



Noxious Weed Control Board

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Puyallup, Washington 98373
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Wednesday, April 14th, 2021 PCNWCB Quarterly Meeting Minutes (Via Zoom)

Meeting Called to order at 9:15 am by Chairperson.

Attendance:

Program Director – Morgan Heilesen
Secretary to the Board – Melody Meyer
Accountant – Donna Peebles
Chairperson – Beki Shoemaker
Board members: Janet Azevedo, Erick Balstad.
No public in attendance
Excused: WSU Representative – Jim Kropf

Review of January 20th, 2021 Quarterly Meeting minutes:

**Janet motions to accept January 20th, 2021 Quarterly Meeting Minutes.
Beki Seconds the motion to accept.
January 20th, 2021 Board minutes are accepted.**

Review of January 20th, 2021 Annual Meeting minutes:

**Janet motions to accept the January 20th, 2021 Annual Meeting minutes.
Erick seconds the motion.
The Board is in favor, no corrections, no opposition.
January 20th, 2021 Annual Meeting minutes accepted.**

Directors Report:

Office & County:

- Pierce County continues telework policy until at least June 30th, 2021. STOP facility is continuing the “no public in the facility” rule, just started conference room usage, 4 person maximum, guidelines still very strict.
- Director is in office Monday through Thursday every week, will be Monday through Friday starting in May. Education Specialist is scheduled Monday through Thursday and

is in the office 2 days a week; currently, teleworks remaining days of week. She is still helping grandson with school at home; hours in office will increase as field inspectors come in. Hours in the office will be increasing in May, discussion between Director and Education Specialist to confirm new schedule is set for the end of April.

- iPads update: we have been working closely with IT-Spatial Services to fine tune the notice and work order process. Education Specialist has been using them out in the field with real time simulation to generate notices for our early reports. This is helpful in discovering what elements are or are not working. We have ordered 3 more iPads, so that no area will be without one. iPad training for field inspectors will be done the end of April in tandem with our office training. We are in a pretty solid state right now. iPads are ordered through Amazon due to IT discontinuing the model we needed; those are on their way and will need to be taken to IT for upkeep before using. Returning field inspectors may take up slack where we don't have iPads. Training will be an hour to an hour and a half at the end of April. Everything will sync nightly. Spatial Services will send us excel files every day that will allow us to generate notices and work orders.

Board Question: How will we handle field inspectors in the office?

Director: We don't really need them in the office, time stamps are on each notice in the iPad. Tracking will be easy for notices and timelines. Real time stamps are in practice, so accountability will be easier than in the past where we relied on the honor system.

- We are looking into doing a surplus of the field inspector computers through IT, we don't need them any longer. We will keep one for a future administrative assistant. We will check in with Board when we know more about need for the computers and whether we will need the actual cubicle spaces in the future, it is not a current issue, but may be something in the future to think about.
- Director and Accountant, mainly the Accountant has been working with IT to transition us over to Quickbooks, working in correlation with ACCESS Payroll to make sure it is all working properly before terminating the use of Access payroll.

Accountant: Part of Quickbooks has a program called Timesheets – tax rates, retirements, all important data is calculated and compared with the budget and finance information to make sure it is calculating and balancing correctly. Current work is to keep comparing and making sure that all needed data is recording correctly and accounted for. It has been pretty good and seems like everything is working okay. Updating the procedural guidelines (like data entry and coding) instructions is being done carefully also while working closely to make sure Director is in the loop on all changes and updates. The new Timesheets program can be very specific with breaks, field-survey time, and other tasks, and it runs on our computers throughout the day. Budget and finance are happy to have us moving away from ACCESS Payroll into Quickbooks.

- Four new hires for field inspectors. Have heard from three. All three new inspectors are very excited to come aboard and work with us. Most have a background in outdoors and gardening hobbies. We are going to be pretty short. Right now, we have 4 returnees, 2 with shorter hours and smaller areas. One field inspector in Parks, Bike Trails & Paths, one in Port. Timberlands staffed. Area 1 is staffed. Area 2, 4, 6, and 8 are minus staff possibly. Field inspectors will be starting at 30 hours, might bump up to 35. Season might be shorter, due to weeds and depending on weather. New people seem really interested in plants. We will be really busy, Director and Education Specialist plan to be in field helping with reports.
- How do we want to approach violations? Does the board have any recommendations? Some counties are doing them, some are still teleworking. What does the board suggest?

Board comment: Someone who is continually a problem – maybe yes, go to violation. But, the newer notices, where people are experiencing the first or second years of receiving notices, no violation. Make it a last ditch effort. Push the effort, maybe push through violation but don't go all the way to actual clean-up for those who have been being notified over a long term. Use your discretion.

Director: Is on same page with this, some sites with more years, repeat behavior.

Board comment: Remember that it is a fine line, considering some may talk to others and find out that other people did not get notices, and Tansy Ragwort coming from roads to private properties, there are many issues. Maybe a 2nd letter. Director can pick a route concerning violations, decide on a course, and Board will be supportive. A check-in with legal department about Covid policies might be a good idea to see if there are actual restrictions in place concerning violations as it might be problematic. With further consideration, violations maybe should not be considered this year. We can do the best we can, similar to last year.

Director: We gave 1st, then a 2nd, then another 2nd notice with stricter wording. We will still check in with Legal as well.

- Port of Tacoma found a large Eggleaf Spurge infestation while looking for Knotweed infestations for biocontrol. Our Edu Specialist joined in on a site visit with the Port of Tacoma Biologist, the State Department of Agriculture, and the WSU biocontrol specialist, as well as Port of Tacoma Environmental Service crew members. Infestation is spread over at least 5, possibly a 10 acre area, all plant stages, seedling to flowering. Crew plan is to bulldoze and destroy seedbank. Will need to coordinate site check scheduling with Port for field inspector to check the area; it is gated with restricted access and most of the parcel infestation is located on a steep hillside. It is Port of

Tacoma owned land, they are short staffed, so we will keep an eye on it, but they seem to have it a control plan under way.

- WSU Biocontrol contact approached us seeking good Knotweed sites for possible biocontrol. They are looking for very strict parameters: not too large, or small. No homeless encampments. No roadways, and no private properties and needs to be on a property that will not experience any other control options by the landowner (to preserve the biocontrol). We gave her locations that fit these parameters as possibilities. A lot of our known sites are on private properties and roads.

Board Question: Do we still support the biocontrol program?

Director: Yes, we still do the \$3500.00 with a MOU. They had a hard time last year, with funding down, and staffing issues (decreases).

Board comment: we should talk about this at end of year – the MOU's. Can Director bring the MOU to board for discussion at end of year/beginning of 2022?

Director: Yes.

- Update about LRI (Disposal services) we contacted them. There is nothing we can change. We can create a credit account, but they want personal information and if anything comes back (bad credit wise, it will come back on the person, not the department). We will continue to reimburse field inspectors for now, rather than having an account. Is board okay with us proceeding this way?

Board comment: Yes.

Director: We will remind field inspectors to keep receipts from transfer stations and field inspectors close to STOP facility can dump for free at STOP.

- We need to deposit \$10,000.00 into Humanitarian Catastrophic Leave through Resolution 2020-3 (signed in 2020), to make up for the \$5,000.00 deposit was missed last year (distracted by the audit). We want Board to be aware.

Board: In agreement.

- Employment Security Department (ESD) needs us to update our ownership information for our Department; (this means the board members). Area on website that could not be accessed because we don't have any updated information except from 1981 Board members. Most info we already have except for Social Security numbers. Will not be used for anything except ESD and security measures. Last updated 1981. Must have all of Board member info for ESD.

Board comment: Why is this needed?

Accountant: Because you are a Board, we need links just to ESD. This probably should have been updated throughout previous years in the county. We just need it updated.

Director: Can this document be emailed to the Board Members to review?

Board: Yes. Can even drop off in person and pick up board member notebook.

Board: Have never had Social Security numbers requested or needed for other boards.

Accountant: Reads email from Employment Security Department: "The board is the entity; the board must have Social Security numbers for the board when it is set up as a board and each time membership updates/changes." Director can send information to the board members for their perusal.

Board: What if they don't want to give their information?

Director: Unsure, will contact ESD to find out.

Board: As board members, we make recommendations, but are not on the bank accounts.

Director: We can scan and send the form to the board for review and Accountant can get additional information; we can table this for July meeting?

Board: In agreement.

- Power equipment in Timberlands: Former field inspector told our new field inspector that he should have a chainsaw; Director said she would bring to board the consideration of a purchase of an electric chainsaw. Director does not think this is a good idea because of liability reasons. As well as equipment expenditures, licensing and training required. Most of the timberlands are on private lands, others are on Federal lands.

Board Comment: This would require funding for chainsaw training, possibly different training from each land manager or owner, further equipment (personal protective equipment, chainsaw pants, etc.) Permitting issues, private property and USFS regulations are all issues. Additional issues for us with Employment Security, L&I and OSHA, this will bring a lot of additional issues. We should not be cutting trees; we work in weed control. If a tree is down we need to be documenting that there is no access, and then talking to the land managers about access (as a policy).

Director: Agreed. Will let the field inspector know of the Board's decision.

- Director has written a Board Member overview to be posted in the employment section of our website so that interested parties can read the Board Member position description. Especially since we are missing 2 board member positions. We can bring this to the Board for approval before uploading to the website. How does the Board feel? It is about 3 ½ pages long, background about operations, board meetings, finances etc.

Board comment: Send it to us and we will look it over and let you know. Please, everyone hit reply all if anyone has questions so that everyone can see the questions and responses; maybe have a zoom meeting if it is needed for more discussion.

Director: Do we need a motion?

Board: We do not need to motion this; we are okay with it being sent out for review and discussed if needed.

Financial Update:

Revenues:

- **Monthly Voucher Numbers/Dollar Amounts:**
SAO has asked for financing to include voucher numbers and the department needs the Board to look over vouchers and dollar amounts during meetings, and to approve expenditures and revenue each quarter.

Board comment: As long as the Board can break down any questions that may come up, no concerns.

Month	Voucher Numbers	Dollar Amount
January 2021	V202101-01 through V202101-23	\$53,206.26
February 2021	V202102-01 through V202102-15	\$28,232.79
March 2021	V202103-01 through V202103-24	\$37,457.01

Vouchers and Financials approved by the Board

Board question: What was the \$3,700.00 in Communication spent on?

Director Answer: Was for mail processing fees for our assessment to be sent out to residents, by the Assessor-Treasurer’s office.

Board question: The rental amount: is this quarterly, or yearly?

Accountant answer: This amount is paid quarterly at the listed amount through 2022.

Director: Not needing cubicles/ less space needed once computers are gone, this might reduce or change our rental amount. This can be discussed once our contract needs to be renewed.

- Suggested by Budget and Finance that we move \$200,000.00 into our investments accounts rather than leave it sitting. This shows that a large sum of money is not just sitting in the account, we are using it to benefit the department. Monies were moved into investments in February.

Board comment: These funds used to be moved monthly, glad that we can now move whenever.

Accountant: Makes sense to keep the money in investment accounts.

State Business:

- RCW 17.10 has been in Legislative session since January, it has made it through the House now in Senate where they are adding amendments, status is still to be determined, discussions continuing at present time. Did not even make it out of House last year. Some issues, but Senate is working with the Washington State Department of Transportation to create amendments beneficial for all. Good part of RCW changes: We would only need 3 voting members to be engaged in primary production of Agricultural products. This helps us at PCNWCB. Any questions?

Board: No questions.

- Washington Vegetation Management Association (WVMA) meeting March 5th was attended by Director.

Outreach:

- Spring fair was by invite only, mostly booths were vendors selling products – has to be drive up. Hoping that fall fair will be normal, we already have field inspector concerns. We will have more questions about the fair booth procedures for fall fair.

Presentations and training by Melody:

- Educ/outreach has had 9 presentation in 2 ½ months, very busy. Especially with Pierce county maintenance crews, new hire orientations. We have ongoing safety trainings with them via zoom.
 - Pierce County Central Maintenance Facility training January 26th
 - Steilacoom Kiwanis Pres. Feb 4th
 - Pierce County Central Maintenance Facility training Feb 6th
 - Steilacoom Parks Volunteer Task Force presentation Feb 16th
 - Pierce County Central Maintenance Facility training Feb 19th
 - Washington Conservation Corps/City of Tacoma March 9th
 - Lakewood Rotary Club March 17th
 - STOP Facility Safety training March 31st
 - Cascade Men’s Club April 6th
 - Upcoming: Petal Pushers (Pierce and Thurston County Gardening Club) April 20th, via Zoom.

Last Order of Business:

Mention from last board meeting that the date of July 14th might not work, is there any update for the schedule?

Board: We should be good for Zoom. Plan on keeping schedule as is.

Board question: With Pierce County going back into phase 2, will this affect the office?

Director: No, we never progressed in the facility from phase 2, no public access, only 4 people in conference room at one time.

Adjournment

Adjournment by Chairperson at 10:20 am.