

GrassWorks Board Meeting
May 12, 2016
Schmeekle Reserve

Board Members Present: Wally Sedlar, Andy Jaworski, Larry Smith, Dan Olson, Jason Cavadini, Jim Quick, Dave Heidel, Laura Paine

Staff: Jill Hapner

Advisers: Vance Haugen, Jerold Berg, Paul Daigle, Otto Weigand, Angie Sullivan

Meeting was called to order at 10:08 am by Wally S.

Agenda and minutes review

Minutes from Feb 10, 2016 reviewed

Motion to approve: Larry/Dan – carried

Financial report

The financial report was reviewed by Jill. She started by discussing the current status of grants and gifts. We will be applying for another Clif Bar grant. A \$250 down payment has been made to Chula Vista for the conference, and \$250 has been paid to On Pasture for advertisement. The current checking account balance is \$43,489.49, and the savings account balance is \$20,001.81. The current foundation fund balance is \$14,689.65. Different options for this fund were discussed later in the meeting.

Motion to approve financial report: Jim/Laura – carried

Executive Directors Report

SARE Grant – The grant began about a year ago. The main purpose is to promote soil health, and to get RC&Ds to work with Extension offices. In the second quarter, Kirsten worked to prepare the soil health day, which was a success. Kirsten has prepared an 80 slide PowerPoint presentation that Jill is going to work on getting onto the website.

NRCS Grant – This grant is for developing grazing plans in collaboration with Marathon County. The original agreement was to develop a certain number of plans, and then several follow up plans. It has become apparent that people aren't interested in follow up plans. Perhaps the grant should be restructured to exclude the requirement for certain plans. In order to fine tune the agreement, we must keep better track of hours and costs to better estimate the support needed from NRCS in the future. Some areas of the state are experiencing decreased capacity to get plans completed (Southwest). Proper documentation should improve this. There was some discussion on the flexibility of plan requirements, which seems to vary by county. All 30 plans are currently complete. Reallocated money will add about 9 more plans. The plans are spread around the state fairly evenly. There was quite a bit of frustration with planners in the first year, but next year should be easier. We will be requesting more money for next year. The DCs in every county can now approve plans. Paul stated that if we want to continue this, then we better begin negotiating soon.

Motion to approve authorization for leadership to negotiate new contract: Laura/Peter - carried

NSAC grant – partner with Land Stewardship project to focus on underserved farmers

Blooming Prairie – did not receive grant

Clif Bar – will be submitting second proposal

Events – so far GrassWorks has been present at 10 events this year; the Grazing Ambassadors have had 2 talks, with two more scheduled in June

Amazon Smile – nothing in last quarter, keep trying to promote

Website – should we identify a company to sponsor the website?

Taxes – we completed our own taxes this year because without DGA it was much easier. However, doing our own taxes uncovered a lot of issues. We must apply for a license when conducting raffles. It is a \$25 fee, and all proceeds need to be separate during conferences. A form 1950 must be filled out for a nonprofit charitable number through the state. Because we are receiving money from different sources than in the past, filing requirements have been changing.

Grazing guides and sticks – 25 guides and 35 sticks sold

Membership – 118 for 2016, everyone has received a thank you as follow-up

Graze magazine – two articles will run this year

Roy White – will be putting on a workshop for the DNR on June 1, but has a lot of grazing facts backwards. We should have a presence there in the future.

Bylaws Review

There was some discussion on whether or not the bylaws actually prohibit the president from writing grazing plans. It was concluded that is not the case. It does state that he cannot be compensated, but he can write plans. There is a conflict of interest form that can be signed if necessary. A great deal of discussion focused on the board member requirements. Currently, directors must be producers because directors are required to be voting members. So in order to allow a director to be a non-producer, the bylaws need to be changed to allow voting members to be non-producers. The data bank will need to be revised in order to track which members are producers and which ones aren't.

Motion to strike “voting” from article II section I: Dave H/Laura – approved

Motion to revise article V to allow up to 2 non-producer directors: Dan O/Jim - approved

Section 2 states that the treasurer must be bonded. This has happened recently, may not be necessary, and costs \$300/year.

Motion to strike bonding requirement from bylaws: Laura/Dave H - approved

Article VI section 1 – the quorum requirement is lower than most groups – it was decided to leave it as is

Auditing the books – has not been happening, but will do it this year at the conference

Partnership opportunities with DGA

There are earmarks available to fund special projects through legislators. This could be a way to bring some funding to GrassWorks through the State. A federal agency sponsor is needed. The money would then be split between the project and the agency. GrassWorks could partner with DGA on a project. Wally, Paul, Kevin, and Jill are willing to represent GrassWorks in discussions.

Grazing conference update

We are all set for 2017 at Chula Vista. However, it is not going to be available for the exact date we want in 2018. Moving to the Wilderness is an option, but it is more expensive and the facilities are not as nice for this conference. Otherwise, the options for Chula Vista are: Jan 12-14, Jan 22-24, Jan 30- Feb 1. There are also potential issues with donating food, and whether or not our insurance coverage is sufficient. This matter will be looked further into.

Motion to select Jan 30 as priority 1 and Jan 22 as priority 2: Larry/Laura – approved

Foundation fund options

Julie looked into all of the options that were discussed at the last meeting, and the consensus is that it's not a good idea to pursue those. However, everyone also agrees that we need to put a face to the foundation. The directors need to be involved with fundraising. We discussed bringing Jean from the Community Foundation back to further explain fundraising and what is expected of members.

Meadow fescue report

Byron Seeds has received 75 lbs of Hidden Valley. It was sent off to Canada. Two other companies have expressed interest in the seed. One has offered \$0.25/lb and the other offered \$0.07/lb. Byron will not be interested in continuing the deal if it is not exclusive to them. Mike Casler may be requesting to include the other companies. Is Larry obligated to give seed to Casler upon his request? The group consensus was no. What should Larry do with the seed from this year? Dan O. expressed that Byron will purchase all of it. Larry doesn't want to get paid, but reimbursement money could potentially go back to the foundation.

Annual picnic

The picnic will be at Dave's on July 14 from noon – 2:00. Organic Valley's grillmaster will be present to serve Grassfed hotdogs and brats. Everyone will be asked to bring a dish to pass. A pasture walk will take place after dinner. The Xerces Society will also be present.

NSAC update

Kevin has forwarded all information to Cheyenne

NRCS technical update committee

Most of what they talk about currently is cover crops

Ag Coalition update

- Ag Education Center in Manitowoc County
 - Tours of what farms are like
 - Nothing about grazing
 - Model after Fair Oaks
- Little Plover River report
 - 26 HC wells around river
- WI Fertilizer Research Program
 - \$0.17/ton into fund – go to cleanup any potential spills
 - Want to increase the amount going into fund
- Yahara Pride
- Group from Manitowoc County – troubles with groundwater contamination
- UW Extension Reorganization
 - Nobody really knows what's going on

- Vance: not likely that grazing specialist position will be refilled
- GrassWorks should draft a letter

Other business

- WFTD in Walworth County
- Vance: grazing calendar
- Jerold: soil carbon restoration book – Ryan Cummings could be a potential speaker

Motion to adjourn at 2:19 pm: Larry/Laura - carried