

Otter Creek Watershed Insect Control District
Regular Board Meeting
8 November 2023
Unapproved Minutes

Board Members: Doug Perkins, Jeff Schumann, Lynne Peck, Jeff Whiting, Sharon Stearns, Ben Lawton, Paul Vaczy, Bruce Baccei, Albert Wenta, Tom Hogan, Tim Kingston, Steve Belcher

Guests: Will Mathis (OCW), Wayne Rausenberger, Richard Russ.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm. The Chair noted that there was a quorum and all towns were represented. There were no changes to the agenda.

In Public Comment, Wayne Rausenberger questioned the Proctor buy-in. Doug Perkins answered that the buy-in will only figure in the next year's budget. Wayne also requested a copy of the budget to be voted on (the Chair gave him his print copy), and requested to be cc'ed on all records. He asked the Brandon Trustees to explain the rise in Brandon's assessment to their Select Board.

The Minutes of the October 25 Special Meeting were approved.

Operations Report

Will Mathis reported that operations were wrapped up. There was a question about the information requested for the annual/year-end reports. The stakes for no-spray zones have been removed. On the trucks – one to be purchased, one to be repaired – there were questions. It was confirmed that the funds were available for the purchase; the cost of the repairs is as yet unknown but will be high as the repairs require tools provided only to the dealers. For expediency, Jeff Whiting moved that the repairs be approved up to a cost of \$3,000, and the motion was approved.

The Treasurer was not present, although expected, and the report was deferred. He did not appear.

Chair's report

The report had been distributed by email; it was largely concerned with the Notice of Violation from the Agency of Agriculture and related communications. The Chair added a late item: an interview with Keith Whitcomb of the Rutland Daily Herald; he had not seen the article.

Old Business

In the absence of Brad Lawes, there was no information on the question of water to the Shed. Unemployment Insurance: Sharon Stearns had expected to attend a workshop on the topic, but the State scheduled conflicting workshops. The issue is that a new law has changed the criteria for organizations. In the past, companies and organizations with 3 or fewer than 4 FTE employees were not required to participate; now they will. There is still doubt about coverage for seasonal/part-time employees. Registration will not be required for some time (probably 1 July 2024).

Sprayer Flow Meter

This topic came up in previous meetings; there were technical difficulties with some of the systems. Some systems use GPS, which is unreliable in the area treated by the OCW. However, the use of such a meter is required on the EPA-approved label of PermaSease. The State has only just raised the issue. On the question of which brand of flow meter to use, it was agreed to consult Brad Lawes.

Donation to Host Facility

A donation of \$200 to the Brandon Senior Citizens Center was approved.

Sick Leave

By a previous resolution of the Board, employees who have met the threshold of hours worked, are entitled to sick leave. This leave-time is not rolled over from one year to the next; rather, employees are granted pay for their hours of sick-leave at a rate of 30% per unused hours. The discussion mentioned questions of paternity/maternity leave. A motion to pay out the 30% of the unused hours was approved.

Trustee Stipends

Trustees are entitled to \$50/meeting. The Treasurer will send out individual emails asking if the Trustees wish to receive payment.

North East Mosquito Control Association

Their conference is upcoming, in Mystic, CT. Various members have attended the event, some using their stipends to off-set the costs. Attendance of the new Chair, at OCW expense, was approved.

Book Keeper

Eloise Crane is stepping down. With the provision that Eloise should finish this year's books, Lynne Peck agreed to become the new book-keeper

Budget

At the previous meeting, the Board had approved a total sum for the budget; there were then some adjustments to the allocations. It was suggested that documents should be sent out with dates, to avoid confusion with earlier versions. Sharon Stearns asked for an explanation of the basis for the Town Assessments.

The OCW uses an algorithm combining three categories: Overhead, Larviciding, and Adulticiding costs. For the Overhead, the assessment looks to the Equalized Education Grand List to measure town resources. For the Larvicide portion, the area of Class II wetlands is the principal metric. For the Adulticide portion, the mileage of roads sprayed in each town and the number of dwellings in each town are the relevant data.

The question of cash-flow came up. The town of Brandon pays on a quarterly basis; other towns pay only after they have received their annual taxes. There have been recent complications, when requests for payment were not acted on or were directed to the wrong Town official. A motion to request quarterly payments from the Towns, to be due on March 31, June 30, September 30, and December 31 was approved.

The out-going and in-coming Chairs plan to meet with the Town Select Boards in the coming months, and hope the Town Representatives will join them.

Annual Reports

Some of the data Doug Perkins had requested – requests for treatment, by town – was not yet available, but Will Mathis promised to produce it. The reports were approved.

Election of Officers

There was some confusion, as Proctor was represented by both members and the alternate, and

ballots were given to all. The extra ballot made no difference in the tallies. The results were:

Chair: Jeff Schumann
Vice-Chair: Doug Perkins
Treasurer: Lynne Peck
Secretary: Steve Belcher
Auditor*: Jeff Whiting

*the position of Auditor is a new one, per the revision to the By-Laws approved at earlier meetings.

Committee Assignments

These have since been sent out by email. Committee chairs will arrange to meet and discuss the activities of their committees.

Permit

The application to the State is due on Feb. 1, and so there will be a need for a Special Meeting in January to approve the application.

The Board then went into Executive Session to discuss the response to the State's Notice of Violation. Following the Executive Session, a motion to authorize Jeff Schumann (the new Chair) to act on behalf of the Board, to request a pre-hearing, and to consult legal counsel was approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Stephen Belcher