

MINUTES OF THE AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARD MEETING HELD AT THE BRAZEAU COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, EOC MEETING ROOM, IN DRAYTON VALLEY, ALBERTA ON WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2021.

CALL TO ORDER Dallas Ekstrom, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m.

PRESENT Dallas Ekstrom, Chairperson & Member at Large
Heidi Swan, Councillor (Via GoTo Meeting)
Donna Wiltse, Councillor (Via GoTo Meeting)
Sara Wheale, Councillor
Cody Brooks, Member at Large
Jocelyn Whaley, Chief Administrative Officer
Shawn McKerry, Interim Chief Administrative Officer
Matt Martinson, Agricultural Fieldman (Via GoTo Meeting)
Corbyn Pankonin, Assistant Agricultural Fieldman
Nancy Chambers, Agricultural Technician/Recording Secretary

ABSENT Mike Mueller, Member at Large

GUESTS A. Heinrich, Hemp Working Group

INTRODUCTIONS J. Whaley introduced Shawn McKerry as the Interim Chief Administrative Officer and Matt Martinson as the Agricultural Fieldman. Board members and staff also introduced themselves.

J. Whaley left the meeting at 1:34 p.m.

ADDITIONS AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Additions and Adoption of Agenda

C. Pankonin requested to ensure Item 7a follows the public input session.

001/21 Moved by S. Wheale to adopt the agenda as presented.
CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Adoption of Minutes

002/21 Moved by C. Brooks to adopt the minutes of the Agricultural Service Board meeting of December 16, 2020 as presented.
CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

BUSINESS ARISING none



AGRICULTURE REPORTS

Assistant Agricultural Fieldman Report December 2020 / January 2021

C. Pankonin provided a verbal review of the Assistant Agricultural Fieldman report. Members asked about coyote bait inventory, noting that when it expires, it may not be worthwhile replacing if it is not used regularly.

Member Reports

Councillor S. Wheale reported on:

- Fixing tractor
- Added more cows to the herd
- Will be calving 2 months earlier than usual

Sandra McIntosh and Melissa Keely entered the meeting at 1:40 p.m.

Member at Large C. Brooks reported on:

- Noted that acreage owners may not have the capacity to store unused amounts of chemical over the winter, since they have to purchase in large quantities but only use small quantities on an acreage.
- Looking for information on weeds for small landowners, perhaps a pamphlet.
- Rebate available to acreage owners would help.

Member at Large D. Ekstrom reported on:

- Article on Class 1 drivers licenses:
<https://www.producer.com/news/alberta-plans-to-make-trucker-licences-less-expensive/>
- Grant available for training, but only if they qualify for Employment Insurance.

Mike Mueller entered the meeting at 1:44 p.m.

Councillor D. Wiltse reported on:

- New resident asking where to buy fresh farm products.
- Can we compile a list to hand out? Or include an article in The Seed?

M. Martinson offered that there is a website for the Alberta Farm Fresh Producers Association: <https://albertafarmfresh.com>.

DELEGATIONS/ APPOINTMENTS

Hemp Working Group

On behalf of the Hemp Working Group, Councillor Anthony Heinrich, Economic Development Officer Sandra McIntosh, and Junior Economic Development Office Melissa Keely spoke about an upcoming online Hemp workshop planned for January 27, 2021.



Shawn McKerry left the meeting at 1:52 p.m.

The goal is to get information out to farmers regarding hemp seed supply availability, licensing, growing, and end buyers. InnoTech Alberta is hosting the workshop and the agenda was provided to the board members. Contact M. Keely to register for the workshop.

A private company that is looking for producers to grow 12,000 acres of hemp will also be speaking at the workshop. Contacts for seed providers and hemp buyers will also be provided. If you have ever considered joining the hemp industry, this workshop will be of great value to you.

There has been good interest so far and the goal of the Hemp Working Group is to generate 2 to 5 area producers this year.

Members asked if seed is easily accessible. There is seed on hand, but availability depends on what type of hemp you want to grow. Hemp out competes the weeds once the canopy closes, but must be clean at the beginning. Hard to clean weed seed out because they are so small. Members asked if hemp is round up ready. Neither the oil variety nor the fibre variety of hemp are tolerant to glyphosate.

003/21 Moved by C. Brooks to accept the Hemp Working Group presentation for information.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Sandra McIntosh and Melissa Keely left the meeting at 2:02 p.m.

Councillor H. Swan reported on:

- Alberta Conservation Association wants to reach out to farmers and rural landowners regarding hunting on their land. Surveys will be coming out.

Member at Large M. Mueller reported on:

- Burning brush piles

004/21 Moved by C. Brooks to receive all the reports for information.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Mental Health Education Seminar

C. Pankonin advised that Do More Ag indicated the workshop can be done any time during the year. Email C. Pankonin if you have any dates to recommend.



NEW BUSINESS

ASB Provincial Committee Funding Proposal

C. Pankonin presented the funding proposal by the ASB Provincial Committee. Members discussed the downloading of this program from the Province to the municipalities. They also discussed this issue being sent to Council and then to the Rural Municipalities of Alberta to help support the ASB's.

005/21 Moved by S. Wheale to send the ASB Provincial Committee funding proposal to the next Council meeting.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Members cautioned that ASB can recommend or ask for an increase in the 2022 budget for ASB Provincial Committee funding, but it is ultimately a Council decision.

H. Swan will be taking S. Wheale's position as a voting member for tomorrow's ASB Conference.

With the exception of C. Brooks, the rest of the board members agreed to vote as opposed to the ASB Provincial Committee funding proposal.

D. Ekstrom called for a break at 2:24 pm and the meeting resumed at 2:31 p.m.

PUBLIC INPUT

Public Input Session

D. Ekstrom, Chairperson opened the Public Input Session at 2:32 p.m.

Lynne Oberle – wondering about herbicide policy. Would like to hear ASB discussion first.

Rick Stuckenberg – curious about the herbicide rebate program.

Allan Taylor – Concern about hunters on private land. In the Carnwood area, the No Hunting signs have been ripped down. An app called Ihunter can be used to find landowners' phone numbers based on their land location. Hunters have placed six cameras on his land without permission. Wondered about recycling twine and plastic from bales. Does the Alberta government set up stations? Where are the depots? He is also interested in the herbicide rebate.

M. Martinson offered that the Alberta government invested in a pilot project with Lacombe and Red Deer Counties for agricultural recycling. There are not currently any depots for Brazeau County ratepayers at this time, but we may hear more at tomorrow's ASB Conference.

The public input session was closed at 2:40 p.m.



006/21 Moved by S. Wheale to add item #9b – Ag Mental Health Workshop on February 23, 2021.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

OLD BUSINESS

Herbicide Policy & Suggested Rebate Rate

Members discussed the draft Herbicide Rebate Program Policy that was tabled from December 16, 2020. C. Pankonin asked for the Board to provide direction on three items: if acreage owners should be eligible for rebates, if there should be a cap on the amount rebated to a landowner, and what rebate rate should we suggest to Council.

Members discussed Provincial weed survey results, priorities of Brazeau County's Ag Division, inclusion and exclusion of acreage owners in the program, education, incentives, availability of chemicals to purchase by farmers vs acreage owners, limits on how much money can be rebated to a single landowner, and the number of acres sprayed.

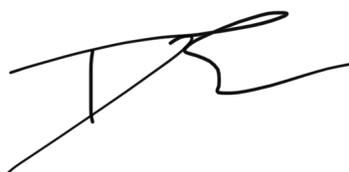
Members asked if commercial applicators can make application for the rebate, and if inspections are done before and after the spraying.

C. Pankonin responded that most applicants receive a weed report prior to spraying. If a landowner doesn't get a weed report and takes care of the weeds prior to an inspection, past weed reports can be utilized from prior years to see the stages.

After hearing from the board members, D. Ekstrom, Chairperson, gave opportunity for public members to weigh in on the conversation surrounding the herbicide program policy.

Lynne Oberle responded that County money should not go to supporting acreages on weed control. Weed control is a cost of living in rural Alberta. Farmers have a responsibility for looking after the weeds, but 50% is way out of whack. A limit such as Councillor Wheale's number is ok. One pail of Round Up for 10 acres, costs \$120 or so. If an acreage owner cannot afford \$120 they maybe they should not be living on an acreage. They can pay their own way. As a farmer, if you get a weed statement and don't look after it, the County has the right to come out and spray it and charge the landowner back. Why can't they follow the same guidelines? The responsibility is with the landowner, not to be depending on tax dollars to support this.

Allan Taylor agreed with S. Wheale that a cap is needed, it's getting ridiculous. We are all ratepayers and if everyone gets a little bit it's better than getting nothing. Big farmers have a large responsibility but why are we paying for the big guys? A cap would make everybody happy. It would be fair. It's not

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only our weeds - the County needs to pick up their step a little bit too. The road allowance of Range Road 53, north of Highway 39 had had Thistle on County property for 5 or 6 years now with nothing done. They are now on his property. The road allowance has never been mowed in the entire time he's lived there. Alberta Transportation also needs to take care of their weeds on the hill. Can we get Weevils? There should be a cap to make it fair to everybody.

Rick Stuckenberg suggested there are 5 components of costs for herbicide spraying: labour and time, quad rental, sprayer rental, cost of herbicide, and cost of fuel for the equipment. The first year of spraying is more intensive. For the application form, he suggested having an option for "other" to be used for other products, for example, for use along a creek requiring hand spraying. He felt the cutoff date was not realistic because the County expenses go by calendar year. Logistically, it's difficult to organize before and after inspections so they need to have some flexibility. He also inquired about a pilot project for weevils, as discussed at a previous ASB meeting.

Members continued discussions on a cap, the amount of acres being sprayed, the products being used, the budget amount set by council, the amount of money disbursed in past years, comparing the herbicide rebate amount to the tax rebate amount, and an acceptable percentage amount.

M. Martinson clarified that Alberta Environment legislation restricts eligibility for purchasing product to anyone that is an agricultural producer. Acreage owners that have crops or livestock are considered agricultural producers and it is not dependent on the number of acres owned. In general, "lifestyler" acreage owners are not eligible for agricultural herbicides such as Grazon, Restore, or Reclaim.

007/21 Moved by M. Mueller that acreage owners are eligible for the rebate in accordance with the draft herbicide policy.

C. Brooks offered a friendly amendment to add "at the discretion of the Ag Fieldman." M. Mueller accepted the friendly amendment.

IN FAVOUR:

M. Mueller
C. Brooks
D. Ekstrom
H. Swan
D. Wiltse

OPPOSED:

S. Wheale

CARRIED



008/21 Moved by D. Wiltse that there is no cap.

IN FAVOUR:

M. Mueller

D. Ekstrom

H. Swan

D. Wiltse

OPPOSED:

C. Brooks

S. Wheale

CARRIED

009/21 Moved by M. Mueller for a 50% rebate.

IN FAVOUR:

M. Mueller

D. Ekstrom

H. Swan

D. Wiltse

OPPOSED:

C. Brooks

S. Wheale

CARRIED

The draft policy with ASB recommendations will now be taken to Council for final approval.

010/21 Moved by M. Mueller that unused portions of the rebate budget should go into the following year's rebate budget.

IN FAVOUR:

M. Mueller

C. Brooks

D. Ekstrom

H. Swan

D. Wiltse

OPPOSED:

S. Wheale

CARRIED

2021 Agricultural Services Interim Operating Budget

C. Pankonin reviewed the 2021 Ag Services Interim Operating Budget that was approved by Council. The weed rebate of \$50,000 is out of the weed budget under contracted and general services.

Members agreed to review the herbicide rebate application form at next meeting.



**CORRESPONDENCE
/ ITEMS FOR
INFORMATION**

2021 ASB Meeting Schedule

011/21 Moved by S. Wheale to receive for information.
CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Ag Mental Health Workshop

Wetaskiwin County FCSS is having a webinar for Talk, Ask, Listen presented by the Do More Ag on February 23, 2021 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. It is advertised on the County Facebook page and we can also email the poster out to ASB members.

Members asked what product the County sprays. ClearView will be used this year and was used last year. Navius was used in the prior year.

Members asked about liabilities of a landowner spraying into the road allowance while they are spraying their own land. A farmer has an exemption to apply herbicide to agricultural lands only, but are not authorized to apply to other lands.

ADJOURNMENT

012/21 Moved by H. Swan that the regular Agricultural Service Board meeting of January 20, 2021, adjourn at 4:01 p.m.
CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY



ASB CHAIRPERSON



AG FIELDMAN