

# LARIMER COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD

## Meeting Minutes

September 14, 2016

Present: Jason Brothers, Lew Gaiter, Charles Gindler (liaison), Brenda Gimeson (liaison), Nic Koontz, Minerva Lee, Gail Meisner, Greg Schreiner, Jon Slutsky, Ted Swanson, Zach Thode, and George Wallace

Absent: Sam Adams (liaison), Jennifer Bornhoft (liaison), Tim Clouse, Karen Crumbaker (liaison), Sarah Fox, Debra Herston, Val Manning, Richard Seaworth, and Bill Spencer (ex-officio).

- I. Greg Schreiner called the meeting to order at 12:36 p.m.
- II. The July 20, 2016, AAB Meeting Minutes were approved.
- III. Interaction with Commissioner Lew Gaiter on Ag and Community related issues.
  - Follow-up and status of weight limits on County Roads. Commissioner Gaiter reported they were working to find a route for this season and hoping to have more than one route for next year. He reported that the Engineering Department is working on an active plan. They are trying to find a structure and possibly a permit to help with Bridge Maintenance. Basically they are working to make something happen this year with the goal to solve the problem for the future.
  - Rural Broadband: Commissioner Gaiter updated the Board. He stated current law (SB 152-2005) prohibits a governmental entity from providing or working on public TV, telephone, internet. One provision in the bill is it provides opportunity for local community to opt out but it was all or nothing. The 1<sup>st</sup> step is to get permission to play in the space. This is the ballot question for this year. Goal is to allow the County to do stuff and this bill would open that door. It does not mean the County will provide high speed internet the day after if the bill is passed, but the next step would be to study the need. He reported there is an active citizens' committee on this and the County can only provide support and facts to the effort. One of the AAB's workplan items

included a report on this issue. The AAB questioned Commissioner Gaiter about what issues they should be including in their report. Commissioner Gaiter responded he wants to know: do the rural residents need it and how would it help them economically if provided—what is the benefit to rural business & what are the community benefits? What are the intangible things it would provide?

- Fair Board/AAB Interaction: Zach Thode reported he has talked to a number of families and they feel disconnected to the Fair Board. He thinks it would be good if the AAB could engage the Fair Board as it seems like there is a gap. He asked if there is a way for a liaison or common member with the AAB. Commissioner Gaiter reported he is very open to have a board member on both boards. He said every January the Commissioners look at the different boards. Nothing would happen until then, so he would like to be reminded of the request near the 1<sup>st</sup> of the year so he can look into it. Commissioner Gaiter cautioned that the fair board is more of a working board and there would be an expectation any member would be participating in the work and not just advising.
- Commissioner Gaiter asked the AAB if periodically there would be a way the AAB could provide a summarization report on how prices and other things are affecting the ag community.
- AAB members also brought up the issue of the new Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Fort Collins. They would like to see agri-businesses or ag center be part of that plan, particularly in the area around I-25.
- Roundabouts: The AAB still has some concerns with the design of the roundabouts on County Roads. Suggestion was to have the Engineering Department come back to the AAB meeting for further discussion.
- Landfill: The Solid Waste Department is currently having meetings in the area about Wasteshed issues. Brenda will send out the meeting dates/locations.
- Immigration: Question to Commissioner Gaiter about the need for immigration discussions before the November elections. What can we do to raise awareness of the local need for farm workers? There was discussion about the differences between legal immigration versus not legal and the regulations on housing and its requirements also being an issue.

#### IV. Updates from AAB:

- There was a lot of discussion about the commodity prices. The AAB felt it is important to have a pulse on the costs/crop prices so others can understand the ripple effect on agriculture. There was also some discussion about ways to help beginning farmers.

- George updated the AAB on work being done on the LESA system. George will send it out and give the Board members a week to review. If no comments provided, they will move forward with the changes.
- There was not time nor enough members in attendance for the Task Force members to work on their projects. Greg asked each task force to meet before the November meeting and come to the meeting with an outline of their presentation.
- Charlie Gindler updated the Board that Open Lands grazing leases are out. This happens every 5 years with option for another 5-year lease.
- Jason Brothers updated the Board on the Open Lands purchase of the Malchow property near Berthoud. Project will develop a water sharing agreement. Suggestion was made to have someone from Open Lands come to an AAB meeting to make a presentation on the details.
- A video was shown from 9News that both George Wallace and Jon Slutsky participated regarding the loss of ag land in Larimer County.

V. The next AAB meeting will be held on November 9, 2016.

IX. The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.