

# HIGHLANDS SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT - BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

## MEETING MINUTES

MEETING DATE: 11/19/2024

Meeting Location: Conf. Room 1 – Bert J. Harris Jr. Ag. Center

**FINAL – APPROVED 12/17/2024**

Recorded by: Kayla Nickerson

MEETING SCHEDULED START: 12:00 P.M. CALL TO ORDER: @ 12:07 P.M.

### PUBLIC MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT READ BY VICE-CHAIRMAN

#### I. Welcome & Introductions

Name	Title	Organization	Present
Dr. John Causey	Chairman	Highlands Soil & Water	N
Steve Smith	Vice-Chairman	Highlands Soil & Water	Y
Doug Deen	Secretary/Treasurer	Highlands Soil & Water	Y
Sara Sebring	Supervisor	Highlands Soil & Water	Y
T.J. Wohl	Supervisor	Highlands Soil & Water	Y
Scott Kirouac	Liaison	Highlands County BOCC	Y
Susie Bishop	Executive Director	Highlands Soil & Water	Y
Kayla Nickerson	Administrative Specialist	Highlands Soil & Water	Y
Chad Harmon	MIL Manager	Highlands Soil & Water	Y
Wade Smith	MIL Technician	Highlands Soil & Water	Y
Will Cochlin	Conservation Technician	Highlands Soil & Water	Y
Lauren Ahrens	Environmental Specialist III	FDACS-OAWP	Y
Tyler Baker	Environmental Specialist I	FDACS-OAWP	Y
Carlos Torres	District Conservationist	USDA-NRCS	N

II. **Approval of Agenda** – Motion to Approve the Agenda with changes - removing “& Review” from Item VIII as well as replacing “Chairman Causey” where written with “Vice-Chairman Smith”. (Deen/Sebring). Unanimous Approval.

#### III. Approval of Meeting Minutes

a. **Board of Supervisors Meeting Minutes – October 29, 2024** - Motion made to approve the minutes as presented (Deen/Wohl). Unanimous Approval.

#### IV. Financial Activity

a. **Overview & Approval of Financial Reports – October 2024:** Review of bank statements & financial reports. Motion to approve the financial reports as presented (Sebring/Deen). Unanimous Approval.

**V. Agency Partner Updates**

- a. **FDACS** – Ahrens reported that Nutrient Application Record Forms are now required for all cost share applicants, regardless of watershed locations. Funding for BMP projects this fiscal year has been fully allocated. No Action.
- b. **MIL** – Harmon reported that he and Wade attended the Quarterly meeting on 11/13/24 where they learned of new software updates to be expected by July 2025. 48 evaluations have been completed this quarter, which is more than the 42 evaluations required. Highlands MIL may begin assisting the Lake County territory, as needed. No Action.
- c. **NRCS** – Nickerson reported that a new employee, a Natural Resource Specialist, has been hired to begin in December 2024. Carlos Torres, the District Conservationist, will be transferring to another office in December and his position has been advertised. Nickerson reported that there is the possibility of an additional program (EQIP/CSP) application batching period in the spring and recommends submitting applications and eligibility documentation as needs arise. No Action.
- d. **HCBCC** – Commissioner Kirouac reported the County is working with a contracted firm to determine the possibility of transitioning the Istokpoga Marsh Watershed Improvement District (IMWID) into a taxing district. If effective, changes would go into effect in the 2025/2026 fiscal year. Funding for maintenance of the water control structures inside the IMWID will be completely depleted in early 2025. The Highlands County Board of County Commissioners is asking HSWCD to consider helping fund/raise funds to cover the maintenance costs of the water control structures through the period between the depletion of funds and ability to receive tax revenue. Commissioner Kirouac agreed to report back with a detailed list of required maintenance and costs associated, along with a written opinion from the contracted firm on the possibility of transitioning IMWID into a taxing district and estimated timeframe. No Action.

**VI. Old Business**

- a. **Legislative Planning** – Bishop provided a recap of the Brainstorm Workshop - consensus was made and plans that were developed are being fine-tuned to disseminate to agricultural associations and partners. No Action.

**VII. New Business**

- a. **2025 Holiday Schedule** – Bishop presented the proposed schedule. Motion to approve schedule as presented (Sebring/Deen). Unanimous Approval.
- b. **New OAWP Contract Requirements** – Bishop reported that anticipated changes did not materialize and there are no new requirements. FDACS will now reimburse the portion of the annual audit that covers their contracts. No Action.
- c. **NACD, February 8-12, 2025, Salt Lake City, Utah** – Bishop reported that she and Nickerson will travel to attend the NACD Annual Meeting. No Action.

- VIII. Executive Director's Report** – Bishop reported that HSWCD staff is available to help navigate state and federal cost share programs, free of charge. She shared a flyer that has been posted about the AgriTest Initiative with UF/IFAS Extension and encouraged supervisors to share with fellow producers. AgVenture 2024 was a success, selling out of the 600 steak dinners and transferring duties to newly hired coordinator. A possible request for additional sponsorship of the coordinator position may be presented at a future meeting. No Action.

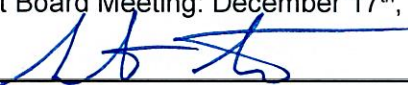
- IX. Citizens Not on the Agenda** – None

**X. Supervisor Comments**

Smith – None  
Deen – None  
Sebring – None  
Wohl – None

Meeting Adjourned at 2:25 p.m.

Next Board Meeting: December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024 – 3:00 p.m.

  
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Steve Smith, Vice Chairman

  
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Doug Deen, Secretary

**POST MEETING ACTION ITEMS**

<i>Action</i>	<i>Assigned To</i>	<i>Deadline</i>
<i>Monitor, review and discuss FDACS-OAWP revised procedures and policies</i>	<i>S. Bishop &amp; K. Nickerson</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
<i>Manage DEP Stolen Saddle Ranch Contract</i>	<i>S. Bishop</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
<i>Legislative Preparation</i>	<i>S. Bishop &amp; K. Nickerson</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
<i>Develop HSWCD/FCDEA Public Records Policy</i>	<i>K. Nickerson &amp; S. Bishop</i>	<i>Dec. 31, 2024</i>
<i>Develop and implement HSWCD Records Inventory</i>	<i>K. Nickerson &amp; S. Bishop</i>	<i>Dec. 31, 2024</i>
<i>2023-2024 Annual Report</i>	<i>S. Bishop &amp; K. Nickerson</i>	<i>Dec. 31, 2024</i>