

Briefing for PWSRCAC Board of Directors – September 2021

ACTION ITEM

Sponsor: Donna Schantz and Administration
Project number and name or topic: Scheduling for PWSRCAC January 2022 Events

1. **Description of agenda item:** Staff is seeking Board direction on how to proceed with the January 2022 events, including the January 26, 2022 Long Range Planning workshop and the January 27-28, 2022 Board of Directors meeting.

At its May 2021 Board meeting, the Board delegated authority to the Executive Committee to decide whether to hold the upcoming December 2021 and January 2022 events in person or virtually. The Executive Committee met on June 16 to discuss how to proceed and directed staff to hold the December 2021 Volunteer Workshop virtually; cancel the volunteer party and Science Night; and to move forward with holding the January 2022 events in person with COVID-19 mitigation measures to be decided later in the year.

At its September 9 meeting, the Executive Committee was asked to provide guidance on the January 2022 events given changing conditions. In light of the current upward trend of the COVID-19 pandemic and the alert level classified as high for the State of Alaska, the Executive Committee expressed the importance of bringing this decision to the full Board of Directors. The Executive Committee made a recommendation that the January 2022 events be held virtually.

Should the Board of Directors choose to hold the January 2022 events in person, they are asked to consider the following questions:

- Should the number of people invited to these events be limited?
- Who will be seated at the Board meeting table, and how far apart?
- Will masks be required, and if so, how strongly should this be enforced?
- Should in-person attendance be limited to those that can provide proof of a COVID-19 vaccination or recent negative COVID-19 test? *(Note: The State of Alaska approved a [directive](#) effective August 11 that recommends fully vaccinated people with no COVID-19-like symptoms and no known exposure be exempted from routine screening testing programs, if feasible.)*
- Should the events be catered (buffet or boxed?) or should participants be on their own for meals?

The first contractual deadline with Embassy Suites to avoid a cancellation penalty has passed. Should the Board choose to postpone making a decision on the January 2022 events, it is recommended that a decision be reached before October 27, 2021, in order to avoid incurring additional penalties. Following is a breakdown of the costs that

would be incurred for canceling the reservation with Embassy Suites and holding the January 2022 events virtually.

If cancelled 91-180 days prior = \$5,060 cancellation fee plus taxes (*now until October 27, 2021*)

If cancelled 8 – 90 days prior = \$10,668 cancellation fee plus taxes (*October 28, 2021 through January 18, 2022*)

If cancelled 0 – 7 days prior = \$12,520 cancellation fee plus taxes (*January 19, 2022 until day of the event*)

The Board of Directors is asked to direct staff on how to proceed with the January 2022 Board meeting.

2. **Why is this item important to PWSRCAC:** The health and safety of PWSRCAC staff and volunteers is a top priority. Of particular concern is the ability to adequately satisfy recommendations including to stay a minimum of six feet apart from non-household members, wearing a face covering when in public, adequately sanitizing and disinfecting commonly touched surfaces, as well as being mindful and respectful to those that are most vulnerable to the virus. These restrictions and recommendations apply even if an individual is vaccinated. Additionally, in order to meet in person, decisions would need to be made such as who will sit at the main table in order to maintain social distancing, the purchase of additional microphones to accommodate social distancing and so that microphones are not shared, how to safely serve food, and who will enforce the wearing of masks.

Furthermore, recognizing that many people are still not comfortable traveling and being around large groups of people, it is anticipated that if the meeting were to be held in person, there would be a number of people that would not travel. This would result in a hybrid in-person/virtual meeting and staff has been made aware of challenges other organizations have faced while hosting hybrid meetings. The general view seems to be, for now, that it is better to be virtual than to host a hybrid meeting, as it is hard to manage the meeting so that both in-person and virtual participants are kept engaged (it is different than hosting an in-person meeting with just a few people on teleconference).

3. **Previous actions taken by the Board on this item:**

<u>Meeting</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Action</u>
XCOM	3/30/20	Authorized a deviation from the Board approved regular meeting schedule by holding the May 7-8, 2020 PWSRCAC Board meeting remotely through videoconference.
XCOM	4/30/20	XCOM approved Temporary Travel Restrictions, including but not limited to the waiver of policies 700.06 (VMT Familiarization), 721.02 (Board Travel Under Own Authority), and Policy 721.03 (Volunteer Travel Under Own Authority) until further notice.
XCOM	7/2/20	Authorized a deviation from the Board approved regular meeting schedule by holding the September 17-18, 2020 PWSRCAC Board meeting remotely through video and teleconference, and to shift the rotation of the annual community meeting so that the September 2021 meeting is held in Seward.
Board	9/17/20	Approved the cancellation of all the December 2020 in-person events (Science Night, Volunteer Workshop, and Volunteer Party) and the in-person January 2021 Board meeting because of COVID-19 and COVID-19 restrictions; staff to work on holding these events virtually.

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Board	9/17/20	Adopted the proposed amendment to Section 3.8 of the PWSRCAC Bylaws titled "Meeting by Telephone or Videoconference."
Board	1/28/21	Authorized a deviation from the Board-approved regular meeting schedule by holding the May 6-7, 2021 PWSRCAC Board meeting and associated events remotely through video and teleconference because of COVID-19 and COVID-19 restrictions.
XCOM	4/27/21	Rescinded the temporary travel restrictions approved on April 30, 2020, with the following exceptions and guidance: a) the suspension of in-person meetings remains in effect until lifted by the Board or XCOM; and b) individual Board or committee member travel to conferences, business meetings, trainings, or other Council related business will be approved by the Board or XCOM on a case by case basis, with careful consideration given to the individual circumstances of each request and the most recent and relevant CDC, state, and local travel advisories and mandates.
XCOM	4/27/21	Approved a recommendation to the Board to hold the September 2021 Board meeting virtually, along with a request that the Board delegate authority to the Executive Committee to make decisions regarding future in-person Council events.
Board	5/7/21	Approved: a) a deviation from the Board-approved regular meeting schedule by holding the September 2021 meeting virtually, shifting the rotation of the annual community meeting so that the September 2022 meeting is held in Seward; and (b) delegated authority to the Executive Committee to make decisions regarding future in-person Council events.
XCOM	6/16/2021	Approved holding the December 2021 Volunteer Workshop virtually, with no Volunteer Party or Science Night, and the January 2022 events in-person with conditions to be decided upon later this year.
XCOM	9/9/2021	Approved a recommendation to the Board to hold the January 2022 events virtually.

4. **Summary of policy, issues, support or opposition:** Per Council bylaws, the date and location of meetings are set by Board resolution. Any deviation from the schedule set by the resolution requires Board or Executive Committee action.

5. **Committee Recommendation:** At their meeting on September 9, 2021, the Executive Committee passed a recommendation to the Board that the January 2022 events be held virtually.

6. **Relationship to LRP and Budget:** Costs associated with the January events are largely attributed to meeting space, meals, and travel for the staff and volunteers. Holding the January Board meeting virtually via Zoom would result in a cost savings of approximately \$25,000 in the FY2022 budget.

7. **Action Requested of the Board of Directors:** Authorize a deviation from the Board approved regular meeting schedule by holding the January 26-28, 2022 PWSRCAC events virtually.

8. **Alternatives:** The Board could choose to hold the January 2022 events in person. Should the Board take this position, answers to the questions outlined in item one of this agenda statement would be needed.

9. **Attachments:** None.