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THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
STATE RECLAMATION & MOSQUITO CONTROL BOARD

**EAST MIDDLESEX MOSQUITO CONTROL PROJECT
SUFFOLK COUNTY MOSQUITO CONTROL PROJECT**

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**East Middlesex Mosquito Control Commission, Executive Committee
Suffolk County Mosquito Control Commission
Meeting Minutes**

November 29, 2022

Zoom Video Conferencing Platform

In attendance:

Brian Farless, Superintendent for East Middlesex Mosquito Control Project (EMMCP) and Suffolk County Mosquito Control Project (SCMCP). David Henley, Administrative Coordinator for EMMCP and SCMCP. Representing the East Middlesex Mosquito Control Commission (EMMCC) is Lenny Izzo, chair, Wellesley; Wendy Robinson, Cambridge; Tony Kiszewski, Concord. Representing the Suffolk County Mosquito Control Commission (SCMCC) is Chris Busch, Julien Farland and Leslie Karnes.

Brian Farless called the meeting to order at 1:08.

1. EMMCC and SCMCC to review and approve minutes from the April 11, 2022 meeting.

For East Middlesex, Tony Kiszewski made a motion to approve the April 11, 2022 minutes, Lenny Izzo seconded, by roll call, all were in favor.

For Suffolk County, Leslie Karnes made a motion to approve the April 11, 2022 minutes, Julien Farland seconded, by roll call, all were in favor.

2. Review the 2022 mosquito season.

The 2022 summer was very dry. The following data came from US Drought Monitor (National Drought Mitigation Center, NOAA, US Dept of Ag). On the May 10th report, Suffolk County and parts of Middlesex County were experiencing a mild drought (D0 Abnormally Dry). May 17, all of Middlesex County was at the D0 level. May 24, Suffolk County and parts of Middlesex County were at D1 Moderate Drought. July 12, much of the area was raised to D2 Severe Drought. August 9, both districts were in D3 Extreme Drought. By the September 6th report, the districts had gotten some rain and were slowly coming out of Extreme Drought. As of the November 22 report, both districts are still at the D0 Abnormally Dry level.

Since the drought didn't start until May, there were plenty of spring species. As for our most abundant mosquito species, *Coquillettidia perturbans*, populations were normal until late July. Since Cq.

perturbans spend almost one year in their larval stages and are found in more permanent water sources, their populations weren't affected by the drought early on, but then the hot and dry weather caused their populations to crash by late July. By the end of the summer, much of the Cq. perturbans habitat dried out completely which will result in their populations to be lower than normal during 2023. Cq. perturbans is our main bridge vector for EEE. Another important mosquito in the EEE cycle is Culiseta melanura. This mosquito species also spends close to a year in their larval stages. Since much of this habitat was also affected by the drought, Cs. melanura numbers will likely be lower than normal during 2023.

No EEE was found in MA in mosquitoes or any other animals during 2022. WNV was first found in a mosquito pool on July 25, 2022. There tends to be more WNV during hot/dry years, but that fortunately didn't happen this year. To date, there have been 8 humans in MA found with WNV during 2022, one of them was travel related. No other animals tested positive for WNV.

East Middlesex and Suffolk County experienced seasonal staffing shortages for the 2022 summer. Since it was dry and the full-time staff wasn't doing as much larval control in wetlands and adult mosquito control, they were able to help with catch basin applications.

3. Discuss FY23 COLA and step raises for eligible employees.

Brian gave summaries of each employee's work performance and reviewed their salary step schedules. After discussions, the commissions decided to give a 2% COLA for all positions, and step increases for three employees.

For East Middlesex, Tony Kiszewski made a motion to give a 2% Cost of Living Adjustment to all positions retroactive to July 1, 2022. Lenny Izzo seconded, by roll call, all were in favor.

For East Middlesex, Lenny Izzo made a motion to drop Step 1 and Step 2 from the Entomologist salary schedule and then add a new Step 7 and Step 8, and then move Doug Bidlack to Step 7 on his anniversary date of February 17, 2023. Tony Kiszewski seconded, by roll call, all were in favor.

For East Middlesex, Tony Kiszewski made a motion to move Peter Mirata to Field Technician, Grade 2, Step 4, retroactive to his anniversary date on September 30, 2022. Lenny Izzo seconded, by roll call, all were in favor.

For Suffolk County, Chris Busch made a motion to give a 2% Cost of Living Adjustment to all positions retroactive to July 1, 2022. Julien Farland seconded, by roll call, all were in favor.

For Suffolk County, Julien Farland made a motion to move Sean Wilson to Skilled Equipment Operator, Grade 2, Step 6, retroactive to his anniversary date on August 24, 2022. Chris Busch seconded. By roll call, Julien Farland and Chris Busch voted to approve, Leslie Karnes abstained, the motion passes.

4. Updates –

a) On October 17, Stoneham voted to join EMMCP.

Brian reported that at Stoneham's Special Town Meeting on October 17, 2022, the article to join the East Middlesex Mosquito Control Project passed by a majority vote. At the State Reclamation and

Mosquito Control Board's (SRMCB) meeting on December 1, 2022, agenda item number 3 is 'Approval to add Stoneham as a member to the East Middlesex Mosquito Control Project'. Once Stoneham is officially a member, Stoneham will nominate a commissioner to sit on the East Middlesex Commission. Mosquito control services will start during the 4th quarter of FY23.

When a non-member municipality is exploring whether or not they want to join the East Middlesex Mosquito Control Project, the Project will give them information explaining services offered, funding/budgeting mechanisms, commission structure, and any other material that is relevant.

The following language is meant to give to a prospective member community. There has been one change which has been marked by a strikethrough, followed by the new language. This change is being made because the EMMCC doesn't approve a town into the Project, only the SRMCB officially approves a municipality into a mosquito control district.

Admitting a new member community

If a city or town requests admittance to the EMMCP following approval by a town meeting or other legally established municipal mechanism and that community has provided written notification of their approval to the SRMCB and to the EMMCP, then the EMMCC/ Executive Committee may ~~consider whether to approve admitting the petitioning community to the EMMCP~~ choose to provide a letter of support or opposition to the SRMCB.

The factors that should be considered by the EMMCC/ Executive Committee include:

- 1. Allowing admittance will be mutually beneficial to the EMMCP communities and the petitioning community.*
- 2. The petitioning community has indicated that it intends to be a long-term stable member of the EMMCP.*

b) Executive Order 594 – 1) Electric Vehicle (EV) First Acquisition program 2) rightsizing of the fleet to improve utilization

Brian reported on Executive Order 594 and how it will affect the Projects.

Electric Vehicles

Any new vehicle we purchase has to be an EV unless there is sufficient justification as to why an EV won't work for our operations.

The current hurdles to this include vehicle shortages and needing to install charging stations.

East Middlesex has a 2007 Ford Ranger that needs wheel bearings in order to pass inspection. This truck also runs very rough and likely has some other major issues. It would be a good idea to replace rather than fixing this truck. Brian reported that the only EV truck available to us right now is the Ford Lightning, which is too big for our needs. Using a 4-door sedan with a trailer hitched bike rack could work for the seasonal staff. Brian reached out to the state's Nissan Leaf vendor and reported that they

currently don't have this vehicle available for government fleets. The vendor doesn't have a timeline as to when vehicles will become available. Brian will continue to periodically reach out to the vendors and once there is a sufficient EV available, he'll get a quote and provide it to the EMMCC.

For our needs, a 240 V charging station would be ideal. Brian will get more information on this and will report back to the commission.

Rightsizing

SRMCB currently has 137 vehicles and the Office of Vehicle Management (OVM) is asking us to eliminate 20 vehicles, which is about 15%. OVM said this will be an ongoing process and to expect more rightsizing throughout the years. The vehicles that they take will be auctioned off and the SRMCB won't receive any of the money.

In 2017, OVM approved Suffolk County (0900) to add a fourth vehicle to the fleet after a second full-time staff member was hired. With that addition, both full-time workers have a vehicle, and then there are two vehicles for the 3 or 4 seasonal staff to share.

For East Middlesex (1600), other than the one-ton dump truck, there are 7 vehicles. There are four full-time staff members that need their own vehicles to maximize the amount of work we can accomplish each day. That leaves three vehicles for the 5 or 6 seasonal staff to share.

4 EMMCP vehicles and 2 SCMCP vehicles have been declared by OVM as underutilized. The underutilized vehicles are the vehicles that the seasonal staff uses 3-3.5 months per year. If we lose one vehicle for either Project, we won't be able to do as much work. The seasonal staff is tasked with applying larvicide to catch basins. This activity targets the primary West Nile virus (WNV) vector in Massachusetts. If we lose a vehicle, fewer catch basins will have larvicide applied, therefore increasing the risk for the residents of the EMMCP and SCMCP of getting infected with WNV.

c) office building leases

Brian gave an update on the building leases. EMMCP and SCMCP went out to bid in January of 2022 for a combined office space, and two proposals were received. Both proposals were much higher than what we currently pay, far too high for consideration. Since the real estate market has been very high over the past year, we've been waiting for it to cool off before going back out to bid.

Each Project will enter another 1-year lease, as seen below:

SCMCP – October 1, 2022 - September 30, 2023

EMMCP – January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023

d) unmanned aircraft systems (drones)

Brian gave updates on drones.

Using a drone to capture imagery will be very beneficial for determining the locations of mosquito habitat. The Projects know where wetlands are, but with rain, drought, beavers and ditch blockages, the

shape of the wetlands change. The drone will also help in determining the location of blockages that are creating mosquito habitat.

As of now, mosquito control districts aren't allowed to use drones. In preparation for using drones, should the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture (MDAR) approve the use of drones, here are the steps for preparing employees to be able to work with drones.

Passing the Part 107 test to become a Remote Pilot is the first step. This test must be taken at an FAA testing facility – cost is \$175.

After passing Part 107, taking a hands-on class working with drones and software would be the next step.

If MDAR approves the use of drones to capture imagery and staff are trained to use drones and related software, we will then need to purchase a drone.

After discussion, EMMCC and SCMCC thought using drones would benefit the Projects and thought it seemed appropriate to start learning about drones and getting employees certified and trained so we can be ready to start should MDAR approve us to use drones to capture imagery.

5. New business

A past Director of the Framingham Board of Health, Bob Cooper, passed away. Dave and Lenny talked about their relationship with Bob and mentioned that he was very involved in public health/mosquito control and that it was a pleasure working with him over the years.

6. Public comment.

Nobody from the public was in attendance.

7. Adjourn.

For EMMCC, Tony Kiszewski made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Lenny Izzo seconded, by roll call, all were in favor.

For SCMCC, Julien Farland made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Chris Busch seconded, by roll call, all were in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 2:56.