

HIGHLANDS SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT - BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

MEETING MINUTES

MEETING DATE: 09/19/2024

Meeting Location: HSWCD Conf. Room – Bert Harris Center

FINAL - Approved 10/29/2024

Recorded by: Kayla Nickerson

MEETING SCHEDULED START: 1:00 P.M. CALL TO ORDER: @ 1:01 P.M.

PUBLIC MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT READ BY CHAIRMAN

I. Welcome & Introductions

Name	Title	Organization	Present
Dr. John Causey	Chairman	Highlands Soil & Water	Y
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 Co. Board of County Commissioners	Y
Susie Bishop	Executive Director	Highlands Soil & Water	Y
Kayla Nickerson	Administrative Specialist	Highlands Soil & Water	Y
Lauren Ahrens	BMP Tech.	Highlands Soil & Water	N
Chad Harmon	MIL Manager	Highlands Soil & Water	Y
Wade Smith	MIL Tech.	Highlands Soil & Water	Y
Carlos Torres	District Cons.	USDA-NRCS	N
Jennifer Gough	Soil Conservation Coordinator	Hardee Soil & Water	Y

II. Approval of Agenda – Motion to Approve the Agenda as presented (Deen/Sebring). Unanimous Approval.

III. Approval of Meeting Minutes

a. Board of Supervisors Meeting Minutes - August 20,2024 - Motion made to approve the minutes as presented (Wohl/Deen). Unanimous Approval.

IV. Financial Activity

a. Overview & Approval of Financial Reports- August 2024: Review of bank statements & financial reports. Motion to approve the financial reports as presented (Smith/Sebring). Unanimous Approval.

b. 2023-2024 General Fund Budget Amendments – Motion to approve budget amendments as presented (Sebring/Wohl). Unanimous Approval.

- c. **Adoption of 2024-2025 General Fund Budget** – Bishop explained proposed changes. Motion to approve budget as presented (Smith/Deen). Unanimous Approval.

V. Agency Partner Updates

- a. **FDACS** – Bishop provided a recap of the FDACS field staff meeting from Tuesday 9/17/24 as it related to the changes to the cost share program. The program agreements will be very different from previous years. Producers will be permitted to apply for funding online starting September 23, 2024. No Action.
- b. **MIL** – Harmon reported that 60 evaluations have been completed this quarter, which is more than the 42 evaluations required. The completed SOP is still awaiting approval/denial. No Action.
- b. **NRCS** – No Report.
- c. **HCBCC** – County budget was adopted with some good and large capital improvements being implemented this year. Residential taxes within the IMWID are still being assessed, helping provide funding for the annual maintenance. In the next fiscal year, the County is looking to begin a Municipal Tax Assessment that will incur millage taxes to help provide maintenance dollars as well. FDOT performed a feasibility study for an alternate HWY 27 route. Development of plans and construction will likely take 10+ years. No Action.

VI. Old Business

- a. **Vehicles** – Bishop reported the 2015 Ford F150 was traded in for a 2025 Ford Explorer. Many options were explored and estimates obtained before making the purchase. No Action.
- b. **Administrative Specialist/NRCS Agreement** – Bishop reported the cooperative agreement should be in place next week. No Action.

VII. New Business

- a. **Brainstorm Workshop: Oct. 10, 2024** – Bishop reported the Annual FCDEA meeting generated unanimous support to move forward with a workshop to bring all stakeholders together. All FCDEA members have been formally invited, as well as ag association representatives. Only 1 supervisor per SWCD may attend to comply with Sunshine Law. To date, Bishop has received positive verbal support of the workshop and invitee plans to attend. Bishop presented a letter written to the Commissioner of Agriculture from Representative Truenow suggesting changes to SWCDs, reenforcing the importance of moving forward with this meeting. Primary topics for the workshop will be proposed boundary lines (if regional), time to transition to regions, and appointment of supervisors versus elected. Clegg Hooks and Christi Chiarelli will moderate. Bishop and Nickerson will travel to Live Oak, FL 9/23/2024 to prepare with the moderators. HSWCD will cosponsor the catered lunch with Okeechobee SWCD at approximately \$500.00 for each SWCD. Motion to select Chairman Causey to attend the meeting on behalf of HSWCD, with T.J. Wohl as an alternate (Wohl/Smith). Unanimous Approval.
- b. **AFCD Annual Meeting: November 1-2, 2024** – Bishop reported the meeting will be held in Destin, FL. No plans to attend currently. No Action.
- c. **FCDEA – Development of Handbook, Website Training** – Nickerson reported FCDEA members completed the Florida Public Records Training and discovered a need for standard operating procedures. Nickerson and Bishop volunteered to take the lead in the creation of the document and will be working to complete the SOP/Handbook in the coming months. Nickerson also volunteered to train other SWCD on website compliance and maintenance. This training will take place in Gainesville on Oct. 9, 2024. No Action.

- d. **Community Garden** – Bishop reported after 10 successful years, she has a desire to transfer the ownership and management to another group or individual. Bishop will consult with the Highlands Master Gardeners on their interest in taking over the project and report back to the board next month with a plan/proposal. No Action.

VIII. Executive Director’s Report –

- SECDEA Meeting will be in Tennessee in November. Bishop and Nickerson may or may not attend, based on legislation planning progress next month. No Action.
- A landowner called the District in hopes of reactivating the Fisheating Creek Landowners Association. Bishop requested direction from the Board as to HSWCD involvement. Chairman advised that the request should be forwarded to the controlling entity (USDA-NRCS) and the District remain neutral on the subject. No Action.
- Bishop presented potential meetings dates for 2025 and adjustments were discussed. Final list of meetings will be adopted next meeting. No Action.
- Blank Executive Director evaluation forms were distributed by Chairman Causey and requested Supervisors to complete and return at next meeting for the evaluation. No Action.

IX. Citizens Not on the Agenda – None

IX. Supervisor Comments –

Smith – None

Deen – None

Sebring – Not available for scheduled Oct. 15th meeting. Motion to move meeting date from Oct. 15, 2024, to Oct. 29, 2024, at 3:00PM (Smith/Wohl). Unanimous approval.

Wohl – None

Causey – None

Meeting Adjourned at 2:46 p.m.

John Causey, Chairman

Doug Deen, Secretary

POST MEETING ACTION ITEMS

<i>Action</i>	<i>Assigned To</i>	<i>Deadline</i>
<i>Stay abreast of City of Sebring-Lake Jackson projects & funding</i>	<i>S. Bishop</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>

<i>Monitor, review and discuss FDACS-OAWP revised procedures and policies</i>	<i>S. Bishop & K. Nickerson</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
<i>Complete the USDA-NRCS Partnership Agreement & Funding</i>	<i>S. Bishop & K. Nickerson</i>	<i>September 30, 2024</i>
<i>Manage DEP Stolen Saddle Ranch Contract</i>	<i>S. Bishop</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
<i>Facilitate Brainstorm Workshop regarding Unified Legislation Planning</i>	<i>S. Bishop & K. Nickerson</i>	<i>Oct. 10, 2024</i>
<i>Develop FCDEA Handbook</i>	<i>K. Nickerson & S. Bishop</i>	<i>Dec. 31, 2024</i>
<i>Develop and present Website Training for FCDEA Members</i>	<i>K. Nickerson</i>	<i>Oct. 9, 2024</i>
<i>Develop and implement HSWCD Records Inventory</i>	<i>K. Nickerson & S. Bishop</i>	<i>Dec. 31, 2024</i>
<i>Review Work Plan and compliance with Chapter 189.0694</i>	<i>K. Nickerson & S. Bishop</i>	<i>Oct. 1, 2024</i>
<i>2023-2024 Annual Report</i>	<i>S. Bishop & K. Nickerson</i>	<i>Dec. 31, 2024</i>