

Okeechobee Soil and Water Conservation District

Board of Supervisors August Meeting Minutes

Approved Date: August 14, 2024

Location: 200 NW 5th Street Conference Room

Minutes:

- I. Motion to approve the May 8, 2024, Meeting Minutes (Figley/Burnham). Motion passed unanimously.
- II. Motion to approve the Financial Report (Burnham/Figley). Motion passed unanimously.
- III. Staff Program Reports
 - a. Audrey Kuipers and Vicki Wheeler gave the NRCS report. Howard Harrison, District Conservationist was participating in the NRCS Quality Assurance Review for the Okeechobee Field Office. Currently, there are 24 (17 Okeechobee, 7 Glades) obligations totaling \$3,592,284 which is an increase from \$386K. There are 17 CSP (13 Okeechobee, 4 Glades) obligations. Lissa Campbell and Clara Riquelme filled the Soil Conservationist vacancies and started last month.
 - b. Nancy Rivera, Conservation Technician and Audrey Kuipers, District Administrator gave the FDACS update. The new BMP Cost Share online is live on the FDACS website. Cost share will be offered at different percentages based on how much data the producer is willing to submit during the Implementation Verification process.
 - c. FSA-no report
 - d. Vicki Wheeler, Program Specialist and Audrey Kuipers gave the OSWCD update. The staff is recommending not to host a speech contest in the FY 25 Budget. "Home is Where the Habitat Is" is the NACD 2025 Stewardship theme. The FY 25 BOCC agreement is being funded at \$53,000 and will be final after the September 19 BOCC meeting. Audrey Kuipers is working with NRCS to amend the current Contribution Agreement to a 75-25 relationship due to hardship. She is also working with NRCS on the possibility of an outreach Cooperative Agreement. Vicki Wheeler continues to perform the deliverables and assist the NRCS Field Office with applications and customer contract folders. Audrey Kuipers updated the Board on the AFCD quarterly meeting and the list of concerns the Florida Conservation District

Employee Association presented to the AFCD Board regarding the lack of service they are providing.

IV. Unfinished Business

- a. The OPPAGA Report and District Responses were shared with the Board and will be available to the public on the OPPAGA website the week of August 19th.
- b. Audrey Kuipers is working with NACD and Blackwater SWCD on amendments to the perimeter fence program to request using the FY2024 Woven Wire-Southeast Scenario payment rate to make the program more attractive to local producers.
- c. The SECDEA Conference Sponsorship Request is being tabled until Ms. Kuipers provides more financial information.
- d. Motion to approve the Telework Policy presented and combine it with the current Personnel Handbook (Burnham/Figley). Motion passed unanimously.

V. New Business

- a. The FY 25 Budget Proposal was tabled for the next meeting.

VI. Meeting Adjourned at 2:37pm.

VII. Upcoming Events and Deadlines

- a. Office Closed: Labor Day: September 2
- b. FCDEA Annual Meeting: September 3-4: Gainesville, FL
- c. Board of Supervisors Meeting: September 11
- d. Board of Supervisors Meeting: October 9