

MASWCD Conference Call
July 25, 2011
2:00 p.m.

Present

Steve Radcliff, President
Bruce Biermann, Area 1
Tom Lambert, Area 2
Kenny Lovelace, Area 3
Beverly Dometrorch, Area 4
George Engelbach, Area 5
Ben Gorden, Area 6
Dan Greeson, Area 7
Sandy Hutchison, Employees Association
Wendy Bowen, Employees Association
Jerry Becker, Employees Association
Chris Terry, Employees Association
Nancy Kirby, Employees Association
Roger Ankrom, Employees Association
Melissa White, Employees Association
Nancy Burrus, Employees Association
Paula Meier, Employees Association

Not Present

Mike Kelley, Area 8
Fred Feldmann, Past President
David Dix, Treasurer
Peggy Lemons, Executive Director

President Steve Radcliff opened the meeting at 2:00 p.m. and approved a quorum by roll call. Sandy Hutchison will be taking minutes.

Discussion was held about the Area Meetings. DNR did not want to have the Area Meetings this year. Both the State Association and the Employees Association decided to do a joint meeting instead and use this as an opportunity to provide training to both groups. Now DNR wants to be on the agenda.

The concern of those in attendance on the conference call was that the employees would have to take annual leave to attend the meetings and not receive mileage with the present agenda. DNR has denied the Employees Association the time they need to hold their Area Rep election which is required according to their Bylaws. They were told that the elections “would have to be conducted at a different meeting if state funds are used to support the area meetings to avoid any perception of a conflict of interest”. There could also be no legislative issues discussed.

Steve Radcliff said that he talked to J. R. Flores and was told that if an NRCS vehicle is available, employees and board members could use them. DNR said that local funds could be used for mileage and salary.

Several comments and questions followed including:

- Districts are getting tired of DNR. What do they want?
- Why is DNR being so knit-picky?
- That can't tell you what they want, because they don't know.

The question was asked if we wanted to continue with having these meetings with our agenda. Most of the dates have been set. Some directors were concerned that if DNR shows up, no one will come. The next Commission Meeting was set on the same day as Area 2. If they still had the meeting and had DNR on the agenda, would anyone from their office show up. It was commented that they would come if they really wanted to be there.

The amount that was budgeted for these meetings was set with \$450 coming from the State Association and \$150 from the Employees Association for each of the eight areas.

It was discussed inviting DNR and then employees could attend on time and not have to take leave. However, in order to do that no legislative type items can be talked about at the meeting, one of which is about the Commission appointments. This was voted on at a MASWCD Annual Meeting and that the Commissioners should have two years of local district board experience. The other subject was about taking away the funding authority from DNR and giving it back to the Commission. It was asked if this information could be emailed out to the districts. The answer was yes it can go to the state email addresses but no replies to the email can be sent from the state computers.

The MSWCDEA elections were discussed. This is another item the Program Office states cannot be done at these meetings if state funds are used for salaries and travel. According to the bylaws, the elections are to be held at area meetings. However, the president can make appointments to fill positions.

The Annual Training Conference was discussed. Steve Radcliff will be talking to Colleen Meredith about the conference to make sure that DNR will still provide funds for it. A verbal commitment was received from Bryan Hopkins and Bill Wilson but nothing is in writing from DNR except for what was included in the MASWCD minutes.

Bruce Biermann made the motion that DNR be invited to the Area Meetings and with them being invited that they stand all the expenses for the meetings. Discussion followed on the motion. The motion was then withdrawn.

Several more comments were made which included: Let DNR invite two people due to the budget. Make them pay for their meals; if they don't want to pay, they don't have to come. Let them come to the meetings; they might just not be on the agenda. Is DNR on state time when they go talk to the legislatures?

If the agenda stays the same and NRCS vehicles available for employees and board members to get to the meetings, this would take care of the travel issue. However, the employees would have to take annual leave to attend or use local funds for their salaries. The area rep elections could also be done.

Directors don't want to see the employees have to take leave to attend the meetings or have to be paid from local funds which some districts don't have. They would like to have the meetings the way they are set up. It was suggested to have conference calls set up for each area to participate in.

Bruce Biermann made the motion to cancel the Area Meetings for this year. Each Area Director should contact its districts and share the issues and concerns with them. It was seconded by Tom Lambert. A poll vote was taken: Bruce Biermann – yes, Tom Lambert – yes, Kenny Lovelace – yes, Beverly Dometrorch – yes, George Engelbach – yes, Ben Gorden – no, Dan Greeson – yes. The motion passed. Sandy Hutchison will send out an email stating that the meetings were cancelled due to DNR requirements and that we were losing a training opportunity. It was stated that DNR was getting what they wanted.

All the areas need to contact their districts and caterers about the cancelled meetings. Steve Radcliff advised the group that they could call him anytime. If an area still wanted to have a meeting, the money is still there.

Kenny Lovelace made the motion to end the conference call. It was seconded by Beverly Dometrorch. All were in favor with none opposed. There being no further business, the conference call adjourned at 3:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandy Hutchison
Employees Association

Steve Radcliff
President