

State Board of Agricultural Research and Education
February 11, 2014
MINUTES

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The State Board of Agricultural Research and Education met at the NDSU Greenhouse conference room, NDSU campus. Board members in attendance were Leland (Judge) Barth, Mike Beltz, Chris Boerboom, Dean Bresciani, Ken Grafton, Rodney Howe, Jerry Klein, Brian Leier, Keith Peltier, JoAnn Rodenbiker, Richard (Dick) Roland and Lyle Warner. Absent: Tracy Boe, Doug Goehring, Paul Langseth, and Doyle Lentz.

Chairman Beltz called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m., and noting a quorum, welcomed everyone to make introductions. Chairman Beltz asked for additions or corrections to the agenda and hearing none, it was unanimously approved. Judge Barth moved to approve the January 10 minutes as submitted and Keith Peltier seconded it; motion carried. Chairman Beltz noted that the March 5 meeting in Bismarck will be held at the State Capitol building in the Pioneer Room.

Administrative Report from Dr. Grafton

Dr. Grafton distributed a spreadsheet of the biennial budget status. Dr. Marcia McMullen gave a status report on the search for an Associate Director for the ND Agricultural Experiment Station. Handouts of the position description were available for distribution, and all are encouraged to nominate qualified individuals or encourage them to apply online.

Administrative Report from Dr. Boerboom

Dr. Boerboom stated that due to the appropriations bill that was recently passed, dollars lost to sequestration were restored. Extension programming is being formulated to assist farmers in understanding the new Farm Bill. Dr. Boerboom indicated that the Ward County agent position was now filled; an offer went out for McKenzie County and it was declined after salary negotiations were unsuccessful. At this point about half of the open positions are being filled. Dick Roland asked if there were other issues holding candidates back from accepting positions in the west. Dr. Boerboom said all indications are that insufficient salary and housing are the biggest barriers.

Agricultural Research Fund (ARF) update

Senator Jerry Klein has spoken with various legislators about the ARF, and received additional feedback and suggestions. Members discussed what if any action to take at this juncture. Senator Klein encouraged members to speak with legislators about this issue. Chairman Beltz tasked Mr. Barth and Senator Klein to pursue further details and report at a later date if there were any developments.

Senator Klein added that during the March meeting, a representative from the Public Service Commission may briefly address the Board. Board members noted they are also interested in hearing from railroad representatives on the issues producers are facing with rail delays.

Extension list of initiatives for consideration by SBARE

Drafts were shared showing Extension initiatives. The previous SBARE meeting resulted in a preliminary ranking retaining all items scoring 32 and higher, resulting in 17 total items. Before describing the initiatives, Dr. Boerboom provided an overview of the balance among the Extension program areas. Board members were encouraged to provide feedback on how they wish to see these initiatives bundled prior to finalizing. Discussion followed. Dr. Boerboom noted that succession planning has been identified as a priority issue and it has been integrated with the Community Vitality initiative. Members discussed various ways to consider the issue and it was agreed that although these FTEs may not serve as true financial advisors, they will fill critical roles in assisting heirs and ag producers in succession and transition planning.

The 'Extension Infrastructure' bundle contains two main components - operating costs, and the Extension Fellows FTEs with their related operating cost. Discussion continued.

One-time requests include oil patch salary differentials. Western staffing needs and challenges are ongoing.

One unranked item is listed, to increase assistance grants to Soil Conservation Districts.

Chairman Beltz called for a vote of the initiatives. Dave Ruhland explained the protocol for this round of balloting. Ballots were completed by members and collected.

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Members took a lunch break at 12:03pm.

Chairman Beltz brought the meeting to order again at 1:02 p.m. Results of voting were shared, and the overall ranking was noted on the handout.

NDAES list of bundles for consideration by SBARE

Dr. Grafton distributed a handout of initiatives as currently packaged. The FTE requests were reduced by approximately 25% from the previous round of voting. Bundles were created with general topics in mind, but also ranking from the last meeting taken into consideration. It was agreed that current packaging can be reworked if needed.

Dr. Grafton informed the board that there has been a withdrawal of offered funding support originally thought to be provided by outside parties for the Oakes irrigation site. Members discussed removing the Oakes irrigation FTE and operating items from a packaged initiative. Jerry Klein made a motion to remove the items from this initiative. The motion was seconded by Keith Peltier. Motion was carried and the ballot will reflect this change.

Discussion on the initiatives continued.

Dick Roland made a motion to reinstate the pulse and bean FTE to the priority list and include it in the bundling and voting process. Lyle Warner seconded the motion. Discussion continued. The board voted and the motion was defeated.

Chairman Beltz reminded the board that the vote today would not eliminate any items currently on the initiatives before them but would narrow down what is front page versus back page initiatives in the final packages.

Dave Ruhland handed out ballots at 1:51pm. Ballots were compiled and results shared with the board.

Capital Improvements list of bundles for consideration by SBARE

The board viewed a handout of packaged improvements and a set of draft floor plans for the proposed improvements. Keith Peltier informed members that he and the Research Extension Center directors have discussed plans for seed cleaning plants. The plan formulated is reflected in these initiatives. Jay Fisher, NCREC Director, added that the North Dakota Crop Improvement Association has voiced support of this initiative as well.

One-Time Funding Requests

One-time funding requests presented were as follows: an increase in deferred maintenance support; an increase in geothermal well capacity for the Main Station Greenhouse; increased support for utilities at the Main Station greenhouse; and the oil patch salary differential.

Chairman Beltz said that the board will finalize the initiatives at the next meeting. At that point final dollar amounts and full package details will be examined. Budget requests are due from SBARE to the State Board of Higher Education on April 10.

Voting commenced. Dave Ruhland shared results of the capital improvements and one-time funding requests vote at 2:41 pm.

Chairman Beltz asked members to review these carefully before the next meeting. He also noted that possible summer meeting locations may include Williston or Minot so members are advised to keep that in mind for the future. Jerry Klein made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Keith Peltier seconded it. Meeting was adjourned at 2:45pm.

Respectfully submitted by Lorie Herbel.