

Texas Forest Service Employee Advisory Council
Minutes From
January 12, 2005

Members Attending:

Clay Bales	Sarah Brooks	Yolanda Lopez
Carrie Chesbro	Sandy Santana	Paula Cadena
Daniel Duncum	Steve Anderson	Richard Dottellis
Linda Alford	Bobby Weaver, Jr.	Kenneth Myrow
Ronnie Hamm	Brad Moore	

Members Absent with Notification:

Jill Lipsey
Nick Harrison

Members Absent without Notification: None

Ex-Officio Members Present:

Tom Owen Don Cumbie

Guests Present: None

Ronnie Hamm, EAC Chair, called the EAC meeting to order at 10:00am.

1. **Approval of minutes from October 2004 EAC Meeting:** A motion was made and seconded and the minutes from the October EAC meeting were approved by unanimous vote.
2. **Welcome to New EAC Members:** Ronnie Hamm welcomed newly elected EAC members:

Clay Bales: Urban/Oak Wilt
Yolanda Lopez: Finance & Administration
Sandy Santana: Finance & Administration
Carrie Chesbro: College Station, At-Large
Kenneth Myrow: South Region, East Zone

3. **Proposed Amendments to Bylaws:** A motion was made and seconded and the following EAC bylaws amendments were approved by a unanimous vote.

- Article VIII: Eligibility for election to EAC Chair-Elect—must have at least two years remaining on term to be eligible.
- Article IV: Modification to TFS Headquarters representative to EAC: “Finance & Administration/Director’s Office (2), FRD (1) and FRP (1).” Remove the “At-Large” category.

4. **Election of Chair-Elect:** Richard Dottellis was nominated as Chair-Elect. No further nominations were received. A motion was made and seconded to close nominations and Rich was unanimously elected as Chair-Elect.

5. **Working Issues from October EAC Meeting:**

The Council reviewed the following working issues:

- Consistent Policies:** The Council will continue to monitor this issue and discuss inconsistencies as they arise.
- Vacation/Comp Time Use to Cover R&R:** This topic is being studied by FRP leaders. More information to follow as it becomes available.
- Employee Suggestion Program:** Tom Owen will provide an update to the Council after discussion with the Director.

6. **New Items:**

- Create a TFS Honor Guard:** The EAC unanimously agreed to table this issue until the next Council meeting.
- Reimbursement for personal telephone calls when in travel status:** The EAC unanimously agreed to send a memo to Travis Zamzow requesting clarification of the agency’s administrative procedure with regard to claiming personal telephone calls. Paula Cadena will draft the memo for the Chair.
- Reimbursement through uniform allowance for required PPE not available via Lion Apparel:** The Council unanimously agreed to take no action on this issue other than prepare a memo for Bill Rose requesting he consider the use of future grant funds for the purchase of brush jackets for agency personnel. The Chair will draft and send the memo.

- d. **Need for agency GIS Coordinator:** The Council discussed an employee recommendation that the Agency appoint a GIS coordinator. The Council unanimously agreed to take no action on this issue other than ask Tom Owen to discuss the issue with Brad Barber and recommend he consider creation of a GIS Council to coordinate GIS activity across the Agency.
- e. **Need to conduct more meeting by phone or over internet/TTVN:** The Council unanimously agreed to appoint a subcommittee to look into possibilities in this area. Clay Bales, Linda Alford, and Yolanda Lopez were appointed to the subcommittee. Tom Owen will also participate with this group. The subcommittee will report back to the Council in April.
- f. **Creation of an Agency wellness program:** The Council unanimously agreed to take no further action on this issue. Joe Pase, the TFS representative to the Texas A&M University System Employee Benefits Advisory Council (SEBAC), is involved in the action and will pursue with SEBAC.
- g. **Reimbursement to seasonals for work capacity testing medical evaluations:** The Council discussed the negative financial impact on seasonal employees who must get medical clearance prior to taking the work capacity test (WCT). Current policy only reimburses seasonals \$25.00 (same as full-time employees). This is an ongoing issue and Tom Owen will report back the Council in April after meeting with FRP leadership and discussing this year's WCT process.
- h. **Blanket Travel Authorization Changes:** The Council discussed how the current blanket travel authorization places restrictions on personal vehicle use and out of state travel (particularly in border towns). The Council unanimously agreed to prepare a memo for Robby Dewitt sharing the concern and requesting possible clarification. Tom Owen will draft the memo for the Chair.
- i. **Pay Issues:** The Council discussed in depth the many issues associated with the recent round of merit increases, merit payments and equity increases. All issues centered on communication. The Council unanimously agreed to have Tom Owen prepare a memo for Robby DeWitt recommending a process to be used in the future to minimize communication failures and insure appropriate input from the first line supervisor.

7. **Next Meeting Date:**

April 13, 2005—College Station: 9am start time

8. **Future Meeting Dates:**

July 13, 2005

Oct 12, 2005

Jan 11, 2006

9. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:30pm.