



**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
MINUTES**

**November 19, 2023 – 1:00 PM
Hyatt Regency Hotel, Wichita, KS**

Call to Order, President Bill Simshauser

Called to order at 1:00 PM

Introduction of Guests, President Bill Simshauser

(waited until Kris and David came in to make introductions)

Approval of Agenda, President Bill Simshauser

Approved with the addition of Wayne Luekert discussing an increase in Aid to Conservation Districts. Wayne is the Chairman of the resolution committee.

Approval of previous meeting minutes, President Bill Simshauser

Bevin motioned, Darrell seconded – motion carried.

Correspondence –

Ranchland Trust newsletter

Thank you from Karen Woodrich

Thank you from KACEE for support of water festival

Thank you notes from students attending water festival

NACD annual report

NCF annual report

Thank you from Governors Water Conference

Financial Report

Budget & Financial Report

Annuity and Savings Account

Pat Lehman Memorial Account

Kansas CD Dues Report

Partner Reports –

Kris Etheridge – Acting State Conservationist -

David Doctorian – new State Conservationist – Starting Dec. 17th, 2023. Davis has a background in farming, “how can we do things that will support production and still be in line with what NRCS wants to do.”

USDA – Kris gave an update on how much NRCS funds used last year in the amount of roughly \$80 million dollars. Plan is to still bring on new employees but to make sure that they are getting trained correctly. They have the funds and capacity to get everyone on board and trained to be able to offer technical assistance agreements and keep those agreements in place.

Big responsibility to get those IRA funds used up. NRCS is trying to use them up with ACT NOW funding system. They can set a threshold that the application needs to meet and start funding applications as soon as possible. Those funds need to be used up ASAP. After the 1st of January most of the initiatives will be used through the ACT NOW funding initiative. RCPP program will also be used to get that funding out there. Creativity and innovative ideas will be needed to get that in place.

Talked about the funding coming our way and trying to get people in the office. NRCS is offering the best that they can and using interdisciplinary requirements to get people in the door.

Getting the NRCS “Brand” out there is equally important. Some people just don’t know what NRCS is all about and what the job entails.

Board Member Reports

Sean gave his report on how things are going at the capital. House Bill 2302 ended up with \$25-30 million over the next five (5) years. Lots of municipalities that need to be included in this grant process. The remainder of the water funding will flow through the normal Water Authority budget. Then they will present their budget to the Water Office. Hopefully we will see an increase in communication with the county commissioners and therefore an increase in that support. We need to really put that effort out there. The conservation funding bill that is going to be coming up soon and they will be competing for our dollars. Looking at a multi-year effort for the conservation funding pool. A lot of education needs to be put forth to let them know what that will be for. Nov of 2024 is an election year for every member in the house and senate. All 165 members will be up for election. We have a chance now to start educating those new people. Probably 25 – 35% turnover next year. Probably not around much past May 1st.

Dan talked about the new bill. Goal one is to find money for conservation districts without raising any taxes. Right now is a good time to look at the state’s surplus and could possibly use those pools. Kansans for Conservation – take a very critical look at the house bill. A living document that will change a lot.

Darrell asked about some funding alternatives. Sticking a penny sales tax on bottled water. Aversion to who that would affect. In general legislatures do not like new taxes.

EO REPORT – update on what happened at the board meeting this morning.

WAYNE’S REPORT – Staying in contact with legislatures. The importance of increasing the state aid to conservation districts. Helping to amend district law so that DMs are held accountable for the reports that need to be turned in. Getting their audits done. DOC has no recourse when the

reports are not submitted. Trying to find a balance between authority over the conservation districts and having them get their jobs done. Ultimately it is the Board's responsibility to make sure they are doing their jobs.

Allen brought up that it would be a good idea to review Supervisor Training Modules on a yearly basis. The board needs to know what they are responsible for.

It can be a committee recommendation. 2007 was the last time that the statute was changed.

Executive Director Report – Convention is what it is. 190 full registrations, another 76 NRCS staff, 28 exhibitors. 340 – 350 for the banquet, 320 – 330 for the luncheon. Small issue with WSU. Sending out reminders that some still owed money for the sponsorships. In all, they sent out around 10 reminders that they needed to pay. WSU thinks they need reimbursed for the registrations they thought they would be collecting.

2023 Educational Grant has been extended and they are working with WIBW to get some work done with them. Garden City is having a career fair and Amanda will be there to represent KACD and get some employees on board. Ecoharvest has been great and getting the producers on board. Dan has been helping out with those. Will be submitting reimbursement requests for Matt Sprick's time and Dan's time. We met our acres for Climate Smart in Kansas of 200,000 acres.

Shared the numbers from all of the partnership agreements. Looking forward to getting Amanda on board as the new Assistant Executive Director.

Board member reports –

AREA I – Allen reported the need for supervisors to go over the training modules regularly. He was re-elected to the extension board. KSU had a tour in his county to role out new programs Kansas 105 they are going to step up and address issues in the counties where help is needed and provide assistance to those counties and use their professors to help at the county level and working with the conservation districts and extension to work on those issues.

AREA II– Bill -bottom line conference has been scheduled for next year. Nov 9th, had their last Farmer-to-Farmer meeting. Counties have been getting their water tested. See attached.

AREA III – Jerry talked about his area has been pretty quiet. They have been getting people signed up with the Climate Smart initiative. Went to his first RAC meeting and is eager to learn more.

AREA IV – Bevin talked and updated about AREA IV. Went to Chi's funeral and went to the Governor's Water Conference. Northern Plains calls. Outreach committee calls for NACD. Annual meeting planning. NRCS shortages

AREA V – Darrell updated the Board with news that Bourbon County is funded. The Board chair has really gone above and beyond to make sure that funding was in place. Talked about how different tragedies in our lifetime have a lasting effect on how we receive news. That area is

conducting testing for uranium.

Old Business –

NACD Annual Meeting Plans – registration is now open. Who plans to attend Allen, Darrell, Jerry, Bevin and Bill. Wayne is willing to act as a representative. Need someone from Area I, III and V. They will need to collect and count ballots. Sometime before the business meeting tomorrow.

Auction Item -

Attendance plans -

Appoint board members to count ballots

New Business –

Conservation Day at the Capitol – February 6, 2024

Grant applications - District should cover hotel room. KACD Darrell motioned and Jerry seconded to pay the meal for the daughter.

KNRC and SAKW attendance - Dan would like to attend and would like Amanda to attend. Jerry motioned and Allen seconded.

SAKW annual dues – Bevin motioned to pay those. Seconded by Darrell.

Kansas Land Improvement Contractors Annual Mtg – meeting is the 28-30 of January, 2024.

Women Managing the Farm – Amanda and Rhonda should attend in Manhattan. Allen and Darrell, motion passed.

Location of 2024 Annual Convention – Hyatt will be in the middle of a remodel. Hilton Garden Inn in Manhattan is open. They are supposed to send a proposal. If they will give us the government rate, they could be a possibility. Tabled until Tuesday.

NACD dues – Normally do Gold at \$775.00 motion Darrell and seconded by Allen. Motion passed.

2024 budget – Dan passed out the 2024 proposed budget. Motion to present the proposed 2024 to the finance committee. Allen motioned, Jerry seconded. Motion carried.

Registration as lobbyist – Need a motion for Dan to register as a lobbyist. Allen motioned, Darrell seconded. Motion carried.

Lobbyist contract with Capitol Strategies, LLC - vote to retain Sean for another year, and the funding will be negotiated at a later time. Allen made the motion, seconded by

Jerry, motion carried.

Contract with Cowley County to host Assistant Director position – Dan went down and met with Amanda and her board regarding the agreement between Cowley County and KACD as the new Assistant Director. Dan reviewed her employment agreement. Motion to accept the employment contract and MOA with Cowley County. Darrel motioned and Jerry seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Review KACD advisor applications and make appointments – Board will go into executive session, to discuss Advisor applications. Motion to go into executive session for 15 minutes. Motion by Allen, seconded by Jerry. Motion passed. Dan received five (5) applications that need to be taken into consideration. Terms could be discussed. Motion made by Allen and seconded by Darrell to vote by secret ballot on the two advisors from the nominations. Dan is the official vote counter. Unanimous for Brittney Miller, three votes for Trent Winter. Dan will contact them about getting on board.

Pat Lehman Award application review - 24 years of service used to be one of the criteria. Then we went down to 15 years. Now if we get applications, we get applications. After looking over her write up. He hadn't been a board member for 15 years. Can we change that criteria? Eliminate the length of service criteria. Motion made by Bevin, seconded by Allen. Motion passed.

Opportunity to exhibit at upcoming events - Dan would like the authority to pick the opportunities for KACD to have a presence at and attend those events. Darrel motioned for Dan to be able to attend the events he thinks would be beneficial for KACD to have a presence at. Bevin seconded it. Motion carried.

Annual performance review for Leadership and Field Services position – Allen motioned for a 5% increase for Rhonda. Jerry seconded and motion passed unanimously.

NACD Scholarship – tabled until the next meeting.

Endowment Committee - Motion by Allen for Rod Vorhees to serve on the endowment committee. Jerry seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Bill adjourned the meeting at 4:28 o'clock PM.

Additional Items

Next Meeting, November 21, 2023 at Hyatt Regency Hotel, Wichita, KS

Area II Director's Report

The Bottom Line Conference is set for August 23rd-24th, 2024.

The Kearny County Conservation District held it's 3rd Farmer to Farmer meeting on the 9th of November.

The water quality grant has been kicked off with water testing for uranium and other contaminants in domestic water wells. October was for Hamilton County and Kearny County. November is for Finney County and December is for Gray and Ford Counties. Once that rotation is complete, we will start over with new round a testing. Had six (6) tests in Kearny County.

I attended the monthly KCCD board meetings.

I attended the Northern Plains meeting Oct. 12th and again Nov 2nd.

I attended the NACD invasive species subcommittee meeting Oct. 18th.

I am on a NACD officer call every Friday.

I attended an ISAC meeting every Friday in Oct.

I went to Washington State for NACD's officer retreat Nov. 7th-10th.

I went to Washington DC Nov. 12-15th for the in person ISAC meeting.

I chaired the NACD legislative committee November 16th.

Will be going to Washington DC on Dec. 4th-7th for the NACS executive board retreat.

Will be going to Washington DC on Jan 29th-Feb 2nd for the 2024 Leadership at its Best Training sponsored by Syngenta.

Bill Simshauser