



**OKLAHOMA PRESCRIBED BURN ASSOCIATION
BOARD MEETING
June 17, 2014
12:00 PM – 3:20 PM
H&H Shooting Sports Complex – Oklahoma City, OK**

DRAFT MINUTES – 6/17/14

LOCATION: H&H Shooting Sports Complex – Oklahoma City, OK

PRESENT:

John Weir, OSU Extension/Chairperson
Russell Stevens, Noble Foundation/Interim Executive Director
Darrel Dominick, OCC/OPBA – Sec/Treasurer
Verlin Hart, Cross Timbers PBA
Karsen Davis, Roger Mills PBA
Bill Inman, Creek County PBA
Harry Fritzler, NRCS Liaison
Alva Gregory, ODWC

ABSENT:

None

Guests:

Doug Schoeling, ODWC

CALL TO ORDER: John Weir called the meeting to order and welcomed the participants. Weir provided an agenda.

INTRODUCTIONS:

None

DRAFT MINUTES REVIEW/APPROVAL:

Weir led the board in review of the previous meeting minutes provided by Stevens for the 2/27/14 BOD meeting. Time was provided for review and there was no discussion. Inman offered a first to accept the minutes as written with the addition of the date for a meeting Weir attended in January 2014. This was seconded by Davis. All present signified approval.

OPBA CORRESPONDENCE REPORT:

Dominick did not provide a report. No significant correspondence has been sent or received since the last meeting.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

Stevens provided a financial report which was reviewed by the BOD. Hart asked about the requirement from IRS concerning the \$50,000 threshold concerning audit requirements. Dominick explained that, from his understanding, the carrying on more funds than \$50,000 will require additional audit requirements and the need for someone with better accounting knowledge than himself. The BOD briefly discussed that this threshold would be broken and there would be a need to find accounting services. Stevens indicated he would look for assistance in Ardmore. Davis asked a brief question concerning the chainsaws bought. Dominick briefly went over the expenses. Stevens indicated he would provide the BOD with Hajny's monthly reports/invoices that are shown on the financial statement as "contract payment" later in the agenda.

REPORTS AND OLD BUSINESS –

- **QUARTERLY REPORTS:**

- **Grant updates:**

- **PLJV:**

- Capacity Grant - Weir discussed that he had re-submitted an application to continue this grant. The original proposal was for \$25K and, due to federal budget cuts, OPBA received \$15,444. Weir indicated he had discussed this re-submission with Christopher Rustay, PLJV Grants Coordinator, and that OPBA could expect \$10K. These funds have a lot of flexibility of use.
- PLJV Conoco-Phillips Grant – These funds are being used for the contract payments for Bryan Hajny. Stevens works on this grant for OPBA.

- **USDA NRCS Agreement:** Dominick indicated he continues to submit monthly status reports and that OPBA has received \$5,000 this fiscal year on this agreement. OPBA can draw another \$5,000 by October 1, 2014 to assist with training and equipment. Dominick indicated he expected this agreement to continue.

- **The Nature Conservancy (TNC):** Weir and Dominick worked with TNC, after Jay Pruett, TNC Conservation Director, indicated that they had \$10,000 available for the continued work of forming, training and equipping LPBAs. These funds have been received and are greatly appreciated. Stevens indicated he was going to send a thank you letter to TNC as soon as possible.

- **Others:**

- **ODWC:** Weir indicated that he believes ODWC was going to provide another \$25K after July 1. Gregory confirmed this. This is greatly appreciated. A brief discussion ensued concerning properly thanking such agencies and groups and to make sure there is an emblem sticker for each on the burn trailers being provided to the LPBAs. A photo of one of the burn trailers was emailed out and it was taken prior to ODWC's previous funding and created questions from them. It was professionally explained that the different emblems shown were from early financial assistance providers and that ODWC would have their emblem on future trailers as funds were made available.
 - **Noble Foundation (NF):** Weir indicated that the Noble Foundation Agreement would be up on March 31, 2015. Weir indicated the need for this support to continue and that several BOD members would set up an appointment with Bill Buckner, NF CEO, for late summer or early fall. This assistance has been invaluable and Stevens has done a super job in getting OPBA up and running. Stevens indicated the NF is committed to this effort. Stevens also explained a new initiative from the NF called "Center for Land Stewardship" which would involve developing partnerships among like-minded entities and using the synergy to have a bigger impact on the resource base.
- **Western Region Coordinator Report:** Stevens provided the BOD with Hajny's monthly reports/invoices for contract work. This contract is funded by the PLJV Conoco-Phillips grant. A brief discussion ensued concerning the LPBA headquartered at Geary and subsequent meetings and reorganization of that group. Hajny was instrumental in kick starting this revitalization of the existing LPBA. Davis commented on the Putnam/S. Canadian efforts and the loss of a local leader.
- **New PBA's/Training Report:** Weir and Stevens discussed the formation of new LPBAs called the Beaver River PBA (Beaver and Harper Counties) and Woodward County PBA. Weir indicated the need to hold a training session soon with the Beaver River PBA. A training session was held May 2, 2014 in Mooreland, with 38 in attendance, with the Woodward County PBA. Inman asked if Weir was going to conduct a training session at OSU soon and Weir indicated possibly in the early fall. Gregory indicated the need to do the following in the NW part of Oklahoma.
 - **Additional discussion:** Fritzler discussed the need for additional training with the LPBAs and that this training is needed on-going. Fritzler indicated he had work with the Creek County PBA and they had a burn involving a lot of dead cedars that were down. This type of burn requires additional planning and could have easily turned into a problem burn that damaged the credibility of OPBA's efforts. Low moisture content of volatile fuel, due to the drought, needs to be considered when planning a burn and the knowledge of this can only come through advanced training and experience. Inman indicated that the problem did not occur due to

having a lot of help on hand and expert advice from Jeff Pennington, ODWC, and Fritzler. Gregory supported the need to be careful with volatile fuel load, brush piles and the continued drought conditions. Weir added there is a need for continued training and that hands-on training for all conditions out in the field is very difficult. Stevens added that training has to continue to be a focus and that each LPBA must develop strict guidelines for members to follow and these must be followed to receive the use of the provided equipment. Stevens indicated that additional trainings, experience and on the ground events were all needed going into the future.

- **Website:** Weir discussed the status of the website and that it had been delayed due to **Blayr Gourley** being on maternity leave. Weir indicated it would be up soon, looks good and will be very functional. Stevens brought up a concern Weir indicated he would look into. This concern is about the list serve.
- **Insurance Report (Liability):** Stevens indicated he had a conversation with the Bramlett Agency and that they had solicited input from several of their possible carriers/brokers. One had indicated he was going to work with Lloyd's of London on a product that would cost \$300-500/year on a premium for \$1M in coverage with a \$10M loss aggregate. Davis asked some specifics if the premium was for each burn or an annual premium. Stevens was unsure. Davis also indicated there is a need to find more reasonable liability coverage for trucks equipped with a water tank and spray equipment used in prescribed fire as the current know policies are expensive and designate these trucks as a "fire truck". Weir indicated this was another insurance concern OPBA would need to try and tackle. Weir indicated the need to work additionally with Farm Bureau and American Farmers and Ranchers on getting prescribed fire coverage, as a rider or under an existing policy, as the TX Farm Bureau has done. Weir indicated he felt State Farm already provided solid coverage such as this.
- **Affiliation Agreements:** Weir and Stevens led the discussion on LPBAs joining up with OPBA through an affiliation agreement. LPBAs have several business items (ex. OK incorporation; IRS EIN) to accomplish before this affiliation can take place. Stevens provided handouts from several LPBAs wanting to join up. Stevens indicated it is necessary to approve several before he can move forward on changing the OPBA's IRS status to a not for profit association that has affiliated LPBAs. This effort will cost OPBA approximately \$3000 to file. The following LPBAs have applied and have all or most of their affiliation requirements (OK incorporation; EIN; and signed agreement) met:
 1. Woodward County PBA – only lacking a \$250 check
 2. Cimarron Range Preservation Association – Check submitted and all requirements met.
 3. Canadian Rivers PBA – only lacking \$250 check

4. Roger Mills PBA – waiting on final incorporation notice from OK; \$250 check provided

The BOD discussed each application and tentatively approved all four once all affiliation requirements are met. There was a first to accept by Inman and this was seconded by Hart and the BOD voted to approve. Weir continued the discussion and indicated that the Pawnee PBA was working on filing affiliation paperwork soon. Dominick provided Stevens the information for him to follow-up with the NW OK PBA at Taloga. They have provided a \$250 check, uncashed as of this date, but with no additional paperwork showing OK incorporation or an EIN. Stevens agreed to follow-up and to hold the check until more information is secured. Dominick indicated that with the new “affiliated” not for profit status OPBA is pursuing that additional accounting requirements of the affiliated LPBAs would be needed along with the need for OPBA to attain additional accounting services as this is becoming more complex. Stevens indicated he would pursue finding these services in Ardmore. Stevens and Weir indicated that as these applications are received that the BOD would be provided the information and could vote via email on accepting into OPBA.

NOTE: There was a brief break. Davis left the meeting due to travel arrangements.

RCPP – NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program: Weir discussed the RCPP opportunities coming up and that this is part of the new Farm Bill – Conservation Title. There will be a meeting, with NRCS in Stillwater at 1:30 on June 23 in the Vet. Medicine building’s conference room, at OSU. Weir indicated Stevens, Dominick and he will attend for OPBA. Weir indicated that there are two options with this opportunity: 1. State level award and 2. Regional/National level award. There will be \$200M available for this opportunity nationwide. Weir discussed the KS proposal and they wanted to include OPBA in that for a regional approach but that OPBA was going to submit a statewide proposal. The pre-proposal is due July 15. These will allow OPBA to grow, train, and form new LPBAs. Weir indicated we should go for both and it was agreed to do so.

Clay Pope Proposal: Weir handed out a consultant proposal from Pope. Pope is leaving OACD as the executive director and moving on into a consulting role for different entities such as OPBA. Pope’s proposal is to work on legislative and communication type issues for a monthly fee of \$2500 plus up to \$500/month in expenses. This proposal was discussed and the BOD is interested in some type of a relationship with Pope, especially while the legislature is in session, but does not have the financial resources to commit to such agreement at this time. Dominick indicated he would discuss this with Pope. The BOD agreed to table the proposal for future consideration.

Signs: Weir provided the Bod with OPBA signs promoting prescribed fire that landowners can place on their fences indicating their properties are managed with fire. These signs were produced by Karsen Davis and his print business in Elk City. The BOD gave a “thumbs up” to the signs and sincerely appreciates Davis’ continued support of OPBA efforts with his donated materials and work. Weir and Stevens indicated they provided the APBA members with a look at theses and feel Davis will be engaged by them to produce such signs for NE, KS and TX.

Burn Ban Plan of Action: Weir led the discussion concerning the current burn ban law in Oklahoma and the inconsistent implementation, many times not following the law, of burn bans by county commissioners. The effort to get this more consistent is needed in OK and OPBA has to play an active role in repealing the existing law or developing a statewide burn exemption if certain criteria are met or having an exemption if you are a member of an LPBA and received training and have experience. Inman discussed the recent Governor's burn ban and those requirements. Stevens discussed recent discussions with Senator Frank Simpson and Representative **Tommy Hardin** to repeal the existing law or change it. The proposal will be to have an interim study this summer. Stevens is going to follow-up on this to make sure it happens. Dominick indicated that if the interim study is called for that, in his experience, there will need to be local, state and federal level support testifying at the hearings.

Note: A brief discussion ensued concerning the utilization of the Arcadia ODWC area for a media event and having a prescribed burn, educating the media, and trying to get key terminology into the vernacular of the talking heads. Stevens indicated that the term "controlled burn" has been lost and is referred to as everything from burning trash to burning a brush pile.

Funding Through the Private Sector: Weir led this brief discussion and emphasized the need to identify possible sources of private funding such as energy companies and associations. The OK Independent Petroleum Association and Brian Woodard were mentioned. Stevens indicated a possible in with someone from Devon. Further discussion was tabled with an action item needed at the next BOD of coming up with a list of possible sources and assigning BOD members to contact.

Alliance of PBAs (APBA): Weir and Stevens led the discussion on a meeting they attended three weeks ago in Wichita. The majority of the discussion centered on the NRCS employee's ATV accident in NE that occurred during a prescribed fire event and NE NRCS response to that event which focused on the prescribed fire and not ATV safety. NE also has done away with the "Prescribed Burn" Specialist for the state. Weir provided the BOD with a copy of a letter that APBA and various partners are going to send to NRCS to support continued technical and financial assistance for reestablishing fire in the ecosystem. The letter was reviewed and it was approved to fully support the letter with a first from Inman, a second from Hart, and a strong approval voice vote by the BOD. Weir asked the ODWC reps at the meeting to try and get ODWC on board to support the letter.

Prescribed Fire Day at the Capitol: Weir indicated his view that it was successful and partnering with OACD and others at "Conservation Day" was worthwhile. Weir and Stevens both support OPBA providing awards during this event and providing recipients with "Carrying the Torch for Oklahoma" awards in the form of a drip torch with plaque. Dominick indicated he would get information on the OACD awards and develop a proposal. The BOD was positive in doing something along these lines.

Annual Meeting: Weir discussed the possibility of holding a joint statewide annual meeting with the Oklahoma Prescribed Fire Council in Ardmore late in the year.

Other New Business:

- Google Earth Pro** – Stevens indicated he had completed OPBA’s application to utilize Google Earth without charge due to the not for profit status. OPBA currently has a one year license which can be renewed. Stevens will research the possibility of opening this up for use by LPBAs affiliated with OPBA. Inman discussed the use of the ODWC site/maps and that it is not accessible. Inman did indicate he utilizes the NRCS’ web soil survey and it is complicated and needs a tremendous amount of data space to run properly. Stevens discussed developments with **Agren’s Rx Fire planner and that our sample year is up and he has completed an assessment survey for them and indicated that the ignition sequence component is missing and it is too expensive to utilize.**

Adjourn: Weir asked if there was any other business or discussion needed and the answer was no. Stevens made a motion to adjourn with a second from Inman and it was approved (3:20 PM).

Next Meeting: TBD

MINUTES APPROVED: 1ST _____
 2ND _____

VOICE VOTE APPROVAL: YES NO

APPROVED MINUTES
 SUBMITTED: _____

M. DARREL DOMINICK

DATE

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