

*Tsaile - Wheatfields Joint Farm Board and Water Users Association Meeting
Monday, March 25, 2013 @ 4pm
Wheatfields Chapter House, Wheatfields, AZ*

MEETING MINUTES

I. Order of Business

- a. Meeting called to order at 4:20pm.
- b. Roll Call: Farm Board – Lorena Eldridge, Lucinda Davis, and Dortha Litson were all present. Water Users – Violet Hunter, Aaron Begay, Kathy Johns, Lupita Maclanahan, new elected board of Director were Myron Tsosie, secretary, and Dortha Litson, treasure.
- c. Invocation conducted by Lucinda Davis

Before the agenda was reviewed people expressed the following thoughts and concerns:

- How can this joint meeting be conducted?
 - Danny Johns Sr. voiced his concern that was once shared by Leslie Allen. They thought that Water User is its own entity, yet the Farm Board are taking charge. The Water User has its own set of bylaws where only the board votes not all. He suggested having one joint meeting per month.
 - Kathy Johns stated we were going to get together an hour before the meeting to touch based. We are making it hard on ourselves. It is important for us to have one meeting so we are not duplicating the information.
 - Lorena Eldridge suggested for the Water User members to have one meeting on their own and one joint.
 - Mildred Silversmith expressed that there are many elders that do not understand English, and if the meeting is English it make the elders not want to participate in the meeting or voice there say so. She requested to have both Farm Board and Water User members introduce themselves. There are many we don't know.
 - As a result, each member introduced themselves and their position.
- d. Reviewed agenda by Dortha Litson. One item added to the agenda was Office Space Agreement.

Action Item: The agenda was accepted with the one item added.

Motioned by Merle Kedelty

Seconded by Addie Billie

Voting: 17 yes; 0 no; 0 abstain

Motion Carried

- e. Reading of last meeting Minutes, March 11, 2013
Dortha Litson read the last Farm Board meeting minutes, March 11, 2013.

Questions and comments:

Frank Billie: Is the bylaws amended and completed?

Lorena Eldridge: She replied to let Mr. Billie know that at the Annual Meeting conducted by the Water User on March 16, 2013 was where the Bylaws and Article of Incorporation were accepted.

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Danny Johns Sr. read the last Tsaile – Wheatfields- Blackrock Water Users meeting minutes, March 16, 2013.

Questions and comments:

None

Action Item: The meeting minutes read by both the Farm Board and Water Users were accepted as it was read.

Motioned by Merle Kedelty

Seconded by Frank Billie

Voting: 17 yes; 0 no; 0 abstain

Motion Carried

f. Announcements

1. Chapter Planning Meeting, Monday, April 1, 2013 @ 3pm, Wheatfields Chapter Hse.
2. 2013 Seed Sovereignty Conference, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, April 3 – 5, 2013 @ Diné College – sponsored by Land Grant and Diné Policy Institute.

II. Reports

a. Farm Board

1. President

Lorena Eldridge: She explained she was assigned to purchase computer, software, other equipments, and office supplies for Water Users. She received three price quotes, but has expired twice. The quotes are only good for 30 days. The recent reason for not purchasing is that the card is not in her name. In addition, Danny Johns now has the card. As a result, she will turn this over to current Water User officers.

2. Vice President

Lucinda Davis: She stated, “At the last Joint Farm Board meeting for the Navajo Nation there was a task force created and she was selected to be a part of the task force. The focus of the task force is to amend the plan of operation for the farm board if there is way to find it fit under the Title 26 if of the Navajo Nation Code.”

3. Secretary

Dorthea Litson: She share many information embedded with some questions. They were as follow:

- What was the outcome of the Chapter resolution that needed to be written to BIA Natural Resource staff to request for Russian Olive Treatment for Tsaile Creek and Lower Wheatfields creek? She will need a copy of that resolution so she can submit that with map to BIA Natural Resource staff.
- Lorena Eldridge replied that the resolution was pass without a written resolution, but you, Dorthea Litson, will need to write one to submit to Chapter, so the Chapter President can sign it.

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- She provided the history of how Water User was established, and the purpose of nonprofit. She is learning as she is experiencing way to work with this nonprofit. She is finding that nonprofit is wonderful thing to have. Our community can really benefit from it especially if we work together. However, this Water User has several problems. As a result, she and other wrote a proposal to First Nation, Denver CO area, to request for \$10,000. It was funded. Now, in this grant were are working with three major outcomes:
 - Establish a sound nonprofit, Water User. It needed to revised its Bylaws, and change the scope a little where the focuses on more water development for agricultural and community activities within our community. Currently the Bylaws have been revised. Also, we worked on our strategic plan. We developed four goals, but will need to put an implementation and monitoring to it.
 - Farming Assessment: To collect data from why people are unable to farm, so we can do more planning.
 - Five Farmers: Work with five farmers to establish conservation plan, and submit for EQIP. We have been conducting several workshops where it opened to all who wants to learn. Currently, in the process she is searching for a consultant to can write a conservation plan using what the BIA requires and NRCS requires. She plans to work with Steve Barker to facilitate the workshops. This workshop will be open to all.
 - She requested when the Water User Officers and Farm Board are able to meet to finalize the strategic plan.

Questions, comments, and suggestions

- Lupita Maclanahan: This grant that was written can it be use to repair the windmill and earthen dam? If the assessment is compiled will First Nation provide us the data? In Blackrock area there are; 4 windmills, 5 wells, 9 earthen dam, and 3 bigger earthen dam.
 - Dorthea Litson responded, when one writes a proposal he has to plan and indicate how he will work and use the money. This becomes the scope of work, and it is important to use for only that purpose as indicated. As a result, we are unable to use it to repair the windmill, well, and earthen dam. However, as a community we need to do both an assessments and inventory within our community so we can write a proposal for it. These are the possibilities.
 - Lorena Eldridge: She explained the difference between inventory and assessment. An inventory is to provide a list of what one has, and the assessment provides the condition.

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- Frank Billy: He asked, what are the things that needs to happen to build the foundation and who needs to build the foundation for the Water User?
 - Dorthea Litson stated, “This is great questions. Of all the things mentioned the one thing we must have to build the foundation is to have a management policy, which includes the Financial Policy and accountant software. Next, we need you, the farmers and ranchers, to collaborate with the officers. The farmers and ranchers will need to voice their needs for improvement.”

b. Water Users

1. President

Violet Hunter: She extended her thanks to all, and plans to serve on the Water User as President. She is excited to service. She has been trying to formularize herself with what the Water User is. In her research, she found that there are many Water User Associations throughout the World.

2. Vice President

Aaron Begay: He attended two workshops, Association for Arizona Tribal Conservation District in Prescott, AZ and First Nations Funders Meeting at STAR School in Flagstaff. The topics in Prescott meeting were as follow:

- MOU between BIA and NRCS. No show from BIA
- NRCS wants to work with Farmers and Ranchers with Conservation Plan
- FSA wants to work with Farmers and Ranchers with any loan needed
- Peach Spring- Walapi Tribes: The people relinquished all the decision to the tribe. The tribe works with NRCS where they implement 600 miles of waterline throughout the reservation. These waterlines provide water to their cattle and wildlife as well.
- Farmers and Ranchers shared their concerns for working with NRCS. NRCS staff stated, “The Conservationist should be able to work with you as a farmer and rancher on what you want. The farmer and rancher should be the one to determine how he wants to work with his land and where improvements are needed.”

The topics in Flagstaff meeting were as follow:

- What is a conservation plan? NRCS staff and retiree were there to explain what a conservation plan should look like and how to put one together.
- STAR School: This school is a K – 8. It runs on solar power and wind bin. Part of the curriculum is to have student plant in their garden. Students harvest the plant and serve to their school. However, what they grow is not enough, so they are seeking for more farmers to work with so fresh produce can be served.
- GRANTS: There are many grants opportunities. 2 billion dollars of Foundation funds are available and only 1.2 million dollars are funded to Native American Indian across the United States.

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- Taos Pueblos: The Taos Pueblos work with the TEDC. They established a commercial kitchen for farmers and ranchers to use. The people can take their produces there to clean and prepare them. Some they fixed are for their own family consumption and the rest are market to others at nearby stores. Along with this they have a mobile Matenza to use with Ranchers. It is a USDA certified mobile slaughter unit. They work with cattle, sheep, pigs, and buffalos.

At the end of his report, he encouraged all to plan with the Farm Board and Water Users; encourage your children to take part planting and ranching; and pay the Operation and Maintenance fee.

Questions, comments, and suggestions:

- Frank Billie: What is NRCS?
 - Lorena Eldridge: She explained what NRCS is as program, and how it is established throughout the US. Finally how it branches out the Navajo Nation. The work they do. On the Navajo Nation there are 5 offices.

3. Secretary

Myron Tsosie left early for class, so no report.

Action Item: No major item evolved from this report. Even when there were requests made. It was accepted for dialogue purposes.

Motioned by Mildred Silversmith

Seconded by Jessie Tsosie

Voting: 16 yes; 0 no; 0 abstain

Motion Carried

III. Old Business

No item listed.

IV. New Business

a. LUP – Transfer, Relinquishment, Sublease, Probate

1. Late Homer Nez family request for research on plot.

The late Homer Nez children were not present at the meeting, but Dorthea Litson explained the little research she conducted. Angie Carroll visited her home Sunday evening, March 24, 2013. She explained the farmland once belonged to Shorty Begay also known as Keyonnie Begay II. He verbal gave a piece of his land to the late Homer Nez. The land he gave to Homer was the one he once lend his sister, Mae. Mae end up receiving a Land Use Permit on the land that was lend to her without confirming her brother. Finally, Angie shared there is a Will paper on Shorty Begay land.

Dorthea Litson did a field visit, and found that there is no fence line to mark. She also found that the land is in Thomas Begay name at 9.98 acres.

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Jessie Tsoosie, the late Homer Nez's sister, stated her mother Mae did have a Land Use Permit, and Homer took the permit when she passed away several years ago. She does not know if the Land Use Permit was put into late Homer Nez name.

Lorena Eldridge suggested writing to BIA office to request for more research.

Action item: To write to BIA Natural Resource office staff in Chinle to request for more research to see if this land being talk about does have a Land Use Permit.

Motioned by Merle Kedelty

Seconded by Frank Billy

Voting: 17 yes, 0 no; 0 abstain

Motion Carried

b. Office Space Agreement

Lorena Eldridge: She now has the office key. Plus, she read the Office Space Agreement in Navajo to the people.

Questions, suggestions, and comments:

Violet Hunter: She commented, "Under compensation for use, the language should either state one or the other, not both; it is now misleading. Does the Chapter want compensation or not. There is no mention of Liability."

Dorthea Litson: The agreement is only between the Farm Board and Chapter. There is need to add Water User. Since both are working very closely together.

Kenneth Sorrel: If you only have the office key, then how do you plan to get into the office if there is no key to the entrance of the Chapter House. As result, there is need to request for an entrance key.

Lorena Eldridge: We will request for an entrance key, and if the Chapter staffs are uncomfortable then it needs to be spelled out how they plan to provide an entrance key.

Action Item put to motion was as follow:

Return the agreement form to Chapter staff and officials, and request for the following:

- 1. Change language under Compensation for Use*
- 2. Add Water Users*
- 3. Request for Chapter Entrance key*
- 4. If entrance key cannot be provided, then it needs to be spelled out how the entrance will be open when needed.*

The action items:

Motioned by Addie Billie

Seconded by Mildred Silversmith

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V. Other

None listed

VI. Conclusion

a. Next agenda items were listed as follow:

1. Water Master – Hiring process – Job announcement, Job description
2. Seed purchase
3. Late Homer Nez LUP
4. One Board position
5. Agricultural Day
6. Logo for Water User

b. Next meeting date scheduled for Sunday, April 14, 2013 at 1pm or following the CLUP meeting.

c. Adjournment at 7:34 pm.

To accept the meeting adjournment:

Motioned by Lupita Maclanahan

Seconded by Mildred Silversmith

Voting: 16 yes; 0 no; 0 abstained

Motion Carried