

**2283 Hartford Ave, Johnston, RI 02919**

**401-934-0842**

## **MEETING MINUTES**

**May 9, 2012**

**9:00 AM**

**Chair Eric Offenberg called the meeting to order at 9:22 am.**

**Present: Chair: Eric Offenberg. ERICD: Emerson Wildes; RIACD: Dick Went; DEM: Michelle Sheehan; NRICD: Jean Lynch; ERICD: Jessica Blackledge; SRICD; Clarkson Collins, Harriet Powell, J.Eric Scherer; RISCC: Ramona LeBlanc, Jill Osgood; NRCS; Pooh Vongkhamdy.**

**I. Minutes: A motion was made to accept the minutes of the March 14, 2012 meeting: Harriet/Emerson; unanimous.**

**II. Financial Report: A motion was made to accept the financial reports as presented: Emerson/Harriet; unanimous.**

**III. Old Business:**

**A. FFOS: Kate and Jessica are working on completing the applications. Kate Sayles will shadow Jessica to learn the process.**

**B. NRCS:**

**1. Ag Inventory:** Ramona reported that two towns have been updated to include forest landowners and crop producers. Two additional towns are due for full survey by the end of May.

**2. Geese Abatement:** Jessica reported that the workshops are complete. At the Green Hill Pond programs held in the Southern District, every island had nests and 46 eggs were oiled. Charlestown has started to work on their own geese abatement project and is making progress. Eric Offenbergs asked Jessica to create a document to showcase the work and success of the project to be used as a marketing tool.

**3. Outreach:** Ramona reported that the recent farm tours have received positive feedback and three contracts were signed. A Farm Tour at Confreda Farms is scheduled for May 19th and at Watson Farm in July.

**4. Engineering:** Eric Offenbergs reported that Amanda is doing well. The RI State Conservation Committee is providing engineering work support to NRCS. He hopes to renew the program that will conclude in September 2012.

**5. Watershed:** Ramona reported that the four water bodies selected as having hydraulic impairments are the Warren River, Silver Creek, Kickemuit River, and Child Street Dam. The goal is to identify sites for a full assessment of what and how to correct problem, cost, etc.

**6. EWP:** Eric Offenbergs reported that the Town of Johnston is ready to start work; Cranston is in process, and Westerly is still working on the MOU. South Kingstown is not participating because of the 25% matching funds requirement.

## **7. NRCS:**

- Phou reported that EQIP Round 1 has 132 contracts totaling over \$2.1 million. 17 contracts are expected for Round 2 at \$70,000, and Round 3, due by June, should yield 71 contracts at \$994,000.
- NRCS is looking to fill an engineer position, and 3 staff positions to be filled by students or young veterans.
- The National Regional District Conservationist went on a statewide tour. Specific issues were identified as needing improvement and there was also much positive feedback.

**C. Fee for Service:** Ramona reported that a Resource Library/Fee for Service portfolio is in process. The report will provide information about each district and include a short biography of each member and staff, photos, skills, services, talents, projects, etc. that the district has to offer. It will also provide a list of affiliated agencies.

**D. Policy and MOU with Districts:** District policy will be revised to state that work conducted by one District within another District will be treated as a co-sponsored event/project. The host District will be included and all press releases, etc. and will be invited to participate fully.

**E. Other: Field Office of the Future Committee (FOOF):** Phou asked each district to appoint one board member and one employee to sit on a sub-committee to develop a written plan for the implementation of each field office. The sub-committee is called the “Field Office of the Future” (FOOF). The plans are due in September.

## **IV. New Business:**

**A. DEM Land Link:** Michelle Sheehan reported that she is working on

launching a web-site that will connect farmers with available farm land. The website will provide a resource for farmers and land owners and will provide profiles of each. Currently, DEM and the Ag & Land Trust are interested in the project. There will be a series of workshops focusing on matching, leasing, farm/farmer identification, etc. She is looking for the RI State Conservation Committee's level of interest in the project. Ramona expressed interest in having District staff attend the workshops.

**B. Revised NRCS Indirect Fee:** Eric Offenbergs reported that contractual indirect fees in current NRCS agreements have been increased. This increase will be passed on to the districts based on billable hours. Harriet made a motion to accept this increase in indirect fees. Emerson seconded; motion passed unanimously.

**C. 2012-13 Budget:** Ramona presented the board with the 2012-13 Budget. The Budget will be discussed further at the next SCC meeting to allow Board members time to review.

**D. ERICD Board Appointments:** Suzanne Hourihan and Ron Mucci from ERICD have presented nomination papers for re-appointment as District Directors. Emerson made a motion to re-appoint them. Harriet seconded; motion passed unanimously.

Eric Offenbergs tabled the remaining agenda items to a future meeting due to time restraints.

Harriet motioned to adjourn at 11:28 am. Emerson seconded; passed unanimously.