

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

The Oklahoma Conservation Commission met January 8, 2007, in the Agriculture Building Board Room, 2800 N. Lincoln Boulevard, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The meeting was called to order at 9:30 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 January 4, 2007, 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
Virginia Kidd, Secretary
Matt Gard, Member
Rick Jeans, Member

Members absent:

Dan Lowrance, 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 Assistant 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
Clay Pope, Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts Executive Director
Ron Hilliard, Natural Resources Conservation Service State Conservationist
Kevin Norton, Natural Resources Conservation Service Assistant State Conservationist
Ginger Lyde, Farm Service Agency
Mark Schlachtenhaufen, Capitol Network News
Kim Tweed, Executive Secretary

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

A motion was made by Mr. Jeans and seconded by Mr. Gard to approve the minutes of the December 4, 2006, Commission meeting as written. Those voting aye were: Stunkard, Kidd, Gard and Jeans. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

DISTRICT DIRECTOR APPOINTMENTS

Mike Thralls, Executive Director, presented recommendations for appointment of conservation district directors as listed in Exhibit #1. A motion was made by Ms. Kidd and seconded by Mr. Jeans to approve district director appointments listed as 1st Recommendation in Exhibit #1 with terms to expire as indicated. Those voting aye were: Stunkard, Kidd, Gard and Jeans. 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. After discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Jeans and seconded by Ms. Kidd to approve the claims and financial statement. Those voting aye were: Stunkard, Kidd, Gard and Jeans. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

SERVICE AWARD RECOGNITION

Ben Pollard, Assistant Director, and Steve Coffman, Financial Management and Human Resources Director, recognized Jana Chicoine, Administrative Officer, for 25 years of service to the Commission and the state of Oklahoma.

PRESENTATION OF COMMISSION AGREEMENTS

Mr. Pollard presented agreements for approval as listed in Exhibit #3. He recommended approval of amended agreements listed as (4a) and (4b). A motion was made by Mr. Jeans and seconded by Ms. Kidd to approve the amended agreements. Those voting aye were: Stunkard, Kidd, Gard and Jeans. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Mr. Gard and seconded by Mr. Jeans to approve new agreements listed as (4c) through (4f). Those voting aye were: Stunkard, Kidd, Gard and Jeans. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

OUT OF STATE TRAVEL REQUESTS

Mr. Thralls presented out of state travel requests as listed in Exhibit #4. A motion was made by Mr. Jeans and seconded by Ms. Kidd to approve the requests as listed. Those voting aye were: Stunkard, Kidd, Gard and Jeans. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

REALLOCATION OF REAP FUNDS TO THE CONSERVATION RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM IN THE EUCHA SPAVINAW AND ILLINOIS RIVER WATERSHEDS

Mr. Thralls requested approval of the reallocation of \$480,000 of REAP funds originally set aside for Agency Administration to the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program in the Eucha Spavinaw and Illinois River Watersheds. He provided a document showing the impact if these additional funds are approved. Mr. Thralls stated that when these funds were set aside the Commission did not have a contributions agreement with the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Since that time, an NRCS agreement has been signed and these funds are not needed for agency operations.

After discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Gard and seconded by Mr. Jeans to approve the reallocation request. Those voting aye were: Stunkard, Kidd, Gard and Jeans. Nay votes: none. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Thralls stated that the Governor's Inauguration is scheduled at 11:00 a.m. today. Members will attend.

OKLAHOMA CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEMBERS

Mr. Gard reported on attending an event in Garfield County at the Groendyke Ranch and commended the district for all its doing in their area.

Ms. Kidd also attended the Garfield County event. She attended the Pittsburg County Conservation District dinner and the Tulsa Farm Show.

Mr. Jeans visited with Representative Dewitt and Senator Myers regarding the Commission's budget and they are very optimistic about funding.

OKLAHOMA CONSERVATION COMMISSION STAFF

Administration: Mike Thralls, Executive Director, stated that staff has been gathering information for the pending lawsuit against poultry integrators. Ben Pollard and Shanon Phillips will participate in the deposition scheduled for January 9.

Mr. Thralls along with Clay Pope, OACD Executive Director, met with Representative Phil Richardson regarding the Commission's budget, lifting the cap on the REAP funds and filling budget shortfalls. The Office of State Finance has inquired about lifting the cap as well.

Mr. Thralls reported that Darrel Dominick, former NRCS State Conservationist, has agreed to work for the Commission in the role of Native American Liaison as well as heading up some leadership training opportunities.

District Services Division: Lisa Knauf, Director, attended a retirement reception for Georgia Lawrence, Coal County Conservation District secretary. Ms. Lawrence had worked at the district for 40 years. Ms. Knauf provided training to new secretaries in Tulsa and Muskogee Counties. She worked on unemployment claim issues in Tulsa County. Ms. Knauf reported on completing development of a "10-minute guide" series. The first series was sent out for discussion at January board meetings. Ms. Knauf has scheduled five workshops in January to assist district employees with W-2 forms.

Water Quality Program: Shanon Phillips, Assistant Director, stated that Director Dan Butler is participating in a conference call with the Environmental Protection Agency regarding the Stamper project this morning.

She reported that an open house for landowners in the Honey Creek 319 watershed project is scheduled for January 9 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Landowners with at least 40 acre tracts were invited and will have an opportunity to sign up for this program.

Ms. Phillips reported that the City of Elk City Council agreed to support a Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) in their area and will provide a portion of the match for this project. Staff will draft a watershed based plan and develop a workplan for the watershed.

Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Program: Mike Kastl, Director, stated that before the 109th Congress adjourned it passed HR 611 which extended the AML program for 15 years. The President signed the bill into law. The bill contains \$135 million for the AML program over the next 15 years. Mr. Kastl expressed disappointment that Oklahoma would continue to receive 1.5 million in reclamation funds for the next three years until funds would increase. He stated that Oklahoma has five million dollars in designed projects sitting on the shelf awaiting construction funds.

Financial Management and Human Resources Division: Steve Coffman, Director, stated that staff has been busy with end of year reporting. Mr. Coffman attended a meeting of the Motor Vehicle Advisory Council. This committee will look at developing uniform procedures for state-owned vehicles. He also attended a meeting of the Oklahoma Financial Manager's Association.

Information Technology Division: Mike Sharp, Director, reported on the West Commerce Tar Creek AML project stating it is nearly finished. Reclamation work continues on the Southeast Commerce Tar Creek project. Staff continues work on the strategic and business plan development for the Geographic Information Council and the Office of Geographic Information.

In addition, staff is working on implementing remote desktop computer applications that will be useful in resolving district and OCC field staff computer problems without the need to physically go to the remote office.

Conservation Programs Division: Robert Toole, Director, noted the division written report submitted to the Commissioners and offered to answer any questions they may have. In addition, Mr. Toole informed the Commission that a significant advancement had been made on the Oklahoma Corporation Commission/Oklahoma Conservation Commission Initiative with the addition of watershed structures on the Department of Environmental Quality website. This allows greater access to the watershed structure location database and increases the efficiency and effectiveness in noting watershed structures during the energy well permitting process

Administration: Ben Pollard, Assistant Director, provided copies of recent news articles for review. The first article is about the Coalition for Conservation. The other is a current piece by Ron Hayes featuring the Commission's current construction contracts which total more than \$9 million. These contracts are in the areas of abandoned mine lands, Tar Creek reclamation, and upstream flood control structures.

OKLAHOMA ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Clay Pope, Executive Director, stated that the National Association of Conservation Districts annual meeting is scheduled for February 4-8, 2007 in Los Angeles. He also reported that the NACD South Central meeting has been scheduled for July 27-29, 2007 at the Cherokee Casino Resort in

Catoosa, Oklahoma.

Mr. Pope reported Timothy Egan, author of "The Worst Hard Times" is unable to attend the annual state meeting. He has confirmation from Lt. Governor Jari Askins to participate and is trying to schedule Governor Henry for participation at the banquet.

Conservation Day at the Capitol is scheduled for March 19, 2007 and Governor Henry is tentatively scheduled to attend. Chesapeake Energy will again sponsor awards for this event.

Mr. Pope spoke on legislative issues stating that committee work is underway. OACD will be monitoring several bills with topics ranging from controlled burn to tax credits for conservation easements.

Mr. Pope expressed his pleasure with the City of Elk City's approval of the CREP. He has been in contact with the City of Shawnee on water quality issues as well.

The OACD Executive Board will meet in a special meeting on January 22 to discuss bylaw changes for consideration at the state meeting. He also reported that representatives with Leadership Oklahoma have requested copies of "Out of the Dust" books for their new class members.

USDA-NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Ron Hilliard, State Conservationist, reported on attending the Garfield County event on December 5 and stated it was very enjoyable.

Mr. Hilliard stated that the NRCS is operating under a continuing resolution through February 15 and that it would probably be June until a budget is received. This action has a severe impact on Oklahoma's budget. This will not allow flexibility nor will it allow NRCS to fill personnel vacancies at this time.

Mr. Hilliard reported on the Conservation Innovation Grants stating that all proposals are due by February 2 and that there is \$20 million available for this program.

Mr. Hilliard stated that there have been several retirements this past month and staff will be meeting to discuss these positions.

USDA-FARM SERVICE AGENCY

Ginger Lyde stated that in the interest of time she had nothing new to report.

NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the Oklahoma Conservation Commission will be held on Thursday, February 1, 2007, 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. Jeans and seconded by Mr. Gard to adjourn. Those voting aye were: Stunkard, Kidd, Gard and Jeans. Nay votes: none. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 10:35 a.m.

Approved by the Oklahoma Conservation Commission on February 1, 2007.

CHAIR