Okeechobee Soil and Water Conservation District

September BOS Meeting Minutes Approved

Date: Wednesday, September 16, 2026
Time: 1:00PM
Location: 200 NW 5th Street Conference Room

Chairman Corona called the meeting to order at 1:02pm.

Mariano Corona-Chairman-Present
Jared Figley-Supervisor-Present
Donald Sellers, Jr.-Supervisor-Absent
Douglas Burnham-Supervisor-Present
Glynn Rutledge-Treasurer-Absent

I. Motion to approve the May 13, 2026, Meeting Minutes (Burnham/Rutledge). Motion passed unanimously.
II. Motion to approve the August Financial Report (Burnham/Rutledge). Motion passed unanimously.
III. Staff Program Reports
    a) NRCS Report: Carlos Torres, District Conservationist reported statewide application and funding numbers. Okeechobee has 60 active Conservation Stewardship Program contracts totaling 7.9M in obligations and 24 Environmental Quality Incentives Program contracts totaling 3.9M in obligations. Statewide applications totaled 2104, with 488 resulting in funding obligations.
    b) FDACS Report: No longer accepting applications for cost share this fiscal year. The Mobile Irrigation Laboratory program has fully transitioned to FDACS staff. Matt Dorriety will send OSWCD and NRCS how to schedule an irrigation evaluation.
    c) FSA Report- no report.
    d) OSWCD Report: Victoria Wheeler, Program Specialist reported on Monofilament Recovery and Recycling Program collections. Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission has updated their website to link our new logo to our website. This year's Stewardship Week theme is "From Source to Sea. Every Drop Has a Journey." Soil Trailer-no report. SWCD presented at UF/IFAS Craft Camp July 6-10 and Ms. Wheeler has a soils presentation scheduled October

1 for Crafty Clovers 4-H Club. Ms. Wheeler continues with website updates and maintenance.

Ms. Kuipers announced the 2027 Local Working Group meeting date of May 12, 2027 and reported that the NRCS Contribution Agreement expires September 30, 2027 and will not be renewed. The BOCC will formally adopt their budget which includes the District Agreement at $53,000 on September 24, 2026. The Association of Florida Conservation Districts held its annual meeting on August 25, 2026. The elected officers and looking into securing a lobbyist.

Ms. Kuipers is contacting NACD for a grant expiration extension due to some projects not being able to be completed, as well as requesting some funds to be utilized for capacity building. Reconciliations with PJ Rader are ongoing each month. The auditing firm Wicks, Brown, Williams CPAs submitted an engagement letter for FY 26 services totaling $16,835.

Personnel: Victoria Wheeler has been accepted into the Certified District Administrative Professional program through FASD and received a tuition fee scholarship. Ms. Wheeler was voted onto the Florida Conservation District Employee Association's Board of Directors serving in the Coordinator position. Audrey Kuipers was inducted into the SE NACD Florida Hall of Fame and serves on the Membership and Technology Committee for FASD. Performance Reviews were reviewed by Board Supervisors.

IV. Unfinished Business

a) None

V. New Business

a) A letter from Wetland Watch Dogs concerning property purchased by a developer was distributed to the Board. It was received in June but Audrey Kuipers did not send a response since it is not the purpose of our Board to get involved. The District's social media also has received negative comments about our functions. Ms. Kuipers chose not to respond. Board direction is to respond once to educate but not to engage with keyboard warriors.
b) Motion to approve the Our Village of Okeechobee Educator Grant Application at $2,950 for the purpose of materials only (no staff support) (Burnham/Rutledge). Motion passed unanimously.
c) Motion to approve Civil Even's Small Farms Cost Share Program Application at $4.50/ft up to $4,950 (Figley/Rutledge). Motion passed unanimously.
d) Motion to approve the FY 26 Budget Amendments with adjustments to special revenue should more payment requests come in before the end of

the fiscal year and add the funded educator grant amount (Figley/Rutledge). Motion passed unanimously.

e) Motion to approve the FY 27 Budget Proposed budget which includes a 2% merit and 2.8% COLA for staff. The Technician position will receive the pay adjustment in the form of a bonus from general funds and cannot be billed to the FDACS contract.

VI. Supervisor and Public Comments-none

VII. Upcoming Events and Deadlines

a) AFCD Bord Meeting, Virtual: September 22
b) Board of Supervisors Meeting: October 14
c) Board of Supervisors Meeting: November 11- NO MEETING
d) Farm City Day: November 19 KOA, 6pm (NEW TIME)

VIII. Adjourn Meeting at 3:20pm.

Approved at the October 14, 2026 Board of Supervisors meeting.