



Four Rivers Vector Control District  
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## Meeting Minutes – June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024

**Opening:** Meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m. on June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024 by Rodney Dieckhoff.

**Present:**

Rodney Dieckhoff, Board President  
Lawrie Dieckhoff, Treasurer  
Duncan Atwood, Board Member  
Amy Varner, Board Member  
Eva Wild Crain, Board Member

**Guests:**

Approximately 14 guests were present

**Absent:**

No board members were absent.

### New Business

Rodney Dieckhoff opened the meeting by reading the emergency meeting guidelines located in the board member manual policy 4.3. It was then stated that it was not an emergency meeting, it was considered a ‘special meeting’, Rodney proceeded with the new business items on the agenda.

**a. Clarification of budget**

**a.** Budget was re-presented to the entire board, all stated that they understood, and no questions were raised.

**b. Clarification of Personnel Positions**

**a.** The board clarified the hierarchy of the district, and all members agreed. The floor was then opened to board members involved in a string of emails which ended unfavorably between the board members and district personnel.

**i.** Please refer to Document A for more detailed information on discussion.

No discussion was held on mosquito control efforts within the district.

### Future Agenda Items:

- a. Neutral 3<sup>rd</sup> party wage evaluation recommended by SDAO.
- b. Job Title and Job Descriptions
- c. Bylaws and Policy Manual
- d. Website status

**Adjourn Meeting:** Meeting was adjourned at 7:27 p.m. on June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024

## DOCUMENT A

I would like to start with saying, we as a board are supposed to be on the same team and we are supposed to do all we can to provide the best service for our community. It is our duty to the tax payers in this district to be fiscally responsible and give them all we can with the money we have.

When Rodney and Lawrie asked me to become a Vector Control Board Member they both knew I had no prior experience as a board member but felt that my business experience would be a great asset to the board. Over the past few months, we, as a board, have been discussing and establishing a budget for the upcoming year. This included changing from two-year budget to a one year budget. In these discussions I voted to raise Myles's pay. On top of that, it was my idea to start new seasonal employees at \$25 per hour to compete with other seasonal jobs in the area.

We discussed the budget in many meetings. Sierra's wage increase was discussed. Lawrie and Rodney both stated that they could not discuss Sierra's wage or vote on her wage increase, due to a conflict of interest. Lawrie told Duncan, Amy and myself we would have to decide on her pay increase. Lawrie suggested that we meet outside the meeting to decide on a number. At that time, Lawrie handed us a stack of papers, saying she did some research on Sierra's pay and "what people in her position are making". In the paperwork, there was a financial scale. One in particular, Lawrie pointed to, saying she thought best described Sierra's position and what she does. That increase showed a \$20,000 increase to what Sierra is making. Lawrie told us, at that time, Sierra deserved that raise.

I felt that a \$20,000 raise was too much for Sierra's position. Sierra is the manager of our office and has had one full time employee, until recently. She now has two employees, with two seasonal employees being trained. She handles payroll, hiring paperwork, marketing, bookkeeping and is trying to update the office. Unfortunately, this office is grossly out of date. Being behind is no fault of Sierra's. The prior manager and board did not keep Four Rivers Vector Control up to date or in compliance with any government requirements. I understand that Sierra has a large task, updating all this and has done a wonderful job, so far, tackling all of this.

In a normal year Sierra works full time for four months out of the year. The rest of the year she comes in to the office or takes the computer home with her to do payroll. In the off season, she does payroll for herself and Myles. I acknowledge that currently, Sierra has a higher work load, due to the issues she is dealing with and I believe she is getting paid fairly for that.

I called around to local jobs asking what managers made and the benefit packages that were included. Sierra's wage and benefits are way above any others I found.

When Duncan, Amy and I met to discuss a raise for Sierra, Amy and I felt as though the benefit package, along with Sierra's current pay was appropriate for her first year on the job. Duncan was hesitant but agreed the benefit package was a raise. We (as a board) have discussed since, that the recommendation from Lawrie and Rodney for us three to meet to discuss the raise was incorrect. It should not have happened. At the next meeting Sierra's raise was not brought up. The meeting after that, Rodney tried to bring up Sierra's wage and Duncan brought up that Sierra's wage increase should be discussed in an Executive Session. The conversation was tabled at that time. This was also not correct information. Sierra's wage and raise should be discussed and decided in an open meeting to the public.

We had one meeting after that, and nothing was said about Sierra's increase.

When I was asked to sit on this board, I was told that it would not be an issue to miss meetings or call-in to attend. Last Thursday the 20<sup>th</sup> I spoke to Rodney at 2:30 in the afternoon. I told him I had something come up that I would like to attend and asked if it would be an issue to miss the meeting. At that time, he said we would not be discussing anything important. I asked if he was sure, I would attend the meeting if I needed to. He assured me, nothing important was happening. We agreed it was not an issue for me to miss the meeting.

The day after the meeting I received a string of emails discussing Sierra's raise. I asked for the meeting minutes and received them.

Not in the meeting notes: Amy asked if Sierra's pay raise would be the cost of living increase 3.5% (the

same as all the other three employees) decided in the last meeting. At that time, Sierra told Amy her raise would be “significantly more”. Amy responded that Sierra’s increase had not been discussed, that’s when Lawrie told Amy it was up to “them” not the board.

In a email it was stated that Myles is the GM and will be deciding Sierra’s increase.

After me questioning Myles’s position (I believed Myles to be the operations manager) we were told, in a follow up email, Sierra confirmed, Myles is indeed the Operation’s Manager. Sierra also stated:

“Rodney called and spoke to George Dunkel at SDAO and he clarified that raises for employees under the operations manager are not up to the board it is up to the operations manager, Myles.

Lawrie even mentioned that my raise is actually not up to the board during the last meeting.”

I too called the SDAO and Spoke to Monica Schultz at the SDAO she put me in contact with Tonya Grass who specializes in law. I was told that Myles, being our highest manager in the office, it would be his decision on what raise is appropriate for Sierra.

Mrs. Grass advised that if Myles feels that any employee deserves a raise above and beyond the cost of living, Myles should present that raise to the board for approval. The reason a raise above the cost of living needs to be approved by the board is because, in the end, it is the board who is liable and held accountable, should any questions arise from the public. If any employee is given a raise over the cost of living, the raise must be defensible to our tax payers.

We did approve the budget. At the time, we said we did not know what to allow for the budget because we did not know what Sierra’s raise would be. We were assured the amount didn’t matter, it only mattered that we had room in the budget for her raise. When I approved the budget, my intention was to leave room for appropriate raises, but not going over and above the cost of living.