



**Garfield County Conservation District  
Monthly Board Meeting Minutes  
2:00pm Thursday, January 6, 2011  
USDA Service Center Conference Room**



The meeting was called to order by chairman Monte Billing at 2:20pm.

**Present:** Monte Billing, Alan Pluhar, Nathan Saylor, Sue FitzGerald, Dean Rogge, Amanda Lammers and Mike McKeever.

**Absent:** Travis Browning

**Guests:** Scott Kaiser, DNRC; David Martin, DNRC; Sabrina Labette, Culbertson CD and Bill Milton with the Musselshell Watershed Coalition.

**Approval of Minutes:** Minutes from the December 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting were reviewed. Alan made a motion to accept the minutes as read. Nathan seconded and all approved. Motion passed.

**Bills and Financial Statement:** Nathan made a motion to pay the bills for the month of January. Alan seconded and all approved. Motion passed. See attached bills and financial statement.

**Public Comment:** Scott and David introduced themselves from DNRC. Scott discussed the Conservation District Operations Assessment regarding district operations, financial management, personnel management and the 310 administration. A few concerns were brought to the board's attention:

- Each supervisor must take an oath of office for each term; urban supervisors are re-appointed and take an oath of office every three years. The person administering the oath must sign the certificate and indicate their office held. For administering an oath of office to a conservation district supervisor, county officers may be used. Travis and Mike need to be re-appointed at the next board meeting. Once they are re-appointed they will stay on the board until the next general election. They will then send their ballots to the clerk and recorder's office.
- Conservation Districts are recommended to have a current inventory of equipment and other property owned by the CD. Monte brought up the CD administers a fire grant and wants to know who will own the equipment such as the chipper, etc when the grant is exhausted. Scott recommended the board should contact their local county attorney in this matter. Mike volunteered to look through the fire grant to find information such as written agreements, MOU's, etc. Mike will also contact the county commissioner's in regard of the 4-wheeler and why they pay \$6400.00 a year for the fire department to rent it.
- Scott highly recommends a treasurer to review all bank statements and make sure everything matches up to the end of the month reports. Quickbook reports need

- to be signed at every meeting. All individuals with access to CD funds need to be bonded.
- Petty cash has no more than \$50.00 in the cash box. Scott mentioned the board should look into purchasing a debit/credit card to have on hand making petty cash purchases.
  - Time sheets are required and are reviewed and signed by a board member at the end of each pay period. Employees are provided sick and annual leave at state rates. Sick and annual leave records are kept, documenting leave credited and leave used. Holiday pay is prorated for part-time employees and does not exceed 8 hours for any employee. Employee history cards are kept on records permanently.
  - Supervisors need to be knowledgeable about the 310 law. CD uses team inspection reports to document and assess the potential impacts of projects. CD must notify Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks of each 310 application received within 10 working days. CD must notify the applicant of the board decision within 60 days of receipt of the application.

Bill Milton with the Musselshell Watershed Coalition introduced himself as the group's facilitator. Bill explained the purpose of the MWC. Bill asked the board if they understood the project MWC is working on. Bill would like to see Garfield CD being active with the group. There are approximately 250 irrigators in the coalition all together. MWC has received an Irrigation Development Grant to set up a GIS database that will be used for the entire watershed. The grant will be used to purchase software and a data collector. The group also applied for an RRGL (these grants are every two years). Bill would like to see Garfield CD visit with local legislatures and encourage them to keep the money in the program. Jim Peterson would be a good contact to talk about the RRGL and why it's important. Monte suggested the district can write a letter of support if needed. Bill briefly discussed the MWC annual work plan. Some additional discussion took place.

Bill briefly talked about the CMR Stakeholder group and reminded the board he has been hired to be the group's facilitator. The group is slowly moving along and holds quarterly meetings to discuss management of the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge with user groups and agencies. The Garfield CD serves as the financial agent for the CMR NWR Community Working Group. Monte and Dean have been attending the regular meetings on behalf of the district. Bill asked what benefits they see coming out of the group that would affect Garfield County. A few issues were addressed from the board:

- Private property rights
- AUM's
- Recreation

How could the stakeholder group agree on what has been happening on the ground and come up with ideas that would benefit this group? Some additional discussion took place regarding the stakeholder group.

**Reports:**

NRCS- Sue reported she held a producer meeting in Cohagen. There were 11 producers in attendance. An agronomist will be coming February 1<sup>st</sup> to work with individuals. There are 24 EQIP applications (4 are CRP Transition). Ranking deadline is January 28<sup>th</sup>. There are 11 CSP applications. The deadline has been extended to January 21<sup>st</sup>. Sue, John and BG will be attending a safety training class in Bozeman, January 11-13<sup>th</sup>.

DRWA- Mike reported the group will be hiring an extra person to administer the DRWA. The group signed an agreement with the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR). There will be a meeting in Billings on Jan 20<sup>th</sup>. There is approximately \$240,000.00 in funds for a feasibility study.

MRCDC- Dean reported the council has a new chair, Nick Schultz and Dean is vice chair. Dean plans on attending the “meet and greet” on January 20<sup>th</sup> in Helena. The next council meeting will be January 12<sup>th</sup> in Lewistown.

MMWG- The group has not heard back from DNRC as to whether they have deemed the water rights application. The group applied for a Renewable Resource Grant to continue the design process for their water storage project but were only ranked 102 out of 107 due mainly to the fact they do not have word they can get a water right for the project. The group has been actively participating with the MWC.

**Correspondence:** None

**New Business:**

1. Certificates of Deposits was discussed; Monte would like to know what the board could use the funds for CD 41357. He is not sure why this CD was set up and what it was used for. Some additional discussion took place. No decision was made at this time.
2. Amanda gave grant status reports on the 223 Big Little Dry Grant, the Wildland Urban Community Assistant, 223 Canada thistle, CMR Stakeholder Group, and the Educational Mini Grant.
3. The board discussed the BLM draft alternatives. The board made a decision to have a meeting on Thursday, January 13<sup>th</sup> at 2pm to discuss and make comments that are due January 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Old Business:**

1. Amanda discussed the Montana Youth Range Camp with the board. Amanda went over ideas for the “Fun Day”. Amanda will find out if the fun day can be hosted at the landowners place or tour Devils Creek.
2. The district supervisors conducted an annual evaluation for Amanda Lammers and Kayla Higgins.

Dean made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Alan seconded and all approved. With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 6:50pm.

The next board meeting is tentatively **February 3, 2011 at 2:00pm**

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Monte Billing, Chairman

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Date

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Amanda Lammers, Administrator

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Date