

**Northern Rhode Island Conservation District**

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**MEETING MINUTES**

**December 6, 2007**

**6:00 PM**

**Paul called the meeting to order at 6:10.**

**In attendance were:**

**Directors: Paul Dolan, Marc Tremblay, Norm Hammond, Eugene Pepper, Dick Went; Associate Director: Jean Lynch; Staff: Gina DeMarco and Ramona LeBlanc; NRCS: Mike Merrill**

**Absent were:**

**Associate Director: Ed Baker.**

**I. Minutes**

**The notes to the October and November meetings were reviewed.  
A motion to accept the minutes was made: Dick/Norm, unanimous.**

## **II. Treasurer's Reports**

**Treasurer's reports for October and November were presented; a motion was made to acknowledge receipt of report: Gene/Dick, unanimous.**

**Income/expenses within budget projections 5 months into fiscal year.**

## **III. Old Business**

### **a. Scituate Reservoir Watershed Education Program**

**Gina reported that teacher packets for the poster contest are being developed. At the request of Gloucester Waste Water Management, the theme will be septic systems. In order to make the topic easier to present to students, PWSB's mascot, Walter Splash, will be used and the approach will be "Walter Splash Goes Down the Drain." Septic systems and their connection to ground water, practices that can be used within the home to help septic systems and why those practices are important will be discussed. Paul asked if NRCS still has water cycle posters that they used to have. Mike will check. Gina will need several hundred to make worthwhile.**

**Elementary packets are almost ready.**

**Neighbor to Neighbor: New lists will be obtained from towns for a mailing at the end of January.**

**A 319 grant (from the Bay Watershed Restoration Fund) to implement a stormwater BMP in the village of North Scituate is on hold. NRCS is to complete the engineering but cannot begin any work now because the money will not be matched until a contract is signed. Gene reported that the continuing resolution funding situation is slowing down the flow of federal money and State bond funding is also being delayed.**

**b. Pocasset Project: Mike reported that a meeting held a few weeks ago that was well attended and that several political figures from both towns were there. Both Cranston and Johnston have signed and that the flood plan management study will be released.**

**c. CIG Project: Entech, Frederickson's Farm and UMass have all been contacted to get paperwork in.**

**A new round of grants is being prepared for. A press release and about 500 postcards will go out. Three workshops (1 in each District) will be held to help people with the application process. NRICD will hold a workshop on 1/15/08; SRICD, one on 1/16/08 and ERICD, one on 1/17/08.**

**d. Wetlands Outreach and Education: The Wetlands in Your Backyard program, originally to start 1/1/08, still does not have a signed contract. Gina is concerned that if it does not start 1/1/08, the timeline for the project will be pushed out. It is a 1 year/\$20000.00 grant that will deal with encroachment issues, native plants vs. invasive species.**

**e. Education/Outreach Position: Several candidates were interviewed but interview panel narrowed field to two applicants. Both were very**

well qualified and concern was expressed that, given their qualifications and the limited number of hours NRICD is offering at this point, either one could leave for a better offer.

There is the possibility of increasing the number of hours if pending grants are funded. Gina suggested that, effective 1/1/08, the billing rate be increased by \$3.00 per hour on new contracts to build a fund to finance health care coverage in some form.

A motion was made to offer the position to Elizabeth Berg: Norm/Gene, unanimous.

Further discussion of benefits raised the points that longevity and the number of hours worked per week should be considered and that a benefit package would be beneficial in keeping positions filled. A motion was made to raise billing rate \$3.00 per hour: Norm/Dick.

Marc raised concern that, if health insurance is going to be offered, a District policy must be established that is equitable to all employees. That is, insurance should not be offered to only some employees. Since Gina and Ramona do not need insurance, Paul suggested a menu of options might be considered: insurance, higher hourly rate, 401K being among the choices. The Board agreed to discuss this policy further at future meetings.

The motion was amended to limit the immediate policy to raising the billing rate with no immediate changes in benefits to be offered until a District policy is established. Accepted unanimously.

f. Annual Dinner: The cost exceeded the budgeted amount suggesting that the budget should be increased next fiscal year unless ticket prices are raised.

**g. Lake Association:** Gina distributed copies of a letter from the Director of DEM to Roylene suggesting that a pilot group of northern RI lake associations be formed to establish what the project will involve. Paul said that any program would have two components: first, a biologist would have to evaluate each pond and establish a management program and, second, either a biologist or an outreach person would have to work with the lake associations to implement that program.

Mike reported that NRCS is interested in funding but there are a lot of permit and coordination issues that have to be dealt with before the agency can commit time and money. A letter will be sent to DEM asking that the District be included in the discussion of the project.

**h. Laptop Computer:** Gina has had no success in having a computer donated. A new one with software would be approximately \$1500.00. The NRCS federal computer is going to be replaced with a newer computer and Gina suggested the District use that for now. Gene will try to get a 1 & ½ year old laptop donated and the cost of a new operating system would be about \$350.00.

#### **IV. Reports**

**a. NRCS:** Mike brought two hurricanes kits to be stored at the District in case of an emergency and said that if storage units re needed, NRCS would provide.

**b. Envirothon:** An executive meeting was held and on January 10th at 3:30, a general meeting will be held.

**c. RIFCO: Woodland owner workshops will be held this winter at the Scituate Community Center on the following dates: February 9th, 16th, 23rd and March 1st.**

**V: New Business**

**a. Seedling Sale: This event will be held on April 18th and 19th.**

**b. Livestock Animal Inventory: Tabled until next meeting.**

**c. Urban Community Garden Opportunities: Tabled until next meeting.**

**VI: Other**

**a. RI League of Cities and Towns: To be held on January 31st, it will have to be determined who will attend.**

**b. Town Funding: Mailing will go out the week of 12/17. Burriville requires a representative to be present at budget hearing. Marc will discuss with Burriville Conservation Committee to see if they will represent District at that meeting.**

**c. NACD Membership: A check was issued to renew membership.**

**d. Directors' Pay: Checks were distributed for July-December 2007.**

**Motion to adjourn Norm/Dick. 7:10 pm.**