

Tsaile – Wheatfields – Blackrock Farm Board and Water Users Joint Meeting
Sunday, November 10, 2013
Wheatfields Chapter House, Wheatfields, AZ

MEETING MINUTES

I. Order of Business

- a. Meeting called to order at 1:05pm
- b. Roll Call: Farm board – Lorena Eldridge, Lucinda Davis, and Dorthea Litson were all present. Water Users – Aaron Begay, Lupita McClanahan, Dorthea Litson, and Kathy John were all present.
- c. Invocation conducted by Aaron Begay
- d. Reviewed agenda by Dorthea Litson. There were not items added or deleted. However there were questions about some items. Those items were imbedded within the items listed.

Action: The agenda reviewed was accepted as read.

Motioned by Lucinda Davis

Seconded by Aaron Begay

Voting: 6 yes; 0 no; 2 abstained,

Motion Carried

- e. Reading last meeting minutes, October 28, 2013, was read by Dorthea Litson. No questions, comments, or corrections.

Action: The read meeting minutes was accepted as read.

Motioned by Aaron Begay

Seconded by Teresa Chee

Voting: 4 yes; 0 no; 4 abstained

Motion Carried

f. Announcements

- Tsaile – Wheatfields – Blackrock Chapter Meeting,
Sunday, November 17, 2013 @ 10am Wheatfields, Chapter House

The following were additional announcements:

- Chinle Agency Grazing Meeting @ Chinle Chapter House 9am, November 12, 2013
- Dine' College Meeting @ Dine' College on November 12, 2013.

II. Reports

A. Farm Board

President reported on the following:

- I. Update on Proposal for Narbona Growth Fund. She followed up on the Narbona Growth at the Navajo Nation Department of Agriculture to see if Mr. Notah had any status. However, she found out that Mr. Notah no longer works with the Department. There will be a Chinle Agency Extension Agent assigned to us after hiring process is concluded. The staff asked if there was a specific extension agent to work with. Finally, she suggested seeing if we can find where Mr. Notah is now at, and he might be able to help with some Water Users issues. He is a very knowledgeable person.

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2. Western Agency's Grazing Officials. She let us know that the Western Agency's Grazing Officials are working together requesting for a timely stipend payment for the service they do. As result, the Navajo Nation's Office of the Controller, Department of Agriculture will be meeting with Western Grazing Officials to figure out a plan for paying their stipend on-line in a timely matter with direct deposit as an option. In addition, the payroll office staffs will not process checks for the grazing and board stipend yet still pending with NN Department of Personnel which is a IRS rule for stipend report on W2. In the meantime the Accounts Payable are processing stipends.

Vice President reported on the Regional Water Plan meeting. She stated that Brown and Caldwell Engineering firm were hired by Navajo Nation Water Management Branch to conduct a Regional Water Shed Study which starts with Sweetwater Chapter to Wheatfields Chapter. This group started their study as of October 1, 2013 to September 30, 2014. Current, the group is in the process of evaluating water tanks, storage tanks, and earthen dams. Their focus is primary water for Business, Farming, and Ranching. IHS focuses on drink water for the people. They will be studying, "What type of water we have?" Ground and surface water will be studied. Finally, they are requesting to meet with the chapter and people on a quarterly base.

From the chapter stand point, Paula requested that they attend the chapter meeting on Sunday, November 17, 2013 to explain to the chapter about the project.

Questions, comments, concerns, or suggestions:

What do they mean when they say, "What does the community want and what is met by collaboration?"

It was explained that the reason for the water shed study is due to the Water Rights. Currently, the Water Rights are given back to the Navajo people, and at the same time the Navajo people DOES NOT have a Water Plan. In the future to come, we know the Water Rights issues will come back on the table, and at that point the Navajo People will be asked about their water plan.

It is important to work with this group, but it is important to keep in mind that the population, housing, ranching and farming, and business is the priority we should be thinking about as we plan for water use.

This water shed study is very important to our community, and impacts many of our committees within the Chapter. We know that the Water Users Board is in the process of writing and submitting a proposal for water shed study with University of Utah and New Mexico State University. How far is that coming along? How will that be different from this study? They also conducted meeting with the people and some survey questions were answered by the people.

Secretary stated she has no report, but would like to comment and make suggestions regarding the President and Vice Presidents report.

- As a Farm Board, we worked on the Narbona Growth Fund Proposal and submitted paper to BIA with an ALTERNATIVE PLAN for working on idling farm lands due to probate cases or not working on it for 2 years. When all of this is put together we need to finalize a Business Plan. With this entire plan put together, we can forward

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this to the Navajo Nation Council Delegate to request them to search for money to help us implement some economic development opportunities for our people within the community.

- Regarding the Water Shed Study, it's been an idea of the Water Users since January 2013 of this year to conduct a Water Shed Study for our own Community. The study was intended to involve more students from Junior High to College to take part in the study and the community people so that both can learn from it. This will allow for people to take water issues more seriously and be more respectful to the issues. Finally, use the results from the Water Study to plan for how can provide more infrastructures. She was unable to attend the meeting last week on Monday, Nov. 4, 2013, regarding the Regional Water Shed Study. However, it would have been nice to set up an appointment with the group to see how they plan to do the study, and figure out how we can collaborate together. This will allow the Water Users more clarity of what the gaps might be, and the gaps are where we search for more money, so it can be a unique study for our area. Currently, the Water Users' put a survey together, and is in process of pulling the survey together. Based on the survey, the proposal will be changed a little. Once that is all put in place the proposal will be submitted for different funding sources. The amount of money we are look at ranges from \$250,000 to \$500,000.

Comments; suggestion, concerns, or questions:

Kathy J commented on the First Nation Grant, and her concerns for using idling farmlands as leverage to search for more funding. She attended some workshops and was in the process of writing her conservation plan, but at the end she was never paid a stipend as she agreed. In addition, she has not received her seeds. Furthermore, her interpretation of the project was for the board to actually farm for her. Due to all of this misunderstanding she is not longer interested in farming.

Lorena explained that it is hard to search for money. When writing a proposal one has to indicate the scope of work that will be conducted to overcome the problem. Based on the specification stated that is how the money has to be spent. If not spent as specified then one is out of compliance.

Dorthea responded to Kathy's comment and concerns: She took her teaching values of her very own elders and parents in her lives about learning the western education and bring it back to her community as mean to help her people. For that reason, she took up this Farm Board position. Yes, she paid \$250.00 on her own willingness, and the people of her community supported through the election. As a board member, today, she is very sincere about finding ways to help her people. She is not here and does not wish harm for her people. As a result, she wrote the First Nation proposal and it was funded. In that proposal, she shared with the Farmers and Boards many times the scope of the work. The five Farmers were to write a Conservation Plan with a youth at hand to help them. When the Conservation Plan is completed by the farmers and youth then they would receive a stipend. At the time, when the conservation plan was called for she did not have a conservation plan and her youth was never involved for that reason she and her youth did not receive a stipend. Freddie Yazzie was involved in the project. He wrote his conservation plan, but not youth involve; therefore, he is the only one to receive the stipend. No

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youth was paid. Dorthea is responsible for the funding source and is not willing to move away from the scope of work as spelled out in the proposal.

Action: The reports provided by the Farm Boards were only accepted. The suggestions were only made; not acted on. No final decisions provided.

Motioned by Aaron Begay

Seconded by Freddie Yazzie

Voting: 8 yes; 1 no; 2 abstained

Motion Carried

B. Water Users

Lorena explained that the Water Users Boards are as follow:

Aaron Begay – President

Lupita McClanahan – Vice President

Dorthea Litson – Secretary/ Treasure

Kathy John Member

Aaron Begay provided updated information about the Irrigation jobs in all three areas of the Farmlands. The following is what he provided

Location of Farmlands	Job conducted	Jobs on hold
Upper Wheatfields	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 14 in weir has been installed so one of the farmer can receive water to her farmland, but after it was tested water DID NOT come out at her farmland; instead water were leaking out in other farmlands. Gate structure is build below Kee White reservoir so farmers can have better control to divert water. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Diversion needs major work and have to search for more money to repair. Concrete is being pushed out from earth movement. 2. There is a need to look for alternative methods, so the one farm can receive water to her farmland.
Lower Wheatfields	Pumped out the water from the pipe line.	
Tsaile	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Four major leaks on the underground irrigation systems were identified and those are being repaired by the water masters right now. In addition, 3 of the 14 inch alfalfa valves will be replaced with a 10 inch valve, and 1 12 inch alfalfa valve will be reinstalled. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Diversion needs major work and have to search for more money for it to be repaired as well.

Currently, Aaron and his family have been bringing the materials and supplies needed from Gallup, Farmington and Phoenix areas to do the job. A backhoe has been rented from Franks Rental out of Farmington, NM. As of today, we used up all of the operation and maintenance fee collected to purchase the materials for these jobs. Plus more money will be spent.

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Water Masters reported what they worked on regarding the jobs conducted mentioned above. Also they stated the backhoe is leaking oil and that needs repair to complete the job. They requested all the boards come and visit the work they are doing, so they can be more familiar about the work being conducted.

Comments, question, concerns, and suggestion:

The earthen dam in Blackrock need a supporting resolution for repair. However, it was conclude that needs to be followed up with the chapter and Navajo Nation Water Resource Department. The earth dam at this time needs to be dry, so it can be worked on as well.

Lupita McClanahan commented that she is willing to serve as a Vice President for the Water Users. She will continue to support the organization.

Aaron Begay final report was that he requested fund from the Chapter to travel to Las Vegas on December 10 to 13, 2013 to attend the Annual Colorado Rivers Water Users Association Conference.

Action: The Water Users Boards and Water Masters report were accepted as it was dialogued. No action came out of this report.

Motioned by Merle Kedelty

Seconded by Aaron Begay

Voting: 9 yes; 0 no; 1 abstained

Motion Carried.

III. Old Business

A. Old Farm Equipments

Lorena explained that at the last Farm Board meeting we decided to forward three options to the Chapter Officials and the people so it can be talked about at Chapter planning meeting on November 5, 2013. These options were presented at the planning meeting, and it was returned to the Farm Board to decide what to do with the equipments. Paula submitted a procurement policy that the Navajo Nation uses, but it does not pertain to the issue we are dealing with. Now the question is what do we do with the equipments?

Comments; suggestions; concerns; or questions;

Thomas Litson: “Were these equipments appraised separately or as a whole?”

Lorena: She replied that she is not sure if the appraisal was conducted separately or whole.

Aaron: He suggested selling all of the equipments. He had some boys wanting to buy the backhoe without the engine so he talked with Paula she was not sure how it can be handle.

Others commented that there are people out there who are willing to purchase them.

Action Deferred to next meeting, and in the main time have the water masters assess the equipment. In addition, we will wait for Paula Begay to forward the appraisal.

Motioned by Aaron Begay

Seconded by Merle Kedelty

Voting: 9 yes; 0 no; 1 abstained

Motion Carried

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B. Annual Operation & Maintenance Fee

Dorthea Litson presented on the overhead the amount of paid and unpaid Operation and Maintenance fee as of November 10, 2013. The paid fees are ___ and the unpaid fees are _____. The question, “how can people pay their unpaid fees?” She came across a Fund Management Plan that explains statue of collecting the unpaid fees, and we can use the Navajo Credit Loan Services guideline and the National Debt Collect Fair Act. These are the possible steps for us to think about. Importantly, these fees are used for repairing the irrigation systems.

Questions, comments, concerns, or suggestions:

Tony Yazzie explained he has a concern about his billing statement. He paid for his assessment for the last two years, and is aware that the late charges have been accumulating. He requested to waive five months of his late charges from his billing statement.

Lorena asked, “Why waive the fee?” and she used an example for how billing systems are set up.

Aaron explained the implementation of Operation and Maintenance fee, and we knew it would be hard to deal with our very own people and relatives. However, it would not be fair to those who have paid on time if your late charges a waived today, and it’s going to bring more people in requesting to waive their fee. Therefore, he kindly asked Tony to pay his full payment amount.

Teresa Chee also indicated to Tony that she and her sibling were in the same situation as he is now in at one time. The late charges were accumulating, and she end up paying for bill, and that would not be fair as well if he received waiver in his fee. Again, she kindly asked Tony to pay his fee.

Action: To accepted the data regarding the paid and unpaid Operation and Maintenance as of November 10, 2013. All needs to pay their fees in full even if late charges are accumulating.

Motioned by Lupita McClanahan

Seconded by Aaron Begay

Voting: 5 yes; 0 no; 1 abstained

Motion Carried

IV. New Business

A. Land Use Permit

No land use permit item was listed to dialogue and discuss.

Action: No action taken.

B. First Nation Training and Youth Workshop

Dorthea Litson shared with the people that she talked to Jackie Frank, First Nation, requesting to use the remaining balance of the grant money. Jackie wanted a budget for using the money, and the money has to be use before the end of December. The budget was approved. The following was the budget Dorthea submitted to Jackie:

Consultant for Training on Software	\$ 500.00	(First Nation is willing to pay for travel)
Youth Workshop	\$500.00	
2 presenters x \$150.00		

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Materials for presenters	\$200.00
Brochures – Copies	\$327.50

Now, Dorthea need help with setting up dates for these events. As a reminder, we as Farm Board and Board of Director all can present and we can find two additional presenters. One is talk about Hunting – for boys only, and the other presenter can do canning.

The following were dates we agreed to:

Saturday, December 7, 2013	Youth Workshop
Monday, December 9, 2013	Training for software

To accepted agreed dates for Youth Workshop and Training.

Motioned by Lucinda Davis

Seconded by Aaron Begay

Voting: 5 yes; 0 no; 1 abstained

Motion Carried

V. Others

No items listed under others.

VI. Conclusion

a. Next agenda items were not list, but others stated that it will be exchanged through email.

b. Next meeting date, Sunday, November 24, 2013 @ 1pm

c. Adjournment of meet was at 4:30pm

Action: The meeting adjournment was accepted.

Motioned by Lucinda Davis

Seconded by Aaron Begay

Voting: 5 yes; 0 no; 1 abstained

Motion Carried