

JOHNSON COUNTY WEED & PEST CONTROL DISTRICT BOARD

Members Present:

Scott Lutterman, Chairman
Scott Rogers, Vice Chairman
Dick Gould
Tyler Benton
Nathan Williams

Others Present:

Rod Litzel, Supervisor (by phone)
Katie Hepp, District Clerk
Bob Perry, County Commissioner

Meeting was called to order at 4:00 pm by Chairman Lutterman. Minutes for the January 2nd meeting were approved with a motion by Tyler and a second by Scott R. Financial Statements for January were reviewed. Scott R. moved to approve the financial statements for the general and leafy spurge funds. Tyler seconded the passing motion. Tyler moved to pay the vouchers and to allow the clerk to write utility, salary, salary related assessments and staff benefit checks as needed. Motion passed after a second from Dick.

Under old business, Rod gave the activity report. The crew is busy with the Salt Cedar/Russian Olive cutting. He contracted with Tim Reimler for a skid steer with operator that ran one of the cutters for a few weeks and is renting equipment from Rocky Mountain Equipment. There were 6 crew members plus Rod for the first part of January and now it is down to just 3; they are working on Streeter and completed a few days on Reculosa. Rod gave his report on hours for the month of January. Katie reported that she had attended the office workshop there was some good computer education. Rod reported that he spoke with Commissioner Novotny regarding the lot for the building. Commissioner Novotny said there was nowhere to go with the gravel pile that is on the lot at this time but as soon as they can get it moved or used they will; however, they are on board with the Districts plans for a new building at that location. The Board agreed there was no sense in moving the pile unnecessarily or the extra expense of doing so. Board also felt that waiting until after the grasshopper season would be prudent as well, so best to be patient. Rod reported that he had a safety inspection done by Workers Compensation. He has successfully completed the "to do" list, completed the forms and sent pictures. The inspector signed off it and the District qualified for a 3% discount. One of the suggestions she made was to install smoke detectors and Rod asked if the Board was okay with just battery operated ones. Dick suggested that the fire department may supply them as they did at the fire department that he worked at, Rod will check with them. Rod lead discussion on the scholarship eligibility requirements. He had considered basing the scholarship on hours worked; however, that did not seem to be the best approach. The Board discussed having it based on days worked, an incentive to work more days with less days off. Returning seasonal employees are eligible if they work 48 days per season, district may hold funds until they are enrolled in college and then send directly to their college or trade school of choice. Dick moved to accept the District Employee Scholarship Program as presented. Motion passed unanimously after a second from Tyler. Rod reminded the Board that the grasshopper meeting is set for 10 am Feb 12th at the library. He is still in the process of doing mapping and will add to the growing list after the meeting. Rod stated that signups be taken until the end of March or April then get bids after that time frame and mapping is complete. Rod reported that he has hired someone to do grasshopper surveys, both pre and post treatment, and asked the Board to set the wages. Scott R. moved to pay grasshopper tech a wage of \$25 per hour plus mileage at the state rate of \$.58 per mile. In 2010 the District offered a cost share on Semaspore to small acreage landowners; Rod asked the Board if they would like to offer that this coming season. After discussion it was agreed to not offer the semaspore and keep it to just the Sevin. Last year Natrona County Weed & Pest sprayed some hay meadows with varying results; some landowners were happy others were not. Rod stated that maybe the use of a helicopter would do a better job in that scenario, in addition, they would have to coordinate to get irrigation water turned off for the spraying. If cost adjustments have to be made for spraying hay fields then the cost share will have to also be considered. Rod reported that he had attended the GISI meeting online, Monday. This time the meeting was more structured thanks to Weed and Pest Coordinator, Slade Franklin. Rod is on the "Technical Team" there needs to be another meeting to go through it all because it is very technical almost to the point that you have to be a scientist to understand it. By end of day both teams were on the same page and drafted a letter to Governor Gordon to see if they are on the right track with a more statewide direction/strategy. Rod reported that the Buffalo Bulletin had interviewed him regarding the GISI. Rod reported that there were no highway bids submit, so he will contact those he sent bid forms to. Rod reported that he is still investigating the idea of bidding out work on the Forest Service. It would be a shame to not get it sprayed after so much has went into it over the years; but, keeping it "in house" is hard because of the man power needed and bidding out for backpack work will be a challenge. The Forest Service has invited the 4 Districts on the Big Horn to be involved t in the NEPA process for getting aerial treatments approved, which we are participating in. Big Horn County Weed and Pest has a drone that may be the answer to covering forest service lands more efficiently in the future. Dick reported on the Special District meeting that he attended with Rod. Dick felt that it was an eye opener for him, he thought that it was just another bunch of people; however, now feels there was value in being a part and having the representation of a larger group with a larger knowledge base. The question was proposed "What does it really get us above the council?" Rod stated that he was not sure that the District gets a lot of value above council; but, representation at the legislative level is a value, for example 300 + members vs 40 + has a greater impact. There is currently a study by the legislator on accountability for how Special Districts do business. Formation of this group of Special Districts gives a larger education base for board member training on roles and functions and gives a common voice to Special Districts especially in front of the legislature. At this time they are more worried about membership than about dues there are 12 weed and pest districts represented out of 41 current members. The Board reviewed the current fee structure which is a sliding fee based on the districts' budget and felt if it was in fact equal representation it should be equal dues. Rod will take the Boards questions to one of the Board of Directors for the Association .

Under new business Rod reported on the meeting with State Lands. In December he had talked with Cole Lambert; but, did not get anywhere. He then talked to Senator Kinsky who said that it needed to come from State or Governor request. The new director of state lands is not sure of what is going on with the assistance and assumed more funding was not needed because it was so large last year. Senator Kinsky called them out on the facts presented by Districts and moved to add additional funding of \$500,000 on top of the \$350,000 requested by OSLI for the biennium. Hopefully it makes it through the budget session.

Commissioner Perry announced that they had settled with Carbon Creek for tax payments and the District should be receiving those funds shortly. Rod announced that the Weed & Pest Council has two draft bills being presented at the upcoming legislative session. The first, regarding an increase in the pesticide registration fee. Wyoming is currently the lowest at \$90. The bill will increase this to \$120. The second is a house bill regarding "inspections". The purpose is to clarify the actions a Weed and Pest Board can take.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by unanimous ballot at 5:30 pm. The next regular business meeting will be March 5th at 4 pm.

