

HIGHLANDS SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT - BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

MEETING MINUTES

MEETING DATE: 03/19/2024

Meeting Location: Conf. Room 3 – Bert Harris Center

Approved 4-16-2024

Recorded by: Susie Bishop

MEETING SCHEDULED START: 3:00 P.M. CALL TO ORDER: @ 3:00 P.M.

PUBLIC MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT READ BY CHAIRMAN

Name	Title	Organization	Present
ATTENDANCE			
Dr. John Causey	Chairman	Highlands Soil & Water	Y
Steve Smith	Vice-Chairman	Conservation District	Y
Doug Deen	Secretary/Treasurer		Y
Sara Sebring	Supervisor		Y
T.J. Wohl	Supervisor		Y
Scott Kirouac	Liaison	Highlands Co. Board of County Commissioners	Y
Susie Bishop	Executive Director	Highlands Soil & Water	Y
Kayla Nickerson	BMP Tech.	Highlands Soil & Water	Y
Lauren Ahrens	BMP Tech.	Highlands Soil & Water	Y
Andrew Adams	ES I	FDACS-OAWP	N
Chad Harmon	MIL Manager	Highlands Soil & Water	Y
Wade Smith	MIL Tech.	Highlands Soil & Water	Y
Carlos Torres	District Cons.	USDA-NRCS	Y
Kati Lawson	Extension Director	Highlands Co. Extension	Y

I. Welcome & Introductions

- II. Approval of Agenda –** Motion to approve agenda moving Item VII.a to be II.b (Smith/Deen) Unanimous Approval.

PRESENTATION: – Partnership for Soil Testing – Kati Lawson
Highlands Co. Extension Director

Lawson presented a proposal to partner IFAS-Extension with HSWCD for financial support of a soil/tissue/water testing program for agricultural producers. The initial funding request is for \$750.00. Motion made to fund the request (Smith/Deen) directing staff to work with Extension to develop a name and marketing plan for the new service to be provided to the agricultural producers in Highlands County.

Unanimous Approval.

III. Approval of Meeting Minutes- February 20, 2024 - Motion made to approve the minutes as presented (Sebring/Smith). Unanimous Approval.

IV. Financial Activity

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

V. Agency Partner Updates

- a. FDACS** – Bishop reported on staff changes at OAWP, fulfillment of contract requirements by HSWCD staff and status of cost share projects. No Action
- b. MIL** – Staff presented numbers of completed evaluations, which are above required contract deliverables.
- c. NRCS** – Working with HSWCD to prepare for the Local Working Group meeting on April 16. Applications being accepted for year 2025. A reminder that Ag. producers need to be sure to update their farm records with USDA-FSA.
- d. HCBCC** – No funding was approved in Session for the IMWID project, making the future of it being completed unknown. Funds for Phase 2 may end up being returned to FDACS.

VI. Old Business

a. OPPAGA – Bishop presented an update on the Audit. All information has been submitted. There have been some questions presented regarding the year end budget vs. the filed financial statement (audit) with the state. HSWCD has engaged Mike Carter, CPA to assist in providing answers and explanations to the OPPAGA Auditor. .

VII. New Business

a. Item moved to Item II.b.

b. AFCD Area 4 Meeting/Ethics Training – May 23, 2024 – Bishop announced the plans for the Area 4 AFCD Annual Meeting to be held in Sebring at the Bert Harris Center. The newly required Ethics Training will be provided OR Supervisors can take the course online at their convenience. The Assoc. of Special Districts is providing an online version at a cost of \$ 49. Bishop will set each Supervisor up for their chosen method of completing the course.

c. Computer Security & Back-Up – Nickerson presented completion of improvements to these operations of the District.

d. Website Updates – Nickerson demonstrated the entire new Website providing a wide and detailed overview. Suggestion made to add a FAQ section.

e. Local Working Group with NRCS – Nickerson shared details of the upcoming meeting to be held on April 16 at 1:30 p.m. Supervisors were encouraged to participate explaining our presentation to the State NRCS Technical Committee are always well received.

VIII. Executive Director's Report - Items presented:

- Avon Park Mitigation Inspection will be completed March 22. This is the final year of the 10 year agreement. Renewal of the agreement is unknown at this time.
- Employees Ahrens, Harmon & Smith have completed their first year of employment with the District. Evaluations have been completed and all three received 3% cost of living salary increases.
- All annual one on one meetings with the County Commissioners will be completed by March 20.
- The South Eastern NACD Meeting will be held in Gainesville June 16-18. Bishop will be attending and it conflicts with the June 18 BOS Meeting. By consensus the Board decided to not hold a meeting in June unless necessary for an unforeseen emergency.
- Maintenance and repair issues with the two trucks were shared.
- A few of the goals in the new work plan have already been completed.

IX. Citizens Not on the Agenda – None

X. Supervisor Comments -

Smith – Commended staff for their performance and teamwork.

Encouraged staff to contact any of the Supervisors at anytime for needed assistance, especially with vehicle break-downs.

Deen – Expressed appreciation for the staff and all their hard work.

Sebring – Commended staff for their exemplary performance.

Wohl – Shared with staff how much assistance he has seen them provide to Bishop and the reduction of stress on her.

Causey – Agreed with all comments to staff and shared his appreciation.

Meeting Adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

John Causey, Chairman

Doug Deen, Secretary

POST MEETING ACTION ITEMS

Action	Assigned To	Deadline
<i>Work with Extension to develop the Soil Testing Program & issue funding</i>	<i>S. Bishop</i>	<i>April 16, 2024</i>
<i>Monitor OPPAGA</i>	<i>S. Bishop</i>	<i>July 2024</i>
<i>Set up Ethics Training for Supervisors</i>	<i>S.Bishop</i>	<i>April 16, 2024</i>
<i>Organize Speech and Poster Contest for Area 4 Meeting</i>	<i>S. Bishop & K. Nickerson</i>	<i>May 23, 2024</i>
<i>Continue to complete website updates/additions</i>	<i>K. Nickerson</i>	<i>April 16, 2024</i>
<i>Monitor and Manage SOW and SOP for the MIL Contract & Project Manager Concerns</i>	<i>S. Bishop & C. Harmon</i>	<i>Ongoing until completed</i>
<i>Manage DEP Stolen Saddle Ranch Contract</i>	<i>S. Bishop</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>