



**League of Women Voters
of Manatee County**

**Voters' Guide to Candidates in the
General Election, November 3, 2020
*Fire and Mosquito District Commissions***

**Featuring the background and viewpoints of candidates in these
District elections:**

- ✓ Cedar Hammock, Seats 1 and 5
- ✓ West Manatee, Seats 2 and 4
- ✓ Mosquito Control, Group 2



Published as a public service by

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The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, and works to increase understanding of major public policy issues.

Voters Guide to Candidates for the Fire and Mosquito District Commissions

Cedar Hammock Fire District Commissioner, Seat 1

Richard McGinley - No response

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Cedar Hammock Fire District Commissioner, Seat 1



Samuel Anderson "Andy" Reasoner

Contact information:

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Questions:

Q: What qualities, experience and skills make you the best person for this position?

A: I am a 5th generation Manatee County resident. I am a graduate of Culver Military Academy and the University of Florida. I was the class spokesman for the first class of Leadership Manatee graduates sponsored by the Manatee Chamber of Commerce. That experience gave me an inside look at the various aspects of county government of Manatee County. I have served on various state wide trade organization boards of directors as well as local groups supporting athletics and the IB Program at Southeast High School.

In 2003 I began development of Royal Palm Terrace Apartments, an affordable housing community in Oneco. I was responsible for the management of that entire \$20MM development process including financing, government relations and operation

Q: Why are you running for this position?

A: I believe I can help direct the responsible and measured growth of the Cedar Hammock Fire District and the judicious use of tax payer funds to provide the safest, efficient and cost effective operation possible. I believe my business experience handling large budgets and development experience along with my history in the community give me a unique perspective to help make Cedar Hammock Fire District the best it can be.

Q: What do you feel is the most important challenge facing your fire district? How do you propose meeting that challenge?

A: Growth management is always at the forefront of any public office in Manatee County. The development of the land formerly a part of Manatee Fruit Company and now known as IMG Academies,

Long Bar Pointe and Lake Flores will present significant challenges to the district. Smart, well thought out planning is critical to insure that the district provides both existing developments with superior service and response times, and also has the needed resources to support the growth that is coming from these new developments.

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Cedar Hammock Fire Commissioner, Seat 5

Emil Plichta - no response

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Cedar Hammock Fire Commissioner, Seat 5

John H. Stevens

Contact information:

Mailing address: 2905 57th Av. W. Bradenton, FL 34207

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Phone: (941) 518-2016

Questions:

Q: What qualities, experience and skills make you the best person for this position?

A: I served 20 years in the fire service. Retired at the rank of LT./EMT. I'm from the Bay area, grew up in Tampa.

I was hired by the Sarasota Fire Department in 1984 that later consolidated into Sarasota County Fire Rescue.

2016 I was elected to the Cedar Hammock Fire Rescue Board of Commissioners seat 5. In this capacity I served as representative at the Manatee C.O.G. I am presently the Secretary/Treasurer of the Board. I am also a Florida Certified District Official.

Q: Why are you running for this position?

A: I want to provide the best service for the Cedar Hammock district.

Q: What do you feel is the most important challenge facing your fire district? How do you propose meeting that challenge?

A: Right now the COVID19 pandemic is my main concern. Hopefully we may be in the recovery stage. The main thing is to remain vigilant. PPE is very important. Our department must provide the best possible service; safety should be our first priority.

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West Manatee Fire Commissioner, Seat 5

Robert C. Bennett

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Facebook: Robby Bennett for Fire Commissioner

Questions:

Q: What qualities, experience and skills make you the best person for this position?

A: I have 35 years of fire service experience spanning from 1985 as a volunteer with AMI Fire District to 2019 serving as Battalion Chief of SCFD. As a leader of a department that utilizes Advanced Life Support (ALS) engines, I will be an asset to both administration and personnel in West Manatee. The qualities acquired throughout my career were honesty, flexibility, empathy, loyalty and compassion. In 1994, I was selected by the VFW for the Paramedic of the Year award in the state of FL. I hold a professional EMS degree and have earned the endorsement of the firefighters Union (IAFF) which I have been a member for over 30 years. This involvement leads to an understanding of how contract negotiations can affect both the taxpayer and the employee.

Q: Why are you running for this position?

A: I have lived in the West Manatee district for 50 years. Being 51 years old I have a lot left to give and return to my community. Having just retired from fire service, I know that I want to continue to serve the community in this capacity. Fire service is a profession that is steeped in the tradition of helping one another through. This position affords me an opportunity to help keep this fire district on the progressive course that the current chief has envisioned. If elected, my mission is to make sure that fire personnel are given the chance to work safely, remain healthy, and retire peacefully. I consider myself ready to fulfill this mission along with being fiscally responsible to the taxpayers of this district.

Q: What do you feel is the most important challenge facing your fire district? How do you propose meeting that challenge?

A: The challenge is going to be to plan for the increased finances that arise when dealing with personnel, equipment, and services. I firmly believe that by having a 5-year plan reinstated with revised budgets will be crucial to this position. With a strong budget plan, future expenditures can be tracked and timelines will be easier to construct to meet the ongoing goals and requirements of this community. The balance of providing the proper training, equipment and education without over burdening the taxpayer is the goal, but I feel this district is set up to succeed with the highly educated and motivated Administration and personnel that I would be honored to become a part of.

West Manatee Fire Commissioner, Seat 5

Steven Pontius (no response)

Contact information:

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West Manatee Fire Commissioner, Seat 5

Derrick Warner (no response)

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Manatee County Mosquito Control Group 2



Michael Daugherty

Contact information:

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Facebook: Mike Daugherty for Mosquito Control

Questions:

Q: What in your background makes you the best candidate for this position?

A: I am a lifelong resident of Manatee Co. I began working in my family’s business (Daugherty Plumbing) in 1970 and continue to work in the plumbing trade today. I am a born-again Christian, an ordained deacon, and North River Church had its beginnings in my living room. I am a contributing member of Manatee Co. and volunteer with many organizations including: the American Cancer Society, president of Ducks Unlimited for two years, Rotary, church youth groups, Parrish Chili Cook-Off, and fund raisers for many elementary schools. I was appointed to the advisory board that began Duette Preserve in northeastern Manatee Co. I have served our community, personally and professionally, and look forward to continuing to serve this community.

Q: Genetically modified mosquitoes are being used to control the mosquito population. Do you agree or disagree with this?

A: While the science appears to be sound and safe, the use of GMO mosquitoes in a large, mainland environment such as Manatee County would be costly, difficult to implement and likely not as efficacious as what might be seen in an “island-community”. Mainland habitats likely offer much

greater potential for mosquito migration thereby rendering the release of GMO-bred mosquitoes less effective. Additionally, the size of Manatee County indicates that GMO-releases would be very costly, become very labor intensive and far exceed current budgets.

Q: How can Manatee County best meet the needs of its expanding population with regards to mosquito control?

A: This is an issue the District Commissioners have been addressing over the past 5-10 years. Over the past 10 years to address the County's growth and need for mosquito control the following has been implemented: 1) Hiring of additional staff to serve expanding development; 2) Recently purchasing 2 larger helicopters to provide mosquito control services over a larger geographic area; 3) Expanding public-education programs to elementary-aged children; and, 4) The District has been located in the same facility since the early 1960's which is now too small for the expanded nature. The District is now is now in the process of purchasing a 30-acre parcel of land to become our new headquarters and provide better, more efficient public services

Manatee County Mosquito Control Group 2

Rodney O'Quinn

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Questions:

Q: What in your background makes you the best candidate for this position?

A: I have been in the Pest Control Industry for 25 years. I am a lifelong Manatee county Resident and have owned a Successful Pest Management Firm for 25 years also. My opponent in this race has held his seat since 1993. He is a really nice guy, but in my opinion does not have the background in this specialized field to be an effective advocate for Manatee Taxpayers. For example, if there were a Plumbing Commission I would not feel qualified to run for that position. I believe it is time for a fresh set of eyes On the Manatee County Mosquito Control Board. The three Commissioners that presently hold these seats have been there a combined 100 years. I will bring the same business approach to the board as I have my company if elected on Nov 3rd.

Q: Genetically modified mosquitoes are being used to control the mosquito population. Do you agree or disagree with this? Please support your position on this issue.

A: I am closely following the Efficacy of the Genetically Modified Mosquito programs presently being used in Monroe and Lee Counties. I feel that the Jury is still out presently. If these programs can prove both cost effective and achieve the Mosquito Abatement promised then It could be a great fit for Manatee County. It could also hold the promise of allowing our present good practices to apply less pesticides to our environment, which can only be viewed as a good thing. Most people are aware that female "Love Bugs" were introduced in the hope that Male Mosquito's would breed with the "sterile"

female Love Bug and therefore reduce Mosquito populations. Unfortunately some Male Love Bugs were also released and the rest is history.

Q: How can Manatee County best meet the needs of its expanding population with regards to mosquito control?

A: Like it or not, others want to join us here every day because we live in Paradise. Mosquitoes have caused more death and disease than any other insect on Earth. The viruses they spread must be kept in check. We will certainly have to expand our existing monitoring protocol to make sure we do not miss pockets of infected Mosquito populations that could pose risk to our citizens. Expanding both ground and aerial mission's will be necessary to accommodate our growing population in the future. More Communication between the district and its citizens through education and good practices will go a long way towards keeping Mosquito problems in check. The district's Website should become more and more educational and interactive in the future.

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To learn more about other candidates to be on your ballot, visit.

<https://lwvmanatee.org/election-information/>

