



Minutes of the NREC Council Meeting
August Department of Agriculture
August 15, 2017
12:00 p.m.

Council Members Present: Ed Corrigan, Cindy Skrukrud, Chuck Cawley, Chris Matlock, Jenny Mennenga, Ted Mottaz, Amy Walkenbach, Robert Mullen, Andy Knepp, Matt Duncan and Jeff Kirwan.

Also present were: Julie Armstrong (NREC Executive Director), Robert Hoeft (NREC Research Coordinator), Dale Hadden, Mickey Latour (SIU), Jean Payne and Dan Schaefer (IFCA), Lauren Lurkins and Lindsey Ramsey (ILFB), Liz Hobart (Growmark), Steve Stierwalt (IASWCD), Lowell Gentry (U of I), and Chuck Davis (NREC Attorney)

Chairman Corrigan called the meeting to order at 12:00 noon and asked for introduction and reviewed the agenda. He also reviewed the Public Comment Policy from the NREC Bylaws:

Public Participation at Council Meetings and Committee Meetings

Citizens may attend these meetings and may provide comments. Comments may be submitted orally or in writing. If comments are submitted in writing, they must be received 10 days prior to the date of the meeting and are limited to five pages. If comments will be provided orally, the citizen must inform the Board Chairman prior to the starting time of the meeting and the oral comments shall be limited to five minutes unless the Chair provides for additional time.

Secretary Chuck Cawley presented the minutes from the December 13, 2016 Council meeting. **Chuck Cawley moved to accept the minutes as presented and Ted Mottaz seconded. The motion was approved.**

Executive Director Julie Armstrong provided an update to the Council on her activities and overall activities of the Council. She reviewed the Outreach Efforts, Meetings and Survey Results. The Outreach Efforts focused on an increased online presence, quarterly newsletters, engagement with researchers and continued focus on producer and retail contact. Details of her report are attached in slides 3-9 of Attachment A. In addition to the outreach report she also reported on the two forums that were held and updated the Council on the stakeholder survey that was conducted. Those details are also included in Attachment A.

FINANCIAL/TREASURER REPORT

Julie Armstrong and Ted Mottaz presented the Financial Report and reviewed current financial reports, account balances and 2018 Budget Considerations. Details are included in slides 10-14 in Attachment A.

Andy Knepp asked for more details on the plans for the remaining balance in the Communications line-item. Julie explained that there are two ongoing projects that will use up a significant portion of that

budget and the change in only having two producer meetings versus 6 was the reason for little spending in the first part of the year.

Cindy Skrukru led a discussion around the importance of the USDA/NASS survey and encouraged the Council to continue support of that important activity.

ILLINOIS DEPT. OF AG UPDATE

Chuck Cawley provided an update to the Council on the collection of assessments and overall Department updates. Details of his report are attached as Attachment B.

He also reviewed Council member terms and reported that both Robert Mullen and Jenny Mennenga are up for reappointment. Julie and Chuck will work with the respective organizations and Director Poe to get the reappointments complete. A chart outlining Council terms is included on Slide 15 in Attachment A.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Research Committee Chair Ted Mottaz and Research Coordinator Bob Hoeft provided an update to the Council on research activities. Dr. Hoeft shared that we have turned an important corner in the evolution of NREC research and are starting to have some sound results to share and our body of funded research is expanding quickly. Further details are in slides 16-19 in Attachment A.

Dr. Hoeft shared his philosophy that NREC serves as the BBB (Better Business Bureau) or Consumer Reports and our job is to test practices and provide an unbiased, research-based reference to these practices.

CONTRACTS COMMITTEE

Contract Committee Chair Chuck Cawley provided an update to the Council on the activities of the committee which is focused on reviewing and providing oversight to all contracts in which NREC engages. This includes research contracts, contractors and employees. The committee was formed at the December 2016 meeting and has been meeting in the first part of 2017 to define their scope and review existing contracts.

2018 Assessment Level

In keeping with Public Act 97-0960 and the requirement outlined within: *"The Council shall recommend, and the Director shall set, the fertilizer tonnage assessment for the purpose of funding the NREC at no less than 50 cents per ton and no greater than \$3 per ton to fund, administer, publish, and implement the research, education, and outreach programs designated each year by the Council."*, Chairman Hadden entertained a motion to set the assessment level for 2017. **It was moved by Ted Mottaz and seconded by Jeff Kirwan to retain the assessment level at 75 cents per ton. The motion passed unanimously with the three farmers on the council approving.**

Other Business

The Council presented former Chairman Dale Hadden with a gift to thank him for his years of service to NREC and to recognize his role in the founding and development of NREC.

Steve Stierwalt, President of Illinois Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts addressed the Council with an update on their activities including the Strategic Plan and Campaign County project that NREC funded in 2016.

Representatives from Illinois Fertilizer and Chemical Association, Jean Payne and Dan Schaefer, along with Lowell Gentry from University of Illinois presented a concept to the Council around publishing a Cover Crop guide and also invited the Council to the 4R research field day.

Ted Mottaz moved and Jeff Kirwan seconded to adjourn the meeting at 1:45 p.m.