

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
Tim Burton, Vice Chair
Anthony Timis, Secretary / Treasurer
Johnny Counts, Commissioner
Gina LeBlanc, Commissioner



DISTRICT DIRECTOR

Dr. Rui-De Xue

Thursday, April 09, 2026 – 5:30 PM ~ Regular Meeting

MINUTES

The regular Board meeting for the Anastasia Mosquito Control District of St. Johns County was held on Thursday, April 09, 2026, at 5:30 P.M.

Board members in attendance:

Ms. Gayle Gardner, Chair
Mr. Tim Burton, Vice Chair
Mr. Anthony Timis, Secretary/Treasurer
Mr. Johnny Counts, Commissioner
Mrs. Gina LeBlanc, Commissioner

Also in attendance:

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

Chairperson Gardner called the meeting to order.

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

ROLL CALL: All Commissioners were present and constituted a quorum.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

➤ No Public Comments

RECOGNITION & APPRECIATION: Lauren Howington was introduced as the new Herbie Wiles Insurance representative, succeeding retiree Don Lohr. She accepted a plaque on his behalf in recognition of his 15 years of dedicated service as AMCD's Health Insurance Agent. Ms. Howington thanked the board and pledged her continued support, while staff expressed their appreciation for Mr. Lohr's longstanding service to the District.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

- A. **A motion was made to approve the Agenda as presented.**
- Motioned by: Commissioner Burton
 - Seconded by: Commissioner Timis
 - 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

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

CONSENT ITEMS ~ APPROVAL OF:

1. Board meeting minutes (March 12 at 5:30pm, 2025)
2. Switch May 14th Board meeting to May 21st (three Board members and Administrators will attend AMCA DC Legislation meeting, May 11-14).
3. 21st Annual Workshop summary report

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- No Public Comments

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Item 1: State legislation lobby firm summary report by Floridian Partners ... Mr. Robert Hawkens (10 min)

- Mr. Hawkens reported that the state budget failed to pass during the regular session and will require a special session before July 1, with another session planned for congressional redistricting. He noted the House's property-tax elimination proposal did not pass the Senate but could return and would require 60% voter approval; it would have cut district revenue by about 51-53%. He highlighted ongoing legislative outreach, including meetings with Northeast Florida members, and mentioned his current contract is ending but he plans to apply if the board issues an RFP.

A. No Motion was made.

Item 2: Discussion to release the RFP for soliciting State Legislation lobby firm... Director, Dr. Xue (15 min)

- The board discussed issuing an RFP for lobbying services, with some commissioners noting concerns about the optics of increasing lobbying costs while others supported releasing the RFP now to be prepared, noting the roughly three-month process and flexibility to adjust the scope later. The motion to release the RFP passed unanimously, with clarification that issuing it does not obligate the district to hire a firm.

A. A Motion was made to release the RFP to solicit a State Legislation Lobby Firm.

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

Item 3: Discussion and approval of the new pay grade and scale recommended by MGT, after the survey study and analysis last September ... HR Generalist, Mrs. Sheila Rivera (15 min)

- Mrs. Rivera presented the MGT compensation study recommending a shift to a 50th-percentile market pay structure with an open-range merit system and about \$23,000 needed to bring employees up to minimums. The board requested clearer salary comparisons and data details before approving and tabled the plan until next meeting.

A. No Motion was made.

NEW BUSINESS:

Item 1: Report and update on Ph.D. student project and training progress ... Laboratory Manager, Mr. Kai Blore (15 min)

- Mr. Blore reported that his PhD coursework is nearly complete and that his research on silver nanoparticles shows no adult mosquito mortality and limited sublethal effects, with further testing planned. He continues to manage AMCD's insectaries, maintain specialized equipment, support GLP work, coordinate with the science team, and prepare for next month's SIT operational releases.

A. No Motion was made.

Item 2: 2025 Intern training program summary report ... Assistant Director, Dr. Whitney Qualls (10 min)

- Dr. Qualls reported that AMCD's internship program provides cross-training and strong mentorship across operations, surveillance, lab, and education. Since 2004, the district has trained 133 interns, including graduate, undergraduate, and high school students, with many contributing to publications and several later hired into full-time roles. The program peaks in June and July and continues to strengthen AMCD's workforce and reputation.

A. No Motion was made.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- No public comments

REPORTS:

Director ~ Dr. Xue reported that surveillance activities continue as normal, noted recent rains, and highlighted strong community turnout at the Disease Vector Education Center, where Spring Break and school field trips pushed parking capacity. AMCD presented five talks at the AMCA Conference, where Olivia Sypes won first place for her poster. He also announced preparations for AMCA's Washington Legislative meeting on May 12-13, with planned Hill meetings to discuss vector-borne disease and mosquito control issues. This will benefit our mosquito control program, usually from federal agency, like CDC.

Attorney ~ No Report

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner LeBlanc ~ Thanked staff for all their hard work

Commissioner Counts ~ Thanked staff for their work, noted an upcoming trip to Washington, D.C., and reported ongoing follow-up with Representative Fine's office.

Commissioner Gardner ~ Thanked everyone

Commissioner Burton ~ Thanked everyone

Commissioner Timis ~ Thanked everyone

ADJOURNMENT: Chairperson Gardner adjourned the meeting at 7:37 pm.

ATTEST



Chairperson, *Commissioner Gayle Gardner*



Secretary/Treasurer, *Commissioner Anthony Timis*

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.