



**THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS**  
**The State Reclamation and Mosquito Control Board**  
**NORFOLK COUNTY MOSQUITO CONTROL DISTRICT**  
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**ROBIN L. CHAPELL** **NORMAN P. JACQUES** **RICHARD J. POLLACK, PHD** **LINDA R. SHEA** **KYLEE C. SULLIVAN**  
Commissioners

**DAVID A. LAWSON**  
Director

**CAROLINE E. HAVILAND**  
Field Operations Manager

**January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024, Regular Meeting Minutes of The Norfolk  
County Mosquito Control District Commission**  
*Held by Zoom Conference*

**Commissioners present:** Robin Chapell, Norman Jacques, Richard Pollack, Linda Shea, Kylee Sullivan

**Commissioners absent:**

**Quorum:** A quorum was established.

**Others in attendance:** David Lawson – Director, Caroline Haviland - Field Operations Manager, Lisa Golden – Administrative Assistant

**Note taker:** Lisa Golden

1) **Call to Order – Establishment of Quorum.** The meeting was called to order at 1:00 P.M. by Chair Chapell.

2) **Agenda Item: Introduction of Lisa Golden, Administrative Assistant:**

3) **Agenda Item: Public Comment:** No public comment was made.

4) **Agenda Item: Approval of the minutes of the December 7th, 2023, Commission Meeting:**

**Action:** The minutes of the December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Commission meeting were unanimously approved on a motion by Commissioner Shea, second by Commissioner Jacques, with a roll call vote.

5) **Agenda Item: Employee Recruiting update:**

The Director updated the Commission on the hiring process for Field Technician positions. The Directory informed the Commission that historically, the district has carried 7 Field Technicians and

are currently down to 5. The Director posted positions in December on MassCareers in the hopes of hiring 2 individuals. The Director informed the Commission that 15 applications were received. Out of the 15 applicants 4 were contacted. Of the 4, 1 applicant withdrew and 3 have not responded. Strategies moving forward: The Director spoke with the HR Liaison for assistance and was advised to repost the Field Technician openings on MassCareers. The Field Operations Manager stated that the positions have been posted on Norfolk Agricultural School's job page, on the Indeed site, and on the NCMCD Facebook page. The Chair Asked about surrounding county districts to see if they had any leads or input. The Field Operations Manager stated that local colleges will also be contacted and explored.

**6) Agenda Item: Budget Overview**

**a) Overview of FY 2024**

Currently, the FY 2024 estimated rollover into FY2025 is very fluid at this point. The projected rollover is high. The primary factors are the delayed hiring of Field Technician(s) and the possibility that budgeted funds for new vehicles may not be expended before the end of the fiscal year. Financially, the District is in great shape.

**b) Projections for FY 2025**

The Director stated that based on projected Field Technician staffing adjustments, the initial budget proposal sent to SRMCB was 2.5%. There are a lot of unknowns in the coming years in regard to vehicle purchases with EV mandates in play which will likely have significant impacts on budgets and projections.

**Action:** The Budget Overview report was unanimously approved on a motion by Commissioner Sullivan, second by Commissioner Shea, with a roll call vote.

**7) Agenda Item: Field work overview**

The Director shared the Field Work Accomplished report with the Commission. The Director noted that there is higher ULV due to the elevated rain through the summer. The Director states that everything else is tracking similar to previous years.

**Action:** The Fieldwork Overview report was unanimously approved on a motion by Commissioner Pollak, second by Commissioner Shea, with a roll call vote.

**8) Agenda Item: Resistance Testing updates**

The Director informed the Commission that he recently gave Matt Osborn, who oversees the lab at DPH, a tour of the facility. Matt Osborn is trying to work with SRB to push the point that we need to be proactive and discover if the current product is working on the targeted species. The Director is anticipating a meeting within the next week or two to attempt to coordinate some studies on resistance. Chair Chapell asked about other districts' resistance testing. The Director reports that Cornell had worked with Plymouth County, however, this ended due to the Cornell group not wanting to sign a contract. Matt Osborn is concerned about studying the efficacy of

spraying. Commissioner Pollack notes that some data coming from the Cornell lab does not make sense. He also indicates an urgency to be more proactive and do the study in house vs. using outside group. The Director reports that there is some evidence of resistance to Qlex (sp) across the northeast region and that this resistance is not isolated to Massachusetts. Chair Chapell suggests pooling data with other Districts. Commissioner Pollack notes that if resistance is found in a lab study you are more likely to find it in a field study, but not always.

Action: No action taken.

**9) Agenda Item: Discussion of Pending Legislative Bills**

The Director noted that there has been no new information regarding the pending legislative bills since February of 2023 when bills were sent to committee.

Action: No action taken.

**10) Agenda Item: Update on EV First and Fleet Rightsizing initiatives from OVM**

The Field Operations Manager informed the Commission that they are looking for other vehicles but that the quota for turning in other non-EV's had not been met. The Field Operations Manager stated that NCMCD has not offered to give anything else up at this time. She states that vehicles need to be replaced, but not replacements need to be EV. Chair Chapell recommended acquiring what the district needs and deal with consequences. The Director states that at the last OVM meeting it was made clear that the purchase of needed non-EV vehicles would not be allowed. The Director states that SRB reminded districts that they need to turn in non-EV before they will be approved for new vehicles. The Field Operations Manager states maintenance is being done on existing vehicles and that these do not have high mileage. She is concerned that the brush truck may need to be replaced. The Field Operations Manager discussed the need for restructuring of the property to make it suitable for the installation of EV charging station(s). The Field Operations Manager is hopeful to have submitted grants to cover some or all the cost of the restructuring on the property and to have received quotes for EV by the next Commission Meeting. She is hopeful that moving forward this year we will have the infrastructure for EV and have one EV in the fleet.

Action: No action taken.

**11) Agenda Item: Policy Review Update on Instituting a Probationary Period**

Commissioner Shea stated that she likes the Plymouth and Central Districts policies regarding probationary periods as there are not many requirements and are direct. She feels that a 6 month probationary period is too long. The Director states that in discussions with Paige Jones, HR Deputy Director and Jessica H. Burgess, General Counsel, State Reclamation and Mosquito Control Board that employees are not confidential and are un-classified. Because we are non-union employees, we are therefore at-will employees. The Director and Commissioner Shea discussed "without prejudice" verbiage in document. Commissioner

Sullivan notes that the Plymouth District's verbiage is confusing in respect to the probationary period. She states that the goal of the probationary period is to make sure that a hire is a good fit for both employer and employee. Commissioner Sullivan feels that the Central District's verbiage is more concise and feels that including the Commission in the document is important for supporting decisions. Commissioner Shea feels that a new employee should not be eligible for a raise after 2 months of employment. Chair Chapell feels that this could be added to the policy. The Director states that the question is whether a person is hired 2 months prior to July 1 should they be eligible for a step increase at the start of a new FY. He feels that instead COLA can be offered but not the step increase. Commissioner Shea feels that new hires need to be employed for a specific amount of time before they become eligible for their step increase. Chair Chapell suggests that a 9 month period of employment prior to end of FY to be eligible for step increase. Commissioner Sullivan states that 6 months would be more appropriate. Both Chair Chapell and Commissioner Shea agree with Commissioner Sullivan. The Director offers the following to be added to the district's policy "3-month probation period upon hire. New Employees are not eligible for a step increase until they have worked for 6 months from their hire date. Employees will accrue vacation time." Dave will construct a tentative policy for approval at the next Commission Meeting and will also submit it to Jessica Burgess for her to review for proper verbiage.

The Commission asked the Director to seek an answer from HR/Legal on whether the Commission had the flexibility to institute a probationary policy or not. \*Did DL do this?

**Action:** The Director will compose new policy for review at the next Commission meeting.

## **12) Agenda Item: Question regarding MGT pay scale review/update**

The Director shared with the Commission that he did not feel that Paige Jones was in favor of the MGT proposal. Commissioner Shea feels that the Commission needs to push back about approving and hiring MGT to manage the pay scale review. Chair Chapell feels that we need to make sure that we are not choosing people arbitrarily, that we can hire knowledgeable staff, and that we stay competitive in our region. Both Chair Chapell and Commissioner Shea feel that we should be pushing back and insist on the offered MGT contract. The Director states that there was a separate email sent to Paige Jones asking her what resources she had to support the development of a pay scale and, if not, what would be the time frame to do so. Paige stated that she is working with her colleagues in HR to come up with something. The Director states that he is curious to see what they come up with and wonders if we should be waiting for them or not. Chair Chapell feels that we should not wait for HR, but feels that instead the Commission needs to inform Paige that they have decided to hire MGT. Commissioner Pollack agrees and feels that it is prudent to pursue the MGT option and that the Commission needs to do this sooner rather than later. Commissioner Pollack feels that the Commission needs to ensure that we are retaining staff. He states that given that HR is not helping, and since we have an approved vendor to provide services, we should inform HR that the Commission intends to move forward with hiring MGT. Chair Chapell, Commissioner Shea and Commissioner Jacques all agree. Chair Chapell asks for motion. Commissioner Pollack makes a motion to write a memo to HR listing the need for MGT due to the above reasons and that the

Commission intends to enter into a contract with MGT with the intention of having MGT provide said services. Commissioner Jacques seconds this motion. Chair Chapell asked if it should be in the minutes or in the form of a letter. The Director feels that we need to address HR and Jessica Burgess as well. Commissioner Shea suggested attaching a letter to the email chain. The Director states that he will draft letter. Chair Chapell feels that the letter will be stronger with the Commission behind it. The Director and Commission feel that 14D gives the district full authority to engage MGT's services. The Director is concerned that the state could refuse to pay MGT which could lead to legal issues with MGT. He feels that the need for someone to advise if the district can in fact engage MGT for their services. Chair Chapell suggests putting it back on the commission. **CH states that it happened this way because DL was trying to follow the rules of procurement. We should be able to get a quote for services and follow the steps. Dave states that if Jessica has an issue, she can be invited to the next meeting.**

***Action:*** The Commissioners authorized the funding of the MGT proposal, but no vote was formally taken. The Director will draft a letter regarding MGT and the district's intent to engage for services.

#### **Agenda Item: Next Meeting Date**

The next meeting was set for Tuesday, March 5<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 pm to be held by Zoom conference.

#### **Other Notes or Information**

At 2:15 p.m. the meeting was adjourned on a motion by Commissioner Jacques.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Chapell, Chair