

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

The Oklahoma Conservation Commission met July 6, 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 July 2, 2009, at the front entrance of the building.

ADMINISTER THE OATH OF OFFICE/LOYALTY OATH TO DAN LOWRANCE

Jana Chicoine, Administrative Officer, administered the Oath of Office/Loyalty Oath to Dan Lowrance for being appointed to a new term through June 30, 2014.

ROLL CALL

Lisa Knauf, District Services Director, took roll 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
Jana Chicoine, Administrative Officer
Karla Beatty, Education Coordinator
Dennis Boney, Watershed Technician
Johnny Pelley, Watershed Technician
George Moore, Watershed Technician
Janet Stewart, General Counsel
Sheryl Gibson, Grants Management Specialist
Whitney Weingartner, Assistant Attorney General
Steve Thompson, Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry
Ron Hilliard, Natural Resources Conservation Service State Conservationist
Teresa Stewart, Natural Resources Conservation Service Assistant State Conservationist
(Field Operations) Zone 3

Babette Goodwin, Natural Resources Conservation Service Human Resources Specialist
Clay Pope, Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts Executive Director
Tres Savage, eCapitol.net
Jason Doyle, OETA-TV
Aaron Byrd, OETA-TV
Mike Wofford

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

A motion was made by Mr. Stunkard and seconded by Ms. Kidd to approve the minutes of the June 1, 2009, Commission meeting as written. Those voting aye were: Gard, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Kidd. 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. Lowrance and seconded by Mr. Rooker to approve district director appointments listed as First Recommendation in Exhibit #1 with terms to expire as indicated. Those voting aye were: Gard, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Kidd. 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. Stunkard and seconded by Mr. Lowrance to approve the claims and financial statement. Those voting aye were: Gard, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Kidd. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

CONSERVATION COMMISSION EMPLOYEE RECOGNITIONS

The following Commission staff were recognized: George Moore, Watershed Technician, for 15 years of service; Sheryl Gibson, Grants Management Specialist, for 15 years of service; and Robert Toole, Conservation Programs Director, for 10 years of service.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE CHICKASAW NATION DIVISION OF COMMERCE

Mr. Thralls stated that Dr. Kelly Hurt with the Chickasaw Nation worked to move this Memorandum of Understanding forward. Areas of joint interest between the Nation and the state are upstream flood control structures, conservation education, and training for conservation work.

After discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Stunkard and seconded by Mr. Lowrance to approve a Memorandum of Understanding between the Chickasaw Nation Division of Commerce, the State of Oklahoma, and the Oklahoma Conservation Commission. Those voting aye were: Gard, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Kidd. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

FEDERAL STIMULUS PROJECTS

Ben Pollard, Assistant Director, presented the America Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 funds the Conservation Commission will be managing in FY 2010 as listed in Exhibit #3. Staff stated that there are matching requirements for the watershed rehabilitation agreements. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) also has stimulus funds to construct two new upstream flood control dams in the state. They will do the contracting for work on those projects.

LOAN APPLICATION TO THE OWRB'S CLEAN WATER STATE REVOLVING FUND

Mr. Thralls and Shanon Phillips, Water Quality Program Director, requested approval of a loan application to the Oklahoma Water Resources Board's Clean Water State Revolving Fund. The money for this fund comes from the Environmental Protection Agency and a percentage of these funds have to be dedicated to "green" projects.

After discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Rooker and seconded by Mr. Stunkard to approve a loan application to the Oklahoma Water Resources Board's Clean Water Revolving Fund for a principal forgiveness loan to fund \$2,000,000 worth of streambank stabilization projects in the Illinois River watershed and the Eucha-Spavinaw watershed. Those voting aye were: Gard, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Kidd. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

PRESENTATION OF AGREEMENTS

Ben Pollard, Assistant Director, presented agreements as listed in Exhibit #4. A motion was made by Mr. Stunkard and seconded by Ms. Kidd to ratify approval of new agreements listed as (a) through (I). Those voting aye were: Gard, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Kidd. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Ms. Kidd and seconded by Mr. Lowrance to ratify approval of amended agreements listed as (j) and (k). Those voting aye were: Gard, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Kidd. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

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

A motion was made by Mr. Lowrance and seconded by Ms. Kidd to approve amended agreements listed as (v) through (ii). Those voting aye were: Gard, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Kidd. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

OUT OF STATE TRAVEL REQUESTS

Mr. Thralls presented travel requests for approval as listed in Exhibit #5. He recommended one staff and any members to attend the meeting listed as (a). A motion was made by Mr. Stunkard and seconded by Ms. Kidd to approve one staff member and three Commission members. Those voting aye were: Gard, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Kidd. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

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

SPONSORSHIP OF EVENTS

A motion was made by Mr. Stunkard and seconded by Ms. Kidd to sponsor the following events.

- a. Caney Valley Watershed Celebration. September 2, 2009, Ramona, Oklahoma.
- b. Wildlife EXPO, September 25-27, 2009, Lazy E Arena, Guthrie, Oklahoma.
- c. H2Oklahoma Water Festival, October 8, 2009, Teal Ridge Wetland, Stillwater, Oklahoma.
- d. Environmental Education Expo, February 2010 (exact date and location TBA).
- e. Oklahoma Envirothon, April 2010 (exact date and location TBA).

Those voting aye were: Gard, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Kidd. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

FY2010-2014 CONSERVATION DISTRICT LONG RANGE PLANS

A motion was made by Mr. Lowrance and seconded by Mr. Stunkard to approve the FY2010-2014 Conservation District Long Range Plans as listed in Exhibit #6. Those voting aye were: Gard, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Kidd. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

CONSERVATION COMMISSION - FISCAL YEAR 2010 BUDGET

A motion was made by Mr. Stunkard and seconded by Ms. Kidd to approve the FY2010 salary for the Executive Director at \$72,398.00, as listed in Senate Bill 155. Those voting aye were: Gard, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Kidd. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Mr. Lowrance and seconded by Mr. Rooker to approve the FY2010 board meeting expense amount at \$25.00 per meeting for 12 monthly board meetings. Those voting aye were: Gard, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Kidd. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Mr. Lowrance and seconded by Mr. Rooker to approve FY2010 allocations to conservation districts for personnel and operating expenses as listed in Exhibit #7. Those voting aye were: Gard, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Kidd. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

Mr. Thralls provided information on the FY2010 Budget Work Program as listed in Attachment A. A motion was made by Mr. Lowrance and seconded by Mr. Rooker to approve the FY2010 Budget Work Program as presented. Those voting aye were: Gard, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Kidd. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

COST SHARE PROGRAM YEAR 10 SPECIAL REQUEST FROM GRANT COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Robert Toole, Conservation Programs Director, presented a special request from the Grant County Conservation District to add locust to the Brush Management (314) practice and recommended approval. After discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Lowrance and seconded by Ms. Kidd to table this request so the district can provide the specific species. Those voting aye were: Gard, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Kidd. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

OKLAHOMA CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEMBERS

Ms. Kidd reported on attending Ag Day activities in Poteau. Mr. Gard attended the Southern Association of State Departments of Agriculture annual meeting banquet. He provided a flyer for the Summer Crops Field Day in Enid on August 19, reported that the OSU Precision Tech Day is scheduled for July 28 and a Canola Conference is scheduled on July 21. Mr. Gard reported that the new Farm Service Agency executive director is Francie Tolle and the new Rural Development executive director is Ryan McMullen.

OKLAHOMA CONSERVATION COMMISSION STAFF

Administration - Executive Director: Mr. Thralls reported that a team of staff members are attending all district board meetings in July and August to discuss the Bond User Agreement, Contributions Agreement and FY2010 budget and allocations. The team consists of Mr. Thralls, Ben Pollard, Mark Harrison, Robert Toole, Tammy Sawatzky, Eldon Merklin, Shanon Phillips, Greg Kloxin, Lisa Knauf, Kevin Varner, and Dwain Phillips.

District Services Division: Lisa Knauf, Director, will be participating in a webinar sponsored by the National Association of State Conservation Agencies on technical training for district employees.

Water Quality Program: Shanon Phillips, Director, reported that during the month of June the second part of verifier training for the carbon program was held. Twenty nine districts have signed up as verifiers.

Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Program: Mike Kastl, Director, reported on two active cave ins in the community of Dow at the rodeo arena. The yearly review of the program by the Office of Surface Mining will begin this week.

Financial Management and Human Resources Division: Steve Coffman, Director, worked on the Commission's FY2010 budget and district allocations.

Information Technology Division: Mike Sharp, Director, reported that the U.S. Geological Survey is producing electronic aerial photos with no contour lines.

Conservation Programs Division: Robert Toole, Director, reported that the Downstream Development Study Group has been launched.

Administration - Assistant Director: Mr. Pollard reported on negotiations with the Mountain View, Kiowa County and Washita County Conservation Districts on consolidation and that a plan will be presented for approval to the Commission.

Mr. Pollard reported that the Stamper project was approved by the State Department of Commerce for stimulus funds.

The Commission is highlighting conservation success stories submitted by districts on its website. Mr. Pollard stated that the Commission and the OACD offered assistance to the OETA-TV with regards to the Ken Burns' dust bowl documentary.

OKLAHOMA ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Clay Pope, Executive Director, stated that OACD is following climate change legislation and that the National Association of Conservation Districts is working closely with the Ag Committee Chairman in the House. Mr. Pope stated that Oklahoma has received \$20 million in stimulus funds for conservation and that the OACD received \$308,000 for the Carbon Initiative and that the Stamper Project has received \$1 million.

Mr. Pope stated that the *Progressive Farmer* Magazine visited with OACD Vice President Steve House, OACD employees and Western Farmers Electric Cooperative regarding the Carbon Initiative.

Mr. Pope stated that a House interim study has been approved and will look at the issue of cedar trees in urban/suburban areas and the fire danger they cause.

USDA-NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Ron Hilliard, State Conservationist, introduced Babette Goodwin, Human Resources Specialist, and Teresa Stewart, Assistant State Conservationist (Field Operations) for Zone 3. He will be introducing NRCS staff to the Commission on a monthly basis. Mr. Hilliard reported that Scott Snider began his duties today as the Ag Engineer. NRCS received approval to hire a temporary engineer to assist with ARRA projects.

USDA-FARM SERVICE AGENCY

No representative present.

NEXT MEETING

A motion was made by Mr. Rooker and seconded by Ms. Kidd to change the next regular meeting of the Oklahoma Conservation Commission to Tuesday, August 4, 2009 at the Holiday Inn in Norman, Oklahoma beginning at 9:30 a.m. The meeting will be in conjunction with the RC&D Summit.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business a motion was made by Ms. Kidd and seconded by Mr. Rooker to adjourn. Those voting aye were: Gard, Rooker, Stunkard, Lowrance and Kidd. Nay votes: none. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Approved by the Oklahoma Conservation Commission on August 4, 2009.



CHAIR