



Pierce County

Noxious Weed Control Board

9200 122nd St E

Puyallup, Washington 98373

(253) 798-7263

Wednesday, October 14th, 2020 PCNWCB Quarterly Meeting Minutes (Via Zoom)

Meeting called to order at 9:06

Attendance:

Program Director – Morgan Heilesen, Secretary to the Board – Melody Meyer,

Accountant – Donna Peeples

Chairperson – Beki Shoemaker, Board members: Tom Bertram, Janet Azevedo, Erick Balstad.

WSU Representative – Jim Kropf

Review of August 5th meeting minutes:

Tom Motions to accept the August 5th, 2020 minutes.

Correction: Please make sure all attendees are noted in attendance section on meeting minutes. Donna Peeples should have been included in attendance section for August meeting.

Janet seconds the motion to accept the minutes.

The Board is in favor, no further corrections, no opposition. August 5th, 2020 Board minutes are accepted.

Directors Report:

Office & County:

- Field Inspectors finished season on September 24th. Only 4 worked through September. Started with 7 ended with 4. Hoped for 10. Connections with Science Programs and office staff at both PLU and TCC should be helpful. We have aggressive recruiting planned for 2021.
- Car has been ordered through ESS and Department of Enterprise Services. Awaiting information about payment. Estimated date of Arrival is 1/16/21.

- Website Rep has uploaded all 2019 Minutes. May and August 2020 Meeting Minutes will be uploaded when they are signed.
- On 9/22/2020 we discovered we have a representative from the County Boards and Commissions Office, who will be handling any new public records situations moving forward, though it was beneficial to learn the process. Our most recent public records request is now closed. Requested records were scanned and sent 9/17. The total for scanning costs and electronic delivery is \$1.90. Records were released after payment.
- Electronic signatures: Is the board okay with implementation of this method for our Board meeting minute signatures? It will save money (postage) and time and will enable us to get meeting minutes posted to the website in a timely manner as well. Are there any other suggestions?

Board Comments: It is legal, easier and more convenient to use electronic signatures. WSU does use electronic signatures for such meetings. Disclaimer can be put in title of minutes that meeting is held electronically.

Director: We will start using electronic signatures with these minutes; they can be emailed out, and a reply back from each board member that they accept the meeting minutes or add needed corrections to initiate a paper trail. Is everyone in agreement?

All Board Members approve.

Do we need a motion?

All Board Members agree that a motion is unnecessary.

- 2021 Budget is completed and sent to County Council office. We are waiting to hear back about how County Council meetings are being conducted within Covid-19 guidelines. We are not asking for any increases. Things are working well within the budget.
- Budget consideration: What are the Board's thoughts on utilizing an internship for the Administrative Assistant position during the noxious weed season? Saves money for PCNWCB and may garner interest for future field inspectors, students may gain favorable resume experience if they are aiming at a natural sciences career within the public sector. We experienced many phone calls and additional work this year since people are at home. We are thinking the schools might have students that are interested in paid internships. We would like to do research on it, if the board thinks it is a good idea.

Board Comments: May and September might be issues for students, keep in mind they may need some flexibility.

Director: Mid months are hardest in summer and most needed during those 3 busy months (June, July and August).

Board agrees that further research into an internship may yield valuable information.

- An internship program would be beneficial for “growing” our pipeline of field inspector candidates. This type of program would help students develop knowledge about what the Weed Board does, how the field inspector operates, build their resume, and fine-tune their career choices. A paid internship (\$13.50/hr.) would be inviting to a student to help their financial situation. This would eliminate the need and expense of an administrative assistant to answer phones and disseminate paperwork.
- We currently start new hires at \$13.50/hr. and pay the seasoned field inspectors \$15.00/hr. We expect a lot from our field inspectors. Our field inspectors are professionals representing the Pierce County Noxious Weed Control Board. We ask our field inspectors to apply critical thinking, including application of rules and laws, in a variety of situations dealing with residents and other agencies. We require pesticide licensure and continuing education to keep their knowledge and skills current.

Survey from State plus Traffic and Sewers extra hires information shows that \$16.00 - \$18.00 per hour is baseline. Information from county weed boards around the state indicate starting wages between \$14.50 and \$17.96/hr. Lead, or more experienced, field inspectors earn upwards of \$23.00 per hour in some counties in Washington. We are on the low end of averages for field inspector pay scale.

As a result of these situations, we were not fully staffed with field inspectors this year. There were two possible candidates who opted to stay home on unemployment because they would be making more money than they would make working for us. Others chose to continue with their previous jobs as they could work their schedule around schooling easier and get paid more.

Board Comments: Is budget okay with adjustments? We are one of the larger counties. We are on the low end of averages for field inspector pay. We are supposed to keep up with the county standards. Sounds like there is already adequate information. Secretary can draw up a resolution for the January meeting.

Director: Yes, budget can handle the adjustments. We will look into descriptions for possible steps.

Additional Board Comments: See if there are any other pay rates and descriptions to use in building the resolution. Possibility of extra step at 4 years to encourage returning field inspectors. Board member mentions that PC uses a 10 step process, should be looked into.

Tom motions to increase field inspector pay scales to start at \$16.00, and progress yearly at \$17.00 and \$18.00 per hour respectively.

Erick seconds the motion.

Board is in favor of bringing this as a resolution to Jan 2021 Board Meeting.

Motion passed.

- iPad training for the Education Specialist with GIS / IT Spatial Services took place last week. Morgan worked with the software yesterday, it is amazing. Data goes to a website that the Director and Education Specialist have access to – and we will be working further with the departments for more information. We can demo to the board maybe next meeting.

Financial Update:

Tax revenue received since last board meeting:

\$23,721.01 (Total)

Cash on Hand:

\$401,253.12

State Business:

- Spurge Laurel is a high consideration weed for designation in Pierce County; we did get a follow-up answer to the question from August 5th Board Meeting: We will be allowed to do extra surveys for Spurge Laurel in 2021 and let the state know our findings.
New designations for 2021: This morning Morgan received an email from the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board – there are several class B designations for consideration, but there will be none affecting Pierce County. There are 2 new class A's possible for 2021; Hanging

Sedge and Turkish Thistle. There will be more discussion at the State meeting in November. Discussions will also include the consideration of some scientific name changes.

- The Education Specialist for the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board has informed us that she has left her position with the State Weed Board (October 7th), she says she will still be involved in project work with the WSDA.
- Washington Vegetation Management Association (WVMA), is partnering with the Washington Invasive Species Council for the annual Weed Conference in November. The event will be virtual, and registration is free this year. Conference will be 4 days, 3 hours per day. 3 credits per day will be available. Two days will be the WVMA, and two days Washington Invasive Species Council.

Board Comments: Registration on WVMA website is not working.

Director: There are two different public facing pages – Secretary will send the correct link to all board members after the meeting. Morgan will let conference registration representative know.

Outreach: (Presentations, Public Outreach & Education, Articles)

- Washington Conservation Corps (WCC) & City of Tacoma Presentation via zoom on 8/19/2020. Originally set for a spring presentation but cancelled due to Covid-19. Presentation contact checked in with us to see if we would be willing to set up a presentation before the end of the WCC season, he was present for last year's presentation and did not want the crews to miss out on our information.
Presentation given for 40 attendees; majority were WCC crew members, a few of our City of Tacoma contacts were present – along with their crew members; our field inspectors were invited to view the presentation as well. Presentation focused on Identification, vector control and noxious weed safety. Additional recruitment component for new field inspectors was welcomed by the WCC Crew Lead that requested the presentation. Contact from an interested WCC crew member came directly after the presentation to learn more about field inspection positions in the 2021 season and had a job shadowing session with the Community Outreach & Education Specialist.
- Weed wrenches were revolving in and out all summer, sometimes with waitlists. All of them are back in now. We currently have 4. What does the board think about adding more Weed Wrenches to our supply?

Board Comments:

Do they usually run Between \$100.00 – \$150.00?

Director: Yes, depending on size purchased. Most people like the smaller ones. if there is demand, we should consider adding more.

Board Comments: How long do we loan?

Director: Two weeks, if extension is needed it is granted if there is no waitlist.

Director: We will look into Up-Router about adding on to our supply this winter.

- This will be Tom's last meeting; he is resigning as of tomorrow, 10/15/2020.
We are appreciative of his time and service to the Pierce County Noxious Weed Control Board. We have ordered a plaque for him; unfortunately, it could not be finished before the board meeting, but we will send it to him as soon as possible. PCNWCB is really appreciative of all of Tom's work. Words of appreciation from board members. Tom has the Board Member Booklet – would PCNWCB like to have that back?
Director: Yes, that would be a great resource to have.
- Next Meeting will be January 13th, 2021

Motion to Close made by Beki at 9:37

No opposition.

Meeting Adjourned At 9:37 a.m.