this time.

#### **FY 2011 BUDGET SUBMISSION**

Mr. Thralls stated that the Commission must submit its 2011 budget to the Office of State Finance on October 1. He stated that the request will be straight forward this year and will not include any new money other than general revenue funding to cover agency personnel expenditures and the increase in the cost of health insurance coverage for district and Commission employees. The Commission will be asked to approve the budget at its October meeting.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

None.

#### **OKLAHOMA CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEMBERS**

Mr. Lowrance attended a meeting with Dean of Agriculture Bob Whitson and his advisory council to talk about OSU programs. He stated that a legislative tour is scheduled for September 17-18 to look at water resource projects in southwest Oklahoma. The tour's first stop will be Lake Humphries in Duncan.

Mr. Stunkard expressed appreciation for attending the RC&D Council Summit last month and thanked Mr. Rooker for the invitation.

Mr. Rooker thanked members for attending the RC&D Council Summit. He reported on attending the NACD South Central Meeting in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Mr. Gard stated that a regional Farm Bureau resolutions meeting was held on August 18. He stated the need to get our message to farm groups. Mr. Gard attended a meeting in Enid with Dean of Agriculture Bob Whitson and ag producers. He attended Congressman Lucas' town hall meeting on August 21. Mr. Gard thanked Ms. Knauf and Mr. Thralls for their assistance with Woods County and East Woods County Conservation Districts' personnel issues.

#### **OKLAHOMA CONSERVATION COMMISSION STAFF**

*Administration - Executive Director:* Mr. Thralls reported that the following staff attended all 88 conservation district board meetings during July and August and he expressed his appreciation: Shanon Phillips, Greg Kloxin, Robert Toole, Tammy Sawatzky, Eldon Merklin, Lisa Knauf, Kevin Varner, Dwain Phillips, Ben Pollard, Mark Harrison and Mike Thralls. He would like to make this an annual event.

Mr. Thralls stated that the Double Creek Rehabilitation Celebration is scheduled for September 2 and that Lt. Governor Jari Askins, Secretary of Agriculture Terry Peach, and Secretary of Environment J.D. Strong will be attending. Mr. Stunkard will serve as Master of Ceremonies.

Mr. Thralls also reported on the legislative tour planned for September 17-18 in conjunction with Representative Don Armes' interim study on water needs in southwestern Oklahoma.

*District Services Division:* Lisa Knauf, Director, attended board meetings in July and August. Ms. Knauf discussed vacancies in district offices stating that if the Commission is paying for unused annual leave that the position will remain vacant until the annual leave hours are paid by a district's allocation for personnel.

Ms. Knauf reported on a grant with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to provide funds to burn associations in northwest Oklahoma. This was a two year program however enough acres were burned this year that the grant was finalized in one burn season and deemed a success.

*Water Quality Program:* Shanon Phillips, Director, stated that no-till drills were purchased for districts in the North Canadian River project area and that 15,000 acres have been committed in that project.

Ms. Phillips reported that the Stamper Project application for stimulus funds was declined by the Department of Energy and that contact is being made with Congressman Boren for his assistance.

*Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Program:* Mike Kastl, Director, reported on emergencies as listed in the report.

The National Association of AML Programs conference is scheduled for September 27-30 in Rogers, Arkansas.

*Financial Management and Human Resources Division:* Steve Coffman, Director, reported on mailing three checks from bond funds; two to conservation districts for operation and maintenance and one to NRCS for engineering work for the Kingfisher project.

*Information Technology Division:* Mike Sharp, Director, reported on working with the state of Texas on public service answering points along the Oklahoma and Texas boundaries. This system is a call center for answering emergency calls.

Shellie Willoughby, GIS Specialist, gave birth to a baby boy on August 20.

## **OKLAHOMA ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS**

Clay Pope, Executive Director, reported on giving presentations at the RC&D Summit, the NACD South Central Meeting, and the NACD Executive Directors Conference. He will be attending the Double Creek Celebration on September 2, the OACD board retreat on October 2-3, and a legislative tour on water issues on September 17-18. Work is beginning on the upcoming area and state meetings.

Mr. Pope stated that the Western Farmers Electric is wanting to expand the carbon program in Oklahoma. He also stated that the Western Farmers, Nature Conservancy and Noble Foundation will be supporting the youth awards again this year.

**USDA-NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE**

Ron Hilliard, State Conservationist, reported that C. Watts and Sons was awarded the Turkey Creek 3 project in Garfield County. This is the first site for new dam construction using stimulus funds to be awarded in the nation. Mr. Hilliard stated that Oklahoma leads the nation with many firsts in the watershed program.

Mr. Hilliard stated that the Conservation Security Program sign-up is schedule August 10-September 30.

Mr. Hilliard reported on attending the NACD South Central meeting in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He stated that Oklahoma was chosen to host the National Society of Range Management annual meeting in 2013.

**USDA-FARM SERVICE AGENCY**

No representative present.

**NEXT MEETING**

The next regular meeting of the Oklahoma Conservation Commission will be held on October 5, 2009, 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 Ms. Kidd 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 10:55 a.m.

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Approved by the Oklahoma Conservation Commission on October 5, 2009.

  
CHAIR