

ESCAMBIA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS' MINUTES

December 7, 2023

Board Members in Attendance

Mr. Travis Tharp, Chair; Mr. Johnnie Odom, Vice-Chair/ Acting Treasurer, Ms. Carollyn Taylor, Secretary; Mr. Brian Foreman, Member; Ms. Whitney Panzik, Member.

Attendees

Ms. Charlene Meeks, AFCD; Mr. Joshua McElhaney, USDA/NRCS; Mr. Levi Blackmon, USDA/NRCS;
Mrs. Debbie Williams, Escambia County NRCD.

Call to Order

Mr. Travis Tharp called the meeting to order at 9:15am.

Those present stated the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag in unison.

Minutes of the Last Meeting

With an update to the November 9, 2023 stating the 100 hundred contracts with USDA/NRCS were not due to drought, Mr. Brian Foreman made a motion to approve the minutes with noted change. Mr. Johnnie Odom seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Acknowledgment of Public Notice

Meeting advertisement published.

Treasurer's Report

No activity with the bank account.

Ms. Carollyn Taylor discussed the reimbursement check she received from AFCD. AFCD was able to assist new District supervisors with expenses to the Annual AFCD meeting that was held earlier this year in Gainesville. The check was issued to Districts however not to each individual Board member who attended.

Mr. Foreman made a motion to accept the reimbursement check, have Mr. Odom deposit the check into the Board's bank account, and then write a check back to Ms. Taylor in her name. Ms. Panzik seconded the motion. Motion carried unopposed.

Mr. Odom will take the check to the Board's bank and deposit it today.

It's reflected Mr. Odom wrote a check back from the Board's account back to Ms. Taylor today in the same amount of the AFCD reimbursement check.

Public Forum

Ms. Charlene Meeks with Area Florida Conservation District (AFCD) came to meet the Board members. She briefly discussed how the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services were only tasked with providing a map arranging counties in districts instead of seats. They don't govern over conservation district's policies.

Regarding the reimbursement check to Ms. Taylor which covered portion of her attendance to the Annual AFCD meeting, funding was provided by FDACS.

General discussion held on the Sunshine Law.

Reports

Mr. Joshua McElhaney gave the DC report. Gave updates regarding contracts, work load, current cost-share application, and the Area 1 NRCS employees meeting.

Discussion on the Blue Jacket Jamboree being held next year on March 23, 2024 and the possibility of the Board having a booth.

Old Business

Ms. Panzik was able to complete her paperwork with the local Supervisor of Elections" office. Discussion held regarding who over sees the power and duties of Conservation Districts, term limits, upcoming 2024 elections, and who is eligible to run in specific districts. Brief discussion held on special districts duties and following State Statues 119 (Public Record Law) and Chapter 582 which governs the Conservation Districts.

Mr. Odom stated for the next meeting he will take care of any matters with the bank, have the GIS map, place for the workshop meetings, meet with Escambia county school district's workforce program, and reach out to FDACS regarding any clarification to the senate bill 1078 pertaining to conservation districts.

Ms. Taylor and Mrs. Debbie Williams discussed the updated district website. There are a few issues to resolve, one being the domain. Hopefully once this is corrected, anyone who googles Escambia Soil and Water Conservation District will be directed to the active webpage.

Ms. Meeks also mentioned the website has to have specific information and be in ADA compliance. AFCD was able to obtain funding from FDACS to work with Streamline to create a new, friendlier version webpage for the Districts.

New Business

Mr. Foreman discussed issues pertaining to overseeing sensitive areas along the waterways, especially boats creating wakes in wake zones. Wakes increase the loss of sediment creating severe erosion. These areas are not enforced by the FWC and one possibility of enforcement could be by video/cameras. Fines could be imposed such as they are with red light video/camera surveillance.

Ms. Meeks stated the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) will be contacting Districts. The agency is tasked with providing data, evaluative research, and analysis to assist the Florida Legislature. They will be inquiring as to the District's plan of operations, projects, their role in the community, and how they are following and supporting the guidelines of Chapter 582.

Mr. Odom discussed being an active member of AFCD and providing dues to AFCD.

Mr. Odom made a motion to have a goal for 2024 to obtain funds in order to pay AFCD annual dues of \$350.00. Mr. Foreman seconded the motion. Motion carried unopposed.

Mr. Tharp stated the Florida Native Plant Society holds meetings every 2nd Thursday of the month at the Pensacola Mess Hall on Wright Street. Their next meeting is January 11, 2024 and he would like to give a presentation to them on the Board and the Board's duties. All were in favor of Mr. Tharp giving a presentation.

Mr. Tharp will bring the presentation for the Board to review at the next workshop meeting, which will be held January 4, 2024.

Discussion held on workshop locations. Mr. Foreman stated the Board could use The Perry House located off of Palafox Street for the January workshop meeting. Mr. Foreman will check into the availability.

Mr. Tharp did request the workshop meetings be scheduled for two (2) hours.

With no further business coming before the Board and with all in favor, meeting adjourned at 10:03a.

Carollyn Taylor, Secretary