Colorado Association of Conservation Districts

 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

February 16, 2016 at 7:30AM via Teleconference

(712) 432-0180, passcode 810871#

***Attendees:***

Don McBee, CACD President

Anthony Lobato, CACD Vice President

Gary Moyer, Director

Gary Thrash, Director

Mike Cleary, Director

Scott Jones, Director

Brian Starkebaum, Director

Jim Cecil, Director

Brett Moore, CACD Lobbyist

Bob Warner, NACD Alternate Board Member

Sharon Pattee, CACD Executive Director

***Absent:***

Elaine Kist, Director

Charlie Carnahan, Director

***Guests:***

Cindy Lair, CO State Conservation Board Program Manager

Harold Unwin, President CSCB

***Call to Order:***

The meeting was called to order by President, Don McBee at 7:36am after establishing a quorum. McBee called for any additions to the agenda by the Board, and hearing none, moved on with the agenda.

***Prior Meeting Minutes:***

President Don McBee asked for a motion to approve the January 2016 Minutes from last month’s meeting. Gary Thrash made the motion to approve the January 2016Minutes and Anthony Lobato provided the second. Without any further discussion, the motion to approve the January 2016 Minutes passed unanimously.

***NRCS:***

Clint Evans was unable to participate in the morning’s teleconference, but had provided an update to Sharon Pattee for the CACD Board. Sharon read the prepared update below.

NRCS brief update:

We received notification of three new Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) projects that were selected for funding in 2016:

1-CCALT – Agate Prairie Conservation Legacy project

2-Partners for Western Conservation –Greater Sage Grouse project in CO, UT and NV (CO is the lead state)

3-Colorado Energy Office – CO Dairy and Irrigation Efficiency Program

We will be working with the project sponsors for each of the new RCPP projects in the coming weeks.

Staffing: We are working to fill 36 vacant positions around the state plus we are adding 4 field office positions that we are hoping to fill as new hires with recent college graduates.  The recent graduates will be placed in Brighton, Cortez, Woodland Park and Hugo or Rocky Ford.

Cultural Resources update: We have three NRCS state archeologists coming to Denver this week to help us develop a plan to clear the backlog of conservation practices needing clearance from the SHPO’s office.  They will be assisting CO intermittently until we can fill CO State Archeologist position.  We don’t have a schedule worked out as of today but will have a schedule and plan in place within the next two weeks.  Due to the existing backlog it will take a team of staff to complete the required actions to obtain the SHPO’s clearance for construction to begin.

There was a small amount of discussion by the Board with regard to NRCS and the RCPP, specifically the partners included in these projects. There was concern voiced that NRCS seems to be willing to partner with any and all organizations “…that bring money to the table….and where does that leave the Districts?….” This would be something to follow up with Clint about in the near future.

***Legislative Update:***

Brett Moore, CACD lobbyist, reported that the February 2016 Legislative Committee call went through about 14 bills, outlining CACD’s position of support or monitor. Brett went briefly through the Tracking Sheet on each of the bill that CACD is in support of, including HB16-1010 (Prairie Dog Relocation) and HB16-1109 (Water Rights and Federal Permits). He reminded the Board that the Tracking Sheet is being done by an outside service and is updated almost daily.

Moore also reminded the group that the CO Ag Council meets every other week, during the legislative session, at the Capitol. Brett and Sharon Pattee both attend, from 7:30AM to 9:00AM twice per month.

Brett also reiterated that several of the legislative issues that failed to pass in 2015 would no doubt be readdressed in the 2016 session, along with that the JBC would be holding their pre-hearing process and were planning to hold to the 2016 funding levels.

***CO State Conservation Board Updates:***

Cindy Lair, DOA Program Manager for the CO State Conservation Board, reported that the first quarter 2016 CSCB face-to-face meeting was held in Broomfield. Among other things, the Matching Grants program was a key topic of conversation. Cindy mentioned that the labor cost docket will follow NRCS guidelines, with both an eastern and western slope schedule. About 19 Conservation Districts were awarded a Matching Grant. Also, the CSCB has a grant for updating and improving computer software/hardware.

Cindy then shared with the Board about the CO Department of Ag’s reorganization of the Conservation Services Division. Commissioner Don Brown wants a Public Lands position that can help private livestock grazers on federal lands. This will be a new position, with someone hired by April 15.

Cindy also mentioned about her and Mark Cronquist attendance at the 2016 NACD Annual Meeting in Reno at the first of February. Gary Thrash and Gary Moyer both shared their experiences at the meeting also, noting that Bob Warner was a major sponsor again; the two resolutions brought from CO passed at the national level; Moyer now is on the NACD Executive Board; Brent Van Dyke (NM) is the NACD President Elect; Jeff Burwell is now the Western Issues Specialist for the Southwest and Pacific Regions; and the NACD 2017 Annual Meeting will be in Denver.

Cindy concluded with noting that the Spring 2016 Watershed meetings were coming up in the next couple of months and encouraged the CACD Board of Directors to get involved and attend. She also is still in the process of hiring a Salinity Program Coordinator for the western slope to replace the vacancy left by Jim Currier last year.

***Administrative Updates:***

Sharon Pattee provided copies of the January 2016 financial statements and provided verbal disclosure and review of the miscellaneous reports. She asked for any questions and after some discussion, Don McBee asked for a motion to accept the January 2016 financial statements as presented. Mike Clear made the motion to accept the financial statements as presented, and Gary Moyer provided the second. The motion was then passed unanimously by the Board. Sharon reviewed the 2016 District dues payments received to date, stating that more of the Districts have sent in their dues payments earlier this year than in the past.

Sharon then moved the discussion to Brett Moore’s contract as CACD’s lobbyist and Amy Gossman’s 2016 Camp Rocky contract. Don McBee stated that he had asked Brett to renegotiate his contract with CACD and was waiting to hear back from him. (At this point, Brett was no longer on the call.) Sharon said that this needs to be taken care of as soon as possible, and said that she would follow up with Brett in the coming weeks. She also stated that the reduction in Amy Gossman’s contracted amount, $4000 instead of the $5000 in the past two years, might have a “bonus” amount IF the camp numbers were up from last year and the money was available to provide her with such. The Board said that they would address that in late June and July, when the camper numbers were realized. A motion was made by Gary Thrash and seconded by Gary Moyer, for Amy’s contract to be in the amount of $4000 this year. The motion passed unanimously.

Sharon reminded the group of the dates for Camp Rocky and CO Envirothon, July 10 – 16 and April 26 and 27, respectively.

Sharon stated that everyone should have received an electronic version of the CO Conservator Winter 2016 newsletter by now. She said that she had hard copies available and upon request would send some out to the full annual dues paying Districts. She would also take hard copies to the spring Watershed meetings to give out to the Districts in attendance.

The Governor’s Forum on Agriculture was coming up next week and Sharon would attend through the generous donation of a $500 sponsorship from Prowers Conservation District. Bob Warner would also be attending through his own sponsorship donation. Sharon also said that Ag Day at the Capitol was March 16th and planning was well underway. She would be attending on behalf of CACD and its membership with the CO Ag Council that organizes this annual event.

***President’s Updates:***

President, Don McBee told the group that he had sent out about 100 letters to CO Legislators, requesting contributions to CACD. He also addressed the subject of the funding letter to be sent out to the top healthiest/stronger Districts within CO. Mike Cleary (and Sharon) were tasked with writing said letter and had done so; there were now waiting for Board feedback on the Districts selected. There were questions on which these “top” Districts would be. Gary Moyer was to contact Nikki Reed and then report back to Sharon on which Districts would meet the criteria to receive this funding letter.

Don McBee then reiterated that the Executive Committee members would be Don McBee, as President; Anthony Lobato, as Vice President; Gary Moyer, as CACD’s Past President, and Mike Cleary in the at large position. The Legislative Committee for CACD will remain the same, with Don McBee, Gary Moyer, Brian Starkebaum, and Anthony Lobato.

Don then stated that the situation down in the Lower Ark with the possibility of several of the Districts helping with a re-vegetation project was not moving forward at this time. If there were any changes, he would advise the Board accordingly.

***Adjournment:***

Don McBee asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting and Gary Thrash so moved with Jim Cecil provided the second. The motion to have the next CACD Board of Directors meeting passed and would be via teleconference on March 9, 2016, at 7:30AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

 *Sharon*

Sharon Pattee

CACD Executive Director