

2283 Hartford Ave, Johnston, RI 02919

401-934-0842

MEETING MINUTES

July 24, 2012

9:00 AM

Chair Eric Offenberg called the meeting to order at 9:15 am.

Present: Chair: Eric Offenberg; RIACD: Dick Went; NRICD: Paul Dolan, Gina DeMarco, Jean Lynch; ERICD: Jessica Blackledge; SRICD: Clarkson Collins, Harriet Powell, J.Eric Scherer; RISCC: Ramona LeBlanc, Jill Osgood; NRCS: Phou Vongkhamdy, Jackie Pashnik; DEM: Ken Ayars.

I. Minutes: A motion was made to accept the minutes of the May 9, 2012 meeting: Harriet/Paul; unanimous.

II. Financial Report: The financial reports and 2012-2013 Budget were presented. The budget includes only current grants/contracts. It will be updated when new contracts/grants are signed. A motion was made to accept the financial reports and 2012-2013 Budget as presented: Harriet/Paul; unanimous.

III. Old Business:

A. FFOS: Becca Buckler, Jo-Anne Pacheco and Kate Sayles have received preliminary mapping training from Kate Bousquet. Kate B. will continue to work then and NRCS will review their first plans. There is currently a back log of 12 – 15 plans, and 25 new participants are expected to enroll in the fall. Additional training for tax assessors is being looked into.

B. NRCS Agreements – Questions on Written Report: Ramona submitted a written report.

1. Ag Inventory: Scituate & Gloucester are updated and include growers and non-industrial forest landowners; Bristol & Warren are fully surveyed; Middletown is in process of being surveyed; and Warwick, Cranston & Cumberland have yet to be surveyed.

2. Engineering: Current contract is amended to include the development of standard design packages for pipelines & irrigation pipelines. The agreement is expected to renew in September.

3. Geese: Fieldwork is complete and data entry is on-going. DEM is interested in getting involved with the Geese project.

4. Outreach: The workshops are complete. Contact with workshop attendees, producers, and NRCS clients continue.

5. Waterways: Phase One field work is complete. Data results will be forwarded to NRCS on July 25th for selection of sites needing additional work.

6. EWP-Pocasset: Johnston & Cranston are either removing their own debris or hiring outside contractors. Each town will contribute

the 25% match.

7. EWP-Wood, Pawcatuck & Queens: The Town of Westerly and various Queens River sites have been identified as needing debris removal. Each will meet their required 25% match.

C. Reorganization Policy/MOU with Districts: The Southern District contributed greatly to the re-work of the documents. The documents are for internal use and will be included in the Director's Handbook. The Handbook will also be updated and may include checklists, training and Conservation guides, and other district information. Eric O. asked each district to review the current handbook and be prepared to comment, make suggestions, and vote at the next meeting.

IV. Reports

A. Southern:

1. Outreach: The Third Outreach Meeting was held on 5/5/12 at Breen's Dairy Farm in West Greenwich. NRCS public affairs specialist Walter Marshall and The Southern District attended the East Farm Spring Festival where they educated the public and distributed several educational flyers. Matt Deane is working on the Watershed Project. The Town of Charlestown is interested in Geese Abatement. The Southern District is receiving training in FFOS to assist with the current workload with a special interest in assisting clients in Kent & Washington Counties.

2. Administrative: The Strategic Plan working sessions are complete and identified goals will be addressed in an Annual Business Plan.

This fiscal year's standard Board Meetings are scheduled for the fourth Monday of each month. The Southern District's Web Page has been updated and improved. The Board continues to seek more permanent office space.

3. Special Projects: The Land Trust Signage Project has begun. Land Trust Planning and Natural Resource Town Planning assistance have been offered to various entities. A public school may be interested in developing an integrated learning program such as the Geese project or Vegetable Gardens.

B. Eastern:

1. Geese: Field trainings and fieldwork is complete. Jessica attended the RWP Pond Restoration Steering Committee Meeting and gave an account of specific geese nesting and training workshops held. She met with Gina DeMarco and DEM representative, Sue Kiernan, on 7/11/12 about potential funding/expansion of the Geese Project. Jessica is active in creating marketing materials to promote the Geese Project as a Fee-for Service option for the districts.

2. Outreach: Jessica attended the 3rd Round NRCS workshop at Watson Farm on 7/18/12 and the Bio-Security Training on 7/19/12.

3. Water Bodies: Jessica attended the DEM Impaired Waters Meeting on 6/13/12 and the DEM Watershed Based Plan Public Meetings on 5/9/12 & 5/10/12. She will evaluate and review Watershed Based Plans with DEM in hopes of retaining work as the facilitating entity.

4. FFOS: Farm Plans will be on-going. Due to the large number of applicants, FFOS training has been provided to Kate Sayles, Jo-Anne Pacheco and Becca Buckler.

C. Northern:

1. Sue Kiernan from DEM met with Jessica and Gina DeMarco about expanding next year's Geese project by opening the trainings to the public as well as to agriculture producers. The Eastern District may expand their current geese monitoring territory to Mashpaug Pond in Providence and Sneece Pond in Cumberland. Other potential work from DEM includes Storm Water remediation and neighborhood rain gardens in regulating reservoirs.

2. DEM Division of Agriculture offered the Northern District an agreement on Bio-Security and Ag Traceability that includes Bio-Security education and maintenance of DEM Div. of Ag. Database of Traceability files. Future state-wide agreements must be with the RI State Conservation Committee.

3. Paul Dolan accepted a position with RC&D and his office is located in the Johnston office.

4. This year's SWERP school projects are complete. The 2012-2013 topics will follow NACD's national theme of "Where Does Your Water Shed?"

IV. New Business:

A. Non-regulatory Policy:

The board recognized the need for a consistent definition of "regulatory." The CD's are non-regulatory entities, and many questions were raised including the appropriateness of reporting irregularities while assisting towns in inspections, verifications, site plan reviews, etc. and/or accepting jobs that may have regulatory components. Questions, concerns, ideas, and information should be

forwarded to Eric O. and/or Ramona.

B. Director Compensation for Services Provided:

The question of what a Director may receive compensation for and what constitutes a conflict of interest was asked. If there is a question about a specific project, it should be sent through Ramona to the Ethics Commission for a ruling.

C. Fee for Service List: The Fee for Service items will be discussed in a separate meeting.

VI. Other:

A. Field Office of the Future: A 5-page handout was distributed outlining plans for creating a NRCS Field/Satellite Office in each of the district offices. NRCS would like a staff member in each district office on a regular schedule. Each district will receive an indirect fee from NRCS for accommodating the Field/Satellite Office.

B. NRCS Report: An NRCS Activity Report was distributed. Phou went to Washington, DC and spoke to Legislators and Congressmen about RI NRCS engineering accomplishments. Funds are available from the National Water Quality Initiative.

C. Southern District:

1. The Southern District is transferring clerk and treasurer duties to a staff member. The State Committee will continue to perform administrative and financial duties.

2. RC&D may no longer be able to assist farmers with the Rural Energy Development Assistance (REDA) program and may be interested in working with the Southern District to obtain the grant. If available for application, the State Committee would contract for the

grant because it is a state-wide program allowing each district to manage customers within their district.

Harriet motioned to adjourn at 10:46 am. Paul seconded; motion passed unanimously.