



Missouri Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

MASWCD MINUTES Conference Call June 22, 2021

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Present

Ron Willis, President
Ryan Britt, Past President
Jim Carlson, Area I
Steve Radcliff, Area II
Scot Shively, Area III
Beverly Dometrorch, Area IV
Mike Haeffner, Area V
Harold Lampe, Area VI
David Hutsell, Area VII
Kenny Spooler, Area VIII
Henry Heinze, Treasurer
Peggy Lemons, Executive Director

Melissa White,
Employees Association
Kurt Beckmann,
DNR SWCP Director
Scott Edwards, NRCS
State Conservationist

Not Present

President Ron Willis welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Quorum established and the agenda was approved.

MASWCD minutes from the 3-10-2021 conference call were reviewed and approved. Motion for approval made by Harold Lampe and seconded by Beverly Dometrorch. Motion approved unanimously (8-0).

Henry Heinze stated the balance of the bank account is approximately \$72,000 which is about \$7,000 more than last year at this time. He said we are at 75% for paid dues. He sent the board a list of districts that have paid dues for 2021 so far. One district has paid partial dues, but this will not allow them to vote. There has been little change in the balance of the bank accounts held in Jeff City for the MDC Incentive funds, etc. The motion for approval of the treasurer report made by Scot Shively, seconded by David Hutsell. Motion carried unanimously (8-0).

NRCS Report: Scott Edwards reported that they had 2 months with all offices working at 50% capacity with the State Office and Area Offices working at 25% capacity. But recently there have been issues of positive cases within the offices and hot spots for spreading the virus. Now they are seeing 4-5 cases per week. The White House has asked for their plan of returning to normal by July 15. They are currently trying to get all EQIP contracts done by the end of July as there will be a large workload of CRP coming their way the first part of August. For August though the first part of September they will be working only on CRP. The new agreements with the districts (UCA) was sent to all the districts recently and they hope to have them all completed by October 1. There have been 24 already completed.

DNR Report: Kurt Boeckmann said he applauded the districts for the amount of cost share spent this year. The deadline to submit payments was yesterday at 5 pm. He estimates \$32.5 million was spent this year for cost share, he was not sure about the amount of the roll-over. They have 2 new employees at the Program Office, Sandy Burd took the position Lori Bax had and Matt Blansett took the coordinator position Jake Wilson had. There is one more vacancy that should be filled soon (Bill Wilson's position). The Governor has not signed the budget yet but should by the end of June. It does include a 2% pay increase for state employees which he is in favor of also providing to district employees. The Program Delivery Committee plans to meet in late September and the Districts Operations Committee should meet this fall also. They are looking at a third committee to discuss how to market the program. Kenny Spooler asked about the possibility of getting wages increased for the district employees. He said a lot of their local businesses have starting wages higher than the district progression line offers. Melissa White said she felt the length of service past 5 years should also be considered. Kurt Boeckmann said he realized a lot of companies are offering better wages; we definitely need to keep that in consideration. The District Operations Committee needs to look at the progression line and starting salary compared to local companies.

Employees Association: Melissa White reported their board met on April 15, will meet again in July. She is asking employees to let her or their employee rep know of issues or concerns. It appears the biggest issues are turnover, training and retention of employees. There is also a lot of concern about the duplication of work with Conservation Desktop and the new DNR mapping tool, employees having to learn both programs. She said they would like to get feedback from the Program Office committees to be prepared for the Commission discussion on their proposals. Also performance appraisals, how to do them and why is an issue. Melissa also stated there could possibly be telework opportunities past COVID for districts.

Brandon Tritten from JBLB Insurance joined the call. He wants to offer proposals for both health insurance and district liability. The Program Office will be the one to work with on health insurance. His company currently has workers comp insurance for 2 soil and water districts in Missouri. They can offer the board liability and vehicle coverage, including the coverage for driving NRCS vehicles. They work with public entities like water districts, fire districts, etc. Information on his liability coverages will be provided to the districts and his contact information will be provided to the Program Office.

Committee Reports: No report from the budget committee. The strategic plan committee had worked on the Training Conference, however there is only one remaining person on that committee. See the later discussion for the training conference. The bylaws committee had no report and has only one remaining committee member, but the quorum issue at the annual meeting was brought up for discussion. There is a suggestion to change the wording in the bylaws for the quorum required for the annual meeting to match the quorum requirement for area meetings. Steve Radcliff made a motion to draft a resolution today to change the quorum required for the annual meeting to match the quorum required for area meetings. There was no second so the motion died. The discussion continued. Zoom might be a possibility to bring in some other voting members to help meet quorum requirements.

2021 Area Meetings was discussed. The issue of how many might attend was brought up. NRCS employees may not be able to attend with current COVID guidelines. If NRCS cannot attend does that also mean district employees will not be able to attend? Scot Shively made a motion to hold the area meetings virtually. There was no second so the motion died. Then Steve Radcliff made a motion to survey the districts to see how many would attend in person and how many would attend virtual meetings. Jim Carlson seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously (6-0). Scot Shively and David Hutsell had other commitments and had to leave the meeting. The Board then reviewed the 2 different scenarios for the route around the state for the in-person Area Meetings. After lengthy discussion, a vote was taken on the preferred scenario. The vote was 4 for scenario 1 and 2 for scenario 2. Ron Willis then asked how elections in areas 1-3-5-7 were going,

Ryan Britt gave a brief review of the NACD National meeting. He stated their summer meeting will be held in Chicago. He serves on the NACD Climate Task Force and they have submitted comments on the 30x30 plan. NACD has had a few staff changes recently.

The next item discussed was the Training Conference. The dates contracted for with Tan-Tar-A (Margaretville) are November 28-30, 2021. The theme for the conference was reviewed. Harold Lampe made a motion for Shaping the Future for the theme. Steve Radcliff seconded. The motion carried with a vote of 5 to 1. It was suggested to change the logo to have the shape of Missouri in the hand instead of a globe. The registration was then discussed. The Employees Association strongly suggested offering a registration only with no meals along with the all inclusive registration. Steve Radcliffe made a motion to approve this registration only if the per diem will cover the meals or list on the registration meals are not covered so they know before registering. Harold Lampe seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously (6-0). The board then looked at tote bag options. Kenny Spooler made a motion to approve the conference bag with the zipper top. Mike Heffner seconded. Motion carried unanimously (6-0). Ron Willis stated he will provide ink pens again. Steve Radcliff made a motion that Area Directors gather items to put in the bags and not to purchase any. Kenny Spooler seconded. Motion carried unanimously (6-0). The agenda for the conference was approved. Steve Radcliff made a motion to offer the awards the same as in the past. Kenny Spooler seconded. Motion carried unanimously (60). The call for resolutions will be sent out in the next couple of weeks. The list of workshops was approved. The open slot for a workshop will be filled with one on trends and effects on nutrient reduction. No outside tours will be offered. An in-house wine tasting may be offered.

Area Reports:

Area 1 – Ron Willis stated the rain has been sporadic but they did get about 3/4 inch over the weekend.

Area 2 – Steve Radcliff agreed with the sporadic rain. He said there are several new employees in his area that need training.

Area 3 – Scot Shively had to leave early.

Area 4 – Beverly Dometorch said she agreed on employees needing training. They did get rain over the weekend that ranged anywhere from 1 to 5 inches.

Area 5 – Mike Haeffner said it has been hot and windy. There was a break in the weather that allowed most of the farmers to get their hay up.

Area 6 – Harold Lampe said they went from too wet to dry they could use some rain.

Area 7 – David Hutsell had to leave early.

Area 8 – Kenny Spooler said some of their hay is a little late. They have had plenty of rain. He also re-emphasized the seriousness of the district employee wages.

Other Business: The check from the Litton Foundation for the speech contest was received. The laptop computer is very outdated, keeps running out of space and the letters are wearing off on the keyboard. Kenny Spooler made a motion to approve the purchase of a new laptop. Beverly Dometorch seconded, motion carried unanimously (6-0).

The next meeting for the MASWCD Board will be hopefully in person the first part of September, the exact day and location to be determined.

There being no further business a motion for adjournment was made by Steve Radcliff, seconded by Kenny Spooler. Motion carried unanimously (6-0). The meeting was adjourned at 1:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Peggy Lemons, Executive Director

Ron Willis, President