***Colorado Association of Conservation Districts***

 ***Board of Directors Meeting Minutes***

***December 14, 2016 at 7:30AM via Teleconference***

***CACD Teleconference Number: (712) 432-0180 passcode 810871#***

***Attendees:***

Don McBee, CACD President

Anthony Lobato, CACD Vice President

Bob Warner, CO Representative to NACD

Mike Cleary, Director

Scott Jones, Director

Jim Cecil, Director

Charlie Carnahan, Director

Brett Moore, CACD Lobbyist

Clint Evans, CO NRCS State Conservationist

Cindy Lair, CSCB Program Manager

Sharon Pattee, CACD Executive Director

***Absent:***

Gary Moyer, Director

Gary Thrash, Director/CO Representative Alternate to NACD

Brian Starkebaum, Director

Les Owen, DOA Conservation Services Director

Harold Unwin, CSCB President

***Call to Order:***

The meeting was called to order by President, Don McBee at 7:31AM after establishing a quorum, and immediately called for any additions to the agenda by the Board. Hearing none, he stated that the draft letter to Governor Hickenlooper, with regard to the CWCB Board positions needed approval from the Board in order to be sent. There were no other additions to the agenda at this time.

***Prior Month’s Meeting Minutes:***

President Don McBee asked for a motion to approve the November 2016 meeting Minutes, from the meeting in Loveland following the 2016 CACD Annual Meeting. Mike Cleary pointed out that he thought that there had been a motion during the November 17th Board meeting, to have the 2017 Annual Meeting stay in Loveland at the Embassy Suites. He also said that there was a vote taken to present a “Balanced Budget to the membership as of 12/31/16, even if expenses had to be cut, in order to do so. He then asked that both of those items be entered into the November 2016 BOD meeting’s Minutes. There was no further discussion for or against doing so, so McBee asked for a motion to approve the Minutes, with the amendments. Anthony Lobato made the motion to approve the November 2016 Minutes as amended, with Jim Cecil providing the second. Without any further discussion, the motion to approve the November 2016 BOD Minutes, as amended with the additional discussion points, passed unanimously.

***NRCS Updates:***

Clint Evans began with stating that Congress had passed the Resolution to continue funding and keep the government “open” at the 2016 levels, at least for the short term, into 2017. He then began reporting on the NRCS staffing vacancies, which were around 43 to 44 positions, statewide. He mentioned the various District Cons, Soil Cons, an Area Engineer, a Design Engineer, Soil Engineer positions that were at different stages in their hiring process. There was a new Soil Tech in the Gunnison and Alamosa Field Offices. He also stated that with the new administration coming in January, there could be a hiring freeze, which may or may not impact the hiring stages that are underway currently. Evans reported that the new sign-up/application process for several of the NRCS programs was soon to be announced—ACEP, EQIP, and CSP. Sign-up deadlines was to be sometime in February.

At this time, Don McBee asked if there were any questions for Clint Evans from the Board. Mike Cleary asked about a recent meeting in his District’s area at which there had been talk about no RCPP business being discussed in the NRCS Field Offices. Evans explained that there was some misinformation about exactly what kind of RCPP business could and could not be discussed within the Field Office walls, and why this was the case. After a lengthy dialogue, Sharon asked that Clint prepare a “statement” that could be used to explain this particular situation further. Clint said that he would do so.

***CACD Legislative Updates:***

Brett Moore, CACD’s lobbyist, commented on the 2016 CACD Annual Meeting and that he felt that there had been good dialogue, formally and informally. He reiterated that the Severance Tax reduction picture for 2017 and 2018 looked bleak. He also stated that the Joint Budget Committee was busy in their briefings and will start their hearing process in January. Moore will be tasked with making sure that CACD’s Tier II funding is not changed/impacted/cut in any way. McBee asked Moore to explain what had been discussed during the CACD Legislative Committee teleconference on December 12, specifically why it wasn’t a good idea to ask for any additional funding in 2017. The funding that CACD lobbies for is in a better position to remain intact than a lot of other areas. In these tough economic times, Moore feels that it is prudent to “lay low” for fear of appearing too greedy. He also stated that the Matching Grant and District Tech funding, managed and distributed by CSCB, is safe for now.

Brett mentioned that the CO Ag Council Meet and Greet is scheduled for January 19th at the Capitol and, starting February 1st, the Ag Council will meet on every other Wednesday during the entire 2017 Legislative Session. He then touched on the National Western Stock Show event, where CACD takes the opportunity to meet up with as many of the active legislators as possible to bring awareness to CACD, private landowner conservation measures, and CO’s agriculture.

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

Cindy Lair, CSCB Program Manager, reported that Nikki Brinson was on maternity leave until the end of January and that Barb DiPasquele had moved on within the DOA. Her position won’t be rehired immediately and Cindy was trying to pick up that work load herself in the meantime. She felt that the person that will eventually be hired for the Grant Administrator position should have thorough understanding of agriculture.

Cindy then stated that the next meeting of her Board would be February 1 – 2, in Denver, at the tail end of the 2017 NACD Annual Meeting. She hoped that this would encourage attendance for the NACD meeting by her Board members. Lair mentioned that Harold Unwin has been termed out and that Danny Neufeld (Rio Grande Watershed) would be the new President. Harold would move in as Vice President, with Karen Salapich (Upper Arkansas Watershed) acting as Secretary. These positions are for one year, with two consecutive terms allowed.

Reviewing the DCT funding situation, Cindy reiterated that the state’s portion of the contract was intact for 2017. She mentioned that they would have about $43,000 to disburse out for “mini” grants, to be used for educational outreach. These Matching Grant funds would be given out in amounts from $2000 - $7000.

Cindy was pleased to announce that the CO Department of Ag is putting out a new, annual publication titled “Cultivating Colorado”. The Department feels very strongly in their mission to make agriculture a familiar and understood business within Colorado. She said that they are encouraging magazine “ideas” for the next issue. Sharon asked if the publication will be available electronically, to which Cindy stated that she wasn’t sure if that was being offered.

She then moved to explaining the CSCB’s offer of seven scholarships available for application to attend the 2017 NACD Annual Meeting. These scholarships were being funded by residual Direct Assistance funding and being offered to “budding leaders” within the conservation partners/family. The mandatory criteria included applicants needing to stay at the Sheraton Downtown Denver Hotel, the meeting venue, and they would need to provide a report on the meeting to their particular Watershed memberships. She mentioned that Bob Warner had pledged $500 to an Upper South Platte Watershed applicant.

Finally, Cindy reported on a 3-Way Agreement that she had crafted between the CSCB and NRCS was completed. This would provide role definition, partner understanding, and outreach to the Conservation Districts, among other things. At this time Anthony Lobato asked her if she was working on outreach ideas to get conservation folks to engage at the Watershed and State levels. Cindy said that she was hoping that the NACD Scholarships would help identify some of the interested future potential leaders in conservation.

***CACD Administrative Updates:***

Sharon stated that the Board had been sent electronic copies of the November 30, 2016 financial statements prior to the teleconference. She briefly went through each report with some explanation where needed and asked for questions from the Board. She mentioned that the $2500 in the accounts receivable line item was the 2016 CO Envirothon sponsorship that was recorded but not received yet from NRCS. She reiterated her frustration in this regard, stating that after nine months, there was still no resolution offered from NRCS. For fear of sounding ungrateful, Sharon hasn’t pressed the issue with NRCS (Becky Ross/Randy Randall/Clint Evans) other than about a once a month query, via email. The NRCS sponsorship for the CACD 2016 annual meeting has not been recorded as a pending receivable; otherwise, that amount ($5000) would also be sitting in that particular line item. Clint Evans was not on the call at this point to provide information on the status of these two funding issues.

Other than some brief discussion in this regard, there were no other comments made, so she asked for acceptance of the November 2016 financial statements as presented. Mike Cleary made a motion to accept the financial statements as presented, with Jim Cecil providing the second. The motion was voted on and passed unanimously accepting the November 2016 financial statements by the Board. Sharon spoke about the 2016 District dues payments received to date, and that she didn’t expect any more District dues payments for the 2016 year. She indicated that there was approximately an increase of $1500 in dues received in 2016 than in 2015.

Sharon pointed out that not all of the 2016 annual meeting’s receipts and expenses show on the 11/30/16 financial statements, particularly the hotel invoicing. However, that as of the 15th, a mid-month financial statement could be run to present the Board with a more accurate view of what CACD’s position will look like heading into the end of 2016. Mike Cleary then asked that a mid-month financial statement be sent out to the Board in order to see a better picture of CACD’s finances after the annual meeting and a few other administrative payables have been recorded/paid out. Sharon said that she would have those updated reports out to the Board by Friday, December 16th. Sharon concluded by saying that one projected payable that had not been accounted for was that of OnTheBallot, LLC (Brett Moore) for the 2016 contract year.

Sharon moved to asking for any follow up comments on the 2016 Annual Meeting. Hearing none, she then asked the Board for direction on Director attendance at the 2017 NACD Annual Meeting, i.e. who was interested/able to attend. Anthony Lobato said that he would try to attend for a day or two; Mike Cleary said that he was still trying to find the time in his January calendar; Charlie Carnahan said that he had applied to the CSCB for a scholarship; Scott Jones wants to attend and will be asking his District for funding assistance. Sharon asked that the Board members let her know their intentions in this regard as soon as possible, as Friday, December 16th was NACD’s early registration deadline date. Bob Warner reiterated that whoever plans to attend, should plan to be there Sunday, January 29th through Tuesday, January 31st, at a minimum.

Mike Cleary said that after receiving the mid-month financial statements, the Board would have a better idea what CACD could or couldn’t afford in the way of registrations/hotel/travel expense for Directors to attend the NACD meeting.

At this time, Sharon asked Anthony Lobato to update the Board on the status of the CO Envirothon program to date. Anthony reported that he would take the lead on COE for the 2017 program year, with the help of Brenda Anderson, from Center Conservation District. He reported that substantial funding had been promised from several sources. Sharon then provided the details of that funding, sent by Brenda, at Sharon’s request. With this information, Anthony stated that he felt that they should move forward with the 2017 CO Envirothon program. Don McBee asked for a motion in this regard, with Charlie Carnahan making said motion and Anthony Lobato providing the second. The motion was then voted on and was passed unanimously by the Board.

On the subject of Envirothon, Sharon stated that she had been contacted by Gene Schmidt, former President of NACD, about having the winning 2016 Colorado Envirothon team attend the 2017 NACD Annual Meeting in Denver at the end of January. Schmidt provided some very preliminary details, and then Sharon asked him if he could find out if there was any funding available from NACD to help with travel expenses for the team from Woodland Park. He had told her that he would need to get back to her. Bob Warner offered a sponsorship for the 2016 CO Envirothon team to attend the NACD 2017 Annual Meeting in Denver on Sunday, January 29th and 30th. Sharon thanked Bob and said that she would follow up on all of the Envirothon details just discussed.

Wrapping up her reporting, Sharon asked the Board for direction on how to move forward with the CACD 2017 annual dues calculations for the Districts that were voted on at the CACD Annual Meeting, by the voting membership during the general business meeting on November 16th. After some brief discussion, it was decided that the 2016 Direct Assistance rankings would be used in the formula to determine the suggested 2017 District dues amounts. Jim Cecil said that he would send Sharon a model/formula that Hans Manley had suggested be used for this purpose. Sharon asked that he also send it out to the entire Board for review. Once she created a spreadsheet, she would ask the Board for approval to invoice the Districts.

Sharon concluded her reporting by asking the Board to let her know if each of them were planning to attend the Wednesday, January 18th CACD face-to-face meeting at the National Western Stock Show event. She stated that she had reserved a block of rooms for the night of January 18th at the Ramada Inn Central. Some of the Board members that responded right away were McBee, Lobato, Jones (no hotel needed), Cecil, Warner, and Carnahan (no hotel needed). She asked that all Directors let her know one way or another, no later than December 30th.

***NACD Updates:***

Gary Moyer was on the road traveling so was unable to provide a report. Sharon had pretty much covered most of the NACD details/updates.

***CACD President’s Updates:***

Don McBee started his updates with asking the group if they had reviewed the letter addressed to Governor Hickenlooper that had be sent out to the Directors in draft form, by Sharon. This letter had been drawn up by Gary Moyer and Sharon the day before, and addressed the CWCB Board positions that were currently being filled. McBee asked that Sharon read aloud the CACD recommendation letter to the Governor, which she did. Anthony Lobato made a motion to approve the letter as written, with Jim Cecil providing a second. The Board voted on and passed the motion unanimously. Sharon stated that she would send the letter out no later than Friday, December 16.

McBee asked that the CACD Executive Committee meet via teleconference to discuss the Executive Director’s job description/priorities via teleconference on Tuesday evening, December 20th at 7:30PM. He also said that with the number of things that were being dealt with, the CACD Long Range Planning efforts would be on hold until after January.

Since Gary Thrash wasn’t on the call to address the CACD archiving discussion held by the Board last month, McBee said that this would be on the table for next month’s meeting. He then moved the discussion to the idea of a 2017 MOU/agreement with NRCS for CACD to provide assistance with planning ten Watershed meetings. He stated that on the teleconference call that was had by the Executive Committee on Monday, December 5th, the group had decided on the amount of this agreement would be a total of $25,000, with $2500 to go for each meeting. Mike Cleary said that a thorough explanation of what was needed for costs for each of the meetings, breaking that $2500 amount down with detail would be necessary. There was discussion about the administrative fee that CACD could expect to receive, i.e. that it couldn’t exceed 10% with NRCS. Sharon would make sure that the travel costs were separated out from any admin overhead. A motion was made by Mike Cleary and seconded by Anthony Lobato to draft a MOU agreement to be submitted to NRCS with regard to organizing ten Watershed meetings. The motion was voted on and passed unanimously. Sharon said that she would work on those expense estimates and draft a white paper for the Board to review.

***Adjournment:***

Don McBee adjourned the December 2016 CACD Board of Directors teleconference meeting at 9:14AM. The next CACD Board teleconference call will be on the morning of Thursday, January 19, 2017 in Denver. Sharon would be sending out those further meeting details, for the National Western Stock Show event, within the next two weeks.

Respectfully Submitted,

 *Sharon*

Sharon Pattee

CACD Executive Director