

# MOSQUITO ABATEMENT

## ST. TAMMANY PARISH

### MINUTES

#### Board of Commissioners Meeting September 20, 2023

#### OPEN

The meeting of the Board of Commissioners, St. Tammany Parish Mosquito Abatement District, was called to order at 1:05 p.m. by Chairman David Stuart, at the St. Tammany Parish Mosquito Abatement District, 62436 Airport Road, Slidell, LA.

Present were Dr. Vicki Traina-Dorge, Ms. Kathryn Townsend, Mr. David Stuart, Dr. Peter Gerone and Dr. A.J. Englande, Jr, Commissioners; Mr. Jake Abdalla, Legal Counsel; Dr. Kevin Caillouet, Director; Mr. Chad Simon, Accounting Manager; Mrs. Jennifer Bushnell, Media and Outreach Specialist, and Mrs. Sarah Malasovich, Office Manager. Dr. Dawn Wesson attended the meeting remotely.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Chairman Stuart opened the floor for public comment. There were no members of the public present.

#### BOARD APPROVALS

1. Minutes (Appendix 1) – The minutes from the August 16 meeting were presented. Chairman Stuart called for a motion to approve those minutes. Commissioner Traina-Dorge so moved, seconded by Commissioner Englande, carried.
2. Credit Card Purchases – Chairman Stuart reviewed all credit card purchases for the month of August. All charge accounts were found reasonable, accurate and consistent with District purchasing policies. Commissioner Gerone moved to approve the credit card purchases review as presented, seconded by Commissioner Townsend. Carried. Commissioner Englande will verify September credit card purchases before the October Meeting.
3. Travel – Director Caillouet shared that the LMCA Annual Meeting will be December 7-9 in Lafayette, and requested anyone who planned to attend to notify the District before the October board meeting. The AMCA Annual Meeting in Dallas will be March 4-8, 2024. Any commissioners who planned to attend should notify the District by January 1, 2024.
4. Director's Time Card and Leave (August 13 – September 16) (Appendix 2) - Chairman Stuart reviewed the Director's time card and leave for August 13 through September 16. Chairman Stuart called for a motion to approve the Director's time card. Commissioner Englande so moved, seconded by Commissioner Traina-Dorge, and carried.
5. Bids – none
6. Contracts –
  - a. Innovative Turbine – renewal contract for inspections and repair of aircraft.
  - b. Target Specialty Products – no-cost agreement for offsite storage of insecticide products.
  - c. Sage Intacct – renewal of accounting software.

Chairman Stuart asked for a motion to approve all three contracts. Commissioner Traina-Dorge so moved, seconded by Commissioner Townsend, and carried.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

1. Campus Expansion Update – Director Caillouet updated the Board on the construction of the new building. The new electrical panel is due to arrive this week, and the transformer is installed. The estimated occupancy date is December 2023. The project is approximately 75% paid for at this time.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

1. Treasurer's Report (Appendix 3) - Accounting Manager Simon presented the Treasurer's Report and summarized August disbursements, revenue, and vendor payments and reviewed the balances of the accounts. Director Caillouet confirmed that insurance liability on new construction is the liability of the builder until occupancy, at which time the District will cover that building. Accounting Manager Simon also presented the 2024 amended budget for the commissioners' review. Chairman Stuart called for a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report. Commissioner Englande so moved, seconded by Commissioner Townsend, and carried.
2. ULL Mosquitofish Research Update – Director Caillouet introduced Dr. Emily Kane, of University of Louisiana at Lafayette, to share details about and results of the ULL mosquitofish research project. Dr. Kane introduced the project and shared a video discussing the project, which studied the effects of contaminated water on mosquitofish populations. Dr. Kane expressed that a noticeable difference between control and exposed fish is masculinization of mosquitofish in exposed fish, in multiple species collected from those ditches. This feature was observed in fish from every contaminated site but none of the clean water sites. Dr. Wesson asked if this has been reported in other locations, and Dr. Kane confirmed other observations in Florida, but not in residential areas. Further research will determine the long-term effects and outcomes of this change. Additionally, the study recorded toxicity by studying effluent concentrations and mortality, noting that under 75% concentration effluent is the threshold for fish mortality, in approximately 30 to 90 hours. Tests were conducted to determine the oxygenation of the water, the temperature, and the level of ammonia as well. Finally, tests to determine the consumption of mosquito larvae were done in the water samples, noting that more consumption appears to be correlated to cleaner water. The Board thanked Dr. Kane for her work and presentation. The project and results are being prepared for publication and further reports will be shared. Dr. Caillouet mentioned that the initial investment into this project has returned much valuable information. Commissioners Englande and Traina-Dorge agreed that these results are more diverse than anticipated and provides valuable insight into the potential harm of effluent in water.

Commissioner Englande left the meeting at 1:55 p.m.

3. Larvicide Vehicle Purchase – Assistant Director Smotherman reviewed the process by which the District leased modified jeeps to accommodate the larvicide efforts. The lease period for the current fleet is approaching termination, and the District has identified factory-built right-hand-drive jeeps available for purchase. Most of the issues the jeeps have experienced have resulted from the

conversion process so purchasing factory-converted jeeps might bypass some of those issues. Further, the District may save money by purchasing the vehicles due to the ability to make permanent alterations that would not have to be un-changed. The lease cost is approximately \$6,500 per month, for a five year term. The purchase price from Chrysler is approximately \$49,000, so nine vehicles will cost \$441,000. The District will publish a request for bids for this process in 2024. Dr. Caillouet stated that there is room in the budget for this purchase. The plan is to return leased vehicles as new vehicles are delivered. The five-year lease agreement trails from 02/2024 through 04/2024. Dr. Traina-Dorge mentioned that there is a UAW strike that could also delay delivery of new vehicles. Chairman Stuart called for a motion to approve the purchase of nine vehicles in the proposed timeline. Commissioner Traina-Dorge so moved, seconded by Commissioner Townsend, carried.

4. Living Wage and Minimum Salaries – Director Caillouet reviewed the minimum wages and correlated inflation process to-date. He then disclosed that the part time minimum wage is under living wage as determined by nation-wide studies and scaled for St. Tammany parish, and made the proposal that the minimum wage be adjusted to that scaled minimum wage going forward, as part of the 2024 budget.
5. Outreach and Education Update – Outreach and Media Coordinator Jennifer Bushnell shared highlights of her outreach efforts over the course of 2023, discussing where those events took place and what the target audience consisted of. Ms. Bushnell highlighted several events including the STPSB Career Fair, STEM days at elementary schools, Mosquito Day at Bonne Ecole elementary school in East St. Tammany, 17 summer camp programs throughout the parish, and other events and site visits in which the District participated. Ms. Bushnell then described upcoming events and opportunities for outreach. Commissioner Townsend encouraged the District to contact the high schools as well for more opportunities as well. Ms. Bushnell described the Adopt-A-Pond program in which the District is participating along with St. Tammany Parish and other entities, which is focused on improving water quality at areas across the parish. The District will utilize this opportunity to educate the impacts of polluted water on mosquito development. Next, Ms. Bushnell discussed the process for determining which events the District is able to attend. Finally, Ms. Bushnell identified a number of fall events that the District is scheduled to attend. The Board and Director Caillouet thanked and commended Ms. Bushnell for her outreach efforts.
6. Dr. Caillouet asked to add an agenda item to discuss board commissioner secession planning. Commissioner Traina-Dorge so moved, seconded by Commissioner Gerone and carried. Three current board members have indicated their desire to resign at the end of the year. Two potential replacements have been identified but Director Caillouet asked the board to consider any other individuals that might be good candidates.
7. Calendar of Events – The Director reviewed recent operational highlights and upcoming events:
  - STPMAD Board of Commissioners Meetings
  - STP Council Ordinance Outreach Meetings
  - Laser Scanning Information Meetings
  - Mosquito Habitat Modeling Meetings

- LST Meetings, Retreat and Classes
- Q3 Report Planning
- Labor Day and Columbus Day Holidays
- STPMAD Staff Meetings
- Wastewater Task Force Steering Committee Meetings
- GIS District Meetings
- Alert Notification Software Demonstration
- Director Teaching at Tulane
- State of the River (Vermilion) Meeting
- STP OWTS Ordinance Planning Meeting
- Construction Meetings
- STP Council Meeting
- STPSB Career Fair
- Wild Things Festival
- LLA Workshop

Note: the November board meeting will be held either on November 14 or November 15.

8. Mosquito Control Report - Assistant Director Smotherman mentioned that cooler weather has started early in the morning, then shared the monthly mosquito control report. There were six of 4,924 West Nile Virus infected pools with two human infections reported in St. Tammany Parish. *Culex quinquefasciatus* are the most abundant species. *Cx quinquefasciatus* are below average, as are *Culex erraticus* and *Culex salinarius*, but *Cx nigripalpus* are continuing their seasonal population increase spike. The parish is below average for all species. Approximately 2,000 miles were treated in larvicide missions. Ground adulticide missions have treated approx. 80,000 acres, and aerial adulticide missions treated 50,117 acres. Adulticide missions are fewer due to the low trap counts and service requests. Director Caillouet stated that the parish appears to have come ended the thermal maximum, which, coupled with the lack of rainfall, contributed to the very low mosquito counts.

## ADJOURN

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:46 p.m. on a motion by Commissioner Townsend. Commissioner Traina-Dorge seconded the motion, which carried.

Respectfully submitted,



Dr. Peter J. Gerone  
Secretary