

Anastasia Mosquito Control District of St. Johns County

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BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Jeanne Moeller, Chairperson
Trish Becker, Vice-Chairperson
Gina LeBlanc, Secretary/Treasurer
Catherine Brandhorst, Commissioner
Gayle Gardner, Commissioner



DIRECTOR

DISTRICT

Dr. Rui-de Xue



Thursday, June 17, 2021

Next Meeting(s): Thursday, July 15, 2021 – 5:00 PM

MINUTES

The regular Board meeting for the Anastasia Mosquito Control District of St. Johns County was held on Thursday, June 17, 2021, at 5:00 P.M.

Board members in attendance:

Mrs. Jeanne Moeller, Chairperson
Mrs. Trish Becker, Vice-Chairperson
Mrs. Gina LeBlanc, Secretary/Treasurer
Mrs. Brandhorst, Commissioner (Arrived Late)
Ms. Gayle Gardner, Commissioner

Also in attendance:

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

ROLL CALL: Chairperson Moeller noted ~ Mrs. Brandhorst was absent.

Proclamation: Commissioner Trish Becker, read the Proclamation stating, Now, Therefore, Anastasia Mosquito Control District does hereby proclaim June 2021, as Pride month, and urges all our citizens to stand as an ally with our family, friends, co-workers and neighbors in the face of prejudice wherever it exists, and to embrace the great diversity within our community. Commissioner Becker continued with, In Witness whereof, we hereunto set our hands and do cause the Seal of the Anastasia Mosquito Control District to be affixed this 17th day of June in the year of our lord two thousand twenty-one. The Proclamation was then signed by Chairperson Moeller and Commissioner Becker. Commissioner Becker then presented the signed Proclamation to the House of Prism President, Sara Bloomberg. Sara Bloomberg thanked the board.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION: For Items not on the Agenda ~ None

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Chairperson Moeller called for approval of the Agenda.

A. A motion was made to approve the Agenda as presented.

- Motioned by: Commissioner Gayle Gardner
- Seconded by: Commissioner Trish Becker
- VOTE: Accepted unanimously by all commissioners

○ **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA: Chairperson Moeller called for approval of the Consent Agenda.

A. A motion was made to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

- Motioned by: Commissioner Trish Becker
- Seconded by: Commissioner Gayle Gardner
- VOTE: Accepted unanimously by all commissioners
- **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Consent Items ~ APPROVAL OF:

1. Treasurer's Report
2. Vouchers (*Cancelled Checks*)
3. Chemical Inventory
4. Minutes: Regular Board Meeting, May 13, 2021 at 5:00 P.M.
5. Renewal of auditor contract for auditing FY20/21
6. Approval Mrs. Becker use the airline tickets credits to visit Rutgers University's Center for Vector Biology, New Jersey or Puerto Rico Vector Control Agency, San Juan.
7. Payroll software update
8. Quarterly budget analysis
9. Budget Amendments

NEW BUSINESS:

Item 1: Report about School Research Project (Video Clip) ... Commissioner Becker

Commissioner Becker

- Commissioner Becker started by greeting her fellow Commissioners, she wanted to go over the previously mentioned research project for her English class titled "Are Humans Giving Mosquitos Superpowers." Commissioner Becker continued the report by showing a short YouTube clip of her research project presentation. The clip consisted of images illustrating mosquito life cycle, common items humans leave around the yard that cause mosquito breeding and other insects including mosquitos. Commissioner Becker went on to explain her research paper and the video clip was about all the ways we as a species build up single use plastic, where it's accumulating and how it affects Mosquito Control. She mentioned a study published by the Royal Society Journal in England, called "The Ontogentic Transference as a Pathway for Ariel Dispersal of Microplastics". Commissioner Becker continues explaining that the study found if they introduce different plastics to mosquitos, they would carry it throughout their bodies. She stated it was one of the only studies done on the theory, so the question is will mosquitos be able to kill humans in more than one way, if they can transfer deadly diseases to humans, does that also mean every time someone gets bit does the mosquito transfer plastic to our bodies, can it build up and kill us? Commissioner Becker mentioned finding grant funding to start researching the theory since there is not a lot of research on the subject, she spoke with Dr. Xue and he liked the idea of it.
- **THERE WAS NO MOTION ON THIS ITEM**

Item 2: Discussion and Approval of RFP for the SIT Mass Rearing Facility... Business Manager...

Mr. Weaver

Mr. Weaver

- Mr. Weaver started the discussion explaining the Request for Proposal (RFP), has the same legalese that is always used but with all the information specific to the Sterile Insect Technique (SIT) program put into it, because it's little easier of a project, it was put as a design build, meaning they would do the design of the building and the site. He continued explaining they would construct the whole thing and the total cost would be submitted at the beginning of the project and the board would either approve it or disapprove it. Mr. Weaver mentioned the total coast would be coming back by the August 12, 2021 Board Meeting for approval. He mentioned the board wanted the RFP out quickly, so he put in a lot of work to get everything important in there. Mr. Weaver did a lot of research on the radiation machinery, irradiators and coolers. He also collected some good suggestions from Lee County Mosquito Control District and increased the sizes of some of the rooms. Mr. Weaver pointed out he's unsure of how good the prices will be with the price increasing on everything but he believes the district will get a good price as far as accuracy.
- Commissioner Moeller asked if it was a design and build or will we experience a time lapse, like when the Education Program was started.
- Mr. Weaver confirmed one company will win the bid and they will do everything from the beginning to the end.
- Commissioner Becker asked under the design and construction narrative, if the administrative and laboratory section would have a front lobby and would that require the hire of an administrative assistant.
- Mr. Weaver confirmed another Administrative Assistant will not be necessary, it is just a small room that is labeled as lobby due to it being located near the entrance door, however it would be more of a mailroom. He explained the original plans show a desk but it was removed, it took up too much space and it was more beneficial to have extra space in the lab.
- Commissioner Moeller asked if the Lab would be similar to Lee County's SIT lab, where the general public cannot just visit and it will not be a part of the tour due to the fact that it needs to stay sterile.
- Mr. Weaver confirmed that was correct.
- Commissioner Becker asked about the dangers of the radiation room and if extra safety precautions would need to be taken or if it would require a special insurance policy.
- Mr. Weaver reassured Commissioner Becker none of that would be necessary and explained the machine is the size of a fridge, it weighs a lot but that is due to the amount of lead, it does not put out much radiation and if it does it is only enough to kill mosquitos. He continued explaining it is very safe, the only quirk would be that it takes coolant due to the amount of heat it generates.
- Commissioner Becker asked about the boring sample and if the Education Center would experience low water pressure like the last time they were building.
- Mr. Weaver confirmed that low water pressure was not an issue, since the sheriff's office was built right next door.
 - Motioned By: Commissioner Gina LeBlanc
 - Seconded By: Commissioner Trish Becker
 - VOTE: Accepted unanimously by all commissioners
 - **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Item 1: Discussion and Approval of the FY 21/22 Draft Budget... Director Dr. Xue & C.F.O Mr. Hanna

- Dr. Xue started the discussion stating that some changes and updates were made to the budget and stated the budget is due the last week of September 2021, therefore a decision can be made at the final public hearing. He mentioned the financial committee is met on Tuesday June 23, 2021, to discuss the cost of current operation. Dr. Xue stated we have three and a half months left to look at our current revenue to know how much we will need for the next few months. He continued explaining the next three and half months are peak season and they have started larviciding due to the increase of rain we've been experiencing in Saint John's County. Dr. Xue is estimating the cost will be around two million dollars because the next few months are the costliest. He mentioned they looked at the situation, to estimate the upcoming millage rate and in order to that the previous year's millage rate and property tax must also be reviewed. Dr. Xue stated it should be discussed it in July 15th, 2021 Board Meeting and a vote needs to be made. He mentioned next week at the committee meeting an estimate from accounting should be reviewed, therefore on the July 15th Board Meeting a recommendation on the millage rate can be presented. Dr. Xue continued explaining that based on the current amount of reserve and the projected need, the financial situation is good. He mentioned that it is possible the millage rate can be reduced, it is currently at 0.2005, and it is possible it can reduce to 0.2 based on the situation. He pointed out the more people that move to Saint John's County means the more people that pay taxes, based on that situation the millage rate may be reduced. Dr. Xue stated there is still several months before those need to be done and if anyone has any questions or recommendations to call Mr. Hanna or Himself.
- Commissioner Moeller stated she had no issue with the budget but had a question regarding the operating expenses, she asked about the mobile app for the public, if it was up and running and how successful it has been so far. She stated it requires 30,000 dollars and we need to generate more revenue towards it.
- Mr. Weaver stated that it is active, the link is posted on the Anastasia Mosquito Control District website and it's designed to send out push notifications and Ariel applications.
- Dr. Xue stated that the use of the app by the public has increased by 50% over the last couple of years.
- Commissioner Moeller's next statement was that the Florida Mosquito Control Association (FMCA) dues of \$6,000.00 are due again. She also mentioned that in the past \$35.00 per employee for employee memberships is set aside in the budget, however, the FMCA has raised that price from \$35.00 for each employee to \$70.00 per employee. Commissioner Moeller mentioned it may be beneficial to the budget if not all employees' memberships are renewed, since most do not use them or know they are members, and maybe certain employees should be picked for membership renewals. Commissioner Moeller also stated that the gas prices are rising and the budget of \$60,000.00, for gasoline may need to be raised based on this recent increase.
- Dr. Xue stated a budget amendment can be made to reflect this increase in gasoline prices because every year is different.
- Commissioner Moeller then had an unrelated question for Mr. Flower, she mentioned that this is the 3rd meeting Commissioner Brandhorst has missed in the last six months, and she has left early for one and left the room for 45 minutes on a phone call for another. Commissioner Moeller asked Attorney Wayne Flower if there was a policy and procedure in place about frequent absences of a commissioner.
- Mr. Flower stated that a policy was in place and he would need to review it and the requirements.
- Commissioner Brandhorst arrived at the meeting at 5:35pm
 - Motioned By: Commissioner Gayle Gardner
 - Seconded By: Commissioner Jeanne Moeller

- VOTE: Accepted by: Commissioner Becker, Gardner, Moeller, Brandhorst
- Commissioner LeBlanc was absent for the vote.
- **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

REPORTS:

1. **Director** ~ Dr. Xue began his report stating we have five sentinel chickens positive for East Equine Encephalitis (EEE) and one mosquito pooling tested in house and possibly positive for West Nile Virus and by law it has to be sent to the Department of Health for confirmation. He also mentioned that we have started larviciding today because the increase of mosquito population, it was dry the last few weeks but we have seen an increase in rain the last couple of days. Dr. Xue mentioned that four intern students have started and they are currently being trained, they do not have a lot of knowledge on mosquitos or mosquito control, so, they have found what they are learning is very interesting and due to the fact that they're minors; they can only work 20 hours a week for six weeks. Dr. Xue stated with the intern students and the seasonal employees the staff is working hard to prepare for peak season.
2. **Attorney** ~ Mr. Flower stated he did not have anything to report this meeting but he did apologize for being late.
 - Commissioner Moeller stated that all the Commissioners understand that sometimes things happen that cause us to be a little late and excused Mr. Flower's tardiness.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Gardner ~ took a helicopter ride with Mr. Smith and she noted it was amazing, she gained a better understanding of how the Ariel spraying works and the value the helicopters hold in the district.

Commissioner Becker ~ as a group of elected officials, we are here to represent all people, the job is public health and a large number of children are homeless because they have been kicked out for their sexual preference. The signing of the LGBTQIA+ Proclamation does not change the law but just shows our support for all people. She wanted to note based on what was discussed during the last Board Meeting, what she believes are the responsibilities as chair, of our committees, and it is my duty as an educational chair to make sure the public is educated on what the district does. She has spent hundreds of her own money creating a brand for herself because she wants us to succeed and loves being the educational chair. She has scheduled three different visits with the Department of Parks and Recreation's kid's camp to come visit the district and has scheduled three different visits. We have not had a lot of tours due to Covid-19 this year, we also did not have as big of a turn out at the open house for the same reason. However, with restrictions being lifted more groups are requesting tours of the district. She spoke with the owner of Blue-Sky Farms, a 5th generation farmer, he is very pleased with the mosquito control technicians that he interacts with and the treatment they provide for his farm. She finished her comments mentioning, Angie Nixon a state representative from Duval County would like to come do a tour and learn more from our district to understand the importance of why Duval should have a District of their own.

Commissioner LeBlanc ~ thanked the staff for all their hard work.

Commissioner Brandhorst ~ apologized for being late. She has had a concussion and has been confused, thinking today was Wednesday. She apologizes for the inconvenience.

Commissioner Moeller ~ a FMCA legislative meeting was held Tuesday and she is the only long-term member of the legislative committee. They have attempted to raise money to ask for money from the state, in order to do that, they must submit the budget to The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumers (FDAC) by August and they still have no background on whether were up that 14% or if they can get it out of the waste tire fund. She continued explaining they have \$500,000.00 that has been going to office and only \$200,000.00 is being used, however, the legislative committee did not move the money appropriately, therefore \$291,000.00 has gone back to FDAC and she is not sure what will happen with it or if it may be lost. She also mentioned that FDAC is trying to change rule 5E-13, which would mean it would no longer work with Chapter 388, she does not know what that will mean for our district as of right now. Commissioner Moeller and Dr. Xue attended a meeting on May 17, 2021 at East Flagler County to do a presentation and they were invited to participate to do surveillance and treatment on the west side of Flagler County. East Flagler County Mosquito Control District set a new goal to be a whole County Mosquito Control. She stated she is the president of the homeless coalition, some of the kids will be coming to visit the district and do a tour. She hopes Commissioner Becker will come and read a mosquito book for children to them. She recently went on a helicopter ride and noticed a lot of swampy area, and suggested that the west side of Saint Augustine needs to be educated on how to prevent mosquito breeding.

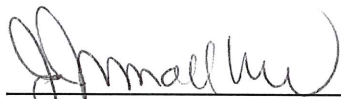
ATTACHMENTS: ~

1. None

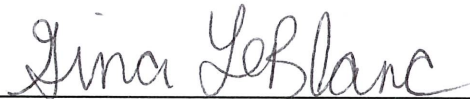
ADJOURNMENT:

Chairperson Moeller adjourned the meeting at 5:57 P.M.

ATTEST



Chairperson, Commissioner Jeane Moeller



Secretary/Treasurer, Commissioner Gina LeBlanc

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.