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Empowering Citizens to Build Strong Communities

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BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, August 14, 2008

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

Call to Order: The August 14, 2008 meeting of the Panhandle RC&D Board of Directors was called to order by President Gary Fisher at 11:00 a.m. Those in attendance included: Larry Gibbs, City of Gering; Charles Weston, Box Butte County; Mike Marker, Scotts Bluff County; Joe Nunn, Sioux County; Ron Miller, Scotts Bluff County; Gary Grubbs, Banner County; Lonnie Miller, City of Terrytown; Gary Fisher, Dawes County; Terry McCord, Garden County; Verlin Bruns Deuel County; and Judie Moorehouse, Village of Henry.

Staff present: Ron Moore and Jennifer Rogers.

Approve Agenda: President Gary Fisher said there was one addition to the agenda: State Association Meeting under New Business. Motion to approve the agenda with additions made by Charles Weston; seconded by Mike Marker. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes: Everyone took a moment to read through the July 10, 2008 Minutes. Motion to approve the July 10, 2008 Minutes made by Mike Marker; seconded by Terry McCord. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: The August 14, 2008 Treasurer's Report was sent out prior to the meeting for everyone to have a chance to look through the items. Receipts included: \$500.00 from DK Paving; \$149.00 from Ron Moore; \$500.00 from PPHS; \$700.00 from Farm Credit Services; \$750.00 from the Interchurch Ministries GAIN Grant; \$500.00 from Box Butte Hospital; \$300.00 from the Village of Big Springs; \$1,000.00 from Panhandle Public Health; and \$1,000.00 from NRCS. The Receipts totaled \$5,399.00. Expenses included: \$924.78 Payroll; \$156.12 to Verlin Bruns; \$41.25 to the Scottsbluff Gering Chamber; \$3,846.00 to Fort Robinson State Park; \$371.50 to High Plains Homestead; \$1,250.00 to Knudson Associates; \$300.00 to the NE RC&D Association; \$156.57 to Ron Moore; \$50.00 to the Western NE Tourism Coalition; \$25.00 to Allo Communications; \$106.10 to KSDZ Radio; \$4,307.55 to Outlaw Printers; \$87.72 to Quickbooks; \$963.32 Payroll; \$100.50 to USPS; \$862.31 to Jennifer Rogers; \$25.00 to Allo Communications; \$924.78 Payroll. Expenses totaled \$14,498.50. Ending cash balance as of August 14, 2008 was \$36,362.41. Motion to approve the August 14, 2008 Treasurer's Report was made by Ron Miller; seconded by Mike Marker. Motion carried.

Approval of Bills: Motion to approve the August 14, 2008 bills as presented made by Larry Gibbs; seconded by Charles Weston. Motion carried.

Reports:

Program Assistant Report: Jennifer gave a report on the Community Development Block Grant Certification that she successfully completed in July. She is now a certified administrator and would be able to administer any grant that a local municipality received through the program. The Council

congratulated Jennifer on receiving the certification and said that this is a great thing for the RC&D program.

Jennifer also recently sent out the 2009 Membership Letters and urged the Council to check in with the Sponsoring Member they were representing to make sure their dues were received promptly.

Jennifer also said that she had been approached by a member of the Leadership Scottsbluff committee which provides a training academy for local up-and-coming leaders in the area. The individual encouraged Jennifer to submit an application to see if she might be accepted into the program. Jennifer thinks this would be a great opportunity, not only for her, but for the organization. The program would be one day a month sessions, including a trip to the Nebraska Legislature in Lincoln in February. The trainings last eight or nine months. Larry Gibbs said he was a part of the first class almost twenty years ago and the information presented would be great for the organization. There is a tuition fee of \$450 that the group encourages the employer of the individual to at least consider paying a portion of. Jennifer said that she would obviously appreciate the RC&D paying the tuition, but if she gets accepted, she would be willing to pay the tuition herself. The \$450 includes the expenses associated with the Lincoln trip. Larry Gibbs made a motion to pay for the \$450 if Jennifer is accepted into the Leadership Scottsbluff program; seconded by Charles Weston. Motion carried.

High Plains WMA Report: Jennifer reported that Project Manager Dennis Beyer is always available for questions during the meetings or in between for any members of RC&D regarding High Plains. Right now they are getting even more projects underway as they have five contractors all working throughout the region. They were also able to recently have some aerial GPS mapping completed by Sky Copters helicopters along the river, and in the channel alone there are nearly 2000 acres of Salt Cedar. The group also recently met with all of the local irrigation districts to discuss any possible hazards that High Plains will make every effort to avoid during the irrigation season. Mike Marker also said that the funding requirements through the LB 701 \$250,000 grant that the group received are very restrictive, in that they can only be used within a very narrow definition of the “channel.” Luckily, the Environmental Trust funds should be able to cover any other area that the LB 701 funds can’t pay for.

Soil Health/Food Web Committee Report: Ron Miller reported that the committee met this morning and talked about the value of understanding the soil food web in recycling manure crops, lawn care, water-use efficiency, and just in general. The committee indicated that the RC&D should start outlining a project for its review and then report back to the board in the future on the possibilities. There are a lot of possibilities out there as far as promoting these ideas and seeing how they can be applied, not only with farmers and landowners, but with people in towns as well, particularly with their lawn care. This work ties together with the organic farming and no-till initiatives the board is currently undertaking. It might be worthwhile to bring in city councils and have some meetings addressing using fewer chemicals in town, because that is often where people get overzealous. We could also look at providing education materials including brochures or posters. One possibility might be to look at our local sugar outlets as a way to get people to use fewer chemicals on the yards. Landowners can apply sugar directly to the soil, just like you would a fertilizer. Larry thinks the City of Gering might be willing to look into that possibility on all of the public land that they are responsible for.

FIG Budget Report: Ron Moore passed out his budget breakdown which has the \$19,000 cash withdrawal broken down based on the cash expenses over the weekend. Jennifer’s budget only has the total \$19,000 withdrawal, but the rest of the checks written for expenses and deposits. The question

was brought up on whether we needed to do W2's for the payments to individuals for their services. Lonnie Miller said that if a payment is made for services over \$600, then yes we do need to worry about W2's. If some of the expenses were for travel, then those things would not be a part of the \$600 threshold. The individual payments will be looked into to see if any of them meet that requirement.

Old Business:

Nebraska State RC&D Association Conference: The nominations were sent off for those representing the Council, and then Cheryl Burkhart-Kriesel will be in charge of us judging the nominations from the other Councils. As far as attendees to this year's conference, Ron Moore will be attending, but his expenses will be paid for by NRCS. Verlin Bruns will also be attending since he is the State Association's Treasurer, but the Council will need to cover his expenses. There are funds in the yearly budget for up to three people to attend. Jennifer said that if there is a spot left over she would like the opportunity to attend as well. A motion was made by Mike Marker to cover the expenses and registrations for the Nebraska State RC&D Association Conference in October for up to four people, including Jennifer Rogers; seconded by Gary Grubbs. Motion carried. Ron Miller stated he might be able to attend, but he would have someone to stay with so he wouldn't have any lodging expenses.

Completed Projects Reports: Ron included a printout in the packets of the completed projects for the Board's review. The handouts really lay out what the benefits have been as well as the costs. There will be more at the next meeting to approve as completed. The most important part of these printouts is that they show how much RC&D has been able to accomplish.

Annual Work Plan 2008: Ron Moore has yet to receive any comments on any changes or additions to this year's Annual Work Plan. Mike Marker, Terry McCord, and Verlin Bruns all felt that it looks fine. Motion made by Mike Marker to approve the 2008 Annual Work Plan as presented; seconded by Terry McCord. Motion carried.

2009 RC&D Proposed Budget/Finance Committee Report: A copy of the 2009 Proposed Budget was sent out for review prior to today's meeting, and a recommendation from the Committee regarding project cash support and increasing the Annual Dues was included in the board packets. Motion made by Larry Gibbs for approval of the 2009 RC&D Proposed Budget and committee recommendations; seconded by Joe Nunn. Motion carried by majority – with Ron Miller voting against. Lonnie Miller reported that we are looking at an overall increase in the fund balance due to increased revenue, including the support from High Plains Weed Management Association.

Project Updates:

No-Till Conference: The Panhandle No-Till Partnership is having a great start to the planning stages of their 2008 Winter Conference. RC&D assisted them in receiving a grant from the Department of Environmental Quality and will be submitting an application to the Environmental Trust.

Organic Farming: Ron Miller said they will be putting on a two-hour workshop to help those interested in organic farming, which should happen sometime in September. The details have not been worked out at this point.

Big Springs Memorial Flag Project and Lake Restoration: The village would like to apply for an Environmental Trust grant to help them complete the project, but they are currently waiting for their engineer's report.

Chappell Lake Restoration: Chappell has signed a contract with the South Platte NRD to get some equipment in order for them to get some dredging done and begin the process of cleaning up the lake.

Blue Creek Blues Festival: the Blues Festival in Lewellen is going forward and will be held on August 30. Ron Moore encouraged the Council to take some of the posters we provided and hang them up in their respective areas.

New Business

RC&D Week: National RC&D week is coming up again in September, and Jennifer will be sending out the letters with proclamations, a press release to the area news media, and is going to try to get some PSA's on the radios. She asked the Council if they would like to do any other activities like an open house or maybe a display somewhere around town. The members suggested contacting the local banks or courthouses to see if we could have some displays set up throughout the week.

DEQ Grants/Recycling Projects: Tabled until the next meeting.

Adjournment: Motion made by Terry McCord to adjourn the August 14, 2008 meeting of the Panhandle RC&D Board of Directors; seconded by Gary Grubbs.

With no further business, at 12:05 p.m. President Gary Fisher adjourned the meeting.