

KING CONSERVATION DISTRICT
Advisory Committee Meeting
August 10th, 2021
10:00 AM to 12:00 PM– via Teleconference Only
Zoom Link: <https://zoom.us/j/91529886780>
Call In Number: (253) 215-8782
Meeting ID: 915 2988 6780

Meeting Agenda

Call to Order

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| 1. Welcome and Introductions | 10:00 AM – 10:10 AM |
| a) New Advisory Committee Members: | |
| 1) Sharon Lerman – City of Seattle | |
| 2) Chris Porter – KCD Board Vice Chair (Alternate) | |
| 3) Sarah Reyneveld – Urban Resident (Alternate) | |
| 2. Public Comment | 10:10 AM – 10:15 AM |
| 3. Interim Executive Director Report | 10:15 AM – 11:15 AM |
| a) KCD Board Updates | |
| 1) Kirstin Haugen – Board Chair | |
| 2) Chris Porter – Board Vice Chair | |
| b) Financial Update | |
| c) Internal & External Survey | |
| d) Equity Training | |
| e) Reorganization | |
| 3. Education Program Update | 11:15 AM – 11:30 AM |
| 4. Communications Update | 11:30 AM – 11:45 AM |
| 5. Election Reform Update | 11:50 AM – 11:55 AM |
| 6. Adjourn | 11:55 AM – 12:00 PM |

Next Meeting: October 12, 2021, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
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**KING CONSERVATION DISTRICT
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

TO: ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

FROM: CYNTHIA SETEL

SUBJECT: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S LETTER

DATE: AUGUST 10, 2021

CC: LORNA MISS

My last day as Interim Executive Director at KCD is September 17, and we are now entering the Pivot Phase. I'll be stepping back a bit and supporting the Board and staff to ensure a smooth transition for the new Executive Director, who starts September 20th.

Before I leave, I'll prepare documents for the incoming Executive Director, Rosa Méndez, and the Board. Amy Michael, the CFO who has been assisting us the past few months, will have completed her report on KCD finances. For now, I'd like to give some updates and recommendations for next steps.

Background

Shortly after I arrived at KCD, it became clear to me that the agency struggles with morale, financial transparency, and accountability. The structure of the organization did not support the structural work that needed to be done and led to many staff doing support work that should have been done centrally. It was impossible not only for our partners to see what we were spending, how we were spending it, and what we were accomplishing. It was also difficult for staff to track their budgets.

When I arrived in February, the agency had six directors, six managers, one finance/HR/administrative manager with two support staff, and twelve staff. Not only was this an imbalance, it also did not allow the very talented KCD staff to thrive and do their best work. Management was extremely top down. I could see that the staff were amazing, but they were not able to do their best, brightest, most visionary work because everything had to be approved by several layers of management. In addition, the teams did not collaborate well. The finance team didn't effectively coordinate with the Directors who didn't coordinate with everyone else. As I've said many times, this was no one's fault. It's what happens in organizations when they grow their budgets and programs, but don't pay enough attention to strong leadership, accountability, letting staff shine and most importantly creating financial and program/grant management systems that are transparent and available for anyone to see, at any time.

In May I proposed a reorganization and in June the Board approved the reorganization. The Director positions were eliminated. I also recommended changes to the reporting relationships of the remaining staff. Currently, staff who manage grants, contracts, and the Landowner.

incentive program report to program managers. I recommended having those positions report directly to a new finance and administrative manager, who would be responsible for ensuring consistency in financial and grants management and reporting, as well as a central location for the policies and procedures. I met with Labor later in June to negotiate the impacts of these changes to represented staff. I also proposed creating an HR manager position, having the three stewardship managers' report to a Deputy/Stewardship Leadership position, and having the communications, education, and data/evaluation team report to the Executive Director. These recommended changes have not all been made, and KCD will need to continue to work with the new Executive Director and the Union to finish the reorganization.

The Reorganization went into effect July 1, at which time I was able to access all of the financial and grants information. It became clear why the agency has not been able to produce accurate, consistent reports. KCD currently enters and tracks financial data in five different systems and none of them "speak" to one another. I was unable to find any agency or individual locally that understood all of those systems.

Current State

I was able to locate a firm in NYC, Your Part Time Controller, that assists agencies during transitions. They have expertise in the various systems we use and will be able to assist KCD in migrating to one system. For now, they are managing the finance team. They have a local accountant who will be in the office two days a week and we have set up access for the NYC team to access our systems. We have a wonderful accountant doing Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable and helping with payroll, and we have a skilled CFO in the office three days a week. My intention was to have the former ED/Finance manager from Pierce conservation district assist us developing the system they use in Pierce, which would give us all of the reporting requirements we need and allow staff to see their budgets, etc. but she is not available in the short term.

I go into this level of detail because I want to assure you all that we are much closer to being able to provide the financial reporting you all should be receiving than KCD has ever been before. I've looked back over 25 years, and the agency has never had systems that were complete, accurate and consistent. We know exactly what the problems are and have identified options for creating the system that is required.

Given all of the transitions, making this change will not occur until the fall or winter. For now, we have only part-time finance and HR consultants. Our focus is on paying staff, paying our bills, and receiving funds. I'm able to track all of our expenses and revenue and have no concerns about any of that. We aren't able to produce accurate, thorough financial statements. The systems KCD has been using do not allow for that. Managers cannot see their full budgets, due to decisions made in the past. Given the skilled people working on this, it may happen sooner, but I want you all to understand why we are where we are and- know that the first step is diagnosing the long-term problem, and we were only able to see the data as of July 1.

In addition, and related to a centralized financial tracking system, the agency has several very large grants involving many partners. Over the past month and with the assistance of many staff we have followed through on all of those commitments. In some cases, we transitioned the management of the grants to partners. The Area Forester Grant is now managed by Snohomish CD. The Shore Friendly King County Grant is being transitioned to Mid-Sound, and we will continue to be a key part of this collaboration. We kicked off the Trees for Rails

(Sound Transit) grant, a partnership with Sound Transit and the City of Shoreline, two weeks ago. The Poverty Bay-Vashon Island Septic Maintenance Rebate Program, a partnership with Public Health, Seattle & King County, kicked off three weeks ago. Several of the strategic initiatives will run through the next year and KCD will keep our commitments to these initiatives.

Our core programs continue to thrive, as well. The Forestry Team has been developing more partnerships with Pierce County. Matthew Axe did a presentation on Q13, and as a result has had several requests for site visits, to assist homeowners in making their properties safe from forest fires. Our farm team is in their very busy season, and this week did a site visit with Councilmember Lambert to one of our agricultural drainage project sites. And today, we celebrate 20 years (plus one) of service for Jay Mirro. He's done over 600 farm plans during that time, which we think is a record, and he maintains the professionalism and enthusiasm of someone just starting out.

The main message I'd like to leave you with is that this is a fabulous agency. Staff are doing incredible work, despite many years in an often-challenging work environment. While they have started the reorganization process, they are only a month in. Real change will take time.

Next steps

I won't be starting anything new or hiring staff over the next six weeks, it's important that Rosa develop the team that will best support her vision. In my recommendations to her I'll include the consultants I've spoken with about Equity training for staff, the Board, and the Advisory Committee. I'll also reinforce the desire to do an internal and external survey of staff and partners.

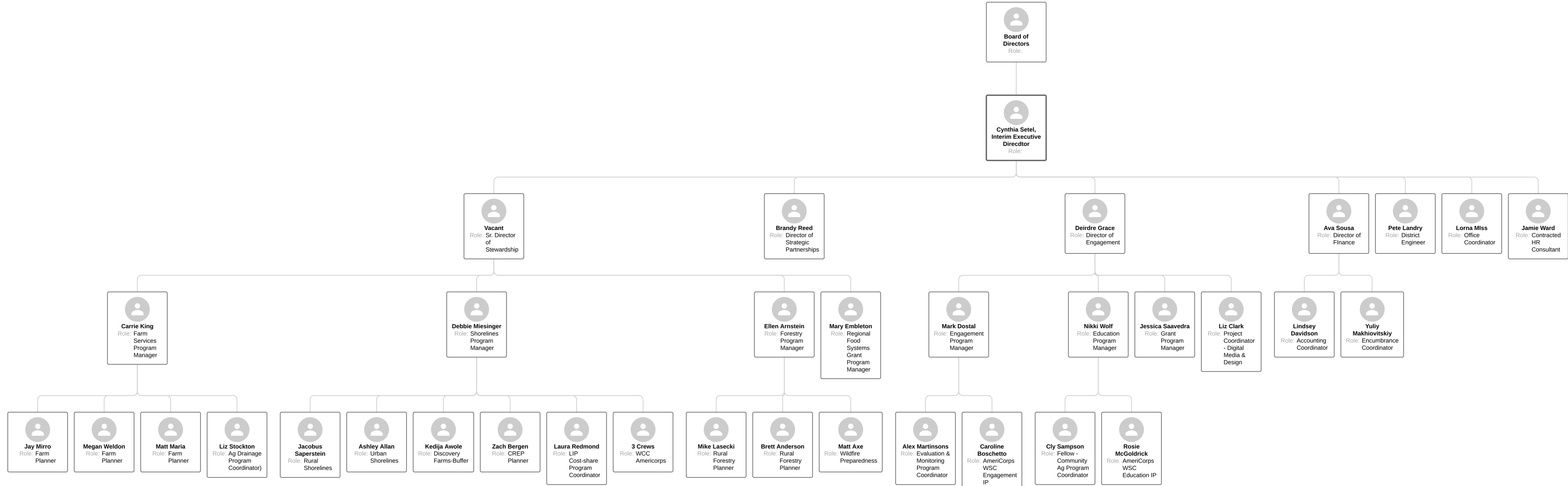
I want to thank the Board, particular Kirstin, and Burr, for all their support over the past five months, as well as the wonderful KCD staff. And thank you all for your patience during what has been a sometimes-grueling few months.

Warm regards,

Cynthia

Org chart-KCD 4-21-2021

Jamie Ward | April 21, 2021





**King Conservation District
Advisory Committee (with emails)**
(as of August 3, 2021)

Seat	Member	Alternate
KCD	Kirstin Haugen kirstin.haugen@Kingcd.org	Chris Porter chris.porter@Kingcd.org
King County Executive	Dow Constantine	Mike Lufkin, Vice-Chair michael.lufkin@kingcounty.gov
King County Council	Claudia Balducci claudia.balducci@kingcounty.gov	Jake Tracy JTracy@kingcounty.gov
Equity & Social Justice (KC)	Tahmina Martelly tmartelly@wr.org	
City of Seattle	Sharon Lerman sharon.lerman@seattle.gov	
City of Bellevue	John Stokes jstokes@bellevuewa.gov	
SCA	Brenda Fincher, Chair – Kent rbfincher@kentwa.gov	Victoria Hunt – Issaquah victoriah@issaquahwa.gov
SCA	Mark Phillips – Lake Forest Park mphilips@cityofflp.com	Vanessa Kritzer - Redmond vkritzer@redmond.gov
SCA	Amy McHenry – Duvall Amy.mchenry@duvallwa.gov	Kelli Curtis – Kirkland kcurtis@kirklandwa.gov
KC Rural Forest Commission	Jeff Boyce ForestComm8@kingcounty.gov jeff@hjlboyce.org	Mari Knutsen ForestComm2@kingcounty.gov
KC Agriculture Commission	Paul Pink agcomm2@kingcounty.gov	Lily Gottlieb-McHale agcomm1@kingcounty.gov lily.gm@pccfarmlandtrust.org
Environmental NGO		
Rural Resident	Howard Langeveld hlangeveld@comcast.net	
Urban Resident	Rachel Perlot badweatherurbanfarm@gmail.com	

KING CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

June 8th, 2021

1 **Committee Members Present:** Councilmember Mark Phillips – City of Lake Forest Park;
2 Councilmember Victoria Hunt – City of Issaquah; Councilmember Vanessa Kritzer – City of
3 Redmond; Councilmember Brenda Fincher – City of Renton; Kirstin Haugen – KCD Supervisor;
4 Councilmember Amy McHenry – City of Duvall; Howard Langeveld; Jake Tracy – King County
5 Council; Jeff Boyce – Rural Forest Commission; Councilmember John Stokes – City of Bellevue;
6 Mari Knutson – Rural Forest Commission; Sharon Lerman – City of Seattle, Michael Lufkin – King
7 County

8 **Other Attendees Present:** Brittney Bush Bollay – Supervisor; Mark Dostal – KCD Staff; Cynthia
9 Setel – KCD Interim Executive Director; Carrie King – KCD Staff; Liz Stockton – KCD Staff;
10 Alan Chapman – WACD; Alexis Mercedes Rinck – Sound Cities Association; Peter Holte – City
11 of Redmond; Rachel Konrady – City of Kirkland; Nina Rivkin – City of Redmond

12 **Preliminary Matters:**

13 Councilmember Fincher called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM. All attendees introduced
14 themselves.

15 **New Business:**

16 Supervisor Brittney Bush Bollay was formally introduced.

17 Interim Executive Director Setel provided an update about KCD, the district reorganization, and
18 board development.

19 Stockton presented the Agricultural Drainage Program.

20 Michael provided an overview about her work to streamline financial reporting and systems at
21 KCD.

22 Haugen and Fincher updated the Advisory Committee about the Executive Director search process.

23 Hunt and Haugen provided an update about the Election Reform Subcommittee.

24 **Hunt moved; Phillips seconded, passed unanimously a motion to approve the statement “The**
25 **King Conservation District Advisory Committee supports putting Conservation District**
26 **Board of Supervisor elections on the regular ballot sent to all registered voters.”**

27 Fincher adjourned the meeting at 11:58 AM.

28

29 Authorized Signature

Date

30

31

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Summary of Motions

33 Hunt moved; Phillips seconded, passed unanimously a motion to approve the statement "The
34 King Conservation District Advisory Committee supports putting Conservation District
35 Board of Supervisor elections on the regular ballot sent to all registered voters."

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KING CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Advisory Committee

Election Reform Subcommittee

Meeting Minutes

June 22nd, 2021

1 **Committee Members Present:** Councilmember Mark Phillips – City of Lake Forest Park;
2 Councilmember Victoria Hunt – City of Issaquah; Councilmember Vanessa Kritzer – City of
3 Redmond; Councilmember Kelli Curtis – City of Kirkland; Kirstin Haugen – KCD Supervisor

4 **Other Attendees Present:** Lorna Miss – KCD Staff; Mark Dostal – KCD Staff; Liz Clark – KCD
5 Staff; Cynthia Setel – KCD Interim Executive Director; Julie Wise – Director, King County
6 Elections; William Cavecche – King County Elections

7 **Preliminary Matters:**

8 Councilmember Kritzer called the meeting to order at 2:03PM. All attendees introduced
9 themselves.

10 **Curtis moved, Phillips seconded, passed unanimously a motion to adopt the agenda (5 ayes,**
11 **0 nays).**

12 **New Business:**

13
14 The committee discussed potential legislative and partner outreach strategy.
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16 Kritzer adjourned the meeting at 3:01PM.