

# **MINUTES - NORTH DAKOTA ATMOSPHERIC RESOURCE BOARD**

**APRIL 6, 2011**

Chairman Henry Bodmer called a telephone conference call meeting of the Atmospheric Resource Board to order at 9:00 a.m., April 6, 2011.

## ***ROLL CALL***

Roll call was taken. Members present were Henry Bodmer, David Hagert, Ervin Opsal, John Bollingberg, Todd Sando, Larry Taborsky and Steven Weber.

Others present were Darin Langerud, Director; Kelli Schroeder, Business Manager; Mark Schneider, Chief Meteorologist; Daniel Brothers, Meteorologist; Hans Ahlness, Weather Modification, Inc. (WMI); and Jim Seidel, Williams County Weather Modification Authority.

## ***MINUTES***

**IT WAS MOVED BY MR. TABORSKY, SECONDED BY MR. BOLLINGBERG, AND CARRIED ON A VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 1, 2010 MEETING AS DISTRIBUTED.**

## ***FINANCIAL STATUS REPORT***

Ms. Schroeder reviewed the financial status report for the period ending February 28, 2011. In response to questions, Mr. Langerud indicated that any unspent funds return to the State Treasury. The biennium ends June 30<sup>th</sup>. In May and June we will have a significant amount of expenditures for the cloud seeding project.

## ***2011 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE***

Mr. Langerud gave a brief overview of the Water Commission appropriation bill relating to funding of the Board's programs (Senate Bill 2020). At this time there have been no changes made that would affect the Board's funding for the 2011-2013 biennium. Funding is expected to be 100% of the previous biennium.

SB 2282 addressed Board member stipend for attending meetings or work sessions. Currently, ARB members are paid \$62.50 per day. This hasn't changed for at least 15 years. This bill ties ARB & SWC member pay to legislative management member pay, which is currently \$148 per day, effective August 1<sup>st</sup>.

SB 2254 is generally an election law housekeeping bill. The last section of the bill relates to the abolishment of weather modification authority by election (NDCC 61-04.1-30). SB 2254 stipulates that a petition to abolish the county weather modification authority must be presented to the board of county commissioners no later than 90 days before the next countywide election. Previously, the petition had to be submitted to the county commission 45 days before the next countywide election.

***WEATHER MODIFICATION LICENSE RENEWAL APPLICATION***

Mr. Langerud stated one license renewal application had been received and is from Weather Modification, Inc. He approved the renewal of the weather modification license of Weather Modification, Inc., Fargo, North Dakota for 2011.

He noted that, a couple of years ago, the Board gave the director the authority to approve license renewals provided that nothing significant changes in the interim.

***2011 WEATHER MODIFICATION PERMIT APPLICATIONS***

Mr. Langerud informed the board that permit applications and fees from Weather Modification, Inc. for District I and District II have been received. He recommended the permit applications be approved contingent upon public response after legal notices 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. OPSAL. VOTING YEA – MR. HAGERT, MR. OPSAL, MR. BOLLINGBERG, MR. SANDO, MR. TABORSKY, AND MR. WEBER. THERE WERE NO NAY VOTES. MOTION CARRIED 6-0.**

***NORTH DAKOTA CLOUD MODIFICATION PROJECT***

Mr. Langerud reported on the district planning meetings in January with weather modification authority members. Chemicals have been procured at a lower price than estimated. So, both districts together came in under estimated budget by \$4,163.

Ms. Schroeder reported that she conducted intern pilot interviews over the phone again as travel plans were halted due to weather. There were 9 students applying for the 9 intern pilot positions. She will now schedule the interns' site locations and vacation schedules.

In response to a question, Ms. Schroeder noted that she and Mr. Langerud would be hosting a booth at UND's Student Aviation Management Association's (SAMA) Career Fair in April in an attempt to create more interest in the program. We are also working with UND Aerospace's Facebook coordinator to post notices about the internship as well.

Mr. Langerud noted that UND is considering combining the fall and spring weather modification courses into one course, which would theoretically increase the number of eligible applicants for the internship. The fall course can be used for a minor in meteorology for aviation students, which is pretty common. But the spring semester course is purely an elective course and can't be used toward any graduation requirement other than general credit.

Mr. Schneider reported that there were 23 qualified applicants for the 3 radar meteorologist positions, of which 2 were 2010 NDMCP staff. There were 11 qualified applicants for the 3 intern meteorologist positions. He and Mr. Brothers will complete interviews this week and hope to have hiring done before the end of April. In response to a question about pay, Mr. Schneider noted that intern meteorologists and pilots will be paid \$10 per hour this year and radar meteorologists start at \$3150 per month.

Mr. Schneider reviewed housing issues in the various field locations. He noted that Lutheran Social Services is renovating the old hospital in Stanley into apartments. Our name was put on the waiting list for an apartment. Initially, it was expected this renovation would be complete in March. That has since been moved into June. We are hoping to rent a 3-bedroom unit to house all 5 staff in Stanley.

Mr. Sando left the meeting at 9:50 a.m.

Mr. Schneider reviewed chemical and flare procurement. Flares have been delivered. The rest of the chemical is expected to arrive by April 29<sup>th</sup>. We projected silver iodide costs to be extremely high, but Laboratories Argenol from Spain bid the lowest at \$215 per bottle. If they hadn't bid, the next lowest bid would have increased our spending by \$20,250 as it was priced at \$350 per bottle.

Mr. Langerud mentioned that he budgeted for 650 ejectable and 375 burn-in-place flares. In addition, we purchased additional flares with leftover general funds. These flares will be in the inventory and available for the project but will not be reflected on the project cost report.

## ***RADAR OPERATIONS***

### **Bowman Year-round Operations**

Mr. Langerud reported that we started running the Bowman radar year-round on January 1<sup>st</sup>. We have contracts in place with 8 counties to fund the non-NDCMP months of operation. The Bowman radar data remains online so that anyone with an internet connection can access the data. The data is also being supplied in raw format for the National Weather Service offices in Bismarck, Billings, Glasgow and Rapid City. Television media are also using the internet version.

Mr. Langerud also reviewed issues relating to problems we are having with the magnetron in Bowman. We are in the process of discerning what the problem is and how to resolve it.

The National Severe Storms Lab in Norman, OK, runs a qualitative precipitation estimation algorithm daily, which they provide for NWS offices to do precipitation forecasting. They incorporate radar data into the model to do this estimate. Mr. Langerud was contacted by one of the people that run the program. They are interested in using the Bowman data to ingest and incorporate into this model. We are in the process of setting that up right now.

Mr. Taborsky left the meeting at 10:12am.

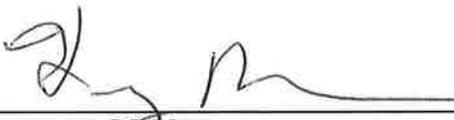
**2011 ARBCON UPDATE**

Mr. Brothers reported that there are 690 volunteers who have signed up to report during this upcoming growing season. The number is lower than normal because he hasn't done any recruiting yet due to the start of the snow-reporting project. 176 of the volunteers will be reporting online. He hopes to increase that number. The National Weather Service and the Flood Forecast Center are finding our online data useful, especially the snow pack data.

With regard to snow reporting, 244 people reported this past winter. Originally just over 400 signed up but some found it to be too difficult. The National Weather Service, State Water Commission and Flood Forecast Center have requested additional measurements of snow data, especially for the Sheyenne and Red River valleys. We switched to 4-inch round gauges for this purpose, as they are more durable. Our long-term goal is to switch all volunteers to this gauge, summer and winter. There are 90 wedge gauges left.

Mr. Brothers reviewed the water magazine article that was sent to board members, illustrating the new precipitation mapping web page. It is an easier way to look at precipitation data. You can break down the data into any time period. We've received good feedback on this tool.

Being no further business the meeting adjourned at approximately 10:20 a.m.

  
HENRY BODMER  
CHAIRMAN

  
DAVID HAGERT  
SECRETARY-TREASURER

Transcribed by Kelli Schroeder