

Otter Creek Watershed Insect Control District
Board of Trustees Meeting
July 10, 2024
Unapproved Minutes

Attendance:

Board members: Jeff Schumann, Doug Perkins, Jeff Whiting, Lynne Peck, Bruce Baccei, Tom Hogan, Sharon Stearns, Steve Belcher.

Guests: Will Mathis (OCW); Wayne Rausenberger, Richard Russ, Richard and LaBerna Bassett.

The Chair opened the meeting, noting a quorum, although not all towns were represented until the late arrival of Sharon Stearns.

The Agenda was adopted without changes.

The public was then invited to comment.

LaBerna Bassett asked about how to get sprayed: requests had not been answered.

Wayne Rausenberger had a series of questions. The first was about the State larviciding grant; he presumed it had not yet been delivered. He asked how much of the previous year's grant had not been used. He noted that the full grant had been included in statements of revenue, thus affecting the town assessments. He noted that the permit only required licensed commercial applicators, and opined that the District should request a refund for any sums paid for a government license. He had criticisms of the disposition of the State charges (spraying a no-spray zone, etc). He objected to statements made by Doug Perkins, at the previous meeting, that the audit conducted in past years was a waste of money. He alleged that the review of the books was an attempt to discover malfeasance; he had shown the audit to various qualified individuals, who identified no problems. He complained that earlier comments had not been included in the minutes. He challenged certain items in the description of the duties of the Operations Coordinator.

The minutes of the June meeting were approved.

Operations Coordinator

There are very low mosquito counts. They sprayed in Proctor the night before; a sprayer motor blew out. The Board discussed options. Repair/Replacement. A new sprayer motor may run \$15,000; Will Mathis had not yet looked at prices. There might be further costs to adapt the motor. The District currently has three operational sprayers. Repair services are hard to find.

The blanks in the latest data sheets are due to delays in counting the mosquito samples.

Treasurer

Lynne Peck noted that the Budget/Actual statement had been sent out, and that the Proctor buy-in funds will now be credited to the Capital Improvement budget. She reported the following amounts as of July 9, 2024:

Checking	27,595.15
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Legal	914.26
Capital / Equipment	21,126.52
Debit	572.41
 Total	 50,208.34

Balance left on expired grant 44,361.53. Flow meter equipment with installation cost \$26,157.66. \$3,842.34 will be returned to the LDFLA.

Reimbursement requests have been sent to the State (there is a window for requests for the previous fiscal year).

She had a question about the Brandon Ambulance fund; after discussion this payment was approved. She then reported some success in reducing the cell-phone bill.

Permitting

Doug Perkins noted that the 5-year larviciding permit comes up for renewal next year, and that the Board should prepare the submission.

The Public Relations Committee had no news to report.

Unfinished Business

Refund of the LDFLA grant unused balance

The LDFLA made a grant of \$30,000 to cover the cost of installing (State-required) spray-meters on the trucks. The actual costs were lower, and so, per the terms of their grant, the remaining balance will be refunded, although the sum was adjusted to include the supplementary labor costs (Social Security and State taxes).

Job Description for the Operations Coordinator

Two versions had been submitted; the Executive Committee had met to review a revision offered by Doug Perkins that included an itemized list of 25 duties; Steve Belcher offered a much shorter description, intended as information for a job-candidate. The Board decided to consider the Belcher revision. Amendments were proposed and approved, but in the end this version of the job description (it being claimed that a 2/3 majority was required) failed when the Chair cast a vote against, making the vote 5-3. A significant issue in the discussion was the proposal that the Coordinator reported to the the Chair, rather than the entire Board. The practicalities of emergencies were a factor.

New Business

The Board approved a new pay-rate of \$25/hour for a new hire, who will assist Kerry White in the identification of mosquitoes.

Hopes for using the Brandon Library for the Board meetings await completion of the renovations.

It was noted that Pittsford, Brandon, and Salisbury do not have full representation.

Capital Improvement wish-list

Jeff Schumann noted that there was a large wish-list for the Capital Improvements budget: new trucks, water/toilet at the Shed, a lab area in the shed. He was then challenged over priorities. He explained that the wish-list was intended as a match for possible grants.

Sharon Stearns rose to note concern over the condition of the trucks (all aged and failing), and asserted that future planning should await the needs of the immediate season. She denounced the leadership for creating a hostile relationship with the staff (Will Mathis concurred, opining that the past two years had been the worst of his employment). Sharon's later remarks led to criticism of the Chair, accusing him of threats against the Board. She did not desist, at the Chair's request. The motion to adjourn was passed while she was still talking.

The meeting was adjourned. The location of our next meeting is undecided, as Kathy Mathis intruded into the discussion (challenging claims of Chair authority) and declared the OCW not welcome at her facility. The normal date will be August 7.

Respectfully submitted,
Stephen Belcher
Secretary