

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

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



DISTRICT DIRECTOR

Dr. Rui-de Xue



Thursday, July 11, 2024

Thursday, August 8, 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, July 11, 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 (Via Phone)

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 ~ that all were present.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA:

- **Ed Slavin suggested the District look into internal controls to protect government money from fraud. AMCD should set the standard and learn from past experiences.**

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 New Business #3.

- Motioned by: Becker
- Seconded by: Gleason
- VOTE: Accepted Unanimously by all Commissioners
- **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Consent Items ~ APPROVAL OF:

1. Chemical Inventory
2. Minutes: Regular Board Meeting, June 13, 2024
3. Auditor Renewal Letter-(Moved to New Business #3)
4. Surplus items
5. DACS/IPM plan

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 Brandhorst
- VOTE: Accepted unanimously by all commissioners
- **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Item 1: Education and Applied Research Committee Reports~ Dr. Rui-De Xue

- Dr. Xue outlined topics that were discussed in the education and applied research committee. Noting the committee members for the education committee; Commissioner Trish Becker, Dr. Joseph Diclaro, Dr. Steve Peper, Mrs. Tomomi Hirokawa, Ms. Genhsy Monzon, Mr. Edward Zeszutko, Dr. Rui-de Xue and Mr. Richard Weaver. During the education committee meeting the open house details were discussed, and reports about visitors to the Disease Vector Education Center (DVEC). The committee also discussed the hours of operation, ticket costs, and discounts, and extended the free period for the DVEC. The St. Johns County (SJC) School Board deputy superintendent also attended the committee meeting to discuss the possibility of training/education grants in collaboration with the St. Johns County School Board. The committee members for the applied research committee meeting were: Commissioner Gleason (absent), Dr. Whitney Qualls, Dr. Joseph Diclaro, Dr. Steve Peper, Dr. Muhammad Farooq, and Dr. Rui-de Xue attended the meeting. Dr. Lee from the University of Florida/FMEL, Vero Beach, and her graduate students joined the meeting. Visiting Scientist Dr. Neok gave a presentation about his ATSB impact on the benefit mosquito, *Tox. r. rutilus*. During this committee meeting the members discussed updates about current applied research projects and updates about collaboration projects.

- **NO MOTION PASSED ON THIS ITEM**

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. Mr. Hanna answered questions the Board of Commissioners asked.
- Former Commissioner Gary Howell pointed out it's against the Sunshine law for Commissioners to have private discussions during a public meeting.
- Commissioner Gleason asked about the status of the agreement with the District in New Orleans. It was stated there is no MOU yet. Commissioner Gleason noted it would be safe to assume that for the rest of this fiscal year, AMCD will probably have to pay for the DVEC Coordinator's salary.

- Commissioner Gleason asked what is remaining of the money that was approved to finish the DVEC. Mr. Hanna let her know that \$262,589.30 is left over and that includes the humidifier. He also noted AMCD staff is tracking that number closely to make sure they staff within budget.
- Commissioner Gleason noted AMCD keeps moving revenues that are made and create more spending, she asked if it's possible to not spend the money just because it's there. Mr. Hanna noted AMCD won't necessarily spend the money, it's just sitting in the budget, and at the end of the year, it will be part of the ending fund balance. Commissioner Gleason commented she doesn't want to give anybody the impression that they have that money to spend, just because you make money doesn't mean you spend it, the money belongs to St. Johns County residents. Mr. Hanna noted when looking at increased revenues, and matching increased expenditures, it's actually zeroing the number out. Commissioner Gleason mentioned your revenues are increasing because you're earning interest, by saying there is interest to spend and putting it into a spending account, that's why residents hate the government because they never get money back the government just spends it. Mr. Hanna noted the capital repairs and upgrades budget, which as AMCD builds more parts of the facility, you're going to see more things break down, for example, an air conditioner unit that needed to be replaced and so you've got big capital items that just need to be maintained. Commissioner Gleason asked if those dollars weren't moved into those accounts, where are those accounts right now as a percent of the budget and how much of those accounts have we spent? Mr. Hanna explained at the end of the year, the whole thing is just going to come out to whatever is not spent goes into reserves. Commissioner Gleason asked AMCD to set a budget last year and each account had a budget number, so, the only reason you would have to move money into those accounts is if you knew it was going to be overspent and would need funding. Mr. Hanna noted it's possible to move the excess money to future capital outlay, however, when that number starts getting too big the state starts looking at you. Commissioner Gleason commented that means AMCD is making too much money, the way taxpayers see it AMCD is spending excess funds instead of saving them for a rainy day.

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

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

NEW BUSINESS:

Item 1: Discussion and Approval of Tentative Millage Rate Recommended by Financial Committee and Director~ Dr. Rui-De Xue

- Dr. Xue reported that based on the St. Johns County taxable value, district budget needs and the financial committee recommendation, he would like to recommend the Board approve the tentative millage rate from 0.1800 for FY 23/24 to 0.1700 for FY24/25. Dr. Xue mentioned the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS) work plan budget is due July 15, 2024, the first public hearing regarding the millage rate and budget is September 12, 2024 at 5:30 P.M. and the final public hearing regarding the final millage rate and budget is September 26, 2024 at 5:30 P.M. The Board of Commissioners

discussed the options and the majority agreed to set a millage rate of 0.1700 and revisit lowering it at the first public hearing on September 12, 2024 at 5:30 P.M.

- Commissioner Becker noted that the millage rate could be lowered after this meeting but once the millage rate is set it cannot be raised, only lowered.
- Commissioner Gleason commented that she appreciates the rollback rate, however, a better rollback rate would be 0.16 because right now that taxable base went up by 3.8 billion for the county, and revenues even at 0.17 are over a half million dollars, almost over \$600,000 more than AMCD brought in last year. She continued to explain this is not reducing taxes for taxpayers, it's basically pretending to reduce taxes.
- Commissioner Becker mentioned there are two budget meetings in September, setting the millage rate to .1700 is a promise to the taxpayers that AMCD will not go over that number, but the number can still be lowered later.
- Commissioner Gleason noted that AMCD is technically charging more money because we're charging them almost \$600,000 more than we did last year. Taxpayers are paying more because the taxable base went up, so AMCD is applying a smaller number to a higher base, so, basically, AMCD is not lowering the number but keeping it neutral.

A. A motion was made to approve the tentative millage rate of 0.1700.

- Motioned by: Commissioner Becker
- Seconded by: Commissioner LeBlanc
- VOTE: Accepted by: Commissioner LeBlanc, Becker, Gardner, and Brandhorst
- VOTE: Rejected by: Commissioner Gleason
- **MOTION PASSED 4:1**

Item 2: Discussion and Approval of DACS Work Plan Budget (deadline is July 15th) ~ Dr. Rui-De Xue

- Dr. Xue reported the DACS work plan budget deadline is July 15, 2024. The Board of Commissioners discussed the DACS work plan budget and the majority agreed to approve the work plan budget and submit it to DACS by July 15, 2024.
- Commissioner Gleason noted she voted no the tentative millage rate and can not vote yes for DACS work plan budget.

A. A motion was made to approve the DACS work plan budget as presented to meet the July 15th deadline.

- Motioned by: Commissioner Becker
- Seconded by: Commissioner Brandhorst
- VOTE: Accepted by Commissioner Brandhorst, Becker, Gardner, and LeBlanc
- VOTE: Rejected by Commissioner Gleason
- **MOTION PASSED 4:1**

Item 3: Auditor Renewal Letter

- The Board discussed the auditor's renewal and Commissioner Gleason mentioned Ms. Julienne Klien never submitted her letter noting a statement she made in the May 2024 Board meeting was factually incorrect. After discussion, the Board of Commissioners decided to invite Ms. Klien to the August Board meeting and then make a decision about the renewal letter.

- Commissioner Gleason noted when the Board met in May to discuss the audit, Mrs. Klien made a statement in response to a question she asked that said if we were to show evidence that the procurement policy was not followed and the spending on the education center, would she have to amend the audit report? Mrs. Klien's answer to Commissioner Gleason in that meeting was yes, and Commissioner Gleason asked for a letter from Mrs. Klein correcting the record that would go to all commissioners, letting them know that the statement that she had made in the May meeting was factually incorrect. Commissioner Gleason noted she still has not seen that letter unless somebody else got it and she missed it. She continued to explain that is important for us to have because we have it in the public record, our auditor told us that if we did not follow procurement policies for the education center, she would have to amend the audit report. Commissioner Gleason noted that's what we ended up with, the resolution we did to make sure that we were following procurement policies and Mrs. Klien said that she misspoke. Commissioner Gleason asked, so where is the letter from Mrs. Klein?
- Dr. Whitney Qualls noted Mrs. Klien has an emergency and that may have distracted her from sending the letter but that is AMCD's fault for not following up and AMCD staff will reach out to follow up ASAP.
- Commissioner Gleason stated AMCD needs that official letter for the record, an audit report was submitted to the state, and she does not want them coming back if they ever did an audit on AMCD and found some deficiencies. Commissioner Gleason also asked it states the audit include an opinion on overall compliance, if Mrs. Klien doesn't know whether AMCD is complying with procurement policies, how is she supposed to render a clean opinion?
- Mr. Hanna noted that FDACS has the single audit act, which is separate guidelines and this is the state of Florida auditor general guidelines that Mrs. Klien is following. He continued to explain this is a generally accepted auditing standard for the state of Florida and that's what the audit is based on, it's the state of Florida law, and FDACS has its own set of audits.
- Commissioner Gleason mentioned she is talking about the state of Florida audit and the language states that the opinion must include no major deficiencies. She noted Mrs. Klien basically stated she wasn't auditing for compliance, then in the meeting in May, she said if showed AMCD she was not in compliance then the report would have to be amended.
- Mr. Hanna noted Mrs. Klien might have something more up-to-date than what Commissioner Gleason just read.
- Dr. Xue stated it would be a good idea to for Mrs. Klien to come to the next Board meeting and explain. He noted it's a time-sensitive issue and she definitely needs to explain this issue.
- Commissioner Gleason noted her issue is not with Mrs. Klien or the firm, she would just like to make sure AMCD is in compliance.
- Mr. Hanna mentioned the audits are supposed to be reasonable assurance, not 100% assurance.
- Commissioner Gleason stated she needs somebody to confirm the language and that Mrs. Klien is only auditing the financials, that she's not doing any opinion as the whether AMCD is abiding by our policies.

- Mr. Ed Slavin believes AMCD needs a new auditor if the current auditor will not take procedures and procurement policies into consideration during the annual audit. He also asked how long AMCD has had the same auditor and when he received the answer suggested AMCD find a new auditor.
- Commissioner Gleason stated she doesn't believe this is an issue with whether Mrs. Klien is an honest person but should the District be solely dependent on one individual for that long period? Two things have happened in the past two months, one a letter that should have been easy to write, still has not materialized and two I asked the same questions last year and never got a response to them.

A. A motion was made to approve tabling this topic until the August 8, 2024

Board meeting.

- Motioned by: Commissioner Gardner
- Seconded by: Commissioner Gleason
- VOTE: Accepted unanimously by all Commissioners
- **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

REPORTS:

Director ~ Dr. Xue reported two sentinel chickens tested positive for EEE and in some areas of SJC the mosquito population has increased due to the amount of rain received. Dr. Xue noted two interns finished their internships last week and AMCD continues to train high school interns until the end of July. He also mentioned last week AMCD started field testing pesticides and AMCD staff has picked three companies and will recommend one to the AMCD Board next month. He also noted AMCD had a planning committee recently and the report for that meeting will be presented at the August Board meeting and the operation committee meeting meets next week. Dr. Xue's final report was that AMCD was conducting an aerial treatment tonight.

Attorney ~ Mrs. Amy Myers had nothing to report.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Gardner ~ Is happy to be here.

Commissioner Brandhorst ~ Is happy to be here.

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

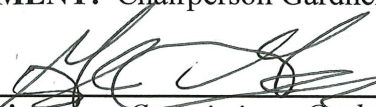
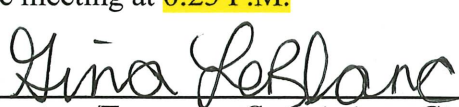
Commissioner Becker ~ Pointed out the mosquito magazine called "Wingbeats," noting it features Salt Lake City District's 100-year anniversary and they're a very excellent District. A couple of months ago she requested a price on a tire shredding machine and noted AMCD should look into that before the budget is finalized, it would be nice for AMCD to shred the tires and donate the pieces to the SJC School Board for their playgrounds, it's a much safer option than mulch.

Commissioner Gleason ~ Thanked the staff for allowing her grandkids to visit recently. She also noted she ran into the chair of the Municipal Service District of Ponte Vedra and they would like an AMCD staff member to attend their next Board meeting and speak about the importance of bubblers in their ponds to prevent mosquitoes and other nuisance insects.

ATTACHMENTS: ~

1. None

ADJOURNMENT: Chairperson Gardner adjourned the meeting at 6:25 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 proc