

# **Indian River County Florida**

*Indian River County Administration Complex  
1800 27<sup>th</sup> Street, Building B  
Room B1-501  
Vero Beach, Florida*



## **Meeting Minutes – Final**

**Monday, January 8, 2024**

**1:30 PM**

### **Indian River Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisors**

*Robert C. Adair, Jr., Chairman: District 1*

*Dr. David L. Cox, Vice Chairman: District 2*

*Charles Kennon Hendrix, Member: District 3*

*Christine Kelly-Begazo, Secretary/Treasurer: District 4*

*George F. Hamner, Jr., Member: District 5*

**Linda Caggiano, District Staff Assistant II: IRSWCD**

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairman Robert C. Adair, Jr. called meeting to order at 1:35 PM.

**Supervisors in attendance:** Robert C. Adair, Jr., Chairman  
Dr. David L. Cox  
Charles Kennon Hendrix  
Christine Kelly-Begazo  
George F. Hamner, Jr.

**Staff in attendance:** Linda Caggiano, Staff Assistant II  
Eric Charest, Interim Natural Resources Director  
Andrea Lazzari, IRC Extension Director; UF/IFAS  
Juan Santiago, Soil Conservationist, USDA/NRCS  
Stephen Wright, Environmental Specialist II-OAWP-FDACS

**Public in attendance:** Mike Johannsen, Indian River Neighborhood Association  
Honey Minuse, Vero Beach Resident

**2. ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA/EMERGENCY ITEMS:****3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

A. The Minutes for Board Meeting of December 11, 2023 were approved as written.

**Motion: A Motion to approve the December 11, 2023 Minutes was made by George F. Hamner, Jr. and Seconded by Dr. David L. Cox. Motion carried unanimously.**

**4. FINANCIAL REPORT:**

A. The Financial Report for December 2023 was available and read by Dr. David L. Cox.

**Motion: A motion to accept the December 2023 financial report as presented was made by Charles Kennon Hendrix and Seconded by George F. Hamner, Jr. Motion carried unanimously**

**5. REPORTS:**

- A. **Jennifer Abbey, United States Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS)** *(Report was read by John Santiago)*
- ❖ **Farm Bill Programs:** 24 of 61 Active contracts totaling approximately \$1,190,000 over approximately 11,900 acres
  - ❖ **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP):** 15 Active Contracts
  - ❖ **Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP):** 9 Active Contracts
  - ❖ **Agricultural Conservation Easement Program - Wetland Reserve Easements (ACEP – WRE) :** 0 application
  - ❖ **Conservation Applications: December - January**
    - None
  - ❖ **Other:** Continue conservation implementation field inspections and FY 2024 EQIP application field visits. Outreach at UF IFAS Pasture Management event. Attended training event on Soil Carbon Amendment.
  - ❖ **Next Month:** Continue FY 2024 EQIP and CSP application field visits. Internal office Quality Assurance Review results. Completed application processing of EQIP high

tunnel. Begin application reassessment of applications with prioritized climate smart activities (herbaceous weed treatment and mulching).

**B. Andrea Lazzari, Indian River County (IRC) Agricultural Extension Director/  
University of Florida/Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF IFAS) Report:**

- ❖ Busy Spring planned: Florida Masters Naturalist Course–Conservation Science Jan 19–Feb 19, 2024.
- ❖ Small Farms: Bee Keeping, Backyard Chicken classes.
- ❖ Envirothon planning, Event at Environmental Learning Center Wednesday, March 6, 2024.
- ❖ Planning a Small Beginning Farmers Mini-conference all-day event. Invite small farmers with 5 or 10 acres Bring resources together, all-in-one place for the residents. Maybe Spring or Summer event?

**Motion: A motion made by Dr. David L. Cox to support and fund up to a \$1,000.00 towards a proposed Small Beginning Farmers teaching event by the Indian River County Agricultural Extension Department and Seconded by George F. Hamner, Jr. Motion carried unanimously.**

**C. Stephen Wright, Environmental Specialist II, Office of Agricultural Water Policy–  
Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (OAWP-FDACS) Report:**

- ❖ Studying BMP Manuals to improve small farms. Suggestion to the Board for improvement to Cost-Share: Soil and plant tissue testing is challenging for smaller producers in the area. When enrolling the producers on the small acreage ; schedule the soil and tissue testing for the next 24 months If there was a way to provide soil testing kits for small farmers. UF IFAS has a soil test but targeted for homeowners.

**D. Linda Caggiano, Staff Assistant II:**

- ❖ **FDACS:** Contract 27690: Amended 10/17/2023 - \$15,041.26 due to Audit Cost. \$115,041.26 for 2023-2024; Paid out a total of \$55,193.32: \$32,504.98 from prior year and \$22,688.34 current FY 2023-2024. 4 Cost-Share Agreements pending receipt of RFR’s totaling \$48,155.64. Balance available of \$21,783.57 for FY 2024 Cost-Share FY 2023-2024. FDACS will reimburse IRSWCD for the full \$8,000.00 for audit per email 12/18/2023 @ 10:00 A.M. FDACS plans to send out letters that will state that the land owner MUST contact the Office of Agricultural Water Policy-Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services’ or they will be fined by DEP. (Prior letters were maybe fined.) FDACS is also working on another project that will allow Producers/Farmers to sign-up for Cost-Share online. If they are not enrolled in an FDACS Program it will let the Producer know and the system will notify the FDACS Environmental Manager for that area to reach out and visit that Producer. N. West Gregory, Direct has instructed the FDACS Manager to update ALL BMP Manuals by end of 2024 calendar year. The manuals are to be streamlined, clear and concise. The FDACS committee to review the Managers updated manuals cannot just strike information they must put in what should be replaced, not making the Mangers guess what should be written. All the rules and requirements are to get the manual completed by deadline. Create a Small Farm BMP Manual for Greenbelt/Agricultural Exempt land use with small farms that does not apply/fit any other manuals. It will be a catch all manual. Once manuals are updated, DEP will review. Legislature to approve to move to Rulemaking, not part of Florida Statutes.
- ❖ **FCDEA:** Monday, January 8, 2024 @ 11:00 A.M. Board Meeting to discuss and formulate questions and/or amendments to the HB 1075. Next meeting scheduled Tuesday, January 16, 2023.
- ❖ **AFCD:** AFCD January Quarterly Meeting was rescheduled to Friday, January 12, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. AFCD is planning the 2024 NACD Southeast Regional Meeting being held in Gainesville, FL from Sunday - June 16, 2024 through Tuesday - June 18, 2024. Will

need FCDEA to assist with Registration, etc. those days. AFCD does not attend the Florida Association of Counties meetings, however, AFCD

- ❖ **OFFICE:** Monthly Meetings Agenda, Minutes. Poster Contest Conservation theme for 2024 Poster Contest: “May The Forest Be With You Always.” Flyer Rules ready to go out to the schools.

## **6. DEPARTMENTAL MATTERS:**

### **A. Election of Board of Supervisors of Indian River Soil and Water Conservation District: Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary/Treasurer (Pictures to be taken.)**

- i. Chairman: Robert C. Adair, Jr.
- ii. Vice Chairman: Dr. David L. Cox
- iii. Secretary/Treasurer: Christine Kelly-Begazo

**Motion: A motion made by George F. Hamner, Jr. to appoint Robert C. Adair, Jr as Chairman, Dr. David L. Cox as Vice Chairman, and Christine Kelly-Begazo as Secretary/Treasurer and Seconded by Christine Kelly-Begazo. Motion carried unanimously.**

### **B. New House and Senate Bills Filed:**

- i. House Bill 7013 filed 12/13/2023, Sponsor Jena Persons-Mulicka (Part of Lee) The Florida Senate (flsenate.gov)
- ii. Senate Bill 1058 filed 12/21/2023, Sponsor Travis Hutson (Putnam, St. John, Flagler, Part of Volusia)Senate Bill 1058 (2024) - The Florida Senate (flsenate.gov)
- iii. House Bill 1075 filed 12/30/2023, Sponsor Keith Truenow (Part of Lake) House Bill 1075 (2024) - The Florida Senate (flsenate.gov) Companion bill Senate Bill 1772 filed 01/05/2024.

**Motion: A motion made by Dr. David L. Cox to designate George F. Hamner as government/legislative liaison to meet with lobbyist in Indian River County and reimburse all travel expenses to Tallahassee, if necessary and seconded by Christine Kelly-Begazo.**

Chairman Robert C. Adair, Jr. Yes  
 Supervisor Dr. David L. Cox Yes  
 Supervisor Charles Kennon Hendrix Yes  
 Supervisor Christine Kelly-Begazo Yes  
 Supervisor George F. Hamner, Jr. Abstained

## **7. OLD BUSINESS:**

### **A. Indian River Lagoon STEM Advisory Committee Update:**

- i. IRL Council STEM Advisory Committee Update – No Report.

### **B. FPL-Solar Letter received 12.11.2023**

### **C. Poll Ranking of Board Priorities (Tabled to 02/12/2024 Meeting)**

**D. Pelican Island Audubon Society Saturday, January 20, 2024**

- i. Indian River Neighborhood Association: Ranchette Brochures  
Need Supervisors to attend.

**8. ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 3:23 PM.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Robert C. Adair, Jr., Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
David L. Cox, Secretary/Treasurer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date