

Pasco County Mosquito Control District
2308 Marathon Road, Odessa FL 33556
Minutes of Regular Board Meeting
November 12th, 2024

Call to Order

Chairman Evans called the Pasco County Mosquito Control District Board meeting to order at 9:00 A.M.

Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Evans led the Pledge of Alliance to the Flag.

Roll Call

Commissioner Evans called the roll. Chairman Evans, Secretary Abbott and Treasurer Cox were present.

District Staff: Executive Director Rogers, Nick McFaul, Rob Bendall, Edwin Martinez, Jose Freundt, Maria Johnson, Lindsay O'Reilly, and Michele Donagrandi.

Additional attendees: Lina Castro (Invision Advisors), Gary Burden (Southstate Bank), Emily Madison (Citizen), Cathy Julian (Citizen), Laura Donaldson (District Council).

Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Evans motioned to approve the agenda; all approved.

Consent Agenda

Commissioner Cox motioned to approve the consent agenda; all approved.

Public Comment

Commissioner Evans called for public comment.

Emily Madison

Ms. Madison inquired about genetically modified mosquitoes and their potential role in future mosquito control efforts. She mentioned hearing news reports about these mosquitoes being released in the Everglades and the Keys as part of research initiatives. Additionally, Emily shared that she previously relied on burning citronella to repel mosquitoes, but she has found this method to be ineffective lately. Commissioner Abbott recommended that Ms. Madison forward any specific articles or questions to PCMCD for a more detailed response. He also suggested visiting the University of Florida Entomology website for additional mosquito prevention tips.

Director Rogers explained that there are several methods to sterilize mosquitoes, including genetic modification and radiation. She clarified that PCMCD does not currently release genetically modified mosquitoes and has not considered this approach as part of its control strategies. She also noted that the only location in Florida where genetically modified mosquitoes have been released is the Florida Keys, as part of efforts to control a dengue outbreak. Some counties in Florida use radiation to sterilize male *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes, a method that can effectively reduce mosquito populations over time.

Cathy Julian

Ms. Julian offered congratulations to the Commissioners on their election wins. She also commended PCMCD on getting budget issues worked out from previous issues. Cathy mentioned that many citizens were upset that planes from the State of Florida were treating for mosquitoes and confused as to why we would need planes to assist when we have specific equipment designed for aerial treatments that we are not utilizing, stating that from what she could see the helicopters haven't flown since the 8th according to flight aware. Commissioner Cox stated that this was misinformation and asked Director Rogers to clarify why the planes were doing treatment.

Director Rogers explained that following Hurricanes Helene and Milton, the Governor issued an emergency declaration, prompting the Florida Department of Agriculture to activate their Emergency Mosquito Control Incident Response Team (MCIRT) to address the spike in mosquito populations. As part of this effort, 21 counties across the state received treatment. In Pasco County, PCMCD collaborated with Pasco Emergency Management, the Pasco Department of Health, and the Pasco BOCC to treat approximately 148,000 acres on October 25th and 26th. Treatment efforts are still ongoing in Pasco and Hernando counties. She emphasized that these operations come at no cost to the District, as all expenses are covered by the State and FEMA under the Governor's emergency declaration. When asked by Ms. Julian if the District suspends its regular treatment protocol during state-led operations, Director Rogers confirmed that they do not.

New Business

A) Employee of the Quarter presentation

Rob Bendall was presented an award for Employee of the Quarter from Commissioner Evans.

B) FY 2024-2025 Budget Amendment

A budget amendment was presented to the Board for approval following the close of the fiscal year. Notably, a significant adjustment stemmed from a grant awarded to PCMCD totaling \$439,892. This amount represents 21.4% of the \$2,058,568 in total grant funds available for distribution. The grant's inclusion in the budget reflects an important boost to PCMCD's funding, allowing for enhanced operational capabilities and further support equipment for mosquito control initiatives. Commissioner Cox motioned to approve the amended budget, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board. The Budget Amendment was successfully adopted.

C) Board Meeting Planning for 2025

A proposed schedule for the 2025 Board meetings was presented for approval. It was noted that the September meeting dates are listed as TBD, as special districts must wait for the Pasco County School Board and the Pasco Board of County Commissioners to finalize their schedules before setting their own. Commissioner Cox motioned to approve the board meeting dates, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

January 21 st , 2025 – 9 a.m.	July 15 th , 2025 – 9 a.m.
February 18 th , 2025 – 9 a.m.	August 19 th , 2025 – 9 a.m.
March 11 th , 2025 – 9 a.m.	September - TBD
April 15 th , 2025 – 9 a.m.	October 21 st , 2025 – 9 a.m.
May 13 th , 2025 – 9 a.m.	November 12 th , 2025 – 9 a.m.
June 24 th , 2025 – 9 a.m.	December 16 th , 2025 – 9 a.m.

Unfinished Business

A) District Banking Services Discussion

Commissioner Cox presented the Board with a recommendation for the selected vendor for banking services, following a review, and ranking of responses to the RFP. The RFP received five responses from TD Bank, SouthState Bank, JP Morgan Chase, Truist, and Service1st. The evaluation committee included Adriane Rogers (Executive Director), Jose Freundt (Finance Director), and Commissioner Michael Cox (Treasurer). After careful review, the committee shortlisted two vendors, Truist and SouthState Bank, and invited them for in-person presentations at the District office. SouthState Bank was ultimately selected due to its competitive offering of the Federal Fund Rate minus 33 basis points, customer service, as well as its strong local presence in Pasco County.

Commissioner Cox disclosed a personal banking relationship with SouthState and offered to recuse himself from the vote if deemed a conflict of interest. Legal counsel clarified that as long as he does not own more than 5% of the bank, there was no conflict.

Commissioner Abbott inquired about SouthState's local branches. Gary Burden, a representative from SouthState, confirmed locations in Trinity, Dade City, Zephyrhills, Palm Harbor, Oldsmar, and Dunedin. Additionally, Burden confirmed that SouthState is qualified to serve government entities and has a dedicated government banking branch.

Truist was ultimately eliminated due to persistent customer service issues, particularly during their platform transition, which significantly impacted the District's operations.

Commissioner Cox motioned to approve the transition of the banking relationship to SouthState Bank, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

B) Board Composition Discussion

At a previous Board meeting, Director Rogers was tasked with determining the cost of holding a county-wide special election. After consulting with Supervisor of Elections Brian Corley, it was estimated that the cost would be approximately \$1.2 million. Given the high expense, it was deemed neither feasible nor in the best interest of the District's funds. Director Rogers was also asked to collaborate with the County GIS department to create a proposed map for a three-member district board, ensuring equal representation based on population. The map was developed using county address data, which is more current than census information. The proposed map outlined three districts: west, central, and east Pasco County. Additionally, two alternative maps were presented for consideration, each proposing a five-member districted board. These maps aligned with either the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) seats or the Pasco County School Board seats. Laura Donaldson, the District's legal counsel, reviewed draft legislation she had prepared, outlining several options for restructuring the Board. After an in-depth discussion, the Board identified specific proposals to present to the legislative delegates for further consideration and potential approval.

General Information

A) New Campus Update, Invision Advisors

Lina from Invision reported that the Invitation to Bid is currently being revised to reflect updated schedule changes. Within the next month, the finalized bid package, including all notification documents, will be issued. In parallel, efforts will begin to secure funding for the new facility, coordinate owner-provided work, and establish site work contracts. Additionally, due to project delays, the team will need to reapply for permits to ensure compliance.

B) Director's Report and District Operations, A. Rogers

In honor of Veteran's Day, a certificate of appreciation was given to Commissioner Evans for his years of service.

The Pasco One Health Alliance meeting was postponed due to the hurricanes. While a new date has not been finalized, we are aiming for early January. We are currently coordinating with our speakers and will send out invitations as soon as details are confirmed.

Hurricanes Helene and Milton significantly impacted Pasco County, with Helene bringing a 12-foot tidal surge that created extensive mosquito habitats, including debris from damaged homes. Fortunately, clear, and dry weather after Helene allowed for extensive aerial larviciding, preventing a surge in adult mosquitoes. This contrasted with Hurricane Debby, where continuous rain hindered mosquito control efforts, leading to a spike in service requests and mosquito populations. Less than two weeks later, Hurricane Milton hit as a Category 5 storm, causing up to 18 inches of rain and unprecedented river flooding, leaving some neighborhoods submerged for weeks. During the storm, the Aquatics team assisted emergency services with water rescues, marking a first for the District in such efforts. Since the storms, the District has ramped up aerial mosquito control operations, treating over 7,800 acres after Helene and more than 21,000 acres following Milton. Despite high demand, pilot safety remains a priority to avoid fatigue-related risks during low-altitude flights. To manage the workload, the District leveraged additional resources to support its aerial operations.

In response to an outbreak of dengue fever (DENV) in the Moon Lake area, where seven cases have been confirmed, PCMCD launched an extensive mosquito control effort across a 4-mile by 2.3-mile zone. This outbreak is believed to have been present but undetected until a resident sought medical attention. Efforts included immediate deployment of ULV trucks, aerial and ground larviciding, and door-to-door inspections to eliminate mosquito habitats and educate residents. Press releases and media campaigns were also utilized to raise public awareness. Despite these efforts, the neighborhood presents significant challenges, including widespread habitat for *Aedes aegypti*, the primary dengue vector. The area contains numerous abandoned, damaged homes and makeshift dwellings, with many residents unable or unwilling to seek medical care or cooperate with mosquito control. Staff encountered substantial resistance, with many properties denying access despite visible mosquito breeding sites. Additionally, over 5 tons of discarded tires, prime mosquito breeding grounds, were removed. Recognizing the inadequacy of ground applications alone, PCMCD quickly adapted its aerial equipment to apply liquid larvicide, conducting one successful treatment before preparations for Hurricane Helene temporarily paused operations.

C) Community Outreach and Education Report, M. Johnson

Presented to the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Trinity Oaks Women's Association, highlighting PCMCD's mosquito control efforts and community engagement initiatives. Participated in a local blood drive and health fair, furthering outreach efforts to promote public health and wellness. Karen Mojica, Public Education Specialist, conducted five interactive school programs, educating students on mosquito biology, prevention methods, and the importance of mosquito control. Distributed mosquito repellents at various events to help residents protect themselves against mosquito-borne illnesses. The final tour of the year is scheduled for December 9th, providing an opportunity for the public to learn about the District's operations. PCMCD will also take part in two community parades in December, reinforcing its presence and commitment to community involvement.

D) Safety Report, N. McFaul

Nick McFaul reported no safety or incidents this month.

E) Arbovirus Report, A. Prasuskas

Director Rogers provided a summary of the arboviral activity throughout the state and within Pasco County. In 2024, PCMCD responded to 53 positive sentinel chicken tests and 52 suspected human arbovirus cases reported by the Department of Health (DOH). Responses to these cases are initiated based on suspicion rather than waiting for confirmatory testing, which can take weeks. Each case triggers a rigorous arboviral response, including surveillance and control efforts that may last over six weeks and cover large geographical areas, straining District resources. The increased workload involves setting and monitoring 44 additional traps, identifying mosquitoes, and conducting extensive

treatment applications. This requires more staff time, products, dry ice, fuel, and equipment maintenance, diverting focus from controlling nuisance species. Often, the District does not receive confirmation on whether suspected cases are positive, yet resources remain committed for extended periods. Director Rogers has been advocating for dedicated funding to support arbovirus response efforts, noting that while FEMA provides funding for natural disaster responses, no similar mechanism exists for public health crises. Efforts are underway to calculate the average cost of comprehensive responses and explore funding avenues through collaboration with the FMCA's legislative committee. Although PCMCD has budget reserves for such emergencies, these funds may need to be utilized this year.

Good of the Order

Commissioner Evans praised the staff for their excellent work in managing all activities and effectively communicating important messages about public health and safety.

Upcoming Meetings and Events

Commissioner Evans reported on dates of upcoming meetings as part of the Agenda with the following:

- A. Regular Board Meetings (9 AM unless otherwise noted)
 - • December 10, 2024
 - • January 2025- TBD
 - • February 2025- TBD
- B. Events
 - • Thanksgiving Day & Day after Thanksgiving – November 23 & 24, 2024
 - • PCMCD Public Tour- December 4, 2024
 - • Festival of Lights & Christmas Parade– December 7, 2024

Meeting Adjournment

Commissioner Evans motioned to adjourn the meeting at 12:27 P.M.; all approved.

Meeting Adjourned.

Date: 12/10/2024
Attested: 