

BLSG Board Meeting
19 September 2019
Unapproved Minutes

Present: Ben Lawton, Jeff Whiting, Wayne Rausenberger, Brad Lawes, Jeff Smith, Mike Blaisdell, Paul Vaczy, Jeff Schumann (Salisbury Alternate), Steve Belcher, Will Mathis

Guests: Bruce Baccei (Proctor), Tom Hogan (Proctor), Jay Michael (BLSG PR/Lake Dunmore), Rich Russ (Brandon), John Haverstock (Pittsford), John Caper (BLSG)

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:04 pm and guests were introduced.
2. No citizen concerns were raised.
3. The minutes of the meeting of August were amended, by deleting an irrelevant sentence in the description of Proctor activities, and then approved on a motion by Jeff Whiting, seconded by Brad Lawes.

4. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer reported that there are three outstanding invoices to the State for a total of \$14,493.80, and that a fourth would be sent out the next Monday. Previous invoices have been paid, and the \$36,000 taken from the Line of Credit has been paid back.

The BLSG has received the Goshen assessment of \$14,409.90.

As of Sept. 19th, the accounts stood as follows:

General Checking:	\$27,217.63
Equipment/Capital	\$22,228.02
Total:	\$50,445.65

A question was raised about mosquito counts and the use of sampling vs. identifying every insect.

On a motion by Steve Belcher, seconded by Brad Lawes, the report was approved.

5. In the temporary absence of the Operations Director, it was moved and approved to move on to the report on Drone Proposals, presented by Jay Michael.

Jay reported that the effort – a continuation of an initiative launched by the late Art Doty – was experiencing its ups and downs. Initial discussions with the Lemon Fair district were cordial, and there was some commitment to participate in a trial exhibit of drone potential. A date had been settled with a possible supplier for a demonstration on Oct. 17-18.

Less promising were the discussions with the State. The issue is that the State has not authorized the use of drones for the sort of activities that interest the BLSG. It seems very unlikely that the situation will change in the next 12 months, as the State seems to be waiting for others to reach conclusions. It was noted that drones are used in 14 other states.

A further issue is the EPA application rules for the products applied by the BLSG, that may not yet specifically authorize the use of drones to apply larvicide. Here again, other states are using drones. A further question was the drone capacity for liquid or granular products.

John Haverstock noted that a drone would cause less damage in a wetland than the use of the Argo, and there was general consensus that drones were more accurate than helicopters.

The project awaits further information and outreach.

6. BLSG Outreach

Jay Michael noted that 8 articles, titled the 'Brandon Buzz', on BLSG activities had appeared in the Pittsford-Brandon Reporter. BLSG representatives had made an appearance at Pittsford Day and at Lake Dunmore, where they encountered a crowd of several hundred. He suggested following up with a sort of Annual Summary to be mailed out to residents of the participating towns. There was some discussion of the content and its relation to the annual letter sent to the towns for inclusion in the Town Reports.

Ben Lawton thanked Jay for his work.

7. Operations Report

Will Mathis reported that the spraying season had ended. The crew assembled, and they could see their breath: a clear sign it was cold – below the 55 F. that is the lower limit for the products used in the sprayers, and also a temperature at which the mosquitoes retreat into hiding. The trapping numbers of mosquitoes have also dropped below 30/trap, and so do not justify further activity. The sprayers have been removed from the trucks.

The search continues for replacement vehicles for those now too old for service.

Jeff Whiting raised a question about the identification of mosquitoes, and Will Mathis replied that he was planning to restructure much of that operation because of the costs involved. The funds come from the State grant, and the expenses have become great enough that the BLSG will not have adequate funds for an aerial larvicidal treatment in the spring.

This led to the grant requirement for monitoring resistance to treatment in mosquitoes; the State requires examination of two species (see August minutes), one of which is not found in Vermont. James Burditt, the Cornell U. entomologist, was expected the next day (Sept. 20) for examination of local conditions and consultation; there is a program planned in Randolph, at the State Entomological Laboratory. Kerry White has identified nine areas for trapping.

At a later point in the meeting, the Board addressed the bids to replace the roof on the BLSG shed. Two proposals had been submitted, one for \$8,750 and the other for \$7020.31. Members questioned whether the proposals had correctly estimated the number of shingles required for the roof area, and wished further specifications on the shingle quality. Given the need to complete the work before winter, Paul Vaczy, Brad Lawes, Wayne Rausenberger, and Will Mathis were appointed to a committee to request clarification on these details from the bidders, and then to decide on the bidder. The starting date for the work should be in October.

On a motion from Jeff Smith, seconded by Jeff Whiting, the committee was authorized.

8. New business

Ben Lawton noted that he had been involved with the BLSG since 1989, and that he is now transitioning to residence in New Hampshire. He therefore plans to step down as Chair. Elections for the Officers of the BLSG are scheduled for the November meeting.

In connection with this transition, he suggested that the Board needed a person to work full-time, in addition to the voluntary work of the Board members; the obvious choice would be the Operations Director, who would then require a salary increase.

Brad Lawes suggested the preparation of a preliminary budget to cover the costs involved in a Full-Time employee, noting also the activities that might be charged to the State grant. The question of testing returned at this point; it was noted that the amount allocated was originally

capped at \$7,500, but that the cap has been removed.

Ben Lawton noted that Massachusetts and other areas were encountering cases of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (with one fatality in Massachusetts), and were engaged in aerial spraying. Texas had an outbreak of EEE, with 89 deaths and \$50 million in medical care for treatment.

Paul Vaczy noted that Rick Enser has moved out of Salisbury. Jeff Schumann (present at the meeting) is the alternate and has been invited to replace Rick Enser.

9. The meeting was adjourned around 8:40 pm. The next scheduled meeting should come on October 17th.

respectfully submitted,

stephen belcher