

Minutes for the Mosquito Control Taskforce for the Twenty-First Century Meeting

December 2, 2020, 1:00 p.m. via Zoom

The meeting was held remotely under the Governor's Order issued on March 12, 2020, which authorizes a public body to meet remotely and suspends the requirement of a quorum on the body being physically present at the meeting location. All votes were taken as roll call votes.

Members in Attendance: Dan Sieger, Stephen Doody, Kathy Baskin, Eve Schluter, Commissioner John Lebeaux, Julia Blatt, Tonya Colpitts, Anita Deeley, Russell Hopping, Kim LeBeau, Bob Mann, Priscilla Matton, Brad Mitchell, Jennifer Pederson, Rich Pollack, Heidi Porter, Helen Poynton, Heidi Ricci, Stephen Rich, Richard Robinson, and Sam Telford.

Dan Sieger called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. and announced the meeting was being recorded. He stated that the RFR has been posted and that the purpose of the meeting is to discuss evaluation criteria. He mentioned the Globe article regarding PFAS and stated that the state agencies are working with EPA to obtain a sample directly from the manufacturer in IL for additional testing. Once that additional information has been obtained the Task Force can invite the DEP team to answer technical questions at a future meeting. He then asked for questions on the subject.

Julia Blatt asked for a timeline for a decision if the state does not want to use this product.

Alisha Bouchard responded that there is flexibility under the contract and no set deadline.

Dan Sieger stated that this is a priority.

Heidi Ricci expressed thanks for the information and stated that it is also important to look at ground spraying because this finding points to concerns about chemical use and what we do not know about the impact on human health and the environment.

Brian Rosman from Senator Comerford's office raised the subject of the local opt-out provision included in the legislation and asked whether progress had been made.

Dan Sieger mentioned bringing something back to the group at a future meeting.

Kim LeBeau asked how the manufacturer is chosen for the large-scale aerial spraying.

Taryn LaScola-Miner stated that state agencies reviewed Anvil last year with toxicology information being provided to the group. The agencies looked at Anvil and 3 other products submitted to the SRB and the SRB voted to choose Anvil.

Dan Sieger emphasized the importance of this discussion and that it will be placed on the agenda when we have additional information.

Dan Sieger then turned to discussion of the RFR. The RFR needed to be reposted which pushes the proposal deadline back by two weeks. Vendors have been notified and the delay does not impact the schedule. The Task Force will spend today's meeting discussing evaluation criteria and the evaluation of bids will take place at a public meeting in January. The documents for review will be compiled and forwarded as soon as possible after the deadline of December 31st

and detailed guidance will be shared with the group. The evaluation will take place at the meeting on January 7th.

Heidi Ricci asked for a summary of the timeline and when the Task Force would be expected to act.

Caroline Higley confirmed that bids would be compiled and sent out as quickly as possible after December 31st.

Richard Robinson asked whether decisions would be made at the meeting on the 7th.

Dan Sieger responded that the aim will be to rank the bids which will determine the winning candidate but there is flexibility if the group decides it needs additional time for discussion.

Richard Robinson mentioned that it would be helpful to hear other Task Force member thoughts.

Jessica Burgess replied that because the Task Force is a public body the only opportunity for sharing views under the open meeting law is to discuss in the public forum.

Dan Sieger mentioned that one approach might be to take people's feedback at the beginning of the meeting before diving into the ranking.

Jessica Burgess answered a question from Pine DuBois about public participation by clarifying that once the procurement is complete the public will have access to the documents, subject to the public records law, but will not be able to participate in the process because they are not part of the procurement team.

Dan Sieger stated that staff will discuss ways to continue to make the process as transparent and accessible as possible.

Dan Sieger then turned to the evaluation criteria.

Caroline Higley then began the discussion of the evaluation criteria which she posted in the chat function. The proposal is to weigh each evaluation criteria evenly and staff was hoping to obtain feedback about that approach.

Eve Schluter inquired about the reasons for the proposed approach.

Caroline Higley responded that the aim was to minimize errors given the complexity of the RFR and the large number of reviewers.

Julia Blatt asked if more specifics could be included under the Technical Expertise bullet.

Caroline Higley responded that significantly more detail will be added under each criteria and members discussed their thoughts on potential technical expertise subcategories.

Task Force members expressed concern about selecting the consulting team with the proper mix of expertise and that it might be difficult to find a bidder with all the areas of expertise needed.

Kathy Baskin mentioned that a contractor can assemble the right team for the project and that the group would be able to look at the entire team.

The Task Force then discussed the second bullet, demonstrated experience and past performance. Staff clarified that they would verify that all required information is submitted, including the subcategories in the RFR, and that it is common to receive letters of support that highlight past experience.

Caroline Higley next touched on Bullet 3 regarding the contractor team and the group discussed the Task Force members being on the same page about the scoresheet.

Jessica Burgess clarified that the evaluation criteria will not include anything that is not included in the RFR and that bidders are required to disclose any potential conflicts of interest.

Staff also described the mechanics of weighting and Dan Sieger asked whether the Task Force wished to weigh some bullets more than others. Task Force members focused on where the meat of the scope was included and discussed the relative importance of the bullets.

Caroline Higley clarified that the scope will ultimately be the report and that these bullets are indications of whether the entity will be able to accomplish the product the Task Force wishes to obtain.

Task Force members then discussed the scorecard and how to evaluate using the same methodology and expressed some concern about Task Force members reaching different scores based on different interpretation of the bullets. Caroline Higley went into some additional detail about the evaluation criteria and the RFR through discussion it was clarified that while we will do our best to put items in categories that make sense, ultimately members have different experiences and will approach things differently. The goal will be to organize criteria that make sense and then the group can weigh in which will make the review more thorough and complete.

Dan Sieger commented on the value of each of the bullets and asked again about the idea of giving even weight to the bullets. After additional discussion the Task Force reached consensus that the simplest approach would be to give each bullet the same weight.

The Task Force discussed the process for approval and staff recommended reviewing all the proposals in advance but not completing the form until after the discussion period at the next meeting since the form will be a public record and can't be changed once completed.

Task Force members discussed how the report will fit into the charge of the group and Dan Sieger clarified that the RFR will lead to a study to inform the work of the Task Force which will in turn lead to the Task Force report to the legislature. This study will be the first step and getting it right will help with our charge. He also mentioned that staff will look into the best way to submit the rankings at the next meeting. He stated that he appreciates the diligent work and that the Task Force may consider bi-weekly meetings in the coming months. He reiterated that people could reach out to him with PFAS questions.

Heidi Ricci requested the final RFR as posted and Caroline Higley responded that she would forward the document.

Dan Sieger asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting which was provided by Richard Pollock and seconded by Commissioner Lebeaux. The meeting ended at 3:04 p.m.