

Piedmont Conservation Council, Inc.
Executive Council Meeting Minutes

May 3, 2011

Members Present: Alex Ashton, Chairman (Guilford), Frank Green (Rockingham), Rudy Langley, Treasurer (Alamance), Hazel Puckett, Secretary (Rockingham), Stephanie Grant, Aspen Price

Members Absent: Bill Alston (Randolph), Eddie Culberson, Vice-Chair (Chatham), Talmage Layton (Durham)

Guests: Millie Langley, PCC Member (Guilford)

I. Call to Order & Chairman Comments

Alex Ashton called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. on May 3rd, 2011 at Maria's Restaurant in Burlington.

II. Approval of Minutes & Old Business

a. Approval of April 5th, 2011 Executive Council Meeting Minutes

Alex Ashton read the April 5th Executive Council meeting minutes out loud. Alex Ashton noted that on line 79-80, he had volunteered to look into potential accountants, not attorneys.

MOTION: Frank Green made a motion to approve the minutes with the change noted. Motion was seconded by Rudy Langley.

VOTE: Unanimously approved.

b. Old Business

New Accountant

The board discussed the search for a new accountant. Ashton noted that Eddie had been looking into accountants. Alex Ashton asked Rudy Langley if there was enough money to hire an accountant. Stephanie Grant went through the SunTrust accounts that she knew about, and asked if there were any others. Rudy said that there wasn't, and noted that they previously had a money market account but closed it when the maintenance fees got too high.

Administrative Position

Alex Ashton asked whether or not they could afford an administrator, and what those duties would be. The board discussed how comfortable Stephanie Grant and Aspen Price would be continuing doing those duties. Stephanie Grant stated that there was a big learning curve for them picking up the administrative and accounting stuff, and that it might cost too much to have another person catch up again. The board also discussed having a separate account for PCC Admin funds. They noted that there was already a

savings account they could use for that purpose. Stephanie Grant and Rudy Langley agreed to follow up on that.

The board discussed paying Aspen Price for doing the additional administrative hours. They discussed whether that should go through SJ Grant Consulting, LLC or through Aspen as an independent consultant. They agreed to pay her as an independent consultant; she would provide an invoice and timesheet to be approved at each meeting, and they would provide a 1099 at the end of the year.

Stephanie Grant asked about the PCC overhead funds, and whether they would have enough money for a yellow book audit. Alex Ashton stated he thought they had around \$16,000 in PCC's reserves they could kick in if they needed to.

MOTION: Rudy Langley made a motion to hire Aspen Price at a rate of \$15.00/hr. for 8 hours/week, noting that she should request more hours if she felt it was necessary, and that PCC would provide a 1099 at the end of the year. The motion was seconded by Hazel Puckett.

VOTE: Unanimously approved.

III. Changes to Today's Agenda

No changes were noted.

IV. Discussion Items

a. Future of PCC – Organization planning guidance distributed by NRCS and NARC&DC

Stephanie Grant presented a Strategic Planning document sent out on the NARDC listserv, intended to help the councils move forward without RC&D funding.

Alex Ashton noted that a general discussion tonight on where things are going would be useful, and to determine what kind of strategic planning needs to take place. Hazel Puckett suggested they start with the Strategic Plan that Julie had drafted earlier. Alex Ashton asked staff to email it to the Executive Council within the next week, and that they would discuss it at the June 7th, 2011 meeting. He stated they could come up with something to present to the full council at their July meeting. Frank Green noted that at this point, without additional grant writing, they were on a downward trajectory. Hazel Puckett mentioned that Julie Elmore had them on a path, and that if she had had more time PCC might be built up to the level that the Pilot View Council is. Rudy Langley noted that they could contract with a grant writing contractor on an as-needed basis to keep going. Alex Ashton stated that they needed to start requesting donations and to start being financially sustainable.

Stephanie Grant noted the email also mentioned doing a strategic planning retreat to plan out the coming year. Alex Ashton noted that would likely require bringing in

someone from outside to run a strategic planning session. Aspen Price suggested that the N.C. Center for Nonprofits might be a good resource, but that PCC was currently not a member. Stephanie Grant noted that the NARDC might also have organizational planning resources, and Hazel Puckett mentioned that PCC does pay dues to the NARDC.

b. Asheboro Office Close-Out

Stephanie Grant noted that Bill Alston had offered to do an inventory of what was remaining in the Asheboro office, but that he wasn't here tonight. She pointed out that the lease ended on May 20th. Hazel Puckett suggested that staff should get in touch with Bill Alston, go down to the office, do an inventory and take photos if needed. She said staff should keep what they could use and sell the rest of it. The board discussed the logistics of conducting an inventory and moving the items.

MOTION: Hazel Puckett made a motion to direct staff to get a definite inventory of what PCC has in the Asheboro office, decide what can be used and to sell the rest without needing approval from the board. The motion was seconded by Frank Green.

VOTE: Unanimously approved.

c. Accounting

Alex Ashton stated that they would need to do a Yellow Book Audit and asked for any other information. Stephanie Grant clarified that a Yellow Book Audit only applies to federal grants over \$500,000. However, she noted that the Clean Water Management Trust Fund contract states that if there is more than \$500,000 in grants in a fiscal year, they would require an audit be completed to Yellow Book standards. She also noted that the way the grants get invoiced and reimbursed may not fall in the same fiscal year, so it may not be applicable for the coming fiscal year.

Stephanie Grant stated that an accountant she talked to recommended using a bookkeeper who could work on an as-needed basis to keep PCC's books straight. Ashton recommended staff talk with Eddie Culberson and move forward on this.

Regarding hiring a new accountant, Alex Ashton suggested that staff come up with three potential accountants, and coordinate a day where several of the board members can come in and meet with them.

d. Remaining County Membership Dues

Millie Langley stated that she had requested payment from Guilford County. The board discussed asking David Stancil (Orange) and Bill Alston (Randolph) to follow up on their county's dues. Alex Ashton noted that they should invoice for FY12 dues in July. The board agreed to ask council members to research whether or not member counties included PCC dues in their FY12 budget; and have members report at the quarterly meeting in July.

e. **Meeting Locations**

The board discussed meeting locations. They agreed it might be more conducive to meet at a library at 7 p.m. and eat beforehand, and asked staff to reserve library rooms for future meetings. They agreed to meet at the Town Table in Elon for the June 7th meeting.

f. **Council Roster**

Frank Green read out the bylaws, which stated “In order to assure a sound, active Area Council, members who miss two (2) consecutive meetings without a designated alternate in attendance may forfeit their membership privileges on the Area Council.” Ashton read through the council roster and checked district information and membership status. Millie Langley noted that she had submitted an application at the last meeting to represent Guilford County.

MOTION: Hazel Puckett made a motion that Millie Langley be accepted as a Guilford County member. The motion was seconded by Rudy Langley.

VOTE: Unanimously approved.

The board noted that not each county was represented on the Executive Council – particularly that Caswell County was not represented. Alex Ashton suggested at the July meeting to find a representative from each county on the Executive Council. Ashton noted that they should be selective in finding members that will actually come to ensure they have a quorum at each meeting.

g. **PCC Logo Selection**

Grant passed around the ten logos that were created, noting that she and Aspen Price had selected their favorites, which were marked by an S and an A. She asked each board member to write their initial next to their three favorites.

The first and second logo had the most votes. Alex Ashton noted that a couple of things to consider were what would it look like in black and white, what would it look like blown up, and what would it look like shrunk down. Rudy Langley suggested that the second one would likely be easily blown up and shrunk down because it is less detailed than the first one.

The board discussed having a byline that they could include with the logo. After discussion, they board decided on “leveraging funds and resources for innovative community projects.”

The board unanimously selected the second logo and the agreed-upon byline.

V. **Decision Items**

a. **Pursuit of Circle of Diamonds status**

After discussion, the board agreed to move forward with the Circle of Diamonds certification. Stephanie Grant noted that Carol Melton had prepared a lot of the required materials already and they just need to be adopted. The board agreed to have staff send them out ahead of time and vote at the next meeting.

b. **Approval of Invoices**

Stephanie Grant presented invoices for approval for payment as:

- 1) Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc., C.W. Stanford Stormwater Project activities: \$21,610.24
- 2) Burlington Times-News, RFQ for Alamance Community College Stormwater Project: \$119.42
- 3) TreesNC, for Community Garden: \$4,167.50
- 4) Clean Energy Durham, Workshop #5, \$1,000.00
- 5) Clean Energy Durham, Workshop #6: \$1,000.00
- 6) EYDO, Guilford Farmland Protection Plan Consulting Services: \$10,519.90

MOTION: Hazel Puckett made a motion that they approve the invoices as submitted. The motion was seconded by Rudy Langley.

VOTE: Unanimously approved.

Stephanie Grant also presented an invoice from EcoEngineering for the Alamance Community College Stormwater Project for \$19,037.50. She stated that she had not received the invoice in time to bring it to the meeting, but that she had talked with them on the phone and felt confident that the invoice met the terms of their contract.

MOTION: Hazel Puckett made a second motion that if the invoice from EcoEngineering meets everything they were contracted to do, they would pay it, but with notice that they would not approve late invoices again. The motion was seconded by Frank Green.

VOTE: Unanimously approved.

c. **EcoEngineering Amendment**

Stephanie Grant explained that the original contract with EcoEngineering did not include Rainwater Solutions listed as a sub-contract, although the amount to pay Rainwater Solutions was in the contract. This amendment included them as a sub-contractor. There was no additional money being requested.

MOTION: Rudy Langley made a motion to approve the amendment to the EcoEngineering contract. The motion was seconded by Frank Green.

VOTE: Unanimously approved.

VI. Pending Projects Update

Alex Ashton suggested that with the meeting running late they should just get updates on projects that staff felt were important, or that board members had questions about.

Stephanie Grant gave an update on the potential Lassiter Mill Dam project. She stated that she met with Lynnette Batt with American Rivers and discussed the project details. Batt would do the general management of the project, and PCC would be responsible for the grant reporting as the grantee. Alex Ashton asked what the time frame was. Stephanie Grant stated that if the board decided to go forward, the designs should be complete within nine-twelve months. Alex Ashton noted that Stephanie Grant would be around during that time period. Stephanie Grant confirmed that and also noted that there would be \$4,500.00 from the grant for PCC admin costs. Alex Ashton asked how much work it would require from staff. Stephanie Grant stated that American Rivers give 60% of the grant money upfront. PCC would then request reimbursements for the next 30%, and then the final 10% would be given once a final report was submitted. Rudy Langley noted that it sounded like it would be a good project, and would provide publicity for PCC.

MOTION: Rudy Langley made a motion that PCC take on the Lassiter Mill Dam project. The motion was seconded by Frank Green.

DISCUSSION: Alex Ashton noted that they would need to have a contract brought forward to them in June to be signed. The board also noted that SJ Grant Consulting would need to bring forward a contract to add that project to their scope of work for PCC.

VOTE: Unanimously approved.

VII. The next Executive Council meeting is scheduled for June 7th, 2011 at 6 p.m. at Town Table in Elon.

VIII. MOTION: Frank Green made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Hazel Puckett.

VOTE: Unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:47 pm