

EASTERN PLAINS RC&D AREA, Inc.
QUARTERLY COUNCIL MEETING
October 21, 2009

The Eastern Plains RC&D Area, Inc. quarterly council meeting was held October 21, 2009, at Thee Garage, Baker. Those present were:

Dixie Berwick, Town of Culbertson; Jason Rittal, EPEDC; David Daveport, Rosebud CD; and Pam Arneson, Eastern Plains RC&D; Jerry Jimison, City of Glendive; Linda Jones, City of Glendive; Kevin Dukart, City of Baker; Virginia Archdale, Town of Wibaux; Bill Loehding, Carter County; William Randash, Fallon County; Tod Kasten, State of Montana Department of Commerce; Mickey McCall, Sheridan County CD/Commissioner.

CALL TO ORDER, INTRODUCTIONS:

Chairman Dixie Berwick called the meeting to order and meeting participants introduced themselves.

AGENDA

Dave Davenport moved to approve the agenda as distributed. Bill Loehding seconded the motion. All present voted Aye. Motion carried.

MINUTES AND TREASURER'S REPORT

Bill Loehding moved to approve the July 22, 2009 minutes. Mickey McCall seconded the motion. All present voted Aye. Motion carried.

The group discussed the possibility of depositing the surplus in the checking account to a CD, Money Market, etc. No action taken. Bill Loehding moved to approve the treasurer's report as presented. Mickey McCall seconded the motion. All present voted Aye. Motion carried.

COORDINATOR'S REPORT

Bob Nansel updated the group on what he has been busy with since the last meeting in July. He spent a week at the NRCS Coordinator training in Ohio. He also has been trying to make the rounds visiting all of the counties. He currently has attended 7 of 16 conservation district meetings. While traveling to those meetings, often he would make time to visit other council representatives in that area during the afternoon. He has spoken to the Northern Cheyenne tribe and received some project ideas although nothing concrete. Jim Atchison at SEMDC has been working with the tribe and he has offered the RC&D's support to Jim. The Fort Peck Irrigation project is just finishing up easement portion and he will check with Paul to ensure the RC&D's file is up to date. The NRCS Assistant State Conservationist has been in contact with the RC&D's throughout the state about prioritizing projects to be more centered around natural resources and development and less on economic development as far as the coordinators work. Also, he is hoping to get the staff numbers up in the office by several different means. One would be to work on getting an Assistant Coordinator hired or increasing funding to hire other employees. Bob gave a brief description of his background for the new folks at the meeting. It was also discussed that many area councils work separately from NRCS employee (coordinator), making more lee-way for economic Development.

EASTERN PLAINS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

Carter County has a USDA application that was approved for purchase of a new road grader. CDBG Disaster funds were approved for infrastructure repair reimbursement for roads and also for the purchase of a new loader. Also, an application is just getting underway for funding to build a community center in Ekalaka. The Town of Ekalaka also has a USDA application pending for an emergency generator. Another application is in

the works for the purchase of a new road maintenance pickup.

In Dawson County the BEAR program is continuing.

Prairie County's USDA application for the purchase of three road maintenance vehicles and one Sheriff's vehicle is awaiting delivery and reimbursement. Fallon County's North Baker Water and Sewer District EDA application has been reviewed and is pending committee vote.

In the EDD area there is a USDA Revolving Loan Fund pending through the stimulus package as well as an EDA revolving loan fund application that Jim Atchison is working on. EDA Additional funding awarded to Eastern Plains EDD. Each of the counties contributed \$1,000 in match for a total additional fund of \$20,000 and a part time employee has been hired and is working out of the Terry School.

FIRST TIME HOME BUYER EDUCATION INSTRUCTOR/BIO-PRODUCT INNOVATION CENTER

Pam reported that the First-Time Homebuyer Education has been very popular and the classes have been filling up the last few months. The numbers for the year maintained from last year. In FY 2009 the class was held 12 times with 85 participants overall. The First-Time Homebuyer tax credit has been extended and continues to encourage participation in the class as well as in home ownership.

NEW BUSINESS

NEW AND EXISTING PROJECT APPROVAL AND PRIORITIZATION

Bob has developed a "Request for Assistance" form to be used for potential projects. It will be helpful when getting started on new projects and better prioritizing them. Bob gave the group an overview of the form and how it relates the goals of the RC&D. Bob passed out a few sheets summarizing the new and current projects. The group went over the new and active projects with an overview from Bob. The first eight projects included the Fairview Bridge Erosion, Forsyth Country Club Pump Site, Jordan Pool Repairs, Jordan VFW/Community Hall Heating, MSU Methane Biogenesis Research, Mosby Musselshell Off-Stream Storage, Sidney Water Users Buried Mainline, and Wibaux Library Water Damage Restoration, those projects are considered new. The remaining projects on the list are considered active but not necessarily on-going. Ginny noted that prioritization should include Bob's recommendation. Bill Loehding noted also that the RC&D should do what can be done on each rather than make priorities. Ginny also noted a points system based on job creation, area covered, etc. could be helpful when a project is being considered by the council. Working on eliminating projects that no longer are on-going would be helpful to downsize the list. Also, Jason noted that ranking and prioritizing are too similar. Bob thinks there aren't any new projects that should NOT be approved. Bill suggested using email more to keep the board informed. There was a consensus to allow Bob to prioritize and let the board know later on.

2010-2015 AREA PLAN

Bob discussed the area plan noting that Linda Twitchell at GNDC and Jim Atchison at SEMDC will be having public meetings in which Bob will attend for community input. A survey has been created and submitted from various sources. NRCS has upped the requirements for this round of area plans and Bob will keep his on the changes.

OTHER NEW BUSINESS

Mickey discussed the situation with the state RDO for Tod Kasten. Mickey moved the Eastern Plains RC&D support RDO by sending a letter. Kevin Dukart seconded the motion. All present voted Aye. Motion carried.

AREA REPORTS

Glendive – The hospital expansion is on going with a \$15 million budget and a timeline of completion by July 10, 2010. Mayor Jimison also noted that currently they waiting on the weather to finish paving on the stimulus money projects as well as potentially looking into waste water distribution system update.

Baker – Kevin noted that a CDBG housing grant is in the works to rehab older homes.

Wibaux – Ginny informed the group that currently they are accepting bids on wastewater distribution designs.

Fallon County – Updates to the county shop and fire hall and an additional 7 wind towers will be going up by Baker. Also, the highway project continues to progress.

Carter County – Bill Reported that highway 323 will be completed and go all the way through the county by 2010.

Sheridan – Mickey reported that in Sheridan County is about to start bagging peas and lentils, creating 4 to 5 jobs.

ADJOURNMENT

Jerry Jimison moved to adjourn the meeting. Mickey McCall seconded the motion, all present voted aye. Meeting adjourned.