

Battle River Research Group

Regular meeting on February 10, 2025

Present were Chair Don Kroetch, Stan Schulmeister, Dale Pederson, Fred Niehoff, Stuart McMahon, Ashan Rajper, Kirk Sorenson, and Terry Magneson

Don called the meeting to order at 9:30 am and noted that this is the first meeting with Ashan as manager. Introductions around the table were made. Don asked for any additions to the agenda. Stan said that we should discuss Stettler County and their membership status. Terry moved to adopt the presented and amended agenda. Carried.

Minutes of the Nov 21, 2024 meeting were presented. After consideration, Stan moved to adopt. Carried

Ashan presented the financial report. Current Account balance on Feb 3 was \$207,651.19 and savings account was \$136,685.37. The 2024 complete financial picture showed a total income of \$495,666.23 and total expenses of \$473,702.48 leaving a balance of \$22,368.70. After deduction of the \$11,500 financial audit costs, a final balance of \$10,868.70 qualifies as zero budget balance for RDAR.

BRRG Update:

*From Ashan's report:*

### **Capital Purchase Fund Discussion**

*Alex received quotes in the past for various purchases we need. Top priority was a seeder and a shed/tent outside in the yard to provide better storage and parking of our equipment. I am in the process to get more quotes for a plot seeder, we should be looking at something relatively cheaper (~\$100,000) if possible or other option would be to change the openers on our current seeder and spend money in repairs.*

*I am expecting to get at least 3-4 quotes (Kubota, Seedmaster, Fabro, Landpride, Esch). We will target for something within 5-6 row seeder, this will save us space, operating and transportation costs.*

*Further discussion to follow in next meeting!*

### **BRRG Research Report/Update**

*ARECA Updates:*

*ARECA is applying for a \$250,000 RDAR grant, which requires 20% matching funding, equating to about \$65,000 per year. The grant will help cover costs for staff (Tanya, Tabiatha, Alan), and other service expenses.*

*ARECA proposed two options. Either increase (double) the membership fee or maintain the 2025 membership fee at \$4,500 and secure additional funding through Member Associations' contributions to specific projects/extension work. This approach ensures financial stability, project accountability, and strong member engagement.*

*End of Ashan's report*

Stettler County has been on reduced membership, and rumors say they are considering fully disengaging. Kirk and Stan have had discussions with councillors about the value we add to agriculture in their county. Consensus was that we need to do better at informing council of our projects, extension, and value in order to keep them better informed. Don and Ashan may try approaching their council meeting. Stuart moved we develop a spring and fall newsletter listing our projects and locations, extension, cooperating farmers, etc. that we can send to county councils, ASB's, Ag Fieldmen, etc. Carried

Our AGM will be in Viking this year, on March 25. Dale volunteered to assist the management team on organizing.

Ed could not be here today, but submitted a report from the ARECA board. He brought updates on topics from board finances, Environmental Farm Plans, and water well abandonment procedures. As well, Ed's term on the BRRG board is drawing to an end, and we will need to have a new ARECA representative from our board. Don will send an email asking for volunteers.

Our policy manual needs updating. ARECA has a template available to assist in the process. Dale moved that we proceed with the update, and use the ARECA assistance. Carried.

Terry informed us that he is on the board of the new Alberta Grains Council and can carry ideas back and forth.

Capital and Finance committee report:

We need to change BRRG signing authority to allow Ashan to do business. Stan moved that we remove Alex Olson from signing authority, and add Ashan Rajper. Full signing authority requires any 2 of Ashan, the Chairperson (Don Kroetch), and Blair Kuefler. Carried. Terry moved

that we formalize moving our accounting to the new company that is doing our financial audit, as the past company would not do the full audits we are now required to have. Carried

Personnel Committee:

Stan moved we go in camera for a portion of this. Carried

Stan moved we go out of camera. Carried

As a result, we are recommending a 5% raise for Alex and Kabir (this is usually the manager's responsibility, but with a new manager, we decided to help out). However, Don spoke to our appreciation of the 2 stepping up thru the transition period, Kirk spoke to expanded expectations from staff, and Dale urged them both to do their best at advancing their educations while here. Terry moved that the wages for Alex and Kabir be increased 5%, retroactive to Jan 1, 2025. Carried

ASB reports:

Beaver County: Dale was pleased with the ASB Conference. They are discussing improving water use by making us of runoff from the Holden drainage system, possibly by building a reservoir. Viking kept license for old reservoir and set up a water station for ag use.

Paintearth County: Stan reported on expansion of their fiber internet program, the sewer system has been installed for new industrial park, trying to assist in attracting and supporting veterinarian services, they are looking into a Class 1 driving school, they have completed solar panels on all county buildings

Flagstaff County: Additions to ASB board members, looking into Alternative Land use program, donated \$2500 to Ag for Life for safety programming, letters of support to Provincial government re: stable funding of the Ag Know Program, and to the Federal Senate asking for support for Bill 293 with no amendments, a newly proposed solar farm at Alliance, extension programs, added 2.6 acres of pollinator program, and they did 184 acres of leafy spurge control, and eagerly await approval for drone spraying in these difficult river valley areas.

The AGM is scheduled for March 25 in Viking. Next regular board meeting will be called as needed. The meeting was adjourned at 11:48

Stuart McMahan, secretary.