

January 19, 2015 UCSWD Board Meeting

Present:

Pete Cameron- Chair

Duke Emerson- Treasurer

Laurel Schaafsma- Secretary

Delbert Smith- Board member

Monica Jones- NRCS Representative

The meeting began at 6:30 pm.

Mr. Duke Emerson informed the board of a Tallahassee session regarding a stricter water bill. A total of 17 changes were mentioned, with four priorities, for vote on the Senate and the House floors. These priorities are as follows: metering all permitted groundwater withdrawals of 100,000 gallons or more; requiring water management districts to come up with an estimate of the maximum amount of groundwater available for withdrawal within the jurisdiction of their district; authorizing an independent study on the potential of establishing water fees on withdrawals; and selecting a "restoration focus spring" that will have its flow and water quality restored in 15 years. This gave rise to the general issue of water conservation. Questions regarding moisture sensors for crops arose. Are there moisture sensors that can shut off irrigation when the moisture has reached a certain depth (end of plant roots)? Answers varied from "yes", on small acreage, and "I'm not sure, on large acreage. Mrs. Laurel Schaafsma mentioned a possible multi-purpose solution to maintain moisture within crop fields. Lawn and yard trimmings (branches and leaves) that are disposed of in the land-fill would be a great additive to depleted soils (adding nutrients back to the soil, holding moisture, and helping prevent erosion). This idea was abandoned due to the prohibitive cost of a chipper.

Mrs. Laurel Schaafsma then brought up the idea of an annual bridge and river trash pick-up. In order to keep a low cost to the county, community service hours could be granted. Education could also be incorporated into these pick-ups. This subject will be discussed later in the year.

Mr. Delbert Smith mentioned the chairman's responsibility to respond to Tallahassee Ethics Commission requirements. Mr. Pete Cameron stated that he had already completed paper work regarding this at the end of 2015.

Mrs. Monica Jones informed the board of the EQIP program. It officially closed for the year Dec. 18, 2015 with several forestry applications from Union County being received. The forestry applications can be made to accommodate the landowner's desired tree crop. There are currently 3 different densities: low (approx. 400 trees/acre), medium (approx. 600 trees/acre), and high (726 trees/acre). It was noted that the more dense planting represents a desire for the highest profit, while the lower density is better for supporting wildlife. EQIP will help plan the planting, assist in thinning, and supplement in the purchase of seedlings.

Mr. Pete Cameron noted that Mr. Buddy Finley had missed three meetings, and according district rules, his role as supervisor is terminated.

Mr. Pete Cameron spoke frankly of his wish to return to his recent position as Secretary of the Board. Mr. Pete recommended Mrs. Laurel Schaafsma as his replacement Chair. A proposal by Mr. Delbert Smith to switch Mr. Cameron to Secretary and Mrs. Schaafsma to Chair was made. Mr. Duke Emerson seconded the motion. A vote occurred, passing unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:23 pm.