

TSAILE/WHEATFIELDS JOINT FARM BOARD AND WATER USER MEETING  
SUNDAY AUGUST 27, 2017 @1:00 PM  
WHEATFIELDS CHAPTER HOUSE, WHEATFIELDS, AZ

MEETING MINUTES

**RECEIVED**

SEP 12 2017

Tsaile/Wheatfields  
Chapter BY: psb

1. ORDER OF BUSINESS

a. Meeting called to order

Meeting called to order by Lorena Eldridge at 1:30 pm

b. Invocation

Invocation given by Lorena Eldridge

c. Roll Call

Lorena Eldridge, Dortehea Litson and Lucinda Davis, Present - Farm Board

Aaron Begay, Anelda Kedelty, Dortehea Litson, Amelda Benally, Kathy Johns, Present - Water Users Association

d. Recognition of guest(s) and visiting officials

All local farmers, no special guest

e. Review and adoption of agenda

Read by Lucinda Davis

**Motion: Teresa Chee – To accept the agenda as is**

**Second: Kathy John**

**Vote: 15 yes – 0 no – 5 abstained**

**Motion Carried**

f. Review and adoption of last meeting minutes, August 9 , 2017

Read by Lucinda Davis,

**Motion: Bennie Litson – To accept the minutes of August 9, 2017 with no changes**

**Second: Linda Staley**

**Vote: 17 yes – 0 no – 7 abstained**

**Motion Carried**

II. OLD BUSINESS

NNFB 2017 goals - Below are the Program Performance Criteria (PPC and Goal Statements for all Farm Boards) The Farm Board elected officials will be assigned 1 or 2 PPC, see below.

A. Each FB will submit 12 crop inventory reports from their respective Agriculture Land Use Permittees (ALUP).

**Goal Statement:** Each FB will submit at least 3 respective crop inventory reports quarterly in table format (3CIR x 13 FBs).

Lorena explained the crop inventory, and encouraged the farmers to return the crop inventory forms, even if one did not plant anything. The Forms were explained as to what is on the form, including the different crops, weeds and irrigation. One can even indicate prairie dog problems, etc. She explained that this relates to the Water Rights and it helps the Nation to hold on to the Water Rights. No questions. At this meeting there were 9 crop inventory submitted which will be given to Department of Agriculture

TSAILE/WHEATFIELDS JOINT FARM BOARD AND WATER USER MEETING  
SUNDAY AUGUST 27, 2017 @1:00 PM  
WHEATFIELDS CHAPTER HOUSE, WHEATFIELDS, AZ

**Action: No action taken**

- B. Facilitate farm improvement/outreach activities for farmers in collaboration with tribal, state and private sectors.

**Goal Statement:** Conduct 2 agricultural educational outreach/workshops for farmers per quarter per 13 FBs.

**1. Wheatfields Agriculture Projects**

- A. Update Hiring Timeline

The advertised positions were Farm Manager, Grant Writer, Accountant, Office Specialist and Equipment Operator, these were advertised in the radio (KTNN & KWRK), newspapers (Navajo Times, Gallup Independent) and posters at the Stores and the Chapter.

Lorena stated, "We thought we were going to get a lots of applications, but we just have 9 applications. The advertisement was from August 14 to 25, 2017. We got one applicate for Farm Manager, one for Accountant, one Grant Writer, three for Office Specialist, three for the Equipment Operator. We did not assess all the applications, so we have to get together sometimes this week to access the applications. We also got one email the individual will not apply because of the Navajo Times article. We also decided to have an interview panel."

Lorena explained that at the last meeting it was decided to have the following on the interview panel:

- All three Farm Board Members
- Aaron Begay, TWB Dineh Water User Association
- Felix Nez, Dine College Land Grant Office
- TJ Holgate, Farmer representative, and alternate Jefferson Davis
- Zane James, Community representative, and alternate, Paul Begay

Dorthea said, "Zane James is only available on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, and TJ Holgate responded to the Water Users that he will not be able to be on the interview panel due to his new job assignment. Jefferson Davis has not been notified yet, but we still need an alternate. Felix Nez has been confirmed from Land Grant Office."

Lorena stated, "The interview is scheduled for Friday, September 1, 2017 at Wheatfields Chapter House, and beginning at 8:00 to 4:00, and each has about 20 questions; 15 questions; and 10 questions for interview; however, the assessment will need to be completed first on all applicants."

Questions, comments, and suggestions:

TSAILE/WHEATFIELDS JOINT FARM BOARD AND WATER USER MEETING  
SUNDAY AUGUST 27, 2017 @1:00 PM  
WHEATFIELDS CHAPTER HOUSE, WHEATFIELDS, AZ

Aaron Begay indicated, "He is unable to be part of the interview on September 1, 2017."

"Who can replace Aaron; which Water User Board of Directors?"

"Kathy Johns volunteered to replace Aaron Begay."

Dorthea stated, "We will need an alternate for Jefferson; if he indicated that he is unable to be part of the interview Panel. Who can we select as an alternate?"

David M. Tsosie indicated he is willing to be an alternate to Mr. Jefferson Davids.

TJ Holgate stated a question and comment:

- When the assessment is conducted, and if no one qualifies then will there be re-advertisement?
- The second is a comment, during an interview one can ask the applicant, only questions related to the positions. "We have to make sure we do this right from the beginning".

Lorena's responded, "Yes, we would have to re-advertise if no one qualifies and the second is the questions will only relate to the position that is being interviewed."

Furthermore, Lorena suggested, "We should make the Accountant and the Office Specialist positions as sensitive positions since they will be dealing with the finance of the operation; just like anyone that works with children, who have to have a background checks.

Aaron Begay and Kathy John agreed these positions should be considered a sensitive position and background checks should be done.

Lorena asked TJ Holgate if this could be done after the job description are done and applications were received.

Mr. Holgate responded, "It is up to the employer, the individuals don't have to be notified to do a background check. During the interview, they can be asked if there is anything that they want us to know, that would give them a chance for them to clear themselves."

The next question, "Do we make all the position a sensitive position, or just the Accountant and Office Specialist?"

Kathy John said it should be all the positions to be fair.



TSAILE/WHEATFIELDS JOINT FARM BOARD AND WATER USER MEETING  
SUNDAY AUGUST 27, 2017 @1:00 PM  
WHEATFIELDS CHAPTER HOUSE, WHEATFIELDS, AZ

TJ Holgate said why call it a sensitive position, it should be call a background check for employment, some people just go from job to job, that would show their employment record, if they were terminated then why were they terminated, this is what we would be looked for.

Lorena stated, "The next thing is it cost money to do background checks. Will the Navajo Nation Background Investigation work with the state or federal, and will do these for us? And Benita, who does Dine College go with? If the individuals go through the investigation and it comes back clear, is the organization willing to reimburse the individuals."

Benita indicated, "She is not sure if the Dine College conducts background checks."

According to TJ, it is the responsibility of the organization. With that Navajo Nation, a referral will be submitted to the Background investigation, with this organization we are an entity of the Nation as a Non-Profit so we don't know if it would be the same.

Lorena asked Aaron and Dorthea to check into finding out who can do the investigation for us.

Dorthea said, "One can go the Chinle Unified School administration office to submit for background check to state of AZ and costs \$ 60.00 and it takes it take 6 weeks to clear. A finger printing card will be issued to you, and the card is good for 6 years. (6) six weeks is a long time, and what we want to know is where to send these people to get the investigation done."

David Tsosie said, "Toyei use to conduct background check."

TJ said, "There is different types of background check, different criteria. Maybe it should just be the Accountant and Office Specialist. Background is still going to be required."

Another questions is all operators are usually given drug and alcoholic testing, but Lorena said she is not sure how that goes, but this is something that we can check into and what the cost would be.

Dorthea said there is 60 days to get all the investigations done. The only thing is the Nation does not report anything to the State, so it would be better to check with the Navajo Nation and State.

TSAILE/WHEATFIELDS JOINT FARM BOARD AND WATER USER MEETING  
SUNDAY AUGUST 27, 2017 @1:00 PM  
WHEATFIELDS CHAPTER HOUSE, WHEATFIELDS, AZ

Aaron said to interview the individuals then ask them what we should we know about them and when hired then they can be given a background check.

Most individuals want to have WUA pay for the test.

***Benita Litson motioned to conduct the investigation to be with the Tribe and the State, and the employer would be the one to pay for their background.***

***Dorthea Litson seconded.***

***Vote: 24 yes – 0 no - 2 abstained***

***Motion Carried***

Then Lorena said, "The Navajo Nation Background check cost \$15.75 plus \$45.00 which equals \$ 60.75, and Navajo Nation works with the State and Federal."

B. Topics

1. Topics and Design

Dorthea explained the proposal, and the need to abide by the outline. The budget is already created, and it indicated how the funding will be used. The following is what she further explained that is written in the proposal:

- The proposal will began with 30 farmers to start working with and thereafter each year there will be 30 farmers that will be coming on to join, but earlier in the year we said who ever want to start with all 127 producers, and this action has been put to motioned.
- There are (6) six Range Management Unit (RMU) within the community, and each has about 17 to 20 permittees (ranchers). We will need to identify to work with (3) three RMU, and work with the ranchers from these areas on planning for increasing water development, and rebuild some earthen dams.
- To rebuild earthen dams for irrigation purposes, and improving irrigation for farmland areas.
- To rebuild the perimeter fence for all three farmland areas. (Just the outside fencing only.)

She explained the six criteria that were developed during the April 2, 2017 Joint Farm Board Meeting. The Water User provides Equipment, seeds, planting, irrigation, harvesting, and workshop within each of the six criteria, but the participation from the identified farmers to work will depend on the farmer. There are six criteria of possible participation; and this is tied to what they receive at the end when production are received from their land. For example, Farmer 1 is when a Farmer sublease his/her land to the Farm Board, and what is produced on that land will be split in the following ways - the Farmer will get 30% and the WUA will get 70%. This depends on the Farmer involvement in farming or not. Farmer 6 has no involvement in the farming in this case what is produced the Farmer will get 10 % and WUA will get 90%.

TSAILE/WHEATFIELDS JOINT FARM BOARD AND WATER USER MEETING  
SUNDAY AUGUST 27, 2017 @1:00 PM  
WHEATFIELDS CHAPTER HOUSE, WHEATFIELDS, AZ

Finally, what is in the proposal is the funding for workshop to provide for the farmers. Now, the questions:

- How should the workshop be scheduled?
- What should be the topics?
- Who should facilitate the workshop?

However, Dortehea thought it would be a great opportunity to partner with Dine College Land Grant Office staff who already provides workshops to their producers. They have a proposal to work with 30 producers annually. We can identify the 30 producers that can work with the proposal that Land Grant already has, plus we can identify 30 more producers as written in the proposal. In total, we can have 60 farmers participate and have the Land Grant Staff run the workshops since they have one planned already.

***Partnership, Land Grant, Dine College***

Benita Litson, Director, Dine College Land Grant office, explained how they are doing their training with their ranchers and farmers and the kind of workshop they have planned. Their question is, do we as Farm Board and Water Users want to join them. Benita explained the different workshop that the Land Grant office staff are planning. She wanted to know if the Farm Board want to do a partnership with them on the Farmers that they will be working with them on the training part. This will be a partnership plan and help in that way. They will work with the Farm Manager to do a schedule and if there is something else that is needed. The Land Grant office the purchase different things for the people they work with such as siring to vaccinate their livestock and for Farmers instruments that help with the soil testing, is this something that the Farm Board would purchase for their farmers.

Questions, comments, and suggestions:

Bennie pointed out, the Land Grant office staff is not only helping our area, but all areas. It would be nice to join Land Grant office staff. If we work with Land Grant it would be to our benefit.

Lorena wanted to add to the workshop schedule:

- To separate the weeds, packaging, and marketing.

Sadie Neztosie agreed with the plan that Benita reported.

Dortehea asked Benita if the 97 farmers join the workshop. Since Benita said 30 farmers, what about the 97. Benita said it is ok since it is open to all.

***Motion: Bennie Litson to join the Land Grant Office.***

***Second: Sadie Neztosie***

***Vote: 21 yes – 0 no – 1 abstained***

***Motion Carried***



TSAILE/WHEATFIELDS JOINT FARM BOARD AND WATER USER MEETING  
SUNDAY AUGUST 27, 2017 @1:00 PM  
WHEATFIELDS CHAPTER HOUSE, WHEATFIELDS, AZ

C. Next Steps

- Dorthea will be meeting with Mike Issacson on Tuesday, August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at 1 pm at Wheatfields Chapter House. A Farm tour will be provided for them to give them an idea of work they will be helping us with as we move the project forward. Furthermore, we will talk about the service that they will be providing.
- Dorthea will be working with Bryceson Pinto this week on forms to be ordered from Sage software. On September 5, 2017 she will be meeting with Bryceson on Timeline for the Wheatfields Agriculture Project, and she would like all of the Board of Directors attendance; and after the meeting she will be meeting with NTUA staff regarding internet access, and sever access. If time permit, the strategic Plan might be discussed.

C. Provide training and assist farmers in updating or developing a conservation plan as required by BIA and the Navajo Nation.

**Goal Statement:** With farmer participation, implement conservation training and develop 2 or more plans per quarter per FB review.

**1.** COPE – Food Policy

Dorthea explained that the Nation does not have a food policy. COPE is Community Outreach & Patient Empowerment, to help us with developing the Food Policy and maybe we can have Nelson Begaye present to the council to start the food policy. Zane recommended this group to help. The Farm Board went to several training in New Mexico, even went through the Farm to School training. New Mexico even has the Farm to Table.

***Action: Defer to next meeting.***

D. Assist with farm area improvements such as land leveling, erosion control: with funding sources such as USDA.

**Goal Statement:** With farmer participation, each FB will implement 1 improvement per quarter according to conservation plan.

E. Each FB member shell inventory at least 3 ALUP/Farm Permit within respective FB area.

**Goal Statement:** With BIA and Farmer participation, reconcile and inventory as to the status of each ALUP or Farm Permit. (3ALUP x each 13 FB member)

**1.** No One on the List

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Travel Policy and Forms

Lorena read the Travel Policy, which has been developed. There is going to be procedures and the travel forms, allowances, advances, transportation guidelines. In the grant, there is

TSAILE/WHEATFIELDS JOINT FARM BOARD AND WATER USER MEETING  
SUNDAY AUGUST 27, 2017 @1:00 PM  
WHEATFIELDS CHAPTER HOUSE, WHEATFIELDS, AZ

funding for a vehicle. There is also the procurement policy and guidelines for different equipment, farm equipment, computers and even contracts and proposing, sole sources, etc. People want to wait on the Procurement and policy.

***Motion: David Tsosie to defer to the next meeting the Travel and Procurement Policy***

***Second: Roy Davis***

***Vote: 20 yes – 0 no - 2 abstained***

***Motion Carried***

**B. WUA Financial Report**

Dorthea reported the Financial Report

As of August 9, 2017 the balance is:	1,816,829.21
Deposit	100.00
Deposit	30.00
Balance:	1,816,959.21
Expenses:	677.49
Post Office Expense:	52.00
Balance to Date:	1,816,221.72

***Motioned by Benita Litson to accept the Financial Report***

***Amelda Benally seconded***

***Vote: 20 yes – 0 no - 3 abstained***

***Motioned Carried***

**IV. RECEIVING REPORTS**

**A. Reports**

Lorena reported the following:

- She attended the CLUPC meeting and in that meeting the ICIP priority list of Tsaille/Wheatfield is to be revisited. CLUPC scheduled a work session on September 6, 2017 to prioritize the projects for our community. Some years back the Tsaille/Wheatfields irrigation was on the top of the list, but now it is at second or third on the list.
- In 2006/7 the Navajo Nation IRS did a research or investigation and in 2011 a settlement was made. IRS revisited. This might change the status of the Farm Board to employee. There is also a Joint Farm Board meeting tomorrow, Monday, August 28, 2017.

WUA-Aaron no report

WUA-Dorthea reported that they increase the water to 4.5 for Lower Wheatfields for two weeks.

Kee Chee just wanted to know when all the meetings are. The Chapter Meeting, CLUPC and Farm Board.

**B. Announcements**



TSAILE/WHEATFIELDS JOINT FARM BOARD AND WATER USER MEETING  
SUNDAY AUGUST 27, 2017 @1:00 PM  
WHEATFIELDS CHAPTER HOUSE, WHEATFIELDS, AZ

V. CONCLUSION

A. Next Agenda Items

Agriculture

Training – COPE

Travel Policy/Forms

C. Next Meeting

September 10, 2017 at 9:00

D. Adjournment

***Motion to adjourn by David Tsosie***

***Second by Bennie Litson***

***All in favor***

***Adjourned at 5:40 pm.***