

Minutes of the SC NRCS Civil Rights Advisory Committee

February 14, 2007

Members/Advisors Present

Lynette Savereno-MAL, Chair
Sabrenna Bryant-MAL, Vice Chair
Cliff Eaddy-AIANPM/Treasurer
LaKeisha Hill-BEPM
Wayne Henderson-DEPM
Rafael Mendez-HEPM
Lisa Good-- FWPM
Craig Ellis-Title VI Advisor
Amy Maxwell-Outreach Coordinator
Dory Reeves-Title VII Advisor

Members/Advisors Absent

Charlie Ogg-MAL, Secretary

- I. Savereno called the meeting to order at 10:10am. The committee proceeded to review the minutes from the last meeting and they were approved.
- II. Budget Report: Eaddy proceeded to discuss the budget. The budget was amended from \$40,215 to \$36,200 at the previous meeting and was approved. Eaddy is going to speak with Frank Wilcox about how to effectively report the spending of funds from the budget. Eaddy stated that a spreadsheet was created to keep track of expenditures & the budget.
- III. Discussion ensued on the vacant Vice-chair position. Hill motioned to nominate Sabrenna Bryant as Vice Chair & Charlie Ogg to fill Sabrenna's seat as Secretary. Good seconded and the motion passed.
- IV. Savereno suggested the civil rights committee to submit an article for the Current Developments newsletter in every edition. Savereno passed around a small table with all committee members listed and the suggested month they could submit an article. Everyone agreed to submit an article.
- V. Discussion of By-Laws: The by-laws were reviewed by committee members, approved, and signed by the Chair, Savereno. Eaddy motioned to approve and Henderson seconded. Bryant will ensure that the By-Laws are given to the State Conservationist for approval.
- VI. Hill and Good had several questions regarding the length of their terms. Savereno agreed to find out the start and end dates of all committee members.
- VII. Members attending CR Training in August need to find out the tuition costs and notify Eaddy. They also need to find out location of training and arrange transportation and hotel reservations.

- VIII. All upcoming civil rights reviews will be attended by a committee member. Savereno passed around a list showing review locations and members attending. Ellis explained what members would be expected to do during the review. Members agreed that a CR Review checklist should be available on the web for field offices, along with other CR materials.
- IX. All Special Emphasis Program Managers presented Savereno with their completed plans of work. Savereno reviewed the plans and passed them around for other committee members to review. Savereno suggested that the plans have a consistent look and that each action item in the plans should have a start and finish date, referring to Hill's as the example. Committee members agreed that plans would be posted to the website in the future.
- X. The committee reviewed the CR Plan of work and made changes. Good had a change on page 6, item 3 and Hill wanted to delete item 5 on page 9. The committee decided not to make a cultural diversity planner and to use the money toward CAT (Cultural Awareness Training) day. Committee discussed the possibility of a stress management class for employees, in compliance with item 31 on page 7. Rafael volunteered to act as an interpreter for Spanish speaking clients who visit other field offices. He also has a dictionary of USDA terms in Spanish which he feels would be useful to put on the website. Ellis mentioned that each field office is required to have a Spanish interpreter's contact information in the outreach files annually. This interpreter must be available and willing to translate for the field office, should the need arise.
- XI. Bryant updated the EEO poster and passed it around for all members to review. Everyone agreed the updates were good.
- XII. Savereno suggested several members of CR Committee be responsible for posting things to the website. Maxwell and Bryant volunteered. Bryant informed committee of the new "Civil Rights Posters and Bulletins" link that she added to the website. This link contains the pdf version of several Civil Rights posters that need to be added to the field office's official bulletin boards. Maxwell asked SEPMs to have information available at next meeting to be placed on the web concerning their Special Emphasis Programs.
- XIII. AIANPM Report: Eaddy reported that he invited Chief Blue to attend the Farm Bill press conference given by NRCS Chief Lancaster on Feb. 1, but inclement weather prevented him from attending. The Catawba Indians in York County have an EQIP contract with NRCS and are implementing one item at a time. They have just completed tree planting.
- XIV. BEPM: Hill reported that her BEPM website is up and running. The website features black history articles and weekly black history trivia questions. She is currently making black history presentations at the small group meetings centering on an ethnic food, the sweet potato pie. She is planning to meet with Reeves about the SC Mentoring program, as well as asking James Williams about attending the MANRRS (Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sources) conference in March in Birmingham, AL for recruiting purposes.

- XV. DEPM: Henderson reported that he is currently helping Hollis Berry, a Soil Con Tech in the Greenville FO, build a ramp for his disabled father-in-law who became paralyzed in an accident.
- XVI. FWPM: Good reported that she will be attending the national Federally Employed Women's conference on July 16-20. All FWPMs will meet privately during this meeting.
- XVII. HEPM/APIPM: Mendez reported that he has been talking with the National HEPM, Gilberto, concerning hiring Hispanic student interns for the summer from Texas and Puerto Rico. Gilberto stated that he can supply up to \$2500 in relocation fees for hiring one of these students. These students are from Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI).
- XVIII. Members at Large: Bryant asked the committee if CR minutes could be posted to the website and the committee agreed. Eaddy reminded the committee that the minutes should only be sent out to the field and/or posted after they are officially approved at a CR Committee meeting.
- XIX. Outreach Report: Maxwell reported Chief Lancaster visited SC on Feb 1st to talk about the new Farm Bill. She and Bryant are also working with Small Farmer Liaison Wilfred Pace on Small Farmer materials.
- XX. Title VI: Ellis reported that 6.8 million is available for EQIP contract funding. Of this amount, 5.4 million will be funding 486 general EQIP contracts, 1.1 will be funding 80 contracts under the Small Scale Farmer Program, and \$194,000 will be funding 9 contracts in the Limited Resource Farmer Program.
- XXI. Title VII: Reeves said that several CR committee members toured the SC Dept of Vocational Rehabilitation facility in December. The facility offers 6 training programs that help disabled citizens enter the workforce. Length of programs range from 6 months to one year. Reeves also passed out handouts of EEO Data in compliance with the No Fear Act and handouts of the Affirmative Employment Action Plan.
- XXII. Bryant said that Cultural Awareness Day (CAD) will now be called Cultural Awareness Training (CAT). The first CAT meeting of FY-07 will take place February 14th at 1:00 pm. Rural Development (RD) will once again join NRCS in CAT day, and will also chair the CAT day committee.
- XXIII. Other business: Eaddy said he invited Regina Bass, an FSA Outreach Liaison for American Indians, to the small group meeting in Newberry. He said that he may also ask her to be a speaker at CAT day.
- XXIV. Meeting was adjourned at 12:41 PM.
- XXV. Next meeting will be held April 11, 2007 at 10:00 am.