***Colorado Association of Conservation Districts***

 ***Board of Directors Meeting Minutes***

***May 10, 2017, at 7:30 AM via Teleconference***

***Attendees:***

Don McBee, CACD President

Gary Thrash, San Juan Basin Watershed Director/CO Representative Alternate to NACD

Charlie Carnahan, Upper South Platte Watershed Director

Jim Cecil, Republican River Watershed Director

Gary Moyer, North Platte/White/Yampa River Watershed Director

Bob Warner, CO Representative to NACD

Danny Neufeld, CSCB President

Harold Unwin, CSCB Vice President

Bobbi Ketels, CACD Executive Director

***Absent:***

Anthony Lobato, CACD Vice President

Mike Cleary, Gunnison/Dolores River Watershed Director

Scott Jones, Colorado River Watershed Director

Brett Moore, CACD Lobbyist

Lower South Platte River Watershed Director (Vacant)

Upper Arkansas River Watershed Director (Vacant)

***Guests:***

Cindy Lair, CSCB Program Manager

Les Owen, CDA DOA Conservation Services Director

Randy Randall, CO NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Operations

***Call to Order:***

The meeting was called to order by President, Don McBee at 7:32 AM after establishing a quorum. Don McBee then called for any additions to the agenda. Don asked the board to email suggestions of venue for the August Face-to-Face board meeting to discuss in next month’s meeting. With no further requests to add the board moved on with the agenda.

***Prior Meeting Minutes:***

President Don McBee asked for a motion to approve the April 2017 Minutes from the last meeting. Director, Charlie Carnahan made the motion to approve the April 2017 Minutes, and Director Gary Thrash provided the second. Without any further discussion, the motion to approve the CACD BOD’s April 2017 meeting’s Minutes was passed unanimously.

***CSCB Update:***

Les Owen: JBC may be approving $100K of Tier 2 restricted funds to be released to help with matching the grant. They were anticipating a no, so felt this was good news to pass along. There are opportunities for the districts to take part of the federal land management planning. There are a couple of the BLM resource advisory councils to southwest and northwest that have open spots, and they are accepting applications until the end of this month. There are grazing seats as well as local elected official seats that are vacant, which provides an opportunity to engage with BLM. Having a seat at the table allows the opportunity to provide input to field offices as to how they are managing the lands. The Brown Canyon National Monument down in the southern part of the state is starting to write a resource management plan for that monument. There are a handful of grazing allotments that are included. This is an upcoming opportunity to engage the eastern Colorado resources management plan.

Just closed the comment period on preliminary alternatives. There are plenty more opportunities to get involved. Alternatives allow for a decrease in livestock grazing but not increase, and the domestic big horn sheep issue is not looking too great, in that or any other planning efforts. The forests services and BLM are getting direction from their national offices and want them to eliminate risks for commingling of domestic and bighorn sheep, which is based on some pretty shaky science. Les stated they need to keep on them and try to make sure the domestic sheep industry keeps going.

Down in the San Luis Valley, they are going to start an environmental impact statement to amend the resource management plan for that area. Specifically, the plan is to deal with 18 domestic sheep allotments. There is bighorn sheep range town, and overlap between allotments so there is the need to stay on BLM to find some alternative allotments for the sheep producers. Several permit renewals are going thru-out the state. Most permits are cut and dry but expect permit renewal protest by certain groups. It is expected that every permit will most likely be protested.

Gary Moyer stated that he attended the local district meeting on Monday and there was a discussion of the need to get help with issues such as BLM pushing back on doing an MOU with local districts at the state level. As well as some wild horse tour with horse advocate groups trying to insist that BLM partner with these advocate groups when Gary’s local district has been working with the BLM for a number of years now. Gary reiterated the need for help on the MOU, with things are falling apart at the state level. Les will see what more he can find out and will follow up with Gary.

Cindy Lair: CSCB staff met face to face, and they have been working to implement a new customer management software that fills the void they have had when their database for managing the conservation districts crashed a few years back. There had not been much priority to get the database replaced, and it is truly a statutory requirement for the state conservation board to have a database as a source of correct information on district statistics having to do with elections, board members, contacts and other information. Nikki has been working diligently to get this in place and to implement over the last two years. They have had a Face to face class and are now up and running. District information has been kept in place and another piece added is to be able to note in districts file of visits, conversations, training that has taken place. All of this will be recorded to show where they are servicing; ongoing challenges will show where the needs are and how to move forward and focus more in the future. Hopefully, they will see some improvements from the districts they have helped.

Right now is a critical time withthe ColoradoRiver Solidity Control Program, which only affects six districts. This is something they wish they could offer to every district in the state because of the amount of funding it does bring to individual districts, especially the landowners in the form of new irrigation technology. They have been renewing their charge as a program that is run by the districts and in partnership between the states and districts and federal agencies. The final roles are going to be decided next month at the salinity control forum summer meeting.

They have an announcement out for more matching grant applications this year.

The executive board decided that they would try another year of educational grants. Cindy stated they were not aware at the time that there would be any funding coming for severance tax, and thanks to Brett for following this it sounds like there will be some funding with around $130K going to the tier 2 entities like the state conservation board. It is not the full $450K, but at least it is going in the right direction.

Danny Neufeld: This is Danny’s first time on a CACD call and stated that he looks forward to meeting everyone and all involved working hand in hand with conservation down the road. Herold announced the district manager workshop to be held July 11-12 in Grand Junction. Danny added that the annual work evaluations are done, and it is almost time to get down to see who is going to score in what order. He stated that it is an exciting time and there are 35 conservation districts this year. It will be the decision of state board at the July face to face meeting in Silt to determine how the ranking will work, but it is not cut in stone. The ranking will probably be structured the same unless the board feels differently. Gary Moyer asked if there was an opportunity for Bobbi Ketels, the new Executive Director for CACD, to attend the district manager training meeting. Everyone agreed, and Bobbi will be attending. Bobbi will also be at Camp Rocky before and after the manager training session.

***NACD Update:***

Gary Moyer: Attended the Western Congressional Caucus roundtable discussion. Brett was there, and they had a good discussion regarding the impact of the litigation from the environmental community and the Equal Access to Justice Act and the need for transparency and reform as well as the Endangered Species Act. NACD was asked to lead the charge regarding reform and transparency on the Equal Access to Justice Act.

Gary reminded everyone of the Leadership Symposium in Lincoln NE in June, which will be an excellent opportunity to get exposure to colleagues around other states. Gary will be going as the executive board member for NACD. Gary Thrash will also be attending. Gary Thrash is in agreement this is an excellent opportunity to be part of a workshop to encourage new leadership in conservations. Gary M. said they are hoping to get three people from each state. Today is the deadline for registration. Cindy Lair and Clint Evans will also be going. Gary Moyer motioned to approve Bobbi to attend. Gary Thrash gave the second. The motion to approve Bobbi’s attendance was passed unanimously.

Prior to Gary Moyer exiting the call, Don asked Gary for his vote to approve changing the director names on the Farmers State Bank CD. Gary Moyer gave his approval.

***Administrative Update:***

Bobbi Ketels asked the board for permission to release the 990 return of organization exempt from income tax form and the 2015 financial statement to West Greeley and any of the conservation districts requesting financials. There were not enough board members left on the call to vote. Don said to send out a request for an email vote.

Bobbi asked about the status of a completed 2017 budget. Don asked if the 2017 budget was approved at the annual meeting. Gary Thrash said yes and there should be an archived copy. Don asked everyone to look for a hard copy to send to Bobbi. There is nothing in QB showing the 2017 budget. Bobbi explained that when working with Kathy on the books, there were remaining questions that Kathy would need to review with Jill (our CPA) when she returned from vacation regarding what balances were correct and should be brought forward into 2017 from our specific programs. Bobbi recommended that the 2016 and the 2017 budgets not be released until Jill had time to research and give correct balances based on the documentation provided. Jill’s goal is to have the 2016 taxes completed by the end of May or mid-June.

**Farmers State Bank CD – Account#05-514758-21:**

President Don McBee asked for a motion to approve the following changes to the Farmers State Bank CD account.

***Remove the following officers currently listed as authorized signers on the CD:***

Darlene Jensen

Callie Hendrickson

J Lavern Vinson

***Add the following officers and executive director as authorized signers on the CD:***

Anthony Lobato, Vice President

Gary Thrash, Officer/Director

Bobbi Ketels, Executive Director

Leave the account as set-up originally to have three authorized signers with only one required signature from any of the three authorized signers to withdraw funds and make changes to the account.

***Change all account contact information as listed below:***

**Colorado Association of Conservation Districts**

New Mailing Address: PO Box 1175, Lamar, CO 81052

New Physical Address: 1501 S. Main Street, Lamar, CO 81052

Bobbi Ketels, Executive Director for CACD

CACD Email: executivedirector4cacd@gmail.com

CACD Phone: 719-686-0020

Donald M. McBee, President

Phone: 719-688-2122 - Email: quail42@centurytel.net

Anthony Lobato, Vice President

Phone: 719-688-2122 – Email: lobdata@amigo.net

Gary Thrash, Officer/Director

Phone: 970-749-7378 – Email: gthrash@frontier.net

Director Jim Cecil made the motion to approve, and Director Charlie Carnahan provided the second. Without any further discussion, the motion to approve all listed changes to the Farmers State Bank CD account #***05-514758-21*** was passed unanimously.

Bobbi will follow-up with Mike Cleary to draft an employment contract agreement and will send to Mike for review and approval before signing. Don stated that having an employee agreement is in the best interest of the board and everyone involved.

Bobbi gave some accounting options regarding membership dues and employee time-tracking. Jim Cleary and all directors on the call were in agreement for Bobbi to work with Kathy to start splitting administrative time between the various programs and general administrative duties. Bobbi will start working on this as soon as possible and will go back as far as possible to the beginning of the year. Mike Cleary, Gary Thrash, and Charlie Carnahan all agree it is a good idea. Gary Thrash and Jim Cecil stated that it is the Board’s job to allocate membership funding where needed. Everyone agreed all membership dues are allocated to the general account.

Bobbi will start updating the website 100% club as soon as possible. The primary goal is to focus on completion of data entry into the new QB software. With all that is going on; this will take a few weeks. There have been many roadblocks within last few weeks. Bobbi is working on issues as they come up and everyone agreed the board is learning a lot of what it takes to get CACD in order, so turnover does not affect the organization so severely in the future, and the goal is to ensure a much smoother transition.

***NRCS Update:***

Randy Randall: NRCS is in the process of working on the ratification from the Envirothon and stated this will be taken care of regarding the $2500 NRCS still owes CACD. NRCS still plans to pay and does not want CACD to lose visibility on this pending issue. On a positive note, the $25K cooperative agreement is moving forward as a 3-year agreement to cover these programs and is well in progress. Bobbi has been instrumental in this process. This agreement should be signed and in place within the last few weeks.

From a staffing standpoint, everyone is aware of the challenges in the field with 50 vacancies. NRCS was notified that two positions were approved to go forward which includes the Gunnison position and engineer in Rocky Ford. The hold up is reduction plans must be submitted to management before they are allowed to do any more hiring, and this is not due until June 30th. Randy stated they did receive news that funding should stay level for this year, with no indication that any funds will be asked to be returned. Everyone will have to continue to see how things play out.

***Camp Rocky Update:***

We are currently looking at approximately 13 registered campers, with a goal of increasing this to 30 campers. Several conservation districts responded to our sponsorship requests. Many districts are struggling to find students from their area. Bobbi will work to match up districts with students for those who are willing to sponsor outside of their districts. We received a first-time sponsorship from SCI of $3K, and the board agreed that Bobbi and Amy would decide where this additional funding is best spent. Some of the money will be used to cover a portion of personal expenses incurred by staff and volunteers. The biggest issue is to find kids who want to attend. Once we have the kids, we will locate the funding for sponsorship. Gary Thrash mentioned that word of mouth from previous campers is huge to help promote Camp Rocky.

***CO Conservator Update:***

The spring issue has been published and electronically distributed. Bobbi will send printed copies to anyone who wants them. Everyone is in agreement that the advertisements did not take away from the publication and that many people were impressed with the quality. The next issue will focus on the western slope. Don asked everyone to help Bobbi with articles and advertisements. We will start working on the next issue in June with the goal to publish and distribute mid-July. The approximate cost is $1300.00 for the layout and print. Don stated that he had $850 from ads and CSCB donated $5K for the Conservator. The NRCS grant will help cover expenses for 2016 publications as well. The cost for ad size is $125 for ¼ page, $250 for ½ page, $350 for ¾ page and $500 for a full page. Everyone agrees this is reasonable and we need to stick to the going rate of similar types of publications. We will try this for a year to see how it goes and next year maybe bump up the price a little. So far the overall feedback on the ads and publication is good.

***Annual Meeting Update:***

Don stated that we should hold up on pushing the start of the planning until Bobbi gets done with current projects and that we should use the same matrix for Loveland which will save time on committee meetings. This will allow a chance to focus more on speakerships with the possibility of being able to get high-profile speakers for the meeting. Bobbi has a call scheduled with Embassy Suites to review and become familiar with the contract signed by Sharon.

Mark Cronquist called Bobbi and made the request to update and post the 2017 nomination forms. Bobbi asked for further direction for the farmer/rancher and small acreage nomination. Don said to review any questions with Gary Thrash, as he handled it last year. Bobbi will get the forms posted and emailed to the districts so they can start thinking about whom they want to nominate. Don said he talked to Cindy and CSCB will give the briefing. Mark Cronquist will most likely handle this. The poster contest is national, and Bobbi will get the new theme for the form to be posted.

Don stated that there was no need to continue with an executive session to review balance due to Brett Moore since there were not enough directors to vote. Everyone should have received the email update from Brett that gave a breakdown of the $26K past due. As of right now, our books show $12K outstanding and as a long term liability. Everyone agreed we need to get this resolved as soon as possible. There is no financial report yet, but we do we have a balance in checking of $23K and a way to move money. Membership dues are are trickling in like normal. Three districts paid the $1K membership plus the suggested donation. We will continue to pay Brett $1K per month going forward as this is a standard contractual obligation. It is unanimous that everyone agrees our Lobbyist is our most important function of CACD, but yet the least understood. Legislative is dealing with over 400 bills, and the legislative efforts of CACD work to weed out what is most important to conservation.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bobbi Ketels

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CACD Executive Director