

Anastasia Mosquito Control District of St. Johns County

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BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Gayle Gardner, Chair Person
T.J. Mazzotta, Vice-Chairperson
Tim Burton, Secretary/Treasurer
Anthony Timis, Commissioner
Gina LeBlanc, Commissioner



DISTRICT DIRECTOR

Dr. Rui-De Xue



Thursday, October 9, 2025 – 5:00 PM~ Regular Meeting

MINUTES

The regular Board meeting for the Anastasia Mosquito Control District of St. Johns County was held on Thursday, October 9th, 2025, at 5:00 P.M. .

Board members in attendance:

Mr. Anthony Timis, Commissioner (arrived late due to accident on highway)
Ms. Gayle Gardner, Chair
Mrs. Gina LeBlanc, Commissioner
Mr. Tim Burton, Secretary/Treasurer

Also in attendance:

Dr. Rui-De Xue, Director
Mr. Daniel K. Bean, Attorney

Chairperson Gardner called the meeting to order.

Commissioner LeBlanc led the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

· **ROLL CALL:** Chairperson Gardner noted all were present with the exception Commissioner T.J. Mazzotta due to illness.

PARTICIPATION FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA:

➤ No public participation

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

A motion was made to approve the Consent Agenda apart from Item #9, which was moved to New Business #3

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

Consent Items ~ APPROVAL OF:

1. Chemical Purchase and Inventory

2. Minutes: September 11th (regular meeting), September 12 (1st public hearing), September 25th (final public hearing)
3. Updated vehicle insurance policy regarding collision coverage from 7 years to 10 years
4. Holiday work schedule
5. Annual physical inventory
6. Updated job description of Field Biologist
7. MGIS service extension for mapping portion of database
8. No Board meeting in November due to 3 meetings in September & FMCA meeting
9. ~~Name correction of the legislation lobby firm from Leath Consulting to Floridian Partners~~
10. Treasure's Report and Cancelled Checks

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Item 1: Discussion and Approval of the HR consulting contract amendment for compensation study ... Director, Dr. Xue (15min)

Dr. Xue presented an amendment to the HR consulting contract related to a district-wide compensation study.

- The study had originally been delayed during peak mosquito season so employees would be available for interviews and surveys.
- The contract cost remains unchanged at approximately \$18,700
- The scope of work is unchanged:
 - Conducting interviews with AMCD employees (in-person and via Zoom).
 - Reviewing comparable positions and pay rates at other special districts.
 - Developing a new pay plan and compensation structure.
- The amendment primarily formalizes scheduling changes, with work beginning in late October 2025.
- Estimated timeline: 2–3 months, with results and report expected by February–March 2026
- The consultant's report will include recommendations for salary adjustments and long-term pay plan strategies, with data comparisons to similar agencies.

A. A motion was made to approve the HR consulting contract amendment for the compensation study

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

2. Item 2: Discussion and approval of Attorney contract renewal ... Chairperson Ms. Gardner (15min)

The Board discussed extending District Attorney's contract for one year.

➤ Workload & Cost Trends:

- Current attorney billed \$63,082 over 8 months in 2025.
- Prior attorney was paid \$44,230 for the full year (2024).
- Increase reflects heavy involvement in policy reviews, contracts, and compliance.

➤ Revised Contract Terms:

- Base hours reduced from 10 → 8 hours per month
- Hourly rate lowered from \$400 → \$375/hour for extra time.
- Annual budgeted cost is estimated at ~\$60,000.

➤ Comparisons & Value:

- Other mosquito districts vary widely (some as low as \$300/month retainers for minimal service).
- AMCD requires more legal involvement due to complex contracts, records compliance, and policy updates.
- Commissioners noted legal workload is now tapering off after initial heavy demand.

A. A motion was made to approve updated public comments policy

- Motioned by: Commissioner Timis
- Seconded by: Commissioner Burton
- VOTE: Accepted unanimously by all Commissioners
- **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

3. Item 3: Discussion and approval of Lobbying contract name change

The Board revisited its previously approved lobbying contract due to a technical issue involving the firm's corporate name.

➤ **Background:**

- In September 2025, the Board approved a contract extension with its legislative lobbying firm under the entity named Leath Consulting.
- Since then, the firm underwent a name change to Floridian Partners.

➤ **Issue:**

- For legal and procurement purposes, the September motion was tied to the old name.
- To ensure accuracy and compliance, the September motion had to be rescinded, and a new motion passed with the updated name.

➤ **Scope & Value:**

- The contract terms, scope of work, personnel, and cost remain unchanged.
- Only the legal entity's name differs.

➤ **Board Comments:**

- Commissioners clarified for the record that this was an administrative correction and did not involve substantive changes to services.
- Chair Gardner noted the Board had "dropped the ball" by not addressing the name change immediately, but that the correction was straightforward.

A. A motion to rescind September 11, 2025, motion approving the contract under the old name *Leath Consulting*.

- Motioned by: Commissioner Burton
- Seconded by: Commissioner Timis
- VOTE: Accepted unanimously by all Commissioners
- **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

B. A motion to approve the contract with the lobbying firm under its new name *Floridian Partners*.

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

REPORTS:

Director ~ Dr. Xue

- Reported one human case of West Nile Virus in June; county is no longer under advisory
- Seven positive West Nile and three positive Eastern Equine Encephalitis cases in sentinel chickens
- Heavy rainfall led to increased mosquito populations
- Research collaborations ongoing with CDC, Department of Defense, University of Nevada, and California
- Staff updates: promotion of a seasonal Mosquito Control Technician to full-time, ongoing recruitment for full-time Janitor and Mosquito Control Technician, Molecular Biologist Entomologist accepted position and will start January 5, 2026.
- Disease Vector Education Center hosted ~1,100 visitors last month, 70% first-time visitors

Attorney ~ Mr. Bean

➤ **Concerns & Comments:**

- Some concern over long-term sustainability of costs.
- Director Xue emphasized that stronger internal policies could reduce future attorney reliance.
- Commissioners agreed the attorney's contributions had been valuable for the District.

A. A motion was made to approve the contract

- Motioned by: Commissioner Burton
- Seconded by: Commissioner LeBlanc
- VOTE: Accepted by all Commissioners
- **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Mr. Bean noted that the committee had not yet voted on Agenda was not voted on and recommended voting on the Agenda as per procedure even though it is halfway through the Agenda

A motion was made to approve the Agenda as presented.

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

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Item 1: Discussion and approval of COL & budget amendments ... C.F.O., Mr. Scott Hanna (15min)

CFO Scott Hanna presented a two-part budget amendment. The discussion focused on staff retention, cost-of-living challenges, and ensuring compliance with state reporting requirements.

➤ **Part 1: Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA)**

- Proposed 7% COLA increase for all employees, replacing the original 3% in the FY25/26 budget.
- The 7% included the original 3% plus an additional 4% (\$148,332 total with benefits).
- Funded by the contingency account.
- Rationale:
 - **Retention concerns:** Many employees commute long distances due to high cost of living in St. Johns County (62.5% of staff live outside the county).
 - **Comparisons:** St. Johns County government granted a 7% COLA; school district implemented tiered raises that equated to higher average hourly increases.
 - **Specialized workforce:** AMCD manages \$39 million in assets (up from \$22 million five years ago) and requires trained, specialized personnel.
- Discussion included whether a later HR compensation study might conflict with COLA adjustments. CFO clarified studies typically prevent decreases, so raises would not be reversed.

➤ **Part 2: Beginning Fund Balance Adjustment**

- Original FY25/26 budget estimated \$9.08 million beginning fund balance.
- Actual reconciled fund balance was \$9.6 million.
- Required by FDACS/DACS rules for transparency and compliance.
- Adjustment increased beginning fund balance by \$537,896.50.

➤ **Board Comments:**

- Commissioners agreed COLA was necessary given inflation pressures and rising housing costs.
- Concern was raised over approving raises while awaiting HR study, but consensus was that retention needs outweighed the risk.
- Director Xue emphasized that employees face hazardous conditions (chemical exposure, disease risk) and deserve competitive pay.

A. A motion was made to approve 7% COLA increase

- Motioned by: Commissioner Burton
- Seconded by: Commissioner LeBlanc
- VOTE: Accepted unanimously by all Commissioners
- **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

B. A motion was made to approve budget amendment (COLA & Fund Balance adjustment):

- Motioned by: Commissioner Burton
- Seconded by: Commissioner LeBlanc
- VOTE: Accepted unanimously by all Commissioners
- **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

2. Item 2: Discussion and approval of updated public comments policy ... HR Generate, Mrs. Sheila Rivera (15min)

HR Generalist Ms. Sheila Rivera presented a revised public comment policy, developed in collaboration with District Attorney Ms. Hodges. The goal was to bring the policy into compliance with Florida statutes and case law while maintaining transparency and order in public participation.

➤ **Structure of Public Comment:**

- Maintains three designated public comment periods:
 - Before approval of the Consent Agenda
 - Before consideration of Unfinished Business
 - After the Attorney's Report (for items not on the agenda but related to District business)
- Ensures the public has multiple opportunities to address the Board at appropriate times.

➤ **Time Limits:**

- Increased from 3 minutes to 5 minutes per speaker.
- Designated representatives for organizations/groups may receive up to 10 minutes, depending on group size.
- No time donation is allowed (speakers cannot give their time to another).

➤ **Speaker Cards:**

- All speakers must fill out a speaker card prior to addressing the Board.
- Cards now include additional details for record-keeping and clarity.

➤ **Rules of Decorum:**

- Old policy included restrictions on language/content that posed First Amendment concerns.
- Revised policy simplifies language to require that speakers:
 - Maintain proper decorum
 - Remain on-topic and within the subject matter at hand
- Chairperson retains authority to call a speaker out of order or remove disruptive individuals.
- Executive Director also authorized to act if necessary.

➤ **Legal Compliance:**

- Policy explicitly defers to Florida Statutes Chapter 286 (Sunshine Law) and Chapter 119 (Public Records Law) in case of conflict.
- Ensures protections of free speech under the U.S. and Florida Constitutions are respected.
- Commissioners discussed nuances: while speakers must be reminded to stay on-topic, they generally cannot be removed solely for straying off-topic unless disorderly conduct occurs.

➤ **Board Comments:**

- Commissioners appreciated revisions that balanced transparency with legal compliance.
- Commissioner noted the importance of allowing citizens full expression while maintaining meeting order.

➤ No Comments

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner LeBlanc ~ Thanked staff for their continued hard work.

Commissioner Gardner ~ Commissioner Gardner: Announced that in December the Board will review chemical purchases/inventory and treasurer's report, currently on the consent agenda, to consider shifting them to information items.

Commissioner Timis ~ No comments


Commissioner Burton ~ No comments

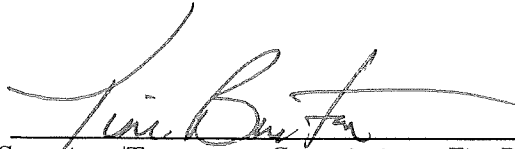
ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Dr. Qualls noted that the St. Johns County Legislative Delegation will meet on October 27, 2025, at 9:00 A.M. at the St. Johns County Courthouse. Commissioners interested in speaking on behalf of the District should notify staff.

ADJOURNMENT: Chairperson Gardner adjourned the meeting at 5:35 PM

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 full and accurate record of the meeting, an individual should view/listen to the entire proceedings.