

Placer Mosquito and Vector Control District
Board of Trustees – Special Board Meeting
MINUTES

Monday, June 25, 2007 - 3:30 p.m.

Board of Supervisors' Chambers

Placer County Administrative Center, 175 Fulweiler Ave., Auburn, CA

Board of Trustees

Rocklin	Harlin Smith (President)	Loomis	Miguel Ucovich
Auburn	Bob Snyder (V. President)	Placer-at-Large	Galen Clothier, Ph.D.
Colfax	Sherrie Blackmun	Roseville	John Cunningham
Lincoln	Linda Stackpoole		

- 1) Call to Order: President Smith called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.
- 2) Roll Call and Determination of Quorum: Trustees Clothier, Cunningham, Smith, Snyder and Ucovich present. Trustees Blackmun and Stackpoole absent.
District Employees present: General Manager Mitchell J. Bernstein, Dr. Jamesina Scott, Vicki Siefer, Kelly Burcham, John McCulloch and Rita Haury. Richard Shanahan, District's Legal Counsel and SCI representatives, John Bliss and Jeannette Hynson.
- 3) Pledge of Allegiance: Trustee Ucovich led the pledge of allegiance.
- 4) Old Business:
 - a. The Board discussed the annual General Manager's Goals and Objectives for 2007-08. Trustee Snyder requested that the General Manager's Goals and Objectives be more finite and discreet; that the report hone in on exactly what is going to be done and when and that he meet individually with Manager Bernstein to go over the details. Trustee Ucovich requested that the following changes be a finance objective for the District; the finances be in-house, including payroll, the District look at a packaged system instead of having a system created for them and the District finances become independent from the County. *A motion was made by Trustee Clothier, seconded by Trustee Snyder to accept the Manager's Goals and Objective with additions made by Trustee Snyder and Trustee Ucovich, unanimously adopted.*
(President Smith called a 20 minute recess at 3:40 p.m.)
- 5) Public Hearing: *President Smith opened the Public Hearing at 4:00 pm.*
President Smith outlined the procedures for the Public Hearing for the Consideration of the Levy of Assessments for the Proposed Expanded Services and Permanent Facility Assessment for the Placer Mosquito and Vector Control District.
Manager Bernstein welcomed the public to the meeting and introduced the Staff of the District. He gave a brief history of the District and the reason the District is in the process of the ballot measure before the public. John Bliss from SCI, Inc., welcomed the public to the hearing. He

explained why the District is conducting the Public Hearing and what will be the next steps in the benefit assessment process.

The Public Input portion of the Public Hearing was opened at 4:23 p.m.

(The following questions were answered by John Bliss, SCI, Inc, Mitchell J. Bernstein, General Manager of the District, Richard Shanahan, District Legal Counsel, Dr. Jamesina Scott, District Vector Ecologist, and Kelly Burcham, District Field Supervisor.)

David Wiltsee from Applegate:

Mr. Wiltsee was concerned about the nature of election and the proposition itself. He said we've been asked to pay a 50% increase or more when there was a benefit assessment put through in the eastern area in 2004. The District has expanding its scope and we see very little difference in our uphill area since the 2004 election and now the District is getting into even more areas of concern, rats, ticks and so on.

Q. Why were conventional voting processes not used?

A. John Bliss- Proposition 218, sponsored by the Jarvis Taxpayers Association was passed by the people of California in 1996. It states that every property owner within a District gets a vote within proportion that they will be assessed. Assessments allow businesses, farmers, and other non-residents who own property and thus would bear the burden of any new assessments to vote. Renters do not have to pay property taxes therefore they do not get to vote.

Q. Why is the only Public Hearing at the end of the process? Mr. Wiltsee felt it should be held earlier so the public can speak up and get some input prior to the proposition cast in bronze.

A. John Bliss-It is in the Proposition 218 statute that you close the balloting with a Public Hearing. All Placer MVCD Board meetings are open and the public is welcome to attend.

Q. What are you going to do about rats, tick and those problems? The public health system is a pretty well oiled machine, the county, the state. It is perplexing how a Special District, who is not responsible to anyone, can assume a major role in public health. Mr. Wiltsee wanted to be reassured that the public health network will be upheld and the public will not bite into a lot of false promises.

A. Dr. Scott- Currently we are not doing anything in terms of rats or ticks because we are not funded for that beyond the rudimentary Lyme Disease surveillance program. If the property owners of Placer County pass this ballot we will do individual homeowner inspections for rodent control and help advise homeowners how to reduce the attraction of their property to roof rats.

The use of poison bait for rat control may be discussed by the Board of Trustees at a later date. The goal of the tick surveillance program is to find out what tick-borne diseases are here in Placer County. We know we have Lyme Disease in about 5% of the *Ixodes pacificus* ticks that we have collected and tested in the County, which is a high infection rate. There are other tick-borne diseases that occur in California but we do not know at what rates. It is difficult to assess what people's risks are so our goal is to let the people and medical community of Placer County know which ticks and which tick-borne diseases are here so they can protect themselves from the tick-borne diseases.

Denny McCloud from Tahoe City:

Mr. McCloud has a home in Tahoe City, and he is at this meeting to observe the process. He is also a Board member from the Alameda County Mosquito Abatement District. He is a resident of Tahoe City during the summer time with a home on the lake and has never seen, in the years that he has been there, a technician from this abatement District.

Q. Do you plan to expand your geographical representation in the County? Are you going to expand your vector control to the Tahoe Basin area?

A. Kelly Burcham- We are in our second year of having a full-time technician work in the Tahoe Basin. Our technician has been concentrating on treating the snowmelt mosquitoes in that area.

Q. How much of the proceeds from the new benefit assessment will go toward a new permanent or expanded facility? What do you have in mind? Do you have a budget? What is the budget flow of the District for the new facility you want to have?

A. John Bliss-The Engineer's Report is the underlining document for this process. It contains the budget guidelines. According to the Engineer's Report two-thirds of the proposed assessment will be used to finance a permanent facility. One-third of the proposed assessment will be for expanded services. The District's Budget is transparent and open to public. Mr. McCloud extended the scientific assistance of the Alameda County Mosquito Abatement District.

Chris Mavy from Applegate:

Q. How are the ballots weighted? Q. What is the formula?

A. John Bliss- Dollar amount on ballot equals the amount of weight of the vote. \$7.97 assessment amount equals \$7.97 voting power. Voting power increases with the potential assessment.

Q. Who designed the formula? How was the formula arrived at? Is a house with a hundred or a thousand acres more weighted than a single residence?

A. John Bliss- SCI designed the formula. The Engineer's Report describes the methodology. It is based on how much benefit the property owner will derive from the benefit, and the number of people on that property that will benefit.

Carl Hass from Rocklin:

Mr. Hass read the following questions and statements to the Board. He presented a copy to the Board.

Q. Why is mission expanded beyond mosquito abatement?

A. Mitch Bernstein- Based on the survey sent out to residents of Placer County the public showed an approval of added services.

Q. Who approved this expansion?

A. Mitch Bernstein- The Placer Mosquito and Vector Control District Board of Trustees

Q. Why was the county elections office not used to conduct the election?

A. John Bliss- this is an assessment not an election

Q. Why is a special election being held instead of a regular election which would be for more cost effective?

A. John Bliss-It is not more cost effective- the cost is less for an assessment of equivalent.

Q. How much is this election going to cost?

A. John Bliss- approximately \$150,000.00

Q. Where are the funds obtained to pay for the election?

A. John Bliss-If approved the funds will come out of the assessment. If not approved the funds will come out of the revenue currently received by the District

Comment from Carl Hass: By getting into new areas, you are competing with private sector pest control businesses.

Dr. Scott- By law, we are prohibited from competing with private pest control. We can not do structural pest control. The District can do vector control for the arthropods and animals that carry diseases or cause human discomfort. Mainly our emphasis is on animals – vertebrates arthropods – that transmit diseases

Q. Why are new offices needed when there is so much rental property on the market?

A. Mitch Bernstein- We will basically look at every opportunity to find a facility. Whatever is cost-effective to everybody.

Q. Why is a lab necessary? Was a cost/benefit analysis performed prior to making this proposal?

A. Dr. Scott-Primarily so we can work with infectious materials in a safe and legal manner. Also to provide services to Placer County that address emerging potential infectious diseases like West

Nile virus. If the assessment passes, we will work with tick-borne diseases doing tests that are not currently available through other agencies or facilities with the state. Whenever possible we do use the existing agencies especially when its cost effective to do testing. Presently the State labs at U. C. Davis do our mosquito virus testing for WNV, WEE, SLE and do it in a very cost-effective manner so we're able to use those labs. Through the state level though there is always the chance that there will not be state funding to help support the tests. In the future we want to do more in-house testing.

Q. How many cases of West Nile virus has Placer County experienced in the last ten years?

A. Dr. Scott- Placer County had 1 case in 2004, 35 cases in 2005 and 8 cases in 2006.

Q. How many full time employees does the Mosquito Abatement District have?

A. Mitch Bernstein- 10 full time employees and 3 part time seasonal employees

Q. What do they do from October 1st to May 31st?

A. Kelly Burcham- We have no real downtime. The only downtime we really have is between Thanksgiving and Christmas and our technicians do fabrication on our specialized equipment at that time. Our mosquito season starts at the first of the year with surveillance program for the *Ae. increpitus* mosquitoes and continues with various species throughout the year.

Q. Why did we have to write our names on the ballots instead of being given a secret ballot?

A. John Bliss- This is not an election. Assessment law is very specific. The ballots become a public document.

Q. To whom is this Board of Directors accountable?

A. Mitch Bernstein-To the public.

Q. Who was performing vector control before? Why can't they continue to do it?

A. Dr. Scott-There was no one performing vector control before the Board of Supervisors set up the District.

Why did the envelopes containing the ballots look like junk mail?

A. John Bliss-SCI is trying to improve the design of the ballot envelopes for a high response rate. Comment by Mr. Hass: It appears that the Mosquito Abatement District is trying to sneak through a tax increase, expand its role into non-mosquito related areas, establish a high-cost, inefficient operation that is not a prudent use of tax dollars and build up yet another bloated bureaucracy.

Robert Knepp from Auburn:

Mr. Knepp expressed \$1.8 million for eternity seems a little high.

John Bliss-The Board of Trustees of the District have an obligation to assess no more than needed. In the future the assessment can be a smaller amount.

Q. Why didn't everyone get a ballot?

A. John Bliss-The mailing addresses are given to SCI by the Placer County Assessor Database. The mailing addresses which are used to send out tax bills are the same addresses used to send out the assessment ballots.

Q. Are townhouses charged the same a single 4 acres?

A. John Bliss-There is a higher amount of the assessment on more than 1 acre.

Q. What the appeal process for whenever the vote count is final?

A. The votes are a public document. A resident can ask for an audit at any time.

Tom Hudson from Placer County Republican Senate Committee

Mr. Hudson said the Placer County Republican Party is unanimously opposed to this tax increase, and are deeply troubled by the process that led to this tax increase. It is done in a way that is unfair.

Q. Why does the notice of assessment not include arguments for or against?

A. John Bliss-Assessment law is very clear, the notice cannot advocate for or against.

Q. Why is the county not counting the votes?

A. John Bliss- This is an assessment not a general ballot. The code says "Obligated by code to have an impartial person designated by the agency who does not have an interest in the outcome of the proposed assessment" count the votes.

Q. Placer County is a rich county why is the District not using these funds?

A. John Bliss- The District is a Special District and is not part of the Placer County system so it does not have access to Placer County funds.

Q. How was the amount of the tax determined for each parcel? How was the \$7.97 figure determined?

A. John Bliss-The information is in the Engineer's Report. The District's Budget divided by the Single Family Equivalent=\$7.97.

Q. How can we stop this process? Is there a sunset clause in this?

A. John Bliss-This voting is for only one year. Each year the Board will hold a public hearing and the assessment must be voted on by resolution. There is no sunset clause in this particular assessment.

Dr. Robert Schnelzter from Auburn:

Dr. Schnelzter said that he feels vector diseases are uncommon and in the total health problems in Placer County they are relatively unimportant. It is very hard to monitor vectors like bubonic

plague, they usually happen at campgrounds on Federal land and they are monitored and reported when they find dead rats. Human cases of bubonic cases are extremely uncommon in this county. Wasps and roof rats are not a vector disease. It is the responsibility of the property owner to get somebody to kill the rats with coumadin or whatever they use. He thinks it is limited to the need for vector control. The mosquito control part of it he can certainly see that although here in Auburn we have very few mosquitoes. He is rarely bitten by a mosquito.

Q What is the importance of West Nile virus? Does it cross over into the Placer County Health Department, the State Health Department, and the arbovirologist in the Davis System?

A. Dr. Scott-Even though the incidence of vector-borne diseases in the United States is low in relation to other parts of the world, the cost, especially when people get ill, can be significant. Twenty years ago conventional wisdom was that there was no Lyme Disease in California. It was through vector surveillance, through agencies not just the mosquito and vector control districts but through cooperation with some of the universities and the Department of Health Services in California that it was demonstrated that Lyme Diseases occurs in California. The importance of that is that we are able to educate the physicians and medical community and make them aware that this disease is here and that it does affect people and it improves their ability to diagnose and treat this disease.

We're able to work through the Department of Health Services and other agencies to inform physician and hospitals community about these diseases and help them diagnose and help keep the patients healthy and treat these diseases appropriately.

The District is part of the West Nile Virus Task Force here in Placer County which is a collaboration between the county and various agencies which includes; the Placer County Ag Commissioner, Placer County Environmental Health Services, the Placer County Health Lab, the Placer County physicians and veterinarians that work in the county and County public outreach and information representatives. We all work together to educate the community to help put out a unified message, coordinate all our surveillance activities with the human disease occurrence with the equine disease occurrence and with the other animals that are affected by West Nile virus. Animal Services is also a part of this with the Dead Bird Surveillance Program. We do work with other agencies to make sure we're not repeating functions or overlapping in what we do. At the State level, we work with the Department of Health Services and we receive regular bulletins with dead bird information. We get quick turn-around time from our mosquito pools and various tests on mosquito-borne diseases. Through the Department of Health Services we also interact with CDC. These vector-borne diseases are entrenched in the animal reservoirs and will continue to be a threat to the residents of Placer County.

Ed Saiz from Auburn:

Mr. Saiz said that he will be voting in the affirmative. He used the services of the District this morning and the technician was very prompt. The gentleman that showed up was Matt. All he had to do was call once and he came out early this morning. Some folks here may not know that probably a reason you do not see them out there is because they go out early in the morning when the wind is still and put out some traps to help identify the kind of mosquitoes in the area.

Gretchen Hass from Rocklin:

Q. Why does the District need its own auto shop?

A. Kelly- The District is not part of the county system. Having our own auto shop and doing our work in-house will be more cost effective and make our District more self-sufficient.

We would like to work on our equipment out of the elements.

President Smith asked if there were any written communication to be read into the record.

There were no written communications to be read into the record.

President Smith asked if there were any communications the public wished to make.

There were no communications the public wished to make.

The public questions portion of the meeting was from 4:23 p.m. to 5:01 p.m. The answering portion was from 5:11 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. The answers are collated in with the questions)

President Smith announced that he had been informed by Mr. Bliss that his statement that the ballots were closed at 5 p.m. was incorrect. They will close after all questions have been answered; at the close of the Public Input part of the Public Hearing.

Trustee Snyder left at 5:30 p.m.

- 5) Public Input Portion of Public Hearing was closed at 6:03 p.m. and Public Hearing continued to July 16, 4:00 pm, (time certain) at the Placer Mosquito and Vector Control District Office, 150 Waverly Drive, Lincoln, CA.
- 6) Board meeting reconvened at 6:04 p.m.
- 7) Announcement of Next Meeting: The next Regular Board Meeting of the Placer Mosquito and Vector Control District will be held at 4:00p.m., July 16th, 2007 at the Placer Mosquito and Vector Control District office, 150 Waverly Dr., Lincoln, CA.
- 8) Adjournment: President Smith adjourned the meeting at 6:08 p.m.

Recording Secretary

