



Montana Conservation District Employee Organization

MCDEO Board Meeting

February 21, 2024, 11 am, by Zoom Conferencing

Call to order

The meeting was called to order by EO president Chris Evans.

Attendance

In attendance: Samantha Tappenbeck (Area V); Kay Webb (Area V); Chris Evans (Area VI); Angie Stahl (Area IV); Wendy Jones (Area IV); Robbie Savelkoul (Area I); Jess Fields (Area VI); Tenlee Atchison (Area III); Julie Goss (Area II); Diane Black (Area I)

Absent: Caitlen Wolff (Area II); Jackson Bramlette (Area III)

Review Governance Calendar

Chris converted the calendar to an excel spreadsheet for editing purposes. Chris reviewed expectations for sending out annual financial contribution information. Kay asked if Area Directors would be asked to pay dues out of our personal funds rather than with District funds. Tenlee asked for clarification. On the Board Member Commitment document, "personal financial contribution every year" is included. Chris noted Terry Profota's input on how personal financial contribution from the Area Directors looks favorable for grant applications as buy-in. Chris would like to define this as the dues contribution and does not have a preference on whether or not that comes from a Director's personal finances or from their CD's budget. Robbie agrees that dues should be sufficient and noted that for another board she serves on, there is a donation of an item for an annual fundraising auction.

Robbie made a motion "to define the annual dues as the minimum annual financial contribution." Kay Webb seconded.

Wendy made a motion to amend "to remove the 'personal' annual financial contribution language out of the Board Member Commitment document." Vote in favor of the amendment - all; Opposed - none; Motion to amend carried unanimously.

Vote in favor of the amended motion - all; Opposed - none; Motion carried unanimously.

Consent Agenda

Minutes and other standard documents to review and approve will be included on the consent agenda. Committees will provide notes from their meetings, and those will be included in the consent agenda to approve. The purpose is to streamline the process of approving standard documents that are distributed and reviewed prior to the meeting.

Approval of minutes from last 2 meetings:

12/20/2023

1/17/2024

Kay Webb motioned to approve the consent agenda. Samantha seconded. Vote in favor - all; Opposed - none; Motion carried unanimously.

Committee Meeting minutes

Committees will provide notes from their meetings, and those will be included in the consent agenda to approve.

Financial Matters (catch up from January Meeting)

4th quarter financial report:

Books are being reviewed right now for pending transition between treasurers. Chris is working with Sharon and Robbie to make sure that Robbie has everything she needs.

Robbie noted we did receive payment from MACD for Convention, thinks it was \$3800 but will confirm the amount.

Dues notices for 2024-Amount \$30?

We will be sending out dues notices in the next couple of weeks. Robbie asked if the amount will stay \$30 or should be increased to adjust for increasing costs. Tenlee noted that it was increased from \$25 to \$30 recently. Chris noted that dues partially cover training expenses and travel scholarships; if every district pays, it provides about \$2200 and that does not cover even half of the travel scholarships. We are planning a training every year rather than every other year. Dues would cover about one-sixth of the travel budget.

Kay stated that she thinks we should consider increasing it considering issues with partnerships and financial support from avenues we've depended on in the past, additionally the influx of funding through CDA grants. Samantha suggested bringing the proposal for increased dues to our quarterly area meetings and discussing with employees in our respective areas. Robbie noted this would give us time to lay out the strategic plan and exactly what we want to do with the increased dues. Kay asked if we would want to bring the question to the full membership. Chris noted that it should not actually be a board decision, it should be brought to the membership for decision. Robbie noted we could have a discussion with the full membership at the November meeting. Chris stated we will leave them at \$30 for now and discuss and consider an increase next year. Robbie will start working on dues requests.

NCDEA Dues Request:

Request for annual dues in the amount of \$200. Discussion about what it gets you if you pay the dues. NCDEO provided a year in review report with the dues request which outlined the accomplishments of the previous year.

Robbie made a motion "to pay the dues in 2024." Wendy seconded. Vote in favor - all; Opposed - none; Motion carried unanimously.

Bookkeeper solicitation results:

The only application we received was from Sharon Lemetis. Robbie shared her feelings on the matter and experience working with Sharon. She noted specific challenges and that she did not see any hope of improvement. Robbie suggested leaving the position open, contracting with an accountant to do the 990s, and to complete other tasks as they come up in the interim.

Chris noted the main point is for the bookkeeper not to be the Treasurer, and we can otherwise contract with a firm to do the work. Chris reviewed the solicitation and noted that we are estimating 50 hours/year. We will not be hiring an employee, we don't want to have to do payroll and taxes, etc. Robbie noted we should probably expand our advertisement of the solicitation and asked if we could share on facebook, request MACD share the information, etc. Chris confirmed and will send the solicitation out again.

Robbie motioned "to continue the search". Angela seconded.

Wendy asked if we should reach out to accounting firms or if that would be too expensive of an option. Chris stated that given we only had one response, sending it out widely would be beneficial.

Vote:

In favor - all but one
Opposed - none
Abstention - one
Motion carried.

Operations

CDAC EO representative: Chris is currently the rep but no longer wants to serve in that role. It is valuable but she is not able to serve. Quarterly meetings, all will be virtual in 2024 except for one. Julie is interested. Wendy is interested.

Samantha motioned to appoint Julie Goss to the CDAC EO representative role." Wendy seconded.

Chris amended the motion to include that Wendy will serve as the alternate.
Vote in favor - all; Opposed: none; Motion carried unanimously.

Status of 1023 submission:

It has been submitted and we expect to hear from them within the next six months. Chris will keep us apprised.

Update on process meetings with Terry Profota:

Meetings are ongoing, next one is next week, February 29th, and will be on cleaning up committee policies. Each committee will have their own set of policies to remove, amend, delete as appropriate. Chris will send a link to the policies for each committee with the meeting information.

Update on Training Coordination meetings:

Chris reviewed SET 2024 planning spreadsheet by date: August 27-29. The 29th will only be for the board. The grant will cover Shannon Stober's expenses, as well as travel to and from the event for EO members. Unclear at this point what the grant will and will not cover. Robbie asked if it would be helpful if we came up with a one page document with the reasons why we have chosen to do the 501c3 status and the benefits in order to help the situation. Chris is not sure and feels that we've explained it over and over already.

2024 Training Update:

Need for roles and responsibilities update training for the EO board. It will be no sooner than late March or April. Kay will put together a poll and send out. Everyone on the board will need to review this. DNRC has indicated that they will not be funding any training for the EO until we have done the roles and responsibilities training with Terry and until we have our prioritization and plan for the future (we have Shannon Stober lined up for August 27-29 in Lewistown - which DNRC will be paying for - but they won't pay for other training until that is completed). Chris thought we could include this information in the EO report provided to CD supervisors. Robbie suggested that the EO executive committee might attend future meetings between EO and DNRC to show support. We may have to pay part of the training expenses out of pocket. The burden of meals and lodging will at least partially be on conservation district employees and/or their boards.

Committees

Review Committee Job Descriptions; Board Expectations:

Chris reviewed the Committee Table chart: Executive, Finance, Governance duties. Most of the documentation created for us will have a second version in case we're ever able to hire an executive director.

Executive

Signing of confidentiality, Board Commitment forms and Conflict of Interest Agreements: Samantha will send out forms and updated board commitment document (since we changed it) and have everyone sign and send back to Secretary email. Secretary to compile and file documents to keep on record. Chris will forward all the edited documents to Samantha.

Finance - Robbie Savelkoul, Angie Stahl, Julie Goss

Governance - Kay Webb, Wendy Jones, Jess Fields

Work Groups/Task Forces

What workgroups or task forces need to be started to cover activities other than the 3 Standing Committees? (Training, EO Event at Convention...etc.) Any EO member can be part of a workgroup or task force.

We can create work groups/teams as needed.

Training: Chris proposes we have a Training Committee and that is an established group. Current members working on training are Chris, Kay, Trish Smith (Petroleum), and Dona Stafford (Fergus).

EO Event at Convention: Chris has not approached MACD about Convention yet, but suggests we have a committee work on that. Robbie noted that she, Wendy and Sharon met and decided they should move forward with an EO event this year and that we should be very clear about what we can/not do and lay out guidelines and expectations. We did make money last year so it seems beneficial. Tenlee volunteered to lead that effort. Julie will also help. Chris will send that group the draft MOU that we initially tried to use in 2023.

Partner Matters

MACD Convention-analysis of numbers, feasibility of continuing the event, or changing the format (off-site?); use of CD Employees to support convention

The committee should put together a proposed budget for the event, including awards, and bring that to MACD. Discussion of whether the EO Event would be on or offsite. Robbie thought that MACD was not willing to help promote the event if held offsite.

Open Mic/other business

Minutes Submitted By: Samantha Tappenbeck (Area V)

Minutes Approved: