

Anastasia Mosquito Control District of St. Johns County

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BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Gayle Gardner, Chairperson
T.J. Mazzotta, Vice-Chair
Tim Burton, Secretary/Treasurer
Trish Becker, Commissioner
Gina LeBlanc, Commissioner



DISTRICT DIRECTOR

Dr. Rui-de Xue



Thursday, July 10, 2025 – 5:00 PM~ Regular Meeting

Next meeting: August 14 at 5:00 p.m.

MINUTES

The regular Board meeting for the Anastasia Mosquito Control District of St. Johns County was held on Thursday, June 10, 2025, at 5:00 P.M.

Board members in attendance:

Mrs. Trish Becker, Commissioner (Via Phone)
Mr. T.J. Mazzotta, Vice Chair
Ms. Gayle Gardner, Chair
Mrs. Gina LeBlanc, Commissioner
Mr. Tim Burton, Secretary/Treasurer

Also in attendance:

Dr. Rui-De Xue, Director
Ms. Lawsiskia Hodges, District Attorney

Chairperson Gardner called the meeting to order and asked the Board to allow Commissioner Mrs. Becker to join via phone.

Commissioner LeBlanc led the invocation and pledge of allegiance.

The Board approved Commissioner Becker to join remotely

ROLL CALL: Chairperson Gardner noted ~ that all were present and that Commissioner Becker joined remotely.

PARTICIPATION FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA:

- No participation for items not on the agenda

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 Mazzotta
- Seconded by: Commissioner Burton
- VOTE: Accepted 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: Mazzotta
- Seconded by: Burton
- VOTE: Accepted Unanimously by all Commissioners
- **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Consent Items ~ APPROVAL OF:

1. Chemical Purchase and Inventory
2. Minutes: June 12, 2025, Regular Board Meeting Minutes
3. Upcoming Budget Hearings: First Public Hearing (September 11th at 5:30 P.M.) and Final Hearing (September 25th at 5:30 P.M.).
4. Approval of DACS Workplan Narrative/IMM Plan
5. Updated A&P Mechanic Job Description
6. Updated Employment Policy
7. Helicopter Insurance Renewal
8. Treasure's Report and Cancelled Checks

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Item 1: Legislation Lobby Firm Report~ Mr. Robert Hawkins

- Mr. Hawkins reported on the 2025 legislative session. Key outcomes included the passage of legislation increasing the number of mosquito control directors on the FMCA council from 2 to 4 and the retention of \$3.6M in state funding, despite requesting a higher allocation based on the tire tax percentage. He noted emerging discussions on property tax reform, including a now-vetoed state study. He recommended that the District prepare for future legislative developments, especially committee meetings anticipated to begin in October. Mr. Hawkins also shared that their firm is merging with Fleury & Partners to provide broader lobbying support.
- Commissioner Mazzotta suggested beginning contract renewal discussions in preparation for the next legislative cycle.
- Commissioner Becker expressed her appreciation for Mr. Hawkins' support and emphasized the importance of maintaining funding for essential public health services, such as mosquito control.
- Dr. Xue and others raised questions regarding changes to FEMA reimbursement and state employee benefits for mosquito control staff.
- Mr. Hawkins agreed further to investigate those issues with the Association and state representatives.

A. No motion was made

2. Item 2: HR Consulting Report (Ppt.) ~ Mrs. Shelia Rivera and Mr. R. Crain

- Mrs. Rivera presented the results of the preliminary HR assessment conducted by MGT. The review highlighted strengths, including employee camaraderie, strong mission alignment, flexible work schedules, and valued benefits. Concerns included compensation equity, performance evaluation processes, and communication gaps between staff and leadership. MGT recommended actions, including a formal compensation study, standardized onboarding, and enhanced management training.

- Board members discussed strategies for recognition (e.g., Employee of the Month), the psychological contract, and increased communication of benefits. Ms. Rivera emphasized steps already underway, including policy revisions, training updates, and enhanced applicant tracking.

A. A motion was made to have Mrs. Rivera give a monthly HR report to the Board.

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

3. Item 3: Discussion and Approval of Director's Recommendation to Conduct a Job Description Review and Compensation Analysis to Update the Districts Pay/Policy Plan ~ Dr. Rui-de Xue

- Dr. Xue explained the history and need for a formal compensation and classification study to ensure equitable and competitive pay. He outlined past efforts and external comparisons, noting that a prior consultant's recommendation came in below AMCD's current pay structure due to a district-wide COVID-related pay increase. The recommended proposal from Arthur J. Gallagher & Co. was presented for \$18,720.
- Ms. Hodges clarified that the current HR contract has a cap of \$30,000, and an amendment would be needed to authorize the additional task order.

A. A motion was made to authorizing the classification and compensation study to be conducted as presented for the amount of \$18,720 and authorize the District Attorney to amend the MGT contract to increase the budget the additional monetary amount needed to complete the classification and compensation study.

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

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Item 1: TRIM and TIM Procedures ~ Dr. Rui-de Xue

- Dr. Xue presented the requirements and timeline for the TRIM (Truth in Millage) compliance process, explaining that the District must hold two public hearings and submit the certified budget to the FDACS by September 30 and a whole package included the final millage rate and budget, newspaper publication/notice, and resolutions to the Florida Department of Revenue by. He reviewed key deadlines, explained the millage calculation based on property values, and emphasized the importance of public participation.

A. No motion was made

2. Item 2: Discussion and Approval of Director's Recommendation of FY 25/26 Tentative Millage Rate of 0.16 ~ Dr. Rui-de Xue

- Dr. Xue presented his recommendation for the tentative millage rate for Fiscal Year 2025–2026. He noted that the proposed rate of 0.16 mills maintains the same rate as the previous fiscal year. The recommendation was based on the current needs of the District and was developed with input from financial staff, by TRIM (Truth in Millage) guidelines. Dr. Xue explained that maintaining the rate unchanged would enable the District to preserve its operational effectiveness

while preparing for anticipated inflationary pressures and capital expenditures. By the end of August, he will have more information about the amount of dollars carried over to the next fiscal year. If it exceeds 10 million, the Board may consider lowering the millage rate to roll back; however, it is better to maintain the tentative millage rate at 0.16 for the time being.

A motion was made to approve the tentative millage rate of 0.16.

- Motioned by: Commissioner LeBlanc
- Seconded by: Commissioner Gardner
- VOTE: Accepted unanimously by all Commissioners

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

3. Item 3: Discussion and Approval of DACS Workplan Budget for FY 25/26 ~ Dr. Rui-De Xue

- Dr. Xue introduced the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS) Work Plan Budget for Fiscal Year 2025–2026. He outlined the required submission process and noted that the Work Plan Budget aligns with the District’s internal budget proposal and includes funding for core activities such as aerial operations, larviciding, surveillance, and research. Dr. Xue also noted that the plan reflects personnel adjustments and contractual obligations discussed in prior board meetings.
- Commissioners asked clarifying questions about line items and future funding for projects such as drone surveillance and public outreach. Dr. Xue that the proposed Work Plan is consistent with DACS standards and formats, and that its approval is necessary and required by FDACS. The District still has more than two months to work on and update the budget until the final hearing on September 25. If any Board members have further input regarding the budget and millage rate, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Xue and Mr. Hanna at your convenience.

A. A motion was made to approve the DACS workplan budget for FY25/26.

- Motioned by: Commissioner Mazzotta
- Seconded by: Commissioner Gardner
- VOTE: Accepted unanimously by all Commissioners

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

REPORTS:

Director ~ Dr. Xue shared updates and reflections on operational challenges, community outreach, and the value of mosquito control work:

- **Public Concerns & UAV Use:** UAV treatments are now integral tools in mosquito control. While the District responds to public complaints (including issues unrelated to mosquito-borne diseases such as midges or other pests), Dr. Xue emphasized AMCD's primary mission as mosquito control. Staff visit communities to educate and provide guidance, including simple tools like egg traps for eye gnats.
- **Community Education Success:** The Disease Vector Education Center remains a strong public draw. In the past month alone, the center received 2,484 visitors. Public perception of mosquito education has improved significantly, with many attendees expressing surprise and appreciation after visiting. During peak summer days, attendance sometimes exceeds 300–400 visitors daily.
- **Economic and Public Health Value:** Dr. Xue discussed the financial justification for mosquito control efforts. He cited calculations presented to local political candidates, illustrating how preventing even a

few cases of mosquito-borne disease (e.g., Zika) has profound cost-benefit implications. Additionally, the education center draws tourists—an estimated 5,000 from outside St. Johns County annually, which contributes significant local economic activity (estimated at \$4 million over ten years).

- **Support from Commissioners & Community:** Dr. Xue thanked Commissioner Trish Becker and the entire Board for their strong support of the education center. He emphasized the importance of public service and community engagement, noting that even unpaid public service roles, such as commissioner positions, are critical to sustaining effective mosquito control and public health protection.

Attorney ~ Ms. Hodges stated that she was working on the auditor's contract and wanted to thank Scott and Dr. Xue for their help in being a liaison to the auditor. She has made some changes to the engagement letter, and the auditor's contract will be on next month's agenda for approval.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Gardner ~ thanked everyone for their continued efforts and Mrs. Rivera for her report.

Commissioner Mazzotta thanked Mr. Hawkins and Mrs. Meredith for presenting to the board.

Commissioner LeBlanc ~ Acknowledged staff and leadership for professionalism and commitment.

Commissioner Becker ~ stated that it has been the honor of her life to support, protect, and defend the Constitution as an AMCD Commissioner. Thank you for allowing me to serve.

Commissioner Burton ~ thanked everyone.

ADJOURNMENT: The Chairperson, Gardner, adjourned the meeting at 6:20 p.m.

ATTEST

 
Chairperson, Commissioner Gayle Gardner, Secretary/Treasurer, Commissioner Tim Burton

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 complete and accurate record of the meeting, it is essential to view/listen to the entire proceedings.