

A. ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM AND ROLL CALL

The regular meeting of the Board of Agriculture & Conservation (BAC) was held October 10, 2013 at the Division of Agriculture conference room, 1800 Glenn Highway, St.12, Palmer, Alaska. Chair Ben VanderWeele called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Board members present and establishing a quorum were:

Mr. Ben VanderWeele, Chair
Mr. John Schirack, Vice Chair
Mr. Al Poindexter, Board member
Ms. Deidre Berberich, Board member
Mr. Chris Flickinger, Board member (telephone)
Mr. Troy Shelden, Board member

Staff in attendance was:

Ms. Esther Tempel, DNR Special Assistant to the Commissioner
Ms. Franci Havemeister, Director
Ms. Lora Haralson, Administrative Officer I
Mr. Robert McFarlane, AAG, Dept. of Law
Ms. Amanda Swanson, ARLF Loan Officer
Ms. Olga Lotosh, ARLF Accountant

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: Board member Poindexter moved to approve the agenda.
No objections were received.
The agenda was approved.

C. PUBLIC COMMENTS/SESSION

Erik Feige State Representative from District 6 and Michael Pascal Legislative Aide reviewed HB 207.

The Board held a discussion with Representative Feige and Legislative Aide Pascal regarding HB 207.

Wayne Brost, pig farmer, dairy and hay producer made the following public comments regarding HB 207:

- Doesn't support the bill.

- Does support the chance for the Board to write regulations.
- Does not want to go to Anchorage nor to the Department of Commerce and Economic Development (DCED) for a loan, loan approvers should be close to the famers.
- By transferring the loan approval to DCED the personal touch will be lost because the loan approver does not know the farmer.
- If it was transferred to DCED a new employee could be hired from out of state and does not know Alaska agriculture.
- HB207 is not a new notion, but scaled down from the previous attempts to move the Agricultural Revolving Loan Fund (ARLF).
- He has attended State Farm Bureau meetings and it was voted down, nobody was or has been in favor of moving the ARLF to DCED.
- Does not want his loan information to go to someone he does not know in DCED.
- He wants his loan information reviewed and approved by someone who has the perspective of his farming operation and his financial background.
- If an applicant feels there is a conflict of interest from individual BAC member(s) they need to let the ARLF loan officer know and that information for the loan will not be included in the BAC packet for that Board member, or Board members.
- If an applicant feels there is a conflict of interest they can apply with other lenders.

Wayne Brost stated that in his opinion Mt. McKinley Meat & Sausage (MMM&S) is not operating efficiently.

D. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETINGS

July 15, 2013 Draft Meeting Minutes

MOTION: Vice Chair Schirack moved to approve the minutes of July 15, 2013.

SECOND: Board member Poindexter seconded the motion.

VOTE: The motion passed without objection.

E. CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES

Chair VanderWeele stated now is the time for conflict disclosures. You have the agenda outlining pending business and we will be going into executive session later to address loan requests. Does any member have a conflict to disclose relating to any business before the board?

(No conflicts were reported).

F. REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE

Director Havemeister:

1. Division Update/Division Newsletter:
 - Presented the Director's monthly report.
 - Attended a Fairbanks Farm Bureau meeting and Kenai Farm Bureau meeting.

ARLF Loan Officer Swanson:

2. Presented the ARLF Interest Rates
The ARLF interest rates in comparison to other agriculture lending agencies were reviewed.
(The Board had no questions).

3. Reviewed the Applications in Process
(The Board had no questions).

4. Asset Report/Umnak Island ARLF Lease Memo
The October 2013 asset report was reviewed.
(The Board had no questions).

The Umnak Island ARLF lease memorandum was reviewed.
(The Board had no questions).

ARLF Accountant Lotosh:

5. Financial Reports
The August, 2013 financials were presented.

6. FY13 Year End Financial Reports
The FY13 yearend financial reports were reviewed.

Special Assistant Tempel will follow up with Deputy Commissioner Fogels regarding the Department of Corrections and paying for the inmate labor.

AAG McFarlane:

7. Public Session Report
The public session report was presented.

G. EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Executive Session for the Alaska Farmer's Cooperative lease status information and the Aging/Delinquency report included Chair Ben VanderWeele, Vice Chair John Schirack, Board member Deidre Berberich, Board member Chris Flickinger (telephone), Board member Troy Shelden, Board member Al Poindexter, Ms. Esther Tempel, DNR Special Assistant to the Commissioner, AAG Robert McFarlane, Director Franci Havemeister, ARLF Loan Officer Amanda Swanson and Administrative Officer Lora Haralson.

H. NEW/OLD BUSINESS:

(No new/old business).

I. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:

The Board commented that the presentation made today by Representative Feige and Legislative Aide Pascal was unclear and not how HB 207 is currently written. The Board indicated there were areas that needed clarification and additions, specifically the appeal process of loans.

J. SET NEXT MEETING & AGENDA ITEMS

The next Board of Agriculture & Conservation meeting will be scheduled in December. The exact date will be determined.

K. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.