October 18, 2023

The executive board of the Virginia Mosquito Control Association held a meeting on October 18, 2023 through GoToMeeting.

Those present were current Past President Wes Robertson, President Carla Caulkins, President Elect Karen Akaratovic, Vice President Lauren Lochstampfor, Secretary/Treasurer Jay Kiser, MAMCA Representative Tim DuBois, Local Arrangements Committee Chair Charles Abadam, and Hospitality Committee Chair Carol LaLiberte..

The executive board meeting was called to order at 9:34am.

Wes Robertson made a motion, seconded by Karen Akaratovic, to approve the September 13, 2023 board meeting minutes and September 14, 2023 email minutes as presented to the board by Jay Kiser. There was no discussion, all in favor and none opposed; motion carried.

Wes Robertson made a motion, seconded by Karen Akaratovic, to approve the October 18, 2023 financial report as presented to the board by Jay Kiser. There was no discussion, all in favor and none opposed; motion carried.

Board member and committee reports

(Board members and committees not mentioned had nothing to report)

Charles Abadam, the Chair of Local Arrangements and Technical Advisory Committees, contacted the hotel to get the answers to the board’s questions. The division of rooms can only be done in thirds and not halves. This means the presentation room or vendor/banquet room will have to be ⅓ and the other will be in ⅔. The hotel said that the banquet tables and vendor tables could not fit in just one room, so the presentation area will have to remain in the same size as last conference. Charles is working to get the tables in the presentation room spaced with walkways against the side walls but still seating 100-120 people. For an extra $300, we can upgrade from the 8’ screen package ($834) to the 10’ screen package ($1120). The projector will need to be moved farther back, but Charles doesn’t see a problem with this. The board members like this idea and Charles will be going with the larger screen. The board is hoping these changes will solve the problems VMCA members had last year (crowded and couldn’t see screen). If not, we will discuss more for 2026.

Charles brought up the idea of bringing the Ice Breaker (IB) event to the Hospitality room (HR) at the 2024 conference. If VMCA provides the food and drinks for the IB, it should be more cost efficient. If both were in the same room, it may keep people in the HR instead of leaving during the transition. The HB can be moved to the corner room with all the windows at no extra cost. Jay brought up the issue in the past where board members didn’t want VMCA to buy alcohol. Jay reminded the board that alcohol is already on our final bill for the conference. Vendors cut us a check for sponsorships, but VMCA pays the bill for all the food and drinks during the IB. If VMCA purchased the drinks at a store beforehand, they could be used for the IB and HR and not have to rely on vendors to provide HR drinks (anxiety of last minute deliveries). Charles said that all the food and drinks could be purchased for less than $1000. Carolyn (Hospitality room chair) said she was happy with this arrangement and has plenty of coolers and equipment to serve food. Tim asked if this would hurt our ability to hit our minimum F&B. Charles said this should not be a problem unless we get rid of other events like breakfasts. There was concern if everyone attending the ice breaker (roughly 60 people) could fit inside the corner room. Last year people spilled out into the hallway where the bar was. If we provide the drinks, everyone would have to remain in the room. Lauren suggested that the hotel provide the bar in the hallway, and we serve our food in the HR. Charles will ask the hotel if this arrangement can work as well as how many people can fit in the HR comfortably. Carla suggested discussing the table style/arrangement in the HR for comfort and space (she would like more tables for sitting). Whatever happens with the Ice Breaker drinks, Jay asked if the board is cool with VMCA buying alcohol for the HR. No board members had a problem with this.

Carla asked Tim and Carol if they could take the VMCA coolers after the recert in January. Tim said that would not be a problem.

Agenda Committee Chair Karen Akaratovic, has 27 presentation forms turned in with only one virtual so far. Tim just sent her an email to expect a few more. Karen is looking at the organization right now, and wants to make a few changes: SCC Q&A break to Wednesday afternoon with the poster presentations beforehand. After the Nov 3 deadline for presentations, Karen will send the agenda to VDACS.

Information Committee Chair Karen Akaratovic, Fall Skeeter just came out. The call for articles for the Winter Skeeter will come out in a month or two. She reminded board members to have their Winter Skeeter articles ready, like the nomination bios and conference related info.

Next year, Karen will be president, and she is looking for people to take over as chairs for her committees. Kaitlyn Price has shown interest to be chair of the information committee next year.

Website Committee Chair Karen Akaratovic, is updating the website as things come in; mostly the conference page. Wes Robertson is interested in being chair of the website committee next year.

Vendor planning committee, Carla asked if anyone has been in contact with Zach. No one said yes. Charles suggested that the chair of vendor planning should not be a vendor. Vendors don’t always want to talk with one another and it doesn’t seem like any vendor really wants the position. Tim said that the industry rep position in MAMCA is also not working well. Jay said that even though he was a part of getting the industry rep board position going, he feels like that position should be taken away. If we go this route, bylaws will have to be changed. Jay would like to bring this up at the business meeting in February and see how the membership feels. Lauren suggested that we calculate board meeting attendance for that position. Jay said that he can do this and have it ready for the business meeting.

Bylaws Committee Chair Jay Kiser, currently we have some bylaws changes in the works for the 2024 business meeting. Jay would like to hold off on the additional changes like adding VAST as a subgroup and taking away the industry rep, until the 2025 meeting. The board did not argue against this.

Student Competition Committee Chair Jay Kiser, Tour de Skeeter was delayed a weekend because of rain. It is now taking place next weekend on 10/21/2023. During the last board meeting, a motion was made to allow SCC to spend up to $1,050.00 on TdS. Jay said there was a miscalculation on the shirts and they cost $200 more than previously thought (more shirts are now being purchased or the cost is higher than previously thought). Jay would like a motion to raise the allowed spending cap. Karen Akaratovic made a motion, seconded by Wes Robertson, to allow SCC to spend a total of up to $1,250.00 on the 2023 Tour de Skeeter. There was no discussion, all in favor and none opposed; motion carried.

Education committee, Calra said that Katherine Ruett (Committee Chair) has been in contact with VDACS for the January recert. The process seems to be moving along fine.

Carla will be having a baby this winter and won’t be able to attend the recert. She was hoping someone from the board can give the welcome speech. Jay said he will be at the recert for money collection, so he can easily give the talk.

Photo Contest Ad Hoc Committee Chair Wes Robertson, no photo entries yet.

Nominations Committee Chair Wes Robertson, two potential candidates to run against Jay for Secretary/Treasurer. Sarah from Portsmouth is a maybe and Katherine from Chesapeake is a yes. Wes has talked to some people about the other positions, but does not have any interest yet.

Curiations Committee Chair Wes Robertson, Suffolk and Henrico have some specimens collected.. Wes has tried asking other areas but no answer yet. He will advertise more next year and at the conference.

Historical Committee Chair Tim DuBois, Ann will bring a mosquito model/diorama (retirement gift) to put on the table at the conference. There are a number of other items to put on the table, including smaller pictures that will be blown up.

MAMCA Representative Tim DuBois, a couple of hotels are being looked at for 2025, including the Portsmouth Renaissance. The Renaissance parking lot is city parking, but Tim works for the city and may be able to get a deal going. The hotel in Downtown Hampton and Double Tree in Williamsburg have the same coordinator as the Renaissance and are being looked at as well. A hotel will be chosen by the end of the year.

Old Business

* Sustaining membership form: Jay emailed out a fillable PDF and google form for the board to look over. Charles added some reformatting and a new way to sign up for sponsorships. There are options for $1,000, $500, and $250 sponsorships that include a list of events for each. The idea is to give them options that may work with their budgets/interests. Charles will call each of the vendors and walk them through the form. It is suggested that vendors are called and talked to each year. Jay suggested that this become the vendor planning committee’s job. Especially if a board member takes this committee over. There were a couple additional changes Charles would like to make to the document before it is finalized. He will email the final documents to the board and a vote can take place via email.
* VAST: The next meeting is scheduled for Nov 16 at 9am. Jay is still thinking of ways to have everyone’s information shared easily. He plans to bring it up during the VAST meeting and see what people think.

New Business

* The next board meeting will be November 13 (Monday) at 930am.
* Jay announcement: we don’t need to discuss this now, but keep in mind that we will need to think about and talk about the purchase of speaker gifts, door prizes, and conference packets.
* Invasive species ID course: Jay was hoping VMCA could host an ID course focusing on invasive mosquito species. He was thinking this course would be attended by seasoned biologists in Virginia and nearby states. He was also hoping it would include both larval and adult specimens. Instructors with their own specimens would need to be invited and possibly paid for their time. Jay thinks sponsorships and a registration cost could cover these expenses easily. To get a better idea of possibilities, Jay talked with Mike Riles from BEACONS, and asked if anyone from their organization would be interested in teaching. Mike said that he would be willing to teach something like this and BEACONS may be able to cover his costs. Spring of 2025 might work best in order to have the extra season to collect specimens. Jay would like to find additional instructors (from the north and possibly the west) to help as well. There was an overall interest from the board. Lauren said that she had attended a class with Mike Riles and he seems very knowledgeable. There was talk of who will be incharge of the course: education committee, curations committee? Jay is not on either of these committees, but he would like to take lead on this project.

Jay Kiser made a motion, seconded by Lauren Lochstampfor, to adjourn the meeting at 11:05am, all in favor, none opposed.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jay Kiser

Secretary/Treasurer VMCA