

Anastasia Mosquito Control District of St. Johns County

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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, August 8, 2024

Thursday, September 12, 2024 – 5:00 PM~ Regular Meeting
Thursday, September 12, 2024 – 5:30 P.M. ~ First Public Hearing
Thursday, September 26, 2024 – 5:30 P.M. ~ Final Public Hearing

MINUTES

The regular Board meeting for the Anastasia Mosquito Control District of St. Johns County was held on Thursday, August 8, 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

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:

- **Mr. Ed Slavin thanked AMCD for doing such a wonderful job since 2005, and to keep up the good work.**

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 Brandhorst
- Seconded by: Commissioner LeBlanc
- VOTE: Accepted unanimously by all commissioners
- **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 as presented.

- Motioned by: Brandhorst
- Seconded by: LeBlanc
- VOTE: Accepted Unanimously by all Commissioners
- **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Consent Items ~ APPROVAL OF:

1. Chemical Inventory
2. Minutes: Regular Board Meeting, July 11, 2024
3. Mr. Conner Kuppe as a Student Representative to Join the SOVE Meeting (He received \$500 Student Travel Fund from SOVE)
4. Dr. Rui-de Xue Elected as the Vice President of SOVE for 2025
5. AMCD's Three Symposia Proposals (Director/Manager by Dr. Xue, Surveillance by Dr. Peper, and Military Transition for Civic Service by Dr. Diclaro) for AMCA Annual Meeting, P.R. March 4th- 8th, 2025.
6. Board Members to Attend the FMCA Annual Meeting, Orlando FL, November 4th-7th, 2024 (Board Member, please let Dr. Xue know Whether you Plan to Join the FMCA Meeting)
7. FDACS MOU (Postponed)

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Item 1: Auditor Engagement Letter for Renewal ~ Dr. Rui-De Xue & Mr. Scott Hanna

- Dr. Xue reported that in 2023, AMCD issued an RFP for an auditor, and the AMCD Board of Commissioners served as the audit committee. He explained that the committee reviewed and ranked all proposals, ultimately selecting and awarding the FY 22/23 financial audit contract to Lombardo, Spradley & Klein. The contract with the auditor firm is renewable annually based on mutual consent. Dr. Xue noted that during the July 11th Board meeting, the item regarding the auditor engagement letter for renewing the FY 23/24 financial audit was tabled until the August 8th meeting due to Mrs. Klein's prior travel arrangements. It was hoped she could join the August 8th meeting by phone if possible. Dr. Xue recommended that the Board vote on whether to renew Mrs. Klein's contract for FY 23/24 and provide staff with direction on how to proceed.
- Commissioner Gleason mentioned that she has repeatedly requested the audit plan for the last fiscal year. Mr. Hanna noted that AMCD staff does not have access to this information and advised Commissioner Gleason to request it directly from Mrs. Klein.
- Commissioner Gleason stated she has contacted Mrs. Klein without receiving a response. She added that the contract renewal was tabled to allow Mrs. Klein to attend the meeting and discuss the issues, but Mrs. Klein did not attend.
- Commissioner Gleason also noted the AMCD Board upon Commissioner Gleason's request received an email from Mrs. Klein correcting her May 2024 Board meeting statement that the 2022/2023 audit report would need to be amended if there were no executed contracts with vendors for the completion of the DVEC project. In her email, Mrs. Klein states that it is her opinion that the audit report does not require amendment due to absence of contracts.

- Commissioner Gleason emphasized that the auditor contract should not be auto-renewed, particularly given Mrs. Klein's failure to attend both the July and August 2024 meetings.
- Mr. Ed Slavin concurred with Commissioner Gleason, agreeing that the auditor contract should not be auto-renewed. He noted that Mrs. Klein was allowed to attend via Zoom and stressed that AMCD is responsible for ensuring proper oversight.
- Mr. Ed Slavin agreed with Commissioner Gleason that the auditor contract should not be auto-renewed. He noted that Mrs. Klein had the option to attend via Zoom and emphasized that AMCD is responsible for safeguarding residents' funds. He also supported Commissioner Gleason's concerns, stating that auto-renewing the contract might not comply with the law.
- Mr. Gary Howell asserted that Mrs. Klein should attend meetings in person, as that is part of her role.
- Mr. Scott Hanna clarified that Mrs. Klein is not compensated for attending meetings; she is only paid for the audit itself.
- Commissioner Gleason remarked that if Mrs. Klein wishes to have her contract renewed, she should attend the meetings, regardless of her compensation for them.
- Commissioner Becker asked Commissioner LeBlanc if she would consider amending her motion to table this item until the next meeting.
- Commissioner LeBlanc declined and stated she would like to proceed with her original motion.
- The AMCD Board of Commissioners decided to table the audit committee selection procedure and resolution for now.
 - A. **A motion was made to approve the renewal of the Auditor contract as presented.**
 - Motioned by: Commissioner LeBlanc
 - Seconded by: Commissioner Brandhorst
 - VOTE: Accepted by Commissioner LeBlanc, Brandhorst, and Gardner
 - VOTE: Rejected by Commissioner Gleason and Becker
 - **MOTION PASSED 3:2**

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. Mr. Hanna noted instead of putting excess revenue in spending accounts, he placed the excess revenue into capital outlay. Mr. Hanna answered questions the Board of Commissioners asked.
- Commissioner Gleason stated she noticed the personnel budget was under budget and she would like to know if that means AMCD is short-staffed and needs to hire people.
- Mr. Hanna noted it was under budget because he moved excess revenue into that specific budget to prepare for possible overtime during hurricane season.
- Commissioner Becker asked if the DVEC expenditures are accurate and would be consistent for the next fiscal year.
- Mr. Hanna mentioned it is hard to tell because the expenditures on the financial report are only for part of the year.
 - A. **A motion was made to approve the budget amendment as presented.**
 - Motioned by: Commissioner Gleason
 - Seconded by: Commissioner Brandhorst

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

NEW BUSINESS:

Item 1: Planning and Operational Committee Meeting Report~ Dr. Rui-De Xue

- Dr. Xue reported that the planning committee meeting took place on July 8, 2024, at 8:30 A.M., with Commissioner and committee Chair Mrs. LeBlanc in attendance. The committee discussed the program goals, performance measures, updates on carport storage, and plans for the Request for Proposal (RFP) concerning drainage issues. They also reviewed contracting AMCD services to Putnam and Clay Counties if needed, and discussed the plans for Good Laboratory Practice (GLP), World Health Organization (WHO) standards, and collaboration centers.
- Additionally, Dr. Xue noted that the operations committee meeting was held on July 18, 2024, at 10:00 A.M. Although Commissioner and committee Chair Mrs. Brandhorst was absent due to family issues, the committee covered various topics including ground and aerial operations. Discussions included arbovirus reports, mosquito population reports, service requests, database and phone app issues, source reduction, fogging, equipment maintenance, surveillance (including airboat operations), drone/GIS with county cooperation, aerial larvicide and adulticide, helicopter maintenance, pesticide comparison tests and recommendations, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) grant with AMCD's cooperation, and the biotechnician position for salt marsh management and mosquito surveillance/control.
 - **NO MOTION FOR THIS ITEM**

Item 2: Discussion and Approval of Mutual Biotechnician Position Between AMCD & the DEP ~ Dr. Rui-De Xue & Dr. Whitney Qualls

- Dr. Xue explained that from 2009 to 2013, AMCD and DEP jointly funded a biological technician position to coordinate salt marsh restoration and its impact on salt marsh mosquitoes in St. Johns County, using a DEP grant. Under this arrangement, the DEP grant covered the biological technician's salary, while AMCD provided the benefits. Dr. Xue noted that salt marsh mosquitoes create significant nuisance problems for residents in marsh areas due to changes in ocean climate and wetlands. He indicated that the DEP grant provides \$30,500 annually towards the technician's salary of \$45,760. AMCD will cover the remaining salary and provide full benefits, resulting in an annual cost of \$50,987.34 for AMCD over the three-year contract period. He also mentioned that the technician will work at the AMCD facility and focus on the project regarding the impact of tidal wetland changes on mosquito populations.
- Commissioner Gleason asked if the funds were appropriated by DEP and ready to be distributed to AMCD.
- Dr. Whitney Qualls confirmed the DEP has the money in hand and AMCD will start receiving those funds on October 1, 2024.
- Commissioner Becker asked if AMCD is responsible for hiring for this position.
- Dr. Xue answered "yes" and AMCD has a couple of college interns who are interested and eligible for application. This job opportunity will be posted on the AMCD website.
- A. **A motion was made to approve the Mutual Biological Technician position grant between AMCD and DEP.**

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

REPORTS:

Director ~

- Dr. Xue reported that a new virus, Oropouche, has been detected in Brazil (with more than 7,000 human cases), Colombia, and Cuba. Originally discovered in the Caribbean Islands in 1955, this virus is transmitted from animals, such as sloths, to humans via biting midges and Culex mosquitoes. He noted that Cuba alone has reported 70 cases, and there have been two imported cases in Florida.
- Dr. Xue also mentioned that the CDC and the Florida Department of Health (DOH) advise travelers to Brazil, Cuba, and Colombia to take precautions and stay informed about the virus. Additionally, he reported that the DVEC had over 1,300 visitors in July, AMCD had seven interns complete their training, and a new intern is scheduled to start on August 19th.

Attorney ~ Mrs. Amy Myers thanked the Board for letting her attend the last meeting via phone.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Gardner ~ None

Commissioner Brandhorst ~ Requested that Mrs. Myer come to meetings better prepared with more knowledge of the materials being discussed.

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

Commissioner Becker ~ Noted that the “Touch a Truck” event had a good turnout, and she thanked the staff for all their help and hard work.

Commissioner Gleason ~ Mentioned Dr. Xue and herself were invited to the Ponte Vedra Beach Municipal Service District Board Meeting on September 9th.

She also noted that she takes her responsibility as AMCD Commissioner seriously because the Commissioners are responsible for the District and District funds.

- Mr. Dana Smith stated Commissioner Gleason why a helicopter part certification of resale from four years ago was sent to her before she was elected as the AMCD Commissioner.
- Commissioner Gleason stated she had no idea what it was and when she received the email this year (2024 and not before she became Commissioner) and she immediately forwarded the email to Dr. Xue and Mr. Hanna.
- Mr. Smith noted that changing the AMCD auditor this late in the season would make the next audit increasingly difficult for staff. He asked if it was anywhere in her contract that she was to attend Board meetings.
- Commissioner Gleason stated the Board's responsibility is to the taxpayers, not the auditor, and if she wants to renew her contract she should attend Board meetings when requested.

ATTACHMENTS: ~

1. DIRECTORS PERFORMANCE EVALUATION (POLICY & FORM)

ADJOURNMENT: Chairperson Gardner adjourned the meeting at 6:12 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