

**SOUTHERN RHODE ISLAND CONSERVATION DISTRICT
MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING HELD JANUARY 23, 2016
AT THE URI MASTER GARDENER FIELD HOUSE**

Present: Clarkson Collins, Chair; Harvey Buford, Treasurer; Carl Sawyer, Secretary; Antonia Bryson, Director; Jean Lynch, RIACD; Melissa Hayden, NRCS District Conservationist; Kate Bousquet, District Manager.

I. Carl called the meeting to order at 4:07 PM (Clark arrived late).

II. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes of the October 24, 2016 meeting were approved as written (Harvey, Carl, unanimous).

III. Reports

Financial Statement: Kate submitted a written Treasurer's Report/Financial Statement. Harvey asked about the status of RI Foundation bridge funding. Kate said the funds (\$50K) were being administered by the RI State Conservation Committee and would be dispersed for operating expenses. There was discussion of what constituted operating expenses. Kate will follow up with other District Managers regarding operating expenses. At Harvey's request, Kate will send a copy of the RI Foundation agreement to board members. Motion to accept approved. (Harvey, Antonia, unanimous).

NRCS Report: Melissa went over a written report summarizing a great deal of NRCS activity in the District. Of note, an Energy Workshop focused on farmers will be held at the West Greenwich Community Center Jan. 26, and selections have been made for two District Conservationist and one Soil Conservationist positions.

Envirothon: Peter sent a written report in his absence due to illness. The Envirothon continues to seek a location for its 2017 competition with East Farm still a good possibility. An all-you-can-eat fundraising breakfast will be held at Dave's Bar and Grill, Post Rd., Warwick on March 26. It was agreed that Kate will send a donation from the District in support of the event according to the amount budgeted.

RI Association of Conservation Districts: Jean will send minutes of the last RIACD meeting to Kate so she can forward to board members. Jean will be representing RI Conservation Districts at the annual meeting coming up in February in Denver. Jean encouraged the District to contribute something toward the annual dues even if it is less than the \$770/yr requested. Kate will send a check for the amount budgeted. Jean noted that funds are available for board development training and will send information to Kate.

District Manager's Report: Kate presented a detailed written report which is filed with the minutes. Of note is a workshop being conducted as part of the 2015 NRCS Outreach Agreement at the Narragansett Indian Longhouse in Charlestown, January 25, from 5-6:30 PM. Naomi Andrews also submitted a written report summarizing her work on Hopkinton Conservation Commission projects, Farm, Forest and Open Space applications, and the Locustville Pond Improvement Association mapping project.

IV. Old Business

- A. URI East Farm, Building #50 Lease:** Kate reported that the 5-year lease for the space has been signed and is in effect.
- B. Update on Legislative Outreach Efforts and Strategies:** Discussed during Financial Statement report. Kate noted that Maria Mack, RISCC, and District Managers will testify before Legislature as necessary.
- C. Collection of SRICD Volunteer Hours:** Kate encouraged board members to submit volunteer hours via Google. She will email the link.

D. Other:

- 1. Land and Water Summit:** The District decided previously to not purchase a table at this year's Summit, however, NRCS has reserved two tables, including one for the Districts. Naomi Andrews will staff the display on behalf of the Southern District.
- 2. SRICD Board Nominations:** The RISCC has approved nomination of Clark and Rudi for appointment to the Board.

V. New Business

A. Additional Insurance: Based on discussions with personnel from the State NRCS office and other districts, Kate wondered if the Southern District should purchase additional automobile liability insurance to cover claims for accidents incurred while operating her own, or other agencies', vehicles while on District business. After discussion, it was agreed that Kate would further investigate the matter and report back to the board via email.

B. Board Chairperson: Clark expressed his wish to step down as Chairperson of the Board, a position he has filled for over ten years. Antonia agreed to consider the position.

C. Freshbooks Software: Kate reported that Eastern and Northern District personnel are using Freshbooks accounting software which has been particularly useful for RI Foundation grant accounting. Kate said the other districts like the program and it would be beneficial for all three districts to use the same thing, especially for timesheet submission. A motion was made to authorize Kate to apply for a 30-day free trial of the program and, if pleased with it, purchase the license for a fee of \$30/month (Antonia, Carl, unanimous).

Motion to adjourn at 6:27 PM. Harvey, Antonia.

The next meeting will be held at URI East Farm Master Gardener Field House February 27, 2017 at 4:00 PM

Minutes submitted by Carl Sawyer, Secretary, SRICD