

# **Metropolitan Mosquito Control District**

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**  
**MAY 27, 2020**  
**9:15 AM**

***Information Packet***

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**METROPOLITAN MOSQUITO CONTROL DISTRICT  
MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT**

**COMMITTEE:**           **Executive Committee Meeting**  
**Metropolitan Mosquito Control District**  
2099 University Avenue West  
St. Paul, MN 55104

**DATE:**                   **Wednesday, May 27, 2020**  
**TIME:**                   **9:15 AM**

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**A G E N D A**

1. Approval of Minutes March 25, 2020 Meeting\*
2. Legislative Update – Peg Larsen, Kim Scott
3. 2020 Expenditure Plan
4. Longer Term Budget/Funding Plan - Initial Discussion
5. Executive Director’s Report
6. Other Issues
7. Adjournment

\* Action Requested

Commissioner Robyn West	Anoka County
Commissioner James Ische	Carver County
Commissioner Liz Workman	Dakota County
Commissioner Jeff Johnson	Hennepin County
Commissioner Mary Jo McGuire	Ramsey County
Commissioner Tom Wolf	Scott County
Commissioner Gary Kriesel	Washington County

**Next Executive Committee Meeting: Wednesday, June 24, 2020, 9:15 a.m.**

**Next Commission Meeting: Wednesday, July 22, 2020, 9:15 a.m.**

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## METROPOLITAN MOSQUITO CONTROL DISTRICT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes  
March 25, 2020  
9:15 a.m.

Chair Liz Workman called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting was conducted remotely using GoToMeeting software. Roll call votes were recorded for each item because this meeting was conducted remotely.

### Roll Call:

Commissioner Robyn West	Anoka County
Commissioner Jim Ische	Carver County
Commissioner Liz Workman	Dakota County
Commissioner Jeff Johnson	Hennepin County
Commissioner Mary Jo McGuire	Ramsey County
Commissioner Tom Wolf	Scott County
Commissioner Gary Kriesel	Washington County

### Staff:

Stephen Manweiler, Executive Director  
Arleen Schacht, Business Administrator

### Visitors:

Kim Scott, RCS Consulting  
Peg Larsen, RCS Consulting  
Joe Langel, MMCD Legal Counsel

Commissioner Liz Workman welcomed all in attendance and thanked them for attending the meeting.

Chair Liz Workman asked for a motion to amend the agenda to conduct a closed discussion about agenda item 6. Commissioner Tom Wolf moved to amend the agenda to conduct a closed discussion about agenda item 6. Commissioner Jim Ische seconded the motion.

The Commissioners voted as follows.

Commissioner Robyn West	Yes	Commissioner Mary Jo McGuire	Yes
Commissioner James Ische	Yes	Commissioner Tom Wolf	Yes
Commissioner Liz Workman	Yes	Commissioner Gary Kriesel	Yes
Commissioner Jeff Johnson	Yes		

The motion to amend the agenda to conduct a closed discussion about agenda item 6 was approved unanimously.

Commissioner Gary Kriesel offered the following resolution and moved its adoption.

*Approval of January  
22, 2020 Executive  
Committee  
Meeting Minutes*

**Resolution 1:**

**Resolved,** that the January 22, 2020 Executive Committee Meeting minutes be approved as presented.

Commissioner Tom Wolf seconded the motion.

The Commissioners voted as follows.

Commissioner Robyn West	Yes
Commissioner James Ische	Yes
Commissioner Liz Workman	Yes
Commissioner Jeff Johnson	Yes
Commissioner Mary Jo McGuire	Yes
Commissioner Tom Wolf	Yes
Commissioner Gary Kriesel	Yes

The resolution was adopted unanimously.

Peg Larsen reported that the legislature is on an extended break until April 14. If need be, they will go longer than that. They want to be able to come back, without being called into special session, to work on the coronavirus.

*Legislative Update*

It does not appear that they will do any work related to pesticides. They are prioritizing bills that need to get passed, an example being bonding. They are only working on bills that all four caucuses can agree on. They are coming into session tomorrow to discuss the need for more legislation for the coronavirus. They expect 90 to 95 members of the house to be there. Some of them will be in the basement and another place is in the capitol and they will take turns voting. They will abide by the social distancing rule. Some have questioned if this method is constitutional, but in dire times flexibility needs to take place. There is \$811 million left in the surplus. They expect to spend most of that, if not all.

Stephen Manweiler reported that the District and Commission have not waived the statutory limits in the past. Stephen recommended that the statutory limits again not be waived.

*Insurance Liability  
Waiver*

Commissioner Jeff Johnson offered the following resolution and moved its adoption.

**Resolution 2:**

**Resolved**, that District not waive the statutory insurance liability limits.

Commissioner Gary Kriesel seconded the motion.

The Commissioners voted as follows.

Commissioner Robyn West	Yes
Commissioner James Ische	Yes
Commissioner Liz Workman	Yes
Commissioner Jeff Johnson	Yes
Commissioner Mary Jo McGuire	Yes
Commissioner Tom Wolf	Yes
Commissioner Gary Kriesel	Yes

The resolution was adopted unanimously.

Stephen Manweiler reported that Dakota County had updated the Human Resources Service agreement with MMCD that was approved by the Executive Committee during its July 24, 2019 meeting. The current agreement expires on December 31, 2020; the updated agreement expires on December 31, 2022. The updated agreement adds designated liaisons and contacts for Dakota County and MMCD. The updated agreement maintains the same hourly cost and includes no other changes compared to the current agreement.

*Updated HR Service  
Contract with Dakota  
County*

Commissioner Jim Ische offered the following resolution and moved its adoption.

**Resolution 3:**

**Whereas**, MMCD desires professional advice to ensure all human resources responsibilities are satisfied in accordance to all applicable laws, and

**Whereas**, Dakota County and MMCD have determined that Dakota County can provide professional advice desired by MMCD,

**Be it now resolved**, that the Executive Committee approves the updated Human Resources Services Agreement between MMCD and Dakota County as presented.

Commissioner Tom Wolf seconded the motion.

The Commissioners voted as follows.

Commissioner Robyn West	Yes
Commissioner James Ische	Yes
Commissioner Liz Workman	Yes
Commissioner Jeff Johnson	Yes
Commissioner Mary Jo McGuire	Yes
Commissioner Tom Wolf	Yes
Commissioner Gary Kriesel	Yes

The resolution was adopted unanimously.

Stephen briefly described how MMCD staff have been responding to the ongoing COVID-19 situation. Our goal is to be ready to provide some level of services after restrictions enacted to slow transmission of COVID-19 are eased. Last week, all staff worked with IT to set up and test remote work capabilities. Since last week, many staff have been working remotely. Some are caring for children at home because of the school closures. The MMCD Emergency COVID-19 Employee Response Plan meets the requirements of the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act and Minnesota State legislation and Executive Orders mandating that staff impacted by COVID-19 be paid. Stephen recommended that the Executive Committee approve the MMCD Emergency COVID-19 Employee Response Plan.

*Emergency COVID-19 Employee Response Plan*

Commissioner Tom Wolf offered the following resolution and moved its adoption.

**Resolution 4:**

**Whereas**, MMCD is working to maintain its ability to provide services during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, and

**Whereas**, MMCD desires to support all of its employees by maintaining full pay while they work remotely due to impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and

**Whereas**, MMCD intends to satisfy requirements of the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act and Minnesota State legislation and Executive Orders mandating that staff impacted by COVID-19 be paid,

**Be it now resolved**, that the Executive Committee approves the MMCD Emergency COVID-19 Employee Response Plan as presented.

Commissioner Gary Kriesel seconded the motion.

The Commissioners voted as follows.

Commissioner Robyn West	Yes
Commissioner James Ische	Yes
Commissioner Liz Workman	Yes
Commissioner Jeff Johnson	Yes
Commissioner Mary Jo McGuire	Yes
Commissioner Tom Wolf	Yes
Commissioner Gary Kriesel	Yes

The resolution was adopted unanimously.

Commissioner Tom Wolf moved that the meeting be closed.  
Commissioner Jeff Johnson seconded the motion.

*Executive Director  
Performance Review  
Process*

The Commissioners voted as follows.

Commissioner Robyn West	Yes
Commissioner James Ische	Yes
Commissioner Liz Workman	Yes
Commissioner Jeff Johnson	Yes
Commissioner Mary Jo McGuire	Yes
Commissioner Tom Wolf	Yes
Commissioner Gary Kriesel	Yes

The motion to close the meeting was adopted unanimously.

The closed session was adjourned and the meeting was opened to the public at 10:20 a.m.

Chair Liz Workman reopened the meeting and opened the discussion to consideration of any action.

Commissioner Jeff Johnson offered the following resolution and moved its adoption.

**Resolution 5:**

**Whereas**, the District’s Executive Director, Stephen Manweiler, is approaching the end of his sixth year in the position, and;

**Whereas**, Mr. Manweiler, by the terms in his employment agreement is to be evaluated annually concerning his performance by the Executive Committee that would draw conclusions and make findings regarding his performance and eligibility for salary increase with a recommendation to the Commission, and;

**Whereas**, the Executive Committee undertook and completed gathering relevant input about Mr. Manweiler’s performance from both Commissioners and staff, and;

**Whereas**, the Executive Committee is confident in his leadership in maintaining the financial and operational integrity of the District including addressing all employee issues and supporting a positive work environment, and;

**Whereas**, the Executive Committee’s conclusions and findings regarding Mr. Manweiler’s performance were very positive, finding that he had fulfilled all of the responsibilities of the job very well and that the Executive Committee further found that he would be eligible for and would recommend him for a salary increase,

**Whereas**, the Executive Committee diligently assessed Mr. Manweiler's performance and found that it would serve the Commission's, its taxpayers', and the District's best interests to continue Mr. Manweiler's employment,

**Resolved**, that the Executive Committee finds that Mr. Manweiler has performed at a Highly Successful level in his sixth year as the District’s Executive Director, that his fine performance is acknowledged and appreciated, that he be recommended for a salary increase equal to the amount approved for other employees, that the Executive Committee finds that it is desirable and appropriate to enter into another three-year employment agreement with him and, and that all of these findings be recommended for approval by the full Commission.

Commissioner Tom Wolf seconded the motion.

The Commissioners voted as follows.

Commissioner Robyn West	Yes
Commissioner James Ische	Yes
Commissioner Liz Workman	Yes
Commissioner Jeff Johnson	Yes
Commissioner Mary Jo McGuire	Yes
Commissioner Tom Wolf	Yes
Commissioner Gary Kriesel	Yes

The resolution was adopted unanimously.

Stephen Manweiler reported more details about how staff are responding to the COVID-19 pandemic to prepare for the upcoming season.

*Executive Director  
Report*

All employees were asked to list all tasks they need to complete between now and the end of March followed by the first half of April, determine which tasks can be completed remotely and prioritize the tasks.

Their initial assignment was to enable remote working as much as possible by working with IT to set up remote work capabilities, test remote connections to resolve problems and begin working from home as quickly as possible to minimize number of employees in facilities at any time. (Most staff mostly working from home by Monday, March 23)

All meetings and interviews are being conducted remotely beginning March 17.

Our next set of tasks includes determining how to maintain social distancing recommendations of the Mn Dept of Health and CDC while beginning larval mosquito surveillance and control after April 13. This includes developing remote training. We may need to stagger training sessions or have all initial training online or via other remote access (GoToMeeting). We will restrict staff to only one person per vehicle.

We will continue to apply the most up-to-date recommendations of the Mn Dept. of Health and CDC.

We will evaluate the situation daily to decide if the April 13 start date needs to be postponed. We will communicate regularly with prospective hires (inspectors) so they understand District plans as affected by the ongoing COVID-19 situation.

Chair Liz Workman asked if there was anything else to come before this meeting. Nobody mentioned any additional items. Commissioner Tom Wolf moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Gary Kriesel seconded the motion.

*Other Issues and  
Adjournment*

The Commissioners voted as follows.

Commissioner Robyn West	Yes
Commissioner James Ische	Yes
Commissioner Liz Workman	Yes
Commissioner Jeff Johnson	Yes
Commissioner Mary Jo McGuire	Yes
Commissioner Tom Wolf	Yes
Commissioner Gary Kriesel	Yes

The motion was adopted unanimously.

Chair Liz Workman declared the meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

## Metropolitan Mosquito Control Commission Meeting

May 27, 2020

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**Requested by:**

Stephen Manweiler  
Arleen Schacht

**Informational:**

2020 Expenditure Plan

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**Background:**

The economic impact of the previous two months of the Governor’s Stay-at-Home Executive order to control the COVID-19 pandemic likely will result in the July and December 2020 levy payments to the District being less than planned. In January 2020, we had planned to scale back service reductions implemented in 2017 to reduce expenditures. In April, we began reviewing how our plans need to be changed to achieve the following goals.

- Provide as many services as possible while maximizing staff and citizen safety by implementing social distancing and all other COVID-19 safety requirements
- Preserve our current cash reserves to insulate the District from negative economic impacts in 2020, 2021, and thereafter

Resource limitations we now face and/or anticipate include:

- We expect of levy deficit of 10-15% (usual planned deficit is 2%).
- Social distancing restricts us to one employee per vehicle – consequently we hired 16% fewer seasonal inspectors (about 32 seasonal employees) than planned

In order to develop a new spending plan, we started with the January 2020 plans (full levy) including restored services (\$400,000) and recent average annual expenditures.

<b>Plan</b>	<b>Cash reserves (year-end)</b>	<b>Jan 1 Cash Reserves</b>	<b>Dec 31 Cash Reserves</b>
2020 levy	\$1,440,833 (reserves added)	\$2,064,239	\$3,505,072
90% levy	\$403,355 (reserves spent)	\$2,064,239	\$1,660,884
85% levy	\$1,344,355 (reserves spent)	\$2,064,239	\$719,884

These projections make clear that we will quickly spend cash reserves that took three years to build up if we do not change our spending plans. We likely will not receive a full levy in 2021 either, another reason we should not spend down any cash reserves.

We next determined what expenditure level in 2020 would not impact our reserves. We planned for 85% levy receipts.

	<b>Actual 2019</b>	<b>85% 2020 Levy</b>
Total Levy	\$18,171,041	\$15,754,293
Other Income	\$460,570	\$200,000
Total Funds	\$18,631,611	\$15,954,293
Expenditure	\$15,933,030	\$15,962,936
Reserves	\$2,698,581 (added)	\$8,643 (spent)

These forecasts indicate that, if we can keep 2020 expenditures at the 2019 level (\$15,933,030), we can preserve our fund balance and cash reserves if we receive only 85% of the 2020 levy. By reviewing the expenditures related to various items including service restorations planned in January 2020, we were able to determine how to limit expenditures to the 2019 level. We also were able to shift some control materials to maximize the use of cheaper materials and retain more expensive materials for use if precipitation is more than typical later in the 2020 season.

	<b>Jan 2020 Plan</b>	<b>85% 2020 Levy</b>
Expected Levy	\$18,534,462	\$15,754,293
Planned Expenditure	\$17,190,778	\$15,962,936
<b>Planned Service Restorations</b>		
Increased Spring <i>Aedes</i> (+ Priority Zone 2 [P2])	Yes	Cancelled
Increased cattail (+ P2)	Yes	Yes
Increased summer floodwater (+P2)	Yes	Cancelled
RFT Hires	Human Resources Representative	Postponed until 2021 (at earliest)

We should be able to maintain the planned increase in larval cattail mosquito control (the amount of which we know most reliably because spring *Aedes* and summer floodwater are impacted much more by precipitation during the season) and minimize expenditures to the 2019 level if we forego the other service restorations, freeze regular fulltime staff hiring and postpone certain large capital purchases such as scheduled replacement vehicles.

## Metropolitan Mosquito Control Commission Meeting

May 27, 2020

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**Requested by:**

Stephen Manweiler  
Arleen Schacht

**Informational:**

Longer Term Budget/Funding Plan

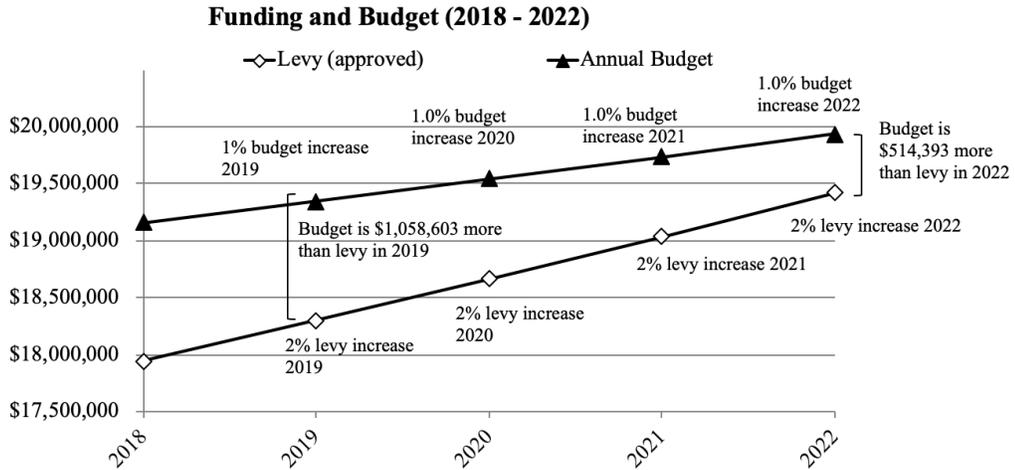
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**Background:**

Expenditures during three years of very heavy service demands (2014-16) were greater than funds received resulting in reserves being depleted well below the minimum recommended to support District cash flow needs. In 2016, a plan was developed to support District finances in the long-term. The plan aimed to achieve three goals through incremental annual levy increases and smaller budget increases beginning in 2016.

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Milestone or plan</b>
Rebuild Reserves to the minimum amount recommended to support cash flow	Achieved by the end of 2019.
Restore \$1.2 million worth of services cut in 2017	In 2020, we had planned to restore one third of (\$400,000) these services. Restore more services as difference between the levy and budget becomes smaller in the future.
Expand services in response to increasing District population and development	To be achieved after all services cut in 2017 have been restored

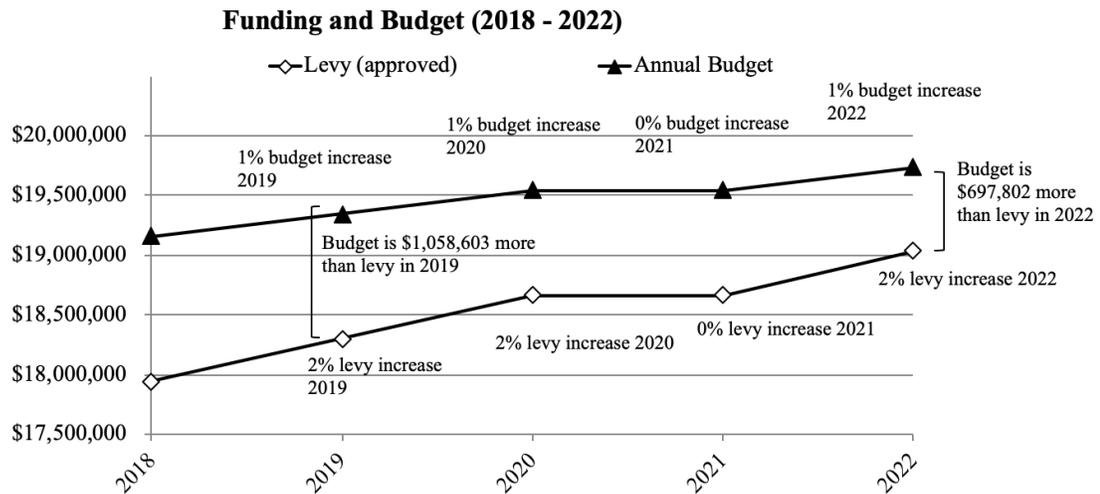
**Long-term plan (as of January 2020 – before COVID-19)**



**COVID-19 Impact on 2020**

The economic impact of the previous two months of the Governor’s Stay-at-Home Executive order to control the COVID-19 pandemic likely will result in the July and December 2020 levy payments to the District being less than planned. This prompted us to change the 2020 expenditure plan (see agenda item 3). It also is likely that economic recovery will not be complete by 2021. We propose modifying the long-term plan as follows.

- Implement the May 2020 expenditure plan to conserve reserves while maintaining services as much as possible. Most service restorations planned in 2020 will not happen.
- We recommend maintaining the same levy and budget level in 2021 as in 2020.
- Review the long-term plan in 2021 and determine recommendations for 2022 based upon the economic situation in 2021 and projected economic situation in 2022.



**AGENDA ITEM 4**  
*Longer Term Budget/Funding Plan - Initial Discussion*

		2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
	<b>ADMINISTRATION</b>	<b>ACTUAL</b>	<b>ACTUAL</b>	<b>ACTUAL(unaudited)</b>	<b>BUDGET</b>	<b>PROPOSED</b>
1	Salary and Wages	\$761,158	\$765,333	\$793,541	\$792,046	\$792,046
2	Building Expense	\$57,013	\$66,571	\$59,494	\$52,770	\$52,770
3	Office Supplies	\$59,746	\$30,207	\$53,669	\$33,870	\$33,870
4	Travel and Mileage	\$2,377	\$1,735	\$2,649	\$4,250	\$4,250
5	Insurance	\$11,287	\$10,182	\$11,428	\$12,500	\$12,500
6	Interest	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
7	General Expenses	\$119,702	\$113,166	\$141,827	\$114,000	\$114,000
8	Repair and Maintenance	\$1,347	\$0	\$0	\$500	\$500
9	<b>Total Admin. Operations</b>	<b>\$1,012,630</b>	<b>\$987,194</b>	<b>\$1,062,608</b>	<b>\$1,009,936</b>	<b>\$1,009,936</b>
10						
11	Administration Capital	\$12,493	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
12						
13	<b>Total Administration -</b>	<b>\$1,025,123</b>	<b>\$987,194</b>	<b>\$1,062,608</b>	<b>\$1,009,936</b>	<b>\$1,009,936</b>
14						
	<b>COMMISSION</b>					
15	Per Diem	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
16	Travel and Mileage	\$2,780	\$2,177	\$2,728	\$3,660	\$3,660
17						
18	<b>Total Commissioners -</b>	<b>\$2,780</b>	<b>\$2,177</b>	<b>\$2,728</b>	<b>\$3,660</b>	<b>\$3,660</b>
19						
	<b>CONTROL/MONITORING</b>					
20	Salary and Wages	\$6,625,114	\$6,559,521	\$6,561,904	\$7,652,148	\$7,652,148
21	Rent and Building Costs	\$1,098,603	\$846,623	\$851,853	\$894,660	\$894,660
22	Supplies & Expenses	\$312,010	\$248,544	\$322,968	\$281,850	\$281,850
23	Control Materials	\$4,244,856	\$4,137,801	\$4,013,552	\$5,831,000	\$5,831,000
24	Helicopter	\$1,728,305	\$1,553,479	\$1,746,405	\$2,527,560	\$2,527,560
25	Transportation Expenses	\$159,917	\$175,049	\$156,594	\$186,390	\$186,390
26	Insurance	\$266,828	\$251,095	\$239,335	\$268,510	\$268,510
27	General Expenses	\$142,834	\$180,498	\$109,931	\$156,630	\$156,630
28	Repair and Maintenance	\$117,364	\$290,161	\$198,509	\$211,700	\$211,700
29	<b>Total Control Operations</b>	<b>\$14,695,831</b>	<b>\$14,242,771</b>	<b>\$14,201,051</b>	<b>\$18,010,448</b>	<b>\$18,010,448</b>
30						
31	Control Capital	\$930,972	\$351,209	\$666,643	\$527,520	\$527,520
32						
33	<b>Total Control Division -</b>	<b>\$15,626,803</b>	<b>\$14,593,980</b>	<b>\$14,867,694</b>	<b>\$18,537,968</b>	<b>\$18,537,968</b>
34						
35	<b>TOTAL ANNUAL BUDGET</b>	<b>\$16,654,706</b>	<b>\$15,583,351</b>	<b>\$15,933,030</b>	<b>\$19,551,564</b>	<b>\$19,551,564</b>
	Levy	\$17,300,234	\$17,832,456	\$18,171,041	\$18,665,369	\$18,665,369
	Revenue - other sources	225,753	285,442	460,570	235,000	235,000
	<b>Fund Balance (end of year)</b>	<b>\$13,063,662</b>	<b>\$15,598,209</b>	<b>\$18,296,790</b>	<b>\$17,645,595</b>	<b>\$16,994,400</b>
	<b>Amount from FB used for exp.</b>	<b>(\$871,281)</b>	<b>(\$2,534,547)</b>	<b>(\$2,698,581)</b>	<b>\$651,195</b>	<b>\$651,195</b>

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## **MMCD CALENDAR FOR BUDGET YEAR 2021**

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Commission and Executive Committee provide direction to develop budget	May / June 2020
Commission approves preliminary 2021 levy and budget direction	July 22, 2020
First levy certification deadline for the District	August 1, 2020
Review 2021 budget and levy proposals	August 26, 2020
Proposed levy certified	September 10, 2020
Executive Committee reviews proposed budget (Subject to change)	September 23, 2020
Commission reviews proposed budget (Subject to change)	October 28, 2020
Executive Committee reviews budget	November 19, 2020
Parcel Specific Property Tax Notice	November 10 – 24, 2020
Commission adopts Final 2021 Levy & Budget (December Commission meeting)	December 16, 2020
Truth in Taxation Hearing (Commission & Staff)	December 16, 2020
Continuation Hearing if necessary (Commission & Staff)	December 16, 2020
Certify Adopted Payable 2021 Levy (Staff)	December 20, 2020

## M E M O R A N D U M

TO: MMCD Board of Commissioners

FROM: Joseph Langel, MMCD Attorney

DATE: August 26, 2016

RE: Tax Levy Schedule

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At the Commission meeting on August 24<sup>th</sup> (2016), there was a discussion about the budget calendar. Specifically, questions were raised about when MMCD's property tax levy must be certified to the Commissioner of the Department of Revenue. The calendar in the Information Packet showed that the initial levy certification deadline is August 1<sup>st</sup>.

Some Commissioners questioned the validity of that date given that it is earlier than other taxing districts. A quick review of Minnesota Statutes chapter 275 (the property tax levy statute) indicated that (1) MMCD is defined as a special taxing district; and (2) "each special taxing district shall adopt and certify to the county auditor a proposed property tax levy" "on or before September 15." *Minn. Stat. §§ 275.065, subd. 1(b), 275.066 (16)*. It therefore appeared that September 15<sup>th</sup> is, in fact, the correct deadline.

The quick statutory review during the meeting, however, did not reveal the additional provisions in Minnesota Statutes chapter 473, which relate specifically to MMCD. Section 473.711, subdivision 5, provides that MMCD "must certify its property tax levy to the commissioner of revenue by August 1 of the levy year." This specific provision overrides the more general provision in Chapter 275.

The Commissioner of Revenue reviews the tax levy to ensure that the tax is within MMCD's statutory levy limitation. That determination must be completed by September 10<sup>th</sup>. *Minn. Stat. § 473.711, subd. 5*. The Commissioner notifies the MMCD that the levy is appropriate and provides the amount of levy for each member county. The levy data is transmitted to the respective counties by September 15<sup>th</sup>. The Commission adopts the final levy and holds the Truth in Taxation hearing in December.

Let me know if anyone has additional questions about this process.

**To: Commission Members**  
**From: Stephen Manweiler**  
**Re: Executive Director Report**  
**Date: May 2020**

## **1. DIRECTOR'S INITIATIVES**

On Monday, April 27 seasonal inspectors began to return. Training and operations that were modified to meet social distancing and other COVID-19 safety requirements have gone smoothly. Regular fulltime staff who can complete their work responsibilities remotely have continued to do so. We foresee remote work by most regular fulltime staff at least part of the time continuing through the next few months depending upon how the COVID-19 pandemic progresses. All plans and required resources for staff to safely return to the workplace are available. Our facilities will remain closed to the public at least through Monday, June 1.

Senator Dzedzic introduced SF 4531 (pesticide control ordinance adoption by cities authorization), although we are not sure it will be heard this session. Stephen and Kim Scott shared with Sen. Dzedzic the language that Metropolitan Mosquito Control District (MMCD) provided to Representative Wagenius for a similar bill (HF 1255) introduced in the House. This language was developed after we contemplated the effect of the proposed legislation on MMCD's work, which is to protect the public health by controlling for vector-borne diseases like West Nile virus. We discussed the language with the City of Minneapolis and Rep. Wagenius, who indicated their support.

Representative Jordan introduced another bill (HF 4661) that gives cities the authority to regulate pollinator-lethal pesticides that is similar to HF 1255. We do not believe it will be heard this session. We will contact Rep. Jordan about mitigating impacts to MMCD.

## **2. MOSQUITO CONTROL SERVICES**

The mosquito season is getting off to a slow start. Even though ice out on most of the local lakes was early, we have had below normal rainfall and the water level in most wetlands is below normal for this time of year. Larval mosquito development levels, especially in the southern half of the District, have been lower than last year. So far this spring, we have treated less than 20,000 acres by helicopter compared to 30,000 acres during the same time period in 2019. The week of May 11, field staff made a big push to treat ground sites with pre-hatch materials to prepare for the first rains that produce summer floodwater mosquito larvae. Significant rain on May 16-17 caused our first summer floodwater brood with 20,000-25,000 acres treated the following week. Also, the last two weeks in May, staff will be preparing to treat the larger wetlands with pre-hatch materials by helicopter. At the end of May through the first few days in June, aerial treatments to control cattail mosquito larvae will start. Except for the treatment of adult mosquitoes, operations are in full swing.

Water levels in the rivers and streams are at levels that allow us to conduct surveillance and treatment of black fly larvae. Deer tick surveillance routes have started. Catch basin treatments for the mosquitoes that transmit the West Nile virus among birds will start the last week of May.

The majority of citizen calls are from individuals inquiring if we have treated a certain wetland near their home or if we could pick up their tires. There have been more calls from citizens from areas including Hastings, Edina, Minneapolis, and Plymouth regarding annoyance including a species of black fly that we currently do not have a permit to treat. The past few years this species has become more prevalent and causing annoyance in the early spring in a few locations. We are working with the DNR to amend our treatment permit.

Most of the seasonal staff have been hired but some regions still have a few positions to fill. The protocols that have been put in place for social distancing and disinfecting vehicles and facilities have been working well. Our main goal and focus is safety first, namely to protect all employees from COVID-19 while working for MMCD.

### **3. MOSQUITO-BORNE DISEASE**

Services to prevent mosquito-borne diseases are underway. Crews have been working to reduce La Crosse encephalitis (LAC) risk by eliminating container habitats since the field season started. We have removed 965 tires from the field for recycling and we have eliminated 182 other LAC vector habitats.

Treatments of catch basins are scheduled to begin on May 26. The first round of pellet treatments will be complete by June 20. Catch basins are the source of significant numbers of WNV vectors. Last year we made over 266,000 larvicide applications to catch basins. Additionally, 14 municipalities are already assisting with treatments of underground WNV vector habitats and we are reaching out to others who have assisted in the past.

As new Inspectors arrive on staff, we focus on training in the many aspects of their new job including the intricacies of vector-borne disease prevention. They are instructed in La Crosse and West Nile vector control methods and on communicating with the public about local mosquito-borne virus and they are also made aware that mosquitoes cannot transmit the virus that causes COVID-19.

### **4. TECHNICAL SERVICES LAB**

During April and May, we identified spaces where we could house lab employees that meet physical distancing requirements. Carey LaMere and Scott Larson set up lab stations in their offices. We have set up two stations in a separate lab office for two people who are roommates, and there will be three seasonal staff and myself in the main lab. We have installed plexiglass dividers in the lab and will use the lab bench vents and overhead vent to ensure proper airflow in the space.

We've had a slow start to the season. The spring black fly and mosquito broods were identified with limited staff. We have two new inspectors this year who have entomological experience; I am confident they will catch on quickly and be able to have a shorter training period than staff with no experience. Monday Night Surveillance was scheduled for the week of May 11 but was postponed due to cold temperatures. May 18 will be the first night

of sampling. Black fly annoyance has been high this spring. We are investigating the black fly annoyance problem and doing additional adult collections in Hastings, Edina, Minneapolis, and Plymouth where many complaints from the public were received.

## 5. PUBLIC AFFAIRS

### Presentations

- Friday, May 8 – Zoom Classroom Presentation for 40 fifth grade students at Groveland Elementary School in Minnetonka.

Due to precautions over COVID-19, all public presentations are currently postponed or cancelled as are all of our public events. We are working on “distance” methods to get our message out to the public this year with the assumption that almost all 2020 events will be either cancelled or reduced in size.

### Media Coverage

We received two types of media coverage in the past 30 days:

- 1) Local newspapers and city websites re-printing our press release to notify residents we will be in the area, and they may be seeing us more frequently.  
EXAMPLES:
  - a. [https://www.presspubs.com/white\\_bear/news/watch-for-mosquito-control-activity/article\\_ecbad496-9543-11ea-85c6-37198d3dd8ce.html](https://www.presspubs.com/white_bear/news/watch-for-mosquito-control-activity/article_ecbad496-9543-11ea-85c6-37198d3dd8ce.html)
  - b. [https://www.swnewsmedia.com/prior\\_lake\\_american/news/local/mosquito-water-quality-treatments-to-begin-around-prior-lake/article\\_f75d77e9-a64c-519c-9bfa-736726b4b8a8.html](https://www.swnewsmedia.com/prior_lake_american/news/local/mosquito-water-quality-treatments-to-begin-around-prior-lake/article_f75d77e9-a64c-519c-9bfa-736726b4b8a8.html)
  - c. <http://www.ci.apple-valley.mn.us/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=2818>
- 2) Statewide media picking up and running stories about the high prevalence of black flies, particularly a species that is less common in the Twin Cities:  
EXAMPLES:
  - a. <https://www.fox9.com/news/new-aggressive-gnat-species-feasting-on-minnesotans-this-spring>
  - b. <https://www.mprnews.org/story/2020/05/14/first-a-pandemic-and-now-biting-gnats>
  - c. <https://minnesota.cbslocal.com/2020/05/14/are-this-years-gnats-worse-than-in-the-past/>
  - d. <https://www.startribune.com/now-what-gnats-black-fly-invasion-torments-twin-cities/570520362/?refresh=true>

### Website

We have created original content on our website in the past couple of weeks to educate and inform people who visit our website. These include:

- 1) Video and post about how MMCD is adjusting for COVID-19 precautions: <https://mmcd.org/2020/04/21/mmcd-and-covid-19-we-can-get-through-this-together/>
- 2) Mosquitoes vs. midges infographic: <https://mmcd.org/2020/05/07/mosquitoes-vs-midges-whats-bugging-you/>

- 3) Tips for reducing black fly bites infographic: <https://mmcd.org/2020/05/15/5-tips-for-reducing-bites-from-black-flies-biting-gnats/>
- 4) Press release about MMCD being in communities: <https://mmcd.org/2020/05/04/press-release-mosquito-control-activity-beginning-in-your-community/>

### Social Media

Our social media has been active this past month providing updates to the public about MMCD's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and responding to comments about gnats and mosquitoes. Here are the latest numbers.

- Facebook – 1,498 Page Likes (Up 35 from April 15)
  - Facebook.com/metromosquitocd
- Twitter – 620 Followers (Up 49 from March 1)
  - Twitter.com/metromosquito
- Instagram – 111 Followers (Up 84 from March 1)
  - Instagram.com/metromosquito

## **6. TICK-BORNE DISEASE**

### MMCD Collaboration to Detect Asian Longhorned Tick

Agencies involved in collaborative surveillance include Indian Health Services (northern MN), Minnesota Board of Animal Health, USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Minnesota Department of Health, Metropolitan Mosquito Control District, University of Minnesota, and the Wildlife Rehabilitation Center of Minnesota.

### Tick Vector Field Projects

Our 2020 tick surveillance season began April 27. As of May 16, three of ten routes in our first round of surveillance have been completed. Due to impacts of COVID19, St. Paul staff are assisting as needed in the field in 2020.

### Public Education/Outreach

- Distribution and/or re-stocking of brochures, tick cards and posters remains suspended for now (due to the COVID-19 situation).
- We continue to alert our Facebook followers to tick activity and other items of interest and also are periodically reminding people that we would like any unusual ticks mailed to us!
- Our estimate of current deer tick activity levels (low, medium, high) is updated during tick questing periods on our website via the Tick Risk Meter. The meter settings are based on the dynamics of peaks in the general deer tick life cycle bell curve for Minnesota in combination with deer ticks being found on MMCD field staff.
- Our Tick Risk Meter is currently set to **MEDIUM**. Deer ticks are out and questing (and so are wood ticks!).
- Signs to remind the public of deer ticks and disease prevention measures are being posted at dog parks and additional locations throughout the metro. For various reasons some signs remain up year-round.