

Hillsborough Soil and Water Conservation District

Regular Meeting of the Board of Supervisors

February 8, 2024 @ 3:00 pm

UF/IFAS / 5339 Country Road 579 / Seffner FL / 33584

Supervisors and staff in attendance: Ryan Gill (Chair, Seat 2); Adam Young (Vice Chair, Seat 3); Robert “Myke” Morris (Treasurer, Seat 4); Chris “Bear” McCullough (Seat 1); Mark Proctor (Seat 5); Tom Gonzalez (Counsel, HSWCD Board); Dr. Joe Walsh (HSWCD Executive Director); Linda Chion (HSWCD Staff)

Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance/Introductions: Chair Gill called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m.; led the Pledge of Allegiance, welcomed attendees and asked for introductions.

Partner Agency and Vendor representatives in attendance: Leslie Diaz-Alvarez (NRCS District Conservationist), Simon Bollin (Hillsborough Agriculture Economic Development), Stephen Gran (Director, UF/IFAS Hillsborough Extension)

Public in attendance: Betty Jo Tompkins (self)

Public comment: Tompkins asked if board was going to take a position on pending legislation concerning soil and water conservation districts statewide. Attorney Gonzalez said the purpose of public comments is not to ask questions, but rather to make comments. Chair Gill thanks speaker, moves meeting forward.

Minutes of January 11, 2025 board meeting: Supervisor Morris moves to accept minutes of January 11, 2024 meeting. Supervisor Young seconds. Motion carries 5-0.

Financial Report: Treasurer Morris reviewed bank accounts, ED Walsh reports Hamilton & Associates engagement letter for next audit shows a substantial increase. Treasurer Morris moves to accept financial report. Vice Chair Young seconds. Motion carries 5-0.

Staff reimbursement: Kathy Eckdahl due reimbursement for HSWCD Lunch-n-Learn held Sept. 7. Chair Gill said he agrees the money needs to be refunded and that he had been led to believe the food had been donated. ED Walsh said he will provide the receipt for documentation. Treasurer Supervisor Morris moves to reimburse Eckdahl. Vice Chair Young seconds. Motion carries 5-0.

Partner Agency Reports:

- *USDA/NRCS* – Diaz-Alvarez, District Conservationist, reported on Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) applications. Discussed upcoming Local Working Group meeting and the shared ag tech position between NRCS and HSWCD. Supervisor Gill noted that applications per Diaz-Alvarez’

report show a significant increase over the past year.

- *Hillsborough Agriculture Economic Development* — Bollin said the next AG Pesticide Collection is set for March 12 at the North Hillsborough Heights Collection Facility, open to farmers only. Gates open 7 a.m. and collection is for liquids and solids (no pressurized cylinders). Bollin noted that on April 5, the eight-hour Military Agriculture Tour is set to take place,

Non-Agenda Items:

- *Meeting dates* — Supervisor Gill opened discussion for a new set of three-month meeting dates, to be posted as well on HSWCD website. Attorney Gonzalez said this is a procedural matter, and therefore can be discussed at the board's workshop meeting, scheduled for Feb. 20, 2024.
- *Local Working Group Meeting* — Leslie Diaz-Alvarez (NRCS) said the meeting needs to be held sometime in the April 1 to May 31 time period, and that she needs to know the date and location by March 1. Supervisor Gill suggested 10 a.m. April 18 for the LWG workshop. ED Walsh said he will confirm space availability with the Florida Strawberry Growers Association in Dover.
- *Outstanding invoices* — Supervisor Gill said ED Walsh has informed him that two Greater Plant City Chamber of Commerce invoices are outstanding. One is for Schmoozapalooza the other is for HSWCD's annual chamber membership (cost to be confirmed). ED Walsh said he can pay for the event with the county account and that he will check to see if chamber membership can likewise be paid with county funds.

Old Business:

- *Update on FY22 state filings* — ED Walsh reports HSWCD is off the Joint Legislative Audit Committee's list for Dissolution; all has been completed. Getting things together in time for FY23 audit.
- *Forthcoming FDACS email* — Chair Gill recounted a call he received from Matt Warren of FDACS, concerning the addition of about \$100,000 into HSWCD's pass-through account for FDACS funding. Counties in the northern part of the state reportedly need more money than what they have available. ED Walsh explained that as a pass-through account, the money would be deposited into the HSWCD account, then taken out to distribute to other counties. ED Walsh said he wants to hear from James Fort of FDACS as well. Chair Gill said the email will be blind copied to supervisors, and that they need to see what Matt's letter says to be better informed for further discussion.

- *Update on bonding of the treasurer* — Executive Director (ED) Walsh reviewed that each person who is authorized to make transactions on behalf of the board must be bonded. The cost is \$100 per year per person for \$10,000 worth of coverage. ED Walsh and Supervisors Gill and Morris are authorized to make payments. Discussion ensued. Supervisor Morris asked ED Walsh to check if the county will cover bonding for all three representatives.
- *Florida State Fair Update* — The Fresh From Florida breakfast held earlier in the day kicked off the 2024 Florida State Fair. The Southern Peach Company, owned and operated by the Gill family of Lithia, donated peach salsa and chips for attendees. HSWCD fair booth to be manned by staff throughout the fair's 12-day run, which ends Feb. 19. Chair Gill is set to be interviewed by Judi Whitson at the fair Friday, Feb. 16, as part of her "Thank a Farmer" series of interviews in the Ag Hall of Fame building, near the HSWCD booth. Chair Gill said he is honored to participate.
- *Poster contest update* — Summer certificates have been signed and checks and 2024 Florida Strawberry Festival tickets (obtained by Supervisor McCullough) have and/or will be distributed. Winning posters will be displayed at the Florida Strawberry Festival.

New Business:

- *Audit for 2023* — ED Walsh Looking into accounting fees, which potentially could more than double due to a host of factors outlined in the understanding of services entered into the record, from Hamilton & Associates, CPA's. Executive director to reach out to James Fort (FDACS) to inquire if FDACS can help cover some accounting fees. The estimate for fees per the document is between \$6,800 and \$7,200. The audit report would be submitted no later than June 30, 2023.
- *Financial Controls and Budget and Financial Control and Budget Exhibit A* — Treasurer Morris reviewed January 11, 2024 amendments to the Financial Controls and Budget Policy dated June 14, 2023. Vice Chair Young moves to accept changes proposed by Treasurer Morris as highlighted in policy document. Also entered into the record, Exhibit A, which covers travel and mileage expenses. Chair Gill seconds. Motion carries 5-0.
- *Rules of Order* – originally included with the Financial Controls item; prior to the meeting Supervisor Morris concluded that there were no issues that needed to be addressed per the existing Rules of Order. Supervisor Morris asked that the item be withdrawn from the Agenda, and the Board concurred. Item was not discussed further.

Director's Report:

- *Updated on proposed Ag-Tech position* — ED Walsh reports county HR is happy with the position, which reflects work for an environmental specialist with a college degree. Walter of NRCS is good with this as well. ED Walsh said he has been advised by county officials not to get hung up on 50-50 cost share, as the split percentage with NRCS is not an issue. ED Walsh said he is working on the position, as well as a request for a truck for the ag technician.
- *Florida Strawberry Festival Grand Parade Luncheon* — Parade is March 4 and six tickets will be secured, for supervisors and for executive director.
- *Exhibit 1* — ED Walsh reviewed the two items in Exhibit 1.
 - *OPPAGA Review* — ED Walsh presented the Mauldin & Jenkins letter notifying the Board of its pending performance review by the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) review. The final report is due by September. ED Walsh opined that this review could serve as a good learning experience for self-evaluation moving forward. He said he will work with Chair Gill to arrange for an online call with Mauldin & Jenkins to discuss review particulars.
 - *Strawberry U-Pick* — Treasurer Morris will work with staff (Melissa Jackson) to ensure delivery of HSWCD canopy to be used at the Feb. 17 4-H Foundation Strawberry U-Pick at Fancy Farms in Plant City. Supervisor Morris and ED Walsh are volunteering for the event.

Upcoming Events:

- Feb. 8-19 — Florida State Fair
- Feb. 17 — U-Pick at Fancy Farms in Plant City
- Feb. 29 to March 10 — Florida Strawberry Festival
- March 4 — Florida Strawberry Festival Grand Parade luncheon

Next Board Meeting Schedules:

- February 20 / 6 p.m. — Workshop (non-business, non-public meeting) leadership meeting, at Cattlemen Foundation building in Plant City, 6404 CR 39 South, Plant City
- March 14 / 3 p.m. — Regular board meeting, at UF/IFAS Extension Hillsborough County, 5339 CR 579, Seffner

Meeting Adjournment:

- Chair Gill moves to adjourn meeting at 4:20 p.m.

(Next Page - Exhibit I)

EXHIBIT I

1. OPPAGA conference call – Joe
 - a. Schedule the call with Tom, Ryan, Brenda Wright and HR(?)
2. FDACS large deposit to mini-grants account
 - a. Reached out to Warren/Fort/Stephen/FDACS on 02/14/2024
3. Local Working Group (LWG) meeting – secure location for Thursday, April 18 meeting 10 a.m. Tentative, 2 hours at strawberry growers association
 - a. Need Zoom
4. Confirm Feb. 20 workshop 6 p.m. at Cattlemens Foundation building.
 - a. Open to non-participatory public viewing
 - b. Post to website
5. Social media link and/or post official flyer promoting March 12 AG Pesticide Collection Thursday, March 12, at No. Hillsborough Heights Collection Facility (source – Simon Bollin)
 - a. No additional information, just link to original content
6. Military Agriculture Tour – April 5, eight-hour tour. Board members agreed one of them to sponsor HART bus and chaperone.
 - a. Linda to coordinate supervisor(s) to Simon Bollin and HART
7. Outstanding Plant City Chamber invoices
 - a. Schmoozapalooza
 - b. Annual membership
8. Bonding insurance – Joe
 - a. How much per person
 - b. Will county cover board supervisors in addition to Joe
9. Lunch ‘n Learn food reimbursement to Kathy Eckdahl

- a. Joe needs receipt/copy of check
10. Hamilton & Associates FY23 audit fee
- a. James Fort re: covering the amount
11. SWC canopy to 4-H Foundation by Feb. 17
- a. For Fancy Farms 4-H u-pick
 - b. Need point of contact from Supervisor Morris – Joe
12. Woman of the Year in Ag Luncheon at FL State Fair – Feb. 12
- a. Is someone attending
13. Farmer Ryan interview at state fair Friday, Feb. 16 (3-5p.m.)
- a. Post social media