

MINUTES - NORTH DAKOTA ATMOSPHERIC RESOURCE BOARD

APRIL 24, 2013

Chairman Henry Bodmer called a telephone conference call meeting of the Atmospheric Resource Board to order at 9:37 a.m., April 24, 2013.

ROLL CALL

Roll call was taken. Members present were Henry Bodmer, Monte Hininger, Tom Tupa, Larry Taborsky 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. TUPA, SECONDED BY MR. HININGER, AND CARRIED ON A VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 8, 2012 MEETING AS DISTRIBUTED.

FINANCIAL STATUS REPORT

Ms. Schroeder reviewed the financial status report for the period ending February 28, 2013.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Mr. Langerud updated the Board regarding relevant state legislation. House Bill 1020 (State Water Commission budget) is in conference committee. The large projects are what are being discussed, rather than ARB funding. There is one amendment being discussed that would affect our division, which relates to moving the file servers from the Water Commission over to the Information Technology Department for administration.

House Bill 1177 was passed and signed. It gives county commissions the ability to pay county weather modification authority members for their time, along with other appointed political subdivision boards. Each county decides their level of compensation.

House Bill 1053 passed regarding aircraft purchases and leases. We reviewed the bill with our attorney. With regard to our contract with Weather Modification, Inc., we are not purchasing or leasing aircraft but rather paying a fee for service that includes aircraft, seeding equipment and pilots-in-command. Additionally, these aircraft are not being used for transportation, which is what this bill is driving at.

2013 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. Legal notices were published in participating and bordering counties. Only two letters of public comment were received. Both letters indicated support for hail suppression activities but not for rain enhancement activities.

Mr. Langerud spoke with our attorney regarding these letters. Neither letter requested a public hearing. The Board may hold a public hearing to collect more information. He recommended the permit applications be approved contingent upon receipt of performance bond from Weather Modification, Inc.

MR. HININGER MOVED TO APPROVE WEATHER MODIFICATION PERMITS FOR DISTRICT I AND II FOR WEATHER MODIFICATION, INC., FARGO, ND, CONTINGENT UPON RECEIPT OF A PERFORMANCE BOND FROM WEATHER MODIFICATION INC. SECONDED BY MR. TUPA. VOTING YEA – MR. HININGER, MR. TUPA, MR. TABORSKY, AND MR. WEBER. THERE WERE NO NAY VOTES. MOTION CARRIED 4-0.

Mr. Taborsky had to leave the conference call at about 10:08 a.m.

NORTH DAKOTA CLOUD MODIFICATION PROJECT

Mr. Langerud reported on negotiations for the new contract with Weather Modification, Inc. for the 2013-2015 NDCMP projects. We also met with the district weather modification authorities at planning meetings in January. Budget details were reviewed. County contracts will be sent out once permitting issues have been resolved for the 2013 NDCMP.

In response to a question, Ms. Schroeder reported that we had 9 applicants for the 9 pilot internship positions, which was an increase from last year. She and Mr. Langerud attended the University of North Dakota's Student Aviation Management Association Career Fair the previous week. In addition, UND's two weather modification courses have been combined into one. This course will count towards electives and also meteorology minors. So, we have hopes that these efforts will continue to increase awareness and interest in the program.

Mr. Schneider reported on the status of hiring meteorological staff for the project. They received 34 radar meteorologist applications and 33 intern meteorologist applications. At this time, we have two returning radar meteorologists.

Mr. Schneider reviewed housing issues in the various field locations. In Bowman, the Gaebe ranch house is not available this year. Two employees will be at Jim Buchman's house east of town, two at Josh Buchman's house in town and two at Dean Pearson's house in town.

Other trouble spots will be Minot, as housing is still tight, and the Stanley airport is on schedule for refinishing work. The airport manager assured us that it will be done in May. There may also be a similar situation in Kenmare for a short time as well.

Regarding Williston and Watford City, Mr. Hininger has been helping us find housing using his contacts with oil company executives. However, we do have options to fall back on in both towns.

Mr. Schneider reviewed chemical and flare procurement. The silver iodide bid came in much higher this year. Our vendor from Spain who usually comes in quite a bit lower did not bid due to construction to their facility.

RADAR OPERATIONS

Bowman Year-round Operations

Mr. Langerud reported that we continue running the Bowman radar year-round. We have contracts in place with the eight counties to fund the non-NDCMP months of operation.

Mr. Langerud and Paul Moen were just in Stanley. The radar has been upgraded with the repaired modulator that is similarly running in Bowman. They also installed a new server that runs the software component of the system. Now there is a working backup server in Stanley should there be a failure.

Mr. Langerud noted that we are still waiting for the spare WSR-74C parts from the National Weather Service, including Williston radar, to be decommissioned. Once they are, we will be purchasing some of the parts through surplus property methods.

ARB BOARD MEMBER APPOINTMENTS FOR 2013-17

Mr. Langerud reported that board member terms are up for District 2 (Mr. Bodmer's position), District 4 (Mr. Hager's position) and District 6 (Mr. Tupa's position). Those terms end June 30, 2013. Mr. Bodmer and Mr. Tupa indicated they were willing to serve another term.

2013 COOPERATIVE OBSERVER NETWORK UPDATE

Mr. Brothers reported that participation in the ARB Cooperative Observer Network has been declining. He has made some extra recruitment efforts, particularly in the Red River Valley. Unfortunately, he did not receive as many volunteers as he had hoped for. There are 570 people reporting for this growing season.

Mr. Brothers reported on the completed snow season reporting. There were 275 people signed up for snow reporting.

FALL MEETING DATE

Ms. Schroeder noted that the fall meeting date is tentatively scheduled for October 30, 2013.

Being no further business the meeting adjourned at approximately 10:37 a.m.



HENRY BODMER
CHAIRMAN

Transcribed by Kelli Schroeder