

# **BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

## **MEETING MINUTES**

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Meeting Date: 02/20/2018

Meeting Location: Bert Harris Agricultural Center-Room 3  
Sebring, FL

**FINAL – Approved March 13, 2018**

Recorded by: Susie Bishop

**MEETING SCHEDULED START: 3:00 P.M. CALL TO ORDER: @ 3:04 P.M.  
PUBLIC MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT READ BY CHAIRMAN**

### **I. Welcome & Introductions**

Name	Title	Organization	Present
<b>ATTENDANCE</b>			
Scott Kirouac	Chairman	Highlands Soil & Water	Y
Dr. John Causey	Vice-Chairman	Conservation District	Y
Doug Deen	Secretary/Treasurer		Y
Pamela Fentress	Supervisor		Y
Steve Smith	Supervisor		N
Commissioner Jim Brooks	Liaison	Highlands Co. Board of County Commissioners	Y
Susie Bishop	Executive Director	Highlands Soil & Water	Y
Carlos Torres	District Conserva.	USDA-NRCS	Y
Sierra Ayers	Soil Conserva.	USDA-NRCS	Y
Kayla Nickerson	FDACS-OAWP	Env. Spec. III	Y
Laurie Hurner	Highlands Co. Extension	Ex. Director	Y

### **II. Approval of Agenda**

Motion to approve agenda as presented (Fentress/Causey). Unanimous Approval.

### **III. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

a. Board of Supervisors Meeting Minutes –January 16, 2018 - Motion made to approve minutes as presented (Fentress/Causey). Unanimous Approval.

### **IV . Financial Activity**

a. Overview of Financial Reports - Bishop presented the bank reconciliations and

financial reports for January. Financial reports for January 2018 were presented with no questions. Motion made to accept the financial reports as presented (Causey/Fentress) Unanimous approval.

## **V. Agency Partner Updates**

- a. NRCS - Torres reported his office has been concentrating on the 59 applications for Emergency Conservation Program for structural damage from Hurricane Irma. Of the 59 applications 28 reviews have been completed. Reports will be submitted to FSA office and they will determine the approvals and denials. NRCS sent additional staff to assist with this work effort. The new Soil Conservation staff person, Sierra Ayers was introduced. Applications for EQIP funds are being accepted for 2018 up to March 2. After the March 2 deadline date, all applications will be for 2019 funds. Torres requested time on an agenda to present the Civil Rights policy of NRCS.
- b. FDACS - K. Nickerson reported their focus has been on the Self Verification notices mailed to producers, with a focus on farmers with multiple NOIs. FDACS staff and BMP Technicians will complete the forms for the producers. This program is being implemented to provide the legislators with data they need to continue funding BMP cost share programs. Fentress expressed a concern regarding the timing, the beginning of a new year is extremely busy and farmers don't need one more task to complete.
- c. MIL - J. Miller presented a report with the knowledge he and D. Pitts recently gained on a behind the "seeds" tour at Epcot's research vegetable growing facility. Miller and Pitts agreed the experience was very beneficial to them both. To date the MIL has completed 18 initial evaluations and 1 follow up for this quarter. Torres reported the value of the MIL – an irrigation system evaluated at a 46% efficiency and following improvements the re-evaluation was at a 86% efficiency. Bishop explained she is in discussions with FDACS regarding well calibrations being offered again by the MIL with specifications to qualify for the service and how the calibrations will count towards contract deliverables.
- d. Extension - Laurie Hurner shared the successes of the Highlands County Fair. There were 53 citrus tree projects entered. Sadly, 11 of the trees tested positive for citrus greening. Those trees were destroyed, but the citrus committee has the funds to pay the youth for their projects. The new 4-H agent has been successful in getting four clubs started in schools with more interest from schools in the County. The most recent Master Gardener class was made up of mostly year long residents, which proved to be beneficial for the program. The 4-H barn is being re-built following the damage from Hurricane Irma. The cost of the construction will be covered by the County and used as their deductible for the county's claim with FEMA. The Citrus Institute will be held in Avon Park on April 3 and in March a grower certification class will be offered.
- e. HCBCC - Commissioner Brooks reported the County will continue with the study of levels of Lake Jackson, but it will be simplified some. There was a dispute with an outstanding invoice on the Lake Istokopga Marsh Project between the contractor and the county, but it is being resolved so the work on the project can begin again. Brooks also explained the phases of the Sebring Parkway.

## **VI. Old Business**

- a. Lake McCoy Project - Fentress reported the final walk through/inspection of the

- project exposed inappropriate completion of the project. The construction company had to start over. Once it is completed and approved the county will invoice HSWCD for its portion of the project.
- b. Board Workshop/Strategic Plan - Bishop reported the facilitator, Dr. Hannah Carter is secured for March 13 to serve as the facilitator of the workshop and asked if the Board had any suggestions or requests for her. Board endorsed Bishop planning the workshop with Carter.
  - c. Livestock Trailer Contribution - Deen shared with the Board the multiple conversations he had regarding this request. He reported the Avon Park FFA Alumni helped to fund this purchase for use by the Avon Park FFA students. There was no change to the vote taken last month to not contribute funds to this effort.
  - d. MIL & Polk SWCD – Bishop explained the potential of Pitts leaving the HSWCD- MIL Manager position to accept a BMP Technician position in Polk County. Polk SWCD has not been successful in securing benefits for Pitts so FDACS-OAWP has asked HSWCD to enter into an agreement with PSWCD so Pitts could remain as an employee of HSWCD for payroll and benefits purposes. After lengthy discussion a motion was made to pursue an agreement with PSWCD for management of a BMP Technician in Polk County for a collection of a 3% admin. fee. Bishop will meet with PSWCD Supervisor to discuss the terms of an agreement and the expectations of Bishop to provide guidance and assistance to the PSWCD Supervisor who will be volunteering to manage the PSWCD contract with FDACS.

## **VII. New Business**

- a. AFCD – Area IV Annual Meeting – Bishop shared the agenda and details regarding Area IV meeting being held on May 10 in LaBelle. Working with OSWCD and H/GSWCD, staff has developed some new concepts for this upcoming meeting. All three SWCDs will fund the expense of the lunch for attendees and the prize money for the poster contest. She encouraged all Supervisors to attend and for one of them to volunteer to serve as Deputy VP for Area IV.
- b. Upcoming Meetings - A schedule of meetings/events being held in the next six months was distributed.
- c. Lake Placid Middle School FFA Request – a letter of request for supplies and replacement of the school nursery project was shared. Kirouac shared he will fulfill this request through FNGLA, so no funds were committed from HSWCD.

## **VIII. Executive Director's Report**

- Bishop attended the NACD Annual Meeting in Nashville, sharing it was a worthwhile trip.
- Bishop attended the DEP – Highlands Hammock Long Range Planning Session
- Avista Computers has set up a new laptop for Bishop and she reported it is much more efficient. She expressed her appreciation to the Board for the purchase.
- Bishop explained the recently approved funds from the Federal Gov't for Hurricane Recovery Efforts in Agriculture are still not organized for distribution. Potentially the funds for Florida farmers could be administered by USDA-FSA and possibly FDACS-OAWP. There is no timeline as to when farmers will benefit from this newly funded program.
- Bishop announced Senator Grimsley has a bill on the floor to refund agricultural producers any sales tax they paid for recovery construction from

the hurricane damage. And she shared Congressman Rooney has announced he will not seek re-election this year.

**IX. Citizens Not on the Agenda**

None

**X. Supervisor Comments**

Causey - None

Deen - None

Fentress - None

Meeting Adjourned at 5:42 p.m.

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**Scott Kirouac, Chairman**

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**Doug Deen, Secretary**

### POST MEETING ACTION ITEMS

Action	Assigned To	Deadline
Work with PSWCD on a potential agreement to manage a BMP Tech. Position in Polk County`	S. Bishop	March 13, 2018
Organize and Plan the Board Strategic Planning Workshop	S. Bishop	March 5, 2018
Schedule to attend FDACS meetings in April	S. Bishop	April 15, 2018
Organize Youth Speech Contest	S. Bishop	April 12, 2018
Continuance of managing of FDACS Contracts/Staff	S. Bishop	Ongoing