

A. ROLL CALL:

The work session of the Board of Agriculture & Conservation (BAC) was held at 9:00 a.m., on November 13, 2019 at the Division of Agriculture conference room, (and telephonically) 1800 Glenn Highway, St.12, Palmer, Alaska. Chair Davies called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

Board members present:

Mr. Stuart Davies, Chair (telephone)
Mr. John Anderson Vice Chair (telephone)
Mr. Jeffery Vance, Board member (telephone)
Ms. Tiani Heider, Board member (telephone)

Board member absent:

Mr. Matthew Bates, Board member
Mr. Matt Hale, Board member
Mr. Robert Jones, Board member

Staff in attendance:

Mr. David W. Schade, Director Division of Agriculture
Ms. Amanda Swanson, Division Staff
Mr. Robert Carter, Division Staff

B. BOARD COMMENTS:

Stu Davies:

Served on the Board of Agriculture and Conservation under three governors. I have an idea of what the board is supposed to do. The Agriculture Loan Act was passed in 1953, prior to statehood. There is statutory and regulatory authority vested in the board. Vision: Pay for staff to run program from ARLF income – put those \$ back in the DNR budget. Wants permanent staff back ASAP!

Jeff Vance:

Don't need change
How do we grow loans 990 farms and only 55 farms

John Anderson:

Want to see a plan of action prior to staff.
Need to do farm development loans
How do we have results: what are the benchmarks?

Amanda Swanson: (Chair Davies asked Amanda her thoughts)
Fund needs updating of processes and/or requirements
i.e. 75 % equity ratio – new farmers don't have the 25% to put down.
Regulations need updating for operating loans
Should consider setting up line of credit for farmers – 5 year duration.

Stu Davies:
Loan Applications are cumbersome.

T.J. Heider:
Agree with above comments.
25%
Line of Credit
Streamlining process
Confidential information

Stu Davies:
Ag Covenants (restrictions) need modified
Need smaller than 40 acres

TJ Heider

Promoting land sales important.
Sat down with staff – Moe . Found no webpage or source for finding
Agriculture related land.

Believes we should consolidate information about lands known for Agricultural
value.

C. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Sabrina Holland: Local Vet and community member
No criticism: ARLF makes \$ - she has two loans
Some procedural problems when she wanted to expand her vet business on an
ag parcel.

Use Facebook for public notice/information. Time is an issue for people on
the farm/ranch. Mail is a waste of \$.

Word of mouth – staff presence important.

D. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 10:43 a.m.