

Minutes of a Meeting of the Outdoor Heritage Fund Advisory Board  
Held on October 7, 2013 at 1:30 p.m.  
Brynhild Haugland Room  
Bismarck, ND

Present: Wade Moser, OHF Advisory Board Chairman  
Eric Aasmundstad, OHF Advisory Board (By Speakerphone)  
Randy Bina, OHF Advisory Board  
Carolyn Godfread, OHF Advisory Board  
Jon Godfread, OHF Advisory Board  
Blaine Hoffman, OHF Advisory Board  
Tom Hutchens, OHF Advisory Board  
Bob Kuylen, OHF Advisory Board  
Jim Melchior, OHF Advisory Board  
Kent Reiersen, OHF Advisory Board  
Patricia Stockdill, OHF Advisory Board  
Dan Wogsland, OHF Advisory Board  
Larry Kotchman, OHF Advisory Board  
Terry Steinwand, OHF Advisory Board  
Rhonda Vetsch, OHF Advisory Board  
Mark Zimmerman, OHF Advisory Board

Also

Present: Kevin Kading, ND Game and Fish Department  
Eric Lindstrom, Ducks Unlimited  
Terry Allbee, NDNRT  
Dana Schaar Jahner, ND Recreation & Park Association  
Members of the Press

Chairman Moser called the meeting of the Outdoor Heritage Fund Advisory Board (“OHF Advisory Board”) to order with a quorum being present.

Chairman Moser inquired if there were any additions or deletions to the October 7, 2013 agenda. No additions or deletions were proposed.

Ms. Karlene Fine, Industrial Commission (“Commission”) Executive Director, presented the September 16, 2013 meeting minutes. (A copy is available in the Commission/OHF files.)

Mr. Eric Aasmundstad was accidentally disconnected from the phone system.

**It was moved by Randy Bina and seconded by Blaine Hoffman to approve the September 16, 2013 minutes.**

Chairman Moser noted that on Page 6 of the minutes there is a motion regarding the use of technical reviewers. Mr. Aasmundstad and he had discussed the intent of that motion and Mr. Aasmundstad had informed Mr. Moser that if there was something of a technical nature in an application that the technical reviewers are to take a look at that aspect of the application and then give the OHF Advisory Board an indication or red flag if there is something not quite right with the application, whatever it might be. Otherwise, the process would be straight forward and all the applications would come to the OHF Advisor Board for review and ranking. It was not a

process where the technical reviewers would review and deny an application – they would just give the OHF Advisory Board a red flag that something was not right with the application. Chairman Moser indicated that was his understanding when he voted and that was what he was thinking and wanted to know if everyone else was on the same page. He asked Mr. Wogsland who seconded the motion, if that was his understanding. Mr. Wogsland concurred.

Mr. Godfreed stated that it was his understanding from the legislative history on the establishment of the Outdoor Heritage Fund and the OHF Advisory Board that one of the reasons for having the number of ex-officio members is so the OHF Advisory Board can draw on their expertise and those technical experts can help guide the OHF Advisory Board on the technical aspects of the applications.

**With that clarification, everyone voted yes with Mr. Aasmundstad absent and not voting. The motion carried unanimously.**

Ms. Fine presented the financial report and noted that there was only one change from the prior financial report. She had included an estimate for interest earnings. (A copy of the report is available in the Commission/OHF files.) Ms. Fine stated she would send out a monthly email with updated financials to the OHF Advisory Board when she receives the monthly report on revenues.

Chairman Moser then took up the agenda item regarding Clarification of the role of technical reviewers and who they might be and role of the OHF Advisory Board. Attachment C was distributed to the Advisory Board members. (A copy is available in the Commission/OHF files.)

The OHF Advisory Board discussed the application process itself and how much time would be allowed for each applicant's presentation, whether applications would be reviewed all at one time and whether there would be an opportunity for the OHF Advisory Board to discuss each application before the OHF Advisory Board members ranked each application.

In response to a question, Ms. Fine said at least one of the other Commission advisory boards does allow a time for board discussion prior to the board members voting on the application. She noted that those discussions take place in open session.

There was discussion of having the technical reviewers and the chair of that group come before the OHF Advisory Board and explain the comments of the technical reviewers. After a while you get to a comfort zone with the technical review team that you don't even question their comments.

Mr. Kotchman said with their forestry grants program – the Community Forestry Council is provided a summary/score from the grant review team, independent members to that body, and those scores include a review of the project with some comments about the merits of the application. Then the Community Forestry Council discusses the application in an open meeting and acts upon those recommendations and generally makes a motion to approve those projects that they intend to fund.

The following questions and issues were discussed:

- Is the Technical Committee going to be made up of the ex-officio members of the OHF Advisory Board or are we going to want a Technical Committee outside the OHF Advisory Board membership?;
- Because of the different types of projects that will be coming to the OHF Advisory Board, is there going to be just one Technical Committee? It was suggested that there should be the same reviewers for all the applications.
- Is the role of the Technical Committee to actually score the applications or rather provide technical expertise? Isn't it the Advisory Board's role to score the applications?
- Do all the members of the Technical Committee need to look at every application or would the Game and Fish Department look at those applications dealing with habitat and wildlife and the Parks and Recreation look at applications that deal with parks, etc.? Who would decide which application went to which Technical Committee member—staff or the Technical Committee?
- What if there isn't a need for a technical review? Would there still be a need for the application to be reviewed by the Technical Committee?
- Will the ex-officio members provide input on more than just the technical aspects of an application? Having their input with their expertise on the overall value of an application (not just the technical aspects) would be beneficial.
- Could we have the Technical Committee comment on whether an application met the directives—the Committee wouldn't rank the applications but rather provide a summary of how the application meets the Outdoor Heritage Fund directives.

Mr. Zimmerman outlined the process that is used by his Department in reviewing applications for their grant programs. The program with the Department of Transportation utilizes a Technical Committee and that committee reviews all the applications and if the application is technically wrong then the Technical Committee can send the application back. In regards to their Department programs, the individuals that score their applications do their scoring well in advance of their meeting, send back their score sheets to the office for tabulation, then the committee members come to their committee meeting and advocate for the projects they believe are the best and try to convince the other committee members. The entire committee has seen the scoring prior to the actual vote or review of the projects. They have had a chance to score them themselves and then get everyone else's results and come into the meeting prepared. He said they get more of that work done in advance of the committee meeting. He expressed a concern that should the OHF Advisory Board receive a significant number of applications it would take a considerable amount of time to hear from each applicant and review every application. He suggested the Technical Committee could go through all the applications to see if they meet the Fund's criteria. If there was something missing in the application, then the committee could say the application is not complete and send it back. The Technical Committee would have the opportunity to review all the applications prior to the OHF Advisory Board getting all the applications.

It was suggested that staff could review the applications for completeness and then the Technical Committee could summarize each application and then indicate if there were any technical (scientific) issues with the application.

Mr. Reiersen said his understanding of the process is as follows:

- the application comes in, staff would review the application to make sure the applicant is a nonprofit or qualified agency, does the applicant comply with the law, etc.;

- then the Technical Committee reviews the technical aspects of the application – they prepare the executive summary; if they do not have the technical staff with the expertise needed to review the technical aspects of the application would they have the authority to go out and get the technical expertise needed to review the application?;
- the Technical Committee prepares a summary on those technical aspects and provides that summary to the OHF Advisory Board;
- then when the OHF Advisory Board hears the applicant’s presentation the OHF Advisory Board would already have that summary in hand;
- then the OHF Advisory Board would do their scoring.

Mr. Reiersen indicated that he would like to have discussion by the OHF Advisory Board right after the presentations to help him understand some of the thoughts of the other OHF Advisory Board members and then have a chance after all the applications are in to review and adjust his scoring. He suggested that the OHF Advisory Board could take the applications home and then the OHF Advisory Board members would have a deadline to get their scoring sent in. If your scoring isn’t in by that deadline, it just isn’t counted. He suggested that maybe a process the OHF Advisory Board should discuss.

In response to a question about dividing the work load among the Technical Committee members, Ms. Vetsch said she had no problems with assigning certain Technical Committee members to look at a particular application but it would be best if the four ex-officio members could make the judgment call. Each member has their own areas of specialties but nine times out of ten, their work does cross over.

After additional discussion it was the consensus of the OHF Advisory Board that it would be appropriate to have the Technical Committee, the ex-officio members of the OHF Advisory Board, review every application and provide their summary before the applicant makes their presentation. If there were questions that then needed to be asked of the applicant that can be done at the time of the presentation. It was also the consensus of the OHF Advisory Board that the Technical Committee could reach out to others to provide technical advice if the Committee determined that they did not have the technical expertise needed to evaluate the technical aspects of the application. The Technical Committee would look at all the applications as a committee. All the applications would come to the OHF Advisory Board—the Technical Committee could not reject any of the applications. The scoring by the OHF Advisory Board would not be done in advance of the oral presentations.

In response to a question, Chairman Moser stated the ex-officio members would not be doing any scoring of the applications.

In response to a question of when the OHF Advisory Board would have access to the applications, Ms. Fine stated the applications would be open records. Her intent is for the OHF Advisory Board to see a list of all applications as quickly as possible after the application deadline. If the OHF Advisory Board members wanted to see all the applications they can have access to them. In response to availability of the applications, Ms. Fine indicated that her office could post a “link” on the website so the applications would be available for viewing by everyone.

The question was asked whether an OHF Advisory Board member could ask the Technical Committee to resolve a technical question about an application. It was suggested that the OHF Advisory Board members could forward any technical questions that they had about an application to the Technical Committee members.

Chairman Moser discussed the time schedule and how much time should be allotted for presentations.

There was discussion about whether there should be oral presentations. Based on their experience in managing grant programs, Mr. Zimmerman and Mr. Bina indicated that depending on the number of applications allowing oral presentations could take a considerable amount of time for the OHF Advisory Board. There was discussion that perhaps there could be oral presentations for applications over a certain dollar threshold or perhaps giving the applicants an option to make a presentation.

**It was moved by Mr. Wogsland and seconded by Mr. Melchior that each applicant be given up to ten minutes to give a presentation on their project if they so desire.**

Mr. Wogsland said projects will be of different scope and sizes, etc. but some of these projects that are \$5,000 or \$10,000 are just as important to them as someone that has \$3 million project and they should have the opportunity to come before the OHF Advisory Board and give a presentation as to what they are about, why we should fund it if that is the directive we have and he would like to give them a shot, at least initially.

The comment was made that the ten minutes was fine but there should not be a time limit for the OHF Advisory Board members to ask questions.

There was discussion on the motion that every applicant be given an opportunity to make a ten-minute presentation but it isn't mandatory. However, an oral presentation was strongly recommended.

**On a roll call vote, everyone voted yes with Mr. Aasmundstad absent and not voting. The motion carried unanimously.**

Chairman Moser called on Kevin Kading from the Game and Fish Department regarding the process the Department uses for ranking and scoring proposals. (A copy of his presentation is available in the Commission/OHF files.)

Chairman Moser then asked Mr. Steinwand, Mr. Kotchman and Mr. Bina to review the information they had provided regarding possible processes for ranking proposals. (A copy of the various ranking option—Attachment D—are available in the Commission/OHF files.)

Mr. Steinwand indicated that Attachment D-1 included two ranking sheets that had been used at the Game and Fish Department or by a regional game and fish group in evaluating applications. Then the last seven pages of D-5 included five proposed assessment questions that each applicant would complete that would be viewed by the OHF Advisory Board and used in the scoring. In addition he had prepared 2 theoretical applications and showed how the ranking would be done on those theoretical applications.

Mr. Kotchman reviewed NDSU Forest Service scoring. He said Attachment D-2 puts forth some grant application recommendations which is not much different than what Mr. Steinwand had done. He said this process would look at competitive criteria with the idea that each one of the competitive criteria would be addressed in an application process and then point scores would be applied to each one of those competitive criteria and then the projects would be ranked according to that. The idea behind this is that rather than making value judgments, for example, whether a water quality project was better than a recreation project, this looks at it from the standpoint of the competitive criteria addressing what we think would be the essential component needed to insure success of the project regardless of what kind of mission you were trying to carry out with it – whether it dealt with all four of the mission statements for the program or even one mission statement for the program. If you go through these things and think through it from a positive standpoint and then you come up with a project that's been planned and prepared and would be implemented to insure success and long term sustainability. He indicated that is the process used by the Western Forestry Leadership Coalition which involves seventeen western states. The Coalition does competitive funding for a wide variety of projects; everything from tree planting to fire protection to working with communities on green space.

Ms. Fine stated some of the items noted in D-2 were also covered in Mr. Steinwand's suggestions but she was uncertain if the integrated delivery and influence positive change were covered in Mr. Steinwand's process.

In response to a question whether the grant application include partnerships with other organizations and is that the same as integrated delivery, Mr. Kotchman said he suggests a combination of collaboration as well as integrated delivery – in collaboration lining out what partners and what kind of contributions they are going to make plus with integrated delivery getting even more specific about how they are going to work together to make sure that something happens that's positive on the ground - more delivery than just endorsement.

Mr. Lindstrom with Duck's Unlimited reviewed Attachment D-3. He indicated this document is a summary of a more comprehensive 40 page report that was led by the Nature Conservancy that looked at other models that have worked in other states. There are similar funds in Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri and Arkansas and it highlighted some of the general guidelines and principles. The OHF Advisory Board has to develop their own criteria but there are some key lessons the OHF Advisory Board can take from that document, models that have worked well in other states, competitive science based scoring, highlights that addresses one of the four directives - where you get the biggest bang for your buck, the best investment return on investment. The report has not been finalized yet but he summarized the review of the draft report. He also suggested that the OHF Advisory Board revisit their decision to have four grant cycles a year—he suggested two grant cycles a year.

Ms. Fine said attachment D-4 was an example of the ranking form used in Minnesota.

In response to a question, Ms. Fine stated that it appeared in the Minnesota process the board can partially fund an application depending on how the project ranked and the amount of funding available.

Mr. Bina reviewed his option which was D-5 pages 1 and 2. We may find as projects come in, a number of projects could cross over and meet more than one of the directives and giving additional points if that happens. He said public access – whatever project we fund, the ability to have the public be able to use that area, free of charge – that is what this program is all about. Partnerships are a good way to get things done. He gave more points for matching funds. The sustainability of the project is extremely important – we want to look back in five years and see the project is still going and the public is using it.

The OHF Advisory Board discussed the various options:

- making sure stewardship of the land was included;
- perhaps too much weighting has been given to habitat;
- including a question about the farming and ranching directive;
- making sure we include plant diversity, soil conditions, water quality issues;
- project management needs to be considered;
- budgeting should be a factor;
- sustainability is also important;
- matching dollars should be a weighting factor.

There appeared to be more interest in the format presented by Mr. Bina with attributes taken from the other options.

Mr. Zimmerman wanted it noted that when discussing outdoor recreation it is more than just parks. It is all recreation – hunting, fishing, walking down a trail, playing on a playground, etc.

It was the consensus of the OHF Advisory Board that a subcommittee consisting of the four ex-officio members and someone representing agriculture work with Ms. Fine to develop a draft ranking sheet for the OHF Advisory Board's consideration. Mr. Wogsland volunteered to serve on the subcommittee representing agriculture.

Ms. Fine stated she would post the subcommittee meeting as required by law and also notify all the OHF Advisory Board members of the subcommittee meeting.

Chairman Moser indicated that there were sample application/guidelines under Attachment E. A sample from the State Forester, from Mr. Bina and Ms. Fine distributed E-3 which incorporated some of the same issues as outlined in the other samples. (A copy of Attachment E is available in the Commission/OHF files.)

Mr. Bina commented on E-2 which he had developed. He asked the question of whether there should be a limit on the number of words. Initially, in the different areas for the narrative, they put a limit on words but then took it out. In some cases if it is a big project they will need to sell it and we should give them as much space as they want. At this point, it is written with no limitations as far as pages.

Ms. Fine said typically, in the other Commission programs there is a limit of fifteen pages. She said it included attachments unless there was something very technical where they had to provide a report but fifteen pages was the total including a title page, table of contents, one page

executive summary of the project and the budget. She strongly recommended that the application have an executive summary.

It was the consensus of the OHF Advisory Board that the subcommittee also develops an application form for the Board's consideration at its next meeting.

In response to a question, Ms. Fine stated that her office would try to set the application up for on-line submission. However, she thought she should also offer the option of submission by paper as there may be a group that is not comfortable using on-line submission.

Chairman Moser told the OHF Advisory Board members to watch for e-mails regarding the subcommittee meeting and another draft of the ranking and application forms.

Ms. Fine reviewed the solicitation letter and plan for distribution. (A copy is available in the Industrial Commission/OHF files.) She said if the OHF Advisory Board recommended application form and ranking process is approved by the Industrial Commission on October 22 then this would be the letter the Commission would send out. She asked for comments on either the letter or the plan for distribution.

Ms. Fine also noted that the chairman had requested that a PowerPoint presentation be made available for the OHF Advisory Board members to use. She encouraged the OHF Advisory Board members to talk to their organizations so everyone is aware of the application deadline. She also encouraged the OHF Advisory Board members to talk to their organizations about getting an article into their newsletters, publications, etc.

Chairman Moser said the PowerPoint was for explaining the Board's purpose and giving information that we can relay so people feel comfortable about applying for funding, how they apply, etc. If there is something specific that should be included in the presentation, please contact either Ms. Fine or him.

Mr. Steinwand said four deadlines per year is very aggressive. He asked the OHF Advisory Board to reconsider the four rounds, at least initially.

Chairman Moser said we will be having a meeting in the next couple weeks before the Industrial Commission meets on October 22. We will put the number of deadline dates on the agenda for the next meeting to see if we are ready for that kind of a work load.

Ms. Fine discussed the upcoming timetable and scheduling of upcoming meetings. (A copy is available in the Commission/OHF files.) After discussion the next meeting was set for October 17 at 1:30 p.m. Ms. Fine will notify the members of the location.

Ms. Fine said based on the sequence of meetings today, applications come in on December 2, staff will review the first week, the week of the 9<sup>th</sup> the Technical Committee would review and then we are in the holidays, but would they want to meet the week of the 16<sup>th</sup>. It was decided the OHF Advisory Board would meet the week of January 13 to hear application presentations. Ms. Fine noted that although the OHF Advisory Board would not be meeting in November and December they would have access to the application in early December and would need to

review those applications if they wanted to submit technical issues to the Technical Committee to resolve.

Chairman Moser called for nominations for the election of a Vice-Chairman.

Mr. Hoffman nominated Mr. Melchior. Mr. Kuylen asked for nominations to cease.

**A unanimous ballot for Mr. Jim Melchior as Vice-Chairman was called for. On a roll call vote, everyone voted yes with Mr. Aasmundstad absent and not voting. The motion carried unanimously.**

Ms. Fine said if the members have expenses and the organizations they represent were not covering their costs she has expense vouchers available. The expense vouchers will cover the members cost for coming to the meetings.

Ms. Fine presented the Communications Plan which is Attachment H (A copy is available in the Industrial Commission/OHF files.) She said she wanted the members to look it over. She was open to any suggestions.

The question was asked if there would be a separate website for the Outdoor Heritage Fund or if it would be within the Industrial Commission website. Ms. Fine said she can set it up as a separate website if there was a need to do so.

A question was asked if whether there are some guidelines from the State or from the Commission on what communication vehicles should be used for distributing information about the program—such as Facebook. Ms. Fine indicated she would discuss that topic with the Commission. Currently the Commission is not on Facebook.

There was discussion regarding staffing which will be a decision the Industrial Commission will make. Ms. Fine indicated she would keep the OHF Advisory Board informed of the Commission's decision.

Being no further business, Chairman Moser adjourned the meeting.



Wade Moser, Chairman



Recording Secretary