



Pierce County

Noxious Weed Control Board

9200 122nd St E
Puyallup, Washington 98373
(253) 798-7263

January 8th, 2020 Board Meeting Minutes

Meeting called to order at 9:00 a.m. by **Janet Azevedo**.

In Attendance:

Director - Morgan Heilesen, Melody Meyer, Chelli Pogue

Board Members: Janet Azevedo, Erick Balstad, Beki Shoemaker, Tom Bertram.

Guests: Jess Stone (PC Parks Planner), Tiffany O'Dell, (PC Parks, Senior Planner)

Tom Bertram moved to accept the October 2019 Board Meeting Minutes.

Erick Balstad seconded the motion to accept minutes.

The Board is in favor, no corrections, no opposition; motion passed, October 2019 meeting minutes are accepted.

Directors Report –

County / Office Business:

- **Weed Warrior Award:**

Morgan Heilesen presented the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Boards monthly, “Weed Warrior Award” to Jess Stone, Pierce County Parks Planner, for her sustained and committed work as a land steward active in restoration of 5,000 acres within Pierce County. Morgan asked Jess to tell us about her work:

Jess extends her gratitude and is honored for the recognition; she thanks the PCNWCB for our work as well.

The primary focus of her land stewardship efforts has been within the Bresemann Forest and Parkland Prairie areas over the last couple of years. Intensive Knotweed and Ivy removal has been key; close attention has been given to many additional invasive, non – native species as well. Revegetation after removal, with native, non – invasive, and

pollinator friendly plants has continued to enhance the restoration outcomes for both areas.

In addition to removal and restoration, weed mapping, trail improvements and signage have also been implemented. Volunteer coordination and participation including Washington Conservation Corps involvement, are credited for much of the successful and ongoing conservation successes for Bresemann Forest and Parkland Prairie.

Jess introduces and thanks her colleague, Tiffany O'Dell, Senior Parks Planner, for her continued support and collaboration in these projects.

In closing, Jess invites the PCNWCB to a guided tour of the areas, especially once the weather is nicer; in addition, to please contact her if she can be of any assistance to us in the future.

The Board members extend this sentiment to her in return.

Many thanks again to Jess Stone for her dedication to noxious weed control.

- **Purple Loosestrife: Designation Change for enforcement in 2020 in Pierce County:**

Several conversations have been had between Chelli, Morgan and Jen Andreas, Integrated Weed Control Project Director – WSU Extension – Puyallup Research Center. Questions and considerations for locations and densities of Purple Loosestrife are given to Jen, as those will impact enforcement ability.

Jen relays the known locations and informs that all stated locations have Bio Controls currently in place. Control measures from the Noxious Weed Board will not be necessary.

Discussion between Morgan and Wendy DesCamp were also had with concerns to Purple Loosestrife designation for control in Pierce County:

It will not be necessary for PCNWCB to ask for control where biocontrol agents are in place – the state considers biocontrol agents to be an adequate control measure. This is helpful in that as far as is known, the current distributions are being treated at this time.

Close communication with WSU is necessary to have knowledge of the use of biocontrol in areas where there may be multiple weed infestations; (affects ability to control the additional weeds

- **Mt Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Partnership:**

Morgan has been contacted by Johnathane Schmitt, Invasive Species and Pesticide Use Coordinator for the U.S. Forest Service (Greenwater contact). The new Shared Stewardship

Coordinator would like to meet with Morgan to consider partnering with the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest on noxious weed control; particularly, about plans from the USFS to implement the “Snoquera Landscape Analysis Project”, along a section of highway 410. This could be very beneficial to us at the PCNWCB as we have a new timberlands area inspector for the upcoming 2020 weed season. More information will be available to Morgan as discussions with Johnathane continue through January 2020.

Previous years Knotweed and other invasive weed control along highway 410 corridor – this would be a great partnership. Much work has been done in these areas in the past by PCNWCB.

- **Potential Technology Changes for Field Inspector Work:**

Trisha James has contacted Morgan about the potential to upgrade and simplify the field inspector technology that is currently utilized. While working with Melody on CV Pro mapping for the Annual Report, Trisha inquired as to how the field inspectors turn in their work, and how we generate our information for mapping for the Annual Report. Melody gave a quick tour through the database and file system showing how the cycle works. Based on this information, Trisha would like to discuss the different avenues available through Spatial Services to PCNWCB. Definitively, an iPad leasing program for Field Inspectors that would be used in lieu of the computers in the office during the noxious weed inspection season.

A meeting is set for January 16th, 2020 with Trisha, Spatial Services members and the office staff.

Considerations:

- Considerable savings for the budget each year – fewer computer ports, no need for 5 months CV Web subscriptions, less need for FI office space.
- Substantial increase in efficiency for Inspectors: less paperwork / clerical time needed for inspectors – more time out in the field inspecting.
- Efficiency increase for office staff – fewer clerical errors / if office staff solely are generating / printing / mailing notices and work orders.

Discussed such as keeping at least one extra computer / port available, at least while in the test phase. Technology issues for some field inspectors may be a concern. An extra computer will remain. Additionally, we will be asking Trisha about their ability to assist us with training the FI's as this will be new to us also.

A resolution has been prepared in advance – if this looks like a viable possibility, we will need to move quickly on it in order to be prepared for the opening of inspection season.

Secretary reads Resolution 2020 – 2: A resolution of the PCNWCB appropriating funds to lease iPads for Field Inspector usage.

Beki motions to accept Resolution 2020 – 2

Tom seconded the motion

The Board is in favor, motion passed unanimously; resolution 2020-2 is accepted and signed by all board members.

- **2004 Ford Explorer:**

The 2004 Ford Explorer was sold at auction in October 2019. Total revenue was \$1,810.00. It was discovered monies were mistakenly deposited to Public Works. This will be corrected and deposited to our account end of January 2020.

- **Boat Trailer and Accessories:**

Inflatable boat, trailer, motors and accessories have all been taken out for surplus at auction. Has been confirmed with Department of Ecology that it was okay to sell the boat since it was bought with grant funds. Lizbeth Seebacher, Water Quality Program Manager with DOE states that purchase was over 10 years ago; it is acceptable to surplus it. Boat was purchased with monies from the Variable-Leaf Milfoil grant.

- **VEBA:**

Office staff have the option to update and amend the VEBA policy language every two years. Office staff did vote that “if the cash out value is less than \$200.00 (at time of retirement and or termination), then the retiree shall receive cash rather than HRA VEBA”. The term of this Employer policy is valid from January 1, 2020 until policy is otherwise terminated or revised.

This updated Employer Policy document is signed by all board members.

- **Employee Handbook**

Many contacts within Pierce County have been utilized to help update the Employee Handbook. It is now inclusive of all staff; full or part time regular hires as well as seasonal extra hires.

- **Humanitarian Catastrophic Leave:**

During the updating of the Employee Handbook it was found that we need to have a policy in place for Humanitarian Catastrophic Leave. To create a policy like the HCL within the Pierce County System, PCNWCB would need to set aside \$45,000 as a reserve. This amount

of money taken out of the budget all at once would have a significant impact on the budget. There are other programs that can be considered.

1. A voluntary donation program: Automatic annual opt – in or opt out at open enrollment time. Employee can donate 1 sick leave day per year; if they have at least 10 or more sick days accrued.
2. Ask Council for a one – time only additional fund increase that would be deposited into the Unassigned Fund.

Morgan requests additional ideas from the Board Members as this is a required policy per RCW 17.10.060.

Discussed adding 5,000.00 per year for 10 years into an investment account to set aside for HCL bank. If HCL is not at an amount that can cover employee leave, then monies shall be taken from Fund Balance – Unassigned to make up for missing leave amount. The program still gets implemented but the impact on the budget is much smaller in this increment.

Beki motions, " To put \$5,000.00 aside yearly, for 10 years up to a limit of \$50,000.00 from the budget, into the investment account for the Humanitarian Catastrophic Leave bank. If HCL is not at an amount that can cover employee leave, then monies shall be taken from Fund Balance – Unassigned to make up for missing leave amount".

Tom seconded the motion.

Board is in favor, no opposition, motion is passed.

- **Shared Sick Leave:**

Shared sick leave resolution will be read for the board at the April 2020 Board Meeting. HCL and Shared Sick Leave are co – occurring requirements (both must be in place as programs). ***Shared Sick Leave is tabled by the board until the April 2020 Board Meeting.***

- **2nd Half Taxes:**

2nd half taxes are deposited in October 2019 with additionally added monies added to the amount in November & December 2019 as well.

- **Winter Projects:**

Field Inspector training updates are being prepared for the season by Morgan and Melody. Focus of training is on safety and emergency preparedness – especially when in the field. Additional Labor and Industries guidelines and procedures are going to be highlighted

during training during training – in conjunction with the updated handbook. The focus of FI training is on Safety rather than paperwork right now since we do not know how much office procedure might change until after we meet with Trisha James on January 16th and know more about the feasibility of the iPad program for Field Inspectors.

Resolution 2020 – 1:

Washington State minimum wage has increased to \$13.50 per hour; to ensure compliance with Initiative 1433, and RCW 49.46.020 (Both are included in the Resolution). First year seasonal employee pay rate will need to change to accommodate I – 1433 and RCW 49.46.020.

Secretary read Resolution 2020 – 1 to the Board.

Tom motioned to accept Resolution 2020-1

Erick seconded the motion.

Board is in favor, motion passed unanimously

- **Tuition Reimbursement:**

Tuition Reimbursement will be used this quarter for Melody. She requested to reduce her schedule to 30 hours per week for winter quarter to accommodate the class schedule. Class taken is Global Politics & Environmental Sustainability.

- **Batch Authorization Signatures:**

With changes to the Board made, Payroll Authorization Sheet needs to be re – signed by Board Members to be updated.

Sheet sent around and signed by all board members.

State Business:

- **Washington State Weed Conference:**

Morgan (Director), Melody (Community Outreach & Education) attended the 2019 conference and many good contacts were made. Field Inspectors Mary Brzezinski, Ken Jensen, and Jim Towslee were also in attendance.

Potential need to hire at least 3 inspectors for 2020 season to fill empty spots.

Melody is creating job announcement flyers and is getting permission from the Science advisor at Tacoma Community College to post them in the Science & Technology Building.

In addition, the Noxious Weed Specialist application link on the website is being left open continuously.

- **Department of Ecology/ Variable Leaf Milfoil Grant:**

The Variable Leaf Milfoil grant has been extended to December 31, 2020 with a total of \$22,000.00 in grant funds. To date, \$4,500.00 was billed in October 2018 and paid January 2019, a new invoice for \$8,696.50 was submitted at the end of the year. The Variable Leaf Milfoil is being controlled by mechanical (hand pulling) methods (Jen Parsons with DOE) and chemical treatments applied by Doug Dorling with Northwest Aquatics Eco-Systems in Lake Josephine and Florence Lake on Anderson Island. The Variable Leaf Milfoil is proving difficult to eradicate. Jen Parsons will be in contact with Morgan and PCNWCB with further contractor information.

- **RCW 17.10 & State Board Updates:**

Email from Janet Spingath read to Board for RCW 17.10 and Legislative updates.

Morgan will keep the Board up to date when there are legislative or state events. It may be very helpful to have board members present at these meetings. Awareness of what is happening is important.

- **Additional General Discussions & Questions:**

Board inquiry about the type of Reed at Dukes Chowder House in Ruston. It appears to be Giant Reed, rather than invasive Phragmites (Common Reed). Does not appear to be spreading.

- **Presentations:**

10/6/2019: Fox Island Community Recreation Association “No Rest for the Weedy”. Noxious ID weed & control with Fall and winter control information requested.

10/14/2019: Edgewood Garden Club, Integrated Pest management questions concerning noxious weeds and control.

11/13/2019: National Wildlife Federation & Tacoma Habitat Stewards Training; Special focus on noxious weed control concerning PNW native habitat restoration.

- **Executive Board Meeting Requested**

Duration 9:55 AM to 10:20 AM.

- **2020 Calendars:**

2020 Board Meeting schedule passed out to Board Members for review.

Board has decided to change the July 8th meeting to July 22nd, 2020 to ensure board member presence. October Board Meeting Minutes are passed around for signatures. (Voted to accept minutes at opening of this meeting.)

No adjournment motion made – opened Annual Board Meeting directly.

Respectfully Submitted by Melody Meyer, Secretary to the Board.