



Meeting Agenda

December 13th, 2017

5:00 PM (first at new office space!)

USDA Service Center, 432 E Pioneer, Suite C Homer, AK

- A. Call to order: 5:37pm
- B. Roll call: Jared Worthington, Gena Grobarek, Chris Rainwater, Tim Alzheimer, Devony Lenher,, Kyra Wagner, Otto Kilcher, and Robert Egan.
- C. Approval of the Agenda: Unanimous approval
- D. Approval of the Minutes: Gena motioned to approve, Tim seconded. Unanimous approval
- E. Visitors
 - a. NRCS Report: delivered by Jared Worthington
 - i. The phones and computers will be moved to the new office space on the 28th of December. In the meantime, NRCS staff will be working in both locations. Parking looks to be a problem. We haven't had all staff at the building yet, so hard to tell.
 - ii. The new soil conservationist for this field office, Sean Willison, will start in January.
 - iii. Payments for the crop rotation practice for EQIP will be \$4.35 per high tunnel, not per foot. This will make more work for NRCS staff because folks will delay the practice for a year hoping NRCS will fix the mistake. Everyone can see the cost list online. *Kyra to find two cost lists from different years to compare.* There will most likely be funds for another sign up in the spring.
 - b. Visitors: Robert Egan. Used to work for the Coast Guard, has high tunnel through NRCS, would like to do more but will probably do without the program so won't have to deal with the paperwork.
- F. Financial Report: Both November and December reports were up for approval. Otto motioned to approve, Gena seconded. *Chris has a question about the rental of gear to employees conversation that has been going on between SWCD managers. Kyra pointed out that no decision has been made at the state level. Conversation around the table expressed reservations on the legitimacy of such an arrangement.*
- G. Manager's Report

A. Land Use: Trails

- a. **Watermelon Trail** : Snomads have hit some snags that did not match their expectations to start in moving forward with trail building. Will keep you posted.
- b. **Fox River Flats Critical Habitat Area**: Kyra attended the KBay/Fox River Flats Critical Habitat Area Plan Review committee meeting this morning. The process moves forward. Today's agenda was to Review Draft Goals, Review Definitions, go over Issue statements and Draft Policies such as: Compatibility, Material Extraction, Pot/Gear Storage, Scientific Research, Oil and Gas. *Kyra will keep the board posted as details and dates come up for focus groups on the grazing topic*

"To provide education and leadership in the conservation and sustainable use of soil- and water- related resources through cooperative programs that protect, restore and improve our environment."



B. Water Quality

- a. **Anchor River:** No news.

C. Agriculture/Soil

- a. **NRCS & Employees:** With NRCS state office staff visiting Homer this past month, much was discussed. Through the process of applying for an NACD (National Association of Conservation Districts) grant to do NRCS work, NRCS has identified areas of need and seen what the districts can do for them as well as what further training districts need. With a great deal of leadership from the Palmer office, we applied as a state for the funds with the three NRCS hubs all ranked equally by NRCS. We put in for \$27,000 and there is 20% match, but if we get this it could cover the expense of our space lease agreement.
- b. **Specialty Crop Block Grant:** We have finally been awarded these funds, which is good because we have already started working on it, the consumer survey mostly complete.
- c. **Farmers Market Promotion grant (FMPP):** Heidi and Kyra are working on a producer survey that will be sent to producers around the state to help identify needs and possible training options.
- d. **Rural Business Dev. Grant:** Devony has been working on a list of producers and Kyra has been working on the first draft of the questionnaire for interviews.

D. Invasive Weed Program

- a. **Weeds program:** Matt has been working on the USFW cost share program. He has been talking to the City as a possible landowner for the program and presented the options at a City Council meeting. The story was picked up and he was interviewed by KBBI as well.

E. Education

- a. **Ag in the Classroom:** Nothing new to update, a class for teachers regarding indoor growing will be in the spring.

F. Administration

- a. **Vacations:** Brad is back, Matt is gone. The office will be full again on the 18th. Jessica is still on the payroll, but we will see how long we can keep her, Brad, and Devony all working on NRCS stuff.
- b. **BLM Audit:** There are four areas that I identified as needing to be addressed. These policies will be up for approval at this meeting. Areas of concern were that we have no written policy that contractors need to sign if they are doing work for us that is paid for by federal funds, nor a policy to make sure we recruit fairly for board members, nor a pamphlet informing customers of public process, nor policies for the disabled or those with limited English.
- a. **New office space:** We are in the process of moving! Get ready to enlist all your friends, neighbors and family. Our internet will be moved on the 18th, NRCS will transfer tech connections on the 28th. Parking at the new site will be interesting, but everything else looks like it will work out fine.
- c. **New office space agreement:** Nothing new to report, still in the works. Heidi has been told it will be \$2500/year for her cubicle space.

H. Old Business

- a. **Earning office space:** Adding to the conversation that went with the Manager's Report, Chris still hopes AACD \$50000 from state (if granted) could be used to meet match for the NACD or for space use. Fingers crossed we get the NACD funding. Otherwise we are drawing from the 10% admin we can charge grants

"To provide education and leadership in the conservation and sustainable use of soil- and water- related resources through cooperative programs that protect, restore and improve our environment."



and 3% of that goes to AACD. One option that SWCDs are employing is to simply pay employees more so that the 10% is also more. Gena asked if board members' volunteer time could be used for NRCS.

- b. Office Move: Everybody to show up on Tuesday the 19th. Tim will bring a trailer.
- c. Ethics: the ethics form "presented to the board on..." And signed by all (and new employee and board member will read and sign. Make for employees too.

I. New Business

- a. State Farm Plan Comments: Roberts/Domela property. Otto motioned to approve, Tim seconded. Discussion in support of new farm family. Passed unanimously.
- b. Civil liberties review/approval
- Internal doc: *Find the MoA of delegation of employee hiring.*
 - Otto moved that we accept it as our policy and to be signed by individual board members and all new board members will sign as part of their initiation. Seconded Tim, unanimously passed
- External doc of civil rights
 - Otto moved to accept Tim seconded brochure as as presented with check on the address for reporting problems
 - c. Peony coop USDA value added producers grant: How could we best support them? We should wait and see what they propose.
 - d. Employee evaluation: Employee evaluation for district manager tabled for next meeting when all supervisors are present. Kyra to email eval to everyone before next meeting.

Adjourned 7:54

Next Meeting January 10, 2018, at 5pm

"To provide education and leadership in the conservation and sustainable use of soil- and water- related resources through cooperative programs that protect, restore and improve our environment."