



GREENBRIER VALLEY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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Serving Greenbrier, Monroe and Pocahontas Counties

Minutes of the GVCD Special Board Meeting April 11, 2016

The Greenbrier Valley Conservation District Board of Supervisors met on Monday, April 11, 2016, in the conference room of the Lewisburg USDA Service Center. Those attending were:

Supervisors: Avery Atkins, Jerry Clifton, Carolyn Miller, Gary Sawyers, Gary Truex, Timothy VanReenen

Others: Walt Helmick, WVDA
Butch Antolini, WVDA
Brian Farkas, WVCA
Jeremy Salyer, WVCA
Jennifer Skaggs, WVCA
Barry Level, GVCD
Lynn Hutchison, WVCA/GVCD

Call to Order

Chairman Timothy VanReenen called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm.

New Business

Green Bank Potato Demonstration

The main purpose of the special meeting was to discuss and approve an Agreement between the West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA,) the West Virginia Conservation Agency (WVCA,) the Greenbrier Valley Conservation District (GVCD,) and the National Science Foundation's National Radio Astronomy Observatory (NRAO.) The purpose of the agreement is "to expand the existing Agriculture Enhancement Program Potato Demonstration Project (Project) to the Greenbrier Valley Conservation District on land owned and controlled by NRAO. This Project continues the concerted effort of WVDA, and Conservation Districts throughout the state, to respond to the decline in natural resource extraction employment by making commercial agriculture a significant part of West Virginia's economy."

Commissioner Walt Helmick presented background information and statistics, and described the scope of the proposed project at Green Bank. He also reported on other similar pilot projects in the state. He and Brian Farkas, Executive

Director of WVCA, answered numerous questions regarding how the program will work, how growers were selected, and the GVCD's role in the Project.

NRAO advertised the Project and held six meetings, starting in December 2015, for interested growers. Word-of-mouth advertising generated additional interest as meetings progressed. Thirteen growers were identified and will work 24 acres of ground in teams.

WVDA will provide seed potatoes for the project. Project produce will not be sold commercially, but instead used by the WV Department of Corrections.

The GVCD will receive, house, and insure equipment (a one-row planter and a one-row harvester plus their respective attachments,) purchased by the Department of Agriculture. This equipment will be provided to Project growers for use at no charge. During times the equipment is not in use for the Project, it can be leased to other District Cooperators under the GVCD's equipment rental program. The GVCD will retain ownership of the equipment at the end of the pilot project.

Supervisor Gary Truex moved to approve and sign the Agreement. Seconded by Gary Sawyers. Motion passed.

Chairman Timothy VanReenen noted that there was not a need for a separate motion on the equipment (as noted on the meeting agenda,) as the Agreement covered the equipment as well.

Supervisor Gary Sawyers expressed his appreciation for the effort being made to promote agricultural growth in the state.

The meeting recessed for a short time before resuming to address other business.

Other Business

- **Contract Timeline for Milligan Creek-Kiddle Fence** – Timothy VanReenen stated that a Job Showing has been scheduled for 4/15/16 and that a date needs to be set for the Bid Opening. (The contract was approved in late 2014.) The first day the Bid Opening can take place is 4/22/16. Supervisor Gary Sawyers was appointed to conduct the Bid Opening at 10am on 4/22/16.
- **Custodian Agreement with Premier Bank** – Timothy VanReenen reported that due to the acquisition of First National Bank by Premier Bank, an updated custodian agreement needs to be signed. **Gary Truex moved to approve and sign the agreement. Seconded by Carolyn Miller. Motion passed.** Avery Atkins and Gary Truex mentioned that it may be time to review bank account fees and services. Lynn Hutchison will gather information for future review.
- **Housing Department of Agriculture Employees** – Brian Farkas reported that he has not heard back from the FAC but will follow up on 4/12. There were questions asked and discussion about the possibility of owning and/or leasing other office space in the future. While options may be explored, there were no specific plans or timelines set. Brian Farkas noted that any potential conflicts of interest should be addressed by obtaining an ethics opinion.

Timothy VanReenen thanked the group for arranging individual schedules to attend the meeting on short notice. He noted that it would be important to make sure all cooperating agencies are on the same page and involved in each step of planning future projects.

Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting adjourned by consensus at 4:21pm.

Respectfully submitted,



**Timothy VanReenen
Chairman**



**Gary L. Truex
Secretary/Treasurer**

TWV/GLT/lh

Recorded by Lynn Hutchison, District Manager