

Meeting Summary-Murray SWCD March 15, 2017

Attendees: Shannon Cohrs, Mona Henkels, Gary Brinks, Paul Posthuma, Karen Hurd, Doug Goodrich (BWSR) , Craig Christensen , Shelly Lewis, Travis Radke, Joe Newberg (Consultant)

We had a lengthy discussion relating to ongoing issues with the County Board, the upcoming budget meeting between Murray SWCD and Murray County. Points discussed were:

- There are generally good relations with most of the County Staff.
- It was felt that it was possible to work toward favorable relationships with four of the five County Board members.
- It is felt that there is/was sentiment in the Murray County Board/Staff for merger between the SWCD and the County Env. Svc Off.
- We had a brief discussion relating to SWCD taxing authority.
- Need to obtain copies of existing MOUs between other SWCD/County pairs.
- It is important to justify the existence of the SWCD in the eyes of the County Board/Staff and citizens.
- There is a need to develop a long range plan (5 years) for the SWCD.
- We discussed a possible presentation on state water law.
- Should we promote a meeting between the SWCD and County full boards
- Aggressive behavior on the part of one county board member has been a real impediment to good relations. We need to foster positive communications and relations.

Murray SWCD Strategic Planning Session

Wednesday, October 5, 2016

(Amended 3/15/17)

1) Mission Statement: *The Mission of the Murray Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is to protect , enhance and conserve the natural resources of Murray county*

2) Issues/Challenges:

- Buffer strips
 - (a) Education needs
 - (b) Cost share considerations
- County Issue
 - (a) 3 month reporting requirement
 - (b) Appropriation system beginning Jan 2017.
 - (c) New County Coordinator/HR Director
- Staffing Issue
 - (a) Retain current jobs
 - (b) Increase size of staff
 - (c) Arrange some sort of job sharing with neighboring SWCD
 - (d) Need to develop policies, manuals, job descriptions
- Budget
 - (a) Probable increase in personnel expenses/benefits
 - (b) Need to minimize impact on current staff
- Need to develop long range vision

3) Strengths & Weaknesses:

- Strengths

- (a) Good existing staff
- (b) Good board
- (c) County has good natural resources/water
- (d) Good rapport with farmers/clients
- (e) Good relations with NRCS, BWSR, etc.

- Weaknesses

- (a) Relations with County Board
- (b) District Manager position currently vacant-Staff filled out
- (c) Knowledge of personnel policies, information-**Personnel Manual complete**
- (d) Uncertain staff needs
- (e) Possible additional space needs?

4) Objectives/Strategies:

- Improve relations with County Board and staff by:
 - (a) Promoting SWCD in quarterly meetings with County-**OK**
 - (b) Providing information packet to new County Board member, develop by 12/31/16.**???**
 - (c) Try to have a BWSR representative at quarterly meetings with County**???**
 - (d) Assist County with input into County Water Plan (2017) **Potential**
- Improve visibility of SWCD with county residents
 - (a) Submit monthly letters to the editor citing SWCD's mission and impact on county-**OK**
 - (b) Participate in Environmental Fair-**OK**
 - (c) Investigate other ways in which SWCD can actively promote its activities
 - (d) **Participate in 2017 County Fair?**
- Investigate the potential for implementation of the One Watershed, One Plan concept for Murray County.

- Solve current staffing issues by:
 - (a) Assigning a working group to develop staffing plan for submission to SWCD Board at 10/24/16 meeting
 - (b) Developing job descriptions, employee policies, and staff budget by 11/30/16
- Investigate opportunities for long term growth for the SWCD in 2017.
- Look into an MOU with Murray County relating to the mutual interactions between the County and the SWCD. Try to get copies of existing MOUs involving other County/SWCD relations.

Participants:

Board: Mona Henkels, Gary Brinks, Paul Posthuma

Staff: Craig Christensen, Shelly Lewis

Consultant: Joe Newberg