

Colorado Association of Conservation Districts
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
January 21, 2016 @ 9:00AM
Ramada Plaza Inn, Denver

Attendees:

Don McBee, CACD President
Anthony Lobato, CACD Vice President
Gary Moyer, Director
Gary Thrash, Director
Anthony Lobato, Director
Mike Cleary, Director
Scott Jones, Director
Elaine Kist, Director
Brian Starkebaum, Director
Charlie Carnahan, Director
Jim Cecil, Director
Brett Moore, CACD Lobbyist
Bob Warner, NACD Alternate Board Member
Sharon Pattee, CACD Executive Director

Guests:

Cindy Lair, CO State Conservation Board Program Manager
Clint Evans, NRCS State Conservationist

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by new President, Don McBee at 9:06AM after establishing a quorum. McBee called for any additions to the agenda by the Board, and hearing none, moved on with the agenda. Sharon Pattee stated that Brett Moore had contacted her to say that he would be at the Capitol until around 11:00AM, and so the agenda needed to be adjusted to accommodate his arriving late. It was agreed that he would be moved to either before or after the Executive Director's report.

Prior Meeting Minutes:

President Don McBee asked for a motion to approve the December 2015 Minutes from last month's meeting, via teleconference. Anthony Lobato made the motion to approve the December 2015 Minutes and Gary Thrash provided the second. Without any further discussion, the motion to approve the December 2015 Minutes passed unanimously.

NRCS:

Clint Evans provided update to the CACD Board starting with updates to the 2016 Local Work Group (LWG) meetings that would provide NRCS with conservation priorities for the 2017 funding year. He tentatively said that deadlines for the LWG meetings would be June 30th for District meetings and August 31st for Watershed input session meetings, for developing resource project priorities. Special consideration would be given to projects that included not only District cooperation, but also community and miscellaneous entity input and funding. He outlined some specific funding amount allocations. Cindy Lair (CSCB) asked what kind of things that the Districts could do to improve the chance of their projects being prioritized and funded. Evans stated that multiple partner input would be favored, in addition to projects that fell into the forest health, selenium, soil health and noxious weed management of List A species projects areas.

Discussion then moved to last years' LWG meeting challenges. Clint stressed the need for formal, advertised meetings, with an open public forum, in order to achieve District and community dialogue. Lair then offered the idea of combining a LWG meeting with a District workshop, in order to capitalize on the attendance draw that workshops typically bring.

Gary Moyer offered the scenario of when District/landowner priorities are negated by the NRCS field office/staff, because the proposed project doesn't "fit" into NRCS program criteria. Evans stressed that if the project captures landowner and District desires and ideas that it should be a priority. Gary Thrash asked about projects that would require working with CO State Forest Service or other state agencies across boundaries. Evans responded that that can be tricky and would need to be addressed on a project by project basis. He again stressed the importance of the NRCS relationship with conservation districts.

Clint wrapped up his report with an update to the State Historical Preservation situation with funding projects that were on hold in 2015, stating that things seemed to be resolved and moving forward.

CO State Conservation Board Updates:

Cindy Lair, DOA Program Manager for the CO State Conservation Board, welcomed Mike Cleary and Scott Jones to the meeting on behalf of the CSCB, and offered any of her staff's help to address any concerns or issues that they may have in their respective Watersheds. She then mentioned that she and her staff are appreciative of CACD's efforts in securing the funding for the programs that her staff and the CSCB administer. She mentioned the snafu of the DCT funding issue that surfaced in December 2015, but that it seems to be resolved with NRCS and the state, at least for now.

Cindy mentioned that severance tax revenues were down, so the program funds will likely see a decrease in 2016 and 2017, particularly the Matching Grant program. The 2016 MG allocations can't be funded until it is found out how much severance tax dollars have decreased. Lair stated that her Board would be meeting next week (January 27 – 28, 2016) for their first quarter face-to-face meeting and that the Matching Grant proposals would be on the forefront of discussion and review. Don McBee asked what the chances were that with the deterioration of the severance tax revenues, if the MG funding might be suspended in 2017. Cindy didn't have an answer for the group on this potential problem.

Cindy related how happy she was with Commissioner Don Brown, and how he was a true advocate for the Conservation Districts of Colorado. She said that he was in the process of hiring a "Public Lands" staff position, who would continually review regulations on public lands and how they might impact the private landowner.

Lair said that she 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. She then asked for CACD's help reviewing the Direct Assistance applications for 2016. Gary Moyer offered to help with this task. Cindy thanked the CACD Board for inviting her to attend the 2016 National Western Stock Show evening and the morning's face-to-face meeting.

Administrative Updates:

Sharon Pattee provided copies of the December 2015 financial statements and provided verbal disclosure and review of the miscellaneous reports, explaining many of the line items, due to the end of year position. She asked for any questions and after some lengthy discussion, Don McBee asked for a motion to accept the December 2015 financial statements as presented. Gary Moyer made the motion to accept the financial statements as presented, and Anthony Lobato provided the second. The motion was then passed unanimously by the Board.

Sharon reviewed the EOY2015 status of the annual District dues payments received. She stated that CACD saw an increase of only about \$1200 from 2015. She expressed her concerns to the Board as to whether CACD will

be able to operate at the current administrative level with the forecasted amount of funding for the upcoming 2016 fiscal year, without additional funding sources. The discussion briefly moved into alternative funding ideas, including corporate sponsorships, different kinds of membership options, and grants.

Sharon reported that the 2014 CACD Audit had been completed by Waugh and Goodwin, LLC, CPA's and that everything was in good order. She stated that if there was anyone that wanted a copy of the tax return, to let her know.

Elaine Kist mentioned severely cutting existing expenses, to include cuts to the ED's position to maybe becoming part time. The seasoned Board members suggested that CACD's budget was already operating at a bare minimum on the expense side, and asked Elaine for specifics. She stated that she would have to look at things more closely, but perhaps CACD's contract with the lobbyist would be a place to start. She was informed that CACD's lobbyist's contract was at least about half of the going rate for a full time lobbyist at the Capitol. Sharon stated that Brett Moore had not billed CACD for about a year's worth of contracted monies due. Part of that was due the lack of reports provided by him, to the Board, as per his contract. There was concern about this by the Board as a whole and they agreed that this needed to be addressed with Moore as soon as possible. (Brett was not in attendance at this point during the meeting, in order to further this discussion.)

Sharon then concluded her reporting with the to-date status' of: the CO Conservator Winter 2016 being at the printer now and due to be sent out with a week or so; CO Envirothon moving forward and set for April 25 – 26, to be held in Douglas County; 2016 Camp Rocky has had two teleconferences and is moving forward with an emphasis on increasing camp exposure and attendance this year; updates on the Mesa Verde NP trespass livestock and CPW wolf reintroduction comment letters that she had recently written; the upcoming 2016 Governor's Forum on CO Agriculture set for February 17 - 18 and the 2016 Ag Day at the Capitol, scheduled for March 16, 2016; and lastly, stating that both Brett Moore's 2016 contract and Amy Gossman's MOA needed to be looked at and renewed at the Board's discretion in the next month.

Legislative Update:

Brett Moore, CACD lobbyist, reported that the 2016 Legislative Session was underway, which started on January 13th. He said that the attendance for the previous evening's rodeo event was about as expected. He reported that he had hired an online bill tracking service that he will use this year, and that they will provide him with a "tracking sheet" report, similar to what he's provided CACD in the past, on an at least monthly basis. He stated that they update those sheets on a real-time basis.

Brett mentioned that he and Sharon had been to the first Ag Council gathering at the Capitol for the 2016 legislative session the previous morning. There was a good turnout by both members of CO Ag Council and various legislators. Oil and gas will be a hot topic this year, and the severance tax revenues are sure to be affected. Cindy Lair asked about the status of the Ag Management Fund. Brett 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.

President's Updates:

New President, Don McBee asked Sharon to address her idea for fund raising in 2016. She presented the Board with her idea that was a result of the Board's desire to ask CACD's healthier membership, perhaps the top ten Districts, to provide additional funding to CACD. Sharon explained that she wanted to craft an item "menu" that would contain more concrete items for a District to choose where or to what program/project they would like their additional funding to go to. Examples were: Legislative, Camp Rocky, CO Envirothon, the CO Conservator, Administration, NACD, a specific sponsorship for an Ag event, etc. In presenting specified items to the Districts in this way, Sharon felt that they might feel more in control as to what and where their additional money would benefit. In any case, it would be a benefit to CACD's fiscal bottom line.

After much discussion, a motion was made by Gary Moyer for a Fund Raising Committee to be formed, and then that a letter should be drafted to the Districts that would ask for this additional funding. Jim Cecil provided the second to that motion, and after brief discussion a vote was taken and passed unanimously. Don McBee asked for volunteers for that Committee. He said that he would Chair the Committee and Gary Moyer, Jim Cecil, Brian Starkebaum, Elaine Kist, and Mike Cleary would be members. Mike Cleary said that he would work with Sharon on the letter right away. There was brief discussion on other fund raising ideas that included, charging more for CO Conservator ads, corporate sponsorship bids, CACD Lifetime Membership requests, and sponsorships from NRCS contractors.

McBee then moved to the formal recognition of Mike Cleary and Scott Jones, the nominated representatives from the Gunnison-Dolores River Watershed and the Colorado River Watershed respectively. Motions were provided by Gary Moyer and Gary Thrash, with the seconds coming from Elaine Kist and Gary Moyer. The CACD Board voted unanimously to accept Mike Cleary and Scott Jones to represent their Watersheds as CACD's newest Board Directors.

Don McBee then stated the need to re-establish the Executive Committee members. The Committee would consist of Don McBee, as President; Anthony Lobato, as Vice President; Gary Moyer, as CACD's Past President, and one at large position. Gary Moyer nominated Mike Cleary to serve as the at-large position, with Anthony Lobato providing the second. The vote was unanimous.

The Legislative Committee for CACD will remain the same, with Don McBee, Gary Moyer, Brian Starkebaum, and Anthony Lobato. McBee asked Gary Moyer if he would be interested in acting as Chair, with Moyer stating that he would consider it.

Don then addressed the issue of the Lower Arkansas Conservation Districts issue with a possible agreement with a land developer/water buyer to oversee the re-veg work in the area. Field checks would be done by local DCT's. McBee, in an effort of transparency enlightened the Board as to possible conflicts of interest and negative perception in this regard. After lengthy discussion, he said that he would update the Board if/when things moved forward or changed.

Executive Session:

At this point, the Board of Directors moved into an Executive Session, to mainly discuss the letter that CACD's Executive Director had sent to the Board with regard to her salary and job review.

Resume General Board Meeting:

It had been reiterated that Mike Cleary would draft a letter to address a fund raising goal of \$35,000, and then after a period of two months, that a performance evaluation would be done and the ED's salary would be re-examined.

Adjournment:

Don McBee asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting and Gary Thrash so moved with Anthony Lobato providing a second. The next CACD Board of Directors meeting would be via teleconference on February 16, 2016, at 7:30AM, instead of Wednesday, February 17th, due to the CO Ag Council and Governor's Forum on Agriculture events.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sharon

Sharon Pattee
CACD Executive Director