

Otter Creek Watershed Insect Control District
Board Meeting
13 September 2023
Unapproved Minutes

Attendance

Board: Doug Perkins, Jeff Schumann, Brad Lawes, Ben Lawton, Kyle Bearor, Bruce Baccei, Jeff Whiting, Tim Kingston, Paul Vaczy, Steve Belcher

Guests: Will Mathis (OWC), George Fjeld (Reporter), Richard Russ, Wayne Rausenberger

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm. The Chair noted a quorum and that all towns were represented. The agenda was adopted without change.

Public Comment

George Fjeld identified himself as a reporter for the Brandon Reporter.

Wayne Rausenberger had numerous questions and observations. He first thanked Brad Lawes for his help in resolving an earlier question involving an insurance payment. He then questioned Jeff Schumann on figures related to the Equalized Education Grand List figures. He questioned Paul Vaczy about the figures relating to the Salisbury assessment for larviciding. His other points claimed mistakes, a lack of transparency, a complaint that the Chair was assisting the Treasurer in preparing the budget (the Treasurer noted he had received assistance from Wayne in the past), and other questions addressed later in the meeting.

The Unapproved Minutes of the August meeting were corrected and approved.

Operations Report

Will Mathis first passed out copies of a Vermont Department of Health advisory report on the risks of late season mosquitoes. He observed that this is a critical time for adulticiding; mosquitoes carrying diseases have been reported in the state, although not in the District. The traps show ample populations, many with blood meals.

The crew has been active every night.

The truck situation is not satisfactory. Brake issues. Sprayer issues. Sub-standard chemical product issues. He has been communicating with the companies and devising hacks around the chemical problems.

A State rep accompanied him on a spray route.

The Cornell sampling for resistance became complicated in terms of supplying the samples they wanted; the latest delivery overwhelmed them.

The EPA has offered a report on Malathion that does not prohibit the use of this chemical for adulticiding in Vermont; this is desirable. Variation in chemical treatment reduces the build-up of resistance in the target population of mosquitoes.

No new truck has been acquired.

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer noted that cash had been running low, but a payment from Leicester relieved the stress. On account balances, he offered the following figures (distributed by email before the

meeting):

General Checking (5020)	35,189.20
Equipment Replacement & Capital Improvement (7510)	14,348.36
Legal Account (7660)	944.26
Debit Card (1303)	256.31
Total funds available	50,738.13
Current Balance of 2024 Grant	61,201.09
Invoice 2024/5	1,373.94
Total unpaid invoices	1,373.94
Available 2024 Grant Balance	59,827.15

There was some discussion about aligning the Quickbook expense categories with the line items in the budget, and on the various versions of Quickbook.
The Treasurer's Report was approved.

The Chair's report had been sent out by email, noting discussion about By-Laws changes and the news that Albert Wenta is now the Proctor Alternate.

Unfinished Business

Water to the Shed: no news.

Art Doty Memorial

Ben Lawton has arranged an observance for Sept. 30, 9-11, in Brandon in the park in front of the Stephen Douglas House; Brandon will provide a tent and a PA system. There will be refreshments (coffee and doughnuts). The event will be publicized in the Reporter. Members of the family may be present. The Select Boards of the towns are invited; Ben had visited some, and is relying on Town Representatives to pass on the word.

The truck question had already been covered.

Algorithm for Spray Route Options

Four options had been presented by email:

1. Use the old method.
2. Shop-to-shop mileage
3. In-town mileage (with shop-to starting/ending point excluded)
4. Product-use per town as an indicator of cost

Will Mathis noted that there are multiple routes to the starting point in each town.

Ben Lawton suggested an average of all four options.

Jeff Whiting noted the issue of dead-end roads, of which Goshen has a number.

Steve Belcher suggested that the transit costs from shed to starting point should be counted as general overhead, to avoid penalizing member towns by geography.

The Chair noted the ways in which each option favored certain towns over others. Jeff Schumann made a motion to adopt option 3, and it was approved.

New Business

Larvicide expenditures

At a previous meeting, Wayne Rausenberger had raised the question of the Board's policy should the larvicide funds run out. The discussion that followed addressed two questions: should the Board have a policy? or should the Board address situations as they arose?

Jeff Schumann's motion that the Board should not adopt a policy carried.

Grant Reviewal

At a previous meeting, Wayne Rausenberger had challenged the Chair's approval of the State Grant without Board review. The discussion noted the time factor (the State grant cannot come before the State budget is approved and usually comes after the start of the fiscal year) that lends urgency to approval.

This led to a question of special meetings for Board approval, and considerations of the Open Meetings law. 24-hour notice is required for special meetings.

A motion that the Chair may not sign documents such as the Grant without Board review, with the proviso that in the absence of a quorum at a special meeting the decision lies with the Executive Committee was approved.

Budget Format

A draft will be drawn up for presentation and review at the October meeting. Jeff Schumann noted that the budget items should align with the Quickbooks categories used by the accountant or vice versa, so that year-to-date expenses can be more easily compared.

By-Laws Amendments

A motion to consider only the proposed changes was approved. The Board would vote on each change as it was presented.

Adding Proctor to the list of towns was approved.

A proposal that on a 2/3 vote of the Board to request Select Boards to replace Members who had missed three regular meetings in a row (unless excused by the Chair) passed.

An amendment to Article II, adding the position of Auditor was deferred, awaiting later action on another amendment.

An amendment to Article III addressed committee structure, committing Board members to serve on committees. The proposed committees are:

Permitting Committee, headed by the Vice-Chair

Finance Committee, chaired by the Treasurer, responsible for preparing the budgets and the strategy for capital improvements.

Public Relations, chaired by the Secretary.

Audit Committee, chaired by a new officer, the Auditor to review District expenditures.

In discussion of this amendment, Jeff Schumann noted that the LDFLA had an active committee structure that spread out the workload. Paul Vaczy noted that the proposal required people ready to be engaged, and that in Salisbury Select Board members usually ran unopposed – the question of recruitment is central. Approved. This approval also applies to the proposed change in Article II creating the position of Auditor.

An amendment to allow the Chair to make committee assignments (the chairs being designated by an earlier change) was approved.

A proposed amendment on special meetings was removed from consideration pending review of the Vermont Open Meetings Law by the Vice-Chair, acting in his role as Parliamentarian.

Article IV: a new section, #6, addressed the question of public comments. The proposal was that comments should be limited to 5 minutes per speaker, that Board members should listen but not respond, and that the Chair had discretion in choosing how to respond. The amendment was approved.

Article V: the first sentence about the fiscal year is removed.

The changes to the By-Laws (excepting the question of special meetings, to be reviewed) were approved.

The Chair then noted that elections for Officers are coming up and offered a process for nominations. He first asked who would not wish to serve (4 members declined). At the next regular meeting (October), he will ask for written nominations from the Board members present, to present a slate in November.

He also announced that he will not continue as Chair.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

stephen belcher
Secretary