

RECEIVED

TSAILE / WHEATFIELDS JOOINT FARM BOARD AND WTER USER MEETING
SUNDAY October 29, 2017 @ 1:00 PM
WHEATFIELDS CHAPTER HOUSE, WHETFIELDS, AZ

NOV 06 2017

MEETING MINUTES

Tsaile/Wheatfields
Chapter BY: psb

1. ORDER OF BUSINESS

- a. Meeting called to order at 1:30 pm by Lorena Eldridge.
- b. Invocation by Lorena Eldridge
- c. Roll Call:
Farm Board: Lorena Eldridge and Dorthea Litson were present for the meeting. Lucida Davis was absent.
Water User: Anelda Kedelty, Dorthea Litson, and Amelda Benally were present for the meeting.
- d. Recognition of guest(s) and visiting officials
All farmers who were present were recognized. No outside guest or visiting officials.

e. Review and adoption of agenda

Dorthea reviewed the agenda. The following were amended to the agenda:

- Fencing Labors and BIA Resolution under item B, Wheatfields Agriculture Project
- Vegetable crop option added under item D, Consultant
- Office Specialist and Irrigation Technician(s) add to Re-advertisement under new business

Action: To accept the reviewed agenda and amendments.

Motioned by Teresa Chee

Seconded by Julia Litson

Voting: 15 yes; 0 no; 2 abstained

Motion Carried

f. Review and adoption of last meeting minutes, October 8, 2017

Action: Defer the last meeting minutes from October 8, 2017 to next meeting due to no copy to be found, and Farm Board Secretary absent.

Motioned by Amelda Benally

Seconded by Emerson Chee

Voting: 16 yes; 0 no; 1 abstained

Motion Carried

II. OLD BUSINESS

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

- A. Each FB will submit 12 crop inventory report from their respective Agriculture Land use Permittees (ALUP).

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

NOV 6 1:52PM

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

Lorena explained, "It's importance for farmers to submit their crop inventory on a quarterly based. Plus, she announced that Tsaille / Wheatfields Farm Board reported 43 crop inventory for the fourth quarter."

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

- Fencing Labors

Lorena explained, "The perimeter fencing repair is part of the Wheatfields Agriculture in all three farmlands area. In the Spring of 2017, BIA visited to review and update us on the probate and farm status. However, the staff from BIA needs to be requested to provide us the following updates: farmland status, probate status, map update – land owner update."

Dorthea explained the following:

- "The Water User hold a special meeting on Wednesday, October 25, 2017. At that meeting, we approved to work with Dine Land Grant Staff. They approach us since, they are working with several producers and when they work with producer some of the things they help with is fencing, but in this case the farmers are located here and there within the farmland. It makes logical sense to help with rebuilding the perimeter fences. They have about 10 interns and 5 employee to help. They can start with Lower Wheatfields from December 11 to 19, 2017"
- "Land Grants staff will be charging us with the labor cost that we have as stated in the line indicated for the Wheatfieds Agriculture Project." "The hope is for as many farmers to volunteer their time to help in rebuilding the perimeter fence. Dorthea assigned the Equipment Operator to collect data on the status of the perimeter fence. At the next meeting, the collected data can be shared."
- "In the Spring of 2017 at one of the meeting, we indicated that fence is going to be 8 feet high and use box fence for fencing, however, the box fence is very expensive and we are going to have to go with barbwire fence, and purchase of a 10 ft. fence post. The 10ft. fence post for purchase might be the way to go; due to driving the fence post at least another foot down into the ground."
- "Finally, there are many of our farmers who have an outstanding Operation and Maintenance fee and can contribute by doing some IN KIND SERVICES. When the data is collected the farmers can start clearing out the brushes within the fence line; cut new fences posts to be use for "H" braces; help with fencing; and cooking, preparing, and serving food for the worker. An account will be establish for farmers' with outstanding O&M fee in the

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grant tracker, and forms will be created to keep track of the farmers in kind work. Currently, the Equipment Operator is assigned to oversee the IN KIND Service that the farmers will contribute, and that record will be given to the Accountant and he will put into the account set up."

Comments, suggestions, or questions:

What if I can't work do an in-kind service due to my job, but can I have my children work?

Yes, your children can help. If there was four work then great. The hours that your children can work and be calculate at minimum wage to lower the O&M fee.

My original fence on the west end is moved at an angle in some place due to many Russian Olive tree growing, but the Farmland is now written in my name stated, Valentino, and he indicated will that be a problem when you are putting in the original farmland.

Lorena comment, "It should not because BIA approved the relinquished to you."

Action: Data collected on fencing conditions and materials needed to complete the perimeter fence in all 3 farmland area will be provided at next meeting. Plus, search for dollars to put chain link fencing around the lease land for Water User to use.

Motioned by Bennie Litson

Seconded by Emerson Chee

Voting: 17 yes; 0 no; 1 abstained

Motioned Carried

- **BIA Resolution**

Dorthea explained, "In the Spring of 2017 we had many several meetings with BIA Natural Resource Staff of Chinle, at the inception of writing this grant, BIA staff asked us to canceling all idling farm lands, but we as Farm Board stated we are not going to do that, but will work with farmers. As result, we wrote the proposal and plan to implement the way we are implementing. Now, the questions is how do we want to write a resolution to the BIA Natural Resource staff to request for support. What should the request and support be?"

Comments, suggestions, and questions:

What are the difference in idling land, probate land, and Quit Title land?

Dorthea stated, idling farmland is land that is not farmed for some times; according to the Navajo Nation Title 3, land idling for 2 years can be cancelled; Probate land is when the land owner dies the family is given five years to probate land in the Navajo Nation Tribal Court; and Quiet Title land is when land owner dies and the family Do Not do anything with the land beyond 5 years or more than anyone can request for the land, but must go through court system as well.

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Emerson Chee, "I am not sure why some farmers are not willing to be part of the Wheatfields Agriculture, but I am suggested we plant on the farmland anyways. People know the legal matters and are aware of the laws. The door is always open for them to attend the meeting for them to understand the overall implantation of Wheatfields Agriculture Project. They are given all opportunities, so who are they going to blame."

Lorena explained, "The Wheatfields Agriculture Project is NOT Just for Lower Wheatfields. There are some farmer who don't want fencing. A good example is Noel Bikkedy is not interest in Fencing, but I am not sure what the fence is like. If her fence not fixed then we will the perimeter fence will be repaired. The Farm Board is only a recommending body of government, and what we recommend will be put on the resolution."

Bennie Litson, "There are several farmers not wanting to be part of the Wheatfields Agriculture Project and he is not sure why. If you listen to one's prayers at the opening of a meeting or one own prayer it is beautiful and meaningful. In the prayers, it's commented to put the land to use." "At the same time, probate is also an issue with grazing status for many people; and there are so many uncertainty with relinquishing land use permit and grazing permit due to laws changing. Perhaps, we ask BIA to come to next meeting and have them review and update the law with us as farmer at the next meeting."

Marie White commented, "The fencing is still being talked about. We as farmer and people have been told about the laws, but we create own law for ourselves. We don't talk to each other right anymore."

Lorena commented, "Farm Board only oversee irrigateable farmland; and we submitted several resolution to BIA Staff; and we will continue to request for their collaboration and support on many levels of issues." "Does anyone want to second Mr. Bennie Litson's motion?"

Emerson stated, "I'll second the motion."

Action: To request BIA Chinle Natural Resource staff to present and explain the Land Use laws to the people; so they can understand them.

Motioned by Bennie Litson

Seconded by Emerson Chee

Voting: 15 yes; 0 no; 3 abstained

Motion Carried

- 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. Training Land Grant

Lorena explained, "The first topic on the agenda that has been disseminated by the Dine College Land Grant staff is Conservation Plan. In terms of conservation plan, BIA, NRCS, and Navajo Nation has their own version of conservation planning template, and she is not sure if the Land Grant has its own version. The Conservation Planning template is all similar, but the flow of the content may be different."

As a REMINDER: The workshop with Dine College Land Grant Office staff is part of the Wheatfields Agriculture Project, and those who signed up to participate need to attend the workshop.

Action: No action taken, but directive was made to have the agreement ready for the next Joint Farm Board and Water User meeting.

No motion or second made.

- D. Assist with farm area improvement 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.

1. Consultant

Vegetable Crop Option

Dorthea explained, "Yesterday, on October 28, 2017 at the meeting with farmer to talk about the participation in the Wheatfields Agriculture Project, we were going to select a vegetable crop to grow, but we did not come a consensus; therefore it is the agenda for discussion today. In addition, the consultant has suggested for the Wheat – To identify one producer to use his farmland to plant Wheat so we can harvest it in June to check for protein content."

Vegetable might be potatoes, radish, and squash. The following are what the farmers selected at the meeting:

- Bell peppers, sweet potatoes, Asparagus, cucumber, onion, cabbage, chard, bean-Pinto or Black.

A farmer commented, "Be mindful that we are wanting to grow what is healthy for our people, and to keep as natural as possible."

Action: To present additional vegetables listing that farmers put together to the consultant, and the consultant can then determine what the top vegetables can be grown within the farmland in relation to the soil testing that will be conducted.

Motioned by Amelda Benally

Seconded by Sadie Neztosie

Voting: 14 yes; 0 no; 2 abstained

Motion Carried

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

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

1. Jessie Tsosie

Jessie explained that she came before the Farm Board at some time with her children, Roberta and Larry Tsosie to transfer her Land Use Permit and Grazing Permit to them.

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Therefore, she does not have her original Land Use Permit. Furthermore, she explained that she spoke with her two children for the possibility of subleasing the farmland to the Farm Board for five years, and her children were in agreement. The children stated it would be helpful to sublease because they live in Phoenix area and are now only focusing on their work, but plan to work on their farmland when they move home at a later time.

Lorena asked Dorthea if she recalls if Jessie has come before the Farm Board to relinquish her land use permit to her children.

Dorthea stated, "She DOES NOT recall Jessie coming before the Farm Board. This might have been done and gone before Grazing Committee."

Jessie stated, "Dorthea explained to her about the options she can explore about her farmland; and one of the option was to sublease to the Farm Board."

Dorthea commented, "At one of meeting in early Spring or over the Summer of 2017, my grandmother, Jessie caught a ride with me to take her home. On our way home, after the meeting, I asked her if she understood what we discuss at the Farm Board meeting, and she did not understand the six criteria or options that we put together for farmers participation in the Wheatfields Agriculture Project; therefore, I explained the options to her and it might be a better option for her to sublease to the Farm Board due to her age and no one to help her."

Action: To accept Jessie request to sublease her farmland to Farm Board for the next 5 years. She indicated she spoke with her two children, Roberta and Larry Tsosie, and they are both in agreement. However, further research needs to be conducted to find her original Land Use Permit.

Motioned by Bennie Litson

Seconded by Anelda Kedelty

Voting: 14 yes; 0 no; 2 abstained

Motion Carried

2. Emerson Chee

Emerson Chee explained, "He sublease two farmland in Lower Wheatfields which are the from his uncle Kee D. Chee and the late Mrs. Arviso, and he and his brother Ambrose have a farmland that was relinquished to them by their father the late Harley Chee in Upper Wheatfields. With these three farmlands, he has been writing a conservation plan for them, and he is making progress on his writing. He requested to be put on the agenda until he completes his conservation plan. Along with this explanation, he quickly shared what he has planted on each field:

- T-5, his sublease in Lower Wheatfields – he planted corn on 5 acres, some hay, and Rye wheat.

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- T-6, his sublease with Kee D. Chee in Lower Wheatfields – this sublease was approved in June 2017. Over the summer, his yield was 1,000 bales of hay.
- T-18, his Farm Land in Upper Wheatfields – this farmland is assign to him and his brother Ambrose. He is very thankful that he and his brother help each other out over the summer. Here on this farmland they were able to produce 620 bales of hay in June 2017 and 2015 bales of hay in Aug/Sept 2017.

Action: Emerson requested to defer his conservation plan to be accepted to the next meeting.

No motioned or seconded made for this action.

3. Laurine John

Dorthea explained Mrs. Laurine John is requesting to sublease her farmland to Farm Board so it be used as part the Wheatfields Agriculture Project.

Action: To defer to next meeting due to no show to the meeting.

No motioned or seconded made to action.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. WUA Financial Report

The Water Users accountant provided the financial report to the farmers only in regards to the Wheatfields Agriculture project. This report was requested by the farmers. PLEASE NOTE: The report provided was only for year one of the WApject at \$1,961,916.00, but of this funding we have not receive quarter 4 at the amount of \$ 168,606.

He used the \$1,961,916.00 for the report and of that we spent \$ 17,531.87 as of Oct. 29, 2017 and leaving a balance of \$1,944,384.13. The actual money in WAP account is \$ 1,775,778 as of October 29, 2017.

Action: To accept the financial report that represented the current balance of each line.

Motioned by Sadie Neztosie

Seconded by Teresa Chee

Voting: 15 yes; 0 no; 2 abstained

Motion Carried

B. Office Space Renewal

Lorena stated, "At the last meeting this was on the agenda, and it was passed. However, we do need to signed copy of the Renewal."

Action: No action taken. Lorene gave a directive to Dorthea to have provide a signed Office Space.

C. Re-advertisement of Farm Manager, Office Specialist, and Irrigation Technicians

Lorena provided the paper work needed in a packet regard previous employment advertising. I gave those to Alvin to file. She also went through the score sheet as follow:

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Interviewers	EQP Operator (1 applicant, TT)	Grant Writer (1 applicant, HH)	Farm Manager (Applicant 1 – EL)	Farm Manager (Applicant 2 – LS)
PB	78	79	53	57
JD	84	59	51	60
LE	66	57	41	42
DT	55	45	34	44
KJ	83	84	69	84
BN	65	57	50	66
Status	Hire	Hire	To re-advertise	

Dorthea explained, “The Water User conducted a special meeting to amend the employment policy. She shared the amendment to the employment policy to the people. In the last policy, all it stated was, if there is ever a vacant position it will be advertised in newspaper, local media such as radio station, and post positions, now it has more detail of the hiring process.” One more things she add, “It is NOT right for people to state that Water User has not policy and it is following the Navajo Nation; I say this because we work hard as an organization on policies to ensure it can receive funding. These policies and procedures may not follow the Navajo Nation, but it does has its own policies and procedures.”

Furthermore, at the special meeting we approved an interview committee for the 3rd advertisement to be conducted from October 30, 2017 to November 9, 2017. The interview committee are: Audrey Etsitty, Dine College Land Grant Staff, Paula Begay, Committee Coordinator, Alvin Johnson, Accountant Water User, Lorena Eldridge, Farm Board, and Tsosie Lewis, consultant. Alvin will chair the interview committee. Each applicant previous employer and references will be contacted, and all will be interviewed.

Questions, comments, or suggestions:

Paul Yoe asked, “Were there only one applicant for Equipment Operator and Grant Writer?”

Lorena stated, “Yes.”

Lorena asked, “Why were the interview panelist change?”

Dorthea stated, “We put it before the people, and these are who they selected for the 3rd round of advertisement.”

Action: To accept to re-advertise the following positions: Farm Manager, Office Specialist, and Irrigation Technician(s).

Motioned by Bennie Litson

Seconded by Sadie Neztosie

Voting: 13 yes; 0 no; 4 abstained

Motion Carried

IV. RECEIVING REPORTS

A. Reports

Loreana – No report

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Dorthea explained the grant tracker. The types of reports that are going into the file. She use the overhead projector to explain.

Other Water User – No reports

B. Announcements

Chapter Planning Meeting, Monday, November 6, 2017 @ 9am Wheatfields Chapter House, Wheatfields, AZ

V. CONCLUSION

A. Next agenda items

The next agenda items area as follow:

Crop inventory

Training and Binding Agreement

Consultant

Laurine John – Sublease

Emerson Chee – approve conservation plan

C. Next Meeting

The next meeting date is Thursday, November 9, 2017 at 10 am Wheatfields Agriculture Project

C. Adjournment

Action: Meeting adjourned at 4:59pm

Motioned by Sadie Neztosie

Seconded by Amelda Benally

Voting: All in favor