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Middle Republican Natural Resources District

MINUTES Middle Republican Natural Resources District Board of Directors Meeting December 12, 2006 Curtis, Nebraska

Board Members Present: Joe Anderjaska, Duane Dodson, Kevin Fornoff, Dennis Hoyt, Gayle Haag, Jerry Mustion, Mike Peters, Don Roberts, Rick Spencer

Board Members Absent: Stan Moore

NRD Staff: Dan Smith, Robert Merrigan, Kara Gall, Christy Peterson, Kim Smith

NRCS Staff: Doug Whisenhunt, Ben Hardin

Others: Dan Nelsen, Brad Randel, Chad Taylor, Darrol Eichman, Mark Billinger, Josh Friesen, Brad Johnson, Marty Schurr, Benjie Loomis, Tom Baker, Mark Christensen, Dean Edson, Ron Johnson

Information Mailed to Directors:

Agenda	Variance Hearing Agenda
November Minutes	Budget Comparison
November Financial Report	NACD E-notes for Dec 5, 2006
Variance Hearing Minutes	NACD E-notes for Nov 21, 2006
Board Retreat Agenda	Information & Education Report
NARD Legislative Conference Agenda	EQIP Special Initiative Acres
Well Permit	“By the People” Report
Draft Bylaws	Draft General Policy
Draft Personnel Policy	

Information Distributed at Meeting:

Cost Share Summary	Reservoir Report
Washington D.C. Agenda	Meter Reading Report
“Some of State’s NRDs are Being Held ‘Captive’” article	
Variance Request	EEO/Civil Rights handout-OUTREACH
Lee Morse Retirement Announcement	NRCS Budget Proposals
NRCS Outreach	

REGULAR MEETING

The regular monthly board meeting was called to order by Chairman Haag at 1:40 p.m. The agenda and roster were circulated to those present.

Items added to the agenda: 12a5) Transfer request-Baker Corp., 14e) Board Meeting Location

Notice of the regular monthly meeting was published in the **North Platte Telegraph** and the

McCook Daily Gazette and was posted in the **NRD office** and on the **District website at www.mrnrd.org**. As a courtesy it was also announced on **local radio stations**.

The minutes for the November 14, 2006 regular board meeting and public hearing were presented.

- ◆ A motion was made by Fornoff and second by Dodson to approve the minutes for the November regular board meeting and public hearing as presented.

Ayes -7 Nays -0 Abstain-Anderjaska, Peters Motion carried

TRANSFER REQUESTS

The transfer request was previously considered. This new transfer permit is being considered by DNR. Previous water reductions have not been credited to industrial use for Trenton Ethanol plant.

- ◆ A motion was made by Anderjaska and second by Fornoff to acknowledge that the current use at the Trenton Ethanol plant is from a previous retirement of acres certified to Baker Corp. These previously certified acres may not be transferred or otherwise be used, other than the current industrial use, in the future.

Ayes-9 Nays-0 Motion carried

FINANCIAL ACTIONS

The financial report for November was presented. A copy of this report is on file with the minutes. Smith reviewed the report. The County Treasurer's balance was \$47,929.50. Budget comparison was reviewed. The audit report was handed out at the November meeting.

- ◆ A motion was made by Fornoff and second by Anderjaska to approve the November financial report as presented.

Ayes - 9 Nays -0 Motion carried

Meeting was recessed at 1:58 p.m. for variance hearing.

Meeting was reconvened at 2:29 p.m.

VARIANCE REQUEST

- ◆ A motion was made by Fornoff and second by Hoyt to approve 3 well permits upon change of ownership of the property, and to decommission existing wells as a condition of drilling the new wells.

Ayes - 9 Nays -0 Motion carried

AUDIT

Smith reviewed the audit.

- ◆ A motion was made by Hoyt and second by Peters to approve the 2006 Audit as presented.

Ayes - 9 Nays - 0 Motion carried

OPEN FORUM

Chad Taylor, NGPC of Cambridge, works with invasive species removal. Some of the species being offered by the tree program are contributing to the numbers of invasive species that landowners and producers are trying to control. Chad would like to encourage the board members and NRD employees to reevaluate the trees on the tree program. He is not suggesting that we remove red cedar but possibly Russian olive. Don Roberts asked what he

would suggest we add to the list to replace the cedars in windbreaks. Chad said he was not sure but would do the research if we decided to readdress the tree list. Mark Billinger, DWR in Kansas, is attending meetings in the 3 NRDs and was present at this meeting.

NRCS REPORT

Whisenhunt reported on NRCS activities. Applications are currently being taken for 2007 EQIP. There is no matching incentive this year. The new ranking program does not allow for any extra conditions. Invasive species removal is going to allow more range contracts. Ranking is weighted so that all invasive removal applications will be funded. PRS goals are being readdressed by the state/national office to be able to set goals for the next year.

CRP has been seeded and payments are being processed.

Burn schools are being scheduled for this spring. One will be held in McCook in April. There may also be schools in Osceola and Chadron.

Budget does not look very good for the NRCS. There are currently 2 proposals being considered. The proposed budget from the House will cause NRCS to lose 17 positions and have no money for operations. The version from the Senate will allow NRCS to keep those 17 positions.

EEO/Civil Rights handout-OUTREACH was circulated.

NARD

Tentative agenda for the legislative conference was mailed to directors. Anderjaska, Haag, Spencer, Dan Nelsen, Benji Loomis, Marty Schurr, and Josh Friesen all expressed interest in attending the conference. Information for the Washington DC trip was circulated.

Discussion was held concerning the new Flexible Benefit Plan. There are 3 components. The Directors need to name an administrator for the plan.

- ◆ A motion was made by Anderjaska and second by Hoyt to name Mid America Benefits as Administrator of the Flexible Benefit Plan.

Ayes-9 Nays-0 Motion carried

NACD

The NACD e-notes for November 21, 2006 and December 5, 2006 were mailed to the Directors.

INFORMATION & EDUCATION

The Information & Education report was mailed to the Directors.

No change in the status of the grants. Reimbursement for CIG grant has been received. Meter list is being reviewed by McCook Power.

NPAIT scholarship application information is in the packet.

The Water Conference is scheduled for March 1.

Burning allotted funds to the NRD's to be used exclusively for education (approximately \$3000). Kara would like to use \$1000 of this money to purchase an Enviroscape game for 7th grade education.

- ◆ A motion was made by Fornoff and second by Anderjaska to purchase the Enviroscape game for approximately \$1000.

Ayes – 8 Nays – 0 Abstain-Mustion Motion carried

NE REPUBLICAN RIVER MANAGEMENT DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION

Smith reported that the next Association meeting will take place January 12, 2007 in McCook, date and time to be announced.

OTHER AGENCIES AND ASSOCIATIONS

The agenda for the December 15, 2006 retreat was mailed to Directors. Board members attending will be Anderjaska, Spencer, and Fornoff.

HOYT left the meeting at 3:20.

WELL PERMITS

A report on well permits was handed out. Smith reviewed the report. No change from last month.

SURFACE WATER REPORTS

Smith reviewed the reservoir reports.

METER REPAIRS, READINGS, AND INSPECTIONS

Smith reviewed the meter report in the packets.

Discussion was held on the number of wells per county. Questions on how the different programs will affect the numbers. Dan explained that CREP will not affect the number of active wells, only EQIP 2 will make the well status inactive.

OTHER GROUND WATER ACTIVITY

Article from the Grand Island Newspaper was discussed.

Discussion was held concerning the show on NE public television. Not all of the information was accurate. For example, numbers from DNR were wrong, and there was no information on the moratoriums and the process involved.

LIVESTOCK WASTE CONTROL APPLICATIONS

Merrigan reviewed an application from Nebraska Pork Partners. The application is for a farrowing facility in Frontier County, east of Stockville. They are looking to improve their existing operation, not add on to it.

- ◆ A motion was made by Peters and second by Fornoff to accept the livestock waste control application.

Ayes – 8 Nays – 0 Motion carried

CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT FUNDS

Smith reviewed the cost-share summary report.

- ◆ A motion was made by Roberts and second by Dodson to approve all applications as presented.

Ayes – 8 Nays – 0 Motion carried

A copy of this report is on file with the minutes.

TREE PLANTING

Merrigan reported that he ordered semi load of mulch.

BYLAWS, PERSONNEL POLICY, GENERAL POLICY

A draft copy of the bylaws, personnel policy and general policy were mailed to Directors for

their review. All proposed changes are in red print. Smith reviewed the corrections. The new flexible spending plan was added to the personnel policy. The general policy was updated to reflect current policy. Smith recommended that everyone take the policies home for review. We will re-address this issue in January.

OATHS OF OFFICE AND REORGANIZATION IN JANUARY

Smith reminded the new directors that they will need to complete an oath of office prior to the January meeting. New officers will be elected at this meeting also.

CHANGE IN THE LOCATION OF THE MEETINGS

Discussion was held concerning meeting locations. Anderjaska indicated that Curtis is too small and the meetings at the fairgrounds in McCook are hard to hear. The McCook Community College has meeting rooms that will seat anywhere from 15 to 100 people. Sue Shaner at MPCC would be more than happy to give a tour on Friday morning. Discussion was held concerning who might be available to take the tour.

LEGAL MATTERS

- ◆ A motion was made by Roberts and second by Fornoff to go into Executive Session at 3:50 p.m. for the purpose of discussing strategy concerning case number CI-02-648. Newly elected board members were asked to stay.

Ayes-8 Nays-0 Motion carried
John Schroeder was invited to speak and arrived at 4:02.

- ◆ A motion was made by Roberts and second by Fornoff to come out of executive session at 5 p.m.

Ayes-8 Nays-0 Motion carried.

- ◆ A motion was made by Roberts and second by Fornoff to authorize Jon Schroeder to make a settlement offer to Scott Merrill of Merrill Land Co. This offer will allow the construction of 2 wells to serve certified acres in the NE 1/4 of sec 30 T9 R34 and in the SE 1/4 of 19 T9 R34 in Lincoln County Nebraska. These wells will provide water to acres already certified and will not result in increased allocation or increased acres.

Ayes-7 Nays-0 Abstain-Anderjaska Motion carried.

Chairman Haag adjourned the meeting at 5:01 p.m.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, January 9, 2007 at 1:30 p.m. at the Red Willow County Fairgrounds in McCook, Nebraska.

Kim Smith
Recorder