

# MOSQUITO ABATEMENT

## ST. TAMMANY PARISH

### St. Tammany Parish Mosquito Abatement Rebuttal of Presentation by “Tax Reduction and Stabilization Workgroup”

#### Executive Summary

On October 23, 2025 District Attorney Collin Sims and Assistant District Attorney Elizabeth Authement delivered a completely subjective prosecution of St. Tammany Parish Mosquito Abatement District to the Government Efficiency Committee of the Parish Council. Under the guise of a group of business leaders, called the “Tax Reduction and Stabilization Workgroup”, Mr. Sims and Mrs. Authement delivered a presentation of financial statements **devoid of contextual information of the best practices of the mosquito management industry**. Their presentation was designed by skilled prosecutors and included several allegations of wasteful spending and the insinuation of wrongdoing. They did so to sway elected community leaders to make decisions regarding the fate of the Mosquito Abatement District to find funds through asset sales to fund their agency.

St. Tammany Parish Mosquito Abatement District provides mosquito management services as a Special Taxing District using the best practices of its industry using an Integrated Vector Management approach. Local experts at Mosquito Abatement tailor solutions based on best practices to solve nuisance and disease carrying mosquito problems and to mitigate the transmission of arboviruses such as West Nile virus.

For nearly 60 years, the District provided these services by collecting a property tax millage which is voted on every ten years and overseen by appointed volunteer commissioners. The collected tax revenue for Mosquito Abatement accounts for ~2% of the total property tax in St. Tammany Parish. As is the case with other public agencies, Mosquito Abatement has monthly financial reviews and undergoes annual financial and procedural audits.

According to St. Tammany Parish Council Chairman Joe Impastato: “In the past we’ve asked questions, but we’ve not had the resources to get a comprehensive understanding of the full picture. Today with the assistance of the District Attorney’s office for the first time I believe ever in St. Tammany Parish we have the information we need to make an educated and informed decision on at least one of these districts. This is true transparency.”

Unfortunately, **without a balanced deliberation of why certain decisions were made or consideration of industry best practices by subject matter experts, this presentation was the opposite of transparency**. The following document provides the missing context for each point made in the October 23, 2025 presentation.

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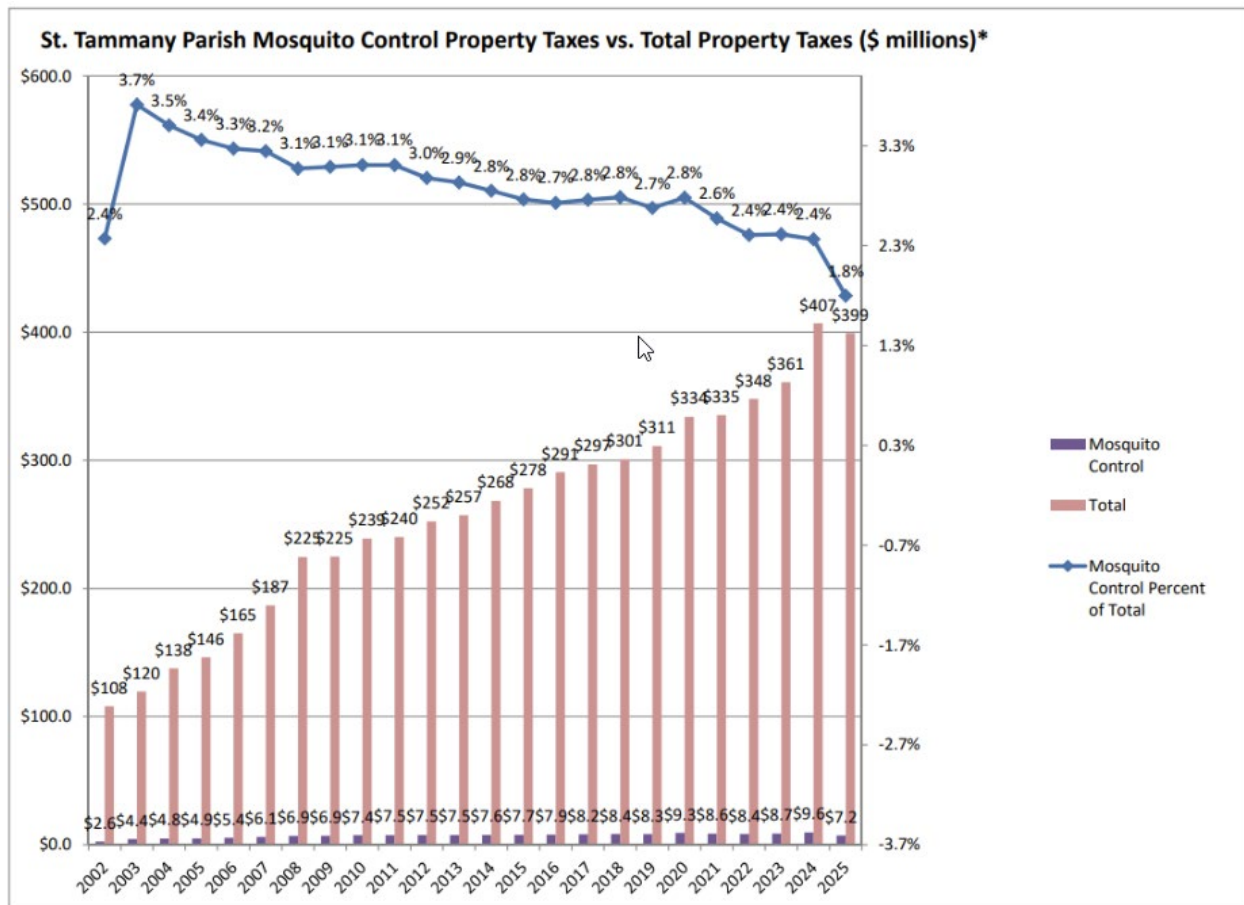
### ***Point by Point Rebuttal:***

Kyle France (Chair of the Tax Reduction & Stabilization Workgroup):

8:40 You all as council members control 9% of the taxpayers dollars. 9%. I went to first grade two years in a row. There's 91 other percent that you have no control over. Ladies and gentlemen, that is not how to run a parish government in 2025.

### **STPMAD Response**

By way of context STPMAD collects 1.8% of the total property taxes in St. Tammany Parish for 2026 (see below chart provided by St. Tammany Parish Assessor's Office). The \$7.5 million this millage generates will not fix the \$20 million budget shortfall facing the parish while still providing mosquito control services.



Kyle France (Chair of the Tax Reduction & Stabilization Workgroup):

9:17 And we're not here to blame or accuse or point fingers or any of those kinds of things. They received their tax dollars.

### **STPMAD Response**

Instead, the presentation that followed focused exclusively on blame.

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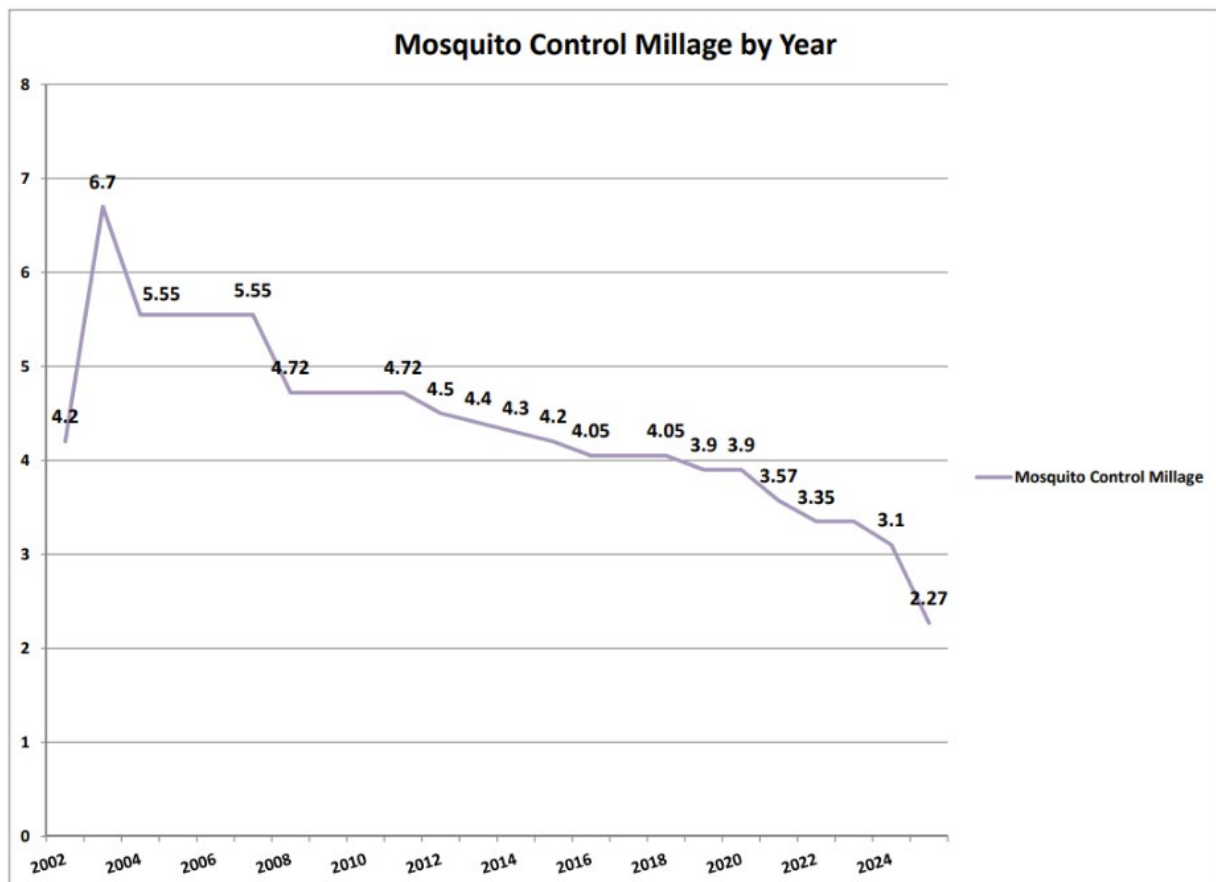
Elizabeth Authement (Assistant District Attorney):

15:56 but because it is a clear example of where funds are dedicated, inflexible, and in some cases used in ways that might not align with the immediate community needs. What we are seeing across the board is waste, duplication, and a lack of flexibility to make decisions at an executive level.

## STPMAD Response

To make a case of wasteful spending, the presentation drew on expenditures which took place over a period of eight years during the same time the 22<sup>nd</sup> Judicial District was fully funded. Legal expenditures made within the scope and charter of the organization to fulfill the best practices of the industry cannot be said to be “wasteful”.

As requested by the St. Tammany Parish Council, STPMAD has lowered millages consistently since 2003 (see below millage history and proportion of St. Tammany total property tax). The District has also committed funds to offset costs of septic inspections also requested by the St. Tammany Parish Council. In addition, the District has already presented to the Council and continues to seek ways to collaborate with parish departments to maximize efficiency for the benefit of the community.



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Elizabeth Authement (Assistant District Attorney):

16:17 While mosquito abatement naturally falls under public works, our focus is on understanding how these dedicated funds...

## STPMAD Response

Across the country, mosquito management services are occasionally housed within public works, health departments, or as an independent department.

Elizabeth Authement (Assistant District Attorney):

16:44 This type of financial review may not be a natural fit for the DA's office, but it became necessary because at the end of the day, if we can't make payroll or sustain operations, we cannot protect the public.

## STPMAD Response

In fact, it is more than “not a natural fit for the DA’s office” it violates their ethical obligation to protect their client, the public agency they are publicly defaming as “wasteful.”

Elizabeth Authement (Assistant District Attorney):

19:00 In 2019, it (STPMAD millage) was at 3.9 and it continues to go down to where we last levied in 2024 at 3.1. What's interesting about that is you can see here when it was a rate of 3.9, we collected 8.5 million. We are projected with our millage rate of 3.1 to collect an estimated \$9.6 million this year. For 2025, the district budgeted \$9.9 million.

## STPMAD Response

At first glance it is obvious to note that \$9.9 million collected for 2025 is greater than \$8.5 million in 2019. However, this basic comparison does not consider inflation, particularly historic increases in costs associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics the cumulative Consumer Price Index (CPI) from 2019 to 2025 was 26.7%. Meaning that what cost \$1 in 2019 now costs \$1.27. **Given this inflationary rate the \$8.5 million in 2019 is equivalent to \$10.8 million.** By this analysis, STPMAD has kept expenses lower than inflation and lowered the millage rate to collect less in tax revenue than expected based on inflation, while at the same time expanding and modernizing services.

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Elizabeth Authement (Assistant District Attorney):

19:39 When we look at their assets and liabilities, the district has over \$40 million in total assets. The district has a helicopter that it purchased in 2021 for just over \$4 million. They were able to purchase that helicopter in cash. They did not have to pay for that over time. They just had the funds available because they've had so much money just sitting in their accounts over the years.

### STPMAD Response

District assets at four times a single year's tax revenue are another indication of prudent financial responsibility. These assets allow Mosquito Abatement to have **more capacity to deliver high quality services than could be achieved with one year's revenue**, as well as be prepared in case of a hurricane or other disaster, that would require additional and targeted services. All assets, as purchased with taxpayer dollars clearly in line with the District's mission, are fully publicly owned and STPMAD does not incur any debt or extra interest costs for their equipment. Instead of presenting assets as a strength of STPMAD's fiscal responsibility, the argument given by the DA, is being made to present these assets as wasteful spending. As assets are owned, these are property, vehicles, and aircraft that do not need to be leased, saving taxpayer's money in interest. They provide service for years to come and, in many cases, increase in value.

As STPMAD's millage renews on a ten-year cycle, bond rates are not favorable over such a short period of time to loan funds for capital expenditures. The process for the decision to purchase a helicopter was made beginning in 2018 and concluded with a public bid in 2021.

For reference, see adjacent table for 2024 total net position of various agencies in St. Tammany Parish.

| Agency                | Total net position<br>(millions) |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Parish Government     | \$790.7                          |
| School Board          | (\$171.90)                       |
| Sheriff               | \$51.5                           |
| Mosquito Abatement    | \$41.3                           |
| Fire District 1       | \$39.2                           |
| Fire District 4       | \$30.7                           |
| Recreation District 1 | \$29.6                           |
| Coroner               | \$14.4                           |

Elizabeth Authement (Assistant District Attorney):

20:33 The district also employs a full-time helicopter pilot at a total compensation of \$180,000 a year. They also employ a full-time airplane pilot at a cost of \$172,000 per year. What we found interesting in this, in reviewing the minutes of the mosquito abatement district, was that when they were reviewing the pilots wanted to receive AD and D insurance with their family members being the beneficiaries of that accidental death and dismemberment insurance. And so the district did their own research on what is the norm across the board in Louisiana and elsewhere. Um do other districts provide this type of insurance? And what they found, according to their own minutes, was well, it's not the norm for a mosquito abatement district to employ and have on staff pilots. They're usually contracted out.

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## STPMAD Response

STPMAD salaries are set based on a comparison of education, training, and experience across like agencies across the region and the United States. Every five years, our District hires an independent human resources contractor to survey and report on salary information as context for STPMAD pay rates and policies. Given the risk and technical nature of their jobs, pilot compensation must remain competitive with the market. In addition, only a select group of pilots has the required number of hours operating spray missions to receive certification by the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry and the number of hours required in specific aircraft each year. Not only are there few available pilots that meet these criteria, but there is also a nationwide shortage of pilots, which further increases compensation across the market. As such there are fewer pilots available to serve these mosquito treatment missions. Salaried pilots allow the agency flexibility and availability to achieve their same or next day service mission as is the best practice in the mosquito management industry. Agencies without in-house pilots wait for contract pilots to become available.

Accidental Death and Dismemberment insurance was added to benefit the families of STPMAD pilots soon after the April 2016 crash that took the lives of two STPMAD pilots, Wayne Fisher and Don Pechon. These pilots risk their lives for the protection of our community. The low cost of annual premiums, a total of \$7,044, for this insurance was deemed justifiable due to the risk these pilots face.

### Elizabeth Authement (Assistant District Attorney):

22:43 When we look was the helicopter a good use of \$4 million of the taxpayers money. We look at their? missions in 2024, our spray missions, and the helicopter only spent 41 hours on spray missions in 2024. That was 20 missions total. So 17 for adulticide missions and three larvicide missions. That is similar to when the district had a contract for helicopter services from 2020 to 2021 and they only used 41 hours. So, their contract, they paid \$300,000 for up to 60 hours of flight usage and they only used 41 of those hours. Again, more waste.

## STPMAD Response

Operating both a helicopter capable of multiple mission types and an airplane allows the district to maximize efficiency in operations. Fixed wing aircraft cover larger area at lower costs to bring adult mosquitoes down quickly, while helicopters allow more flexibility and precision. The addition of the Bell 407GX in 2022 also allows the district to only maintain two aircraft instead of three. The Britten Norman Islander, still in possession by STPMAD, will be sold in early 2026. Fewer aircraft mean less maintenance and overhead cost.

Helicopters have supplemented fixed wing aircraft due to their flexibility to achieve multiple mission types based on their ability to hover and immediately turn in space. These functions allow for greater precision in the application of expensive and environmentally sensitive insecticides, especially around the many waterways we have in the South. In Louisiana, both Orleans and East Baton Rouge Parish use helicopters in their mosquito management efforts. As seen in the table below, helicopters are more commonly used for mosquito control in Florida

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than fixed wing airplanes.

| State of Florida Program/District                | Airplanes | Helicopters | Drones    |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|
| Anastasia Mosquito Control District              | 0         | 3           | 0         |
| Beach Mosquito Control District                  | 0         | 1           | 0         |
| Brevard Mosquito Control District                | 0         | 2           | 1         |
| Broward County Mosquito Control                  | 0         | 0           | 0         |
| Charlotte County Mosquito & Aquatic Weed Control | 0         | 2           | 1         |
| Citrus county mosquito control district          | 0         | 2           | 0         |
| Collier Mosquito Control District                | 4         | 4           | 1         |
| Collier Mosquito Control District                | 4         | 4           | 7         |
| Florida Keys Mosquito Control District           | 2         | 4           | 1         |
| Hillsborough County Mosquito Management Services | 0         | 1           | 4         |
| Indian River Mosquito Control District           | 0         | 0           | 0         |
| Jacksonville Mosquito Control                    | 0         | 3           | 0         |
| Lee County MCD                                   | 5         | 6           | 0         |
| Leon county mosquito control                     | 0         | 0           | 0         |
| Manatee County Mosquito Control District         | 0         | 3           | 0         |
| Moore Haven Mosquito Control District            | 0         | 0           | 0         |
| Okeechobee County                                | 0         | 0           | 0         |
| Osceola County                                   | 0         | 0           | 0         |
| Palm Beach County Mosquito Control Division      | 0         | 0           | 0         |
| Pasco County Mosquito Control District           | 0         | 2           | 0         |
| Pinellas County                                  | 0         | 1           | 0         |
| Polk County Mosquito Control                     | 0         | 1           | 0         |
| Sarasota County Mosquito Management              | 2         | 0           | 0         |
| Seminole County Mosquito Control                 | 0         | 0           | 0         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                     | <b>17</b> | <b>39</b>   | <b>15</b> |

**Elizabeth Authement (Assistant District Attorney):**

23:34 with a company called Clark Environmental at a rate of 70 cents per acre, 77 cents per acre. So what we wanted to look at was see if they were to contract out all of their aerial services like some parishes do, what would an approximate cost of doing that be? So we took the hours that they flew on aerial missions last year that they provided to us and looked at it from that contract rate of 70 cent 77 cents per acre and that would cost approximately \$971,000 to outsource that to that particular company at that rate. So when we go back to the previous slide on this spreadsheet, we know that the recurring annual aircraft expenses are at least 856,000, but there's a lot of unknowns.

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## **STPMAD Response**

The contract for aerial application services with Clarke Environmental/Dynamic Aviation at a rate of \$0.77/acre is for contingent emergency needs such as unexpected maintenance to the district's aircraft or post-hurricane assistance. This rate is considerably lower than the rate offered to provide an aircraft onsite for weekly normal operations, because the contractor can provide resources for limited times that are not sustainable at the rate of \$0.77/acre across a season.

In fact, a recent quote provided by the same contractor offered onsite aircraft services at a rate of \$1.34/acre. Considering the 1.2 million acres covered by STPMAD aircraft in 2024, this cost is >\$1.6 million.

Elizabeth Authement (Assistant District Attorney):

Salary & Benefits

25:08 Salary and benefits was another area that was particularly interesting to us. The district employs 30 full-time employees, seven part-time and 21 seasonal. The average full-time employee, not including executive director Caillou's salary, Their total compensation package is \$117,000.

## **STPMAD Response**

As mentioned earlier, STPMAD salaries are set based on a comparison of education, training, and experience across like agencies across the region and the United States. Every five years an independent human resources contractor is engaged to survey and report on salary information as context for STPMAD rates and policies.

Mosquito abatement services require certain education, training, and specialized skillsets. A range of professionals are hired to complete both technical and non-technical roles. Aircraft and vehicle mechanics, pilots, biologists, entomologists are part of the STPMAD team. Hiring and retaining a qualified competent team requires fair market value compensation and continuing professional development.

Elizabeth Authement (Assistant District Attorney):

25:39 The district also provides for tuition reimbursement even for part-time employees.

## **STPMAD Response.**

The District does not offer any form of tuition reimbursement for part time staff and never has. This statement in the minutes from a Board of Commissioners meeting was taken out of context as a potential consideration when hiring for certain positions became difficult, but was never made policy.

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Elizabeth Authement (Assistant District Attorney):

26:27 Just a rough glance at what other directors are making across the state, the numbers I saw were much closer to about a \$100,000. Um, and when we looked at what Orleans Parish and EBR were advertising for, it was a range that kept out at about 120 to 130.

### STPMAD Response

We are curious to see these advertisements and when these positions were advertised. To our knowledge the director position in Orleans Parish was last advertised in 2006. According to the website openpayrolls.com the Mosquito Abatement Director in Orleans Parish made a base pay of \$183,290 in 2023.

Elizabeth Authement (Assistant District Attorney):

27:07 And typically, they are basing raises from what we saw in the minutes off of the consumer price index. Those salary increases year-to-year are much higher than what we see in other government agencies where we typically see cost of living increases of two to three% maybe and oftentimes their raises were six 7%.

### STPMAD Response

The consumer price index is the primary measure of inflation or the rise in the cost of goods to the average consumer. There are no other better objective tools to use to ensure employee's compensatory value is maintained relative to the rise in the cost of fuel and groceries. In this statement ADA Authement is leaving out the fact that inflation was at record high levels during and following the COVID pandemic. To keep pace with these rising costs salaries were in line with 12-month CPI increases.

| Year | Inflation rate |
|------|----------------|
| 2019 | 1.6            |
| 2020 | 1.3            |
| 2021 | 6.9            |
| 2022 | 7.9            |
| 2023 | 3.1            |
| 2024 | 2.4            |

Elizabeth Authement (Assistant District Attorney):

27:21What we found interesting about this salary survey, they lasted when I believe in 2021 and when they got those results back, they said the salary survey said that they had three employees that were outside of the maximum range for their position. One of them was their media outreach coordinator. So, what they did, they said, "Well, let's change her title to public information officer to justify that salary." And that's you can see

### STPMAD Response

According to best practices for an Integrated Mosquito Management (IMM) plan, a key function of that plan should include Education and Outreach. It is important for us to connect with the St. Tammany residents, for them to understand the risks associated with mosquitoes, and steps that they personally can take to minimize those risks. When STPMAD decided to hire their first ever Public Information Officer, they wanted the title of that position to reflect that key function

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of the IMM. Therefore, they opted for the title of Media Outreach. The job responsibilities of that individual were always that of a traditional Public Information Officer.

In 2018, the Louisiana Legislative Auditor recommended to us, that salary surveys be conducted by public agencies to improve transparency and address payroll deficiencies. Within the framework of a salary survey, each job position is compared to like titles and duties and the minimum/maximum wages for that position are weighed against other agencies. The administration felt it was important to move forward that the title be changed to reflect the industry standard for this position.

Elizabeth Authement (Assistant District Attorney):

28:39 We also took note of exorbitant travel expenses. For 2025, the budget was \$56,000. Last year, I believe it was \$37,000. Some of the notable trips that they've taken, they go to a lot of conferences. Um, the American Mosquito Control Association, Louisiana Control Association meetings. Um, but in 2025 that was held in Puerto Rico. We know that executive director Kaya attended that along with their research entomologists and one of the commissioners. frequently they are opening up these trips to the board members. Um, anybody who wants to go, so it is not a who needs to go, who would benefit from this, but anybody who wants to go can. And when you have a \$56,000 travel budget, I guess you can do that. They also took trips to St. Augustine, Florida, New Orleans, Washington DC. Um, we noted the AMCA meeting in Dallas in 2024. We saw commissioners who attended that. There was a 2019 trip to Orlando where they spent \$18,000 on travel for that trip. We also were looking at a spreadsheet of expenses. We saw trips to Salt Lake City, Lafayette, various locations where they're traveling to all these conferences, commissioners, employees, everybody. That travel budget is excessive

### **STPMAD Response**

Attendance at certain educational conferences is required by the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry once every three years to renew pesticide applicator's licenses. Given the technical and scientific nature of the mosquito management industry, it is also best practice for senior level management and board commissioners to attend national conferences to stay informed of current best practices.

STPMAD Commissioners are volunteer positions by St. Tammany residents with relevant experience in science, technology, business and administration, but generally lack knowledge of mosquito management. Commissioners must be informed of mosquito abatement and industry best practices and be able to compare our practices with others around the country, to make the best decisions regarding the execution of our services to the public.

A total of \$29,455.22 year-to-date has been spent on travel.

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## Elizabeth Authement (Assistant District Attorney):

30:35 The district was interested in developing a wireless sewage monitor product and as they created that they enlisted the assistance of an engineer. We saw several payments thousands of dollars to an engineer. They also enlisted the assistance of a patent law firm. We also saw a \$15,000 contract to adaption strategies for market research for a working prototype per septic MD. The district sought an ethics opinion to see if they could get royalties from the creation if their employees could get royalties from the creation of this product. They did not disclose to the ethics board that public funds were used in the creation of the patent. So that was concerning because you have public funds being used with the expectation and hope that their employees will receive extra compensation. My understanding is that the committee or the council has requested the patent number for that particular product and has not received it to date and we also do not know whose name the patent is under.

## **STPMAD Response**

STPMAD received a provisional patent for an onsite wastewater treatment system (aka septic system) monitoring device. This “smart” device was intended to monitor the functional status of homeowner’s wastewater treatment system to inexpensively help homeowner’s troubleshoot the maintenance of their own systems. With over 36,000 onsite systems in St. Tammany Parish, more than any other parish in the state, unmaintained systems frequently discharge untreated sewage into parish drainage ditches and eventually into Lake Pontchartrain. These discharges kill fish that consume mosquito larvae contributing to an ongoing source of mosquito production and is the main reason St. Tammany has a larger mosquito and virus carrying mosquito problem than the other Louisiana parishes

STPMAD employees conceived of this invention as an attempt to solve a key community problem that limits economic development, causes considerable mosquito problems including that it exacerbates West Nile virus transmission, and may directly sicken people in contact with fecal bacteria. The District was attempting to patent this device so that STPMAD could control the costs of manufacturing and distribution with the hopes of offering the device at cost to residents to solve a community problem. This effort was again, within the Mission of STPMAD for the benefit of all St. Tammany residents.

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Elizabeth Authement (Assistant District Attorney):

31:49 Another interesting expenditure, obviously this is one that um that we've taken note of, but the district at a meeting earlier this year that I attended noted that they were reserving \$250,000 for professional expenses. And during that board meeting, they refused to state what those professional expenditures would be for. Later, Director Caillouet confirmed that that would be for legal representation.

And historically, the district attorney's office by law has been the legal representative for the district. And they pay the pay the district attorney's office \$500 a month. So \$6,000 a year versus a quarter of a million dollars that they have elected to invest in legal representation.

## **STPMAD Response**

Historically and since its inception, the District depended upon the District Attorney's office for legal review, advice and representation. For the last few years, the DA's office has made public remarks that disparage the entity, including referring to it as a "fiefdom", and has misrepresented information about the entity's financial responsibility and management. The DA itself has admittedly investigated the district, its client, in a clear violation of its ethical duties as the attorney for the district, the legality of which is also in question. To that end, the District requested the DA's own recusal from representation and recognition of the conflict of interest. We would challenge anyone to continue to utilize an attorney that didn't represent them in public. And thus, the entity did indeed pursue external legal counsel.

Elizabeth Authement (Assistant District Attorney):

32:38 We also saw where they invested \$15,000 for a mass notification system, something that we know the parish already has.

## **STPMAD Response**

In September 2023, STPMAD approached the Parish Government IT Department about the shared use of the Everbridge system. The concept was explored with Everbridge representatives, STPMAD, and the Parish IT and PIO departments. Ultimately, there were two hurdles that could not be overcome – first, there was not a way for Everbridge to distinguish which agency was sending the message, and second, a resident could not opt out of one agency's notifications without opting out of both. Additionally, those residents that signed up for the parish's emergency alert system but not Mosquito Abatement's treatment notifications would receive aerial mission alerts regardless of whether or not they signed up for them, drawing into question SPAM laws. Given the potential high importance of the emergency alerts, it was decided that the notifications should remain separate to avoid that risk.

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Elizabeth Authement (Assistant District Attorney):

34:26 The new construction for the renovations and the laboratory was at least \$7.64 million. Again, they were able to pay cash for that because they had that much money available.

### STPMAD Response

A new building was constructed beginning in 2022 after numerous COVID-19 delays and during a period of increased costs. This building was finished in January 2024. This building serves multiple needs for STPMAD to serve the growing community. The new Operations building was constructed to **1) meet the needs of an expanded vehicle fleet to service an ever-growing population, 2) expand a laboratory designed to meet current safety standards for dealing with insecticides and biological hazards, and 3) train a staff of 40 employees in the COVID-19 era.**

The existing STPMAD building was constructed in 2008 after Hurricane Katrina flooded the previous facility was built to meet the needs of the parish at that time. The building was at capacity for needed office and parking spaces. **Expanded fleet:** Before the new building was constructed STPMAD had parking space for only 44 fleet vehicles, boats, and trailers. The new truck bay expanded this capacity by 34 parking spaces. The 2021 daytime staff included 35 people but parking only 32 vehicles. The new facility and surface parking lot added an additional 32 parking spaces for the staff's personal vehicles.

**Expanded Laboratory & New Services:** The laboratory was expanded from 640 sq. ft. to 1,934 sq. ft. and enabled the addition of new functional spaces for secured mosquito colonies in two climate-controlled insectaries and molecular analysis of genetic material for arbovirus diagnostics. In addition, critical safety upgrades were possible in the new space including proper ventilation to work with insecticides that the old laboratory space lacked violating OSHA working standards.

**Expanded Training Capacity:** The largest existing meeting space was a 624 sq. ft. conference room that could not safely seat all our 35 daytime staff during the COVID-19 emergency. The new 2,320 sq. ft. training room allows us to comfortably meet with all staff at one time and to host other community meetings.

This new building is clearly not just a laboratory; in fact the lab is relatively minor portion of the total footprint. According to the building's architect, Michael Hunley of MSH Architects, the cost of the laboratory or other specific functions of the building were not broken out separately from total construction costs. He estimates given the square footage of the lab and estimated construction costs at the time for laboratories that the STPMAD lab accounted for ~\$1.5 million of the cost of construction.

Costs of construction of this new facility was paid with savings in cash because the district's 10-year millage renewal cycle does not allow favorable terms for borrowing money.

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## Elizabeth Authement (Assistant District Attorney):

35:19 equipment. When we look at was this a good financial decision, the LSU laboratory charged us \$5.50 per test. Now that we have our own in-house laboratory, it costs us \$12 per test. So, we are spending more to keep this in house. And while the district cites a faster turnaround time, the reality is Dr. Roy at the LSU laboratory said that they had never received a complaint or a request for expedited testing in the history of the lab. And in fact, when executive director Caouette told her that they were going to be building this in-house lab, she tried to talk him out of it. The fact that it is much more expensive for us to do our own testing creates the reality that this will never be a profitable endeavor. No other parish is going to submit their test to us because they can always go to LSU at less than half the cost. And that's because the state subsidizes the testing at LSU.

## **STPMAD Response**

Mosquito Abatement tests mosquitoes in-house to reduce the turnaround time to provide immediate reductions in arbovirus infected mosquitoes to mitigate the risk of infection to residents. Test result turnaround time at the LSU Diagnostic Laboratory is 4-9 days, while the STPMAD in-house laboratory can turnaround test results in 4 hours. With this information, we immediately go and treat the area where the virus-positive mosquitos were found. This is the most effective way to reduce the risk of being bitten by similar virus carrying mosquitos and contracting the deadly disease those viruses cause. If we waited 4-9 days, hundreds of residents could have been bitten and gotten sick.

Until recently, likely due to this review, the Louisiana Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (LADDL) has never offered to expedite mosquito arbovirus pool testing. When Dr. Caillouet first started with STPMAD in 2013 he asked at an arbovirus workgroup meeting why there weren't multiple test rounds each week to speed up diagnostic turnaround for mosquito pools. At this meeting he asked if districts could pay more for multiple rounds per week to increase efficiency. This suggestion was laughed off at the time with the suggestion that there was no need. As such, LADDL said they do not regularly expedite mosquito testing and that is why Dr. Caillouet has not asked recently for this service. In addition, since there is no way to know when you will have West Nile or other virus infected mosquitoes, one would need to expedite every single pool of mosquitoes for testing. That is why building our own testing lab was the most efficient and effective use of the taxpayer dollars to protect all St. Tammany residents to the best of our ability.

Finally, there are some items like mosquito arbovirus testing that will cost more to provide better service. If you look at these decisions purely based on the COSTS and not taking into account the BENEFITS service based on industry best practices will suffer jeopardizing residents' health.

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## Elizabeth Authement (Assistant District Attorney):

36:38 the district also does quite a bit of research. And this was particularly eye-opening for us when we learned that the district is sponsoring research at universities. So the district paid the University of Louisiana Lafayette almost \$10,000 to conduct research. Part of that was \$2,000 to go toward publishing that research in a foreign magazine. The district also sponsored research at LSU at a cost of \$18,000. This is St. contaminate taxpayers paying for research at established universities. The district also paid an intern \$47,000 to dissect the ovaries of mosquitoes to determine their age. The district performs research for outside agencies such as the CDC and NIH.

## **STPMAD Response**

The state law chartering mosquito abatement districts sets the mission and mandate for how tax dollars are used. It reads, “The purposes for which mosquito abatement districts may be organized and the nature of the business to be carried on by them are as follows: the abatement, control, eradication, and study of mosquitoes and other arthropods of public health importance, and all activities incidental thereto..”

The District performs their mandate for the “study of” or “research of” mosquitoes and other arthropods of public health importance, because mosquito management relies on sound science. As technologies advance, new scientific study advances the field and creates new efficiencies in mosquito management. Contracts with University of Louisiana at Lafayette and Louisiana State University were entered into to understand the effects of sewage on mosquito fishes’ ability to survive and consume mosquito larvae and to validate mosquito ground pool habitat models for greater efficiency of treatment.

Dissection of mosquito ovaries is undertaken to understand the impact of insecticides on target mosquito populations. By determining the relative age of the mosquito population, which can only be done by inspecting the ovaries, we can determine if the population is older and whether the insecticide remains effective at managing the population. This information is critical to understanding whether the mosquito populations have become resistant to the insecticides being used. As such, these routine evaluations save taxpayers money by ensuring insecticides that are applied in the field are not wasted but are having the intended effect.

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Elizabeth Authement (Assistant District Attorney):

37:29 For the district's own mosquito fish research, it spent \$10,000 for tanks, filters, and pumps. and it doesn't look like it's going to end anytime soon. We saw where the district had assigned \$250,000 to purchase additional land where it hopes to build a greenhouse so that they can expand their research efforts into the plants that harbor mosquitoes.

### **STPMAD Response**

Another essential component of an Integrated Mosquito Management plan is “source reduction”. When most people think of mosquito source reduction, they picture dumping and draining containers in the backyard. At STPMAD, we are thinking more broadly about the preferred habitat of several species of mosquito and working to reduce or eliminate that habitat to lower the mosquito population and reduce our need to rely on pesticides, and lower its use and exposure to our residents

Most of the nation's mosquito control programs have some form of a mosquitofish program in which they release a native minnow fish – in our case it is *Gambusia affinis*, or mosquitofish as they are more commonly known – that consume as many as 500 mosquito larvae a day. We raise these fish to release into permanent residential water sources that do not have an established ecosystem. Adding these mosquito predators to unmaintained pools, non-functioning fountains, or ornamental ponds, means we now have a natural control method to minimize mosquito production from this source without the use of pesticides. Yes, we invested in the tanks to raise these fish, but their primary purpose was for controlling mosquitoes. With that said, we have conducted research on these fish to better understand why they are not surviving in our septic ditches, which is the primary habitat of the mosquito that transmits the most West Nile virus.

Another mosquito that we have found through our research, that plagues our coastal areas, and recently has inundated our Madisonville residents, is a Fall mosquito species, *Mansonia* spp. This mosquito has adapted anatomy that allows it to breathe through the aquatic roots of some invasive plant species. Not only are these plants producing massive numbers of mosquitoes, but they are also clogging our waterways and impacting stormwater drainage. We recently were asked by the Madisonville City Council to inform them of what they are dealing with and how we are working to combat the problem, and our research has allowed us to have answers to their questions and a way forward. We are working closely with our partners at Parish Government, Wildlife and Fisheries, US Fish and Wildlife, and LSU to treat these invasive plants across the parish. This is a great example of cross agency collaboration that results in an improvement to both our beautiful waterways and our ability to enjoy them without the plague of *Mansonia* species mosquito.

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### Elizabeth Authement (Assistant District Attorney):

38:09 The district is attempting to be an academic research institution and I think that parish government really needs to examine if that's what their role should be and if that's what St. Tammany tax dollars should be going toward.

### **STPMAD Response**

St. Tammany Parish taxpayers are not paying for external research. Projects are self-sustaining and add to the local knowledge of mosquito ecology and best operational practices. The table below demonstrates the external funds pending or receivable to the district.

| <b>STPMAD Grants &amp; Contracts</b> | <b>2025</b>   | <b>2026</b>   | <b>2027</b>   | <b>2028</b>   |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| SOW for Syngenta                     | \$ 20,849.22  | \$ -          | \$ -          | \$ -          |
| New Orleans/Jennifer                 | \$ 15,000.00  | \$ 15,000.00  | \$ -          | \$ -          |
| Borough Seed research                | \$ 13,080.00  | \$ 13,080.00  | \$ -          | \$ -          |
| Vec Tech - NSF Grant                 | \$ 14,422.39  | \$ 14,422.39  | \$ -          | \$ -          |
| Sewage dilution                      | \$ 17,394.00  | \$ -          | \$ -          | \$ -          |
| University of Arizona                | \$ -          | \$ 141,406.30 | \$ 141,406.30 | \$ 141,406.30 |
| Texas Tech                           | \$ 7,232.43   | \$ 7,232.43   | \$ -          | \$ -          |
| YEEO-Eco-safe                        | \$ 22,032.66  |               |               |               |
| Pontchartrain Restoration            |               | \$ 163,406.16 | \$ 252,880.36 | \$ 92,776.15  |
| Totals                               | \$ 110,010.70 | \$ 354,547.28 | \$ 394,286.66 | \$ 234,182.45 |

### Elizabeth Authement (Assistant District Attorney):

39:38 The district also has a Marsh Master which is used to pull stuck airboats out of the marsh. They purchased that in 2024 for \$218,000. And when we took a tour this year, the district stated that they had never used it. What is more interesting is that the parish already has an equivalent piece of equipment called a gator toe. So that was a completely unnecessary purchase, \$218,000 of taxpayer money that didn't need to be spent.

### **STPMAD Response**

The District's Marsh Master MM2 was received late in 2024, near the end of season for marsh inspection. As of the time of the referenced tour, we did not need to use it for recovery operations. The MM2 is intended to be a multifunction platform that can be used for airboat recovery, for launching drones, and for herbiciding. Curtailing drone usage and herbiciding operations were due to the Parish Council's clear desire to cut expenditures across all agencies. The roll back of herbiciding will have deleterious effects on cooperative measures performed with the City of Slidell and the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. The reason we

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need it stationed at our office is that during the marsh inspection season if an airboat needs to be rescued, not having an immediately available machine would result in personnel being trapped in the marsh, sometimes in extreme conditions.

Our original Marsh Master MM1 was purchased for \$26,341 in 1984 and sold this February at public auction for \$8,577.77. If the new one were to last as long and retain the same value, that would amortize, it would work out to \$3,706 per year. Over the years, the old machine was successfully used for hurricane rescues, flood management, larviciding, and testing.

Elizabeth Authement (Assistant District Attorney):

40:29 paying for testing. the public information officer for the district, her total compensation is \$133,000, which I believe is more than the total compensation than the PIO for parish government. IT staff total comp is \$128,000.

### **STPMAD Response**

The overall message of this remark is not about whether or not this is fair compensation for these staff members– the real message is that these are duplicative services. While on the surface that may seem like a fair assumption, it would be difficult for one Public Information Officer (PIO) to represent the needs of all government agencies in addition to serving the departments Parish Government. This would be an even greater challenge when one or more of those agencies have a conflict in that messaging. A recent NOLA.com article demonstrates this case in-point when Parish Council members had a difference in opinion on statements made on behalf of Parish Government.

Our Public Information Officer has spent a great deal of time learning about mosquitoes and the science behind our operations to be capable of addressing any question a resident may have. Similarly, our IT team has managed our operations and treatment tracking software, while innovating solutions for our unique needs.

Parish Government has an incredible team in its Public Information Office and IT Departments, and they have been great partners over the years. But it is unrealistic to think that they can serve all special taxing districts without expanding their own capacity to fulfill the needs of those additional agencies.

To the direct point of compensation, a salary survey was completed in 2025 and shows that the compensation for the Public Information Officer and the Information Technology manager are within the minimum/maximum standards for the respective positions. As any agency considers when setting salaries, both public and private, STPMAD evaluates tenure, experience, qualifications, and skill sets when establishing compensation.

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### Elizabeth Authement (Assistant District Attorney):

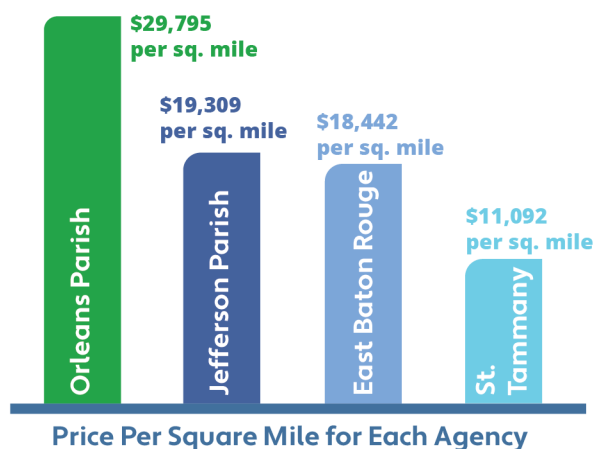
41:19 it where we have redundancies. Something else we wanted to do was assess where St. Tammy Parish stood when we looked at mosquito abatement programs across the state. So first we took the top 10 parishes by geographical size.

St. Tam ranks sixth in geographical size and we spend almost \$3.4 million more than any other parish that falls within these top 10 parishes by geographical size. You can see our total annual expenditures that we budgeted for this year at \$9.9 million and the closest is KUSHU (Calcasieu Parish) at 6.5 million. We are spending 3.5 million in salaries as opposed to Calcasieu's 1.16. Then we looked at the top 10 parishes by population. This is a little bit of a trickier analysis because your top population is in East Baton Rouge. their budget along with Orleans, they put everything online. However, their budgets are combined with rodent control. Obviously, a more urban area, so they have a bigger rodent problem and they don't break down their s their budget to show what's going to mosquito and what's going to rodents. So, it's a little bit difficult to tell. But what we do know is that East Baton Rouge their total budget for both of those functions is about 8.1 million. So, if we assign some of that to rodent control then we know that us, being at almost 10 million, we are way above East Baton Rouge. Jefferson Parish is at number two population wise and they contract out all of their mosquito abatement services for \$4.9 million. We look again at Calcasieu Parish. So they're on this list as well. I think they're probably the most comparable in times in terms of looking at size and population. Um, so they are ranked seventh in population and again their budget is 6.54 million, which is interesting because when we talked to a private company to get a very rough estimate of what it would cost to have them take over mosquito control completely in St. Tammany Parish, they said it could be done for under \$7 million, which is roughly in line with what Calcasieu has budgeted

### STPMAD Response

Determining the appropriate level of mosquito management effort is dependent on several

#### Mosquito Control Operations Comparison



factors: **1) which mosquito species are present, abundant, and threats to human health, at any given time, 2) which strategies will be employed to manage these species, 3) how spread out is the area near residents that you intend to manage.**

Since mosquito development happens in small pools of water or at the edge of larger water bodies, the natural and anthropogenic factors that determine water presence, permanence, and which kind of water bodies are present (i.e. diversity of mosquito habitat) determine which species of mosquito and how abundant each

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species are locally (i.e. expansiveness of habitat). Mosquitoes are both hyperlocal – one area may have a high abundance of mosquitoes, and another close-by area may have a low abundance -- and hyper focal in time—their larvae can develop in less than one week and they can have hundreds of thousands of offspring every 3-4 days. Given the focal nature of mosquito production in space and time, efforts to control mosquitoes must be locally tailored and match them in time and space. Put simply the comparison of necessary mosquito control efforts in one parish to another is like comparing apples and oranges because of the myriads of differences in the geographic and meteorologic determinants of mosquito habitats.

**St. Tammany (846 sq. mi.) is 3.6 times larger in land area than Jefferson Parish (296 sq. mi.).**

Though St. Tammany and Jefferson Parishes are similar in population size the density of the population is very different. Jefferson Parish has 1,489 residents per sq. land mile compared to St. Tammany's 312 people per sq. land mile. The suburban to rural nature of St. Tammany and the relatively spread-out populations requires both more frequent and larger area-wide treatments for mosquitoes than in a more urban environment. St. Tammany has 1.8 times more roads (3,614 miles; excluding highways and major throughfares) to treat with ultra-low volume applications from trucks than does Jefferson Parish (2,024 miles; same exclusion as above).

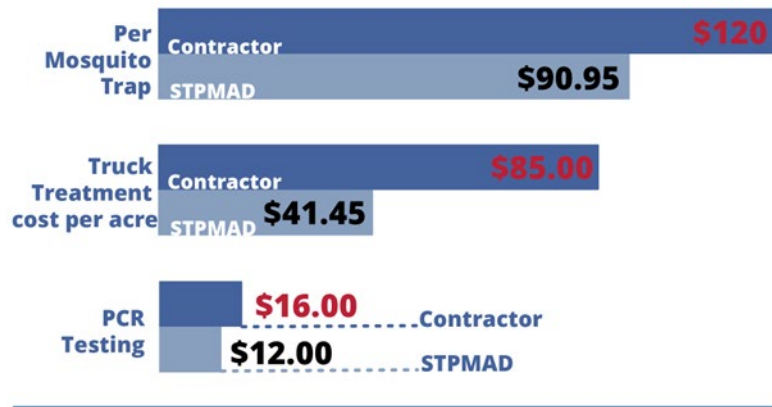
More than fifty different species of mosquito can be found in St. Tammany Parish due to its unique diversity of wetland habitats. Coastal Marsh: St. Tammany has more than 65 sq. mi. of coastal brackish marsh bordering Lake Pontchartrain produces salt marsh mosquitoes. Lake Pontchartrain and Rivers: Invasive floating plants, such as water hyacinth and giant salvinia and mosquitoes which attach themselves to these plants, have harborage in our coastal marshes and rivers. Hardwood bottomland swamp: the Pearl River Basin and the Bogue Chitto border the Northern and Eastern boundaries of St. Tammany along with numerous other rivers throughout St. Tammany producing flood-related mosquitoes. Clay soils: heavy clay Pleistocene and Pliocene soils hold water to the surface. Urban and Suburban environments: artificial containers and refuse hold water near households and businesses. Sewage polluted roadside ditches: A lack of maintenance of the more than 36,000 onsite wastewater treatment systems creates sewage pollution in roadside ditches that allow the primary West Nile virus vector to proliferate. West Nile virus hotspot: Since 2002 St. Tammany has been a national hotspot for WNV due to its mix of suburban and forested environments which serve as a refuge for birds that carry WNV and sewage pollution exacerbating populations the primary WNV vector.

Though Jefferson Parish and St. Tammany likely share similar rainfall patterns and many species of mosquitoes, many differences exist that can be attributed to different biting mosquito outcomes. 1) Jefferson Parish does not have roadside drainage ditches and a limited number of OWTS and associated sewage pollution to surface waters. 2) More hardscaped impermeable surfaces (e.g. structures, roads and parking lots) mean water is managed to eliminate temporary pools of water where mosquitoes proliferate. Jefferson Parish alluvium soils, which were deposited by the shifting course of the Mississippi River, are very different in their ability to absorb water from the clay soils of the Northshore.

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## STPMAD vs. Outside Contractor Cost Comparisons



According to Ms. Authement a contractor has provided a verbal estimate of mosquito management services for the cost of \$7 million. We urge the public and council to understand how the services quoted compare to the services that are received from STPMAD. It is not possible for a private company to match the current level of services, including surveillance and treatment, provided currently by the District. Private

companies who contract with local governments to provide services cost more because they must: 1) pay taxes on everything they purchase and their income, 2) charge a profit margin on top of the cost to perform the service, 3) they cannot purchase off state contracts which receive the best pricing. As well, most only treat on a regular basis, without preceding surveillance to know where and what type of treatments are needed, reducing labor and pesticide costs and undue exposure to the taxpayers and our environment. Mosquito surveillance throughout St. Tammany Parish by the District is ongoing, guides treatment decisions, and serves the public and our environment in the most ethical, healthy, and environmentally sustainable way.

### Elizabeth Authement (Assistant District Attorney):

44:18 They've just been able to lay that out with nobody really knowing that this was going on. And then the laboratory, again, same thing, just laying out almost \$8 million and nobody really knowing that that money is being spent.

### **STPMAD Response**

Each month, the District publishes a monthly report and a treasurer's report which details the operational activities and the financials for the previous month. These reports, along with the minutes from each public board meeting, are emailed directly to each member of the parish council, the parish president, and several other political offices, as well as to any member of the public that requests them. Further, these reports are posted on the District's website. The minutes are also published in the official journal, the St. Tammany Parish Farmer. The District's commitment to transparency is significant and sincere. There is also an annual open house event, inviting residents to learn more about the operations that are undertaken there.

If the council claims to not know what is "going on" financially or otherwise, this is due to their own lack of effort to read the emailed material provided each month. Importantly, the District's

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annual budget is also presented in a public meeting, and is published in the paper, prior to its adoption.

Todd Richard (Tax Reduction & Stabilization Workgroup):

47:38 Every special district that operates in such a silo has or will likely experience similar outcomes. We believe that the overwhelming majority of our citizens do not understand that this government has no real oversight over these special taxing districts.

**STPMAD Response**

We disagree. We believe that residents do know that politicians do not control their tax dollars for mosquito abatement and have chosen this precisely because there is no one between them and the services they desire. We also agree that the taxpayers should be called on to decide whether to continue to fund dedicated mosquito abatement services in 2026.

Todd Richard (Tax Reduction & Stabilization Workgroup):

48:21 rural parish. Many special districts are flushed with cash while other government priorities are left without proper funding. Again, this is a structural problem. It's time to consolidate government where feasible. The efficiencies achieved through consolidation alone can save millions of public dollars.

**STPMAD Response**

This call to consolidate Special Districts, such as the Mosquito Abatement, into St. Tammany Parish government seems dangerous given accusations by the Chamber PAC that the Parish Government has “misleading budget practices, wasteful spending, and questionable contracts.” Why would this group want Parish government to manage even more funds and service, with no oversight or accountability to the public.

(<https://sttammany-chamberpac.org/2025/09/24/st-tammany-chamberpac-task-force-exposes-misleading-budget-practices-wasteful-spending-and-questionable-contracts-by-parish-administration/>)

Todd Richard (Tax Reduction & Stabilization Workgroup):

48:46 Furthermore, it is our opinion that elected officials, not appointed members of the public, should exercise control over budgets and capital expenditures. Transparency and accountability are necessary for government to regain public trust. But there is an opportunity to begin consolidation. It can be achieved in an orderly fashion. Our group's recommendation is that this council go through the process of bringing mosquito abatement into St. Tam Parish government as a department of government rather than a standalone entity.

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### STPMAD Response

For nearly 60 years the taxpayers of St. Tammany have disagreed with the idea that a science-based service should be part of Parish Government. This is because they do not trust politicians in the centralized Parish Government to deliver the services they need, want, and expect. As noted above, members of this same Tax Reduction and Stabilization Workgroup through the Chamber PAC are alleging financial mismanagement by St. Tammany Parish Government. But now they want to give them more money to manage? We believe the taxpayers should decide on a renewal for the dedicated funds for Mosquito Abatement in 2026, as they have every ten years since 1968.

Arthur Laughlin

1:07:09 If I understand this correctly, we could if the the bottom number is we could realize a savings of \$2 million a year. Is that correct?

Authement

Yes.

### STPMAD Response

We do not agree that there is any way to cut \$2 million from STPMAD without cutting services that the public was promised and expects.

Elizabeth Authement (Assistant District Attorney):

1:07:33 So, we did do a real estate analysis and we know that that property has an estimated resale value of between \$6 and \$8 million. We also know that it has a lease value of between 12 to \$15 per square foot. who would use it? I don't know. There would have to be some research by the council and parish government to go into that. I would be hopeful that um there would be some possibilities there, but certainly it definitely has a high market value.

### STPMAD Response

This is the true intent of this effort – to liquidate the assets and take the cash. Sell the plane, sell the helicopter, sell the buildings, add the night truck fleet to Public Works and call it Mosquito Control. It is reprehensible to think that a group of lawyers and CEOs are so interested in getting their hands on the assets that taxpayers have dedicated mosquito control that they give zero thought to the impact that this strategy will have on mosquitoes, the diseases they transmitted, or the overall public health and quality of life for our residents here in St. Tammany.

The most important takeaway here is that this is not a decision for the District Attorney's Office and a group of business leaders to make. This is a decision that the citizens of St. Tammany Parish need to make. That is the democratic process. If the people of St. Tammany want to rededicate those dollars to the justice system, then so be it. If our community wants to scale back mosquito control operations – why not ask the experts the best way to make that happen.

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Joe Impastato (Councilman):

1:08:37 Well, one I know you talked about I believe there's never been any complaints from the mosquito district to uh Dr. Roy the LSU lab. Yes. Have we ever asked them to expedite testing?

Elizabeth Authement (Assistant District Attorney):

No. Dr. Roy stated that they had never received an expedited request not just from St. but any any parish in the state

Joe Impastato (Councilman):

and I was there so I know the answer but I'd still like the public to hear it. Are they able to expedite testing?

Elizabeth Authement (Assistant District Attorney):

Yes. So they emphasized their desire to help um in any way possible to protect animal and human life and they would go

### **STPMAD Response**

As noted earlier, until recently, likely due to this review, the Louisiana Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (LADDL) has never offered to expedite mosquito arbovirus pool testing. When Dr. Caillouet first started with STPMAD in 2013 he asked at an arbovirus workgroup meeting why there weren't multiple test rounds each week to speed up diagnostic turnaround for mosquito pools. At this meeting he asked if districts could pay more for multiple rounds per week to increase efficiency. This suggestion was laughed off at the time with the suggestion that there was no need. As such, LADDL said they do not regularly expedite mosquito testing and that is why Dr. Caillouet has not asked recently for this service. In addition, since there is no way to know when you will have West Nile or other virus infected mosquitoes, one would need to expedite every single pool of mosquitoes for testing. That is why building our own testing lab was the most efficient and effective use of the taxpayer dollars to protect all St. Tammany residents to the best of our ability.

Joe Impastato (Councilman):

1:09:20 35,000 a year. How else is that laboratory funded? I know you mentioned it, but I just I want to hear it again. I know there's three funding sources, I believe, federal grants.

Elizabeth Authement (Assistant District Attorney):

They do have, I believe, federal grants, there's state subsidies, and do y'all remember and and pesticides. Yeah, they sell pesticides. And then all the parishes that are contributing, and I believe every single parish in the state utilizes that laboratory.

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## STPMAD Response

This exchange between Mr. Impastato and Mrs. Authement is confusing but we think they are asking how LADDL is funded. Of course, this is outside of the scope of STPMAD knowledge. We do, however, know that LADDL does not sell pesticides. This is another clear example of the lack of knowledge of this review.

Joe Impastato (Councilman):

1:10:33 The accreditation, what kind of accreditation does LSU have?

Elizabeth Authement (Assistant District Attorney):

So the specific accreditation, do you remember the um so it is accredited through the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians. Um and again only 50 laboratories in the United States are accredited through that manner through that manner. It is considered the gold standard in the United States for accreditation.

Impastato: And what accreditation does the mosquito abatement district in St. Tammy have?

Elizabeth Authement (Assistant District Attorney):

None. None. Okay.

## STPMAD Response

LSU has great facilities and smart employees, but their accreditations are for Veterinary Medicine, not for mosquito testing. Our facility is audited annually by a certified laboratory inspector to confirm that our staff, training, equipment, and protocols are appropriate for mosquito testing at a BSL-2 standard. We participate in an annual proficiency panel conducted by a diagnostics laboratory responsible for statewide mosquito testing outside of Louisiana, as neither LSU nor any other accredited laboratory within Louisiana offers such validation. It is ignorant and vindictive to suggest that our laboratory is at fault due to a lack of unrelated Veterinary accreditations.

Joe Impastato (Councilman):

1:11:19 Um I know we're expanding  
and we talked about a quarter of a million dollars. They were looking at expanding into growing plants to see how the mosquitoes reacted to the plants.

## STPMAD Response

The mosquito species that has been devastating all outdoor recreation along the coast for the last month would not exist without aquatic plants. Every soccer game in Madisonville and bike-ride on the Trace this time of year is plagued with a particular mosquito species that is 100% reliant on aquatic plants for survival. Why is Madisonville experiencing such an outbreak? Because more invasive aquatic plants clog their waterways than any other part of St. Tammany and attached to each one of those plants is an untold number of mosquitoes waiting to emerge

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and ruin your night. Yes, we are researching how mosquitoes plaguing the coast, and all St. Tammany coastal communities, like Madisonville attach to and make use of the plants they are 100% reliant upon as larvae, to later develop into adult mosquitos. Yes, we are considering expanding our services to combat not just this mosquito species, but the weeds which produce them with such great abandon. Yes, the aquatic weed issue and the mosquitoes they produce grow worse every year, a direct result of raw sewage (aka human fertilizer) polluting our waterways (which Council has yet to adopt a resolution to solve). Attacking our research efforts to better understand and prevent a mosquito crisis that barely exists outside of St. Tammany Parish (and that no one else is investigating how to combat) is ignorant and detrimental to the quality of life of most of our parish.

**Joe Impastato (Councilman):**

1:15:39 , Miss Hayes. I see the package for the director of the mosquito district exceeds \$250,000. Do we have anybody at Parish government? He has 30 employees. Do we have anyone at Parish government that makes that kind of money?

**Gina Hayes (Chief Administrative Officer):**

Not even close.

**STPMAD Response**

The information you presented is incorrect. Our District employs 53 staff members. Please see the table below for agency head's 2024 compensation as reference. The yearly salary and total compensation package for STPMAD Executive Director Caillouet is fully in line with all other St Tammany Parish Agency Heads.

| Agency                                | Agency Head         | Salary     | Total Compensation |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|------------|--------------------|
| St. Tammany Parish Government         | Michael Cooper      | \$ 192,013 | \$ 246,938         |
| St. Tammany Parish Sheriff's Office   | Randy Smith         | \$ 196,351 | \$ 248,645         |
| St. Tammany Parish Mosquito Abatement | Dr. Kevin Caillouet | \$ 185,114 | \$ 249,804         |
| St. Tammany Parish Assessor           | Louis Fitzmorris    | \$ 181,140 | \$ 270,124         |
| District Attorney                     | Collin Sims         | \$ 224,365 | \$ 271,207         |
| Fire District No. 4                   | Kenneth Moore       | \$ 128,201 | \$ 308,205         |
| St. Tammany Parish School Board       | Frank Jabbia        | \$ 240,023 | \$ 360,102         |

\*Compensation data from 2024 audits available at:<https://lla.la.gov/reports/audit-reports/>

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Joe Impastato (Councilman):

1:16:24 about that. See their budget. I don't know if this is an era or so in 2025 there was a trip to Puerto Rico, a trip to St. Augustine, Florida, a trip to New Orleans. Why was there a cost associated with a trip to New Orleans?

Elizabeth Authement (Assistant District Attorney):

Uh, I can't speak to that. All we know is what was noted in the minutes. So, the specific expenditures that went along with that trip, whether they were getting hotels for driving across the lake, um whether that is gas for employees, parking, what those specific expenditures are, I I don't know. That would be a question for the district.

Joe Impastato (Councilman):

Okay. Um, and then another trip in 2025 to Washington DC. That was just the commit. That was a commissioner.

Elizabeth Authement (Assistant District Attorney):

That was a commissioner. Yes.

Joe Impastato (Councilman):

To Washington DC.

Elizabeth Authement (Assistant District Attorney):

Yes.

Joe Impastato (Councilman):

Did we know what that was for? Or is that a question we have to ask the mosquito?

Elizabeth Authement (Assistant District Attorney):

The specific reason why he went, that would be a question for the district.

Joe Impastato (Councilman):

But just a commissioner

Elizabeth Authement (Assistant District Attorney):

according to what we could see in the minutes.

Joe Impastato (Councilman):

And then in 2019 to Orlando, how many commissioners went on that trip?

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Elizabeth Authement (Assistant District Attorney):

I believe four commissioners went on that trip to Orlando.

Joe Impastato (Councilman):

Four commissioners went on a trip to Orlando. Do we know where they stayed?

Elizabeth Authement (Assistant District Attorney):

We have the I believe we do have the name of the hotel. I'd have to go back and look to see exactly what that is.

Do you remember? The Carob.

The Carob Resort. I don't I don't remember specifically the name of the hotel. The Carob Resort, I think.

Joe Impastato (Councilman):

Is that close to Disney World? Yes. Really? by violence. It's probably probably a Okay, fair enough.

### **STPMAD Response**

The assertion that the District paid for Commissioners to attend the American Mosquito Control Association Annual Meeting so that they could go to Disney World is ridiculous.

Dr. Caillouet's travel expense to New Orleans referenced here was on April 3, 2024, to attend an Association of Special Districts conference. Dr. Caillouet was reimbursed \$44.30 for these out-of-pocket expenses. The meeting registration was paid with a District credit card. It is important to note that Dr. Caillouet was not reimbursed for mileage for this trip. The expenditures associated with this trip were as follows:

Parking - \$38.30

Causeway Toll - \$6.00

Meeting Registration - \$60.00

Other travel questions were answered previously. Travel to state or national conferences are the best and only tools the District and its board must educate themselves on best practices for mosquito abatement. None of the expenses associated with these trips are egregious, inappropriate or illegal, and all of them are and as best practice and fiscal responsibility will be reviewed by the legislative auditor as is done every year.

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Joe Impastato (Councilman):

1:20:09 We need to work with the tax stabilization work group and we need to start looking for solutions and to try to figure out uh what type of funding we need annually for a mosquito abatement district and how we need to handle that situation.

## **STPMAD Response**

Who do the taxpayers want to tell us “what type of funding you need annually for mosquito abatement,” subject matter experts or attorneys and/or private business owners?

Collin Sims (District Attorney):

1:24:52 And all things being equal, the questions become in a lot of these things, can you provide the same services that people expect for cheaper? If you can do it, great. Save the money. Change something. If not, move on.

## **STPMAD Response**

We could not agree more with Mr. Sims on this point, if the level of service is the same for cheaper, then that is the right course of action. However, you must have subject matter experts determine the appropriate level of service. As entomologists, we would not presume to know what is necessary to provide best practice services for the District Attorney’s office, but he certainly wants you to think he knows what is necessary for Mosquito Abatement.

Collin Sims (District Attorney):

1:27:11 Not one elected person is noticed to be spent on things that either are wanted or needed. And that's a decision that has to be evaluated. Is it a need or a want?

## **STPMAD Response**

Again, who do the taxpayers want to decide between “needs” or “wants”, the attorneys, private business owners, or the actual subject matter experts?

Collin Sims (District Attorney):

1:27:31 In 2022, you didn't have \$500,000 in staff for a lab that used to be outsourced for \$37,000 to LSU. Did anyone notice a problem

## **STPMAD Response**

This number is not correct and assumes there were no lab costs prior to the construction of the new building. In fact, the old lab space was outgrown by the District needs. The District has always had lab space and employees dedicated to the collection of accurate data. These functions include counting trap collections, identifying each mosquito species, pooling

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mosquitos to be tested for arbovirus, chemical resistance, chemical effectiveness, and aiding in chemical label compliance. The new lab increased the efficacy of performing these tasks and now have added the ability to perform arbovirus testing, for a huge time-savings in identifying presence of viruses that risk public health. The new building is multifunction: training space, meeting space, mechanical bays, welding bay, garage space for five trailers and twenty-four vehicle spaces.

In fact, all costs included in lab budget for 2022 totaled \$628,303.22 which represents a savings of over \$128,000, if Mr. Sims' \$500,000 is correct. This represents all supplies, insurance, salary, benefits, machinery and travel.

Collin Sims (District Attorney):

1:27:56 They built what they thought they wanted to build. But not one person knew about that. And that is the thing of all things being equal.

### STPMAD Response

Notifications of capital expansion plans, including the construction of a new building and the purchase of a helicopter, are a matter of multiple public records of board discussions and proceeding, prior to any large expenditures. The discussion of building construction started at a public meeting of the Board of Commissioners on the May 23, 2018, meeting when Director Caillouet discussed the District's Assigned Funds Plan and it was included in the **agendas of 34 subsequent public meetings prior to the construction bid opening on June 15, 2022**. In addition, monthly reports noted the plan for the new building three times prior to bid award.

The use of a helicopter was mentioned starting in April 2019, **18 times and the purchase of one was mentioned 4 times in monthly reports prior to the bid award on May 26, 2021**. At the Board of Commissioner meetings, helicopter use made the agenda eight times starting in October 2018 prior to a bid award for purchase. Purchase of a helicopter was an agenda item four times starting in April 2019.

As such, every Parish Council member was responsibly informed of all actions, activities, and planned expenditures many times prior to the expenditures were made. It appears that the Parish Council members did not take the time to read and review the documents STPMAD sent them.

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Collin Sims (District Attorney):

1:29:51 is to do a deep dive and see what are the needs versus wants. Having a dialogue with our tax district partners, can you help us? Can we all get creative? Let's bring everyone together. And that is all I I it's not meant to be offensive. The whole aspect and and I again agree the DA's office does not need to be involved in this.

Collin Sims (District Attorney):

The option is to get creative, collaborative, bring our taxing district partners in, come up with solutions, bring in the business community because they do know how to be efficient and run things.

**STPMAD Response**

A “dialogue”, collaboration and “bring(ing) everyone together” never starts with name calling or a forensic audit. This is clearly not about “helping” this is about fleecing other agencies to fund what is most important to Mr. Sims and not the taxpayers.

STPMAD Executive Director Caillouet took much thought and time and laid out the process for working together to find efficiencies at the first Government Efficiency Committee on September 18, 2025. What was presented, started with gathering all of the public entities in the parish together to discuss the mission and needs of each agency and looking for ways to help each other achieve those goals. What would then be needed would be an annual equipment and asset conference where each entity presents the capabilities of their team and how they might help other agencies with these assets.

Finally, an agency service audit process could be installed to review levels and costs of service. Such a review would involve the hiring of third-party subject matter experts to advise the committee on industry best practices. Engagement of the public through town hall meetings would be critical if service changes were suggested to have impact on how recommendations might affect the public. Report findings would be coordinated with management responses so that the public would have access to both perspectives while reading reports in the future.

However, this collaborative suggested approach was not taken seriously by the Committee, we now find out, because they never wanted to collaborate or work together, they only wanted to consolidate the District for them to take over the assets.

EXHIBIT: (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DqOHobBzl-4&list=PLH9u5rnOHS1dhvVFHZmHihH2yRWFrDkIL&index=2>) minute mark--30:20.

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## Collin Sims (District Attorney):

1:30:17 I don't think you want to have a \$4 million helicopter as opposed to the entire judiciary's budget which is only 3 million if you added the two years' worth of spending okay for helicopter lab buildout a marsh buggy for some reason and some other things you could fund the judiciary for six years for six years. But we bought a \$4 million helicopter, a lab we didn't need, and we staffed it because why? Because we weren't even on notice that it was happening because of the structure.

## **STPMAD Response**

These arguments make these decisions sound like they are ongoing. Note that decisions to purchase and operate a helicopter which go back to 2018 predate the current lack of funding for the DA's office.

We've also noted throughout this document that proper notice was given for Board of Commissioner's meetings, monthly reports on activities, finances, plans and planned expenditures have been sent to all Councilmembers.

## Arthur Laughlin (Councilman):

1:33:39 And if y'all um if Kyle, if you want to come up and answer, do you think these same decisions would have been made had an elected body had oversight?

## Kyle France (Tax Reduction & Stabilization Workgroup):

France: I I doubt very seriously. I mean I I can't imagine I mean look you all are answerable to the people. You make those kinds of decisions and the people have to go and vote to reelect you or not. And ultimately I think those kinds of decisions would have not been made.

## **STPMAD Response**

**STPMAD leadership bases its decision on best practices throughout the industry.** Leadership, consisting of well educated, highly recognized individuals, contribute to recommendations that are then made to the Board of Commissioners, who are appointed by the Parish Council, and consisting of St Tammany residents, who are taxpayers, as well as representatives of the taxpayers. These commissioners ultimately make the contractual, financial, legal and policy decisions which govern the district. Do you want decision made based on best practices, science and the discernment of the residents, or based on popularity of the council person who is attempting to secure votes? The District has always operated on millage granted by the vote of the taxpayers. There is no need for the council to intervene – the taxpayers can utilize their own voice to continue this funding.

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Jack Donahue (Tax Reduction & Stabilization Workgroup):

1:37:14 I I think I think you're asking the right question. And as a CEO and a business person, I make decisions based on information that I have. If I have good information, I can make a good decision. Maybe not always. It comes out the way I wanted it, but it's a good decision. If I have bad information, I'm probably going to make a bad decision. So, if this council had a choice about here we have \$4 million. Are we are we going to fund the parish and and the needs for public safety or are we going to buy a helicopter? I I know what decision you would make. All of you would make it. It's the only decision you can make.

## **STPMAD Response**

We agree that decisions must be made with good information. We are concerned that the information presented here by lawyers lacks the appropriate subject matter expertise to present good information.

Jack Donahue (Tax Reduction & Stabilization Workgroup):

1:38:09 And right now, you know, you get elected, you're only spending 9% of the money.

## **STPMAD Response**

STPMAD is only 1.8% of the total property tax and this is not enough to solve the parish's \$20 million budget deficit.