

**SOUTHERN RHODE ISLAND CONSERVATION DISTRICT
MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING HELD MARCH 27, 2017
AT THE URI MASTER GARDENER FIELD HOUSE**

Present: Antonia Bryson, Chair; Harvey Buford, Treasurer; Carl Sawyer, Secretary; Rudi Hempe, Director; Peter Stetson, Associate Director; Melissa Hayden, NRCS District Conservationist; Jean Lynch, RI Association of Conservation Districts; Kate Bousquet, District Manager.

I. Antonia called the meeting to order at 4:10 PM.

II. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes of the February 27, 2017 meeting were approved as written (Rudi, Harvey, unanimous).

III. Reports

- A. Financial Statement:** Kate submitted a written Treasurer's Report/Financial Statement.
- B. NRCS Report:** Melissa went over her detailed written report. She noted that Jermaine Jenkins, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist Of Field Operations, has asked NRCS staff to stay on top of contract implementation and maintenance follow-up. Phou Vomkhamdy, NRCS State Conservationist, has funds to direct toward Districts to facilitate this follow-up.
- C. Envirothon:** Peter reported that the fund-raising breakfast held at Dave's Bar and Grill in Warwick raised over \$1200 toward financing the winning team's participation in the national competition. Eleven teams have registered so far, with one middle school team. Peter handed out a page describing the topic for this year: Agricultural Soil and Water Conservation Stewardship. The RI teams will focus on Jamestown's Watson Farm as they prepare for the competition. Peter also passed around a page describing the 2017 Rhode Island Mapping Competition which will enable Middle School and High School students to develop skills in online ArcGIS mapping, something that will be useful in the Envirothon competition and potentially their career.
- D. RI Ag Council:** Carl represented the Southern District at the March Ag Council meeting. The Ag Council is hoping to have better participation from member organizations at their booth at the Washington County Fair.
- E. RI Association of Conservation Districts:** Jean reported on her trip to the National Association of Conservation Districts meeting in Denver. She also encouraged to Board members to consider attending the 2017 NACD Northeast Region Meeting in Burlington, VT August 13-15.
- F. District Manager's Report:** Kate provided a detailed written report. She noted that the three Districts would be introduced on the Senate floor Thursday of this week. Harriet Powell's letter to the editor in support of District activities did not get published. On Wednesday of this week, the House Finance Committee is expected to hear testimony regarding DEM management of state funding for Districts. Kate also provided a report from Naomi Andrews detailing her progress with mapping for the Hopkinton Conservation Commission.

IV. Old Business

- A. Update on Legislative Outreach Efforts:** Previously discussed in District Manager's report.
- B. Update on Operating Budget Expenditures:** Kate provided a SRICD FY2016-2017 Budget and a draft spreadsheet of SRICD total estimated expenses for RI Foundation bridge funding. There was lengthy discussion of the SRICD budget and, in particular, the need for administrative assistance for Kate. Kate

provided a spreadsheet detailing her activity and the average hrs/week for each activity which totaled 48.35 hrs/week. It was agreed that administrative assistance was necessary and that Kate would develop a position description for an office manager.

- C. Alterations to SRICD Banking:** With Antonia taking over as SRICD Chairperson, paperwork will have to be completed to enable her to sign checks along with Harvey (Treasurer) and Kate. Kate also noted that she had been using her own debit card for District business and wondered if the District could get a debit card. Following discussion, it was voted to: allow Kate to apply to apply for a debit card from Washington Trust to make purchases in the ordinary course of business up to \$1000 (Rudi, Harvey, unanimous). It was also voted to amend the check-writing policy to allow Kate to write checks for a sum up to \$1000 (in place of \$200) for District purchases (Harvey, Rudi, unanimous).
- D. Other:** There was no further old business.

V. New Business

A. Consideration: SRICD to host a local farmer working group meeting: There was discussion of how SRICD could better serve the needs of our constituents. Possibilities included: 1) hosting a workshop, 2) utilizing the Community Partnership Program at Roger Williams University to develop an outreach program or questionnaire, and 3) initiating a one-on-one interview process.

B. Contract Agreement Signing: Antonia would like clarification of who should, or is permitted to sign contract agreements and request for payment. Antonia and Kate will look into this further after reviewing the existing agreements.

C. Number of District Directors: Rudi expressed his feeling that there should be more than five district directors. It was agreed that this is something that should be presented to the RIACD.

Meeting adjourned at 6:06PM

The next meeting will be held on April 24, 2017, at 4 PM at the URI East Farm Master Gardener Field House.

Minutes submitted by Carl Sawyer, Secretary, SRICD