

Anastasia Mosquito Control District of St. Johns County

120 EOC Drive, St. Augustine, FL 32092
Telephone: (904)-471-3107 * Fax (904) 471-3189 * Web: www.amcdsjc.org

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Gary Howell, Chairperson
Vivian Browning, Vice-Chairperson
Catherine Brandhorst, Secretary/Treasurer
Janice Bequette, Commissioner
Jeanne Moeller, Commissioner



DISTRICT DIRECTOR

Dr. Rui-de Xue



Thursday, September 22, 2016

Next Meeting(s): Thursday, October 20, 2016 – 6:00 PM

MINUTES

The Final Public Hearing meeting for the Anastasia Mosquito Control District of St. Johns County was held on Thursday, September 22, 2016 at 5:30 P.M.

Board members in attendance:

Mr. Gary Howell, Chairperson
Ms. Vivian Browning, Vice-Chairperson
Mrs. Catherine Brandhorst, Secretary/Treasurer
Ms. Janice Bequette, Commissioner
Mrs. Jeanne Moeller, Commissioner

Also in attendance:

Dr. Rui-De Xue, Director
Mr. Wayne E. Flowers, Attorney

Chairperson Howell called the meeting to order.

Commissioner Howell led the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

Roll Call: Chairperson Howell noted ~ All were present.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- **Mr. Richard W. Harvy**, 120 Jackson Boulevard, St. Augustine, FL: is retired from pest control in Ocala, the housing building and wind tunnel are a waste of money, he has experience in calibrating equipment and will come volunteer to do that for us, is for the mosquito control program and wants the most out of it for his tax payer dollars.
- **Dr. Michael Shirley**, 561 Howard Place, St. Augustine, FL: Has 30 years of experience working on non-target effects of mosquito control sprays, on coastal estrian habitats, etc., understands and knows why research is important and needed in mosquito control, the goal of the commissioners' is to keep people healthy in mosquito control and reduce the impact on the environment and AMCD has done this and at the lowest possible cost, every time we do an aerial spray - we save 70% over what it used to cost, in 2007 the only thing on the tax docket that went down was mosquito control because of the research that led to better technology, we have internationally recognized personnel here at AMCD, support them.

- **Ms. Sharon Widdifield**, 601 Sands Drive, St. Augustine, FL: Doesn't disagree with the research plan but surprised by it, the public should have been informed about this when AMCD planned the main complex in 2015, asked that we delay the increase in millage this year and suggested community workshops to discuss what we are planning to do.
- **Dr. Gladys Kiely Humphreys**, 2 C Street, St. Augustine, FL: came to the meeting because of the editorials in the St. Augustine Record and agrees with them, feels the Board is trying to create a research institute, research is the wrong way to go, opposed to the budget to create the research facility.
- **Ms. Alexandrina S. Gemelaris**, 3841 Winterhawk Court, St. Augustine, FL: does not support the millage increase, proposed expenditures are wasteful – unnecessary and redundant, research is done at the universities and the CDC, now huge hangar and dormitory which are all extravagances from the tax payer's pockets.
- **Ms. Ann Brogden**, 245 Wildwood Drive #59, St. Augustine, FL: has no background in mosquito control but doesn't understand why anyone would question the millage increase as in the household amount of \$10, \$30, per year for us to know how to take care of our future residents of St. Johns County (children, grandchildren, etc.), we have resources and capable people here at AMCD and are in a better position to do research and decide what we need here in St. Johns County, rather than through the university outside of the area and AMCD is doing a marvelous job and at a low cost to protect us going toward the future.

The Public Comment portion of the meeting was closed at this time.

- Dr. Xue then spoke, this is not for theoretical research, it is for APPLIED RESEARCH, we check and make sure things work like they need to - such as the clip on repellents you see advertised on television, we paid \$265,000 for an aerial spray, things that work in California may not work here so we use our applied research to see what does work for our area, we can't compare with the universities in research, we do applied research to figure out what does work, before becoming director – the budget was 4.3 million dollars, now our current active budget is 2.8 million dollars, since 2003 we have no local acquired human case of mosquito-borne disease, we reduced 4 stations down to 2 at present and plan to reduce one more in the near future, positions have been reduced from 40 down to 25, the vehicle fleet has been reduced from 57 down to 41, we utilize seasonal employees to replace full time employees to reduce costs, so far we have received over 1 million dollars in grant money, kept the millage low for many years, in the future we will have even more capability, we can't endorse products but can test them, this year we have received a \$240,000 grant through the university, Department of Agriculture, including \$97,000 grant from the Department of Agriculture for pesticide study and a \$25,000 MTK grant, applied research helps us save money and improve in becoming more efficient, when started as Director we used close to \$400,000 for pesticides and now current budget is \$244,000 for pesticides which is a 50% reduction in cost, prevention is #1, the cost for 1 person with a mosquito-borne disease is at least \$21,000, applied research is needed, invited the public to visit with him and let him show them what we do and how.

BOARD COMMENTS:

- **Commissioner Browning:** Our goal is to protect the public health and safety, even animals can get diseases from mosquitoes, children are dying in third world countries from mosquito-borne diseases and Dr. Xue has come up with solutions for us and in some of these third world countries, mosquitoes are the most dangerous animal, Dr. Xue is a world known scientist, AMCD has cut costs and has received grants to also offset costs, we need the local research and training, a \$10 tax bill vs. lives being saved, supports the research facility.
- **Commissioner Brandhorst:** This item has been on the Agenda since 2003 and if you paid attention to mosquito control before last week, you would have known that.
- **Commissioner Bequette:** Appreciates the public comments, is the chair of the Applied Research Committee, it has been proven that it saves money, time, and resources, we receive free supplies - chemicals and tools in doing applied research, we test a chemical and find that we can use it at a 40% rate

rather than 60% which is better for the public and the environment, we can't count on the universities, legislature, etc. to get money to do our job, we protect visitors, citizens, etc., the return on investment for applied research - reduced fleet, amount of chemicals used, helped the environment, applied research proves the path so we don't build resistance in mosquitoes, asks the Board to support what was presented.

- **Commissioner Howell:** pays 5 tax bills on properties he owns, doesn't mind spending that money, he gets the best from AMCD for his dollar, we need the research facility, our future (children, grandchildren, etc.) is what is important, hopes all will stand behind this, invites all to come back as Dr. Xue suggested.
- **Commissioner Moeller:** It is interesting that between 2004 and 2008 when we didn't raise taxes, we were on the top fold in the St. Augustine Record more than 40 times per year, since 2008 (with the exception of the last couple of months) can count on one hand the number of times the St. Augustine Record has sent an employee to our meetings to report what happens at this Board, Jim Sutton and the St. Augustine Record are entitled to their opinion, but when we increase the budget by \$3.77 per \$100,000 of taxable billable houses, it is only \$1.80 per month over 12 months, this is about the health and welfare of St. Johns County, we started the building in 2008, got rid of the first architect who was going to build a shoddy building much like the Flagler county building mentioned in Jim Suttons article which has not been completed as he stated, the building is on hold, it already has a cracking foundation, it is adjacent to – not on (as stated in the article) airport property and over budget, very proud of our building and supports the budget.

BUSINESS:

Item 1: APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION 2016-01 and FINAL MILLAGE RATE at 0.2150 for FY16/17

A. A motion was made to approve Resolution 2016-01 and the final Millage rate at 0.251 for FY16/17 as presented.

- Motioned by: Commissioner Browning
- Motion Seconded by: Commissioner Bequette
- VOTE accepted by all commissioners
- **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Item 2: APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION 2016-02 and CERTIFIED BUDGET for FY16/17

(Deadline September 30, 2016)

- There was no additional discussion on the budget.

A. A motion was made to approve Resolution 2016-02 and the Certified Budget for FY16/17 as presented.

- Motioned by: Commissioner Bequette
- Motion Seconded by: Commissioner Brandhorst
- VOTE accepted by all commissioners
- **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

ADJOURNMENT:

Chairperson Howell adjourned the meeting at 6:17 P.M.

ATTEST

Chairperson, Commissioner Gary Howell

Secretary/Treasurer, Comm. Catherine Brandhorst

These minutes are not intended to be a verbatim transcript of this meeting and could easily be misinterpreted by a reader who was not present. To obtain a full and accurate record of the meeting, an individual should view/listen to the entire proceedings via the District's DVD visual/recording system.