



Resource Conservation & Development, Inc.

*Empowering Citizens to Build Strong Communities*

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## BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, January 8, 2009

11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

**Call to Order:** The January 8, 2009 Meeting of the Panhandle RC&D Board of Directors was called to order by President Gary Fisher at 11:00 a.m. Attendees included: President Gary Fisher, Dawes County; Ron Miller, Scotts Bluff County; Mike Marker, Scotts Bluff County; Lonnie Miller, City of Terrytown; Larry Gibbs, City of Gering; Cheryl Burkhart-Kriesel, South Platte NRD; David Ostdiek, North Platte NRD; Joe Nunn, Sioux County; Josh Skavdahl, Sioux County; Gary Grubbs, Banner County; Brenda Johnson, City of Crawford; and Amy Reinbold, City of Mitchell.

Staff: Jennifer Rogers, Program Assistant

Guests: Dennis Beyer, High Plains Weed Management Association

**Approve Agenda:** Motion made by Mike Marker to approve the January 8, 2009 Agenda as presented; seconded by Ron Miller. Motion carried.

**Minutes:** Motion made by Lonnie Miller to approve the December 11, 2008 Minutes as presented; seconded by Mike Marker. Motion carried.

**Treasurer's Report:** Due to Treasurer Verlin Bruns' absence, Jennifer Rogers went through the January 8, 2009 Treasurer's Report. There was a beginning cash balance of \$51,287.28. Receipts included \$1,506.92 in donations from the Friends of the Intertribal Gathering Crafts Auction; \$4,000.00 from the No-Till Cadre for the No-Till Conference; \$250.00 from Valley Bank for sponsorship to the 2009 Sustainable Decisions Conference; and \$10,500.00 from the Department of Environmental Quality for the No-Till Conference grant reimbursement. Receipts totaled \$16,256.92. Expenses included: \$100 to the Website/Hosting Company for the City of Terrytown (to be invoiced); \$450.00 to the National Association of RC&D Councils; \$185.00 to KAAQ/KQSF FM Radio; \$6,511.53 to the Gering Civic Center; \$25.00 to Allo Communications; \$30.26 to the Chappell Register; \$42.00 to the Western Nebraska Observer; \$175.00 to KSID Radio; \$150.00 to Clear Channel; \$448.68 to the Star Herald; \$72.00 to the Sidney Sun Telegraph; \$280.00 to the Alliance Times Herald; \$54.00 to the Pine Bluffs Post; \$150.00 to KCSR Radio; \$106.10 to KSDZ Radio; \$1,179.95 Payroll; \$850.00 to South Dakota RC&D; \$200.00 to the South Dakota RC&D; \$1,179.95 Payroll. Expenses totaled \$12,189.47. Ending balance of all accounts \$55,354.73. Motion made by Ron Miller to accept the January 8, 2009 Treasurer's Report; seconded by Cheryl Burkhart-Kriesel. Motion carried.

**Approval of Bills:** Motion made by Mike Marker to approve the bills-to-be-paid as presented; seconded by Lonnie Miller. Motion carried.

### Reports

**Program Assistant Report:** Jennifer Rogers presented a breakdown of her hours put in for the 2008 No-Till Winter Conference as requested by the Board at the December Meeting. This could possibly

be used as a baseline for conferences in the future when deciding whether or not to begin charging administrative or personnel fees. On the letter, a total of \$3,519.00 worth of personnel hours was contributed to the project on various items including grant applications, financial management, and grant reporting. The main funding for the conference were two grants that could be applied for to assist in next year's conference as well.

**High Plains WMA Report:** Project Manager Dennis Beyer wanted to let the Board know that since the project began in the first of June, the organization has removed and treated over 2,500 acres of Russian Olive infestation. This is only the tip of the iceberg regarding Russian Olive infestation along the North Platte River. The group has also submitted an application for follow-up money to the Environmental Trust for the projects that will be completed with the initial funding. After the Trust's board meeting in February there will be an opportunity for individuals to submit comments regarding the new application, and it is encouraged that all RC&D members make an effort to show their support for this project.

**Organic Farming / Soil Health Report:** Ron Miller reported that the committee held their second workshop on December 15<sup>th</sup> and there were twelve or thirteen attendees. Topics included: the management of weeds without chemicals, profit opportunities, etc. The University of Iowa recently conducted a study that demonstrated the great profit margin that can be made by converting to organic production. According to the study, the conventional profit average was \$20 per acre, and with organic production, the profit was \$170 per acre. This should be taken into consideration by local officials particularly due to the fact that a profit margin like shows that through conventional farming the same amount of acres that could support 157 individuals would only support 18 for conventional farming. The High Plains Ag Lab is currently working with ongoing trials and data in the area of organic crop production and it is certainly something that is picking up throughout the Panhandle. One thing many people don't know is that to become a certified organic farmer, the land has to undergo being chemical-free for three years.

### **Old Business**

**Election of Officers:** Mike Marker reported that the nominating committee has three people that it would like to recommend for the annual election of officers for RC&D. These people include: Larry Gibbs from the City of Gering for President; Ron Klemke from the City of Oshkosh for Vice President, and Verlin Bruns from Deuel County for Treasurer. Motion made by Lonnie Miller that nominations cease and unanimous ballot cast for the recommendations as presented by the nominating committee; seconded by Mike Marker. Motion carried.

**2009 State Association Meeting:** Larry Gibbs reported that part of the initial planning committee for the meeting met earlier that morning at 10:00 and decided that it is important to begin setting up the subcommittees to start the process. The committees include: Trainings / Speakers; Entertainment / Bus Tour; and Budget / Finance. It was decided to forego an official chairperson of the conference and to allow the subcommittees to nominate their own chairs which would then bring back information to the group at each meeting. There is certainly enough to be done for everyone to have a place on the committee. Initial volunteers included: Training / Speakers: Cheryl Burkhart-Kriesel, Larry Gibbs, Ron Miller, and Mike Marker; Entertainment / Bus Tour: Brenda Johnson, Cheryl Burkhart-Kriesel; Budget / Finance: Lonnie Miller, and Jennifer will contact Verlin Bruns to see if he would sit on the Budget Committee as well. Jennifer will send out correspondence reminding everyone of the committee commitments and to request for the absent members to volunteer for a committee as well. The dates of the conference are October 5-7, 2009. Motion made by Larry Gibbs to schedule and sign

a contract with the Gering Civic Center for the conference on October 5-7, 2009; seconded by Cheryl Burkhart-Kriesel. Motion carried.

**City of Terrytown Website / Invoice:** Jennifer reported that the website project for the City of Terrytown is basically complete and that there is \$100 in hosting and domain fees that needs to be billed to the City. Motion made by Larry Gibbs to send an invoice to the City of Terrytown for \$100 regarding the domain and hosting of their new website; seconded by David Ostdiek. Motion carried.

### **New Business**

**National Historic Park Designation:** Jennifer reported that Ron Moore has been working with the group that is looking into the possibility of obtaining a National Historic Park Designation for the area. No project proposal has been submitted at this time, so no formal action is necessary. Cheryl Burkhart-Kriesel and Larry Gibbs attended a meeting of the Friends of the Bluffs group the night before which is the informal group that has been looking into this. There are currently some issues with landowners being concerned over possible land acquisitions and imminent domain. At this point, the group is in the very early planning stages and the idea for the park is to take many of the already-established local attractions and to turn those into a grouping in order to receive the designation. There would be a great opportunity for increased tourism and an economic boost to the area.

**Adjourn:** Motion made by Larry Gibbs to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Mike Marker. Motion carried. At 12:00 p.m., the meeting was adjourned by President Gary Fisher.