

MEETING MINUTES

Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts

September 21, 2017

300 Sower Blvd. Room 216

In Attendance: Mr. David Rowlett, President; Mr. Shane Wells, Vice-President; Mr. Allan Bryant, Secretary-Treasurer; Mr. Steve Coleman; Mr. Randy McCallon; Mr. Ted Jessup; Mr. Rodney Dick; Mr. Orville Bennett; Mr. Ethan Brown; Mr. Kevin Jeffries; Mr. Shane Wells; and Ms. Ava Adams.

Also in Attendance: Ms. Kim Richardson, Director, Division of Conservation; Ms. Johnna McHugh, Assistant Director, Division of Conservation; Mr. Ray Adams, Chairman, Kentucky Soil and Water Conservation Commission (SWCC); Kayleigh Evans, President, Kentucky Association of Conservation District Employees(KACDE); Mr. Steve Kull, Assistant Director, Division of Forestry; Ms. Karen Woodrich, Natural Resources Conservation Service(NRCS); Jennifer L. Turner, Department of Natural Resources, Commissioner Office; Ms. Amanda Moore, Natural Resources Conservation Service(NRCS); Mr. Brent Burchett, Kentucky Department of Agriculture; Kentucky State Representative Rick Rand; and Mr. Jeff Gravitt, Division of Conservation.

Quorum was met.

Meeting Called to Order - at 9:31 am by KACD President Mr. David Rowlett.

Mr. David Rowlett turned the discussion over to Mr. Allan Bryant. Mr. Allan Bryant address the board and presented Kentucky State Representative, Mr. Rick Rand with the Distinguished Service Award. Rep. Rick Rand thanked KACD for the award and looks forward to working with KACD in the future.

KACD Minutes of the Last Meeting – May 11, 2017 –Mr. Steve Coleman made a motion to approve minutes. Mr. Allan Bryant seconded the motion to approve. **Motion carried.**

Treasurer's Report - Mr. Allan Bryant presented the KACD Treasurer's Report with copies handed out. Mr. Allan Bryant made the motion to approve the report as presented. Motion seconded by Mr. Steve Coleman. **Motion carried.**

Mr. Allan Bryant presented the KACD Budget with copies handed out. Mr. Allan Bryant made motion to approve the report. Mr. Kevin Jeffries seconded the motion. **Motion carried.**

- Mr. Allan Bryant informed the board that the KACD account had a beginning balance of \$100,635.36 and an ending balance of \$113,043.14.
- Mr. Allan Bryant updated the board on the 2017 KACD Convention Financial Report.
- Mr. David Rowlett discussed paying the Kentucky Agriculture Council dues in the amount of \$250.00. Mr. Allan Bryant made a motion to approve and motion was seconded by Mr. Steve Coleman. **Motion carried.**
- Ms. Kim Richardson asked the boards to approve the spending of \$7,150.00 for 100,000 tree bags. Motion was made by Mr. Allan Bryant and was seconded by Mr. Orville Bennett. **Motion carried.**

Correspondence – Mr. David Rowlett discussed the following with the board:

- Ms. Johnna McHugh received an email from the Mammoth Cave Regional Foundation. It stated that the MCRF will be dissolving and asked that KACD take responsibility of the dispersal of the checking account and a trust fund of approximately \$190,000. This money will need to go through a 501(3)c organization to be distributed to the following counties: Allen, Barren, Butler, Edmonson, Hart, Logan, Metcalfe, Monroe, Simpson and Warren.
 - Mr. Kevin Jeffries made a motion for KACD to take responsibility of funds dispersal. Motion was seconded by Mr. Shane Wells. **Motion carried.**
- KACD dues will increase from \$250.00 to \$350.00. Motion to approve was made by Mr. Kevin Jeffries and was second by Mr. Steve Coleman.
- Mr. David Rowlett discussed the hiring of a KACD Director. Mr. Allan Bryant made a motion to approve and was seconded by Mr. Orville Bennett. Mr. Steve Coleman asked to amend the motion to include that the Executive Committee explore and have the authority over the decision making process in the hiring of the Director. Mr. Steve Coleman's amendment was seconded by Mr. Rodney Dick. Amendment carried. **Motion as amended carried.**
 - The Executive Committee in charge of hiring process for the KACD Director are as follows:
 - Mr. Steve Coleman
 - Ms. Kim Richardson
 - Ms. Kayleigh Evans
 - Mr. Allan Bryant
 - Mr. Shane Wells.

- Mr. David Rowlett.
- The Executive Committee will update board at the next meeting on their progress.

NACD Director's Report – Mr. Kevin Jeffries updated the board on the following items:

- NACD Southeast Regional meeting was held August 6th – 9th in Greenville, South Carolina.
- Mr. Kevin Jeffries held a meeting with Mr. Jeremy Peters from NACD. Mr. Kevin Jeffries stated that they had a very good discussion about the possibility of holding a future meeting in Puerto Rico. Mr. Kevin Jeffries has set up a SE committee to look at that being a possibility in 2020.
- Mr. Kevin Jeffries held a Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) conference call on September 9th. Secretary Charles G. Snively sat in on the conference call.
- Mr. Kevin Jeffries discussed the 2018 Farm Bill Requests from National Association of Corporate Directors (NACD).
 - Repeal the System for Award Management and Data Universal Numbering System (SAM/DUNS).
 - Continue current conservation compliance policy.
 - Crop insurance should continue working in tandem with conservation.
 - Environmental Quality Incentive Program.
 - Regional Conservation Partnership Program.
 - Dam Rehabilitation Program.
 - Conservation Reserve Program.
 - An increase in the CRP acreage cap but not at the expense of other programs within the Conservation Title.
 - Allowing more grazing in CRP as NACD believes grazing activities can be done in an environmentally sound way and can actually improve the health of the land.
 - A continuation of the 2014 Farm Bill policy of allowing continuous CRP acres and State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) acres to be counted separately from the 25% cap imposed on General CRP lands in a county.
- NACD encourages Congress to increase the CRP payment limit per person or legal entity from \$50,000 per year to \$100,000 per year.

- Update on United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) reorganization:
 - USDA is taking further steps in their efforts to reorganize the department.
 - USDA has communicated to NACD that its most recent proposal is in no way moving NRCS responsibilities for Farm Bill program administration out of NRCS.
 - Administrative functions ensure consistent operations at the service center level.
 - While NACD is continuing to support NRCS through this transition, we are concerned that moving administrative functions up another bureaucratic level will only create more headaches.
- Mr. Kevin Jeffries discussed the NACD Membership Dues and Report. Packets of information was handed out.
- NRCS has entered into a two year agreement for a 10 million dollar grant to districts.
- Mr. Kevin Jeffries discussed NACD call for 2018 Resolutions and Bylaws from Ms. Debbie Bogar.
- Mr. Kevin Jeffries announced that the registration is open for the NACD annual meeting to be held in Nashville, TN on January 27th-31st.

KACD Auxiliary Report –Ms. Ava Adams updated the board on the following items:

- Convention went very well.
- There was not a lot of auction items but what items were there were quality auction items.
- KACD Auxiliary Scholarship Applications. The Auxiliary needs help getting the word out about the KACD Auxiliary Scholarships, especially the Betty Barrick Non-Traditional Scholarship.

Review of 2017 KACD Convention – Mr. David Rowlett discussed the following with the board:

- Positive feedback overall from convention attendees
- KACDE partnership with KACD was a big reason for the convention’s success.
- Look into the possibility of a convention evaluation form being created and handed out next year.
- Ms. Kayleigh Evans is looking at creating a more basic technical training session for next year’s convention.

2018 Legislative Reception – Mr. David Rowlett discussed what date to have the Legislative reception. Mr. David Rowlett discussed the issue with setting a date without the Legislative calendar not being released yet. Motion was made by Mr. Kevin Jeffries to hold off on setting a date and then letting the Executive Committee meet to set the date, where to hold the reception and all other things related to the reception. Motion was seconded by Mr. Ted Jessup. **Motion carried.**

Division of Conservation Report – Ms. Kim Richardson updated the board about these items:

- Potential budget cuts totaling 17.4 %
- With current pension short falls, the conservation districts are facing an increase in payouts for retirement. A total of 48 counties will face increases.
- Kentucky Soil and Water Conversation Commission (SWCC) appointed and reappointed following members:
 - Mr. Scotty Parsons
 - Mr. Jeff Rice
 - Mr. Don Minton
 - Ms. Denise Hoffman
- Art and Writing Contest - Ms. Johnna McHugh discussed the following:
 - “Water is Life” is the subject of this year’s contest.
 - KACDE still has 400 available tabloids to sell if there is any need.
- Envirothon – Ms. Johnna McHugh discussed the following:
 - Bowling Green and Laurel County as being the potential locations for the Envirothon competition.
 - Having two days of training before the competition.
 - Looking at bringing in more sponsorship and donations.

Agency Comment

- **Natural Resources Conservation Service** – Ms. Karen Woodrich updated the board about these items:
 - Ms. Karen Woodrich has been detailed for a four month period to work with the USDA in Washington DC. Ms. Amanda Moore will be Acting State Conservationist while Ms. Woodrich is away.
 - Natural Resources Conservation Service is still awaiting official Chief to be appointed.
 - Federal United States Department of Agriculture’s hiring freeze is over but is under a tight hiring strategy currently.
 - Federal funding is forthcoming (October).
 - The EQIP deadline is November.
 - NRCS 2017 hiring summary/staffing levels/current employees/vacancies/retirement data and staffing ceiling.
 - NRCS funding for livestock is at 69.8%. That’s 9.8% over what federal regulation call out for.
 - NRCS total project completions stand at 20% so far this year.
 - Conservation Stewardship Programs (CSP) has spent \$3,924,222.00.
 - Ultima has partnered with NRCS in the hiring of 6 new contract employees at entry level positions.

- **Department for Natural Resources** – No Report given.
- **Farm Service Agency** – No Report given
- **University of Kentucky** – Not attended.
- **Kentucky Department of Agriculture** – No Report given.
- **Division of Forestry** – In Mr. James Wright absence, Mr. Steve Kull updated the board about these items:
 - Division of Forestry’s working relationship/partnership with NRCS.
 - Forestry is having a slow period at this time. This is due to the extra rain fall Kentucky has experienced this year.
 - Division of Forestry has many volunteers helping out with the cleanup in Texas after Hurricane Harvey.
 - October 1 is the start of Kentucky’s fire season.
 - The Division of Forestry’s nurseries are doing well. The division has more than 1.6 million trees available for purchase.
- **Kentucky Association of Conservation District Employees (KACDE)** – Ms. Kayleigh Evans updated the board about these items:
 - KACDE is slowing down after a busy convention.
 - The KACDE portion of the convention was well attended with a lot of new faces.
 - KACDE has sold over 89,000 tabloids for the Arts and Writing.
 - Conservation districts have a total of 111 full time employees and 52 part-time employees across the state.

Mr. David Rowlett discussed a letter he received from Mr. Lenville Martin discussing tax increases and conservation easements in his district.

Mr. Steve Coleman handed out to each board member the KACD Collaboration Survey Project form and discussed the importance of filling one out.

Adjournment – Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Shane Wells and was seconded by Mr. Ted Jessup. **Motion carried.**

Next Board Meeting – November 14