

Otter Creek Watershed Insect Control District
Board of Trustees Meeting
16 Feb. 2023
Unapproved Minutes

Attendance:

Board: Steve Belcher (Pittsford), Alicia Malay (Pittsford), Brad Lawes (Leicester), Doug Perkins (Leicester), Richard Russ (Brandon), Jeff Schumann (Salisbury)

Guests: Steve Dwinell (VAAF), Patti Casey (VAAF)

Others: Bruce Bacceti (Proctor), Tom Hogan (Proctor), Heidi Willis, Jim Andrews, Wayne Rausenberger

The Chair noted a quorum, although not all towns were represented. The advertised Zoom link was not available due to a problem with the Brandon Senior Citizens Center Wi-Fi.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. The revised Agenda, sent out earlier, was approved.

Members of the public were introduced and made their comments.

Heidi Willis and Jim Andrews had come on behalf of the Salisbury Conservation Commission to inform the Board that they planned to introduce a resolution not to fund adulticide activities in the coming year in Salisbury.

Wayne Rausenberger had questions. First, the Town Report noted that the Lake Dunmore Fern Lake Association had made a donation to fund adulticide operations in Salisbury during the period from the start of the season until July 1 (at which point Salisbury had voted funds). Why was such an option not offered to other residents? Second, the Report notes 16,000 acres of wetlands within the District; what is the treatable area? The State grant allows an average of \$4/acre. The Chair responded that 30% of those wetlands were not treatable from the surface.

The Chair then recognized the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets (VAAF) guests and introduced the Board members. Then Steve Dwinell, the new Director for the VAAF Public Health and Agricultural Resource Management Division (PHARM) offered remarks.

He recounted how it came about that he now holds Cary Giguere's job. Previously, he had worked in Florida (a 30-year career), where mosquito control is a constant and requires considerable resources. He described his role in inter-agency coordination, required especially in 2008 when Florida suffered four back-to-back hurricanes. (Later in the meeting, an illustration of the difference of the scale of mosquito-control operations in Florida and Vermont came in an anecdote: One of Steve Dwinell's former assistants went down to manage the mosquito control operations in Key West. In the first year of the former assistant's management he achieved a \$5 million reduction in costs).

Director Dwinell views mosquito control as a local government activity. The State's role consists is to set the regulatory framework, offer technical support, and then provide oversight through inspections. Mosquito control is the sort of service that is forgotten when it is working.

Director Dwinell noted the new pesticide regulations that will take effect as of Feb. 24, 2023. The District will need two permits. The OCW's current larviciding permit is valid until 2025. The adulticiding permit will need to be issued; the Agency is developing the requirements and application form and will work with the OCW to put together our submission. Director Dwinell is aware of the time constraints if the OCW is to start adult mosquito control May 1st.

Answering questions from Board members, he described the parameters of mosquito control: monitoring populations is central, and control comes when mosquitoes interfere with the quality of life. Mosquito control reduces the populations to a tolerable level; larviciding cannot control all the varied species of mosquitoes, some of which live in woodlands. Continuous monitoring, including many factors beyond the trap results, such as rainfall and temperature, should allow prediction of population spikes requiring treatment.

Patti Casey assured the Board that the VAAFM would continue to offer technical assistance.

The Minutes of the Special Meeting of January 19th were approved.

The Treasurer offered his report. The finances as of January 31:

General Checking	\$50,606.51
Equipment/Capital	\$14,348.36
Legal	\$ 1,014.26
Debit Card:	\$ 700.39
Total available:	\$66,669.52

Current balance available on the State Grant: \$50,091.40

It was noted that 2022 assessment payments from Goshen and Proctor had not yet been recieved but are expected in the very near future.

The Treasurer's Report was approved.

The Chair's report had been distributed by email.

He noted that the court case against the Agency of Natural Resources, involving their decision that the OCW did not need an endangered / threatened species taking permit, had been dismissed. The Environmental Court ruled that they (the Court) did not have jurisdiction in that matter.

The Chair's report was approved.

Unfinished Business

Well/Waste-water for the shed

Brad Lawes reported that the plans for extension of the Brandon water-system down Rte. 73 are in process.

Art Doty Memorial

Richard Russ reported that Ben Lawton (not present) had the materials; action was deferred.

Trifold Brochure

Jeff Schumann reported that the publication price had gone up. A motion to approve payment of \$500 for 1,000 copies was approved.

Final Budget

In November, the Board approved the sum of \$236,329 for the over-all budget and the varying sums for assessments sent to the towns. Actual apportionment of expected expenses required some adjustments based on 2022 year-end final amounts. A large issue was the liability insurance: the company calculates costs on a sample period, that coincided with the OCW period of maximum activity; Brad is working to redefine their measurements, and the OCW may need to change insurance agents. The proposed budget expense revisions were approved.

New Business

Sick Leave Grants

The Board had previously approved granting sick-leave to the employees. The Chair presented the figures involved, and the Board approved the 2023 sick-leave grants.

OCW Web-Site comments

Steve Belcher had visited the sites in the FAQ/Links section and provided his report to the Chair.

Larvicide Mailing

This question arose because the new regulations require public notice before treatment. Under adulticiding, there is a discretionary clause 'other means acceptable to the Secretary' for the means of public notice; this clause is not included in the larviciding section. Director Dwinell noted that as the larviciding permit is active, no immediate action is required.

The Board approved a motion for the Chair, in coordination with the Lemon Fair ICD, to submit a petition to the VAAFMS Secretary for a rule change, adding this clause to the larvicide permit section of the new regulations. Such a petition would, if approved, then be subject to the usual process of rule-making.

Town Meetings

The Chair encouraged all Board members to participate in their Town Meetings.

The Chair then announced a special meeting to be held on Friday, March 3, to review a revised version of the OCW Integrated Pest Management Plan that will be circulated to the Board by email in advance. The Chair wants the Board's approval before submitting the Plan to VAAFMS PHARM.

The meeting adjourned at 7:58 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Stephen Belcher,
Secretary