

Upper Ohio Conservation District Minutes November 17, 2020

Members Present via teleconference

Allen Rush, Chairman
Patricia Thomas, Supervisor
Audra Cunningham, Supervisor
Holly Morgan, Secretary/Treasurer
Wayne McKeever, Supervisor

Others Present via teleconference

Kim Fisher, WVCA Area Manager
Lori Cochran, WVCA/UOCD District Manager
Nick Beaver, NRCS
Susan FunkaPetery
Katie Fitzsimmons, NRCS

Chairman Rush called the meeting to order.

Cooperating Agency Reports

USDA-NRCS-FSA – Beaver reviewed current NRCS programs activities, tomorrow State Con Tour in UOCD and NPCD. UOCD will be touring Bolin farm. Supervisors are invited to join if they would like. Working on 1 CSP renewal in Wetzel County. Currently waiting on guidance from the state office and to go to property and planning visit. Application cut-off is this Friday, November 20. Current workload of active contracts consists of 21 active EQUIP and 12 active CSP for a total of 33 active contracts in the District. Currently have 7 applications in the system for funding in 2021; do have several not entered yet. Only 7 have been entered so far. FSA update, Eleanor Porter, the CED in Parkersburg has moved on to Public Debt and someone else is filling her place.

WVCA – Fisher reported a memo from Farkas went out that looks like things will not return to normal work until mid-year 2021. Remind all employees to wear their mask when they are in the office and to continue to take all precautions. A budget meeting was held in October. Still no discussion of budget cuts for this year, so as far as we know all is good. Brian has again asked for the extra money to help with the repair and rehab of the dams. With the election over, Brian suggest getting in touch with legislators and let them know what the Districts do, what our concerns and needs are and why conservation is important. State Committee met in October. There are some changes in titles in the agency, job classifications. District Managers are now Administrative Specialist. State Committee is also working to amend WV Code. That is to explain that the Agency and Districts can engage in projects that affect water quality. That is currently a gray area. A letter was sent to the Attorney General's Office, waiting for clarification. When Brian hears back, we will make sure the Districts know what the Attorney General said. A reminder December 4 is the state-wide AgEP Committee Meeting. Make sure we have a representative at that meeting. It will be a Skype meeting only. It is time of year to get the audits done and to review policy manuals and plan of work.

Forestry –

SWA – Morgan reported she saw on Facebook SWA is not taking any recycling until 2021. Rush said a meeting is scheduled for January 6. They are still accepting from the business that have been coming for an extended time, but nothing will be accepted from the public until at least January 6.

WVU Extension – None.

Meeting Minutes

McKeever made the motion to approve the October 13, 2020 meeting minutes. Morgan seconded the motion; motion passed.

Financial Report

McKeever made a motion to file the financial report for audit. Cunningham seconded the motion; motion passed.

Morgan made a motion that UOCD bills be paid as funds permit and coordinated by office staff. Cunningham seconded the motion; motion passed.

Funding Request

None

Supervisor Reports

Cunningham – On the 21st was on the Lime and Liming call. Spoke with two farmers about the Beef App Program that is being offered thru FSA. Picked up the Chestnut trees for Pleasants County. Spoke with Missy

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Taylor, the Environmental Science teacher at the St. Marys High School. Missy is very enthusiastic about planting trees there. The second site for tree planting will probably be the Park in St. Marys. Missy and her class will be taking all the data for both sites. With the way things are with school, no date has been set to plant the trees. Audra is taking good care of the trees until planting can take place. Met with Mike from Stationers the same day at the office. He measured the front area to come up with a plan for a more protective cubicle for Jennifer. Gathering daily weather data and reporting.

McKeever - On the 21st attended the Lime seminar via phone until was interrupted with another call. On the 29th there was an NCF Envirothon Workshop. November 4 attended the Envirothon Meeting. We decided this years Envirothon would be online. We are deciding what platform will be used, the tests are going to have to be timed, so there are four or five platforms that can be used. Today a letter went out to the schools asking about their intent to participate. We are hoping to have even more schools participate. Attended another Envirothon workshop in November on virtual presentation. We are trying to get as much information as possible so we can put a really good virtual Envirothon. Was on a Partnership call on the 5th with Brian, Jon and Roger. These meeting keep us informed what each agency is doing. It is good Brian came up with the idea, the meetings are a good thing. Delivered the trees to the office for Audra to pick up. We now have the trees planted in Wetzel and Tyler Counties. We received some really good publicity on the Chestnut Tree Project. Articles were in the local newspapers and also Mid Atlantic RC&D placed an article in there. NACD E-Resource placed it in their publication and should be one coming soon in the NACD Forestry Notes. TVCD is trying to work on a cost share program for the American Chestnut. Working with them to present next month at the AgEP meeting and try and get it in AgEP. Quarterly Meeting, everyone should have received the minutes and my newsletter on the meeting. We tried to get as much information out as possible on the meeting; it was a good meeting, lots of participation at the meeting. Which is what we are looking for, more participation, more ideas, more suggestions. We tried something a little different where we went to a forum to discuss ideas for the Districts. We did it on a trial basis to see how it went and we think it went well, so probably will continue to do that in the future. In a regular meeting you really don't have time to talk other than about what is on the agenda. This way they had a chance to talk about other things. During the meeting the By-law revisions were approved, talked about modification to WV Code 1921A which dealt with water quality. At the meeting there was a motion to support changing Code to include water quality if the Attorney General deems it necessary. So, we will support that. This is why we have the Legislative Committee. Our Legislative Committee needs to contact as many of our representatives as possible to let them know what we do, what is going on and how we benefit them and how we benefit the state and the taxpayers of the state. Need to do a lot of basic work there with them. The auction brought \$5001.00, think our basket brought around \$80. There was one 250-year farm, one 200-year farm, four 150-year farms and eighteen 100-year farms.

Thomas – Signed checks on October 26th.

Morgan – On the 15th narration for Davin for State Meeting for slide shows, talked to Molly about gardening and postage. Food desert opportunity, talked to John, Molly and Kim to see if that was something Grow Local would be interested in pursuing. Went to Hundred and planted trees on the 20th and went to the 4-H grounds on the 27th to plant more trees. Signed up for the grant class that is supposed to be coming up. Sent articles to newspapers. Sent the news article for the Conservation Farmer of the year award to all three papers. Terry Hudson contacted me to help build the Facebook page for the Association. Susan expanded on the Food Desert email. They are wanting to work with a community that may already have some grassroots efforts to help alleviate some of the food desert, the availability of food in their area. So, they are just reaching out to the Districts to see if they have some names to offer, so they can reach out and move on with this. More of a fact-finding process right now.

Rush – Transferred the BHCU CD to a 24-month term at 1%. Went to the Quarterly Meeting on the 19th and 20th. Biggest discussion was on opening the code. There was a lot of discussion on Chestnut trees. Called in on the RC&D Meeting and was able to listen in, but they were unable to hear me. Hundred is getting \$1000 for their Rails to Trails Project and the check will be mailed to them this time.

Unfinished Business

Cooperator Agreement

Cunningham made a motion to approve the cooperator agreement of Daniel Stillwagoner. Morgan seconded the motion; motion passed.

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Thomas recused herself from the following item of business.

AgEP

McKeever made a motion to approve the following payments. Morgan seconded the motion; motion passed.

Name	Practice	Amount	Cost Share
Daniel Stillwagoner	Heavy Use	1950'	\$1980.00
Hannah Ferrell	Heavy Use	3608'	\$1980.00
Jack Smith	Lime	55.2 tons	\$1380.00
David Clough	Urban Ag	576' Deer Fence	\$869.66
James A. Cochran, Jr.	Lime	32.7 Tons	\$817.50
Grace Grover*	Lime	96.45 tons	\$2404.00
Kenneth Thomas*	Lime	97.78 Tons	\$2444.50
Patricia Thomas*	Heavy Use	1500'	\$1980.00
Total approved payments			\$13855.66

*Supervisor and supervisor family member payments

Thomas rejoined the meeting.

NRCS Grant Position

Soil Sample Mailings

Morgan made a motion to discontinue paying for mailing soil samples to be tested.

Cunningham seconded the motion; motion passed with 2 votes in favor, 1 against and 1 abstained.

Grant Position Pay Increase

Cunningham made a motion to pay the backpay for the pay increase that due to start after 1 year of employment by the shared grant employee. McKeever seconded the motion; motion passed.

Equipment Usage Update

The lime spreader was rented one time.

Award Presentation

Try to get photos for the Facebook page

Gardening Class

Holly discussed this with Molly. Class must be taught by an Ag Agent. Virtual classes were done earlier this year by Extension and WV Dept. of Ag. We could just partner up and promote those.

Grant Needs

Think of needs within the District we could submit request for grant funds. Holly hopes to start a grant writing class soon.

Shared Employee 1-Year Extension Agreement Letter

McKeever made a motion to apply for an extension for the NRCS Grant Position to Mid-September 2022. Thomas second the motion; motion passed with 3 votes in favor and 1 against.

Correspondence

Adjournment

Morgan made a motion to adjourn. Thomas seconded the motion; motion passed.

The next regular meeting will be on December 15, at 6:00 p.m. Meeting style is yet to be determined.

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Minutes submitted by: Lori Cochran, District Manager

Signature of Chairman

Date

Signature of Secretary

Date