

Upper Ohio Conservation District Meeting Minutes March 16, 2021

Members Present via teleconference

Allen Rush, Chairman
Bill Gellner, Vice-Chair
Patricia Thomas, Supervisor
Holly Morgan, Secretary/Treasurer
Wayne McKeever, Supervisor
Audra Cunningham, Supervisor

Others Present via teleconference

Jennifer Kile, WVCA
Lori Cochran, WVCA/UOCD Administrative Specialist
Nick Beaver, NRCS

Chairman Rush called the meeting to order.

Cooperating Agency Reports

USDA-NRCS-FSA – Beaver reported staff are still rotating 2-3 day rotation for in office work. This is the time of year some people are doing timber stand improvement, cutting grape vines and other brush removal, brush management and frost seeding. One frost seeding was certified today to complete one of our contracts. Doing some planning visits this time of the year, selecting eligibility paperwork for 2021 applications for eligibility deadline for sign-up #1. Been entering plans into Conservation Desktop, the planning software used to turn these applications into contracts eventually. Working on assessing plans for overall efficiency, cost estimates and handling of our applications this year. Have been receiving calls from people interested in sign-up #2 or for next year. NPCD has received resumes for the shared employee position, not sure how many, but have received resumes.

WVCA – Fisher provided written report which was reviewed by supervisors.

Forestry – None

SWA – None

WVU Extension – Bolin was unable to attend but reported still have Garden Calendars available at the office. WVU has revised our in-person meeting guidelines so we'll be starting to plan more in-person events after April 1, 2021. I'm working on gardening take-home kits for Tyler County elementary and middle school students. Planning educational events for the summer months (waiting on day camp guidance from WVU)

McKeever made the motion to approve the February 16, 2021 meeting minutes. Morgan seconded the motion; motion passed.

Financial Report

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

Gellner made a motion that UOCD bills be paid as funds permit and coordinated by office staff.

Cunningham seconded the motion; motion passed.

Funding Request

Supervisor Reports

Gellner- State AgEP sub-committee, did introduce an introductory conclusion to the committee a couple weeks ago. They will be meeting to discuss or approve what was recommended. Sub-committee recommended to change the formula to 5 % based upon the population of the area in the District, 37 ½% would be from the number of farms, 37 ½% from the number of farm acreage, 5% for general population, and 15% of the budget amount would be given yearly to the District and do away with the 3 year average. RC&D held a meeting on the mini grants, I was not able to attend.

Cunningham – Sat in on the Watershed meeting on the 24th, with us having no dams in the District, most really does not apply to us. They have revised how and when funds are allocated to Districts. WVDA ask to attend a food desert meeting involving regional processing kitchens across the state for use by producers. They are looking at facilities in different regions across the state, hoping to add equipment to already established kitchens. Hoping producers will be able to book time in these kitchens to use the equipment provided. I attended the St. Marys HS Ham, Bacon and Egg sale. Have been reporting precipitation daily. Have attended some virtual sessions- one on weed management in pastures. Also participated in the virtual Small Farms Conference this year. Tried to tune into the monthly communications call, but was having technical difficulties

McKeever - 2/23 communications meeting, 3/3 Envirothon meeting, coming into the last month of planning and a lot has to be done. We extended registration to 3/26 to get more participation. 3/04 had a Partnership call working on long range planning. We are all working together to accomplish the same things. John supports the District tremendously and we are certainly appreciative of that. 3/08 had a call with NACD and also talked with John from NRCS. WVACD may have an administrative change in some things. No announcement to be made yet. April Quarterly Meeting registrations need to be in by the 19th. I sent out the agenda for it today. There will be a tour, West Fork has two farms we are going to with a

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dinner following at a nearby winery. West Fork is providing the dinner. Quarterly Meeting is at Stonewall, new this year. 3/09 Envirothon meeting again, worked on awards. Been on a lot of calls for Envirothon, Association changes, Quarterly Meeting, Supervisor calls, Partnership calls, working on a strategic conservation plan, trying to work on conservation planning that is coming later on in our meetings in July and October. Also working on a Memorandum of Agreement. Mostly a lot of calls in the last month. The Water Quality issue in code was attached to the Dept. of Ag. is heading to the floor and in all likelihood will be passed. Legislative Committee will be having a meeting on 4/2. Pretty important meeting discussing conservation law and WV Code, Mike Brown will be on the call.

Thomas – completed the survey on the AS position, read tons of correspondence, edited the legislative letter, previewed some of the resumes, been in contact with Envirothon teachers, and trying to update some information, encouraging them to keep working with the kids to get at least one team, perhaps two. They have been having meetings a couple times a week. Trying to get permission slips back from students, have some younger students interested this year. Have been working really hard and hope to get something productive out of it.

Morgan - Sat in on the communications call, the AgEP call, signed checks. FB reached 1450 people and had 11 new likes. Sharing educational opportunities that the Dept of Ag, 4-H, and WVU Extension is putting out.

Rush - Sat in on the Watershed call, but they couldn't hear me due to technical difficulties. They did cover a lot of stuff in a little bit of time. The place we got the barrels from is permanently closed, so we are actively searching for another supplier. Still working on Century Farm applications. Wetzel County now has a full time Litter/Animal Control officer who has been busy writing citations and moving people along with their litter control.

Unfinished Business

AgEP

Cunningham made a motion to complete Tim McDiffitt's AgEP practice using receipts presented. Kile presented current pricing from Martin Marietta and Westbrook Trucking on gravel and ag lime.

Grant Needs

Nothing new

Spring Development Supply Update

Rush reported he has been unable to get an answer from the odds and ends supplier of culvert, we may have to buy complete tubes and cut as needed. Cunningham is checking on another source. Had an issue with the sod seeder, hoses are damaged.

Shared Employee Update

Meeting Thursday at 6pm to go through resumes and select applicants preferred to interview.

Education Programs

- Barrel order update – the supplier we had been ordering from is permanently closed, still searching for a replacement supplier.
- Composting workshop update – nothing new.
- Bluebird Box Video – Jenn hopes to get video completed in the next week.
- Other ideas

Employee Handbook Review

Additional sections are being worked on.

District Policy Manual Review

McKeever made a motion to approve District Policy Manual as presented. Morgan seconded the motion; motion passed.

Administrative Survey

1. Board Meeting Information-How do you want this information sent to district supervisors prior to monthly board meetings? **Email**
2. District Correspondence-Does the board wish to receive all correspondence forwarded to them and if so, what types of correspondence? **Continue as have been, omitting junk mail.**
3. District Board Meeting Draft Agenda – It has been suggested the DRAFT agendas be distributed 5 days prior to the meeting date instead of the mandatory 3 business days as defined in WV Open Meeting Laws. This would allow a two-day buffer for additions/corrections to be made to the draft agenda and

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then redistributed and posted as per WV Open Meeting Laws. Also, how would you like this information sent to the board? **Email DRAFT agendas 5 business days prior to meeting date.**

District Board Meeting DRAFT Minutes-currently the AS is required to send draft meeting minutes to Brian Farkas and their Ad withing 24 hours of the board meeting. Would the entire board like to receive the draft minutes at the same time? **No, continue to send DRAFT minutes when sending the DRAFT Agenda.**

Cunningham made a motion that the above be the accepted procedure concerning correspondence, DRAFT Agendas and DRAFT minutes in the future. Gellner seconded the motion; motion passed.

New Business

New April Meeting Date

April meeting date changed from April 20 to April 27th.

Farm Award

Be thinking on who we should honor in each county with Conservation Farm Award.

Correspondence

Adjournment

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

The next regular meeting will be teleconference April 27, at 6:00 p.m.

Minutes submitted by: Lori Cochran, Administrative Specialist

Signature of Chairman

Signature of Secretary

Date

Date