

Northwest Illinois Forestry Association

Minutes of January 14, 2014

President Tom Arnold called the meeting to order at 7:15 pm in the Atwood Room of the Stockton Public Library. 9 people were in attendance.

President Arnold asked for additions or corrections to the December 10, 2013, minutes. Hearing none, Lee Freedlund moved that the minutes be approved as sent. Dick Pouzar seconded the motion. Motion carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer, Keith Arnold reported that the balance of all accounts was the same as December's balance: \$8,982.76.

OLD BUSINESS

Bob Dittmar and Mark Wakely from Country Mutual Insurance Company were present to discuss NIFA current liability insurance coverage and details of possible additional director/officer liability coverage. Our current liability coverage stands at \$500,000 per occurrence with a \$1,000,000 total per year. Last year's premium was \$221.00. This year's premium, due March 22, 2014, will increase to \$262.00. Bob felt that increasing this coverage to \$1,000,000 per occurrence with a \$2,000,000 total per year for an additional \$37.00 was a good value. That would bring 2014's premium to \$299.00.

Discussion then moved to a liability coverage for directors and officers. This type of policy would protect directors and officers should a lawsuit be brought against them for gross negligence as representatives of NIFA, commonly referred to as "Errors and Omissions". Coverage of \$500,000 per occurrence and \$1,000,000 total per year would be a premium of \$317.00 with a \$1,000,000 / \$2,000,000 policy premium of \$357.00.

Mark & Bob were asked what the statistics were for directors and officers of non-profit organizations in Illinois being sued for "Errors and Omissions". Both agents made it pretty clear that D&O coverage wasn't very popular among non-profits (only about 25% buy it) and that they didn't know of any lawsuits in NW Illinois against non-profit directors. Also, the State of Illinois offers some "protection" from litigation to those willing to hold these positions in non-profits. Suit would be more common in situations involving for-profit organizations and corporations.

President Arnold asked for further discussion on policies with Bob and Mark, and shortly thereafter the two Country Mutual agents left the meeting. A brief discussion followed about the insurance proposals. A motion was made to raise our current liability coverage to the \$1,000,000 / \$2,000,000 level for the extra \$37.00 in premium but to not pursue the Directors and Officers coverage. The motion was seconded, and all voted in favor.

President Arnold tabled discussion on the 2014 agenda items until the February meeting as several people who were to give reports concerning proposed events were absent.

NEW BUSINESS

It was brought to the member's attention that the Illinois DNR Conservation Congress was scheduled for April. DNR is looking for input on Phase 2. An on-line survey can be accessed at www.dnr.illinois.gov. Also, webcasts / roundtables are being held consecutive Thursdays from January 23 through February 20th.

President Arnold brought up a concern expressed by Tom Sleeter via telephone conversation about an aging, stagnating NIFA membership without much influx of new and younger members. Active discussion pursued with many good suggestions to work on. Suggestions included:

- Wider distribution of pamphlets in facilities such as Stephenson Co. Welcoming Center east of Freeport on Hwy 20, Extension and NRCS offices, DNR Forestry office, etc.
- Update display to include history and ongoing activities.
- Manned booth at Tri-State Forestry Conference.
- Agendas and pamphlets at all tours and meetings.
- Member profiles published in newspaper articles
- Membership information added to tour and meeting announcements.
- Highlight tour events on website and archive.
- Each member inviting someone with forestry interest to meetings.

Kevin Cahill moved to adjourn the meeting. Dick Pouzar seconded the motion with all voting in favor. Meeting was adjourned at 8:19 pm.

After the meeting, Extension Educator Jay Solomon presented a Power Point presentation and review of the recent Biomass Heating Symposium held at Highland Community College. Many examples of institutional buildings being heated by wood chips and pellets were given, ranging from actual combustion systems to gasification systems. Good discussion followed, including opportunities of local markets for locally sourced fuel stock. Suggestion was made to approach a local institution, possibly a school, to look into funding a biomass heating option for their facility.

Respectfully Submitted for NIFA Secretary Jerry Misek by Tom Arnold, NIFA President.