

MINUTES

NORTH DAKOTA ATMOSPHERIC RESOURCE BOARD

JULY 26, 2000

A telephone conference call meeting of the North Dakota Atmospheric Resource Board was called to order by Chairman James Haaland at 8:30 a.m. CST, Wednesday July 26, 2000. Members present were Mary Cichos, William Geiger, Hattie Melvin, Jay Sandstrom, David Sprynczynatyk, Gary Ness, and Steven Weber. Staff members present were Bruce Boe, Director; LeNor Dollinger, Business Manager; Darin Langerud Chief Meteorologist; Paul Moen Research/Field Meteorologist; and Dawn Feist, Project Assistant. Others present were Mary Holberg, Assistant Attorney General.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Mary Cichos to adopt the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by David Sprynczynatyk. Motion carried.

CLOUD MODIFICATION PROJECT UPDATE

Approval to Proceed with Montana Environmental Impact Study

Mr. Boe informed the board that Mary Holberg, with Attorney General's office, was present and available to answer any questions the board might have concerning the Montana Environmental Impact Study (EIS), noting that Ms. Holberg had researched the legal aspects, and had written the memos provided to the board. Mr. Boe stated that he believes that it is not a sure thing that permits will be issued if the board decides today to go ahead with the EIS. Mr. Boe's recommendation is to proceed with the EIS because the board needs an answer. David Sprynczynatyk asked what Bruce's next step would be in moving ahead with the EIS. Bruce indicated that the board has received contracts from the county authorities contributing to the EIS, and the Atmospheric Resource Board is also prepared to contribute funding. Also, the cost-sharing agreement with the State Water Commission, has been drawn up. The next step will be to put that contract in place; Bruce has not pending the board's decision. Mr. Boe will then talk to the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) to get things started, with the scoping of the EIS in eastern Montana. Mr. Sprynczynatyk asked for the best estimate of the total cost, Mr. Boe stated that the best estimate, according to the Montana DNRC, is \$140,000. The board is prepared to pay that amount.

A motion was made by David Sprynczynatyk to authorize Bruce Boe to proceed with the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation to begin the Environmental Impact Study in an effort to gain a permit for the buffer zone in Montana. The motion was seconded by Mary Cichos. Members Mary Cichos, William Geiger, Hattie Melvin, Jay Sandstrom, David Sprynczynatyk, Gary Ness, and Steven Weber voted aye. There were no nay votes. Motion carried.

District I Buffer Zone Issues

Mr. Boe advised the board of recent developments in District I, noting that a summary was included in the packet sent out. He informed the board that there was an effort made by the Board and the Bowman County Weather Modification Authority to accommodate the concerns of the City of Marmarth, but during a mission soon after, pilots took extreme efforts not to fly over the City of Marmarth, and they still received an angry phone call at the radar. The Bowman County Authority, after consulting with the Bowman County Commission, made the determination since there is no legal basis for the objection, they will do what they need to do to treat the clouds.

Mr. Haaland feels that we are making a genuine effort to make these people happy. He feels that we are following the rules and regulations by flying over the city of Marmarth, because it is part of the legal buffer zone. Mr. Ness commented that threatening an aircraft is a federal offense, and the FBI should be questioning those people that made the threat. Mr. Boe commented that if we receive another threat that the Bureau of Criminal Investigations will be notified, and they would get involved at that time. The people who made the threat have been made aware of this by both Slope and Bowman County Sheriffs.

Mr. Sprynczynatyk mentioned that he received a phone call from one of the legislators there and Mr. Boe had followed up with a return phone call to him. Mr. Sprynczynatyk feels that it is good that the board is communicating with the legislator and others in the area. Mr. Sandstrom feels that we need to take this seriously and the people in Marmarth must realize that we are taking this seriously. Mrs. Dollinger mentioned that the weekend after all this happened she was in Bowman for the Bowman County Fair and spent a great amount time talking with the staff in Bowman. Some are pretty nervous about the situation there. She reported she visited with local authorities, asking them to have a greater presence at the radar. Mrs. Dollinger agrees with Mr. Sandstrom that we need to take the people of Marmarth very seriously.

Project Progress Report

Mr. Boe updated the board on the project thus far. Through noon on the 21st of July District I had flown 34.44 cloud top hours, and 42 cloud base hours; District II cloud top aircraft had flown 65.35 hours, and 242 cloud base hours. There has been some problems with personnel in the field but the staff believes it is due to lack of experience. Both Darin Langerud and Paul Moen have spent a considerable amount of time in the field trying to get them up to speed. The staff has discussed what can be done to improve ground school and other things. One idea that was proposed was bring the meteorological staff in a day earlier.

CONSIDERATION OF REQUEST TO OBSERVE CLOUD MODIFICATION OPERATIONS BY PARTICIPATING IN AN OPERATIONAL SEEDING FLIGHT

Mr. Boe informed the board that there were two individuals who have asked to fly on a seeding

mission. The first one is Mr. Dan Noah from the National Weather Service. Mr. Noah is the Warning Coordination Meteorologist. He works closely with this office and the last couple of years has made presentations at ground school. Mr. Noah feels that it would help him to understand what the pilots are seeding and reporting if he were able to fly along. Mr. Boe believes this would be a good idea in the area of public safety. Mr. Boe requested that the board approve Mr. Noah's request to fly along on a seeding mission this summer.

The second individual seeking approval to ride along on a mission is Mr. Stanley Pope, who is a member of the Bowman County Airport Authority. The Bowman County Airport Authority provides the facility for the Bowman radar. Mr. Pope has indicated his interest in flying on a mission because of the working relationship we have established with them. Mr. Boe recommended to the board that they approve Stanley Pope to fly along on a mission. Mr. Sprynczynatyk asked if the board is covered if it approves these individuals to fly on a mission. Mr. Boe answered that the board is covered by Risk Management, and it also obtains a legal release form that is signed by himself, the pilot, and the individual. The form has been drafted with the aide of legal counsel.

A motion was made by Jay Sandstrom to authorize Daniel Noah and Stanley Pope to fly on cloud seeding missions. The motion was seconded by Hattie Melvin. Members Mary Cichos, William Geiger, Hattie Melvin, Jay Sandstrom, David Sprynczynatyk, Gary Ness, and Steven Weber voted aye. There were no nay votes. The motion carried.

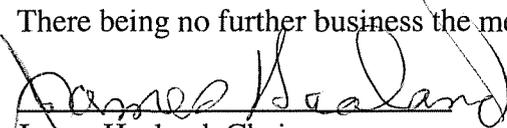
PROPOSED BUDGET REQUEST, 2001-03 BIENNIUM

Mr. Boe summarized the budget for 2001-03 biennium which is now in draft form. The only area that there is a change in is the special funds received for cooperative research, which includes entities other than the federal government and the counties. The new line item was added to conduct a rainfall evaluation. The last such evaluation done was completed in 1985.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Boe informed the board that Mr. Paul Moen, who has worked with board staff in the field and in the office for a number of years, has now become a full time employee with the State Water Commission, effective July 1. He will remain with the Atmospheric Resource Board until August 15. At that point he will join the Water Commission's Information Technology Section. Mr. Moen will still be in a position to support TITAN in the field.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 9:25 a.m. CDT.


James Haaland, Chairman

Date _____

Mary Cichos Secretary

Transcribed by Dawn Feist