

Anastasia Mosquito Control District of St. Johns County

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BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Gayle Gardner, Chairperson
Martha Gleason, Vice-Chairperson
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Catherine Brandhorst, Commissioner
Trish Becker, Commissioner



DISTRICT DIRECTOR

Dr. Rui-de Xue



Thursday, March 14, 2024

Thursday, April 11, 2024 – 5:00 PM~ Regular Meeting

MINUTES

The regular Board meeting for the Anastasia Mosquito Control District of St. Johns County was held on Thursday, March 14, 2024, at 5:00 P.M.

Board members in attendance:

Mrs. Gayle Gardner, Chairperson
Mrs. Martha Gleason, Vice-Chairperson
Mrs. Gina LeBlanc, Secretary/Treasurer
Mrs. Catherine Brandhorst, Commissioner
Mrs. Trish Becker, Commissioner

Also in attendance:

Dr. Rui-De Xue, Director
Mrs. Amy Myers, Attorney
Mr. Robert Hawken, Lobbyist

Chairperson Gardner called the meeting to order.

Commissioner Brandhorst led the Invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag

ROLL CALL: Chairperson Gardner noted ~ all were present

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION: Mr. Mike Martin, Chairman of the East Flagler Mosquito Control District. Mr. Martin believes it is really important for the independent special districts to forge a closer bond and fight back against a state legislature that is against our organizations. Mr. Martin noted that independent special districts are valuable due to having a lower number of diseases vectored by mosquitoes in our districts, county-owned mosquito controls have higher diseases vectored by mosquitoes. Mr. Martin intends to build a closer bond with AMCD.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Chairperson Gardner called for approval of the agenda as presented.

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

- Motioned by: Commissioner Becker
- Seconded by: Commissioner Gleason

- VOTE: Accepted unanimously by all commissioner's present
- **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

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

- A. A motion was made to approve the Consent Agenda with moving consent item #3 to unfinished business #3.**
- Motioned by: Gleason
 - Seconded by: Becker
 - VOTE: Accepted unanimously by all Commissioners present
 - **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Consent Items ~ APPROVAL OF:

1. Chemical Inventory
2. Minutes: Regular Board Meeting, February 8, 2024
3. Agreement Between AMCD & Gulf South Vector
4. SOVE Meeting Attendances, Ft. Collins, September 15th-17th
5. 19th Workshop Update

Commissioner Mrs. Gleason pulled over item #3 under the consent agenda and listed this item under unfinished business number 3.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. **Item 1: Legislation Update ~ Mr. Robert Hawken**
 - Mr. Hawken noted that Mr. Martin is correct, special districts have been under attack. He gave a few facts like, the bill was passed, the session is out, and there was one negative vote (Representative Angie Nixon) on this piece of legislation. Mr. Hawken highlighted a few items, the bill had been engrossed and would go to the Governor, in the next 90 days he would either veto the bill, sign the bill, or let the bill become law. Mr. Hawken noted that there is no indication that the Governor will veto the bill. Mr. Hawken explained that AMCD will have to post goals/objectives on our website and each year after have a performance indicator as well as an annual program report.
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2. **Item 2: Financial Report and Budget Amendment ~ Mr. Scott Hanna, C.F.O.**
 - Mr. Hanna reviewed the treasurer's report/vouchers with the Board of Commissioners. Mr. Hanna also explained usually budget amendments are to amend overspending, however, the district earned more revenue than the budget originally anticipated.
 - Commissioner Gleason pointed out that there are several invoices that she believes are education center-related, she would like to see those contracts, their scope of work, and who signed them.
 - Mr. Weaver explained most of those are an hourly rate or by project, so there wouldn't be a contract or scope of work. They work until the specific project is completed.
 - Mr. Weaver confirmed for Commissioner Gleason that there were no RFPs/Quotes or Contracts and there was nothing to bring to the Board. Commissioner Gleason said question was asked and answered and that obviously there was no Board oversight.

- Mr. Weaver explained after the Compass Group debate the Board permitted him to finish the project however he had to and that means he has been working as a general contractor and hiring sub-contractors to finish the project. Commissioner Gleason stated that she had not been able to find any minutes in which the Board delegated its full authority, including contract execution/signing authority to Mr. Weaver for the completion of the project.
- Commissioner Gleason noted she has a problem with this because companies have gotten in trouble for this, where you give me an invoice and check to sign under a certain financial signing threshold, the invoice is signed and by the end of the year, you have a vendor that has charged \$100,000, way above the signing authority of the individual that brought in the vendor for the project.
- Mr. Weaver explained when the Board canceled the contract with Compass Group, they let them out of the contract for \$67,000 to finish that building. That was a Board and lawyer decision. Mr. Weaver noted that he knew at the time it would cost closer to one million to finish the Disease Vector Education Center (DVEC) but it was out of his control. He explained since then, he has been acting as the general contractor and has worked with multiple contractors to finish the project. However, Commissioner Gleason that termination of the contract and Board delegating full authority for the project to Mr. Weaver as a general contractor is no where in the minutes.
- Commissioner Gleason noted financial oversight is the Board's number one responsibility and if the Board gave away signing authority, That was done before she was on the Board and she is yet to find minutes that indicate that authority was given.
- Mr. Weaver explained nothing needed to be signed as a contract, AMCD is not working under a contract, we're working on an individual basis with individual contractors on individual displays.
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- Commissioner Gleason stated she has not seen one resolution or anything that says we're not only giving Mr. Weaver authority to find the vendors but also giving him authority to sign the agreements
- Commissioner Becker noted Commissioners have to sign every single check that goes out of this building and so does the Director.
- Commissioner Gleason asked so over 700 thousand dollars was okay, no questions asked?
- Mr. Hanna noted Compass was the vendor selected to finish the project and when they were let out of the contract for \$60,000, both Mr. Weaver and I knew it was a big mistake, however, no one was given the option to fight back.
- Commissioner Gleason noted she was not questioning Mr. Weaver's integrity; she was just asking what authority the Board gave. She mentioned she was questioning the AMCD Board of Commissioners and she apologized for upsetting Mr. Weaver, her intent was not to question Mr. Weaver's integrity but to ask does this Board provide the financial oversight that they should have been doing.

A. A motion was made to approve the budget amendment as presented.

- Motioned by: Commissioner Becker
- Seconded by: Commissioner Gleason
- VOTE: Accepted unanimously by all commissioner's present
- **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

3. **Item 3: Agreement Between AMCD & South Gulf Vector~ Commissioner Martha Gleason**

- Dr. Xue explained that AMCD and Gulf South Vector are still drafting the agreement and AMCD will send monthly invoices for hiring a training coordinator who will work at the DVEC. He continued to explain the Gulf South Vector will pay the Coordinator, the AMCD will provide full benefits and the Gulf South Vector will also provide partial funds for related research.
- Commissioner Gleason noted the original plan was for training not hiring a DVEC Coordinator, she asked lawyer Ms. Myers if we could get audited for that.
- Ms. Myers confirmed that Gulf South Vector could get audited for it but AMCD cannot.
- Commissioner Gleason gave a set of questions to Ms. Myers to follow-up on regarding AMCD invoicing Gulf Shores without an MOU in effect.

A. **A motion was made to approve giving staff the authority to work with the South Gulf Vector.**

- Motioned by: Commissioner Becker
- Seconded by: Commissioner Gardner
- VOTE: Accepted unanimously by all commissioner's present
- **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Item 1: Aerial Program Update & Report ~ Mr. Dana Smith**

- Mr. Smith started his presentation with a picture of himself and the rest of the aerial staff and pointed out their job titles. He continued to give the Board an update on equipment, and parts, N874M, N67569, and N67442 while explaining what each of the helicopters are for. Mr. Smith pointed out all the flight training he and his team have completed and all the positive impacts the aerial program has provided to the St. Johns County residents.
- **NO MOTION WAS PASSED ON THIS ITEM**

2. **Item 2: Grant Summary Update & Report Since 2017 ~ Dr. Rui-De Xue**

- Dr. Xue noted that AMCD started receiving collaboration grants in the middle of 2016 after the new complex was opened with universities. He mentioned some of the organizations AMCD has received grants from over the last eight years; the Center for Disease Control (CDC), Department of Defense (DOD), National Institutes of Health (NIH), U.S Department of Agriculture (USDA), National Science Foundation, Florida Department of Agriculture (FDACS), Department of Health (DOH), and national, international, and many industries. Dr. Xue mentioned that from 2016 to 2024 AMCD has received 30 collaborative grants, totaling about \$2,578,011.18 in cash.
- Commissioner Mrs. Gleason mentioned that there was no direct grant fund for the Disease Vector Education Center and that Commissioner need to stop telling the public that the Center was paid for with grant funding

- **NO MOTION WAS PASSED ON THIS ITEM**

3. **Item 3: Disease Vector Education Building Cost Summary~ Mr. Richard Weaver**

- Mr. Weaver began explaining the Board had three spreadsheets in front of them, the first was AMCD's first initial plan for \$170, 379.98 and several increases which did come before the AMCD Board of Commissioners. He continued to explain the contract amount was \$148,000, the allowance was \$177,629.98 and AMCD spent \$170,379.98. Mr. Weaver mentioned that \$288,877.45 went towards the design and site plan of the building and the rest was for the construction of the building and displays. He explained so far AMCD has spent almost \$3.9 million to build the Disease Vector Education Center (DVEC)
- Commissioner Gleason what is the estimate of total cost once all work is completed. Mr. Weaver stated that probably closer to \$4.4 million.

○ **NO MOTION WAS PASSED ON THIS ITEM**

4. **Item 4: FY24/25 Budget Guidelines, Major Work Plan & Update Strategy Plan ~ Dr. Rui-De Xue**

- Dr. Xue outlined some important budget dates for the FY24/25 budget and asked the Board of Commissioners if they have any suggestions or would like to see anything on the new budget to let him know.
- Commissioner Gleason mentioned that she had already submitted to Mr. Hannah an example of the Orlando Mosquito Control strategy plan and that she would like to see the Education Center and SIT building shown separately from on-going operations.

○ **NO MOTION WAS PASSED ON THIS ITEM**

REPORTS:

Director ~ Dr. Xue reported the surveillance program is up and running, AMCD has ordered chickens and built/fixed chicken pens, AMCD also increased the number of chicken pens from nine to eleven. He mentioned that AMCD has started interviews for seasonal employees, intern students, and high school interns. Dr. Xue continued to mention so far, we've interviewed nine people, hired five of them, and also hired a biologist for the DVEC used the budgeted position for the SIT building, and will hopefully hire another entomologist to replace Dr. Qualls former position. Dr. Xue explained that AMCD will have three visiting scientists this year. The District will hire six to eight seasonal employees and two or three are coming back from last year. Dr. Xue mentioned everything is prepared for the workshop, AMCD also will host an adjunct, consulting, and collaboration meeting on March 25. AMCD will have the grand opening of the DVEC and SIT building on March 26 at 8am. All Commissioners are invited to join.

Attorney ~ Mrs. Amy Myers had nothing to report.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Gardner ~ No comments.

Commissioner Brandhorst ~ Thought Commissioner Gleason owed the AMCD's Board of Commissioners and Mr. Richard Weaver an apology.

Commissioner LeBlanc ~ Thanked the staff for all their hard work and noted that we should watch our tone and the way we are speaking to each other. That attacking each other will get us nowhere.

Commissioner Becker ~ Reported she was on the City of Saint Augustine "Breakroom" radio station where she discussed the DVEC and gave them a tour. The education committee meeting was this week where staff and I discussed the DVEC and making admission free until July 10th.

Commissioner Gleason ~ Commissioner Gleason indicated she did not need to apologize to the Board as she was doing her job, as for Mr. Weaver that it had already been addressed. She hoped everybody understood that the questions were not meant micromanage. We have to be cognizant that there are multiple projects and we need to ensure that staff can cover

Commissioner Gleason also asked Ms. Myers to follow-up on the legal status of the Educational Center to determine if education center under its current legal structure: 1) qualify for grants; 2) charge for admission? or does the Education Center need to have a 501C(3) status. Per conversation she had with AMCD's prior attorney; he was never asked to provide guidance on this. Ms., Myers agreed to take the questions back and research them for the Board.

ATTACHMENTS: ~

1. *HR Consulting proposal*

ADJOURNMENT: Chairperson Gardner adjourned the meeting at 7:17 P.M.

ATTEST



Chairperson, Commissioner Gayle Gardner



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