

Minutes: _____ Northwest Kansas Groundwater Management District 4 May 18, 2006 Board Meeting

1. OPEN MEETING, ATTENDANCE AND AGENDA

The May board meeting was opened at 10:20 a.m. CDT, May 18, 2006 in the district office, Colby, KS by President Scott Maurath. The meeting was opened without a quorum for discussion and updates only - while a quorum was expected upon arrival of a late member.

Board members present for some or all of the meeting were: Mitch Baalman, Lon Frahm, Dave Rietcheck, Jon Friesen, Scott Maurath and Roger Zweygardt.

Board Members absent were: Monty Biggs, Dave Mann, Doug David, Bill Nondorf and Jeff Deeds.

Others present for some or all of the meeting were: Wayne Bossert, Ray Luhman and Dan Simmering – GMD 4 staff; Mark Billinger and Kelly Stewart - DWR; and Susan Stover and Diane Coe - Kansas Water Office (KWO).

2. CONSENT AGENDA

Lon Frahm moved: 1) for approval of the consent agenda including the April 13, 2006 minutes; and 2) the April financial reports including the April, 2006 expenditures totaling \$23,453.42. Mitch Baalman seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

3. MANAGER'S REPORT

In addition to the written manager's report in the board packet several other items were reported on:

1) GMD Staff Changes: GMD 2 manager Mike Dealy has resigned effective May 31, 2006; GMD 3 assistant manager Jan King has resigned in order to assume the GMD 1 assistant manager position being vacated by the retiring Neta Wheeler.

2) Manager will be presenting to the KU Wheatstate Whirlwind Tour next week.

3) GMD 4 has received its first electronic newsletter subscription from the new newsletter webpage arrangement.

4. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a. **Enhanced Management Discussions:** Staff updated the board and based on last month's request, presented a series of maps looking at water use density as a possible parameter for incorporating into the priority area designation/selection process. Maps were: 1990 average water use per section; 1990-2000 average annual water use per 2-mile area; 1990-2000 average annual water use per 5-mile area; and 1990-2000 average annual water use per 10-mile area. Discussed ideas were: 1) using some form of density data (section-level data) in concert with the previously approved percentage decline data (either % decline AND density criteria; or; % decline OR density criteria). The board wondered about what density data covering our specific target time period (1997-2002) would look like in relation to the 1990-2000 time period. After more discussion, *Dave Rietcheck moved to look at (if available) the 1997-2002 average annual water use density for both the 2-mile and 5-mile areas. Mitch Baalman seconded the motion which passed unanimously.* Once obtained, this data would be

considered in relation to the percent decline data previously approved.

b. KAR 5-24-10: Staff reported that DWR has given their approval to our draft regulation. However, before finally deciding to seek such a regulation change the board last meeting asked to look at several specific examples of the impact of changing 15 acrefeet of irrigation water use under the proposed regulation. Ray Luhman provided 9 examples which were covered for the board. These examples were specifically chosen to bring out the most interesting issues of the policy. Following review and discussion of the examples, *Jon Friesen moved to request that DWR continue promulgating proposed KAR 5-24-10 on our behalf. Dave Rietcheck seconded the motion which passed unanimously.*

5. NEW BUSINESS

a. Bureau Modeling Grant: Susan Stover, KWO, updated the board with the background of the request, what it was intending to do and how it fits into the state and local water planning efforts. Wayne Bossert added that he agreed to recommend \$6,000.00 of GMD 4 support (\$2,000.00 cash and \$4,000.00 in-kind support) based principally on the modeling requests made by the south Thomas County group. It should be noted that GMD 4 is proposing that two additional areas (SW Sherman County and NW Sheridan County) be included as well.

In discussion, Mitch Baalman expressed concern that the results could possibly be used to disadvantage GMD 4 groundwater right owners - particularly with respect to the Solomon River basin (Area II) components of the proposal. Mark Billinger remarked that following all the data and work done thus far, it appeared to him that the Solomon system has not been compromised by groundwater pumpage too badly thus far, and that any policies in this regard that might even be considered for advancement would presumably be minimal.

Following all discussion, *Lon Frahm moved that GMD 4 provide the recommended \$6,000.00 of support to the effort as proposed in the reviewed draft. Roger Zweygardt seconded the motion which passed unanimously.*

b. Copier Change - Lease vs Purchase: Manager presented the details of our copier situation but all the figures had not been received yet. In discussion, *Jon Friesen moved that manager Wayne Bossert address the copier problems as an administrative issue. Lon Frahm seconded the motion which passed unanimously.*

c. NRCS QRA Designations: Manager updated the board on the current year's program and indicated that it was time to consider designating next years' areas. The supportive members of the NRCS KTC subcommittee (KWO, GMDs, DWR etc.) will be meeting with Harold Klaege on June 26 to cover the issues of the current program and ideas for next year's program.

Based on the pattern of applications and known interest staff recommended that the Thomas County QRA be retained, that the Rawlins County QRA be eliminated and replaced with a two to four township area in SW Sherman County that best matches the county's worst decline area and that the Sheridan County QRA be expanded to cover a two to four township area in NW Sheridan County that best matches the county's worst decline area. Manager also reported on a request by a Cheyenne County landowner to include an area of east central Cheyenne County where this person irrigates.

In discussion, the board looked at the current program results and noted at least one application that they thought should not have been approved. They asked if suggestions were going to be made to correct this process. Staff responded in the affirmative. Following more discussion, the board asked staff to prepare a listing of all current

program issues to be discussed on June 26 with NRCS for review and action during the June 8, 2006 board meeting. With this decision, the board tabled and decisions on setting specific QRA's for next year until the June 8 meeting. The board also suggested that Sherman County and Sheridan County board members begin discussing the program with land and water right owners in the staff-proposed areas of these two counties. Jon Friesen expressed strong interest in developing a specific set of criteria for QRA's so that the annual decision would not appear to be so ad hoc. The board was most interested in designating areas with sufficient interest to result in good participation levels.

Also discussed was the role GMD 4 could play in advantaging area applicants. One possibility was by better education. Another was to offer additional (complimentary) incentives to either extend the set aside period or involve more irrigated acres or other ways to reduce consumptive water use that were consistent with EQIP.

- d. **Cost Share w/ KWO on Steel Tapes:** Manager covered the proposed contract with the board which would basically provide 50% of the cost not to exceed \$1000.00 for 2 new 300 foot steel tapes with the assurance we would provide at least 2 private measurements to the state's water level data base. Following discussion, Lon Frahm moved to approve the proposed contract and have board president Scott Maurath sign. Mitch Baalman seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

6. DWR REPORT – Mark Billinger briefed the Board on the upcoming BAC meetings and provided the board various water use density maps of western Kansas and NW Kansas. Mark also provided an update on the public hearings regarding the Hays wellfield change applications.

7. OPEN SESSION - PUBLIC QUESTIONS/COMMENTS - none


8. SET NEXT MEETING DATE AND CONSIDER FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

June 8, 2006 (to include budget hearing). July meeting was not set.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Lon Frahm moved for adjournment at 2:50 p.m., May 18, 2006. David Rietcheck seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted:



Dave Mann, Secretary