

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

### **APRIL 3, 2012**

Chairman Henry Bodmer called a telephone conference call meeting of the Atmospheric Resource Board to order at 1:30 p.m., April 3, 2012.

#### ***ROLL CALL***

Roll call was taken. Members present were Henry Bodmer, David Hagert, Monte Hininger, John Bollingberg, Tom Tupa and Steven Weber.

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

#### ***MINUTES***

**IT WAS MOVED BY MR. HININGER, SECONDED BY MR. TUPA, AND CARRIED ON A VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 2, 2011 MEETING AS DISTRIBUTED.**

Mr. Taborsky joined the conference call at 1:32 p.m.

#### ***FINANCIAL STATUS REPORT***

Ms. Schroeder reviewed the financial status report for the period ending February 29, 2012. In response to questions, she noted that the federal funds listed on the report are an appropriation (authority to receive and expend federal funds should we get any). We have not received federal funds this biennium. Special fund revenues are received at various times throughout the year. Mr. Langerud noted that most of the revenue from the 2011 project came in before July 1, the beginning of the current biennium.

Mr. Langerud reviewed the issue with excess county special funds due to multiple years of coming in under budget in the weather modification program. He explained that the authority members elected to use the 20% discount we offered on 2012 contracts in an effort to reduce the large amount of carryover funds.

#### ***2012 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. TUPA MOVED TO APPROVE WEATHER MODIFICATION PERMITS FOR DISTRICT I AND II FOR WEATHER MODIFICATION, INC., FARGO, ND, CONTINGENT UPON PUBLIC RESPONSE. SECONDED BY MR. HAGERT.**

**VOTING YEA – MR. HAGERT, MR. HININGER, MR. BOLLINGBERG, MR. TUPA, MR. TABORSKY, AND MR. WEBER. THERE WERE NO NAY VOTES. MOTION CARRIED 6-0.**

***POLCAST HYGROSCOPIC SEEDING RESEARCH PROGRAM***

Mr. Langerud reviewed the POLCAST3 operations from 2010 and the proposed budgets submitted for the 2012 project by the University of North Dakota (UND), National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) and Weather Modification Incorporated (WMI). The UND proposal with the Citation aircraft came in too high to be able to fund. In 2010, we received a significant discount for the Citation time because they were getting their new aircraft and instrumentation on it up and running. POLCAST allowed them a chance to run it locally and troubleshoot. This year, UND's proposal is \$100,000 over the 2010 budget.

Mr. Langerud spoke with WMI about the possibility of getting a turbo-prop aircraft to serve as both cloud base seeder and also to do some in-cloud microphysics since UND's Citation will be too expensive. WMI supplied a proposal. However, it's unlikely the aircraft will be available because it's also being bid on several overseas projects. In all likelihood, we will probably end up with a project that looks more like the 2008 project... a Cessna 340 seeding at cloud base taking cloud base aerosol and cloud condensation nuclei measurements. We would focus more on getting a higher number of randomized seeding cases and less on in-cloud measurements. We would leave the in-cloud measurements to the Polarimetric radar, which will be operating in conjunction with this program.

Mr. Langerud asked for the board to approve a permit exemption for research and development, as it has done for this project in the past. The project scientists, WMI and Mr. Langerud will work out small changes to the proposal to go forward with the operations plan for the summer.

Mr. Langerud noted that this is funded from state funds, in response to a question. He also explained the project operations area. The estimated project period is June 15<sup>th</sup> through August 15<sup>th</sup>.

**MR. TABORSKY MOVED TO GRANT A PERMIT EXEMPTION FOR THE POLCAST4 RESEARCH PROJECT FROM JUNE 15 THROUGH AUGUST 15, 2012. SECONDED BY MR. HININGER. VOTING YEA – MR. HAGERT, MR. HININGER, MR. BOLLINGBERG, MR. TUPA, MR. TABORSKY, AND MR. WEBER. THERE WERE NO NAY VOTES. MOTION CARRIED 6-0.**

***WMI EXPERIMENTAL FOG CLEARING RESEARCH PERMIT EXEMPTION***

Mr. Langerud reviewed Weather Modification Inc.'s (WMI) fog clearing research permit exemption request. He recommended that the board approve the fog clearing research exemption through April 30, 2012 and begin again October 1, 2012 through April 30, 2013.

**MR. TUPA MOVED TO GRANT A PERMIT EXEMPTION FOR WMI'S FOG CLEARING PROJECT AS RECOMMENDED BY THE DIRECTOR. SECONDED BY MR. TABORSKY. VOTING YEA – MR. HAGERT, MR. HININGER, MR. BOLLINGBERG, MR. TUPA, 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. He mentioned again the 20% reduction in contract prices for the counties. Total project cost for 2012 will be around \$900,000. Budget detail was reviewed. New costs to the project include replacement of the Palm aircraft record keeping systems with iPads.

Mr. Schneider reported on the status of hiring meteorological staff for the project. They received 39 radar meteorologist applications and 14 intern meteorologist applications. At this time, 2 of the 3 radar meteorologists from last year have submitted applications for this summer, along with 2 of the intern meteorologists from last summer.

Ms. Schroeder reported that she conducted intern pilot interviews in Grand Forks. There were 6 applicants applying for the 9 intern pilot positions and all were accepted. Previous year applicants and previous interns were contacted for interest. One 2011 intern will work for us again as he did not have enough hours to be a pilot-in-command for WMI. Additionally, we contacted another student who applied in 2010 but wasn't chosen, who agreed to do the internship this year. All eight aircraft are covered with intern co-pilots. The ninth position is the vacation rover, which will not be filled. Vacations will be optional. We do have an offer from another 2011 intern to help out a couple of weeks this summer for vacations. We will more than likely accept that offer.

In response to a question, Ms. Schroeder noted that Mr. Langerud discussed the lack of interest we have been seeing in the internship with Ken Polovitz, Assistant Dean, UND Aviation Student Services in January. He felt there was a lot of apathy toward internships in general. We are still the only paid internship for aviation students at UND. We have attempted to increase awareness by attending the UND Student Aviation Management Association's (SAMA) Career Fair last April and will do so again. After the meeting with Mr. Polovitz, we have begun posting brochures and flyers around the Aerospace buildings.

Mr. Langerud noted that we are also competing with UND's flight school. They pay their instructors \$19 per hour. Although, we do not know if the pay is based solely on airtime, where our pay is air & ground time. But they may be able to log many more hours by being flight instructors over the summer.

Mr. Schneider reviewed housing issues in the various field locations. He noted that Stanley was still a trouble spot for us because we could only house 4 of our 5 project members in the 2-bedroom apartment due to the rules of the landlord. However, in further discussions with Lutheran Social Services, they determined that the intern meteorologists are considered guests as they rotate through the project locations. Then

all 5 staff members could stay in the apartment. Mr. Ahlness will be placing a pilot in Stanley that will have other housing arrangements anyway, so it will not be necessary to house 5 in the apartment we have rented.

Other trouble spots will be Minot, Williston and Watford City. Mr. Hininger has been helping us find housing using his contacts with oil company executives. Mr. Schneider and Mr. Hininger will continue to coordinate their efforts on these matters.

Mr. Langerud reviewed the issue of providing a housing allowance to our intern meteorologist and intern pilot staff. In January, the weather modification authorities agreed that providing this type of assistance has become necessary for our hourly staff. The formula has not been determined. However, Mr. Langerud is considering a scenario such as the following. The intern pays the first \$200. After that, ARB will cost share half of the rent up to a cap. Based on last year's rents, ARB's total additional cost for this would be about \$2,400 for the season.

Mr. Ahlness and his staff have been attempting to find housing in Minot. However, the little they are finding is prohibitively expensive for pilot and intern pilot staff. Mr. Langerud noted that we might need to move the Minot crew to Kenmare if they are unable to secure affordable housing in Minot.

Mr. Taborsky had to leave the conference call at about 2:30 p.m.

Mr. Schneider reviewed chemical and flare procurement. Acetone prices have been creeping up the last few years. This year it will cost us around 9% more than last year. This won't put us over budget on chemical though as silver iodide came in less than we expected.

## ***RADAR OPERATIONS***

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

Mr. Langerud reported that we are running the Bowman radar year-round. We have contracts in place with 8 counties to fund the non-NDCMP months of operation. The counties are happy with their service.

Part of the Bowman system has been out for repair for the last few months. It is being shipped back today. The technician will be installing it tomorrow. Once we are satisfied with that and if we have time, we will ship the Stanley system out for the same repair. If there isn't enough time, we will wait until the project is completed before sending Stanley's components for repair.

Mr. Langerud also noted that we will have access to spare and used parts from the National Weather Service due to the closing of their Williston radar service.

**2012 COOPERATIVE OBSERVER NETWORK UPDATE**

Mr. Brothers reported that growing season reporting just began on April 1<sup>st</sup> and runs through September 30<sup>th</sup>. There are 605 people reporting for this growing season, 167 reporting via the Internet. Mr. Brothers will be recruiting more observers as the total has fallen some.

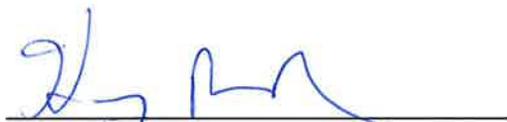
Mr. Brothers reported on the completed snow season reporting. There were 311 people signed up for snow reporting, 94 reported via the Internet.

**FALL MEETING DATE**

Mr. Langerud mentioned that the board could schedule a tentative date for the fall meeting. A fixed schedule would allow us to reduce the amount of public notice required. If the board would set a date, it could be changed later on. The board decided on a meeting on November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2012, in Fargo.

In response to a question, Mr. Langerud noted that if Measure 2 in the upcoming primary election would pass it would affect this program. It would affect our programs in 2 places. One being the weather modification project because county tax revenues via a mill levy assessment in the participating counties pays 2/3 of the cost of the program. The other area it would affect this board is in the ND counties that support the Bowman radar operations on non-NDCMP months as county tax revenue pays for that as well.

Being no further business the meeting adjourned at approximately 2:45 p.m.



HENRY BODMER  
CHAIRMAN



DAVID HAGERT  
SECRETARY-TREASURER

Transcribed by Kelli Schroeder

