

Washington State Commission on Pesticide Registration

July 12, 2006

Cave B Inn, George, Washington

Kurt Volker, Chair

Minutes

Commissioners in attendance: Kurt Volker, Gina McCauley, Art Losey, Chuck Masters, Erik Johansen, Dan Robinson, Ben Barstow, Doug Walsh, Byron Phillips

Staff present were: Alan Schreiber, Laurie Wishkoski

Guests present were: Laurel Hansen, Spokane Falls Community College and WSU, Debra Bahs with WSDA, Rich Zack with WSU

Chair Volker called the meeting to order at 10:12 am.

Introductions

Introductions were made by all present.

Minutes

Chair Volker called for comments or corrections to the minutes of the May meeting. Erik Johansen noted some typographical errors which were given to Laurie Wishkoski for incorporation into the minutes.

Ben Barstow moved to approve the minutes with the incorporation of the typographical corrections. Dan Robinson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Financial Report

Alan Schreiber gave an update on the embezzlement case. Kurt Volker provided background on the embezzlement for those that were unfamiliar with the case. Alan Schreiber proceeded with the financial statement. The embezzlement of money from

Alan Schreiber's business did not have any connection to WSCPR. The Washington State Commission on Pesticide Registration works on the fiscal year due to the fact that Washington State University is its financial agent. The fiscal year runs from July 1 through June 31. All of WSCPR's funds go through the WSU system with the exception of the small amount that is in the account in Pasco. Alan Schreiber went over the financial statement through year end. There was no bill from the office of the Attorney General. Administrative costs were kept under budget. Expenditures were examined. The year ended with operating expenses also under budget.

Kurt Volker asked about the ten dollar service charge. This service charge is refunded to the Commission.

The check detail could not be presented at the January meeting due to the embezzlement investigation and have not done so in the intervening two meetings. All checks are now presented for approval. All checks are accounted for and all checks are good. Kurt Volker reminded the commission that Alan Schreiber has had accountants go through all of the books. It has been established that there are no financial irregularities with the WSCPR accounts.

Andy Jensen moved to accept the financial report. Art Losey seconded the motion.

Kurt Volker added that it is admirable that Alan Schreiber and his business Agriculture Development Group, Inc. have been so transparent and professional.

The motion passed unanimously.

Alan Schreiber said that two weeks previously he had sent an email to Sandra Ristow at WSU for an update on the policy of forward allocation. At this point there is no change in policy.

Administrator's report

Alan Schreiber showed the latest copy of the Journal of Economic Entomology. Doug Walsh has an article in this edition. WSCPR was acknowledged in the article.

The list of Pest Management Tour attendees was handed out. The Tour agenda was discussed. Gina McCauley asked for clarification on one of the Tour stops. From the agenda it was unclear to her whether the stop is at a greenhouse or a nursery. Gina McCauley said that the nomenclature is important to the industry. The stop is correctly called a propagation nursery and greenhouse. Alan Schreiber thanked Doug Walsh for his help in putting together tour stops. Dan Robinson said that he might be able to join with two field representatives. Kurt Volker suggested that private research contractors could be invited.

Alan Schreiber gave information on the biennial report. The economic value of the projects supported by WSCPR for the last two years was over \$260 million. Kurt Volker

asked if some of the commissioners could review the report. The files will be emailed but they are very large. Alan Schreiber will forward to interested commissioners.

Andy Jensen asked if WSU's Tim Waters and Mark Trent have been involved in the Tour. Alan Schreiber said that Tim Waters is already involved but Mark Trent will need to be contacted.

Washington Ag Project

Alan Schreiber said that he used to say that there were over 300 crops but he has now found even more. Deb Bahs reported on opium poppies being grown in the state and the FDA viewpoint on that crop. Alan Schreiber said that there will probably be some grouping of crops together. Cooperative work is ongoing with the Washington State Department of Agriculture. Alan Schreiber showed the commissioners the pages that are in-progress on the website. Viewing was done of the asparagus, nectarines and prune-plum pages. Information was given on both the crops that were done and those that were in progress. Gina McCauley asked about the original goal or purpose of the project. Alan Schreiber replied that the goal was to capture information and to provide a resource. The searchable qualities of the project were discussed. Gina McCauley asked how notice of the existence of this resource would be disseminated. PNN, WSU, WSDA, WSCPR and others have existing contacts which would serve as the starting point for getting the word out. Deb Bahs added that during the Toxics Coalition law suit it was difficult to educate the people who might need the information.

Guest Speaker

Dr. Laurel Hansen reported on pest ant projects including a summary of the work that had been funded by WSCPR.

Lunch

RFP Review

Kurt Volker said that he felt that the RFP document needed serious examination. Chair Volker told the commissioners that he felt that it was absolutely essential that submitted proposals adhere to WSCPR's requirements. He went on to say that he felt that the proposals should be limited to four pages rather than five.

Doug Walsh said that it might be possible to put some information into table form. Byron Phillips added that there was often duplication within the proposal. Kurt Volker asked Doug Walsh for his input. Doug Walsh responded that it was not always possible to describe the mechanics of the proposal in four pages. Ben Barstow asked what it was that was desired to get out of the proposal. Alan Schreiber responded that some of the information was collected to create the biennial report. Originally it was mandated that this information be collected. Alan Schreiber said that it can be very difficult to ascertain the scope of the problem without this information. Alan added that the commission gets a great amount of variation due to the scope of the issues addressed.

Doug Walsh said that with IPM projects they have to submit a one page relevancy description. Rich Zack commented that the problem description could be in table form with a relevancy paragraph.

Doug Walsh said that originally it was taken on faith that the commodity group which was being represented was also funding this research. The proposal then was the same submitted to both entities and WSCPR was used to pick up the shortfall in the commodity group's research funds. If WSCPR made more stringent guidelines for their proposal submissions then that would be changed. Ben Barstow added that this would mean that the researcher would have to write two different proposals...one for the commodity group and one for WSCPR.

Alan Schreiber said that he felt that if the commissioners' desire was to shorten the proposals then it would be better to go with Kurt Volker's original suggestion of leaving the elements in but reducing the maximum length to four pages. Andy Jensen commented that there wasn't a need to shorten the length if the proposal was complicated. Andy Jensen felt that if the form was shortened for complicated projects then the shorter form would lead to incomplete descriptions. Kurt Volker suggested that the project description be limited to 2 pages. Andy Jensen said that he would be happy with that. Chuck Masters agreed that the statistical design element must be adequate for assessment. Chuck Masters felt that lacking a clear project description should be basis for rejection. Rich Zack suggested changing 'problem description' to 'relevancy'.

Andy Jensen suggested that the description be eliminated within the proposal and leave the instructions in the outside form. Rank and prioritization could just say to refer to page 5. Rich Zack said that it could be a box with lines to indicate that more than a simple check mark in a box was desired. Consensus was to leave at 5 pages but to get rid of internal instructions. Instructions were to be only on instruction pages.

Andy Jensen referred to the email that he sent out for suggested headings. Andy Jensen suggested that the RFP might be more effective if done in outline form. There could be a heading for what the WSCPR is. What the RFP is doing. Who can submit proposals? Who may receive funds? A person should be able to scan the RFP to find out what they need. Who may submit? There is a need to explain what support is. What is an affected user group? Define more clearly what support means. Andy Jensen's proposed changes to the RFP are passed out. Andy would like to see some organizational changes. All information containing instructions would be in one proposal preparation instructional set. All budget information would be in one area...matching funds criteria, budget requirements and budget approval information. Evaluation criteria could be stated.

Alan Schreiber said that 'evaluation criteria' is a new area. Andy Jensen agreed and added that it could be very helpful to submitters to better understand what the commission's evaluation criteria are.

Deb Bahs suggested using a clear writing format which uses a question and answer type structure within the document. For instance "What does a complete proposal include?"

Kurt Volker said that having the RFP in an outline form would allow it to be used as a checklist for the researcher making the proposal. Essential items would be listed and then the responsibility of the submitter to have all elements included.

Doug Walsh said that federal applications have a numeric score that is applied to each category. Gina asked if the scores were in the RFP so that the proposal could be written to them. Kurt Volker said that the format needed to be agreed upon before discussion on evaluation criteria could take place. Erik Johansen said that Andy Jensen's form looked good but there needs to be more clarity for understanding.

Kurt Volker proposed that the commission direct Dr. Schreiber to put the current RFP into an outline form as suggested by Dr. Jensen.

Evaluation Criteria

Alan Schreiber told the commissioners that some proposals are submitted by people who clearly do not understand the importance that the commission attaches to certain things.

Andy Jensen said that the commission is interested in specifics. Examples of these are experimental design, clear definition of the problem, matching funds and relevance to the user group (it has to be important to someone besides the researcher). The writing should be terse, pithy and succinct. There needs to be accuracy of facts and figures. Proposals need to have a detailed project description with emphasis on clear statistical design parameters and analysis.

Alan Schreiber said that these changes would be implemented and the result sent out to the commissioners for review. This would happen in August. Andy Jensen suggested that a deadline for comments from the commissioners should be included when the RFP was sent out for review.

There was a discussion among the commissioners regarding the ranking system. The main question was whether or not the weighting or valuation of certain segments of the proposals should be established or left up to the evaluator's discretion. It was decided that the ranking will be left up to the commissioner's discretion. Putting restrictions or constraints on the scoring would reduce flexibility. Chuck Masters asked for clarification of the term 'administrative considerations'.

Matching Funds

Andy Jensen referred to the email that he sent out. Andy's recommendation was that a portion of the general instructions should include information on matching funds. Matching funds and their sources would be taken into account in the scoring of the proposal. Andy Jensen did not see the rating of matching funds as relating to the amount of the budget but rather as an indication of the source and the percent of possible funds available to that source. Andy Jensen's feeling is that this is a deal breaker element.

Alan Schreiber contributed that if this is done then the language needs to be very clear. It is critical that it is articulated accurately.

Doug Walsh said that there are several large industries that do not have a commodity group. They do not want to be assessed because they feel that the government should have the responsibility. They have not put in a proposal because of the issue of matching funds. Onions are an example. Gina McCauley agrees with Doug saying that the nursery landscape association does not have a research fund. Alan Schreiber answered that the license fees could be used for matching funds.

Kurt Volker said that he felt that the language was useful because it explained that the commission was flexible in its view of matching funds. Matching funds need not be one to one and in-kind donations would be accepted.

Erik Johansen said that he felt that giving 'admin and matching funds' a weight of 50% equal to 'problem and project descriptions' might be giving it too much weight. Erik felt that problem and project descriptions should account for more than 50%...more like 60% or so. Erik Johansen went on to voice comments on the wording regarding matching funds. The intent is to make clear that the closer to the source (the growers) the greater the value the matching funds have to the commissioners. Erik had problems with the use of the word value. Alan Schreiber clarified that self-assessment does have a greater weight than other sources. Erik went on to recommend that a one to one match might be called a 'suggested' amount rather than a 'common' amount.

Ben Barstow referred to Doug Walsh's comments. Ben said that he felt that if any commodity group (in Doug's example onion growers) was not concerned enough about a problem to come before the commission or to assess themselves to scrape together matching funds then the commission should not be funding it. The project and the problem were not a high enough priority to the industry.

Andy Jensen said that this was the issue that had caused him to voice his concerns regarding matching funds. Andy Jensen said that he felt that proposals needed to have demonstrable user group support.

Alan Schreiber said that he would change 'value' to 'weight'. Alan Schreiber asked for clarification regarding the use of 'common' amount when referencing the matching funds. Byron Phillips suggested that the existing language in the RFP be retained. Kurt Volker agreed.

Problem Description

Kurt Volker said that he felt that it was important for a proposal to have a well executed problem description. Alan Schreiber responded that he saw the problem description in a different way. Alan Schreiber felt that the criticality or the urgency of the problem was the important part of the problem description and that the more pressing the problem the more weight should be given the proposal.

Chuck Masters said that the problem may lie with the term 'problem description'. Deb Bahs asked what the criteria were for the problem. Alan Schreiber responded that it could be economic, it could be human health concerns or it could be a threat to the environment.

Alan Schreiber suggested doing 30/30/10. Andy Jensen suggested that the missing members should be brought up to date prior to the next meeting. Kurt Volker said that this will happen in two ways. The minutes will be disseminated prior to the next meeting and after Alan Schreiber has made revisions to the RFP it will be provided for comments to the commissioners.

Rich Zack asked for clarification on the scoring process. Alan Schreiber said that the process for ranking was quite objective and the commission and the commissioners adhere to the numbers. Scoring allows the commissioners to evaluate the urgency of the problem.

Alan Schreiber explained that the rationale of the rejections is given based on the concerns of the individual commissioners. The rejection letter gives reasons for the rejection. If there is further concern on the part of the researcher they call Alan for more information. Alan Schreiber goes through the evaluation forms to give further information and guidance to the researcher as to the concerns or shortcomings of the proposal as perceived by the commissioners. Kurt Volker read aloud from some rejection letters sent out for proposals that had been denied funding.

Dan Robinson said that he felt that there should be different weighting of the criteria. Dan felt that the problem or the project should be more important than the administrative or matching categories. Dan Robinson wanted the evaluations to reflect how important the project is for the industry.

Alan Schreiber read from the new proposed language regarding matching funds. Alan Schreiber wanted to know if all of the commissioners were in agreement on this subject. The new wording stated that there would be weighting of the source of matching funds. In essence, the closer the source of matching funds to the affected user group the greater the weight of the funds. Alan Schreiber went over the exact wording. Andy Jensen said that this was the essence of his concerns. Andy Jensen said that this was the attitude when he first came onto the commission and the commission should return to this attitude. Chuck Masters suggested that the first half of the sentence be retained but the second half be eliminated. Chuck felt that the examples part of the sentence was confusing. Alan Schreiber said that he had put that in for guidance but he would remove it if the consensus was that it was unnecessary. Kurt Volker said that the second part of the sentence should be made clearer.

Chuck Masters asked if everyone was clear regarding what constituted matching funds and what did not. Kurt Volker responded that this is always an issue of concern. Doug Walsh added that the University of Washington has listed a waiver of indirect fees as a portion of match. Budget approval can vary greatly from institution to institution.

Different things are considered match or not match depending upon the person doing the budget review.

Kurt Volker asked Alan Schreiber why the commission is now requiring that the budgets be reviewed. Alan Schreiber replied that the idea had originated with Bob Berger. It was implemented though as a response to the growing number of proposals that were submitted with budgets that did not make sense or were added incorrectly. The problem had reached a point that there was so little care taken with the many inaccurate budgets that it seemed sloppy and disrespectful to the commission.

Doug Walsh said that this requirement has constrained his ability to use matching fund sources due to WSU policies. Kurt Volker sought clarification from Doug Walsh. Kurt Volker said that there is no requirement for a particular person or entity to review the budget.

Alan Schreiber passed out the mailing list for the RFP and asked for additions or corrections to the list.

Byron Phillips said that he would like a specific format especially for annual reports and final reports on continuing projects. The cover page of the annual report would be different than the cover page for the final report. There could be difference in the verbiage to include ...how our funding helped to resolve the problem. Alan Schreiber replied that there have been changes in what has been required from the researchers both in the proposals and in the reports. Previously, reports submitted to WSCPR have been the same reports as the report submitted to the supporting user group. One problem to address is the fact that there may be a series of research projects that are a single year in length but that may have a correlating factor which would create some degree of overlap in the research. Another problem to address is that each proposal is given a number. If a project is on-going it is only funded on a year to year basis and is viewed as a new proposal each year...so each year has a new number. If a report is written as a final report and is dealing with multiple year data collection...which number is put on the report? Alan Schreiber said that he thought that it was a great idea to list all of the numbers. It was agreed that the budget page would be removed.

Alan Schreiber asked what the benefit of a new report form would be. This is good information but the issue of how it can be used must be addressed. It could be put up electronically and posted on the WSCPR website. Kurt Volker said that the spreadsheet that he had proposed could be used to accommodate this. Byron Phillips said that it could be a fillable spread sheet in on-line form. Ben Barstow asked if this needed to be done for every project. Alan Schreiber answered that it should be done for every project because it cannot be foretold what might become necessary information.

Other Issues

Meeting dates for the rest of the year.

September 19th (Wednesday is a backup)

Doug Walsh asked if there were any problems with the previous site in Olympia. Doug Walsh asked where Gina McCauley would like to attend the meeting.

Funding meeting is the first Tuesday after Veteran's Day...this is Nov. 14th and 15th. The meeting will be in Ellensburg.

Alan Schreiber explained a bill for Deb Ashbeck. The check is written and signed by Alan Schreiber but Ann George is not in attendance to obtain her signature. Alan Schreiber asked for permission to send the check to Ms. Ashbeck with only one signature.

Kurt Volker asked for a vote on this issue. The vote carried unanimously.

Kurt Volker asked if there was any other business. There was none.

Andy Jensen moved that the meeting be adjourned. Dan Robinson seconded the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 pm.