

Colorado Association of Conservation Districts
September 10, 2014 @ 7:30AM
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Via Teleconference

Attendees:

Gary Moyer, CACD President
Don McBee, CACD Vice President
Gary Thrash, Director
Anthony Lobato, Director
Jim Cecil, Director
Brian Starkebaum, Director
Charlie Carnahan, Director
Susan Raymond, Director
Brett Moore, CACD Lobbyist
Bob Warner, NACD Alternate Board Member
Cindy Lair, CSCB Program Manager
Larry Sweeney, CSCB Board President
Sharon Pattee, CACD Executive Director

Absent:

Scott Nocks, Director
NRCS Representation

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by President Gary Moyer at 7:33AM after establishing a quorum. Moyer called for any additions to the agenda, and hearing none, moved on with the agenda.

Prior Meeting Minutes:

President Gary Moyer entertained a motion to approve the August 2014 Minutes from the face-to-face meeting in Leadville. Don McBee made a motion to approve the Minutes and Anthony Lobato provided the second. Without any further discussion the motion to approve the August 2014 Minutes passed unanimously.

Legislative Update:

Brett Moore had not joined the call yet, so it was asked that the Legislative Update be moved down the agenda. Everyone agreed to move the agenda forward in that regard.

CO State Conservation Board Updates:

Cindy Lair, Program Manager for CSCB, provided updates that started with their face-to-face meeting in Wray, CO on August 27/28th. She reported that it was a great meeting, reiterating the value of meeting one on one with the state Board members, CACD, and NRCS. There were updates from CSCB as to “emergency” grant funding requests with regard to the tumbleweed problem that the Front Range particularly will be dealing with again this year. She stated that the tumbleweed issue really can’t be considered an emergency in this regard. She was able to give a simple definition of “emergency” as the state saw it.

Moyer asked Cindy to explain how true emergency funds are obtained from the Legislature. Larry Sweeney commented that the state already has some emergency funding in place and Districts that wish to apply for those funds need to follow the procedure that is in place for obtaining those funds, just like other units of government. They need to apply for those specific funding pockets. The money won’t just come to them without the application process.

Cindy reported that it is CSCB's turn to Chair the annual joint Board meeting in November, in Loveland, and is making preparations to do so. The joint Board meeting will start at 9:30AM on November 10th.

The concerns over the continuing issues with NRCS were discussed, one area being the Lower Arkansas River Watershed area, but related that there are complaints coming in all over the state. Cindy expressed her frustration over the fact that it is looking like we will get another "acting" state conservationist, and may not have a permanent state con in place until January. NRCS seems to be kicking the can down the road and it is having a detrimental effect on the Districts and their landowners. She mentioned the 2014 Resolution that is coming up from Branson-Trinchera CD that speaks to the NRCS issues. She mentioned that she had heard that there is a similar one coming up from a western slope District. CACD Board member, Don McBee voiced concern about the field office point system that NRCS currently has in place. There was additional discussion on this subject by the group.

Cindy stated that she is still trying to help sort out the CORE financial system mess at the Department of Ag. Between the Direct Assistance payments to the Districts, matching grant funding, and the technical assistance reimbursements, the funds are being processed as quickly as is possible given the problems with the program software. She hoped that things would be "fixed" by the end of September, at the latest.

Cindy made note of the hiring of Robin Reilley, to replace Ashley Ross's vacancy, as the southern conservation specialist. Robin will be attending as many meetings as is possible in order to quickly be effective for those Districts in her area.

NRCS Updates:

Unfortunately, there was no representation from NRCS again at this meeting. Concerned was again expressed by those present about the seeming change in attitude and a feeling of a general lack of importance that NRCS currently has on its relationship with the Conservation Districts. It was mentioned also that just as soon as NRCS appoints a new State Conservationist for Colorado, CACD and CSCB plan to hold a meeting with that appointee in order to explain the recent negative feedback that CACD and CSCB has been given from the Districts. Moyer commented that Astor Boozer, NACD's Western Region Issues Conservationist, would be attending the annual meeting in November.

Administrative Updates:

Sharon Pattee, CACD Executive Director, provided copies of the August 2014 financial statements and asked if there were any questions on the documentation. She briefly commented on some of the reports and again reiterated that she was fairly comfortable with how things were looking to date. She then reviewed the current status of the 2014 Annual District Dues payments and encouraged each Watershed Director to reach out to their individual Districts and ask for any District dues payments that haven't been made. Sharon again said that as soon as the Direct Assistance payments went out from CSCB, that she would send out a "second request" letter to those Districts that haven't paid yet. Without any further discussion, Gary Moyer asked if there was a Motion to accept the financials as submitted. Anthony Lobato so moved and Charlie Carnahan provided the second. The Motion to accept the financials as presented passed unanimously.

Brian Starkebaum suggested that CACD submit to the District an Annual Plan of Work. Gary Moyer reminded the Board that CACD is not an arm of the state government so wasn't required by statute to do so. He suggested that something more in line with a quarterly report could be sent to any or all of the Districts that request it, if not a copy of the 2014 budget itself. Sharon Pattee reminded the Board of all of the avenues of communication that she has with the Districts on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis. If the email updates stop at the desk of the District Managers, that is something that would be difficult to fix. Ideally, CACD would have the email addresses of all of the District Board Supervisors so that we could be assured that they are receiving all of the

communication sent out by Sharon/CACD. If the District Managers are delivering the messages, than there isn't a problem in this regard. But, we have no particular way of knowing. During the District's monthly Board meetings, CACD updates should have a permanent spot on their agenda, where these updates could be delivered to the Supervisors.

Susan Raymond commented on that she had been told that the Delta CD felt that CACD was focused too much on National issues. Gary Moyer explained that many of the national issues trickle down to the states and so are very much state issues as well. If the District doesn't realize that, Moyer suggested that Susan explain that to them. CACD primarily focuses on state concerns and not every District may have an interest about every issue. But, as a state association, CACD has to look at the big picture, as well as District or Watershed specific issues.

Pattee updated the BOD on the reimbursement request to NRCS for the expenses incurred through June 2014 (the second quarter) by the District Outreach Program. She said that she is still fairly unclear as to what sort of detail NRCS requires for reimbursements of this nature, but she had the paperwork ready to go and hoped that the request would go smoothly and that we would receive our funding by the next Board teleconference call.

Sharon stated that the site visit held on September 9th, went well in Loveland. It was good to have Mark Cronquist (CSCB), Nancy McIntyre (DM from Boulder Valley/Longmont CD's), and Katherine Burse-Johnson (NRCS) there to help with the annual meeting preparations. She then reported that there have been weekly teleconference meetings with the 2014 Annual Meeting Program Committee and felt that the program/agenda was coming along well. She stated that she was still working on the registration form and cost breakdowns from the ES Hotel in Loveland. She also said that she had updated most of the documentation needed for the annual meeting and that most of the forms, if not already available, would be on the website by the last week of September. She reminded the Board that she had requested the help of Janette Terry and Amy Gossman to help her during the annual meeting in several areas.

There was some discussion about a request from the Rocky Ford/Olney Boone FFA, asking for a contribution from GLCI funds for their state livestock judging event. Sharon said that, because the GLCI was in limbo, she would have to talk to Rachel Murph (NRCS) to inquire as to the status of the program and if we could make a donation from that line item, for that purpose.

Sharon then mentioned the 2014 Camp Rocky wrap-up call that took place in early September. There was to be further discussion on possibly moving the site for 2015 or 2016. Amy Gossman would work at gathering information on other possible locations. Sharon reported that there was an increase in the RMM Camp expenses for this year, compared to last year, with only a slight increase in camper numbers and less staff overnight stays.

Legislative Update:

Noting that Brett Moore had joined the call, Gary Moyer asked for a brief legislative update due to the fact that the meeting was behind schedule. Brett addressed the recent movement by the Governor's office to appoint a "task force" for the oil and gas issues currently moving around the state, in lieu of the Ballot Initiatives. It was decided that Gary Moyer would send in a bio to be review for a possible seat on this task force. Also, it was discussed that current CACD policy does not specifically address oil and gas issues, only the item of all natural resources, of which oil and gas would fit into. It was mentioned that perhaps during the 2014 Resolution process that there might be more specific policy being brought forth by a District or Watershed.

The conversation then moved to the CO State Water Plan and its eight or more upcoming stakeholder meetings. Sharon Pattee reminded the Board that she had sent out, via email, notice to the Districts about these upcoming meetings, which were due to wrap up by the end of the month. She had encouraged Districts to involve their landowners to attend these meeting and provide local input, as suggested by the Water Resources Review

Committee. The last meeting is to take place in Denver on October 1st, at the University of Denver, downtown at the Metro State campus.

Brett then moved the discussion to whether CACD wanted to look at lobby the Legislature for new/additional funding in 2015. It was briefly discussed that, at the request of the Districts through the Resolution process, this lobbying take place. It was important to note that some very important work would need to be done to develop a “plan”, the way this funding would be used, and the best delivery pitched to the Legislature in order for a successful outcome. There were several ideas were discussed briefly by Brett and the group.

President’s Updates:

Gary Moyer moved to the subject of the Employees Association, reporting that CACD had still not heard from the EA as of this date. It was necessary for planning purposes that the EA communicate with CACD with regard to the annual meeting. Brian Starkebaum stated that it was his understanding that the EA was having problems with the idea of being “affiliated” with CACD. Jim Cecil made comment that a member of the EA had contacted him. He stated that like it or not, that CACD had to deal with these DM’s and felt that CACD needed to capitulate in this regard and take “the high road”. These comments brought forth contentious discussion about what the role of an Employees Association was in the relationship with their State Association. NACD’s EA history and standards were discussed, in that it was the District employees that asked to be affiliated with the state/national associations. The state and national associations saw value in this potential partnership and so the affiliations were formed. There was further discussion, and it was determine by the majority of the Board, that any plans to engage the EA in the 2014 Annual Meeting, along with the issue of a Silent Auction, would not move forward until there was communication from the EA to CACD.

Moyer moved the discussion to the 2014 Resource Committees and the Resolution Process. Sharon Pattee reminded the group that the 2014 Resolution form and instructions were available on the CACD website, and that she was also updating the contact information for RC Chairs and committee members. A letter/packet had been sent out to the committees during the first week of September. However, with the updates made during the September Watershed meetings, she would be sending out another RC contact listing sheet during the first week of October.

Gary Moyer reported on the upcoming NACD travel during the month of September, specifically the Southwest and Pacific Regional Meeting to be held in Portland during the week of September 15th, which Moyer, Bob Warner (at his own expense) and Sharon Pattee would be attending. Additionally, on September 22nd, there was the NACD Executive Directors Conference to be held in Tennessee, which only Sharon Pattee would attend.

Adjournment:

Sharon Pattee asked that the next BOD meeting could be scheduled for October 15th, at 7:30AM, due to the San Juan Watershed meeting on 10/8 that she wants to attend. Everyone was alright with bumping the October BOD meeting up to 10/15. Gary Moyer asked if there were any other items to be discussed and upon hearing none he entertained a motion to adjourn. Charlie Carnahan made the motion, and Don McBee provided the second. Without further discussion, the motion passed unanimously to adjourn at 9:43AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sharon Pattee
CACD Executive Director