

Tsaile – Wheatfields – Blackrock Farm Board and Water Users Joint Meeting
Sunday, September 29, 2013
Wheatfields Chapter House, Wheatfields, AZ

Agenda

- I. Order of Business
 - a. Meeting called to order at 10:37 am.
 - b. Roll Call: Farm Board – Lorena Eldridge, Lucinda Davis, and Dorthea Litson were all present. Water Users – Aaron Begay, Lupita McClanahan, and Dorthea Litson were present. Absent: Violet Hunter, Kathy John, and Myron Tsosie.
 - c. Invocation conducted by Lucinda Davis
 - d. Reviewed agenda by Dorthea Litson. No questions or comments.
Action: The reviewed agenda accepted as it was read, no amendments.
Motioned by Lucinda Davis
Seconded by Aaron Begay
Voting: 5 yes; 0 no; 1 abstained Motion Carried
 - e. Read last meeting minutes, September 11, 2013, by Dorthea Litson. No questions or comments.
Action: The last meeting minutes read was accepted as it was read.
Motioned by Aaron Begay
Seconded by Lucinda Davis
Voting: 5 yes; 0 no; 1 abstained Motion Carried
 - f. Announcements
 - Tsaile – Wheatfields – Blackrock Chapter Planning Meeting, Wednesday, October 2, 2013 @ 1pm Wheatfields, Chapter House
- II. Reports
 - A. Farm Board

President stated she has no report.

Vice President reported that she attended the Reservation Wide Meeting at Navajo Nation Museum on September 26, 2013 in Window Rock, AZ. The topics were addressed:

 - **Current Status of Plan of Operation for Farm Board and Grazing:** The Plan of Operation for the Farm Board is making way into the fall legislative session, but the Grazing' continue to sit at Department of Justice for further review.
 - **Stipend for Farm Board, Eastern Land Board, and Grazing:** For the upcoming fiscal year the Farm Board stipend decreased from \$ 125.97 to \$113.00 per meeting while there is no increase or decrease for the Eastern Land Board or Grazing. Many comments were raise around this issue. For example: Leonard Chee, Community Development Director, commented that all departments had increase in funding; therefore why is there a decrease in Farm Board stipend.
 - **Horse Round Up Across the Navajo Nation:** 43 chapters who agreed to have the Navajo Nation Department of Agricultural help with Horse Round Up. However, Tsaile – Wheatfields – Blackrock chapter is not part of the 43 chapters. The grazing might have decided to conduct his own horse round up.

Tsaile – Wheatfields – Blackrock Farm Board and Water Users Joint Meeting
Sunday, September 29, 2013
Wheatfields Chapter House, Wheatfields, AZ

Questions, comments, or suggestion:

Lorena Eldridge commented Tsaile – Wheatfields Chapter will receive reimbursement for the July Horse Round up Conducted based on number of horse caught.

Secretary reported she attend the last two Tsaile Farmers Market that the Farm Board and Water User Co- Sponsored. The last Farmers Market Workshop focused on sheep management. That was very interesting to her because her knowledge of sheep is limited. The Land Grant staff covered vaccination, wool hair, and meat marketing.

B. Water Users

Vice President of Water Users reported he will begin to gather materials needed for the Water Masters to conduct their work.

Furthermore, Dorthea Litson explained to the people that the materials that Aaron will be preparing are going to be purchased with money available in the Operation and Maintenance budget.

Comments, questions, and concerns:

Lorena Eldridge asked if Aaron Begay’s name continues to be on the signatory listing.

Aaron replied that he is on the account and signatory listing. Hopefully, it will not be problem, but all expenditure will be stated in the meeting minutes.

Treasurer reported she paid the people who completed their conservation plan. She ended up paying Weston Carroll due to Kathy Johns not having a written Conservation Plan. She will go according to the scope of what is indicated on the proposal. However, majority of the farmers will not be able to apply for EQIP due to several reasons. Some have not farm for the last two years; and some have probate cases.

Action: The reports for both Farm Board and Water Users were accepted. As a result, the materials and supplies needed for the Water Masters will be purchased.

Motioned by Aaron Begay

Seconded by Teresa Chee

Voting: 6 yes; 0 no; 2 abstained

Motion Carried

III. Old Business

A. Water Shed Study – Grassroots People’s concerns

Dorthea Litson shared a meeting was conducted on Thursday, September 26, 2013 to explained “what a watershed study was and it’s purpose, and finally shared concerns by the people about water.” There was only a very few people who attended, but we stated that the Water Shed Study information would be shared at this Farm Board Meeting and Chapter Planning Meeting.

**Tsaile – Wheatfields – Blackrock Farm Board and Water Users Joint Meeting
Sunday, September 29, 2013
Wheatfields Chapter House, Wheatfields, AZ**

In addition, during the week of October 14 to 17, 2013, we would travel to certain part of the community to hear their concern about the water issues. Finally, she present who was attending the meeting to explain the water shed study. Importantly, she shared this would have more grassroots people involve in the process.

Questions, comments, suggestions, and concerns:

There are many data available at Department of Water Resources, Safety of Dam, and Water Management Office.

Lucinda Davis: She reported the Navajo Nation Water Management Branch was granted 8.6 million dollars to conduct Water Shed Study for the Tsaile – Wheatfields – Blackrock community. Currently, they hire Brown and Cardwells to contract the work from October 1, 2013 to September 30, 2014. However, the community people can help the consultant to advance the study.

Lupita McClanahana: She reiterated what was meeting was about on Thursday, September 26, 2013, and explained that majority of people who attended this meeting had concerns about the Operation & Maintenance fee invoice they received. Furthermore, she commented, “How do we get the grassroots people out here to voice their concerns and become involved?” She commented to perhaps to develop survey questions for the people to fill out.

Lorena Eldridge: She suggested presenting this Water Shed presentation to be conducted at Chapter meeting, Community Land Use Planning Meeting, Grazing Meeting, and Farm Board Meeting.

Aaron Begay suggested announcing and advertising with date of what part of the community people we would be reaching out too.

Action: Continue to put the Water Shed on the agenda to hear the people concerns. The group at the meeting assigned Dorthea to schedule meeting with people living in Ram Pasture; Lupita to schedule meeting with people living in Blackrock; and Aaron to schedule meeting with people living in surrounding the Wheatfields Chapter and Tsaile area. There is a need to reach out the community people.

Motioned by Aaron Begay

Seconded by Lucinda Davis

Voting: 5 yes; 0 no; 1 abstained

Motion Carried

B. Letter to BIA

Lorena Eldridge explained this issue has been in the planning for some time all summer long. It has been a slow process. We have been putting additional information to be attached to letter to BIA. It is regarding what to do with idling farmlands.

Dorthea Litson explained that there are several information developed for attachment such as alternative plan; collection of Operation and Maintenance fee for Farm Equipment Rental; and

Tsaile – Wheatfields – Blackrock Farm Board and Water Users Joint Meeting
Sunday, September 29, 2013
Wheatfields Chapter House, Wheatfields, AZ

Implementation plan of how to work with farmers within 5 years of their sublease. Now, the question is, “What is the role the Farm Board plays for the sublease for five years?”

Action: A letter will be written to Sharon Pinto, Director – Navajo Region, BIA Office in Gallup. To request for technical assistance to collect data on the status of idling farm land and support the implementation plan for farm board to sublease the farmlands for five years.

Motioned by Lupita McClanahan

Seconded by Aaron Begay

Voting: 8 yes; 0 no; 1 abstained

Motion Carried

IV. New Business

A. Land Use Permit

No Land Use Permit related issues presented

B. O&M Fee – Status Report

Dorthea Litson shared with the people that Lower Wheatfields 50% of the Farmers’ paid their Operation and Maintenance fee; Upper Wheatfields 40% of the Farmers’ paid their Operation and Maintenance fee; and Tsaile 26% of the Farmers’ paid their Operation and Maintenance fee. She explained that there are people who have paid their Operation and Maintenance fee for the two years this year, but they have accumulated late charges from the O&M fee that they did not pay for from last year, April 30, 2013. So there are people stated why they have to pay for late charge or pay for the whole O&M fee?

Comments were made that it is not fair for people who has paid on time and obeys what they are requested.

Questions, comments, suggestions, and concerns:

Margo Sorrell: She explained that her grandmother Angela Kedelty let her know about the invoices that need to be paid regarding the farmland. Her grandparents’, Raymond Sorrell had farmland in Tsaile and Ruth Sorrell had farmland in Upper Wheatfields, and they both passed away several years ago. She has been working on the relinquishing her grandparents’ farmland for the past 6 years, and it has not been resolve to date. Now, she wants more information about why the invoices are being submitted to the farmers?

Lorena Eldridge explained the reason for the invoice. It is used to repair the major irrigation line in all three farmland areas. The charge is \$3.00 per acres for each farmer and a \$10 late charge will be added if not paid. Also she encouraged Margo to attend the farm board meeting.

Aaron Begay explained the invoice process, and this is the first year the Tsaile and Upper Wheatfields are being charged.

Tsaile – Wheatfields – Blackrock Farm Board and Water Users Joint Meeting
Sunday, September 29, 2013
Wheatfields Chapter House, Wheatfields, AZ

Action: Continue to add \$10.00 late charge for the Operation and Maintenance to all who has not paid.

Motioned by Dorthea Litson

Seconded by Aaron Begay

Voting: 7 yes; 0 no; 1 abstained

Motioned Carried.

C. Review Goals

1. Farm Board
2. Water Users

Dorthea Litson shared the goals of both. Farm Board goal:

By 2015, 100 percent of the farm lands will be used for sustainable agriculture to bring suitable economic stability to the community.

- *30 percent (30%) of the farm lands will produce fresh food crops to feed the people of the community; and*
- *10 percent (10%) of the farm lands will produce native food crops to feed the people of the community and to revitalize the scarcity native food that was once abundance to the community; and*
- *60 percent (60%) of the farm lands to produce variety of hay to feed the livestock own by the people of the community or to create bio – fuel to improve the environment.*

Water Users vision, mission, and goals:

Vision:

The vision of the Tsaile – Wheatfields – Blackrock Dineh Water Users is to have a sustainable supply of high quality water to support a prosperous agricultural community that nurtures healthy and happy families.

Mission:

To develop, promote, and maintain water conservation systems to sustain agriculture and community activities in the Tsaile – Wheatfields – Blackrock community for the present and future generation.

Strategic Direction and Goals:

Strategic Direction I: Achieving organization stability

Goals: Implementing Financial Management Plan; Achieving Organizational Stability; and Updating Policies and Procedures

Tsaile – Wheatfields – Blackrock Farm Board and Water Users Joint Meeting
Sunday, September 29, 2013
Wheatfields Chapter House, Wheatfields, AZ

Strategic Direction 2: Establishing Healthy Communities through Collaboration and Planning

Goals: Establishing Collaborative Partners; and Establishing Healthy Communities through Planning

Strategic Direction 3: Creating Life Skills for Self Reliance

Goals: Creating Life Skills for Self – Reliance

Strategic Direction 4: Integrating Technology

Goal: Utilizing Social Media for Network; and Enhancing Data Driven Decision Making

Questions, comments, suggestions, and concerns:

Lorena Eldridge commented that the goals statement will need to be put into an Action Plan stating the timeline and responsibility. In addition, she asked to put on the agenda at each meeting to review.

Action: To share the goals at the Chapter Planning Meeting. However, it will not need a motion.

V. Conclusion

a. Next agenda item

Financial Report

Old Equipment

WUA - Annual Report to both Navajo Nation Business Regulatory and IRS

b. Next meeting date @ 1pm October 9, 2013, Wheatfields Chapter House

c. *Adjournment @ 3:15pm*

Motioned by Lupita McClanahan

Seconded by Teresa Chee

Voting: 7 yes; 0 no; 1 abstained

Motion Carried