

MOSQUITO ABATEMENT

ST. TAMMANY PARISH

MINUTES

Board of Commissioners Meeting October 20, 2021

OPEN

The meeting of the Board of Commissioners, St. Tammany Parish Mosquito Abatement District, was called to order at 1:05pm by Chairman David Stuart, in the St. Tammany Parish School Board Chambers, 321 North Theard Street, Covington, LA.

Present were Dr. A.J. Englande, Jr., Dr. Peter Gerone, Mr. David Stuart, Ms. Kathryn Townsend and Dr. Vicki Traina-Dorge, Commissioners; Mr. Jake Abdalla, Legal Counsel; Dr. Kevin Caillouet, Director; Mr. Calvin Smotherman, Assistant Director; Mr. Chad Simon, Accounting Manager; and Mr. Weber Janssen, IT Specialist. Advisors Ron Francis and Dawn Wesson were absent.

Chairman Stuart called for a motion to move Agenda Item 14 - COVID-19 Vaccination or Testing Mandate to follow the public comment period. Commissioner Englande so moved. Commissioner Traina-Dorge seconded the motion. Carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Chairman Stuart opened the floor for public comment. Four mosquito abatement employees were present to provide testimony on Agenda Item 14 - COVID-19 Vaccination or Testing Mandate as follows: Lab Manager/Entomologist Nick DeLisi, Field Biologist Richard Frazier, Night Driver David Glass, and Larvicider Jim Mobilia.

Lab Manager/Entomologist Nick DeLisi thanked the Board for enforcing the vaccine mandate. As the father of a small child unable to receive a vaccination, he feels it is the responsibility of others to protect those who cannot protect themselves. District operations are based upon risk analysis, such as insecticide treatments applied to lower the risk of WNV. These applications outweigh inherent risks of insecticides to human and environmental health, according to peer reviewed scientific data. He believes the Board's decision to mandate vaccines is aligned with this fundamental principle.

Field Biologist Richard Frazier thanked the Board of Commissioners and Director Caillouet for all they have done for the employees. Mr. Frazier asked the Board to reconsider the vaccine mandate, biweekly testing at the expense of the unvaccinated, and forced resignation or termination. For two years the agency has successfully navigated COVID-19 with little to no real impact upon operations. He expressed concern that these mandates will affect trust between the employer and employees. He asked the Board to withdraw mandated vaccinations and mitigate the cost of testing by covering this expense.

Night Driver David Glass disclosed that his daughter received the vaccine, developed life-threatening blood clots in her legs and lungs, and then contracted COVID-19 pneumonia. He requested that the Board remove the vaccine mandate until further testing minimizes the risk of adverse reactions. He asked that the Board also reconsider the financial burden of biweekly testing for unvaccinated employees. Lastly, he mentioned that night drivers are isolated in spray trucks, which reduces direct contact with other employees and residents.

Larvicider Jim Mobilia mentioned there are conflicting expert opinions from scientists, healthcare professionals and government officials on vaccinations. He questioned the government's practice of first bribing and then threatening citizens to take the COVID-19 vaccine. He cited first-hand experience with Agent Orange, having served three tours of active duty in Vietnam. Evidence now shows this toxic compound is the probable cause of some types of cancers and many health issues affecting veterans. He requested tabling the mandate and biweekly testing until more studies with long term conclusive evidence are available.

Director Caillouet agreed that the night crew is isolated, but cannot override state law governing public agencies by distinguishing two classes of employees. Risks also exist within the community that may affect staff from reporting to work. He added that the vaccine and testing mandate would ensure the availability of adequate staff to perform the agency's core mission.

Chairman Stuart thanked all four employees for providing public comment on the COVID-19 vaccination and testing mandate.

COVID-19 VACCINATION OR TESTING MANDATE

Director Caillouet reported that the Board adopted the following resolution at the September 22 meeting, "By November 1, 2021, require all STPMAD staff and contractors to have received a COVID-19 vaccination or subject themselves to biweekly COVID-19 testing at their expense at the STPMAD facility".

Following the board meeting an COVID-19 vaccine anonymous survey was distributed to the staff, survey results were then forwarded to the Board and staff, and vaccination/medical concerns addressed by Dr. Mike Hill, an infectious disease specialist. Employees were also invited to provide comment at today's meeting.

The Director presented three revisions to the adopted resolution for consideration: (1) change "biweekly testing" to "weekly testing" using an FDA-authorized test within 72-hours prior to presenting to work for the week", (2) change November 1 deadline to December 1, and (3) reconsider who should incur the cost for testing.

Chairman Stuart stated it was his understanding the staff was made aware of the Board's resolution to either submit to a vaccine, test biweekly at their own expense, or terminate employment by November 1. Director Caillouet confirmed this information was communicated to the staff following the September 22 meeting.

Lengthy discussion followed regarding the survey, revoking mandated or forced terminations, rescinding the vaccine mandate, the hardship of testing costs on employees, lack of enforced vaccine mandates by other state or local government agencies, boards or commissions, potential for litigation challenging vaccine mandates, the importance of public health and workplace safety for all people, FDA approval of the vaccine, work exposure for staff with children that cannot be vaccinated, postponing the mandate until 2022, encouraging vaccination or weekly testing at the agency's expense, and the District's excellent record of continuous mosquito abatement operations throughout the pandemic.

Commissioner Traina-Dorge moved to rescind the September 22 resolution. Commissioner Gerone seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Commissioner Traina-Dorge made a motion to strongly encourage vaccination for all staff; however, if they choose not to employees will submit to weekly testing at the District's expense beginning November 1, 2021. Commissioner Englande seconded the motion. Carried.

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

This agenda item was set aside by Director Caillouet.

MINUTES (Appendix 1)

The minutes from the September 22 meeting were presented. The minutes were approved on a motion by Commissioner Traina-Dorge and seconded by Commissioner Townsend. Commissioner Englande abstained due to his absence at the September meeting. The motion carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT AND CREDIT CARD PURCHASES (Appendix 2)

Accounting Manager Simon presented the Treasurer's Report and summarized September disbursements, revenue, and vendor payments.

Commissioner Townsend reviewed all credit card purchases for the month of September. All charge accounts were found reasonable, accurate and consistent with District purchasing policies. Commissioner Stuart will verify credit card purchases before the November meeting.

Commissioner Traina-Dorge moved to accept the Treasurer's Report and the credit card purchase review for September. Commissioner Townsend seconded the motion. The motion carried with no opposition. The Treasurer's Report was approved in consideration of, and according to, the District's strategic operational and administrative priorities plan.

2022 PROPOSED OPERATING BUDGET (Appendix 3)

Accounting Manager Simon presented the proposed 2022 Operating Budget. Projected revenue totaled \$9,452,972, with expenses estimated at \$10,609,776. The increase in expenditures is largely due to capital construction for the campus expansion of \$2,725,000 and the aircraft refueler truck for \$182,995.

2022 SALARY RANGE (Appendix 4)

Director Caillouet presented the 2022 salary range schedule for each position. Per District policy, salary range minimums are annually increased using the September 12-month Consumer Price Index (CPI). The CPI increased to 5.4% over the past 12 months, due to higher inflation. Employees are also eligible to receive up to an additional 2% increase based, upon performance evaluations, unless the employee has reached their maximum salary range. The Director asked the Board to consider approval of the 5.4% CPI and the 2022 salary range.

The Board deferred action on the 2022 salary range and cost of living increase, pending receipt and review of the salary compensation survey.

2022 HEALTHCARE INSURANCE (Appendix 5)

The Director presented the 2022 healthcare renewal from Blue Cross Blue Shield. The group healthcare benefits incurred an 8.1% increase for 2022. Alternative plans were reviewed, but most offered significantly increased family out-of-pocket maximums from \$4K to \$17k. Other choices were limited to Louisiana physicians, clinics and hospitals or Ochsner only providers.

Commissioner Townsend moved to renew the current healthcare plan with Blue Cross Blue Shield for 2022. Commissioner Traina-Dorge seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

2022 DENTAL AND LIFE INSURANCE (Appendix 6)

Director Caillouet stated that UNUM dental coverage increased by 11.9% for 2022. Principal Life Insurance is under a rate guarantee until 2023. The District pays 50% of the premium for dental insurance for full-time employees and their qualified dependents and 50% of the premium for life insurance for full-time employees.

Chairman Stuart called for a motion to accept the UNUM dental renewal for 2022 and the current rate guarantee renewal with Principal Life. Commissioner Townsend so moved. Commissioner Englande seconded the motion. The motion carried.

NOVEMBER BOARD MEETING DATE-TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 16

The Director reported that the November Board meeting will be held Tuesday, November 16 in the St. Tammany Parish School Board Chambers, due to a possible conflict Wednesday, November 17.

NOVEMBER 16 PUBLIC HEARING-2022 PROPOSED OPERATING BUDGET-12:45PM

Director Caillouet announced that the Board of Commissioners will accept public comment on the proposed 2022 Operating Budget at its public hearing Tuesday, November 16, 2021, at 12:45pm, in the St. Tammany Parish School Board Chambers.

NOVEMBER 16 REGULAR MEETING-ADOPTION OF THE 2022 OPERATING BUDGET-1:00PM

Director Caillouet stated that the Board of Commissioners will formally adopt the 2022 Operating Budget at its regular open meeting Tuesday, November 16, 2021, at 1:00pm, in the St. Tammany Parish School Board Chambers.

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS ANALYSIS (Appendix 7)

At Commissioner Englande's request, a SWOT analysis was performed by receiving input from supervisors and employees within the agency. The Director outlined the top five strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The five-year plan adopted in July will be revisited to include project indicators and time lines.

CAMPUS EXPANSION UPDATE

Director Caillouet stated that the existing and campus expansion properties were officially purchased October 14. An architectural design regroup meeting has been scheduled. Wetlands mitigation and soil boring geotechnical services are underway. Updated cost estimates and schedules will be presented at the November meeting. The architect anticipates completion of the construction project by January 2023.

2021 LMCA VIRTUAL ANNUAL MEETING-DECEMBER 7 & 8

The LMCA Annual Meeting will be held virtually December 7-8, at a cost of \$50 per registrant. Commissioners interested in attending should advise Susan Lowrie by November 19.

A hybrid AMCA Annual Meeting will be held February 28-March 4, 2022 in Jacksonville, FL. The registration rate for members attending in person is \$485 and the virtual rate is \$129.

BOARD APPROVALS

a. Travel

None

b. Bids

1. Aircraft Refueler Truck

Director Caillouet reported that Legal Counsel Abdalla reviewed bids submitted by Technology International (\$182,995) and Skymark Refuelers (\$159,800). The bid was originally awarded to Technology International, who listed all specifications in their bid. However, the bid request did not require vendors to include bid specifications. Legal Counsel Abdalla reviewed both bids and recommended either rejecting both bids and rebidding the refueler truck or rescinding the original bid award to Technology International and awarding the bid to Skymark Refuelers.

Commissioner Traina-Dorge moved to rescind the bid award to Technology International and award the aircraft refueler truck bid to the lowest responsive bidder Skymark Refuelers. Commissioner Townsend seconded the motion. The motion carried.

2. Auction of Ag Husky

The Director stated that the Ag Husky was originally appraised at \$100k. The initial sale and auction of the aircraft fell through when Airspray Kenya became non-responsive. The Board subsequently cancelled the bid award and sale, set a new minimum bid price of \$90k, and contracted a broker to sell the aircraft. The Director recently learned that the aircraft broker must comply with LLA requirements to sell the aircraft. The broker was not able to satisfy all provisions, so the brokerage agreement was cancelled. Director Caillouet requested Board approval to enter a new auction for the sale of the Ag Husky, setting a minimum bid price of \$85k.

Commissioner Traina-Dorge so moved and Commissioner Townsend seconded the motion. The motion carried.

c. Contracts

1. Innovative Turbine (Appendix 8)

Innovative Turbine is a third-party service that annually inspects the Twin Otter aircraft and performs maintenance. The Director presented the renewal contract for Board approval, noting the labor rate remained the same as the prior agreement. Legal Counsel Abdalla stated that the contract looks good, but has yet to issue approval in writing.

Chairman Stuart called for a motion to approve the Innovative Turbine renewal contact, pending written approval by Legal Counsel Abdalla. Commissioner Englande so moved and Commissioner Traina-Dorge seconded the motion. The motion carried.

d. Director's Time Card (Appendix 9)

Chairman Stuart reviewed and approved the Director's time card for September 12-October 9. Commissioner Gerone made a motion to accept the Director's time card. Commissioner Englande seconded the motion. Carried.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- LMCA Annual Meeting Planning with Outreach and Media Specialist Jennifer Bushnell
- Review of Job Descriptions for Salary Compensation Survey
- Environmental Sensors/Data Logging Suppliers Predictive Mosquito Modeling Meeting
- New Field Biologists Attended NOLA Mosquito Control Academy
- CDC Collaborators on Sewage Meetings
- Director taught at Tulane Arthropods and Public Health
- Sewage Reform Coalition Meeting
- LLA Center for Local Government Excellence Training Workshop
- MSH Architects Campus Expansion Regroup
- Monthly Staff Meetings
- Monthly Board of Commissioners Meetings
- LMCA Annual Meeting Registration November 19 Registration Deadline
- Thanksgiving Lunch - Friday, November 19 at 11:30am, Airplane Hangar

MOSQUITO CONTROL REPORT

Assistant Director Smotherman reported that the top five species for September were *Mansonia titillans*, *Culex nigripalpus*, *Culex erraticus*, *Aedes atlanticus*, and *Psorophora ferox*. Excess rainfall from Hurricane Ida flushed out ditches, negatively impacting *Culex salinarius* and *Culex quinquefasciatus*. Ground adulticide operations for the treatment of woodland species increased after the hurricane. Substantial storm debris hindered the treatment of roadside septic ditches.

REQUEST FOR AG OPINION

Commissioner Traina-Dorge inquired about the status of holding a hybrid meeting that would allow commissioners to vote in-person and virtually. Legal Counsel Abdalla contacted the St. Tammany Parish District Attorney and the Attorney General and learned the Open Meetings Law states commissioners must be physically present to vote viva voce. Commissioner Traina-Dorge asked Legal Counsel Abdalla to obtain an Attorney General Opinion, because of the COVID-19 emergency declaration issued by Governor Edwards.

Commissioner Traina-Dorge moved that Legal Counsel Abdalla pursue an opinion from the Attorney General regarding hybrid meetings and voting restrictions. Commissioner Englande seconded the motion. The motion carried.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:00pm on a motion by Commissioner Traina-Dorge. Commissioner Gerone seconded the motion. Carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Peter J. Gerone
Secretary

Appendices

1. Minutes
2. Treasurer's Report
3. 2022 Proposed Operating Budget
4. 2022 Salary Range
5. 2022 Healthcare Insurance
6. 2022 Dental and Life Insurance
7. Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats Analysis
8. Innovative Turbine Contract
9. Director's Time Card

