

MINUTES - NORTH DAKOTA ATMOSPHERIC RESOURCE BOARD

APRIL 21, 2022

Acting Chair Casey Veil called the meeting of the Atmospheric Resource Board (Board) to order at 10:02 a.m. CDT, April 21, 2022.

ROLL CALL

Roll call was taken. Members present were Casey Veil, District V; Chris Theisen, District IV; Gail Yuly, District II; David Monson, District III; Kyle Wanner, Director, ND Aeronautics Commission; Rebekah Pfaff, ND Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ); and John Paczkowski, for Andrea Travnicek, Ph.D., Director, ND Department of Water Resources (DWR).

Others present were Darin Langerud, Director; Kelli Schroeder, Program Manager; Mark Schneider, Chief Meteorologist; Jody Fischer, Weather Modification International (WMI) and John Suter, ND Weather Modification Association.

MINUTES

IT WAS MOVED BY KYLE WANNER AND SECONDED BY CHRIS THEISEN TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 26, 2021, MEETING AS DISTRIBUTED. ALL MEMBERS VOTED YEA. THERE WERE NO NAY OR ABSTAIN VOTES. MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

FINANCIAL STATUS REPORT

Kelli Schroeder reviewed the financial status report for the period ending February 28, 2022.

2022 NDCMP PERMIT APPLICATIONS

Public Comment

Mr. Langerud informed the Board that the legal notice was published as required by statute for two consecutive weeks in the county newspapers in the target and adjacent counties in March with regard to the permit applications received from WMI. There was a 20-day period for the public to comment following the publication. The comment period ended April 7, 2022. Public comment that was received was provided to the board.

In response to a question from Casey Veil, Darin Langerud noted that, per ND Century Code, the legal notice only requests comments from people who feel they are being harmed. It does not invite positive or neutral comment.

Weather Modification LLC – NDCMP District 1 & 2

Darin Langerud reviewed the permit applications for NDCMP Districts 1 and 2 from Weather Modification LLC. He recommended the board approve the permit applications for both Districts 1 and 2 operational areas for the 2022 season.

GAIL YULY MOVED TO ACCEPT THE DIRECTOR'S RECOMMENDATION AND APPROVE THE WEATHER MODIFICATION PERMITS FOR WEATHER MODIFICATION, LLC, OF FARGO, ND. SECONDED BY JOHN PACZKOWSKI. ALL MEMBERS VOTED AYE. THERE WERE NO NAY OR ABSTAIN VOTES. MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

NORTH DAKOTA CLOUD MODIFICATION PROJECT

Weather Modification LLC agreement

Darin Langerud reviewed the process to begin contracting with WMI for the 2022-2024 NDCMP service contract.

In response to a question regarding how the cost of fuel is affecting contracting, Darin Langerud explained the configuration of contract pricing options we are considering. The options are: (1) a scenario where there is reduced flight hour cost that is fixed and then the counties would be responsible for paying fuel; or (2) a slightly elevated flight hour cost but then contractor is responsible for fuel up to a specific price level. The 2nd option is where we are leaning right now in trying to configure the best program for this year and the future.

Budget

In response to a question, Darin Langerud reviewed the budget provided to the board. He indicated that the Cessna 340 will not be on project this year as WMI is phasing them out of their inventory. There will be 4 Piper Seneca IIs and 1 King Air C90.

In response to a question, Darin indicated that power settings are reduced for Senecas when they are seeding and in areas of inflow. Jody Fischer indicated that their fuel burn is around 18-19 gallons per hour.

Staffing

In response to a question, Darin Langerud indicated that we are not seeing a difficulty in finding temporary employees for the project. The DWR is having significant problems filling openings for full-time positions.

Mark Schneider said they had no issues getting applications for meteorologists. They had 15-20 applicants for the 3 intern meteorologist positions and 12-15 for the 2 radar meteorologist positions. Both radar meteorologists hired this year were interns last year. Two of the three interns hired this year have undergraduate or higher degrees, so they will likely easily step up to the plate at the end of project when both radar meteorologists leave early for graduate school.

Kelli Schroeder reviewed what has been typical in recent years for pilot intern applications, last year's exceptionally large pool and this year's more traditional 17 applicants for 5 positions. Promotional activities will continue at UND for the pilot internship.

County contracts

Darin Langerud noted that a draft county contract has been reviewed by the DWR's attorney and will be sent to counties once we have final costs pinned down for WMI's contract.

Seeding agent and supplies procurement

Mark Schneider reviewed remaining chemical inventory from last year and discussed procurement of reduced quantities of chemicals. We did not need to purchase any flares for this season. Deliveries to our office will be made by early May. By mid- to late-May, chemicals will be delivered to field sites.

Mark also discussed the new shipping container being purchased which will hold chemical for us in Stanley. This is a replacement for a 20-year-old old shed.

COOPERATIVE OBSERVER NETWORK UPDATE

Mark Schneider reported that there are currently 461 active precipitation observers. Of those, 164 are reporting online. He also discussed the online interactive map on our web site.

In response to a question, Mark indicated that the observer count has remained stable, with slight decreases. Dan actively recruits in the same area when someone quits. If he is not able to find a replacement, we now can fill the area in using the PRESENS system.

INTEGRATION OF METEOROLOGICAL AND SOIL SENSORS WITH PRESENS

Darin Langerud reviewed DWR's PRESENS system. Around 200 sites have been deployed around the state. We installed the first two with atmospheric sensors last year. We plan to have a couple dozen more installed this summer if the technicians can get them installed. We are working with the Souris River Basin on six sites for them to monitor precipitation and soil water profile. Oakes Aquifer will be instrumented with 12-15 atmospheric sensors to help with a project that is ongoing in that area. There are other areas where we are lacking data around the state that we are also considering.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Darin Langerud reported that chairman Tom Tupa resigned shortly after the fall meeting. Therefore, the chair position is open.

Casey Veil called for volunteers or nominations. Hearing none, he volunteered for the chair position.

IT WAS MOVED BY DAVID MONSON AND SECONDED BY JOHN PACZKOWSKI TO CEASE NOMINATIONS AND CAST A UNANIMOUS BALLOT FOR CASEY VEIL AS CHAIR. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Casey Veil then called for nominations or volunteers for the Vice Chair position. Gail Yuly volunteered.

IT WAS MOVED BY GAIL YULY AND SECONDED BY CASEY VEIL TO NOMINATE GAIL YULY AS VICE CHAIR. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Darin Langerud introduced Rebekah Pfaff, our new board member from the DEQ. By statute, DEQ must nominate a representative from their staff for our board as an ex-officio member.

Being no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 11:02 a.m.

 11/21/22

CASEY VEIL
CHAIR

**Chris
Theisen**

CHRIS THEISEN
SECRETARY

Digitally signed by Chris Theisen
DN: cn=Chris Theisen, o=Northern
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Transcribed by Kelli Schroeder