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Five Rivers RC&D Council Meeting Minutes – August 23rd, 2012

President Jessica Jones called the regular meeting of the Five Rivers Resource Conservation & Development Council to order at 9:34 a.m. at the Five Rivers RC&D office in Tecumseh, Nebraska.

Members Present:

Lower Big Blue NRD –Bob Lorenz	Gage County – Myron Dorn
At Large – Dale Haverty	Richardson County- Jim Davidson
Nemaha County – Mary Kruger	Jefferson County - Jim Frager
Otoe County - Alfred Gigstad	At-Large – Jessica Jones
Johnson County – Tom Hamer	Pawnee County – Alan Richard
At-Large – Paul Rohrbaugh	At-Large – Wilmer Schlake
Nemaha County Alternate – Marvin Bohling	Nemaha NRD Alternate – Scott Nelson

Members Absent: Saline County – Willis Luedke

Staff and Volunteers: Bobbie Meints, Executive Director

Introductions: None

Additions to Agenda: Meints reported that the bill for the 2013 Nebraska State RC&D Association's membership dues is an addition to the agenda. Davidson made the motion to accept the addition. Lorenz seconded the motion. Motion approved. Discussion was held and Richard made the motion that due to the financial hardship of the Council, the state association dues would not pay be at this time. Davidson seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Minutes: A motion was made by Haverty and seconded by Lorenz to approve the June 21st, 2012 minutes as presented and previously mailed. Motion carried.

Bills and Financial Report: Frager made the motion to accept the financial report as presented with a second by Davidson. Motion passed. A motion was made by Richard and seconded by Davidson to pay the bills as presented. Motion carried.

Staff Report: Meints provided the Council with an update of the current events and projects, including the upcoming Household Hazardous Waste Collections! Kruger also reported on SENTC, Byway 136, and the MINK project. Rohrbaugh updated the Council on SENGAs activities.

Update of Volunteer Hours: A volunteer hours reporting form was circulated.

Unfinished Business:

Fundraising Opportunities/Brainstorming: Rohrbaugh extended his discussion and update of the SENGAs group by proposing a partnership between Five Rivers and SENGAs to bring in another speaker for a grazing conference in the Five Rivers area. Rohrbaugh suggested asking Neil Dennis of Sunnybrae Farms to present high density grazing techniques at the event. Meints reported that she had been in contact with Mr. Dennis and received some information regarding the topics he would be willing to discuss, time frame, and fees. She reported that Mr. Dennis requires that his airfare be paid prior to him traveling for the event, which is estimated at approximately \$850.00 round trip. Paul Rohrbaugh reported that he believed SENGAs would be willing to pay for the airfare. Meints also reported that other costs would include mileage fees, food, lodging, and presentation fees.

Discussion was also held on where to hold the event. Pawnee City, Nebraska City, and Beatrice were all discussed and due to location as well as lodging options, it was determined that Beatrice may be the best city to hold the event. It was suggested to contact Paul Hay at the Gage County UNL Extension office about utilizing the Gage County 4H building. It was believed that it may be possible to use this space free of charge. Jones will contact Paul Hay to inquire about this possibility.

Rohrbaugh and Meints reported that they would need to review the costs and discuss the amount to charge for registration.

Richard made the motion to accept the proposed project and hold the event in Beatrice. Kruger seconded the motion. Motion approved.

Rohrbaugh also suggested hosting a dinner reception for PR purposes. He stated that he is unfamiliar with who the county commissioners even are anymore and maybe by reaching and out and making an attempt to get to know each of our county reps would increase the amount of financial support the organization receives.

MINK grant possibilities –Kruger: Kruger reported that she attended the MINK meeting with Meints last month in Sidney, IA. She reported that they are continuing to work on the grant, however may shift the focus of the grant from disaster relief to marketing. She also stated that Nemaha County will be hosting the next MINK meeting, which will be held October 4, 2012 at Peru State College. Kruger reported that she will be collaborating with Meints to make the arrangements with Peru State College.

2012-2013 Five Rivers RC&D Sponsorship Dues-UPDATE from County Reps: Meints reported that she has received two County sponsorship dues as of today's meeting: Johnson County, who paid the full requested amount, and Jefferson County, who paid \$1,000.00, which is \$509.40 less than what was requested, but \$700.00 than was requested the previous fiscal year.

Meints also stated that Willis Luedke, Saline County, who was unable to attend the meeting, asked Meints to share his thoughts on the 2012-2013 Sponsorship Dues. Luedke reported that currently Five Rivers' Sponsorship request is worked in to the County budget. He also stated that he felt it was an issue that all counties were not paying dues, or not paying full days, stating that it was not fair to the counties who are paying the full sponsorship request.

Dorn reported that he agreed with Luedke's comments, however after many attempts, failed to convince the Gage County board to pay any sponsorship dues. Frager reported that he would try to speak with the Jefferson County Commissioners in regard to their partial payment.

Bohling reported on behalf of Nemaha County and Davidson on behalf of Richardson County, each stating that the full sponsorship request is included in the County budgets at this time.

Sponsorship Request Project: Meints reported that the Council still needed to decide whether or not they should proceed with the current Sponsorship Request from cities, villages, businesses, etc. Rohrbaugh made the suggestion to change the direction of the sponsorship request to seeking sponsorships based on current events. For example, asking banks, sale barns, vets, farm supply stores, etc. for \$100 each to sponsor the Neil Dennis Grazing Conference in December. Discuss was held and it was determined that a member in each county would need to be responsible for obtaining the sponsorships once an agenda was finalized.

New Business:

Executive Committee Report – Jones/Kruger/Gigstad/Richard/Frager: Jones reported that the Executive Committee met prior to the regular Council meeting this morning and determined that due to the current financial distress of the Council, that Meints would not receive a raise at this time. However, the committee felt that Meints should be rewarded for her efforts the past fiscal year, and therefore, propose giving her a \$250.00 bonus. Jones also stated that they would reevaluate Meints's pay at a future date. Davidson made the motion to accept the proposal. Lorenz seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Household Hazardous Waste Collections-September 18th -21st –Jones/Meints: Jones reported that the grant for the HHW collections was awarded and the dates have been finalized. Meints reported that she was very excited and relieved to have received the award letter in the mail and has been working extensively on finalizing the dates, times, and locations of the nine city, seven county area. She stated that she continues to contact the trash haulers to make arrangements as well. Meints also reported that she will be sending out a news release in all the area papers next week and that ads will also be placed in the local papers. She also stated that she will request that local radio stations announce the upcoming event as well. Meints informed the Council members that she will be sending each representative two flyers, one which listed every location, date, and time of each event, and one specifically tailored to their community's event. She also noted that each representative will need to find at least two volunteers to help at each event.

Nemaha NRD Executive Committee/Five Rivers Meeting Report – McNiff/Hamer/Jones – Hamer reported that he felt that the meeting went very well and that the NRD was very cooperative, but it would take some time to rearrange the storage space. Meints reported that she also spoke with Bob Hilske, Nemaha NRD Office Manager, and toured the space once again. She stated that Bob reported that the board has approved the RC&D to utilize a section of the basement for storage space. Meints asked Hilske if the NRD would be willing to extend the offer that they had the previous year of remodeling the space for the Five Rivers office if Five Rivers paid for the remodeling expenses. Meints reported that Hilske was hesitant about this idea, stating that he would need to address the board once again, however felt that they were more comfortable with the RC&D utilizing the space

strictly for storage and Meints working at home at this time due to liability, decreased budget, limited space, and limited phone lines.

Richard reported that he was strongly against Meints working from home and suggested contacting the NRD Board once again to request permission for Five Rivers to remodel a portion of the basement for office space. He stated that he would rather close the office than allow Meints to work from home and use the NRD for storage only.

Meints asked Scott Nelson, Assistant Manager-Nemaha NRD, to fill in any information she may have missed. Nelson reported that at this time the board has approved the use of their facility for storage only, however that maybe in a year they can revisit the issue and discuss remodeling at that time. He also stated that the back entrance could be an issue due to the absence of a sidewalk and handicap accessibility.

Haverty commented that he felt we could work around the handicap issue by meeting in a separate public space or making other arrangements. Jones also reported that other businesses in Tecumseh will meet with handicap customers outside of the office to accommodate their needs.

Kruger asked Richard if he had talked with Windstream to discuss the possibility of Five Rivers staying rent free while the corporation receives a write off for tax purposes. Richard reported that he had not talked with Windstream yet.

Meints reported that she is currently working from home part-time currently anyway and expressed that this option could save the organization money. She stated that she contacted Verizon Wireless to inquire about the cost of a cell phone for the organization. Meints reported that for a commercial account would be approximately \$70 for a basic phone, which includes unlimited text, minutes, call forwarding, call waiting, etc. She also stated that current office land line phone number would transfer, so they could keep the same number, which is important. She stated that phone reception can be an issue at her house, so she suggested utilizing the call forwarding to her home phone, which is only used for satellite TV purposes anyway. Meints also stated that she already has wireless internet service; therefore the cost of internet would be decreased to \$0.00 for the Council.

Meints also pointed out that the PO Box would remain the same and she would have to travel to Tecumseh at least twice a week to check the mail. At this time, she pointed out, she would be able to go to the NRD and complete any financial transactions that are necessary, so that the financial files would remain safe and confidential. She also noted that at that time, she could locate any files and information she needed to take home and return them to the file when she traveled back into town. She stated that she felt more comfortable leaving the files at the NRD for security reasons as well as the fact that she has limited space in her home.

Meints also pointed out that she was uncertain if the space the NRD is willing to provide would even be large enough to store all of Five Rivers' equipment and furniture while also serving as an office.

Richard reported that when he has spoken with Meints via her cell phone, her reception is terrible.

Meints reiterated the option of call forwarding to avoid the poor cell phone reception while having the benefit of a wireless phone to take with her while working on outside projects, such as Household Hazardous Waste Collections, which will require her to be out of the office the entire week.

Rohrbaugh stated that although he doesn't know Meints all that well, he feels that he knows her well enough to know that she can handle it and will continue to do a good job for the Council. He reported that he was the Executive Director of NSAS for several years and worked out of his home. He stated that it worked very well and really only need a 2 drawer file with the necessary files. He stated that the RC&D could have his old cabinet if needed. He suggested at least trying the option of Meints working from home and using the NRD for storage on a trial basis.

Haverty made the motion to utilize the NRD's basement for storage while allowing Meints to work from home on a trial basis. Rohrbaugh seconded the motion. Meints asked what type of notice they would like to give the NRD and Windstream. The council discussed this and considered the date of October 1st, 2012. It was noted that an end date needed to be set for the trial date to determine if the arrangements are working or not. Richard questioned what would happen if the trial basis did not work out.

Richard made the motion to table the motion. Discussion was held and Bohling commented that Richard's motion needed a second. Richard reported that he was incorrect and that the motion was tabled.

Bohling inquired as to whether or not the office needed to be in Tecumseh. He stated that the Wellness Center in Auburn had an extra office and thought that the RC&D could move into this space rent free. Meints stated that she didn't know if she would be able to commute that far, however it was an option.

Rohrbaugh made the motion to pursue the questions while allowing Meints to work from home.

Richard commented that he would go back to the NRD and ask about remodeling the space.

President Jones appointed Hamer and Richard to the Facility Committee. Richard will contact Windstream prior to the next meeting.

Electronics Collections – 2012 –Meints: Meints reported that PC Recycling of Omaha had contacted the office once again stating that they received additional funding for the 2012-2013 year. She stated that they have enough funding to host 4-5 more collection events in the Five Rivers area with 2 being held this fall and the rest held in the spring. Meints reported that she had heard back from Pawnee City, Nebraska City, and Crete, each stating that they would like an event. Meints stated that cities who have not held an event yet will receive priority. Meints asked if anyone else would be interested. Davidson reported that Falls City may be interested in hosting another event next fall if we could work it to align with their town recycling event. Dorn reported that he would talk with the Gage County Extension to see if they would be interested. Meints asked Gigstad and Haverty if there was enough funding if they would like just one event in Nebraska City or two events to include both Nebraska City and Syracuse. Haverty and Gigstad reported that if there was enough funding, two separate events would work the best. Currently, the list of interested cities in Electronic Events is as follows: Pawnee City, Nebraska City, Beatrice, Crete, Falls City, and Syracuse.

Projects to open: Richard made the motion to open Proj. 12-320- Electronics Collections & Recycling 2012-2013. Lorenz seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Projects to close: Richard made the motion to close Proj. 11-307-Electronics Recycling Grant. Lorenz seconded the motion. Motion approved.

Other Business:

Nebraska RC&D Association Conference-Wayne, NE, September 25th-27th, 2012 – Northeast RC&D Hosting. Jones stated that Richard has volunteered to attend the conference. She asked the Council if they would be willing to send Richard as the Five Rivers RC&D voting delegate. Davidson made the motion to send Alan to the conference and serve as the voting delegate. Dorn seconded the motion. Motion carried. Meints also reported that the Councils were only given approximately 1 week notice on award nominations; therefore she had to make an Executive decision on who/what to nominate. She stated that although she could not submit a nomination for every category, she did submit nominations for Alan Richard as Outstanding Council Member for his efforts and dedication to the Council, especially during the transition period after losing federal funding. She also stated that she nominated the Five Rivers RC&D Council and the 21st Century Grazing Conference as Top Project.

Western RC&D Association Conference -Scottsbluff, NE, March 18th-21st, 2013 – Nebraska Hosting

Council of 12-Meints: Jones reported that the State Conference and Western Conference were discussed at the Council of 12 call.

Roundtable: Council members shared upcoming events and other news from their communities and counties.

Council Meeting was adjourned at 12:05 p.m. with a motion from Richard and second by Davidson.

Respectfully Submitted,



Alfred (Doc) Gigstad, Secretary