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

**Meeting Minutes**

**Meeting Date: 03/21/2023**

Meeting Location: HSWCD Conf. Room – Bert Harris Center

**FINAL – Approved 4-18-2023**

Recorded by: Susie Bishop

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| **Name** | **Title** | **Organization** | **Present** |
| **ATTENDANCE** |  |  |  |
| Dr. John Causey  Steve Smith  Doug Deen  Sara Sebring  T.J. Wohl  Scott Kirouac | Chairman  Vice-Chairman  Secretary/Treasurer  Supervisor  Supervisor  Liaison | Highlands Soil & Water  Conservation District  Highlands Co. Board of County Commissioners | Y  N  Y  Y  Y  Y |
| Susie Bishop  Kayla Nickerson  Lauren Ahrens  Chad Harmon  Wade Smith  Carlos Torres  Rich Budell | Executive Director  BMP Tech.  BMP Tech.  MIL Manager  MIL Tech.  District Cons.  Mgr. Partner | Highlands Soil & Water  Highlands Soil & Water  Highlands Soil & Water  Highlands Soil & Water  Highlands Soil & Water  USDA-NRCS  Budell Water Group, LLC | Y  N  Y  Y  Y  N  Y-Via  phone |
|  |  |  |  |

**Meeting Scheduled Start: 3:00 P.M. Call to Order: @ 3:02 P.M.**

**Public Meeting Announcement Read by Chairman**

1. **Welcome & Introductions**
2. New Employee Introductions - Lauren Ahrens, Chad Harmon & Wade Smith were introduced.
3. **Approval of Agenda –** Bishop requested amendments to the agenda: under new business reverse items a. & c. and add Item d. Ag Venture. Motion to approve agenda with requested amendments (Deen/Wohl) Unanimous Approval.
4. **Approval of Meeting Minutes – February 21, 2023 -** Motion made to approve the

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

1. **Financial Activity**
2. **Overview & Approval of Financial Reports- February 2023:** Review of bank statements, financial reports. Motion to approve the financial reports as presented (Wohl/Sebring). Unanimous Approval.

**VI. Agency Partner Updates**

**a. FDACS –** Bishop reported the moratorium on IV Visits has been extended to April

30, 2023. No Action.

1. **MIL** –Bishop reported Pitts left his position abruptly prior to providing any training of the new MIL Staff. Director of MIL for state here this week to conduct training. Evaluations were not completed for January or February by Pitts making it necessary to file for a waiver for the January & February invoices. No Action.
2. **NRCS** – No Report
3. **HCBCC –** Kirouac reported on County projects and decisions. No Action.

**VII**. **Old Business**

* 1. **Audit –** Bishop reported the Audit has officially started and hope is to present it at the May Board meeting.

**VIII. New Business**

1. **Stolen Saddle Ranch Project –** Bishop presented in detail the proposal of HSWCD to serve as the fiscal agent with the owners of Stolen Saddle Ranch and DEP for a Feasibility Study regarding a potential water storage project in the lower Peace River Basin. An Admin. Fee of 5% will be collected. All documents were reviewed and discussed. Rich Budell joined the conversation via phone to provide more detail and answer questions. Motion made to accept proposal to enter into agreements with landowner and DEP to serve as the fiscal agent for the Grant (Wohl/Deen). Unanimous Approval.
2. **Avon Park Mitigation Inspection -** Bishop reported inspection has been completed with many improvements being completed on both pieces of property. The report has been submitted to USFWS and the invoice has been mailed to the City of Avon Park. There are 2 remaining annual inspections to be completed. No Action.
3. **Staff Training –** Bishop explained how new staff are receiving training. No Action.
4. **Ag Venture –** Bishop explained the discussion of the Ag Venture Board regarding the future of Ag Venture. Per discussion the consensus was for HSWCD to offer monetary support only at this time. Staffing support will be reviewed by the Board after Ag Venture determines how they will proceed. No Action.

**IX. Executive Director’s Report**

**Items presented:**

* Bishop shared a document about Sunshine Law watch group.
* Bishop has a meeting scheduled with US Fish & Wildlife to discuss partnership.
* On March 29 & 30, Bishop will attend a Wedgworth Leadership Seminar in Belle Glade to receive leadership training, tour farms and learn about the Everglades Restoration. Supervisor Sebring will be attending too.
* The Land Owner Expo is scheduled for June 6, 2023 and HSWCD will provide support with staff and funds for cost of lunch for attendees.
* Bishop will be preparing for the OPAGA in coming weeks.
* Beginning on April 24, Bishop is summonsed for 2 weeks for District Court Jury Duty in Ft. Pierce.
* Bishop presented a trailer of the Documentary movie “Path of the Panther”, a movie being shown in theatres in larger cities telling the story about the wildlife corridor through the state of Florida. As a team building activity, she would like to take staff on March 23, 2023. Board was supportive of this activity.

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

**X. Supervisor Comments**

Deen - None

Sebring – None

Wohl – Informed Board regarding Sunshine Law and the size of the

Board room should we have more people in attendance. Bishop

explained, in the event of that happening we can relocate to one

of the conference rooms in the building.

Causey – Explained a new company performing removal of hydrilla from

Lake Istokpoga and extracting the juice from them which is high in nutrients and can be spread on ag lands. He will pursue further information and report back to the Board.

Causey reported a phone conversation with Pitts.

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Meeting Adjourned at 4:59 p.m.

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

**Post Meeting Action Items**

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| ***Action*** | ***Assigned To*** | ***Deadline*** |
| *Supervise training of new staff* | *S. Bishop* | *March 30, 2023* |
| *Conduct Team Building Activity* | *S. Bishop* | *March 23, 2023* |
| *Prepare documents and submit for DEP Project* | *S. Bishop* | *March 30, 2023* |
| *Monitor Annual Audit & Prepare for OPPAGA* | *S. Bishop* | *June 2023* |
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