

MINUTES
NORTH DAKOTA ASSOCIATION OF SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICTS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
CONFERENCE CALL

July 9, 2011

The meeting was called to order by President LeAnn Harner at 8:03am.

ATTENDANCE: Edward Hauf, Dennis Reich, James Cart, Curtiss Klein, Richard Faught, James Teigen, Donald O. Anderson and LeAnn Harner

President LeAnn Harner stated the purpose of this meeting was to discuss the personnel opening created by the resignation of NDASCD Executive Director Tom Hanson and what steps we need to take. She stated we would meet for one hour to gain a general sense of the direction the Board wishes to pursue and then adjourn, with another meeting scheduled within two weeks. She will be meeting with Tom next week to conduct an exit interview, see what recommendations he will have, and get up to speed on various association activities so they can be continued.

LeAnn Harner asked if the group wished to have an audit. In March, the Board had decided to do audits biannually as a cost-saving measure. Consensus was to do an audit since we just completed our fiscal year and this would be a clean break between one Executive Director and the next. LeAnn Harner will meet with Tom Hanson and Mary Heintz and get their opinion on the lowest cost audit that would be satisfactory and the Board can formally approve something on our next conference call.

The Board was asked when we should tell the Soil Conservation Districts about Tom's resignation. So far, only the Board and immediate office staff are aware of the resignation. Consensus is that we need to coordinate the announcement with Tom, but sooner rather than later. It was agreed that the announcement needs to come from the Board, but Tom should be encouraged to write a personal note. It was suggested that, if Tom was comfortable with sharing his personal email, phone, etc. that that information be included in the announcement so people could send him notes.

Discussion then opened on the following questions: What qualifications and characteristics do we need in a new CEO? Which is the most important? Do we search statewide, regionally, nationally? Each director shared their initial thoughts and we discussed pros and cons.

The final question for discussion was how to handle things in the interim? At the June meeting during the budget discussion, the Board had determined they need more production cost information from the nursery and to take a harder look at where we can be more efficient as margins are tighter. Considering our need for stable funding, it was decided this effort needs to continue in the interim. There will also need to be some convention work, etc. Before the Board makes a decision on interim staffing, LeAnn will meet with Tom for his recommendations and see how that fits with current staff.

The Board agreed to meet within 1-2 weeks at the call of the President and when we have some of our written documents circulated to those board members without email.

The meeting adjourned at 9:03 am.

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Thursday, July 21, 2011
9:00 pm CDT

Present: Aaron Smestad, Curt Klein, Dick Faught, Jim Teigen, LeAnn Harner, Dennis Reich, Donald O. Anderson

Absent: Dennis Haugen, Jim Cart, Ed Hauf

President LeAnn Harner called the conference call meeting to order at 9:00 pm.

Dennis Reich announced that Paul King has been named Acting State Conservationist for next week. Starting August 1, Norman Vigil from New Mexico will be the next acting until further notice.

Audit/Financial Review – Dennis Reich moved we hire Brady Martz to do a “review of financial statements” and prepare taxes. Jim Teigen seconded. Motion carried. All board members present voted aye. Absent were: Dennis Haugen, Jim Cart, Ed Hauf It was noted that this needs to include the Trust as well as NDASCD, since we have the same accountant do both.

Change Trustee for Retirement Plan to give that person signing authority. Tom Hanson was the only signatory. Jim Teigen moved that LeAnn Harner be authorized to have signing authority. Seconded by Aaron Smestad. Motion carried. All board members present voted aye. Absent were: Dennis Haugen, Jim Cart, Ed Hauf

News from NACD – Dick Faught reported that John Larson, Washington Association of Conservation Districts Executive is the new NACD Executive Director, starting August 8. NACD has sent out a new Farm Bill policy statement.

LeAnn Harner reviewed upcoming NDASCD activities and where we are with the planning.

Reaction from SCDs regarding Tom Hanson’s Resignation - Consensus was that everyone we talk to is shocked and disappointed. District employees have offered to help wherever needed – especially with convention. Other partners are also volunteering to help.

The Board discussed how to proceed in the interim without a CEO.

The next meeting is tentatively set for August 1, 2, or 3, in the evening, depending on how soon we have new information to discuss.

The meeting adjourned at 10:15 pm.

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Wednesday, August 3, 2011

9:00 pm

Board Members Present: Curt Klein, Dick Faught, Jim Teigen, LeAnn Harner, Dennis Reich, Jim Cart, Ed Hauf

Board Members Absent: Aaron Smestad, Dennis Haugen, Donald O. Anderson

Others Present: Greg Morgenson, Nursery Manager

President LeAnn Harner called the conference call meeting to order at 9:00 pm. She explained the resumes and proposals that have been submitted and other suggestions for consultants who were not contacted because of various conflicts of interest.

Consensus of the Board was that a team approach might be more credible better than one person. Since there was just one proposal from a team, it was suggested we ask other ag lenders if they would submit proposals. Dick Faught will also contact NDSU to see if they can offer some expertise.

Further consensus was to hear the presentations and then decide what dollars we were willing to expend.

It was suggested that the Board keep in mind funding of the Association other than the Nursery and look at what other states might be doing to keep their Association going.

Time for interviews will be somewhat dependent on how many interviews we have and what information we can get to candidates before the interviews. It was suggested to only have 1-2 people ask most of the questions, to keep things flowing.

Staff is working on a nursery reference handbook for board members, which would also be a good starting point for the evaluators. It was suggested staff bios be included in the handbook.

Consensus of the Board was that we need to keep moving on with this process and, if we do hire a consultant, we need to heed their recommendations.

The meeting adjourned at 9:58 pm.