Jackson Soil & Water Conservation District Monthly Board Meeting

June 01, 2023

8:00 a.m.

UF/IFAS-Clover Room

Board members present: Mack Glass, Steve Basford, Tom Stadsklev, Jeff Pittman, Dave DeFelix

Absent: 0. All 5 board members present

Administrative Staff: Alisha Dunaway, Peggy Gilley. Others present: Rex Patterson, JSWCD-MIL, Kevin Warren, JSWCD-MIL, Garrett Williams, JSWCD BMP Tech, Brendaly Rodriguez-Munoz, NRCS District Conservationist, Camilo Gaitan-OAWP Sr. Water Resources Engineer, Charlene Meeks, AFCD, Chris Denmark, FDACS Environmental Administrator, Captain John Alter, NWFWMD, and Guest: Portia Holmes from New North Florida Co-op.

Supervisor Glass called the meeting to order at 8:04 a.m.

Supervisor Glass welcomed attendees and guest.

Supervisor Pittman made a motion to accept the agenda, seconded by Supervisor Basford Carried unanimously. Supervisor Basford made a motion to accept the minutes as read, seconded by Supervisor Pittman. Carried unanimously.

AFCD Report: Charlene reported that all of the Area meetings have concluded. Reminder that on 6/30 the current audit is due at the state. Because there are so many new supervisors there will be a continuation of the AFCD annual meeting in September to help provide them with the training they need. (Sept. 26th & 27th, 2023 in Gainesville.) AFCD and NRCS have an agreement and will be covering the cost of Supervisor registration and rooms. AFCD has a new board President, Buck Carpenter, Charlene ran down the names of the rest of the board members for the group. Charlene let everyone know that the board voted to go back to a 4-area district vs the 6 to align with NRCS districts moving forward. Supervisor Glass asked Charlene to be a spokesperson to speak for us all regarding the timing of running for election with all the newly appointed board members.

NRCS Report: Brendaly gave Dave DeFelix a big welcome as our newest Supervisor on the board. NRCS is re-advertising for the Area Programs Specialist. That position will be just for the panhandle. They haven’t had any applicants and there is a $20K sign-on bonus!

The Soil Conservationist position has been readvertised with a sign-on bonus too. Brendaly will get those positions’ information to Peggy to share with the board members. Equip and CSP funding-people are calling. It is 6/1 and we still have no word on who got funded. Brendaly asked for patience-no one has been funded yet. She is looking for the list to arrive from the state this week. The IRA slowed them down. The office is open to the public and staff is available.

BMP Report: Garrett reported that they are finishing cost share. Garrett received a quote this morning from a producer, they are working on spending the rest of the funding. Whatever is left

over Chris will get to the districts that need it. They had a meeting in Tallahassee last month. The

way the IV’s are to be done was covered, it will be easier to do these. They are also closing out the SARP contract. Angela, & DEP people came out to look over what has been done with that funding. Chris added that they are working on last-minute funding pools and he appreciates our

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Employees getting the contract work done. Stephen is still farming and employed by FDACS. They are holding the position open for him for a little while to see if he will get help at the farm and be able to come back. The legislative session is done, and Director West is getting out and about in the field to see what is happening out here.

NWFWMD Report: Captain Alter reported that their meeting is next week. The district is working on controlled burns, reforestation, and land clearing/hurricane clean-up. Regarding the smut grass test they are working on at his place, they were out last week and told him things are favorable with the test. Maybe at the next meeting, he will have more concrete news. Garrett asked if the water mgmt. dist. is in on the mill pond grass removal. Captain John replied that IFAS helped develop the chemical and they were asked for help moving the dead grass out.

UF/IFAS Report: Peggy reported that Doug Mayo is in the field this morning. He said to let everyone know they are still working on hiring a horticulture agent.

OAWP Report: Camilo gave a brief intro to the group for those that do not know him. It is time to renew the MIL contract and he is working with the guys to do a new contract because the 3-year contracts will not be extended anymore. Camilo let the board know that the MIL numbers will stay the same. On the positive side of the last three years, the Dept. of Ag was able to get an office for MIL with technology to do their job and interact with Camilo and other employees in Tallahassee, and they can access FSA software and NOI lists. Camilo manages six contracts and 8 MIL labs. He tries to accommodate different situations that come up. Camilo agreed that our guys know our area and can start and stop as needed. Camilo is asking for the board to require the MIL lab techs to work 7-3:30 the two days they are in the office each week, so he has access to them. The JSWCD personnel policy manual states generic hours of 8-4:30 with the ability to change hours as needed with permission.

Camilo asked if the board would vote to make those hours mandatory for the MIL lab two days a week. The board stated that they are our employees, but they do not have a supervisory role in their day-to-day operations. They also do not want to change the Personnel Policy and handicap the lab techs by holding them to specific times. The board is seeing this as a communication issue between Camilo and the lab techs. They suggested that they work out a schedule where Camilo knows when they will be in the office, and when he sends messages or emails to the techs they respond in a more timely fashion. The last three years have been working well serving the people, they need flexibility. Chris added they had the same situation on their side and the more tight the schedule was, the less flexibility and it all falls apart. Alisha added that the MIL techs are very good about letting her know their schedules and if Camilo needed anything quickly she could help. It was agreed that Alisha will be CC’d on emails in case something comes up in the afternoon she might be able to assist. Camilo is very happy about the work being done, he is required to make grower calls and needs to touch base with the guys, Everyone agreed to be better at communicating.

MIL Report: Rex reported that their numbers for last month are in and they are hitting the ground running for this month.

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Financial Report: Alisha reported that since the report was printed one payment to the Office of Energy was made and a couple more are about ready to go. We had received the first invoice for energy audits and that has been paid. Yesterday she found out that as of 7/1 FDACS will be changing how benefits are done on paychecks. It will look like a cost-of-living raise, will send it to Peggy to send to the Supervisors.

Supervisor Basford made a motion to accept the Financial Report, seconded by Supervisor Stadsklev, motion passed.

Supervisor Glass asked our guest Miss Portia Holmes if she wanted to bring anything up to the board. Miss Portia reported that their group, New North Florida Co-op buys food from the farmers, processes it, packs it, sells, and delivers it to the schools for the lunch program. There was an email from NACD forwarded from Charlene to Alisha that they would be awarding $2.7 million across TX, MS, AL and parts of FL, GA, NM. & CO. to underserved farmers. The New North Florida Co-op applied and needs a conservation district to partner with. They do not need a decision today; she is here to pass along the information & request for her husband Glenn Holmes the NNFC President. Supervisor Glass said they will look into it, his reservations would be to not comingle any outside funding with the state funds we work with and that there would be a fee for our services to partner with them. When the discussion was over, Miss Portia thanked the group for their time and consideration about the matter and took her leave from the meeting.

District Coordinator Report: Peggy let the board know that there are checks to sign at the end of the meeting. The first survey from OPPAGA was due on 5/17 and submitted a week early. We are waiting for the next email from them to move on. JSWCD had a table set up at the NAACP Spring Festival at Madison Street Park on Sat 5/20, there were a lot of people to share our information with. Some of the Supervisors have received Form F the financial statement for the state in your home mailbox, we received a couple here at the office. Last year Peggy did the ones for Tom, Sonny, and Greg. Mack & Steve did their own. I have Toms ready to sign today, please let me know if anyone else wants it done here or if you will do it yourself. Supervisor Glass let Jeff & Dave know that their accountant will know how to fill it out. Peggy brought up the Land Judging pit boards. They are at least 30, probably more years old, and in very rough shape. She has priced wipe-off boards & vinyl. Chris Franklin @ the School Board has offered to have his kids in the wood shop make the frames. We would like to have brand new boards for the kids for the next, hopefully, 30 + years. I would like to ask permission to spend no more than $75.00 on the boards and vinyl (for the conditions, then wipe off markers to put the numbers on them that change every year.) Motion for Peggy to spend no more than $75.00 to build the new land judging boards made by Supervisor Pittman, seconded by Supervisor Basford, carried unanimously. Thank you! Supervisor Glass was in the office recently and saw this graduated 2Qt pitcher that I picked up at an event. (held the pitcher up) He was very impressed with the idea of a promo item that farmers could really use. I have contacted the company that makes them, in Texas, USA. I was hoping to have the artwork and a quote for y’all today, but with the holiday it didn’t happen. I will bring that back to y’all at the next meeting.

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Old Business: proposed By-laws. There was much discussion about whether to have or have not. We are governed by the statutes and our Personnel policy. There was a suggestion that we take a few of the items from this form and put them in the Personnel Policy. The board wants to have more time to think over this one, and will bring it back at the next meeting. The board asked Peggy to remove our logo from the top and put a DRAFT watermark on the pages.

 DOE letters regarding the SOE Oath and Fee. All the Supervisors except Tom need to go to the Supervisor of Elections Office, pay the $10.00, and be sworn in by Miss Carol Dunaway. Supervisor Glass has taken care of him already.

New Business: SECDEA Conference-Peggy let the board know that there is a Save the Date flyer in their packets. There will be some great training at the conference for those that are able to make the trip to Pigeon Forge, TN. November 7-9, 2023.

 5% Funds: because there have been discussions before about equipment rentals and we are discussing how best to use the funds we have, Peggy did research on another S&W board that rents equipment. Pettis County was very helpful, Ashlynn said they rent a Great Plains No-Till Drill 10’. In County - $10/acre ($200 minimum) or out of County - $12/acre ($200 minimum). She said for maintenance of the equipment they are lucky and have an in-house mechanic that does maintenance and easy repairs. For hydraulics, they have a local guy or for bigger issues they send it to the dealership. They have a tracking code for each implement to see what it costs to keep over the years. The board is not ready to decide on anything yet but was glad for the information.

 JC BOCC funds: We received an email from Admin to let us know our funds, as well as all the county funds, have been cut, and they need our request for funding submitted this week. Last year we received $8,200.00, this year they have $7,738.00 budgeted for JSWCD. We just need Supervisor Glass to sign the request and Peggy will get that over to Admin so they can process the request and cut the check.

Supervisor reports: Supervisor Glass, everyone be thinking of ideas to use our 5% funds.

 Supervisor Basford, no report

 Supervisor Stadsklev, would like to get some quotes regarding the audit and the fees charged. Would like to keep it local but might have to look elsewhere to save some money. Alisha will look into that for the board.

 Supervisor Pittman, mentioned John Tidwell and farm safety. John had his hair caught in a PTA shaft; he’s had his third surgery. Be careful out there. Electricity was brought up too and how the grid isn’t going to handle all the extra power required. They haven’t been able to get it where it needs to go without spiking and ruining $20K equipment that the farmer must cover replacing, and it is impossible to get any answers from WFEC.

 Supervisor DeFelix, Good to be here.

A motion to adjourn at 9:58 a.m. was made by Supervisor Pittman and seconded by Supervisor Basford. Carried unanimously.