

MINUTES
Marion Soil and Water Conservation District (MSWCD)
Regular Board Meeting
2710 East Silver Springs Boulevard
Ocala, FL 34470
April 10, 2023
9:30 AM

PLEASE NOTE: Individuals wishing to address the Board will need to sign in. A three-minute time limit will be administered to each of these individuals. PLEASE MUTE ALL PHONES. This agenda acts as a guidance for the structure of the meeting. Thank you.

I. Call to Order

Vice-Chairman Vivi Serena called the meeting to order at 9:34 AM.

▪ **Roll Call**

Lee Black, Supervisor
Vivi Serena, Vice-Chairman/Treasurer
Brent London, Supervisor; left at 10:08 AM

Absent

Justin Albright, Supervisor

Others in Attendance

Tammy Hinkle, FDACS
Richard McGinley, MSWCD Associate
Ann Bishop, MSWCD Staff
Jeff Platt, MSWCD Staff
Brigitte Smith, Citizen

▪ **Proof of Publication**

Star-Banner – On December 17 an email was sent regarding this meeting and a reminder was sent on March 17 and April 2.
Florida Administrative Weekly – It was posted in the FL Admin Weekly on December 30.
NRCS – On December 17 an email was sent regarding this meeting and a reminder was sent on March 17 and April 2. Marion County Board of County Commissioners – On December 17 an email was sent regarding this meeting and a reminder was sent on March 17 and April 2.

II. CONSENT AGENDA

(A motion to approve the items on the consent agenda is to approve items if unanimous consent from last workshop meeting.)

i. **MSWCD Board Minutes**

ii. **MSWCD Board Financial Report**

PROPOSED MOTION: Brent London moved that the MSWCD consent agenda be approved as presented. Lee Black seconded; all were in favor.

III. Administrative (Update)

▪ **Board Appointment**

PROPOSED MOTION: Brent London moved that the MSWCD appoint Richard McGinley as MSWCD Supervisor, Seat 2. Lee Black seconded; all were in favor.

PROPOSED MOTION: Brent London moved that the MSWCD appoint Brigitte Smith as MSWCD Associate Member. Lee Black seconded; all were in favor.

Ann Bishop asked the District Board to review their contact information, and she will provide the list at the next meeting.

- **Part-time Employee**

A District part-time employee was discussed.

PROPOSED MOTION: Richard McGinley moved that the MSWCD pursue a part-time SWCD position thru the County. Lee Black seconded; all were in favor.

Ann Bishop will contact Jessica James at the County to start this process.

IV. **Marion County Budget**

The Board discussed the District's goals. The Farms of Environmental Distinction was discussed, and it was suggested to promote these farms through year-in-reviews, at the local working group, at festivals and events, and through articles. Brent London stated that individuals gave feedback about the Farms of Environmental Distinction signs at the Farm Land Preservation Festival.

PROPOSED MOTION: Brent London moved that the MSWCD approve the presented goals and projected Marion County budget for fiscal year 2023-2024. Richard McGinley seconded; all were in favor.

V. **NRCS Report**

The District reviewed the NRCS Report.

VI. **FDACS Report**

- **Cost Share**

Tammy Hinkle gave an overview of the cost share and stated that all funds were exhausted.

- **District No Till Drill (Update)**

The no till drill was discussed. The second quote was obtained and cheaper than the first. Richard McGinley is going to reach out to an insurance agency (AGI) to see what coverage would cost the Board. Ann Bishop is still waiting on Brown and Brown.

- **Tech Contract**

- **Jeff Platt's Notice**

Vivi Serena gave an update on Jeff's resignation and rescinded notice; the Board discussed it. Vivi, Ann and Jeff had a meeting with FDACS to discuss the inappropriate behavior of FDACS staff, Chris Denmark. During this call, Bret Prater, FDACS Deputy Director, stated that Chris is no longer to have contact, now and in the future, with MSWCD or its staff. Vivi Serena and Ann Bishop plan to have a follow up meeting in Tallahassee.

- **Hiring**

Hiring was discussed. On the call with Bret Prater, he stated that MSWCD is to move forward with hiring the other two tech positions. Jeff Platt asked the Board if he could have a discussion with Ann Bishop prior to the interview to discuss potential details that a new hire might or need to know prior to accepting a position with the District.

Jeff Platt asked about comp and flex time. This was discussed. Vivi Serena told him that he needs to schedule his time accordingly to not exceed forty hours, and to use a calendar if needed and not to answer calls, texts, or emails outside his work shift. His normal work shift is 8AM -5PM, Monday -Friday, as indicated in the handbook, but the Board allows for flexibility outside this schedule, if it is approved. The Board is also aware that sometimes comp time will occur, but Jeff Platt needs to let the producers know if he cannot meet them to ask for an alternative time and date to meet.

Richard McGinley, Vivi Serena, and Tammy Hinkle all agreed to conduct interviews at 9 AM and 10 AM on April 24. Ann Bishop will book the conference room; and Angela Weeks-Samanie will be contacted to see if she or a designee would like to sit in on the interviews.

Richard McGinley stated that he would not be able to attend the meeting in May nor the one in July.

- **Benefits**

Benefits were discussed. FDACS stated that with the excess in funds to go ahead and administer the supplemental benefits to the District's tech(s); however, this will change in July when technicians will have to pay part of their benefits. FDACS is still in discussion about dependents. The handbook was updated to reflect these changes, and handbook always had a clause for liability that states the Board can amend the handbook, its contents, including benefits without notice and at any time.

In addition, for supplemental insurance coverage the District needs two, full time employees to get these benefits. If an employee seeks coverage, the Board can pay the insurance company directly the cost, currently at 100%, for these benefits but not to the employee directly.

Currently Okeechobee is the only other district who disclosed to MSWCD that they pay for supplemental insurance; all other districts who responded to this inquiry stated they require their employees to cover this insurance at 100%. All districts cover medical at 100%.

VII. Staff Report & Recap

▪ **Outreach**

- **Contests (Update)**

Contests were discussed. Volunteers are still needed for the State Envirothon in Gainesville on April 22. The Board reviewed the Conservation Landscape Tray thank you letters. Vivi Serena stated that she will assist in getting the awards and projects to the schools. Ann Bishop stated that she is unable to reach our speech winner.

- **Farm Land Preservation Festival (Update)**

Jeff Platt gave an update on the Farm Land Preservation Festival. He stated about 300-400 people attended and that he left prior to 4 PM.

PROPOSED MOTION: Richard McGinley moved that the MSWCD buy a new, easy up, outdoor tent with the District logo on it, not to exceed \$300. Lee Black seconded; all were in favor.

- **Run for the Springs (Update)**

The District submitted its sponsorships and the Run begins at 7:30 AM on April 22 at the Baseline Trailhead.

- **Project Learning Tree**

PROPOSED MOTION: Richard McGinley moved that the MSWCD allow staff to attend the UF/IFAS Natural Resource Professional Outreach and Education Training in Gainesville on April 27-28. Lee Black seconded; all were in favor.

▪ **Miscellaneous**

- **Financials (Update)**

District financials were discussed. Ann Bishop mentioned that the District audit and County Budget are due on May 3. QuickBooks software is going out of date in May, so a more expensive online, annual version needs to be purchased. FDACS should cover this cost; Tammy stated to send her an email regarding this purchase for approval.

- **AFCD Meetings**

- Area 1: May 5th located at: Gadsden Extension Office, 2140 W. Jefferson Street, Quincy, FL 32351
- Area 2: May 18th located at: Trenton Women's Club, 2107 S CR 339, Trenton, FL 32693

- Area 3: May 12th Charlotte Extension Office, 1120 Centennial Blvd, Port Charlotte, FL 33953
 - Area 4: May 11th Everglades Research & Edu Center, 3200 E Palm Beach Rd, Belle Glade, FL 33430
- PROPOSED MOTION: Richard McGinley moved that the MSWCD approve staff and supervisors to attend the Area II AFCD Meeting, and that Ann Bishop be allowed to attend all the AFCD Meetings as the President of the FCDEA. Lee Black seconded; all were in favor.**

- **FCDEA Meeting**

FCDEA meeting were discussed.

PROPOSED MOTION: Richard McGinley moved that the MSWCD approve staff to attend the FCDEA Midyear Meeting. Lee Black seconded; all were in favor.

- **Farm Bill**

Ann Bishop mentioned that upon Vivi Serena's request a letter was sent out to the Senate and the House regarding the Farm Bill.

VIII. Upcoming Events

- SECDEA Midyear – April 16-21
- FCDEA Monthly Meeting – April 25
- Project Learning Tree – April 27-28
- Financial Audit Due – May 3
- MCBCC Budget Due – May 3
- BMP Working Group Meeting – May 3
- Area I Meeting – May 5
- MSWCD Monthly Meeting – May 8
- Area IV Meeting – May 11
- Area III Meeting – May 12
- Area II Meeting – May 18
- FCDEA Midyear – May 23

IX. General Public Comments

X. Supervisor Comments

XI. Meeting Adjournment

- Our next meeting is May 8, 2023 at 9:30 AM in the Growth Services Building.
- With no other business needing addressed, Vice Chairman Vivi Serena adjourned the meeting at 11:05 AM, until our next meeting.

MSWCD's regular meetings are held at 9:30 AM on the 2nd Monday of each month, and their workshops are held the 4th Monday of each month at 9:30 AM, tentatively. Both meetings are located in Growth Services, located at 2710 E. Silver Springs, Ocala, FL 34470. For more information, call (352) 438-2475.