



**MINUTES OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
December 2, 2019**

PRESENT: Aaron Pointer, President
Tim Reid, Clerk
Andrea Smith
Erik Hanberg
Jessie K. Baines, Jr.

PLACE: Metro Parks Tacoma Headquarters

The meeting was called to order by President Pointer at 5:30pm.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

November 18, 2019

It was moved and seconded to adopt the minutes as presented; approved unanimously.

ELEPHANT PROGRAM UPDATE

The following introductions were made:

Stephanie Dunkel, Matthew Rollosson, Pierce County Health Dept.

Alan Varsik, Sarah Oliver, Dr. Karen Wolfe, Whitney DalBalcon, Point Defiance Zoo

Shon Sylvia opened the meeting stating that he's pleased with the way the Park District and Health Department staff have come together to manage the TB occurrences at the Zoo.

Alan Varsik reviewed the time line of events related to the TB at the Zoo as follows:

- 9/11/19 - Elephant Staff Testing Results
- 9/17/19- Conference call Washington Dept. of Health and Washington Dept. of Ag.; Tacoma-Pierce County Health Dept. notified 9/19/19- Site visit by Washington Dept. of Health, Washington Dept. of Ag., Tacoma-Pierce County Health Dept.
- 9/30/19- Additional staff/volunteer testing
- 10/11/19- Initial phone consult with NIOSH
- 11/6/19- Received positive test results for active infection in both elephants
- 11/13/19-11/14/19- Onsite consultation with NIOSH and CDC
- 11/25/19- Met with Dr. Rabinowitz, UW regarding partnering with UW Health Animal Worker Clinic and One Health Projects

Matthew Rollososon, RN then updated the Board on the basics of TB. H noted that TB is a bacterial slow growing disease that most commonly affects the lungs. He further commented that treatment can take months to years. Mr. Rollososon stated that transmission of the bacteria is airborne requiring person-to- person contact in an enclosed spacer for a long period of item. He continued by commenting that it is not transmitted outside, by casual contact, or contact with inanimate objects. Health Department staff stated that most people who are exposed to TB are not infected and most who are infected do not develop the disease. There was then a brief discussion led by Health Department staff regarding the differences between latent TB and TB. Symptoms of the disease were then outlines as being cough, fever, weight loss & night sweats. Mr. Rollososon also explained the TB skin test and the TB blood tests methods. Dr. Karen Wolf of the Zoo's veterinary staff commented on the health conditions and treatments of 55 year old Asian Elephant, Suki and 56 year old Hanako. She noted that TB has been detected in both elephants. Both elephants have an identical strain but neither are showing clinical disease. Dr. Wolf then reviewed the treatment and drug regimen for elephants noting the challenges due to the length of treatment, poor palatability, non-compliance and side effects, and challenges with monitoring drug levels as well as challenges determining efficacy of treatment. For the reasons outlined by Dr. Wolfe the current management plan for the elephants at the Zoo does not include antibiotic treatment; Federal, State and County agencies are aware of the decision. Sarah Oliver commented that the zoo is reducing the risk of TB exposure in a number of ways include limiting access to the elephant barn to essential staff only, providing a mobile office for elephant staff, N95 masks, increased testing and monitoring, and scheduling essential duties to reduce exposure..

Commissioner Reid voiced concern over future L&I claims that could result. Stephanie Dunkel commented that conversations about that concern are continuing at a staff level. Paul Weed commented on insurance and protection the District currently has in place.

Alan Varsik stated that plans to move forward include continue to have the elephants drive their management, Review the pending recommendations from NIOSH, Update and refine necropsy procedures, identify additional means of assessment and response to TB even, evolve zoonotic monitoring and explore enhancements to occupational health and Identify innovative opportunities to communicate this situation with zoo's audience.

Staff of both agencies will be getting together in January for an after action review.

OTHER

ADJOURNMENT

Being no further business, President Pointer adjourned the meeting at 7:35 p.m.

APPROVED:

President

Clerk

Submitted by:

Jennifer Bowman, Secretary