



NERA

NERA Minutes September 20, 2016

NERA Meeting at Joint Meeting of the Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Sections, Jackson, Wyoming

Attendees:

Cameron Faustman, Jon Wraith, Mark Rieger, John Kirby, Tim Phipps, Margaret Smith, Jodi Jellison, Gary Thompson, Adel Shirmohammadi, Rick Rhodes

Agenda Items

Call to order at 0702 hr and introductions – Cameron, Chair.

Approval of the agenda. Motion: Tim; second: Jon. Unanimous approval.

Approval of the minutes from June 20-22, 2016 meeting. Motion: Gary; second: Adel. Unanimous approval.

Executive Committee Report:

The Executive Committee reported that the ED has requested that NERA allow grants to buyout a portion of the ED's salary and fringe. (A portion of the EDs salary and fringe is supported by a grant from the USDA/Foreign Ag Service.) The Executive Committee agreed to the buyout request.

Rick announced that a new coordinator, David Leibovitz, had been hired and that David would be joining NERA at the beginning of October.

NERA Budget Presentation:

The budget was presented by the ED. (The budget spreadsheet is attached to the minutes.) The projected FY '17 budget income totaled \$382,989 and the expenditures were \$352,290 leaving a surplus of \$30,699. The projected surplus did not include carryover from FY '16 (\$113,636), savings from the ED's salary buyout (\$11,528) or the coordinator joining NERA one month into the FY (hence, a one month savings on the Coordinator's salary and fringe; \$16,880). In short, the ED noted that NERA was in good shape. Discussion ensued. Cameron noted that the travel budget had been previously approved at \$23,000 (versus \$20,000) shown on the budget spreadsheet. Motion to approve the budget: Jodi; second: Margaret. Unanimous approval.

Planning grants:

The reviews of the planning grants were presented by Fred on behalf of the MAC. Fred shared that he had spoken to the ED and Rick noted that NERA had \$20K budgeted for the planning grants. Twelve proposals were submitted for consideration of funding (the directors received electronic copies of the proposals as part of the NERA meeting packet). The MAC suggested three proposals for consideration of funding. The three top proposals presented by the committee included: 16-1 (PI-Anderson, WVU; *Planning for the Future: Ensuring Clean Water on Working Farms and Landscapes Subject to Climate Change and Natural Gas Development Perturbations*), 16-11 (PI-Sutherland, UMASS; *Investigating the adaptive potential of a forest indicator species to climate change predictions in Northeastern forest ecosystems*) and 16-12 (PI-Zinn, UCONN; *Poor maternal nutrition and its impact on neonatal outcomes*). Robust discussion ensued. Should the directors with stations involved recuse themselves from voting? The consensus was no. A motion to fund 2 of the 3 proposal was extended but died for a lack of a second. The MAC found that all three proposals were meritorious. Specifics of each proposal were discussed (e.g., 16-11 using a single species for evaluation. Jon asked if the directors had been given the full proposals. Yes. Jon asked whether proposal 16-11 will benefit the experiment stations. Gary responded yes, indicating citizen science will assist in gathering data. Jon asked if 16-11 fit under Hatch or McStennis? Could be both. Fred noted that 16-11 was activity-based, with a network of members. Fred had the impression that the proposed knowledge exchange was to further build network and use that as a means to build the science. Adel: There's value the addition of network members; use the planning grant platform to build a team in important subject area. Gary noted that 16-11 was NSF fodder for climate change proposal. Broad group will assist in the broader impact component of NSF proposal. Jon suggested that we should amend budget first. Cameron posited that we should decide which are meritorious, then think about funding. Fred then spoke positively for 16-1. He noted that we have not had a proposal like this. Further this proposal addresses an important issue at food/water/energy nexus. Likewise, Fred noted that the maternal nutrition proposal is strong. Gary mentioned that the research proposals rose to the top quickly. 16-12 was clearly a research proposal. He also observed that a number of the proposals had leveraged funds. 2 projects came out of a regional CC or MS group, is that good? Jon stated that we don't fund existing committees. We should chase down the groups on NIMSS. Jody noted that NERA should not disincentivize by discouraging having leveraged funds. Further, she observed that many of the UMASS proposals had strong extension component but did not have strong research. We need to help with intergenerational land transfer. I (Jody) will give them \$2K to help plan... Tim noted that the MAC talked about the ethnic veg proposal (16-8). Jody suggested that she'll contribute ethnic veg, intergenerational land transfer, and health equity. John K stated that we should provide latitude to groups on multistate groups. Jon expressed a concern about increasing \$ needed to support 3 planning grants (~\$30K). Jody suggested going back to the top groups, cutting the budget to \$7K, and offering that. Gary: I like the idea of \$7K. We had three strong proposals. A motion to fund 3 proposals (16-1, 16-11 and 16-12) at \$7K made by Jody second, Adel. Motion passed with unanimous approval.

Multistate Activities Report:

The MAC report was presented by Fred.

Formal actions: NE_Temp1010 *Improving Forage and Bioenergy Crops for Better Adaptation, Resilience, and Flexibility* had 3 excellent reviews. The MAC made a motion to approve the project and forward to NIFA; second - Adel. There was no further discussion and the motion passed with unanimous approval.

The MAC suggested Mark Rieger as AA for NE 1640 (*Plant-Parasitic Nematode Management as a Component of Sustainable Soil Health Programs in Horticultural and Field Crop Production Systems*). The NE 1640 proposal is in the hands of NIFA for approval.

Best practices discussion for March meeting:

Cameron asked the Directors which three topics we should address. Cameron suggested an additional topic: What do people do with discretionary dollars to assist faculty? The topic of seed grants and bang for that buck was suggested. Discussion ensued. John K will be facilitator for the topic, "what do people do with discretionary dollars to assist faculty"? Cameron asked the directors to send info to facilitators. Gary suggested the topic which he will facilitate: "what do we do to promote diversity in our faculty, staff and grad students"? Mark brought up the topic of 1890/1862 relationships. A discussion about 1890/1862 relationships followed. What's the secret sauce to make those relationships work? The suggestion was made to expand the conversation to minority-serving institutions. Mark will facilitate the discussion of "reaching out to minority serving-inspections".

Meeting announcements:

Cameron circulated a handout on an NRSP, The National Animal Nutrition Program and commented on its good work.

The question was posed, "who goes to ESCOP"? The answer: past chair and chair. Mark takes over as chair, Jan is the vice chair and Jody is the member at large.

Gary commented that the Pittsburgh meeting went well. He also shared that the 20ESS meeting will be in Philadelphia at the Hyatt at Bellevue. The theme of the meeting will be "a question of balance". What are the tipping points?

The joint NEED/NERA summer meeting is on planned for the Greenbrier in White Sulfur Springs, WV. Dates are being negotiated.

Other business:

Jody extended congratulations to Dan and Rubie; a sentiment enthusiastically supported by all in attendance.

Jody then shared that NIFA is soliciting "What are the big ideas"? She noted, "what's relevant in the NE"? Food sheds and the urban-rural interface. This kind of initiative has the overall support from extension. They understand that urban ag a tiny part... Discussion ensued. What is the sustainability of Northeast food shed? It's inclusive of coastline, it's a significant water shed, it includes urban ag, and it includes 1890. We need to get a handle on the demographics of farm owners? What are the regulatory obstacles? This kind of initiative would also include small farms, food safety, gas drilling, and processing and distribution. We

should submit an integrated suggestion from region with a price tag of \$40-50 Million. Gary noted that the Farm Bill has regional component and that the topic was timely. He suggested that we should put some depth to this. Cameron asked how best to do this? Is this something where we send NEED/NERA reps? Or do the ED's take this forward? Jon asked, how do we control this? What is fundamental to the experiment station? Jody remarked that we should pursue the discussion. Margaret provided her support topic of the topic and asked, how do we pull the pieces together? Cameron mentioned that he gets nervous when he hears "discuss". What's the product? Does this have a spring meeting deadline? Should we create a position paper? Adel suggested that a Task Force craft a whitepaper. John asked, where will the funds come from? Cameron noted that this whitepaper will inform the language of a RFP. Fred noted that the breadth of the proposal could be useful. How do we put our stake in the ground? How do we make a difference? How do we poise the region? Jody suggested a spring meeting deadline and charge Rick to work with Nancy to work with subgroup from NEED/NERA and develop structure around a big idea. The key here will be to define the issue rather than make a big ask. We can find volunteers and schedule a conference call.

Adjournment:

Fred made a motion to adjourn at 0847 hr.