

MINUTES

NORTH DAKOTA ATMOSPHERIC RESOURCE BOARD March 31, 2008

A telephone conference call meeting of the Atmospheric Resource Board was called to order by Chairman Henry Bodmer at 9:00 a.m., Monday, March 31, 2008.

ROLL CALL

Roll call was taken and members participating were Henry Bodmer, Bobb Brewer, Ervin Opsal, David Hagert, John Bollingberg, Dale Frink, Gary Ness, and Steven Weber. Also participating were Darin Langerud, Director; Kelli Schroeder, Business Manager; Mark Schneider, Chief Meteorologist; Daniel Brothers, Environmental Scientist and Hans Ahlness, Weather Modification Inc.

MINUTES

Mr. Ness moved the minutes of the October 29, 2007 meeting be approved as distributed. Second by Mr. Brewer. Motion carried.

FINANCIAL STATUS REPORT

Ms. Schroeder reviewed the financial status report for the month ended January 31, 2008. Mr. Bodmer noted that it appears we have enough funding to get us through to the next biennium. Hopefully with the surpluses the State has been seeing, we won't have trouble getting the funding we need for the next biennium.

WEATHER MODIFICATION LICENSE APPLICATION

Mr. Langerud stated one license renewal application had been received, which was from Weather Modification, Inc. Mr. Langerud approved the renewal of the license for Weather Modification, Inc., Fargo, North Dakota for 2008.

WEATHER MODIFICATION PERMIT APPLICATIONS

Mr. Langerud informed the board that permit applications have been received from Weather Modification, Inc. for both districts. He recommended the permit applications be approved contingent upon public response after the Notice Of Intentions have been published and time has been allowed for public comment.

Mr. Hagert moved to approve weather modification permits for District I and II for Weather Modification, Inc., Fargo, ND, contingent upon public response. Seconded by Mr. Brewer. Voting yea – Mr. Brewer, Mr. Opsal, Mr. Hagert, Mr. Bollingberg, Mr. Frink, Mr. Ness, and Mr. Weber. There were no Nay votes. Motion carried 7-0.

Mr. Bollingberg inquired if any other contractors show interest bidding the NDCMP. Mr. Langerud indicated that the last competitive bid for aircraft, pilots and cloud seeding equipment services was in 1980. The additional bidder was Atmospheric, Inc., which just went out of business last year. They had maintained a license with the State of North Dakota until about 2005.

Mr. Langerud indicated that North American Weather Consultants also does this type of work. However, they focus primarily on wintertime operations.

Mr. Ahlness indicated that the number of aircraft required for this project is a stumbling block for most companies. No other company has as many airplanes as Weather Modification Inc.

Mr. Bodmer asked if there were companies in Canada doing a project. Mr. Ahlness indicated that the Calgary project let their bids in 1995. There were other companies that bid against Weather Modification Inc., but they were companies without equipment.

POLCAST II RESEARCH PERMIT EXEMPTION

Mr. Langerud reviewed the POLCAST research project from 2006 and upcoming POLCAST II project. He noted that they are hoping to add additional cases to the original dataset to improve statistical confidences of the results. They are also considering adding additional instrumentation to the aircraft that will measure cloud condensation nuclei spectrum in and below the cloud base and cloud droplets in the clouds before and after seeding is conducted.

Mr. Langerud noted that according to North Dakota Century Code 61-04.1-12, the Board has the ability to exempt research and development activities from the permit process. The Board exempted the 2006 POLCAST project. Mr. Langerud requested that the Board authorize an exemption for POLCAST II, to be conducted in June and July.

Mr. Bollingberg moved to grant a May 1 through August 31 window for permit exemption for the POLCAST II research project. Second by Mr. Ness. Voting yea – Mr. Brewer, Mr. Opsal, Mr. Hagert, Mr. Bollingberg, Mr. Frink, Mr. Ness, and Mr. Weber. There were no Nay votes. Motion carried 7-0.

2008 NDCMP PREPARATIONS

Mr. Schneider reported on ongoing activities in preparation for the 2008 NDCMP. Today is the application deadline for field and intern meteorologist positions. Mr. Schneider has received 13 field meteorologist applications and 7 intern meteorologist applications to date. We are fortunate to have two previous meteorologists from the program applying – one field and one intern meteorologist. Mr. Schneider commented that the intern meteorologist applicants are very qualified as well.

Mr. Schneider noted that he has called many contacts regarding project housing. Watford City, Williston and Stanley personnel will likely have the most trouble finding housing. He noted that in the next couple of weeks, we will get the project staff hired and get them in touch with the county weather modification authority members for assistance in locating housing.

Mr. Langerud noted that he has been trying to contact Tim Johnson on the airport authority in Stanley regarding living quarters in one of the hangers but hasn't been successful. He is hoping to find out if that would be available for this summer. Mr. Bodmer and Mr. Ness gave Mr. Langerud additional contact information for Stanley airport.

Mr. Langerud also noted that previous field staff members have compiled housing possibility lists for Bowman.

Mr. Bodmer asked who is responsible for paying for the housing. Mr. Langerud responded that the personnel are responsible to find and pay for their own housing. He noted that we recognize the tight market and are simply trying to help them out as much as we can. If they can't find housing, this could affect the project.

Ms. Schroeder noted that she and Mike Poellot, UND, conducted ten interviews for the nine intern co-pilot positions. There are two that have not yet met their certification requirements for multi-engine ratings, of which one individual has a minor in meteorology. Mr. Poellot and Ms. Schroeder will be finalizing the selection soon.

Mr. Schneider commented on the chemical procurement status for the 2008 project. Silver iodide is \$209.42 per unit, up from \$117.48 last year. We will probably need to budget a greater increase for following years for silver iodide. All chemical bidding is complete and we should have delivery by the beginning of May.

Mr. Langerud noted that our silver iodide purchase was much smaller than average this year because the last 2 years of operations haven't seen as many flight hours as normal. This year we purchased about 150 units, when normally we would have purchased 350 units.

RESEARCH & EVALUATION EFFORTS

Congressional Legislation For Weather Modification Research

Mr. Langerud reported that North American Interstate Weather Modification Council has been working on legislation to implement a federally funded weather modification research program. The resolution signed by the Board last fall in support of the current legislation has been passed onto the North Dakota Congressional Delegation staff. The latest news on this legislation is that there is a possibility of it being appended to a larger climate change or global warming type of bill.

Update of Economic Study (Sell & Leistritz, 1998)

Mr. Langerud discussed the 1998 study by Randy Sell and Larry Leistritz from NDSU Agribusiness and Applied Economics Department that looked at the economic impacts of the cloud seeding program in seeded areas and also extrapolated the potential impact of seeding on a statewide basis. Mr. Langerud noted that we are in the process of putting together an agreement with Dr. Leistritz to update that study using the most recent ten years of data, which would also incorporate the recent run-up in commodity prices, the changes in cropping patterns, etc. that have occurred since the completion of the study. Mr. Langerud is hoping the study will be completed by this fall. He would like to have updated data to share with the counties and with the legislature in the upcoming session.

2008 COOPERATIVE OBSERVER NETWORK

Mr. Brothers reported that instruction letters, reporting cards, and replacement rain gauges were mailed to the observer network the week of March 24th. Reporting will begin April 1. As of this date, there are 763 active observers in the 2008 network. We are continuing on-line reporting this year with 116 observers indicating they will report on-line.

Collaboration with State Climatologists / CoCoRaHS

Mr. Langerud will have a conference call with the State Climatologists from North Dakota and Colorado on April 8th. There is a large network that the Colorado State Climatologist has been putting together, called CoCoRaHS. Discussion will center on incorporating ARBCON data into their network.

Discussion with RRBC on snow measurements

Additionally, Mr. Langerud is also working with the Red River Basin Commission who would like to acquire wintertime snow precipitation data for flood mapping. He is considering asking some of our observers to measure snowfall.

Being no further business the meeting was declared adjourned.



HENRY BODMER, CHAIRMAN

Transcribed by Kelli Schroeder