

**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
Collier Soil and Water Conservation District (CSWCD)  
June 20, 2024, 10:00 am  
JW Marriott Marco Island Beach Resort  
Osprey Room 10  
400 S. Collier Blvd., Marco Island, FL 34145

A regular monthly board meeting of the board of supervisors was called to order June 20th, 2024 at 10:12 am.

Present: Rob Griffin, James Nikolich, Santos Colberg, Meghan Foos, Heather Cleckler, Jillian Sanchez, and Jess Morris. Also in attendance were guests: Florida's State Conservationist Juan Hernandez and Project Manager Camilo Gaitan

**I. Pledge of Allegiance**

**II. Approval of Agenda** Chairman Rob Griffin made a suggest to move NRCS Update by Juan Hernandez to the first of the reports. Supervisor Meghan Foos made a motion to approve the agenda with the change. Supervisor Jess Morris seconds.

**III. Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes** Supervisor Jillian Sanchez made a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes. Supervisor Jess Morris seconds.

**IV. Reports**

**a. NRCS Update by Florida's State Conservationist Juan Hernandez:** Chairman Rob Griffin welcomed Mr. Hernandez and thanked him for all of his hard work and effort for the NRCS. Mr. Hernandez informed the board that the forecast for the upcoming year looks promising for more funding for NRCS. Supervisor Heather Cleckler shared information on the WERP Project to Mr. Hernandez.

**b. District Conservationist's Report:** Mr. Santos Colberg reports that he is currently working on CSP and EQIP pre-approval applications for 2024 and the obligation deadline is 7/26/2024. NRCS is now taking applications for 2025 funding season. Mr. Juan Hernandez shared with the board that the deadline for 2025 applications is November 1, 2024. Mr. Colberg has received 15 EQIP and 5 CSP as of the day of this meeting. He also shared that he has 40 EQIP/6 CSP deferred FY2024 applications for 2025. He informed the board the there are 19 pre-approved 2024 CSP applications (Collier-3, Lee-16) with 28 total applications amounting to approx. total of \$1,300,000.00. There are also 18 pre-approved 2024 EQIP applications (102 total applications) amounting to approx. total of \$1,600,00.00. Under EQIP there are the following pre-approved applications: High Tunnel: 1(Collier County), IRA ACT NOW: 3 (Collier), and Classic IRA: 14 (Collier-4, Lee-10). State Conservationist Mr. Hernandez informed the board that IRA is not for livestock. Mr. Colberg informed the board that the Ft. Myers field office will be getting a new employee soon to help with the workload. He has been networking with UF/IFAS, FWS, and local FDACS.

He shared with the board that he is now also the PMC Advisory Committee Field Office Representative for Area 4. Mr. Colberg also met with FSA District Director Amanda Morgan-Dubach and discussed the recent heavy rain event in Collier and Hendry County and the effects it had on agriculture producers.

- c. **Financials:** Supervisor Jillian Sanchez made a motion to approve the May 2024 Financial Report. Supervisor Meghan Foos seconds.
- d. **District Status Report:** Mr. James Nikolich informed the board that the April invoice of \$7,377.07 has been deposited and the May Invoice of \$9,836.51 has been approved. Mr. Nikolich completed 17 evaluations in May. So far 8 evaluations have been completed and entered into the database. 5 evaluations have had site visits but are not completed and not in the database. He needs to schedule 1 more evaluation to meet the fiscal year FDACS Contract minimum since the state fiscal year ends at the end of June.
- e. **Chairman's Report:** Chairman Rob Griffin shared with our guests that three of our board members were able to attend the district meeting in Sebring and completed the Ethics Training there. He also shared that each board member is officially trained in Ethics and that all board members are up for re-election. Chairman Griffin shared with the board that we received a finalized report from the OPPAGA audit and that we passed. He would like to review some details of the report with the board and discuss ways to improve.
- f. **Secretary's Report:** Supervisor Heather Cleckler refers to regular meeting minutes for her report.
- g. **Treasurer's Report:** Supervisor Meghan Foos informed to board that she was able to take the CSWCD trailer to the Collier Youth Leadership Event at JB Ranch. She would also like to bring the trailer to next year's Florida Cattlemen's Convention.
- h. **Supervisor's Report:** Supervisor Jillian Sanchez informed the board that she currently has no updates that haven't already been discussed in this meeting.
- i. **Supervisor's Report:** Supervisor Jess Morris shared with the board that there is an upcoming event for 4H, the Backyard Growers Project, that the CSWCD may be interested in participating in. She also informed the board of some property on Everglades Blvd. that is for sale that maybe CSWCD would be interested in investing in. She also inquired about room and mileage reimbursement for the AFCD meeting back in November.

## V. Old Business

- a. Elections Office: all board members have completed all forms and requirements for the elections and are up for re-election.
- b. Ethics Training: all board members have completed ethics training

- c. **First 1 Bank Update:** Supervisors Meghan Foos and Heather Cleckler shared with the board that they had a meeting with First 1 Bank and voiced their concerns with switching banks. Upon further consideration it is suggested that the board continue to bank with Bank of America. Supervisor Heather Cleckler made a motion to keep banking with Bank of America. Supervisor Jillian Sanchez seconds.
- d. **CSWCD Properties:** Chairman Rob Griffin shared with State Conservationist Juan Hernandez the recent site visit with Crenel Francis to one of our CSWCD properties. He voiced our concerns on future projects for our properties. Mr. Hernandez suggested waiting to see what happens with the new Farm Bill before moving forward with any projects.

## **VI. New Business**

**a. FDACS Update by Project Manager Camilo Gaitan:** Mr. Gaitan was pleased to inform the board that Mr. James Nikolich has visited 6800 acres in the 2023 fiscal year. He also shared that FDACS is looking into turning MIL program into a GIS system. The new FSA program will be more operable. He also let the board know that Mr. Nikolich is first in line for a MIL vehicle.

**b. AFCD Update by Charlene Meeks:** Mrs. Charlene Meeks was unable to attend this board meeting.

**c. AgVentures Update by Meghan Foos:** Supervisor Meghan Foos informed the board the the Collier AgVentures was such a success that Hendry and Glades Counties would like to replicate the event in their own school systems.

**VII.** The board agreed to have our next board meeting on August 15, 2024 at our regular meeting site at the IFAS Extension Center at 9:00am

**VIII. Adjourn** meeting adjourned at 12:02pm.