

NDCDEA Directors Meeting

NDFS Conference Room

October 26, 2022

The meeting was called to order by President Dustin Krueger at 10 am. A quorum was present.

Directors Present: Dustin Krueger, Shannon Anderson, Tokina McHarry, Matt Olson, Kari Beckman (via Zoom), Darci Gahner (via Zoom), Stetson Myers, Chad Thorson, Cassidy Fairbanks, and Molly Jugovic.

Others Present: Tom Claeys, Sarah Tunge (via Zoom), Jodi Delozier (via Zoom), Rhonda Kelsch (via Zoom)

Minutes:

Minutes from the July 27, 2022, directors meeting were presented and reviewed. Tokina McHarry motioned to approve the minutes as presented, Cassidy Fairbanks seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Financial Report (see attachment):

Financial report was reviewed as presented. Gahner explained Outdoor Heritage Fund checks have been distributed. The 2021 audit will be mailed to three reviewers in the next week. Membership dollars for 2023 are slowly coming in. Seeing no further discussion, Matt Olson made a motion to approve the financial report, Chad Thorson seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

It was brought to the attention of the Board that the 2023 membership for the National Employees Association was due in the amount of \$200. Matt Olson made a motion to pay the 2023 National Employees Association membership dues. Molly Jugovic seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Old Business:

The Urban Conservation Workshop was discussed. It was reported that attendance was good and other employees have appreciated having sessions recorded and shared after the event. Survey results will be coming shortly.

On the agenda for 2023 trainings will be the Windbreak Technology course. Plan on collaborating with NDFS and possibly NRCS. Tunge mentioned that the Agroforestry Center out of Nebraska has been holding trainings throughout Minnesota and offered to provide assistance to ND Districts as well.

It was mentioned that employees will be asked at the State Convention for training topics they would like to see.

Also on the potential agenda for 2023 will be a youth education/outreach event. A subcommittee of Fairbanks, McHarry, and Tunge will work on this.

Tree Promo will be held March 7-9, 2023, at the Baymont in Mandan. Krueger, Olson, Thorson, and Kelli Schumacher will be the main planning committee. This will be separate from the Watershed Coordinators conference this year, but may be joined again in the future.

The Benefits Survey was emailed out and 71 responses were received. Results will be sent to all employees within the week.

2022 State Convention agenda was reviewed and NDCDEA roles and responsibilities were reviewed. Mentorship/Discussion breakout sessions for District Employees will be Monday morning in the lower level meeting rooms following the NDCDEA Business Meeting. Topics included 319 Projects, District books/operations, and employee handbook.

A rep from NDASCD will be asked to speak at the NDCDEA Business meeting about the upcoming education grant program they will be rolling out.

The auction will be held in the Ballroom right after the Achievement Winner Banquet, auctioneer and clerk will be lined up for that event. McHarry will set up a spreadsheet to help coordinate what auction items to expect. All money will go to education scholarships.

A request for nominations for the NDCDEA Appreciation Award will be sent out to all employees.

Kelsch joined the meeting via Zoom at 10:40 am.

New Business:

Rhonda Kelsch – Reported that the NDASCD will be holding a reorganizational meeting in December, after which they will decide which direction to take with the CEO replacement. Kristi is the main contact for tree orders and deadlines. It was stressed that timely submission is important. Kelsch also stressed keeping an attitude of professionalism and moving forward, instead of focusing on the past.

The Rural Investment to Protect the Environment (RIPE) program is moving forward. Farmers Union did receive the funding. Now in the logistics phase and programmatic tweaks. Meetings will be held soon in the counties that will be eligible for funding. There may also be funds through a program with ESMC and General Mills that could be statewide. In the end, Kelsch said the structure of the Districts in the state make us an ideal entity to facilitate the distribution of Climate Smart dollars – it allows us to be reimbursed monetarily for contract assistance and helps promote who we are. Training will be made available in the next few weeks with additional information.

Jodi Delozier – Introduced as new Extension Program Director and Specialist, Soil and Water Leadership Development with the SSCC. The vacant administrative assistant position will hopefully be filled by mid-November and then advertising will begin for a new Program Coordinator. The SSCC board will be meeting before Convention and encourages all employees and supervisors to attend the session during the convention with the Assistant Attorney General for ND about Supervisor Roles and Responsibilities.

Tom Claeys – Updated board on Windbreak Renovation Initiative through OHF. They were approved for a third round where funding will go back to 75/25 cost share. The Forest Service still has financial assistance for districts to help them with contracting. The 2023 Towner Nursery catalog has been released.

Shannon Anderson – Updated board on research done for District options for health benefits. There are a lot of loops to go through and nothing feasible has been found yet. This is also being discussed at the National level because Districts across the country are struggling with the same issue.

Sarah Tunge – Dakota Legacy Initiative will hopefully be rolled out at the State Convention. After looking through our current employee handbook, it would be important to know what District staff find important and useful. Perhaps some of this can be handled at Convention. The Summer NACD Annual Meeting is still a go for Bismarck as the location.

Discussion was held on upcoming grants in general. There will be some upcoming transition with grants handled through the NDCDEA. Discussion on OHF and why contract fulfillments seemed late. There were some issues stemming from 2 main factors – late submissions from individual districts and then staff retirement/turnover with the Industrial Commission. Again, when deadlines are not met, it slows the process down for all the Districts in the State.

The Regional Employee Award nomination for NACD is due shortly. There has never been a recipient from ND. An email will be sent out asking for potential nominees.

Other Business:

NDCDEA elections will be held at the November Business Meeting. There will be an email sent out statewide with stats and open positions.

Darci brought up perhaps having a monthly NDCDEA Directors meeting with all the upcoming programs, grant opportunities and other changes. It was the consensus of the board this would be beneficial.

Also, discussion on how to better keep communication lines open for all Districts in the state – especially with staying up to date with NDCDEA activities. A motion was made by Matt Olson to have minutes of the Director Meetings emailed out to all employees once they are approved by the Directors. This will help everyone keep abreast of upcoming events, deadlines, and grants. Second by Anderson. Motion passed unanimously.

Reminder that a reorganizational meeting for Directors will be held after the November Business Meeting.

With no other business, meeting was adjourned at 12:30 pm by Krueger.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tokina McHarry

Tokina McHarry