

Hillsborough Soil and Water Conservation District
Regular Meeting of the Board of Supervisors
TIME - April 18, 2024 @ 1:00 pm
Location - Florida Strawberry Growers Association
13138 Lewis Gallagher Road / Dover FL / 33527

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

Items 1-5

Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance/Introductions: Chair Gill called the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m.; led the Pledge of Allegiance, welcomed attendees and asked for introductions.

Partner Agency and Vendor representatives in attendance: Matt Warren (FDACS)

Public in attendance: None

Public comment: None

Item 5 - Public correspondence: None to report at this meeting.

Item 6 - Minutes of meeting March 14, 2024: Treasurer Morris moves to accept as corrected the minutes of the March 14, 2024 board meeting to reflect that Supervisor Young seconded the motion to adopt the HSWCD logo that’s on the agenda and that the staff should use the official logo on business cards. Treasurer Morris clarifies that the color version of the HSWCD logo be made the official logo of the district. Supervisor Young seconds. Motion carries 4-0.

Item 7 - Treasurer’s Report: Treasurer Morris notes there has been no activity in the accounts save for the Hillsborough 100 account, as it pertains to outstanding checks written last month for summer poster contest award recipients. Treasurer Morris moves to accept the treasurer’s report and move it to file for audit. Supervisor Proctor seconds. Motion carries 4-0.

Item 8 - Old Business:

- *Amendment to FDACS contract* — ED Walsh said there had been a misunderstanding between HSWCD and FDACS concerning K. Eckdahl’s role with the district; ED Walsh notes that an amendment has been updated and signed, designating Chair Gill as the contract manager and ED Walsh as the project manager. Matt Warren commented.
- *OPAGGA review* — ED Walsh notes that the upload of documents asked for has been acknowledged and that after two Q&A rounds, there’s been no word back over the past

two weeks. Questions had been asked concerning the district's status, raising the issue of independent versus dependent districts. Evidence is required to confirm district's dependent status. Attorney Gonzalez said this is the case given the county has control over HSWCD's budget.

- *Form 1* — Supervisor Proctor noted confusion over Form 1 requirement. Attorney Gonzalez said Form 1 for 2023 has to be filed, but there is no requirement for ethics training for the 2023 filing. Attorney Gonzalez commented. Supervisor Gill noted the filing date, by July 1. Attorney Gonzalez and Chair Gill commented.

Item 9 - New Business:

- *Poster/speech contests* — ED Walsh commented on NACD contests this year, as AFCD said the deadline for state competition is May 1 or May 15. He asked the board for its permission to bow out this year, as contest participation is a board activity, and not a county activity. Supervisor Morris moved to not participate in the AFCD/NACD poster and speech contests this year. Supervisor Proctor seconds. Motion carries 4-0.
- *Double-sided sign for Coronet Road office* — ED Walsh said the intent is for a double-sided sign perpendicular to the road, and that two proofs came in for review over the past couple days. The sign will feature the district's approved logo.
 - *Additional issue: security* — Supervisor Proctor gave an update on his approach to the Sheriff's office regarding onsite security issue for the new office. Discussed were issues concerning site survey, move-in date, underbrush trimming, vagrancy, access to the camera system, trespass reporting and that officers will make regular stops, day and night. ED Walsh said he has offered that deputies can stop in to the office at any time to use restroom, breakroom and spare desk space as needed. He said he wants a relationship with District 2 and has talked with senior patrolmen.
 - *Other worksite issues* — ED Walsh said the Coronet Drive facility has a dumpster, phone line with voicemail, internet access with VOIP phone capability, but not yet a copier/printer. Office supplies are needed. He noted that he is developing a rapport with neighbors.
- *Dependent vs. Independent Conservation District* — Attorney Gonzalez clarified the distinction between independent and dependent special districts, noting that by statute HSWCD does not meet the test of an independent district; that functionally it is a dependent district. ED Walsh said that in reviewing files, it is clear HSWCD has always claimed to be an INDEPENDENT district via its filings with Florida Department of Commerce. Chair Gill inquired, what is the threshold crossed that renders a district dependent versus independent. ED Walsh answered that the Board does not control its operating budget, which has been provided by and must be approved by Hillsborough

BOCC, going back to at least FY 2015. Attorney Gonzalez said it comes down to whether the County can veto this district's budget, and if the County is approving the budget, no matter where the revenue comes from, the District is considered dependent. Considering the legal and political situation the District is in, Chair Gill and Treasurer Morris asked clarifying questions and added comments to the discussion, suggesting that changing the filing status of the District should be looked into further.

- *1D Tree Farm ACH disbursement exceeding 30K* — Matt Warren, Env. Specialist from FDACS, reviewed the status of HSWCD's contract and remaining allocations, noting that there are 3 Ag producer Agreements remaining to be paid, which would leave an ending balance of roughly \$8,000 to the District's allocation. Warren reviewed the process for funds to be distributed and emphasized that the hard deadline to get paperwork finalized for distributions is June 30th. Supervisor Morris moves to temporarily suspend the financial control on the Executive Director, which requires two signatures for the transfer of funds greater than \$30,000, for the specific purpose of allowing him to distribute funds for the 1-D Tree Farm Agreement in the amount of \$31,961.38. Supervisor Young seconds. Motion carries 4-0.

Item 10 - Upcoming Events, Board Meeting Scheduling: Discussion to move next board meeting (May 23) from UF/IFAS to HSWCD's new home, at 4503 Coronet Road, Plant City.

- Building issues discussed. Regarding holding public board meetings in the garage bays, ED Walsh said it's dark in the garage; but otherwise, there are plenty of seats; the facility will have flags (not stickers of flags); and that there never will be central air-conditioning in the garage. Chair Gill said he had no objection to using the Coronet Road facility for the meeting, and suggested that mobile evaporative air conditioners could be an option to control the bay's temperature during meetings
- Discussion about scheduling the next Board Meeting to occur at the Coronet Road facility on the same day as the already scheduled ribbon-cutting ceremony. Chair Gill affirmed that the Plant City Chamber would need lead time to push out its messaging for the meeting.

Item 11 - Meeting Adjournment:

- Chair Gill moves to adjourn meeting at 2:38 p.m.