

HINTS ON THE CONDUCT OF MEETINGS
OF A BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF A MOSQUITO ABATEMENT DISTRICT

by

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The operations of a mosquito abatement district in California are governed by a Board of Trustees, consisting of five or more Trustees. The Trustees in turn are controlled in their operations by the powers and duties imposed by Sections 2200 to 2398 of the Health and Safety Code, and various other laws relating to administrative boards in general.

The Trustees serve without pay, though their expenses may be defrayed from District funds. Usually the Trustees are men with substantial businesses or professions of their own, and it would be unreasonable to expect them to give large amounts of time and attention to the details of the work of the District. In particular, the work of the meetings of the Board should be so organized as to require a minimum amount of time on their part, but at the same time insuring that all necessary actions are taken in a legal manner, and properly recorded in their minutes.

In a number of Districts in the past it has been apparent that many actions have been taken without following safe legal procedures, and such actions could be questioned in court by a suit entered by any taxpayer, with resultant embarrassment to the Trustees. This is particularly true with regard to the procedure in paying money for services and supplies furnished to the District.

Section 2312 requires that money shall be paid out of the District fund (held by the County Treasurer) only upon the warrant of the Board of Trustees. The warrant must be signed by the President of the Board and countersigned by the Secretary. Furthermore, because of other laws governing the payment of money out of the county treasury, each warrant must be signed by the County Auditor before it can be honored by the County Treasurer. It is obvious that the Board of Trustees can only authorize the payment of money as a result of action duly taken at a regular or special meeting of the Board.

The Board is required to provide for the time and place of holding its regular meetings. This presupposes that there will be regular, stated meetings, which of necessity must be held at least monthly, and if employees are to be paid on a bi-weekly or semi-monthly basis, then at least two

regular meetings per month will be required. These meetings must be open to the public. In order to conduct a meeting, a majority of the Trustees must be present.

The first thing necessary to be done for the convenience of the Trustees, and to insure as far as possible the presence of a quorum, is to arrange for regular notification of each Trustee sufficiently in advance of the time and place of the next meeting of the Board. This should be done by the Secretary of the Board of Trustees, though frequently he may delegate to the Superintendent the duty of sending out written notices by mail, signed by the Superintendent in the name of the Secretary. These notices should be mailed three or four days before the meeting date. In addition, it is advisable for the Superintendent to call each Trustee on the telephone a few hours before the meeting to ascertain if he will be able to attend. If it is obvious that a quorum cannot be attained, each Trustee should be notified by telephone, so as to avoid an unnecessary trip. An adjourned meeting should be arranged for at a later date when a quorum can attend.

Prior to the actual time of meeting, the Superintendent can schedule the work of the meeting, and have all necessary documents in order, so that the meeting can proceed with despatch and accomplish all the work required.

In the first place, all warrants should be properly prepared with their supporting purchase orders, invoices or payroll attached, so that as soon as they have been examined and approved by vote of the Board, the warrants can be signed by the President and Secretary. But in addition, there should be furnished a list of the warrants, giving the number, the payee, the purpose for which paid, the amount of each warrant, and the total of all the warrants. It is further desirable to show on the list of warrants the cash balance on hand after paying out the total of the warrants. It is desirable that each Trustee be given a copy of the list of warrants, together with the sheet listing the business of the meeting. The latter is usually called an "agenda".

The agenda is simply a schedule of the work of the meeting of the Board. A normal agenda for a Board meeting would have the following items:

1. Roll call
 - Trustees present
 - Trustees absent
2. Reading of Minutes of the last previous meeting, and approval or amendment of these minutes.
3. Approval of payment of the warrants due and payable at the meeting.

4. Brief report by Superintendent on any important matters: don't bother the Board with minor details. Secure authorization in advance of any large or unusual expenditures.
5. Discussion of and action on any special matters of business, each of which should be described briefly on the agenda.
6. Adjournment

If a list of warrants has been prepared, it will be unnecessary to type the list into the Minutes; instead, the list can be designated with an exhibit letter, such as "A", "B", "C", etc., and attached to the Minutes. Any resolutions passed by the Board can also be designated as exhibits and attached.

If an agenda has been properly prepared, it can be used by the addition of notes, entered thereon in writing, as the basis for preparing the Minutes of the meeting. The time of opening and closing the meeting should be shown; for each motion or resolution there should be noted the Trustee who moved and who seconded, and the vote thereon.

As soon as possible after the Board meeting, usually the next day, the Secretary should dictate the Minutes of the meeting, and they should be typewritten, following a general pattern. There should be stated first the date and place of meeting, and the time when called to order; secondly, the Trustees present and absent, and third; the reading and approval or amendment of the Minutes of the previous meeting. Thereafter there should follow seriatim the various actions taken by the Board, including matters discussed without action, or matters discussed and postponed as to action. Finally, the time of adjournment should be stated.

The Minutes, when typed and the exhibits attached, should be signed by the Secretary. When approved at a subsequent meeting of the Board of Trustees, the Secretary should endorse thereon the date and fact of approval, or approval as amended. Corrections or amendments should be initialled by the Secretary.

In some Districts the writing of the Minutes is delegated by the Secretary to the Superintendent, subject to review by the Secretary before presentation to the Board. In one district the Minutes when prepared are duplicated (except for exhibits) and mailed to each Trustee, within a few days after each meeting.

The Minutes, with all exhibits, should be kept in the District office as permanent records, and should be bound in some satisfactory manner.

Each meeting of the Board of Trustees is conducted by the President, or the Vice-President in his absence. However, the Superintendent can do much to make the work of the Board at its meetings simpler, more effective and expeditious, and busy Trustees will appreciate his efforts in this direction. Part of the Superintendent's job is to think ahead and prepare in advance for various actions which must be taken by the Board, or by other agencies. For example, each November he should prepare letters addressed to the Board of Supervisors or to the City Councils of the cities in his district, notifying them of the expiration of the terms of office of Trustees on January 2nd following, and requesting the appointment of a Trustee for the ensuing two year term. At the November meeting the Board should direct the Secretary to send these letters.

At the proper time, also, the Superintendent should prepare the preliminary budget for the ensuing fiscal year, with supporting data, and preferably should send individual copies to each Trustee about 2 weeks in advance of the date for considering and adopting the budget.

When any special problems of major importance are to come up for consideration by the Trustees, the Superintendent should prepare and send to the Trustees, in advance of the meeting, a special report or memorandum giving all essential information thereon.

If an annexation is to be accomplished, the Superintendent should see not only that all necessary forms are prepared with the advice of the District Attorney's office, but he should prepare a schedule for all the actions to be taken, including publication, and also an agenda for the hearing on the annexation petition.

The suggestions made herein will make it possible to conduct Board meetings in an orderly and efficient method, and the saving in time and energy of the Trustees will be appreciated by them.

Mr. Gray: The paper on DDT will be presented by an Assistant, Mr. McGowan.

TWO YEARS' EXPERIENCE
WITH DDT IN THE
ALAMEDA COUNTY MOSQUITO ABATEMENT DISTRICT

by
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and
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In December 1943 the Alameda County Mosquito Abatement District performed a limited amount of experimental spraying with DDT and cooperated in laboratory experiments at