

MOSQUITO ABATEMENT

ST. TAMMANY PARISH

MINUTES

Board of Commissioners Meeting

June 18, 2025

OPEN

The meeting of the Board of Commissioners, St. Tammany Parish Mosquito Abatement District, was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Chairperson Vicki Traina-Dorge, at the St. Tammany Parish Mosquito Abatement District, 62436 Airport Road, Slidell, LA.

Present was a quorum, consisting of Dr. Traina-Dorge, Mr. Glen Boyer, Mr. Jacob Groby, and Mrs. Kathryn Townend, Commissioners, and Legal Advisor, Jake Abdalla. District employees present were Dr. Kevin Caillouet, Executive Director; Calvin Smotherman, Assistant Director; Chad Simon, Finance Director; Jennifer Bushnell, Outreach Coordinator and Sarah Malasovich, HR and Office Manager. Advisor Dawn Wesson joined the meeting shortly after the meeting was called to order.

PUBLIC COMMENT – No members of the public were present.

BOARD APPROVALS

1. Minutes^(Appendix 1-3) – Commissioner Townsend asked about ChamberPAC, and whether that organization is a part of the Chamber of Commerce, and asked why the Chamber was interested in the District. Commissioner Boyer asked the same question regarding the Chamber's authority. Discussion ensued. Executive Director Caillouet suggested a meeting with the Chamber leadership would be appropriate. Commissioner Groby asked if the Chamber has a representative on the TRAC committee. Commissioner Boyer moved to approve the minutes from May 19, May 21, and May 28, seconded by Commissioner Groby, carried.
2. Credit Card Purchases – May credit card expenses were reviewed by Commissioner Stephens and found to be in good order. Commissioner Groby moved to approve the purchases, seconded by Commissioner Boyer, carried. Commissioner Groby will approve May expenditures for the June meeting.
3. Travel – none
4. Executive Director's Time Card & Leave – April, 2025 ^(Appendix 4) – Commissioner Traina-Dorge reviewed the Executive Director's time card and leave and found them to be in good order. Commissioner Groby moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner Boyer, carried.
5. Bids – St. Tammany Farmer – Commissioner Groby moved to award the bid to the only respondent, the St. Tammany Farmer. Commissioner Townsend seconded, motion carried.
6. Contracts^(Appendices 5-7)
 - a. Precision Aviation Group – to repair the Britten Norman Islander Engine – A motion to approve this contract was made by Commissioner Boyer, seconded by Commissioner Groby, carried.
 - b. Tangipahoa Mosquito Abatement – Aerial Application Services – St. Tammany could treat the neighboring parish at a rate of \$.86/ acre for treatment and an hourly rate for the mechanic. Questions regarding availability and the rate ensued. Commissioner Groby asked when the last time Tangipahoa engaged

our services; Executive Director Caillouet responded that was in 2020. Advisor Wesson asked for any concerns about towers or other obstructions; Dr. Caillouet responded that a pre-mission inspection flight would take place. A motion to approve this contract was made by Commissioner Groby, seconded by Commissioner Boyer, and carried.

- c. CDC Vector Grant – Training Vector Control Professionals with City of New Orleans. – under this grant, the District would assist training of vector control professionals in the region to allow wider area vector control. Chairperson Traina-Dorge commended the district for assisting the area beyond our parish boundaries when possible. A motion to approve this contract was made by Commissioner Groby, seconded by Commissioner Townsend, and carried.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Cell Tower Proposal – Vertical Bridge – In follow up to prior meetings, Vertical Bridge provided a number of supporting documents for board review. Commissioner Boyer suggested the district counter with a \$900 per month rate. Commissioner Traina-Dorge suggested that a monthly agreement (as opposed to a single payment) would potentially keep the company more engaged. Commissioner Townsend asked to table this topic without additional discussion with the Vertical Bridge organization again. A motion to table this topic pending further attendance by the company representative was made by Commissioner Groby, seconded by Commissioner Townsend, carried.
2. A motion was then made to add “Minutes Discussion” to the standing agenda, beginning today, by Commissioner Groby, seconded by Commissioner Boyer, and carried.
3. Adding that Agenda Item, Minutes Discussion, Commissioner Townsend asked if the District could invite the ChamberPAC and/or the Chamber to attend a meeting to discuss the intent or review of STPMAD. Further information about the ChamberPAC from their website was reviewed. Commissioner Boyer suggested that the Commissioners seek clarity from Parish leadership. Discussion ensued, wherein it was reiterated that the District is transparent and willing to be scrutinized, however the entities performing that scrutiny raise questions. Commissioner Townsend asked, in reference to a meeting on May 28, why is the St. Tammany Parish Chamber of Commerce, the board of which is headed by someone that works for an auditing firm, investigating a government entity and being involved in the appointment of members of the Board of Commissioners of St. Tammany Parish Mosquito Control. She further asked for clarity of what authority grants such a review and in what purview. The commissioners repeat that the district is very open and transparent in its management.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Treasurer’s Report (Appendix 8) – Finance Director Simon began by announcing that the 2024 audit is being finalized and is going well. He then presented the Treasurer’s Report, summarizing May disbursements, revenue, and vendor payments and reviewed the balances of the accounts, highlighting some larger dollar income and expenses, as well as the assigned funds disbursements. A motion to accept the Treasurer’s Report was made by Commissioner Townsend, seconded by Commissioner Boyer, and carried.

2. Incidents and Claims Reports – There was one incident, reported on June 17, 2025, where a resident reported a night driver sprayed them and further altercations. The District is reviewing and investigating this further.
3. Social Media Policies – Commissioner Groby commended PIO Jennifer Bushnell on her regular responses to the public through social media. He suggested that, as a Commissioner, it sometimes makes sense to not respond. There are aggressive and inappropriate comments made under the guise of “St. Tammany Sentinel” etc., where derogatory and often inaccurate comments are made. Ms. Bushnell shared that a policy for Social Media has been drafted by the district for public use of the District’s social media pages, to establish boundaries for removing posts, comments, etc. while protecting the rights of citizens for freedom of speech. Executive Director also requested that one of more Commissioners participate in a subcommittee ad hoc to review any posts that be removed. Chairperson Vicki Traina-Dorge requested to be included in that subcommittee. Commissioner Groby reiterated that the communications to date from the District have been handled great, to date. Chairperson Traina-Dorge stated that the communications are very service-oriented. Commissioner Groby stated that no one can be blocked unless they have threatened the user. Any opportunity for feedback has to remain open for comments. Language and other standards exist with removals within Facebook. The Policy, when adopted by the Board, will be included in the About Page on Facebook and other social media platforms. Commissioner Boyer suggested that the District respond to those that have infractions of the policy, explaining why and allowing them to alter the comment or message. Commissioner Townsend asked if the current communications and comments made by “St. Tammany Sentinel” and other anonymous posters constitute harassment. Comments that have currently been placed include disparaging remarks towards board members and references to the District as a fiefdom. Commissioner Townsend asked if these comments should be reported; Executive Director Caillouet responded that they would be if there was a direct threat, and reiterated that these comments are not on the STPMAD page, so the District has no control over removing them. Commissioner Groby mentioned that a commenter that has a vitriolic response can remove that response by deleting the original comment, suggesting that legal guidance in this process would be welcomed. A motion to table this topic to allow for legal review and commissioner review was made by Commissioner Boyer, seconded by Commissioner Groby and carried.
4. Board Meeting Time/Date – A member of the District Attorney asked why the Board meetings are so early that residents cannot attend. The response was that the public has not requested such a presence. Commissioner Groby stated that there is not a mandate to stick to the policy but suggested that there be at least one evening meeting in the Training Center, with a 30-day notice, perhaps two times, and enforce that the public is not interested in attending. Commissioner Boyer and Commissioner Townsend voiced that they were not for this action but could support one trial endeavor. Mr. Groby asked if a citizen comes to a meeting to make a public comment unrelated to an agenda item, would they be allowed to do so; the board agreed that such a comment would be entertained. A public comment time is available at the beginning of each meeting, and at the discretion of the Chair, the comment could be made at the beginning of each agenda item. Assistant Director also reminded the board that they can re-open closed items if a member of the public asks to do so; those could be added to a future agenda meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for July 23; Chairperson Traina-Dorge suggested waiting to schedule this evening iteration for Wednesday, August 20, at 6:00 p.m. A motion to adhere to this schedule was made by Commissioner Groby, seconded by Commissioner Townsend, and carried.

5. Livestream or Video Recording and Online Archive of BOC Meetings – Chairperson Traina-Dorge asked if video recordings are posted on the website. Executive Director Caillouet said that they are archived but not posted. If Livestream takes place, public comment must be accepted through a chat. There would need to be an officer to observe the chat and read it into a limit. Commissioner Groby suggested this would not adhere to time limits, and if a question gets missed there is inherent risk. Commissioner Boyer mentioned that classes sometimes say “we will read the chat and get back to you in the future.” He suggested that posting the recordings would be better. Commissioner Townsend asked who would be answering questions; Executive Director stated that public comments do not require questions and answers. Advisor Wesson asked if this can be limited to a period of time at the beginning of the meeting. Livestream Audio may not be available technologically. Assistant Director Smotherman stated that, if it is streamed in real time, external communications would need to be read into record. Commissioner Townsend showed concern about the extension of time that the comments could create. Commissioner Boyer moved that there be no live stream. Executive Director mentioned that meetings could be archived online or on YouTube; the board stated that they feel this is unnecessary. Commissioner Groby seconded the motion, carried.
6. Calendar of Events – The Executive Director reviewed recent operational highlights and upcoming events:
 - STPMAD Board of Commissioners Meeting – May 21, June 18, July 16
 - Pontchartrain Restoration Program Grant Meetings – May 22, 30, June 4
 - Floodwater Modelling with Precipitation – May 23
 - Memorial Day Holiday – May 26
 - STPMAD Tour with Councilmen and Guests – May 28
 - Floodwater Modelling with EBRMARC – May 29
 - Science on the Bayou Presentation – May 29
 - Slidell Reveille Community Breakfast – May 30
 - STPMAD Staff Meeting – June 4, July 2
 - STP Council Meeting – Commissioner Nominations – June 5
 - Giddy Up Folsom Community Breakfast – June 6
 - Slidell Library Outreach – June 9
 - Abita Springs Library Outreach – June 10
 - Floodwater Modelling With Halff – June 10, June 20
 - Five Lakes Cub Scout Day Camp Outreach – June 11
 - NIH R21 Grant: Culicoides Vectors of Oropouche Virus – June 11
 - LMCA Research Committee – June 13
 - Juneteenth Holiday – June 19
 - AMCA Culicoides Grant – June 19
 - Open House Setup – June 20
 - STPMAD Open House – June 21
 - STP Council Agenda Review – June 25
 - STP Council Home Rule Charter Committee – June 26
 - DES & Parish Council OWTS Ordinance – June 26
 - Madisonville Library Outreach – June 30
 - STP Council Meeting – Commissioner Appointment – July 3
 - Independence Day Holiday – July 4
 - Floodwater Modelling with Sev1Tech – July 7

- Pearl River Library Outreach – July 8
- Public Assistance Training with GOHSEP – July 9
- Mandeville Causeway Library Outreach – July 10
- Folsom Library Outreach – July 10
- Children’s Museum of St. Tammany Outreach – July 16

Commissioner Stevens asked if the District speaks to Homeowner’s Associations. Jennifer Bushnell confirmed that the District does, and that there are other educational opportunities within homeowner groups as well. Commissioner Townsend says Home Rule Charter is going to make a recommendation and it is not going to pass. Ways it can change the council include decreasing from 14 to 7 council members, adding an inspector general, and the process for dissolving taxing districts. A suite of recommendations that the council can choose will be presented, and then the public will vote on those things. She noted that the council chairperson, Joe Impastato nominated Kirk Landry to be on the District Board of Commissioners.

7. May Mosquito Control Report – Executive Director Caillouet shared that there was one infected mosquito pool in March, but trapping has had four positive pools in the past few weeks. These numbers are not higher than typical years but are higher than last year. Assistant Director Smotherman continued the mosquito report by sharing mosquito trapping counts. *Culex salinarius* are the highest in number. It is expected that the numbers of *Culex quinquefasciatus* will increase soon, though their numbers are low overall, probably due to rain influx. Service requests have begun to increase but remain a little below average, and the recent increase is due to woodland mosquitoes from the recent rains. Ground larvicide operations treated approximately 1,050 miles. Ground adulticide treatments were administered to approximately 82,000 acres. Aerial adulticide treatments covered approximately 90,000 acres. A motion to accept this report was made by Commissioner Groby, seconded by Commissioner Townsend, carried.
8. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m. on a motion by Commissioner Townsend, seconded by Commissioner Boyer, and carried.

Respectfully submitted



Kathryn Townsend
Vice Chairperson