



NREC Council Meeting

August 18, 2015

Illinois Department of Agriculture, FFA Room, Springfield IL

Council members in attendance:

Representing farm organizations: Dale Hadden, Matt Hughes, Jenny Mennenga (appointed at this meeting to replace Matt Hughes) and Ted Mottaz (appointed at this meeting to replace Gary Hudson)

Representing fertilizer industry: Howard Brown, Ed Corrigan

Representing Certified Crop Advisers: Andy Knepp

Representing specialty fertilizer industry: Chris Matlock

Representing IDA: Chuck Cawley

Representing IEPA: Trevor Sample (sitting in but not voting on behalf of Marcia Willhite)

Representing Environmental Groups: Cindy Skrukrud and Jessica Dexter

Absent but excused was Dr. German Bollero who represents the state or federal ag research station and Matt Duncan who represents the fertilizer industry.

Others present: David Reid (NREC Legal Counsel), Dr. Robert Hoeft (NREC Research Coordinator), Jean Payne (NREC Administrator).

Vice-Chairman Ed Corrigan (serving as Chair due to Gary Hudson's resignation from NREC in July 2015) called the meeting to order at 12:15 p.m. He noted that IDA Director Nelson had appointed two new Council members: Ted Mottaz from the Illinois Corn Growers Association to replace Gary Hudson and Jenny Mennenga from the Illinois Soybean Association to replace Matt Hughes; Matt stated his intention to step down from the Council at the close of this meeting.

Review & Approval of May 18, 2015 NREC Special Meeting Minutes

Ed asked the Council to review the draft minutes of the May 18, 2015 Special Meeting. Motion to approve the minutes made by Dale Hadden, seconded by Howard Brown, motion carried unanimously.

Legal Counsel David Reid then provided an update on the Council's request that the Illinois Attorney General review the circumstances that led to the May 18, 2015 Special Meeting and if a violation of the Open Meetings Act (OMA) occurred. David had previously provided the Council with a letter from the AG's office stating that these circumstances did violate the OMA, but the fact that the Special Meeting was conducted subsequent to the OMA violation had resolved the issue and NREC was no longer in violation of the OMA. Jessica Dexter asked David if the AG had indicated whether the violation was attributed to individuals on the Council or to the Council as a body. David stated that it was his understanding that the each member of the Council had an individual responsibility to not violate the OMA, but that a violation of the OMA is noted against the entity, not individuals of the entity, and that the body itself needed to address any violations. David cautioned the Council that everyone must remain aware of the provisions of the OMA and that their actions in discussing NREC business must comply with the OMA.

Financial Report

Matt Hughes presented the financial report; he noted that income from spring fertilizer sales will continue to come in as IDA continues to send out invoices. Matt also explained the balance sheet, which illustrates the carry-over of income from the previous year, which was the practice of the Council to keep almost a year of assessment on hand to assure financial stability. Dale Hadden moved to approve the financial report, Andy Knepp seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Chuck Cawley reported that IDA continues to make progress implementing a new software system to improve the fertilizer registration and tonnage reporting process.

Bob Hoeft stated that he had recently attended the American Association of Plant Food Control Officials (AAPFCO) meeting at their invitation, to speak about NREC. Bob stated that many new fertilizer stabilizer and enhancer products will soon be coming to the marketplace and the importance of assuring the efficacy of those products if they are labeled for sale and use in Illinois, which is a responsibility of AAPFCO and the IDA.

Research Committee Report

Dale reported that the NREC Research Committee met on June 25, 2015 with the goal of discussing ideas for future NREC research that farmers had provided during the June 2015 Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy statewide meetings. The committee refined the suggestions and included those items in the Request for Proposal for 2016. Jean reported that the RFPs went out on July 9, 2015 with proposals requested back to NREC by September 30, 2015 and Dale stated that moving up the timeline will ensure that NREC can make funding decisions for 2016 projects by January 1, 2016 and issue contracts for 2016 work in a more timely manner.

Bob gave a brief report of the on-going projects. He has been fielding questions from those who received the RFP and are looking for guidance as they prepare their proposals. Bob stated he's very pleased with the progress of the on-going projects with the exception of the Notre Dame evaluation of the Indian Creek Water Quality, he stated they seem to be struggling to correlate the data to BMPs.

Bob discussed the Field Day held in Bureau County on The Wetlands Initiative wetland project, it was well received. Cindy Skrukud said the Fox River watershed group is very interested in learning more about the Multi-Functional Buffer project at the St. Charles. Bob will continue to set up field days and plans to feature the Douglas County and Piatt County project sites soon. Jessica noted the importance of continuing to stress the outreach component be present in all projects funded by NREC.

Cindy expressed concern about the proposed layoffs of the IDA Bureau of Land and Water Resources staff as well as budget cuts to the Soil & Water Conservation Districts. Chuck Cawley reported that 5 of 8 layoffs at IDA are slated to come from the Bureau of Land and Water. Cindy and Jessica both expressed concern that with goals of reducing nutrient loss outlined in the State's Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy, that these budget cuts and layoff of staff working on nutrient and conservation issues is a big concern to the environmental groups, who want to support this work.

Governance Committee Report

Chuck Cawley stated that the goals of the Governance Committee is to ensure that a newly hired NREC Executive Director would have a performance review process to help this person and the Council as they work together.

Tonnage Assessment Level for 2016

The Council discussed the current assessment level, which has been at 75 cents since NREC was initiated in 2012. Jessica stated she feels this amount of assessment has been working well. Dale stated farmer

awareness of NREC is growing and more understand the assessment as the retailers also communicate it to their customers. Dale moved to keep the assessment for 2016 at 75 cents per ton, Howard Brown seconded, motion carried unanimously.

By-Law Change

Following the May 2015 Special Meeting and the need to ensure farmers represented on NREC have their voices fully represented regarding the assessment level, Jean had worked with David Reid to amend the NREC by-laws to state that as follows in Section 3 of the By-Laws:

- a. On votes pertaining to the NREC tonnage assessment, a 2/3 majority vote by the Council **in addition to a 2/3 majority vote of persons representing the three grower organizations** is required to approve a change in the assessment level.

Andy Knepp and Ed Corrigan both spoke to this and reiterated that the fertilizer industry, and ag retailers, wants the farmers to support NREC and that the fertilizer industry is dedicated to supporting programs that help farmers on profitability and environmental issues. This change will insure that when the assessment level is decided, that the majority of the farmer representatives would have to agree upon a change in the assessment level. Matt Hughes made a motion to approve this change in the by-laws, Andy Knepp seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Next NREC Meeting Dates

Ed Corrigan thanked David Reid for his service to NREC. David informed the Council that this would be his last meeting as their legal counsel, as he is seeking a position as a judge. He said he very much enjoyed helping NREC and that he truly believed in the mission and importance of the organization.

The next NREC meeting date is scheduled for December 10, 2015 in Bloomington, IL at 10:00 a.m. Having no further business, motion to adjourn at 2:40 p.m. made by Howard Brown, seconded by Chris Matlock, motion carried unanimously.

Minutes recorded by Jean Payne, reviewed by Secretary Dale Hadden.