

MINUTES

Sept 29, 2020

JOHNSON COUNTY WEED & PEST CONTROL DISTRICT BOARD

Members Present:

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

Others Present:

Rod Litzel, Supervisor
Katie Hepp, District Clerk

Meeting was called to order at 4:00 pm by Chairman Lutterman. Minutes for the Sept 3rd meeting were approved with a motion by Scott R. and a second by Tyler. Financial Statements for September were reviewed. Tyler moved to approve the financial statements for the general and leafy spurge funds for September. Nathan seconded the passing motion. Dick 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 Scott R.

Under old business, Rod gave an activity update: Salt Cedar was finished for the season, gaining on it; the early frost has changed the plans for some clean up spraying, but, there are a couple small spray projects that Rick will do; Rick has cleaned and organized the shop; Prairie Dogs have exploded on the North end of the county and there are 3 commercial applicators working on them and Rod has worked off his comp time.

Under new business Rod reported that the rates for Wy Retirement went up. He reviewed the spreadsheet regarding the amount that it went up and what the future plan is. Scott R. moved to continue paying 100% of Wy Retirement. Motion passed unanimously after a second from Tyler. Rod reported that Fall Conference will be Nov 3rd and 4th. Conference will be held virtually this year; however, they will have a conference room with a limited number of participants in Casper. Rod asked the Board if he could attend in Casper since he is on the GSI and cheatgrass panels. Board agreed that Rod should attend. Chairman Lutterman appointed Rod as Council Voting Delegate. Designating cheatgrass as a State Noxious weed has been a contentious issue among District's the past few years; as part of this year's Conference, a state panel was set up to discuss the impacts of listing, of which Rod is on the panel. Rod initiated the discussion on the impacts of cheatgrass to the seed industry, DOT State Lands, and the potential impact to the District budget but wanted input from their perspective as Board members and landowners so that he can fairly represent the Board's thoughts at the panel discussion. The Board agreed on the following: it would be hard to spend enough money at current funding levels to carry out an effective program by definition and the other established District programs would suffer; it is difficult to stay consistent on a program for Cheatgrass because of variable climatic conditions and a narrow treatment window; if one landowner says "no" the whole program likely would fall apart; with Cheatgrass you don't know you have a problem until it's too late due to the fall treatment window; a local 3rd mil would be needed to adequately fund an effective program which would be hard to convince the public for the need of an additional tax; from a landowners perspective Cheatgrass can be utilized and managed through intensive grazing in the spring; without throwing money at it; and felt that there should be a proven method of control before it should be designated. The Board also agreed that allowing District's to declare it was best at this time so that individual Districts could choose to implement a program without forcing others into it. Rod reported that he has been looking ahead with respect to his tenure as Supervisor. This year was an eye opener for him as he feels he is starting to struggle with some of the physical demands of the job and does not want to "short change" the District or landowners. Rod would like to transition out as the Supervisor by working one more year in that position and then go to more of a backup role with fewer hours. This plan would give the Board time to budget for and hire a new Supervisor by the spring of 2022 and he would help guide the new Supervisor through the transition at least through 2023. There was considerable follow-up discussion on options on how that transition should take place, goals of the Board for a new Supervisor & their programs, and Rod outlining more details for the Board of what he does in the position.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by unanimous ballot at 6:00.

