

Minutes of Board Meeting  
Pasco County Mosquito Control District  
2308 Marathon Road, Odessa, FL 33556  
October 16, 2023

Regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners was called to order at the District office on October 16, 2023, at 9:00 A.M.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

Those present from the District were Chairperson Cox, Treasurer Abbott, Secretary Evans, Executive Director Rogers, Nick McFaul, Michele Donagrandi, Jamie Black, and Maria Johnson, all representing the PCMCD. Andrew Pupke from InVision Advisors was also present.

**Approval of Agenda:** Commissioner Cox asked to modify the agenda, removing the item under *Unfinished Business* (Benefits Discussion), as there was no update to discuss at this time. Commissioner Abbott motioned to approve the agenda as amended; all approved.

**Approval of Consent Agenda:** Commissioner Evans motioned to approve the consent agenda; all approved.

**Public Comment:** Rebecca Yuengling stated that she was commenting on some records that have come through and watched the district at the Legislative Delegation meeting earlier in the month. She stated that even though the district is a taxing district it's unsure if the taxing authority would go to the BOCC and that a lot of what was said was not factual. She also commented on the Director's salary and the budget for build-out of the new campus and stated that it's going to be more expensive. She also stated that people don't like to speak up in the county because their jobs get canceled when they do, including a few employees that used to work for the district that have spoken out and they have been canceled. She wants to give people of Pasco their voice back.

Chairman Cox responded by talking about the process for building projects, stating the district underwent an additional step to get a preliminary budget number early on that most entities do not go through. This is the process he talked to the delegates about at the meeting referenced and subsequent conversations with the representatives to clarify their understanding of the project, as there is a lot of information being put out on social media is just not factual.

Ms. Duffy spoke up regarding increasing taxes and said mosquito control doesn't do any good and should be cut. She then stated that the district is buying helicopters with no place to store them and "mosquitoes won't be living here either because it will be all concrete". She continued to comment on the diminishing bee population and that things need to be cut.

Cathy Julian asked about the cash the district has on hand and bond that might be needed for completion of the new campus. She asked Commissioner Cox to comment. He then stated that the sale of the district's existing campus is being considered and informed Ms. Julian of the amount of cash the district has on hand they have been building up for the project with the intent for a lease-purchase agreement for the remainder of the cost. The reason for this is that the new complex will serve people who are not even born yet. Future generations should help pay for the complex that has a 40 or 50+ year life span, so the Board has decided to finance the rest of the cost. She then asked if we started taking bids on the current property and then asked questions about the helicopters and pilots on staff. She wrapped up her comments by stating that she feels it is coincidental that her house has never before had a mosquito control helicopter near it and all of a sudden, after she started attending the district's meetings, the helicopter has been near her house twice.

**New Business:**

- A. Executive Director Rogers presented the Board with a summary of the 2023 merit-based performance allowance for staff.

## Unfinished Business:

- A. Benefits Discussion – This item was removed from the agenda at the beginning of the meeting as there was no new information to present at this time.

## General Information:

- A. Campus Update: Andrew Pupke presented an update on the campus design, the progression of events, and associated timeline. He stated that the architect engineer team has completed their 30% of the Construction Documents and IVA will be meeting with district staff to review the documents within the next week. Spring Engineering, Inc. has come to an agreement with FDOT on the roadway improvements. He also reported that AV/IT vendor discussions have begun, and the environmental survey has been completed. Commissioner Evans asked about further impacts to the timeline and stated that it's good to have a second and third look at the documents, even if it delays the project more.
- B. District Operations:
  - a. Executive Rogers stated that the highly anticipated OPPAGA review/special district accountability performance audit has been completed and the agency has published their findings. She continued to state that it was unfortunate that citizens who might be concerned about district operations and whether PCMCD is being a good steward of taxpayer money do not stay for the full meeting to become informed on factual information the district is involved in. The findings of the expansive, state-mandated, third-party evaluation of the district through OPPAGA were complementary of the district overall and showed that the district is, in fact, operating as a good steward of taxpayer money. The report recognized the challenges that the PCMCD faces in serving an area with extremely high (human) population growth and urban development, necessitating the need for multiple forms of mosquito control and growth of the district. The report showed that the revenue and expenditure trends are attributed to that continued growth in development of the county and expenses associated with the expansion of services to accommodate new developments, which continue to increase. The OPPAGA report stated that additional increases are necessary to meet the needs of the extremely fast-growing population in the near future and that it is NOT recommended that district operation should be consolidated within any other entity in Pasco. The report had a recommendation to continue to proceed with its strategic plan development and highlighted the district in its innovative and cost-saving efforts to fabricate equipment in-house rather than purchasing off-the-shelf items at a higher cost and the assistance the district has provided other districts, while being leaders in the industry in efficiencies. And lastly, the report called on the Florida Legislatures to consider amending its policies to provide more opportunity to assist mosquito control district in waste tire abatement activities and for the Florida Coordinating Council on Mosquito Control to work toward standardizing formal goals for the entire mosquito control industry in the state.
  - b. Executive Director Rogers then mentioned that operational changes that have been made this season have been effective and an improvement to mosquito reduction overall. The staff have been finding new mosquito production sites, larger treatment sites have been identified and added, the use of UAS/drones have been implemented, all of these expansions have helped the district become more comprehensive and expand services. As a result, customer service requests have been reduced and adult mosquito trap counts are lower overall.
  - c. Ms. Johnson provided an update on community engagement and outreach activities. Commissioner Evans asked if we are printing the OPPAGA report to distribute to Legislators, as the report highlights PCMCD's efficiencies and our efforts to save taxpayer money, showing we are good stewards of their money. Commissioner Cox discussed exploring the possibility of providing continuing education credits for the medical community or other groups, which may increase attendance.

- C. Safety Reports: Executive Director Rogers informed the Board that there were no safety issues to report within the last month.
- D. Arbovirus Report: Research and Surveillance Director Prasauskas provided an update on the arboviral activity throughout the state and within Pasco County. Executive Director Rogers reinforced the importance of mosquito control to prevent the spread of mosquito-borne disease and that this is the information the members of the public really need to be aware of. Pasco has had travel-related disease cases identified and the district always responds very quickly to reduce mosquitoes to a level that does not sustain local transmission. Two human cases of EEE have been identified in North FL this year, which has the highest mortality rate among the mosquito-borne diseases we are combatting. The district was formed to protect public health, not just improve quality of life by reducing mosquito pressure to make it more enjoyable to be outside, but to prevent the very real threat of mosquito-borne disease in our community. This is the information we need to share with the citizens of Pasco County. There was then discussion on the incidence of mosquito-borne disease worldwide and reference to a survey that was conducted which showed most mosquito control programs or areas of concern are not sufficiently prepared to respond to a disease outbreak. Unfortunately, history has shown that it isn't until an outbreak occurs that the federal, state, and local governments then realize the need for mosquito control efforts and dedicate funding to combat the outbreak. This is very reactive. Mosquito control programs across the globe should be increasing their capabilities in order to appropriately respond to these threats and become more proactive. PCMCD works proactively to combat mosquitoes in the immature stage, before they become fly and biting adults with the potential to spread disease and responds rapidly to any potential threat identified. Commissioner Cox stated that the steps the district has taken, the efforts Executive Director has requested of putting an emphasis on community engagement and outreach is really starting to resonate with people. He continued to state that people in the community are discussing it and our efforts are needed.

**Good of the Order:**

- A. Commissioner Evans stated that he conducted his evaluation on Executive Director Rogers and thanked her for the efforts over the past twelve months. He also recognized the efforts the staff have put in that make the district look good, referencing two employees who won the Florida Mosquito Control Association's Jim Robinson Award last fall for their innovations. He also stated that district staff present their work at the annual conferences and there are a lot of talented people at the PCMCD, they are awesome and deserve the raise their Executive Director gives them!
- B. Commissioner Cox stated that one outstanding item that requires discussion is what the Board will do with the existing campus. There have been discussions with Berkshire Hathaway to get a preliminary estimate on what the property is worth, at this time, investing in a full appraisal is not warranted because it is not yet time to sell. He also commented on the upcoming meeting district staff have scheduled to meet with the Pasco Economic Development Council and they should be involved with the marketing of the property. The Board discussed the options for keeping part of the property so that the district can maintain its landing zone in the southwest corner of the county. There is a consensus of the Board to keep a presence in the Southwest Pasco area, and more importantly, to maintain the landing zone for efficiencies in aerial operations, which translates to cost-savings for the district.

**Meeting Adjourned:**

Commissioner Evans made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:42 A.M., all approved. Meeting Adjourned.

Date: 11/08/2023

Attested: \_\_\_\_\_

