

MINUTES

Regular Meeting

February 17, 2009

I. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Rice at 10:05 a.m. at the Mezzanine Conference Room, Fort Jackson Building, Waynesburg, PA. Directors present included J. Robert Rice, Chairman; Bradley Eisiminger, Vice Chairman; Tom Headlee, Treasurer; Jim Cowell, Secretary; Dave Coder, Commissioner Representative; Archie Trader, Director; Jim Kenney, Director; Frank Blaker, Associate Director; Greg Hopkins, Associate Director and Bill Wentzel, Associate Director. Guests and District staff present included Chuck Kubasik, Field Representative; John Scott; Regional Director, PA Department of Agriculture; Sherene Hess, RC&D Coordinator; Suzy Petery, SDC, NRCS; Chris Hardie, Planner, Economic Development; Martin Niverth, District Manager; Lisa Snider, Assistant District Manager/Watershed Specialist; Laurel Rush, Ag Manager; Dustin Teegarden, Resource Specialist; Mary Jane Kent, Administrative Assistant for Program Support; and Becky Salosky, Fiscal Officer.

Sherene Hess was introduced as the new RC&D Coordinator. She replaces Bobbie Bailey.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were received.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion by Archie Trader, the minutes of the January 20th meeting were approved as distributed. Jim Cowell seconded. (Motion Passed)

IV. TREASURER'S REPORTS

On a motion by Bradley Eisiminger, the Treasurer's Reports were approved with the following addition. Jim Kenney seconded. (Motion Passed)

NPDES/CWF

Ck# 203 Martin Niverth – Expenses - \$61.60

V. CORRESPONDENCE

- a. Martin announced that this year's Child Fest with a theme of "When I Grow Up" will be held on April 18th. A request for donations is being made with sponsors being recognized. **After discussion, a motion was made by Jim Kenney to donate \$100 and Archie Trader seconded. (Motion Passed)** Martin and Mary Jane will get together to discuss other things that could perhaps be donated.
- b. Laurel reported that tomorrow is the registration deadline for the Appalachian Grazing Conference. One person, Rick Miller, is interested in the scholarship to attend the event. She said that he has already mailed a payment along with the registration, so he will have to be reimbursed.
- c. **A motion was made by Archie Trader to approve the attendance of one person, Martin or Lisa, to attend the PA Land Conservation Conference in State College at an approximate cost of \$300.00. Dave Coder seconded. (Motion Passed)**
- d. The State Ethics Forms were distributed by mail with the meeting notices. Becky requested that they be completed and returned to her.
- e. Martin announced that a PACD Southwest Regional Director's Meeting will be held on March 25th in Westmoreland County. Chuck added that leadership development, conflicts of interest, and permitting issues will be topics of discussion.
- f. The last item of correspondence brought before the board was the 2009 Oil and Gas Conference scheduled to be held on March 23rd and 24th at the Hilton Garden Inn at Southpointe. There is a registration fee of \$250.00 per person, but because of its close proximity, no overnight stay will be required. Martin said that with the amount of drilling currently being done, he feels that it is important to send someone to the conference. He will also speak to Robbie about sending someone from Planning and Development as well. **A motion was made by Jim Kenney to send either Martin or Dustin to the conference and Archie Trader seconded. (Motion Passed)**

Mr. Trader expressed his concern with water quality during the well “fracing” process and consequently, Mr. Kenney amended the motion to send two people to the conference provided no one from Planning and Development attends. Archie Trader seconded. (Motion Passed)

Mr. Hopkins also expressed his concerns with the vast amount of Oil & Gas drilling in Greene County. Mr. Kubasik added that amendments have been made in the drilling permits concerning water withdraw and treatment and that some permits have been held up. Suzy urged for follow-up and action be taken. She also mentioned Representative DeWeese’s bill which may address environmental issues in the industry.

Martin said that work is currently being done with Planning and Development on a Water Plan.

Mr. Eisiminger also feels that the conference is important and that we should send two people regardless of whether Planning and Development sends anyone. **Consequently, the motion was again amended by Jim Kenney to send at least two people regardless of whether Planning and Development sends anyone. Archie Trader seconded. (Motion Passed with its Amendments)**

VI. REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

No Requests for Assistance forms were received.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

- a. Martin said that he will be submitting the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to the county and Human Resources for their review this week. He explained that he had completed it, but lost it in the computer. Chairman Rice said that he thought that the MOU was to be presented to the board before going on. Martin agreed to have it finished for the March meeting.
- b. Lisa discussed the next item of business, the Dirt and Gravel Roads contract amendments and payments for Jackson and Washington Townships. She said that the final inspections were completed last week on both projects and that the Quality Assurance Board (QAB) approved the final payment. Amendments were needed for both projects due to price increases. **A motion was made by Tom Headlee to approve the final payments and amendments. Bradley Eisiminger seconded. (Motion Passed)**

- c. Lisa also discussed the next item of business, the Grigsby Project. She was informed by Keri Rebeck of Mackin Engineers that the Foundation for Pennsylvania Watersheds has approved our \$20,000 grant application for matching funds for the project. Lisa also said that this funding will be contingent upon acquiring the \$76,000 Growing Greener grant. Brandon Diehl of the Foundation has requested that the District keep these funds in a separate account instead of passing them through Penn's Corner RC&D. **After discussion, a motion was made by Jim Kenney to approve the grant and Jim Cowell seconded. (Motion Passed)**

- d. Martin distributed the 2009 Annual Plan of Operations (APO) and reviewed some of the changes. They include developing an agreement with Washington Township for E&S review, eliminating GP-11's under Chapter 105 and the inclusion of ESCGP-1 permits, the inclusion of handling complaints regardless of whether they are E&S related, continued participation in the Ryerson Lake Task Force, and work with various entities on a pilot project to abate AMD in Dunkard Creek. Mr. Hopkins inquired about the availability of maps for public access. Martin said that we have been working with Planning and Development on a Geo Portal to provide this service.

A motion was made by Jim Kenney to approve the Annual Plan of Operations. Jim Cowell seconded. (Motion Passed)

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Laurel discussed the next item under New Business, the Agriculture Conservation Easement Allocation. She said that at the beginning of each year the Farmland Preservation Program sends a letter to each county requesting their annual contribution. Last year the county contributed \$5,000.00, however, this year, only \$2,500.00 was available and the Conservation District was asked to contribute the other \$2,500.00. Via a phone poll by Becky, the directors agreed to this contribution. **A formal motion was made by Tom Headlee to make this \$2,500.00 contribution. Bradley Eisiminger seconded. (Motion Passed)**

- b. Due to Robbie's absence because of a family illness, discussion of storm water management was tabled.

- c. Martin requested approval to purchase safety gear (hard hats, steel toe boots, safety glasses, rain gear and ear protection) for field workers in order to comply with OSHA laws. **After discussion, a motion was**

made by Archie Trader to allocate \$400.00 to purchase this equipment. Jim Cowell seconded. (Motion Passed)

- d. The next item brought before the board was the purchase of a computer for Becky, Fiscal Officer. Martin said that under our technology initiative, Becky is next in line for a new computer. He said that Todd Klaner had developed a plan to purchase equipment using accelerated review fees. A draft of this plan was presented for board approval; however, a final plan was never adopted. **A motion was made by Archie Trader to create a fund of \$25,000.00 for this purpose. Jim Kenney seconded. (Motion Passed)**

A motion was made by Jim Cowell to approve a \$1,500.00 ceiling for the purchase of a computer for Becky. Archie Trader seconded. (Motion Passed)

- e. Laurel said that the West Virginia Small Farms Conference will be held February 24-26th. Because one day of the conference includes a discussion on alternative energy, she requested approval to attend at a cost of \$60.00. **A motion was made by Archie Trader to approve Laurel's attendance. Bradley Eisiminger seconded. (Motion Passed)**
- f. Laurel also requested approval to attend two other conferences, the Appalachian Grazing Conference and the Northwest Grazing Conference. The Appalachian Grazing Conference will require hotel reservations and a registration fee of \$75.00. A \$25.00 registration fee will be needed for the Northwest Grazing Conference. **A motion was made by Jim Kenney to approve Laurel's attendance of these conferences. Jim Cowell seconded. (Motion Passed)**
- g. Martin discussed the next item of business, the purchase of professional services to assist with QuickBooks. He said that with the growth of the District, assistance is needed to adapt QuickBooks to our specific use. A consultant, who is an expert at QuickBooks for Conservation District's use, is available for assistance. Martin said that she will need a copy of our program, which can be sent by key drive and a visit here to work with us. Lisa presented information on the cost for an 8 hour visit as followings. Travel by air from Bigingham, New York to Pittsburgh, car rental and mileage from the airport, and a hotel stay for \$950.50. Martin also requested that an additional \$100.00 be included for the purchase of a key drive. Mr. Trader that he is in favor of this, however, he feels that a back up of the program should be done everyday to avoid a loss of data. **A motion was made by Tom Headlee to approve the hiring**

of this consultant to assist with QuickBooks. Archie Trader seconded. (Motion Passed)

- h. The last item under New Business discussed was the payment of \$200.00 for Project Grass dues for 2009. **A motion was made by Jim Kenney to approve payment of the dues. Jim Cowell seconded. (Motion Passed)**

IX. DISCUSSION OF STAFF REPORTS

Staff reports were distributed with the meeting notices. Additionally, Lisa announced the date of April 23rd for this year's Envirothon. She reported that Foundation Coal has agreed to fund both the scholarship program for the winning Envirothon team members and the sponsorship of a student to the Conservation Leadership School. Also, she has submitted a request through the Community Foundation to Consol for funds for the Envirothon.

Laurel reported that the state has requested that she review our Nutrient Management Program and report the number of active and inactive nutrient plans and forecast our workload for this year. She said that we have 8 voluntary plans, 2 of which are active, and 3 individuals have expressed an interest in developing a new plan. She also said that January 27th was the closing of the first agricultural easement in Greene County.

Dustin reviewed and noted corrections of his Excel Spreadsheet he uses to track E&S plans submitted for review. On Thursday he will be meeting with Atlas and Jim Willis to resolve issues on a pipeline project. He also said that Bill has been out in the field quite a bit to conduct inspections. Plans for a large pipeline project by Texas Eastern have been received. The project consists of 18.8 miles of 36" pipeline through 6 townships in Greene County.

Mr. Blaker expressed concerns about groundwater pollution and the longwall mining being planning under the old Waynesburg Borough Landfill.

X. REPORTS FROM COOPERATING AGENCIES AND GUESTS

Suzy Petery – Since Suzy had a field appointment, she actually gave her report at the beginning of the meeting. She said that they are still on hold for Farm Bill Programs as they are awaiting final rule. Fifty applications have been received for the 3 county area with 12 in Greene County for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Approximately 3-4 applications have been received, with more expected, for the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) in Greene County. There may be some changes in this program that may require that landowners be agricultural producers. In order to emphasize forestry, under EQIP, incentives will be available for

forestry conservation practices. In closing, Suzy said that Support Assistant, Jennifer Firestone, has recently resigned to accept another position.

John Scott – John briefly discussed the oil and gas industry. He also said that the reduction of milk prices will severely affect the dairy industry. Budget cuts are expected.

Sherene Hess – Sherene announced that the Grassland Evaluation Contest will be held on May 5th in Centre County. She said that the contest is aimed at high school students in 4-H or FFA who form teams of 3 or 4 to evaluate 4 plots. The first place team members each receive scholarships of \$500 and 2nd place team members each receive \$250 scholarships. She said that last year Greene County provided a donation toward the contest and she will attend next month's meeting to make a formal request. She also said that a Guide of Common and Invasive Weeds are available.

Chuck Kubasik – Chuck said that he did not have good news regarding the budget. The Governor's proposal, calls for reductions in most programs for Conservation Districts. The PA Department of Agriculture's line item of assistance to local conservation districts which funds District Manager's salaries is proposed to be reduced from \$1.66 million to \$1.194 million. Last year, the Nutrient Management Fund, received \$3.277 million and the proposal calls for funding of \$3.1 million this year. DEP's line item of assistance to local conservation districts and the Conservation District Fund Allocation Program (CDFAP) which cost share salaries of the Manager, Technicians, and administrative assistance is also proposed to be cut. Last year this program was funded at \$3.6 million and the proposal calls for a reduction to \$3.06 million. He also said that in the past, Governor Rendell has shown similar cuts and in the end they were restored by the legislators. However, with all the financial difficulties, it is uncertain that will happen this year. He said that if these cuts are made, they will have a significant impact on Conservation Districts and urged us to contact our legislators. He said that many Districts participate in "Capitol Day" to discuss legislative issues. Chuck also said that approximately 2,600 positions will be eliminated statewide. Don Brown, Compliance Specialist, who handled complaints in the 102/105 program has accepted another position. Now there will not be any Compliance Specialists and these issues will have to be referred to Supervisor Kathy Watson. A DEP Regional Roundtable Meeting will be held on April 17th in Westmoreland County. The PA Fish & Boat Commission will be sponsoring an open house with the nearest location being at Frazier High School on March 12th.

Chris Hardie – Chris announced that the following projects will be discussed at the Planning Commission's next meeting. Two gas compressors stations, Foundation Coal's airshaft/portal, and the resubmission of a storage building in Waynesburg Borough. He said that they will be working with the District

on these projects. Regarding the multi-municipal plans, Southeastern Greene is in the final stages of their plan development, but Carmichaels Borough and Wayne Township have yet to adopt it. West Greene is in the beginning stage of their plan which will include 10 municipalities. Two subcommittees of the Planning Commission will be active this year, the Industrial Committee and the Road Committee. Work will also be done this year on an update of the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO). To address an earlier question regarding access to maps, Chris gave an example of Allegheny County's site, which will be similar to the Geo Portal we are developing.

XI. The next regular meeting will be held on March 17th

XII. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was declared adjourned by Chairman Rice at 12:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca K. Salosky
Fiscal Officer