

MOSQUITO ABATEMENT

ST. TAMMANY PARISH

MINUTES

Board of Commissioners Meeting August 20, 2025

OPEN

The meeting of the Board of Commissioners, St. Tammany Parish Mosquito Abatement District, was called to order at 6:03 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. Vicki Traina-Dorge, Ms. Terri Lewis Stevens, Mrs. Kathryn Townsend, Mr. Glen Boyer, and Mr. Jake Groby, Commissioners. Legal Advisor Jake Abdalla was also present. District employees present were Dr. Kevin Caillouet, Executive Director; Calvin Smotherman, Deputy Director, Jennifer Bushnell, PIO, Chad Simon, Finance Director, and Sarah Malasovich, HR and Office Manager. Guests present were Chris Handy of Bradley Murchison and Lester Richoux of Laporte CPAs & Business Advisors. Wayne Barnett from Vertical Bridge joined virtually.

PUBLIC COMMENT – No other members of the public were present.

Commissioner Boyer proposed adding an agenda item to discuss personnel, seconded by Commissioner Groby and passed. This item was addressed initially. Mr. Boyer asked how many people would be retiring and what is the plan to replace retirees, mentioning that the Harbor Center had a layover of multiple months to allow a transition of duties. Dr. Caillouet responded that he is not aware of anyone who is retiring this year and would likely have at least one retiree in 2026, but that the plan is to have a transition period with the outgoing and incoming employees on staff as has been done in the past. Mr. Boyer additionally asked if there were still temporary staff, and how many, and if they could be given permanent roles. Dr. Caillouet answered that there are part time temporary positions but no temporary full time positions, confirming that the Research Entomologist position is funded through an assigned funds project over three years, after which it could be sustained through operating funds, allowing a spend-down of unassigned funds. Dr. Caillouet also mentioned that the Research Entomologist also has secured a number of grants for funding sources.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Approval of Minutes_(Appendices 1 & 2) – July 16, 2025 and August 15, 2025 – Commissioner Boyer moved to approve these minutes, seconded by Commissioner Groby, and carried.
2. Credit card purchases – Commissioner Boyer reviewed the credit card statements and associated documentation for July expenditures and found them to be in good order. A motion to approve the credit card purchases was made by Commissioner Stevens, seconded by Commissioner Townsend, and carried. Chairperson Traina-Dorge will review the August purchases for the September meeting.
3. Travel - None
4. Director's Time Card and Leave_(Appendix 3) – July, 2025 - Chairperson Traina-Dorge reviewed the Executive Director's Time Card and Leave for July, 2025 and found all to be in good order. A motion to approve the time card was made by Commissioner Groby, seconded by Commissioner Boyer, and carried.
5. Bids – None

6. Contracts^(Appendices 4 & 5) –
 - a. Culicoides spp. Larval Management Research Contract – Texas Tech University/AMCA - \$14,464.85 – this proposal is for a research agreement for biting midges, wherein the grant funds would be paid to the district for their contributions.
 - b. Novel Larvicide Evaluation Contract – YEEO Eco-Safe - \$22,032.66 – this proposal is for funding to undergo testing on a new larvicide product.
A motion to approve both contracts was made by Commissioner Stevens, seconded by Commissioner Townsend, and passed.
7. Old Business
 - a. Cell Phone Town Proposal - Vertical Bridge – Wayne Barnett discussed the proposal to house a cell tower on the property for Verizon and eventually possibly other carriers as well. Commissioner Traina-Dorge asked about maintenance and accessibility requirements following the tower build. Mr. Barnett stated that a lot of the maintenance and repairs can be handled remotely although there are times when physical maintenance and repairs do need to be done. Dr. Caillouet asked about the tear-down and removal plan in case of contract termination. Mr. Barnett stated that tear down of above-ground materials would be included in the case of contract termination. Dr. Caillouet suggested that the next steps might be a general commitment to allow Vertical Bridge to continue to proceed with the processes of permissions from the FAA, etc., after which they would then provide a lease for review (approximately two weeks later). Commissioner Stevens asked to consider the pros and cons for another month to regroup at the September meeting. A motion to delay another month was made by Commissioner Stevens, Seconded by Commissioner Townsend. Commissioner Boyer voted against this motion but the motion carried on a majority. Mr. Barnett then left the meeting.
8. Commissioner Boyer made a motion to move agenda item 5b, 2024 Financial Audit & Statewide Agreed Upon Procedures up in the agenda, seconded by Commissioner Boyer, and carried.
9. 5 B – 2024 Financial Audit & Statewide Agreed Upon Procedures^(Appendices 6 & 7) – Lester Richoux from Laporte reviewed the audit documents distributed, referring specifically to the final summary, issuing an “unmodified opinion”. Mr. Richoux summarized that there were no issues of noncompliance or concerns at this time. Mr. Richoux stated that all in all the audit was a good experience, noting that the Board demonstrated levels of approvals at this meeting that are the intended checks and balances and recognized that the management and board are acting appropriately to demonstrate internal controls. Mr. Richoux stated that he had no issues to communicate about the audit. He then reviewed the Statewide Agreed-Upon Procedures Audit, stating that all checks and balances and operational procedures are being followed and there were no negative findings there at all. Commissioner Groby mentioned that the board is open and upfront about the books here and that the District is 100% above-board. Mr. Richoux mentioned that as a citizen of St. Tammany Parish he appreciates that the district is demonstrating financial responsibility. Commissioner Boyer asked for examples of what is reviewed in the audit, and Mr. Richoux listed out the extensive documentation that is required and recognized that the records are clean and organized. Dr. Caillouet mentioned that annual compliance training is reviewed in this process as well, noting that multiple emails requesting documentation are passed back and forth through the audit process. A motion to accept the audit report was made by Commissioner Groby, seconded by Commissioner Townsend, and carried. Mr. Richoux then left the meeting.

b. St. Tammany Parish Council's Transparency & Resource Accountability Committee (TRAC) (Appendices 8-11). Dr. Caillouet stated that the District is still waiting to hear a response from the Attorney General, and that he has prepared a timeline of the communications to date. Further, Dr. Caillouet summarized a document prepared to answer all the questions that have been asked in public, allowing the district to rebut the questions that have been laid forth. Additionally, Dr. Caillouet mentioned a letter prepared to the Parish Council to identify both the timeline, the answer to all of the questions and to publicly redress that the council on their actions to-date. Finally, Dr. Caillouet shared a letter crafted by our attorneys directed to the Louisiana Attorney Disciplinary Board, wherein the District has laid out complaints regarding the District Attorney's conflicted representation of its client, the District. The board reviewed the letter to the parish council first and discussed the information therein, including the specific reference pertaining to "Investigations" undertaken by the Council. Commissioner Townsend stated that the timeline was very helpful. Chairperson Traina-Dorge stated that she approved the preparation of this documentation package to the Parish leadership. Commissioner Boyer stated that the phrase "at least" can be edited; Dr. Caillouet stated that any edits would be welcomed. Mr. Boyer asked if by stating "that it has been six months since the formation of TRAC" might be legitimizing that organization. Dr. Caillouet stated that the TRAC committee is founded legitimately but to his knowledge they have not met and the Home Rule Charter does not include St. Tammany Parish Mosquito Abatement District as a "Special District". Commissioner Groby asked about the two resolutions to the Attorney General; Dr. Caillouet stated that the AG has not responded to the second resolution to-date. Dr. Caillouet stated that the position the District maintains is that the District is open and willing to share information as much as possible but not to the District Attorney as it is in conflict with his role as the District's counsel. Mr. Abdalla asked if the District feels like this needs to be sent now; Dr. Caillouet responded that the timing is largely in response to a second public records request received last week, following the meeting between the District Attorney Collin Sims, Dr. Traina-Dorge and Dr. Caillouet wherein they did not review the findings they had, but rather began to ask questions in a deposition-(manner), whereafter the District representatives determined that this was misrepresented and they left the meeting. Dr. Caillouet stated that, on behalf of District Attorney Sims, Mr. Impastato asked how the District would like to receive these questions which were sent as a public records request from Ms. Mary Burkell, Council Administrator. Dr. Caillouet stated that the District needs to respond fully and yet to ensure that the commissioners understand the truthful origin of the request and verbal communications that have taken place. Mr. Groby asked if this is the response to the Public Records Request; Dr. Caillouet stated that the Public Records Response will be separate and will take an estimated eight weeks. Dr. Caillouet stated that these communications will provide an opportunity for the District to be forthcoming in advance of the District going to the ballot for millage renewal. Commissioner Boyer suggested including a summary or the final report of the audit. Dr. Caillouet noted that it was referenced in the packet. A motion was made to approve the distribution of the packed by Commissioner Stevens, seconded by Commissioner Townsend, and carried.

The Board next reviewed the letter to the LSBA's Disciplinary Council that was distributed for review. Commissioner Boyer stated that the date would need to be updated. Mr. Abdalla stated that he felt that this letter was premature without adding detail. Dr. Caillouet mentioned that notification was sent to Mr. Sims in May stating that it appeared that he was acting in an unethical manner. Mr. Abdalla stated that

he felt that this should be taken under further consideration. Ms. Townsend asked why and Mr. Abdalla stated that he didn't know these processes have been happening. Discussion ensued. Chairperson Traina-Dorge asked if the DA has shared their part of this process with Mr. Abdalla, who affirmed that it they had not. Commissioner Groby stated that the lack of the DA's communication with their own representative was indicative of the DA's unethical behavior. Discussion ensued, including specific references to legal conflicts of interest as well as direct attacks on the District and the Board. Commissioner Townsend commented that valuable time that could be spent on the scientific abatement of mosquitoes has been spent on political efforts. After further discussion, Chairperson Traina-Dorge stated that the efforts of eighteen months to protect the district and its representation by the District Attorney have not resulted in any improvement and there is no longer any other option to proceed. Mr. Handy stated that the letter is directed overall pertaining to the conflict of interest between the DA and the District and isn't an attempt to target Mr. Abdalla beyond his own professional conflict, and that the disciplinary office would open their process of review but the issue exists and needs to be addressed, not in direct attempt to cause harm or discredit to Jake Abdalla, but rather to focus the attention toward the investigation against Mr. Sims' actions specifically. Commissioner Groby, in response to Mr. Abdalla, stated the DA office is charged with investigating criminal allegations by use of a forensic audit and needs to show that a crime has been committed; and there has never been any allegation that a crime has been committed by the District to give him a reason to investigate. Commissioner Traina-Dorge stated that a forensic audit by nature indicates inappropriate actions, when initiated by the District Attorney. Mr. Handy stated that an attorney cannot investigate their own client, and there is therein a clear conflict of interest which is the primary focus of the ethics complaint. The board noted Mr. Abdalla's objections to submitting the letter to the Disciplinary board. A motion to submit the letter was made by Commissioner Groby, seconded by Commissioner Townsend and passed with four ayes (Townsend, Groby, Traina-Dorge and Boyer), and one nay (Stevens).

NEW BUSINESS

1. **Treasurer's Report**_(Appendix 12) – Finance Director Simon presented the Treasurer's Report, summarizing July 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. Commissioner Stevens asked about the Slidell parcel tax, and Mr. Simon responded that the taxes are paid through the assessor's office. Additional questions about the aerial department ensue, and Executive Director Caillouet states that the Aerial Department Supervisor will be present at the next board meeting to update the board. A motion to approve the Treasurer's Report was made by Commissioner Townsend, seconded by Commissioner Stevens, and carried.
2. Salary Survey – Executive Director asked to table this topic until the September meeting.
3. Intent to Call Election for April 2026 Millage Renewal_(Appendix 13) – Executive Director Caillouet shared the timeline for the millage renewal process as provided by Bond Attorneys Foley Judell. Chairperson Traina-Dorge read into record the formal announcement of the District's intent to be added to the ballot in April 2026.
4. Cellular Phone Policy_(Appendix 14) - The District presented an updated cellular phone policy for the Board's approval. This policy would terminate cell phone stipends and decrease the amount of dedicated desk phones needed, while providing more dedicated phones to the employees and creating a cost savings. The policy mandates the exclusive use of these phones for work-related manners and removes the use of personal phones for work-related

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- messaging and communications. A motion to approve this policy was made by Commissioner Boyer, seconded by Commissioner Groby, and carried.
5. Incidents and Claims Report – There were no new incidents in the previous month, and no new actions or prior incidents.
 6. Calendar of Events – none presented at this meeting
 7. Mosquito Control Report – Assistant Director Smotherman began by introducing three species of mosquito: *Mansonia titillans*, *Mansonia dyari* and *Coquellitidia peturbans* whose habitats include floating vegetations, a problem in many waterways of St. Tammany Parish. Executive Director Caillouet shared that there were seven residents identified with Neuro-invasive West Nile Disease, plus two others that were asymptomatic but diagnosed while giving blood. The season is serious, with the highest numbers of human cases since 2012, wherein there were 25 cases. About 75% of infected mosquito pools are coming from areas with septic ditches, and these cases appear to be driven by the *Culex quinquefasciatus* species. Overall, service requests and mosquito numbers are relatively low despite the high numbers of west nile positive pools. Landing rates are average for this time of year. Larviciders treated approximately 1,500 miles in July. Adulticide treatments covered approximately 90,000 acres, and aerial treatments were applied to approximately 125,000 acres in July. A motion to approve the Mosquito Control Report was made by Commissioner Townsend, seconded by Commissioner Stevens, and carried.
 8. Adjournment – A motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:49 p.m. was made by Commissioner Stevens, seconded by Commissioner Groby and carried.

Respectfully submitted



Terri Lewis Stevens
Secretary/Treasurer

Appendix 1 – Minutes from July 16
Appendix 2 – Minutes from August 15
Appendix 3 – Executive Director July Time Card
Appendix 4 – Texas Tech/AMCA Contract
Appendix 5 – YEEO Eco-Safe Contract
Appendix 6 – 2024 Financial Audit
Appendix 7 – 2024 Statewide Agreed Upon Procedures Audit
Appendix 8 – Letter to Parish Council
Appendix 9 – Timeline of TRAC-related Events
Appendix 10 – Response to Questions
Appendix 11 – Letter to Louisiana Attorney Disciplinary Board
Appendix 12 – Treasurer’s Report
Appendix 13 – Announcement of Intent to Call Election
Appendix 14 – Cellular Phone Policy