

BLSG Board Meeting
20 February 2020
Unapproved Minutes

Present: Wayne Rausenberger, Jeff Whiting, Brad Lawes, Rich Russ, Paul Vaczy, Jeff Schumann, Chad Beckwith, Mike Blaisdell, Steve Belcher

BLSG staff and associates: Will Mathis, Kerry White, John Capen, Jay Michael (PR)

Guests: Tom Hogan, Bruce Baccei

1. The meeting was called to order just after 7:00 pm. Introductions were performed around the table. No citizen concerns were advanced. Rich Russ was introduced as the new Brandon Representative. Chad Beckwith now becomes the Goshen representative, replacing Ben Lawton, who replaces Chad as the Goshen Alternate.

2. On a motion by Jeff Whiting, seconded by Wayne Rausenberger, the minutes of the Nov. 7, 2019 meeting were approved without changes.

3. Will Mathis presented his operations report. Preparations are underway for the upcoming season: applicators are lined up, the permit requests are in process for larviciding. He has yet to arrange for four alert balls to be hung on wires in Leicester, as a prerequisite for aerial treatment using that landing site. There is a good possibility for a used truck which will be further investigated.

On the question of training, the answer was that it would not be necessary, as the hires are currently certified.

On larviciding, the BLSG has enough product on hand for local treatment and up to 2000 acres of aerial treatment, pending release of State funds (\$25,000 are expected). Costs for helicopter treatment vary between \$21/acre (with a minimum of 1000 acres) to \$14.50/acre. After July 1 (the new state fiscal year) the financial picture may change.

On a motion by Wayne Rausenberger, seconded by Jeff Whiting, the Operation Manager's report was approved.

4. Treasurer's Report

Wayne Rausenberger offered the following figures for his report:

General Checking:	\$88,844.69
Equipment replacement/Capital improvement	\$23,232.89
Invoice due from the State:	<u>\$ 1,860.00</u>
Total:	\$113,937.58

Balance on the State FY 2020 grant: \$11,899.81.

He noted that we should receive another \$25,000 from a special allocation voted by the legislature.

On insurance, he noted that the trucks will go back on to full insurance as of April 1. He has received the bill for the Workmen's Comp insurance (which may be reduced); other

insurance bills such liability and buildings will be paid as they come in.

On a motion by Steve Belcher, seconded by Jeff Whiting, the Treasurer's Report was approved.

5. Public Relations Activities

These included two principal points: plans for a visit to the Legislature in April, and a 'Consumer mailing' to be sent to residents of the participating districts following the town meetings.

Kerry White outlined the plans for the BLSG to visit the 'Card Room' in Montpelier in early April, so as to present BLSG activities and purposes to the legislators. Butch Shaw received a party from the BLSG and showed them around. They hope that Board members will join them in Montpelier.

Jay Michaels spoke about the proposed consumer mailing and passed around a mock-up of the document.

There was discussion of the presentation of disease-bearing mosquitoes on the BLSG web-site, since the BLSG has no mandate involving such 'vector' mosquitoes. Steve Belcher insisted that such 'front-line' information, with referrals to specialized web-sites such as the CDC, VDH and AG web-sites were entirely appropriate. Others agreed.

There was some discussion of the possibility of charging individuals for special treatment visits. Here, the terms needed clarification: the BLSG received some 450 requests for treatment over its territory, most of which were simply alerts that the resident was experiencing high-density mosquitoes. Such information is valuable to the District, as it provides a record of the location of mosquito problems and guides placement of traps. Most such requests were handled in the course of the normal spraying routes. Only ten cases were special requests due to private gatherings.

Issues in Salisbury were raised: a group has sent out a mailing, advocating withdrawal from the BLSG. This led to a discussion of financing: if the towns financed the larviciding and no State grant were available, the BLSG budget could leap to over \$300,000 in a bad year like 2017. The assessment for Salisbury would rise to \$59,000.

Jeff Whiting noted that the BLSG would also have to revisit the funding formula, to define each town's acreage treated by larvicide or by adulticide. The wetlands are not spread evenly among the towns. It was also noted that many mosquito species don't breed in swamps and must be treated with adulticide.

The consequences of a withdrawal were discussed: essentially, the town would lose the services of the BLSG, and would face difficulties if it asked to be reinstated. The question was raised whether the interests of the non-voting summer residents of Salisbury were also being considered.

6. Mike Blaisdell presented a report on the New England Mosquito Control Association (NEMCA) meeting. He noted that in the past year, New York and Massachusetts had many cases of Eastern Equine Encephalitis and were forced to mobilize unusual resources. Jeff Whiting noted that 10% of the deer taken in every county in Vermont had tested positive for EEE (the sampling was taken when hunters brought their kills to the F&W stations).

7. Mike Blaisdell passed out a listing of working committees for the BLSG, to be reviewed at a later time.

8. Proposal for the District Coordinator's position

Action on this item awaits approval from town meetings to fund a full-time position.

Kerry White presented a request for a title for the position she occupies, that mingles the responsibilities of ecologist and biologist, but stands out from the sampling activities that she and other employees perform. She submitted a sample job description from a California district.

9. Preparation for Town Meetings

The principal question here was the possibility of a mailing to residents of Salisbury in response to another recent mailing. After some discussion, Jeff Schumann and Jay Michaels were authorized to prepare a document to be mailed to Salisbury residents early in the week of Feb. 24, subject to review by members of the Board.

10. A motion by Wayne Rausenberger and seconded by Mike Blaisdell passed to donate \$100 to the Stephen A. Douglas House for providing us a place to meet again this year passed..

11. New Business

Paul Vaczy passed on a request for the data from the tracking system that has been installed in the trucks for July 2019 for Salisbury. There was some discussion about the format and filtering of that information. When the parameters of the request have been defined, Will Mathis will act on it.

Wayne Rausenberger noted that he has acquired a free computer for the use of the BLSG and requested reimbursement for the \$35 cost of wiping its memory clean. This was agreed by general consensus. He also put in a request to purchase a metal storage cabinet, and this also was agreed by general consensus.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:15 PM. The next scheduled meeting should be at 7:00 pm on March 19th.

Respectfully submitted,
stephen belcher