

MRCDC Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
May 23, 2023 at 1pm via Zoom

At 1:08pm, Laura Kiehl called the MRCDC Executive Committee meeting to order.

Council members present were Laura Kiehl, Petroleum County CD; Dick Iverson, Richland County CD; Greg Jergeson, Blaine County CD; Dana Berwick, Roosevelt CD; and Lorri Schafer, Fergus CD. Others present were Katie Lund, MRCDC Fiscal Manager; Molly Masters, MRCDC Coordinator; Brent Smith, CEMIST Manager and Trish Smith, PCCD Administrator.

Approve Minutes

Minutes were reviewed from April 24, 2023. Lorri Schafer moved to approve the April minutes; Dick Iverson seconded. Motion passed.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Financial Report

Katie stated the budget is just for this year and in line for what it needs to be for the rest of this year, with the 2-year grant cycle. We have approximately \$30K left for the whole 2-year budget cycle through the end of May. Profit and loss by class – Mainly using the DNRC 656, Molly been using the new NACD grant for a few items, the SSA will be opened again, and also the River Rendezvous account. Lorri asked when we have the bill from PCCD if that will go into this fiscal or next fiscal year. Katie will date it for June 30th for July billing. Statement of Accounts – will see a couple reversals for checks that Molly didn't cash for checks, so re-issued those checks to her. Lorri Schafer moved to approve the May financial report and pay unpaid bills; Dick Iverson seconded. Motion passed.

Molly listed items needed purchased with the extra money: Computer - \$1,114.98 (already purchased, Council had approved at the previous meeting); Pay Bill Milton for his time/travel for CMR CWG meetings; laptop case; paper cutter; cooler for River Rendezvous; miscellaneous office supplies; 200-300 MRCDC brochures - \$500; another 6' stand up banner - \$300; Swag bags - \$450; Ball caps \$6/each, \$400; notepad/pen. Total for all just under \$5000.

Bill will need to submit an invoice to submit for reimbursement. Dick Iverson moved to pay Bill Milton \$2250 for reimbursement for travel/per Diem; Lorri Schafer seconded. Motion Passed. Lorri Schafer moved to approve Molly purchasing the rest of the promotional items and office supplies purchases totaling approximately \$2700; seconded by Dick Iverson. Motion Passed.

Old Business

MRCDC vehicle – fix hail damage – Nothing to report. Molly will call insurance to make sure we are still

in the timeframe to submit a claim.

BLM proposed rule change comment letter approval – Council went over the corrections and updates on the letter and had discussion on the letter, and clarification on BLM wanting to convert grazing permits to conservation permits. Since there was no definite decision on approval of the letter, Laura suggested that the Council members send their suggestions to Molly and the letter would have to be approved at a special meeting later. Additional comments due to Molly by May 26th and letter put together for a May 31st special meeting at 1pm.

New Business

Molly's maternity leave – Molly stated that the Montana Maternity Leave is up to 12 weeks (SL, AL, unpaid leave). Molly will be off for most of August, parttime September and October and back to fulltime in November. Molly asked about the Council's thoughts on paying any maternity leave. Dick suggested Molly and Veronica to get together for a game plan and report back at the special meeting May 31.

Committee Reports

Fort Peck Test Flows – Molly stated they had a stakeholder engagement meeting Friday. The Fort Peck Reservation tour went on with MRRIC. Overall, they have the same thoughts on the minimum and maximum flows (20-25cfs for high 8-10k cfs for low). The tribe has concerns with their irrigation. Toured the water intake and the Corps said that they are looking on the high end for 25Kcfs but not sure on the low. MRRIC's preliminary meeting was the 15th and they summarized past work and talked about looking at doing studies with the flows in the Powder and Yellowstone Rivers. Dick stated that Tester was going to be asking questions of the Corps of Engineers at a Senate Committee and hasn't heard any results on that. Three employees from the Farm Credit Services out of Glasgow asked to be part of the Stakeholder meeting call Friday since crop insurance is not effective if it is a man-made disaster – to make sure stakeholders are protected. The Corps doesn't have jurisdiction on the Milk River (Bureau of Reclamation does) and had a call with the head of the Bureau of Rec. He doesn't think the Milk River has a lot of potential for getting sturgeon down. Dana is getting on as an alternate for irrigation on MRRIC.

CMR Community Working Group – Molly stated they had a meeting in Fort Peck May 18. It was well attended. Main topic was the Farm Bill and representatives from each of the congressional offices attended via zoom to give updates and listen to comments and concerns about the Farm Bill. Top comments were housing availability and affordability, finding capacity and unable to fill positions, invasive species and the BLM proposed rule. The next meeting is June 22nd in Jordan and the next will be in September.

Living on the Bank – No update.

Woody Invasive Species Working Group – Molly stated that she attended the YRCDC Meeting May 11th with Trish and Brent, and part of their focus was discussing the working group. RFP is due May 31 for the working group coordinator that will be hired for planning for the upcoming year. Received \$65K through the Noxious Weed Trust Fund Grant.

River Rendezvous – Molly stated that Patricia Gilbert (tour organizer) will not be able to join us for the River Rendezvous since her father passed away unexpectedly, so need to rethink on what we are doing with a plan B. Asked her if she is still able to go see the sites or not and she hasn't heard back. Karl and

Molly did look at some of the maps and there really isn't a road close to where the project was. Laura reached out to Rachel Frost and she has a PowerPoint we can use but won't be there herself. Corps has done additional treatment sites since, but won't have that info. She wondered about going to Musselshell for treatment sites. Can talk to Laura Nowlin and Allison Martin and see if they have ideas. We can also fill in time with the museum if needed.

Partner Reports

MACD – No Report.

DNRC – Molly stated that Veronica told her the biggest update was the Funding Forum Meet and Greet this evening in Glendive and there will be another one in Lewistown late June.

NRCS – Molly stated that we are finalizing the sub award grant through MACD for paying for the River Rendezvous. Laura stated that the Core Partners meeting scheduled for June was cancelled, so people are hoping to just meet at the Spring Board meeting and schedule another Core Partners meeting in the fall.

MRWA – Greg stated that the Milk River Working Group met this morning in Havre and discussed the various tools the legislature gave them to work on for putting all the projects together on the Saint Mary Milk River. They have not had a meeting recently for the Milk River Watershed Alliance.

CEMIST – Molly read Brent Smith's update. May 31st is the CEMIST monthly meeting. May 31st the deadline for the Woody invasive "task force" RFP. June 13th is the AIS substrate monitoring training in Miles City; still some openings for CD Administrators. We are looking at August for another training in the upper Musselshell area (Harlowton). Department of Livestock is still looking for the MT assistant veterinarian to fill the vacancy. Have had a couple applicants and interviews so far. This person will eventually be the point for the DOL feral pig program. Jared Beaver is starting to work on the Feral Pig highline tour meetings. More info to come but will most likely be in the fall.

Reach Reports

Lower Reach – Dick Iversen stated that Dana and Buz are going to try to get on as representatives for Irrigation with MRRIC. He thinks that we should put in a letter for support. Molly stated that her letter of support came from the DNRC. Dana stated that their CD is sending a letter of support and we could send another letter of support, but they are due May 27th. Molly stated that we would need to be more specific in the agenda for writing the letter of support for Dana being on MRRIC as an irrigation representative. It was decided to not push the issue.

Reservoir Reach – Laura stated that we are just helping to get ready for the River Rendezvous and the PCCD Event Ladies Day on the Range is coming up soon. Petrolia Lake did fill and has been running over the spill way for a couple weeks, so has put some water into the Musselshell River and on into Fort Peck.

Middle Reach – No Report.

Upper Reach – No Report.

Individual CD Reports (voluntary/as needed) – No other reports.

Coordinator Update

Molly stated that she will be busy traveling in June between the Spring Board Meeting, Missouri River Natural Resources Conference in Helena, and the River Rendezvous/CMR CWG in Jordan.

Dick Iverson added that the test flow stakeholder meeting is going to be held Friday via Zoom; they will be having satellite images showing where all the fish travel down the river. If anyone is interested in attending, get ahold of Molly to get the Zoom info, since the Corp has to give permission on who gets on that call.

Upcoming Events/Important Dates

May

- 23:** ***MRCDC Executive Committee meeting***
- 26: USACE Ft. Peck Stakeholders meeting
- 29: Office Closed
- 31: CEMIST meeting

June

- 2: Molly out
- 5: BLM Virtual public meeting
- 6-8: MACD Spring Board meeting
- 12-14: Missouri River Natural Resources Conference
- 16: Molly out
- 21: River Rendezvous, Jordan
- 21:** ***MRCDC Quarterly meeting, Jordan***
- 22: CMR Community Working Group, Jordan
- 28: CEMIST meeting
- 30: Molly out

July

- 4: Independence Day
- 25:** ***MRCDC Executive Committee meeting***
- 26: CEMIST Quarterly meeting
- 28: Baby Girl Masters' due date

Other

With no further business, Dana Berwick moved to adjourn the meeting; Lorri Schafer seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 2:45pm.

Approved on: 7/25/2023

Submitted by:



Trish Smith, MRCDC Secretary



Laura Kiehl, Chairman