

Hillsborough Soil and Water Conservation District

Meeting of the Board of Supervisors

July 21, 2025 @ 10:00 AM

Location: HSWCD Office/4503 Coronet Rd/Plant City/FL/33566

Supervisors and staff in attendance: Terri Parke (Seat 1), Betty Jo Tompkins (Seat 2), Gretchen Hoke (Seat 3), and Aly Sullivan (Seat 5); Special Counsel Tom Gonzalez; Dr. Joe Walsh (Executive Director); K. Eckdahl (Office Manager); Brooke Saunders (Intern)

Absent: Absent/Vacant (Seat 4)

Items 1-4

1.-4. Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance/Introductions: Chair Parke called the meeting to order at 10:00 A.M.; led the Pledge of Allegiance; Vice Chair Hoke led the prayer; Chair Parke welcomed attendees; and asked for introductions.

Partner Agency and Vendor Representatives in Attendance: *in person* Simon Bollin, Hillsborough County Agribusiness Development; *by video-conference*, Troy Green, HCBOCC-Div Env. Mgt.; Vanessa Bauzo-DeLeon, Env. Consultant, Florida Department of Ag & Consumer Services FDACS, Office of Agricultural Water Policy (FDACS-OAWP); Ken Griner, Environmental Engineer, FARMS; Mona Neville, FDACS – County Forester.

Public in Attendance: none at this meeting.

Item 5. Public Comment: None at this time.

Item 6. Public Correspondence: None at this time.

Item 7. Review and Approval of Agenda: Supervisor Sullivan moved to accept the agenda for July 21, 2025. Supervisor Hoke seconded. Motion carried: 4-0.

Item 7a. Introduction of Non-Agenda Items: Dr Walsh reminded the Supervisors of Ethics Training needs to be completed either in person or online. Chair Parke, Special Counsel Gonzalez and Executive Director Walsh will confer on date and time for in-person training.

Item 8. Partner Agencies (introductions and reports):

- a. USDA/NRCS – No report at this time.
- b. FDACS – Vanessa Bauzo-DeLeon updated the Board on the Alafia enrollment efforts. Information is partner agencies, Tampa Bay Estuary Program and Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), on performances under the Nutrient Reduction/Reasonable Assurance agreement would be reviewed in determining any FDACS-OAWP allocation reductions to cost-shares in our region of the State. Dr Walsh stated that his understanding is that cost shares in the Little Manatee and Alafia basins will not be covered under any new cost shares, which are allocated

under “Regional Assistance Projects” in other parts of the State. He mentioned that it was his introduction to the TBEP – Reasonable Assurance Plan (RAP) that originally got his attention focused on the Basin Management Action Plans. He asked how the Conservation District can help FDACS, whether technically or by way of outreaching the situation. Bauzo-DeLeon agreed to follow up with Dr Walsh.

- c. SWFWMD – *Ken Griner* provided an overview of the Farms program Cost Share reimbursement dollars with special mention of the Mini-Farms option. Mini-Farms is best suited to smaller farms having a \$10,000 per project limit, with a per customer/property limit of 5 projects in a lifetime, and a pace of 2 project maximum per year. Ken encouraged participation in the SWFWMD programs. Dr Walsh inquired about irrigation calibration as a technical service previously offered by SWFWMD; could this be offered by HSWCD with support from SWFWMD. Ken said he would follow up with Dr Walsh on this matter.
- d. Hillsborough Agri-business Development – *Simon Bollin*. Reminded the Board of the next Agriculture Economic Development Council (AEDC) Board meeting that is scheduled for Aug 12, 2025; The meeting agenda will include a review of SWFWMD’s Regional Water Supply Plan.

Item 9. Minutes of June 30, 2025, HSWCD Regular Board Meeting: The Board’s meeting minutes from June 30, 2025, were presented. Supervisor Tompkins requested an amendment to the minutes to include the full report of her activities as she had named them. Dr. Walsh asked her to clarify whether the activities were a representation of her business as a Conservation District officer or as a Director on the Board of the County Fair, to which she corrected that the activities were associated with the Hillsborough County Fair Board. Supervisor Tompkins moved to accept the amended meeting minutes as amended. Supervisor Sullivan seconded. Motion carried: 4-0.

Item 10. Financial Report for June 2025: The June 2025 Financial report and bank statement were reviewed. Supervisor Sullivan moved to accept and file for audit the June 2025 Financial Report and Bank Statements for audit. Treasurer Hoke seconded. Motion carried: 4-0.

Item 11. Supervisor Announcements:

Supervisor Parke: as a representative of HSWCD will be attending the Salute to Ag luncheon on Aug 14, 2025 and the combined Citrus/Fruits and Vegetables Trade Expo held at Florida State Fair Grounds on Aug 20-21, 2025. She reported that she is working with Martin Communications to get in contact with local stakeholders such as Hillsborough County Chapter of the Farm Bureau, Hillsborough County Florida Cattlemen’s Association and more to provide us with input for the HSWCD Strategic Plan.

Vice Chair Hoke: stated she is researching weather-related technical tools and whether there were opportunities associated with those for the District to support services to our agricultural producers.

Supervisor Tompkins: presented orally a list of her activities since the last meeting and asked that the list be incorporated into the minutes. Dr. Walsh asked her to clarify if these activities were specific to the business of the HSWCD or more closely related to her activities through the Hillsborough County Fair Board. Supervisor Tompkins agreed the listed activities were more closely associated to her role as a director on the County Fair Board. Dr. Walsh commented to Supervisor Tompkins that her orally-presented list is too much to capture in the meeting minutes, and asked that she provide a written list to Ms. Eckdahl for attachment to the minutes as an addendum.

Supervisor Sullivan: nothing to report at this time.

Item 12. Executive Director's Report:

- Strategic Plan – Martin Communications and Brooke Saunders are now scheduling interviews with members of our agriculture trade groups, other SWC Districts and a few government-sector subject matter experts on priorities, technical service options etc.
- AFCD – after Supervisor Tompkins' assertion last month that AFCD had gone inactive, Dr. Walsh followed up to determine status. The AFCD is not "inactive;" with the resignation from position of president by Buck Carpenter. The Executive Board has restructured, notably with Supervisor Jackson (Jackson HSWCD) and Burland Findley (Blackwater SWCD) at the helm; these gentlemen have been stalwart leaders of the AFCD in previous years. Members of the AFCD Employees Association are volunteering in support of drafting updated AFCD governance documents, proposed services, fees structures etc. Dr. Walsh is expecting to hear from AFCD representatives this fall. Ms. Tompkins engaged in conversation on this topic referencing the alternative "Federation." Special Counsel asked Supervisor Tompkins exactly what her role was with the alternative "Federation," and cautioned her that actions she may be taking in that regard may be creating conflicts of interest for this Board of Supervisors. She remarked that nothing official had been done, she hadn't voted on anything, and only conversations had occurred.
- Website support services - AFCD is no longer involved in negotiating fees for Streamline's support. Dr. Walsh and Kathy Eckdahl have already been working with Streamline to ensure no disruption of service. Streamline offered a new service agreement with no changes in the level of service or the fees. Streamline's invoice will ensure service for the period July 2025-July 2026 and has already been submitted for payment.
- Plant City Chamber's Leadership Institute – Chair Parke nominated Dr Walsh for participation in the Chamber's Leadership 2025 cohort, recognizing that it provides a more structured introduction to the business community in the agricultural area of the County for Dr. Walsh. The fees fit within the Board's Fiscal Controls for the Chair's approval and the amount budgeted by the County to support annual training opportunities (\$~1200 for registration). If selected to participate, Dr. Walsh's registration fee will need to be paid before the next meeting of the Board. Discussion among the Board members indicated general approval of the action without a motion being made.
- Donations of unused office supplies to schools – With Dr. Walsh's approval Kathy Eckdahl arranged to donate a surplus of supplies to primary-school agricultural educators in the area. Donation of reams of various colored paper, reams of certificate paper, specialty paper, over 20 sets of 25 water cycle bracelets, various colored beads, and various other items were accepted by Cheryl Hyde, Principal Brooks DeBartolo Collegiate High School and shared with Cindy Davidson, Youth Environmental Alliance.

Item 13. Old Business:

- **Proposal to refer Supervisor Tompkins' for removal from the office of Supervisor** (*Chair Parke with assistance of Special Counsel Tom Gonzalez*) Special Counsel stated he did not receive a formal response regarding the letter sent to the Commissioner of Ag. Dr Walsh stated that he received a verbal response from the Commissioner of Ag's office. The recommended action, citing F.S. 582.20(11), is for the Board to refer Supervisor Tompkins to the Governor's Office for consideration of removal from office.

Item 14: Upcoming/Proposed Business Schedule: Upcoming event dates were reviewed.

Adjournment: Chair Parke adjourned the meeting 10:31 AM

Next Board Meeting:

Aug 18, 2025 @ 10 AM

HSWCD Office 4503 Coronet Rd/Plant City/FL 33566

Contact: soilandwater@hcfl.gov