

Otter Creek Watershed Insect Control District
Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees
14 August 2024
Brandon Town Hall
Unapproved Minutes

Attendance

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

Public: Fred and LaBerna Bassett, Will Mathis (OCW), Kerry White (OCW), Emma White, Seth Hopkins, Keith Whitlock (RDH).

The meeting was called to order at 7 pm. The acting Chair noted that there was a quorum and all towns were represented.

Wayne Rausenberger asked for two additions to the Agenda: a discussion of the Board's policy when larviciding funds run out before the end of the season, and the question of the town assessments. Sharon Stearns asked the Board to revisit the requirement for a two-thirds vote that had been invoked at the July 10 meeting, as a result of which the motion to adopt a new job description for the Operations Coordinator failed.

Approval of the Minutes of the July 10 Regular Meeting was postponed to the September Meeting pending revisions. The Minutes of the July 23 Special Meeting were approved. The Minutes of the August 7 Special Meeting were amended and then approved.

The Board then proceeded to the nomination and election of Officers to replace the three who had stepped down. Steve Belcher was elected Chair, but also retains the position of Secretary. Sharon Stearns and Olya Hopkins were nominated as Vice-Chair; following a vote with paper ballots, Sharon Stearns was elected. Wayne Rausenberger and Doug Perkins were nominated for Treasurer; following a vote with paper ballots, Doug Perkins was elected.

The Operations Coordinator then delivered his report. He requested approval of \$3,500 to repair the sprayer; there was some discussion of the District needs. A motion to approve the cost was approved. He reported on trapping results (lots of anopheles). They are working on larval sampling; they will be doing egg-rafts and sending samples to Cornell for resistance testing. On staffing he reported that Sawyer Pierpoint, a new hire to assist with mosquito identification, was doing well but also was about to go back to school.

Steve Belcher had distributed a list of the vehicles and equipment; Will Mathis then ran down the list commenting on the condition of the vehicles and the problems they had. The Argo and the Gator both needed new batteries but now are fine. Jeff Schumann had provided a short list of maintenance issues, such as the siding on the shed.

Doug Perkins asked about the status of inspections; Will reported that Clark Parmelee from the Agency of Agriculture had come down last week and received the second (mid-season) inspection reports. There will be a third inspection at the end of season. The flowmeters are

working well, but there are some questions about the software. Doug Perkins asked in the trapping data on the webpage is up to date, and also about trapping sites in Leicester. He noted counts that exceeded the action threshold, but there had not been spraying. Paul Vaczy asked about surveillance in Salisbury; Will assured him the data would be posted. Albert Wenta asked if the counts over the threshold meant spraying, but Will noted that the weather did not always allow spraying; he also noted that the threshold of 40 mosquitoes was not determinative; if other counts were much higher, those areas would receive priority.

Will noted that one can subscribe to notifications on the webpage, and urged people interested to do it themselves rather than sending their emails for him to copy.

Lynne Peck asked about truck inspections; repairs need to be made before they are inspected. She noted a donation from the Lake Association towards the purchase of a replacement truck.

There was no Treasurer's report, but later during the proceedings Lynne Peck gave the following balances:

General Checking:	\$36,390.80
Capital Account:	\$27,474.18

Steve Belcher offered a brief Chair's report; he is learning the ropes. He noted that the PR Committee has not been active, but that Keith Whitlock had covered the Board's activities in the Rutland Daily Herald, and Marin Howell put a story into the Addison Independent, which was then picked up by the Reporter. He later noted that the Larvicide grant had been signed and sent to the State.

Under New Business, Steve Belcher asked about the status of the Finance Committee, since there is now a Treasurer; Jeff Schumann and Bruce Baccetti offered to assist him.

He asked for attention to the Capital needs, as Sharon Stearns had urged at an earlier meeting. At the start of the year, Will Mathis was authorized \$10,000 to buy a truck, but when the new requirement for flowmeters was announced the Board decided to defer the purchase until the issue of flowmeter costs was settled. That problem was solved by a donation from the LDFLA. He asked for a motion to increase Will's cap to \$14,000. Lynne Peck then offered some balance figures for the accounts (given above) and urged that we should increase the transfer from General Checking to Capital Improvements since the season has been relatively light and there are funds.

Ben Lawton asked about rust on the trucks. Will noted that the trucks are not used in the winter season and so are relatively rust-free. He would like to get another large truck and has a lead on another Ford Ranger. Ben Lawton made a motion to authorize the costs for repair to the sprayer.

Ben Lawton made a motion to raise the sum authorized for a truck from \$10,000 to \$14,000. Doug Perkins asked that the decision be deferred and made a motion to defer the purchase. Jeff Whiting noted that 4-wheel drive vehicles are harder to find as snow-season approaches. Others also it would be inadvisable to wait. The motion did not pass. Doug Perkins raised a parliamentary question, arguing that a 2/3 vote was needed to effectively reverse an earlier decision of the Board; Albert Wenta noted the item had not been warned. The motion to raise the cap met the threshold.

The Board then addressed the question of a new bookkeeper; after discussion, Lynne Peck agreed to continue as bookkeeper, having developed a good working relationship with Doug. She admitted that she had resigned the week before, but also believed it would be good for the Board. Sharon Stearns had ideas about how to identify potential bookkeeper candidates who might not read newspaper. On a motion by Ben Lawton, the Board voted to reinstate Lynne Peck as bookkeeper.

Wayne Rausenberger noted that the Board had admitted it had no policy for funding larviciding when grant funds run out, as happened two years ago. He moved that the District should stop all larviciding activity except the light traps. Doug Perkins noted that the District operates under an Integrated Pest Management Plan, and that the State requires that we comply with the Plan; the Plan identifies larviciding as the first measure to be used against mosquitoes. Thus, the District must continue larviciding as appropriate, using other funds if the grant amount has been depleted. Jeff Schumann urged that Wayne's motion be deferred until a budget was prepared, and his motion carried.

Wayne Rausenberger also questioned the change to go from annual to quarterly payments from the towns. There were a number of rationales offered for and against the quarterly system – under the old system, most towns made their payments during the winter, which is the District's inactive season, and those sums had to carry the District through to the end of the next mosquito season. There have been frequent periods of cash shortages. The quarterly system is intended to ensure money for the District at the start of the season. Sharon Stearns raised the question if the billing should be at the start of the quarter rather than the end. Doug Perkins made a motion that the bill be sent at the start of the quarter. The motion passed.

Sharon Stearns had asked for clarification about the 2/3 vote required. This led to disagreement about the parliamentary procedures and Seth Hopkins was asked to intervene, which he did at the Board's request. The upshot was that the question will appear on next month's agenda with two items: a motion to rescind the earlier job description from 2021, and a motion to approve the new job description. Being warned, neither item would require a 2/3 vote.

It was then after 9 o'clock. The Chair noted that Paul Vaczy had requested an Executive Session; Paul agreed that it could wait until next month.

The meeting was then adjourned at 9:08 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Stephen Belcher, Secretary