***Highlands Soil & Water Conservation District - Board of Supervisors***

**Meeting Minutes**

**Meeting Date: 08/15/2023**

Meeting Location: HSWCD Conf. Room – Bert Harris Center

**FINAL – Approved 9/19/2023**

Recorded by: Susie Bishop

**Meeting Scheduled Start: 3:00 P.M. Call to Order: @ 3:03 P.M**

**Public Meeting Announcement Read by Chairman**

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| Dr. John Causey  Steve Smith  Doug Deen  Sara Sebring  T.J. Wohl  Scott Kirouac  Susie Bishop  Kayla Nickerson  Lauren Ahrens  Chad Harmon  Wade Smith  William Adams  Carlos Torres  Sierra Arens  Crenel Francis  Marcus Shorter | Chairman  Vice-Chairman  Secretary/Treasurer  Supervisor  Supervisor  Liaison  Executive Director  BMP Tech.  BMP Tech.  MIL Manager  MIL Tech  ES 1  District Cons.  Soil Consv.  WRE-Easement Spec.  Asst. State Conserva. | Highlands Soil & Water  Highlands Soil & Water  Highlands Soil & Water  Highlands Soil & Water  Highlands Soil & Water  Highlands Co. Board of  Commmissioners  Highlands Soil & Water  Highlands Soil & Water  Highlands Soil & Water  Highlands Soil & Water  Highlands Soil & Water  FDACS-OAWP  USDA-NRCS  USDA\_NRCS  USDA-NRCS  USDA-NRCS | Y  Y  Y  Y  Y  N  Y  Y  Y  N  N  Y  Y  N  Y  Y |

1. **Approval of Agenda –** Motion to approve agenda as presented (Smith/Wohl).

Unanimous Approval.

1. **Approval of Meeting Minutes – July 18, 2023 -** Motion made to approve the

minutes as presented (Deen/Smith). Unanimous Approval.

**Special Presentation**: USDA-NRCS Assistant State Conservationist Marcus Shorter

& WRE Easement Program Specialist Crenel Francis presented Easement

Programs available to landowners in Florida. ALE-Ag Land Easements,

WRE-Wetland Reserve Easements and GSS-Grasslands of Specific

Significance. NRCS is seeking properties in Florida to purchase Easements

Via these programs with considerable funding available. A Real Estate

Acquisition Training with targeted participation of Real Estate Agents is being organized for late November or early December to be held in Sebring.

1. **Financial Activity**
2. **Overview & Approval of Financial Reports- June 2023:** Review of bank statements & financial reports with detailed discussion regarding the Budget to Actual Report. Motion to approve the financial reports as presented (Sebring/Deed). Unanimous Approval.
3. **Agency Partner Updates**

**a FDACS –** K. Nickerson & Bishop provided updates on field staff work. HSWCD

staff is ahead on their IV Completion List. Applications are being sought for

Cost Share projects. No Action.

1. **MIL** – The MIL Team is ahead of schedule for completed evaluations. Bishop reported many hours have been spent working on the revisions of the Scope of Work, no final presented to date. The issues with the Project Manager at FDACS continues to be a challenge, but Bishop has been working with other MIL Staff and FDACS-OAWP leadership to address all the concerns. No Action.
2. **NRCS** – C. Torres reported 2024 applications are being accepted. For 2023 Year there are 6-7 Contracts for 2023 CSP and 12 contracts for EQIP. Also, there will be emergency funds available for use by farms, governments, etc.
3. **HCBCC –**Bishop reported on behalf of Commissioner Kirouac regarding the Budget, Mobile Home Parks Zoning/Ordinance and IMWID. No Action
4. **Old Business**

a. **Strategic Work Plan** - Bishop distributed the current Short Term & Long Range

Work Plans asking for input for the upcoming workshop. No Action.

1. **New Business**
2. **Warner University Scholarship –** Bishop presented an ask from the University for a Scholarship/s in the Ag. Degree Programs. By Board consensus, Bishop will request historical information of previously awarded scholarships. Tabled until Sept. 19, 2024...
3. **Ag-Venture Sponsorship Level –** Bishop explained plans for a part time Director Position for Ag Venture to be created and the goal to secure 2 year commitment sponsorships to increase the overall funds/budget. Per discussion, motion made to contribute $5,000.00 for 2024 & 2025, above the annual program donation of $2,000.00 (Smith/Deen). Unanimous Approval.
4. **Executive Director’s Report - Items presented:**

* The first payment for the Stolen Saddle Ranch project should be made this week.
* AFCD Mid-Year Annual Meeting in Gainesville Sept. 26 & 27. Bishop will attend part of the meeting.
* Community Garden work day with inmates will be Sept. 6 and all plots are secured by Gardeners.
* Having met with D. Ramba in Tallahassee, there are rumblings about potential SWCD Legislation... Bishop is working on ideas to be proactive if Legislation is presented.
* Commissioner has experienced negative experiences with Hillsborough and Bradford SWCDs.

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

**X. Supervisor Comments -**

Smith - NoneDeen - None

Sebring – None Wohl – None

Causey - None

Meeting Adjourned at 4:56 p.m.

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**John Causey, Chairman Doug Deen, Secretary**