



GASWCC BOARD MEETING MINUTES
February 11, 2025 AT 10:00 AM
VIA ZOOM

TIME AND PLACE OF THE MEETING:

The Board Meeting for the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission was held on Tuesday, February 11, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. via zoom.

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION:

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Bob Martin at 10:00 a.m. Robert Amos gave the invocation.

The following board members were via zoom: Chairman Bob Martin, Vice Chairman Vikki Consiglio, Edwin Nix, Jason Winters, and Jim Waters (new Board member). A quorum was established.

Partners and/or Supervisors in attendance via zoom: Dana Tripp, GACD.

Attending members of the Commission who appeared via zoom were Mitch Attaway, Executive Director, Robert Amos, Deputy Director, Ben Ruzowicz, Urban Program Manager, Ben Hyer, Rural Project Manager, Greg Walker, Rural Project Manager, Ben Roberts, Region V Conservation Manager, and Jacqueline Holt, Administrative Assistant.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Chairman Martin asked for approval of the minutes from the December 17, 2024 meeting. There was a motion by Vikki Consiglio to approve the minutes, a second Edwin Nix and the motion carried to unanimous approval.

Consiglio asked if can get minutes before meetings. Attaway stated he hears your input and will get minutes to you before meeting.

MOTION FOR VICE CHAIRMAN:

Chairman Martin asked for a motion to keep Vikki Consiglio as Vice Chairman of the Board. There was a motion made by Jason Winters to keep Vikki Consiglio as the Vice Chairman of the Board, a second by Edwin Nix and the motion carried to unanimous approval.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT BY MITCH ATTAWAY:

I would like recognize Jim Waters as the Region III Board member. Thankful to have 5 Board Members.

Old Business: Approval of new MOA process

Attaway stated that the new MOA process is to make it more efficient for GSWCC and the LIA. The new process will give an option of 3 months instead of 6 months. The new proposed overview process for the MOA will go from 2 overviews to 1 overview. The AG's office representative, Kathleen McCanless, stated in her letter that they believe that 1. The new process is sufficient, and 2. Having the Board approval should be sufficient.

Chairman Martin called for a motion to approve the new MOA process. There was a motion by Edwin Nix to approve the new MOA process, a second by Vikki Consiglio and the motion carried to unanimous approval.

Edwin Nix stated he has one issue. He knows that in the past some plans have been kicked back for misspelled words. Are people still going to be punished and have to wait another 30 days for that?

Attaway stated No, there are checklist items that are required. Spelling should not be an issue moving forward.

Chairman Martin asked if there were any more questions.

Consiglio stated she would like to thank Attaway for showing the letter from Kathleen McCanless at the AG's office. Consiglio said she thinks we need a second review because there could be 1 project they want to get done. She stated that as a Supervisor she has gone on overviews and they found out that some LIA's were not following proper procedures.

Attaway stated there are different opinions but the second opinion from the AG's office states if we at any point determine we need to tighten up, the Board has the ability and authority to change it. As for a second overview, there is no problem putting that language in the motion to do a second overview.

Consiglio asked if this was supposed to go to the district? Attaway said after what happened at the board meeting today, we are going to speak with the districts. Consiglio asked if districts can ask for two overviews instead of one? Attaway stated yes. He will make sure the language says this has to be one passing overview. I don't know if that answers your question.

Chairman Martin questioned if Ben Ruzowicz, Ben Hyer or Greg Walker have anything to say. Ben Ruzowicz stated that shortening the overview process is no big deal, it has been done in the past. As for misspelling, there are some LIA's that will not approve plans contingent but we have a list and the plan reviewers are careful in this regard.

Nix, Ben has cleared this up for me.

Chairman Martin called for a motion for Approval of the new MOA process. Mr. Nix stated he is good with the motion I made earlier. Ms. Consiglio seconded and the motion passed 5-0 in favor again.

HUMAN RESOURCES:

Attaway stated before he gets into the human resources changes, he wanted to let the board know that Karen Bruce has chosen to move her retirement up to the end of this month. There is a chart included in the packet that shows the break down of the agency. Mr. Attaway stated he will get a more detailed chart to the Board members by the end of the month.

Consiglio asked if this agency is under the Dept of Ag but Attaway reports to the Governor? Attaway stated his position is Governor appointed and he reports to the Governor. Attaway explained that the relationship GSWCC has with the Dept. of AG is the Dept provides the money and GSWCC draws it down. Chairman Martin mentioned the possibility of having an executive board meeting in March via zoom. Attaway stated he is on board with whatever the Chairman wants to do. He will have a chart together by the end of the month and will answer any questions.

There was one resignation and one promotion from the Urban Lands Program. Karen Page resigned in January 2025. India Gipson was promoted from intern to Erosion and Sediment Control Specialist, Urban Lands Program. Ms. Gipson was promoted because she was an intern already and it worked out with her school schedule and she was already doing the job on a part time basis.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

Attaway stated that if the board has any financial questions to direct them to him. Karen Bruce is leaving at the end of the month. He stated that accounts payable is a big number for the agency considering our size and will looking into ways to decrease that amount. Moving forward he is looking forward to working with the state accounting office and the Dept. of Ag. He will keep the board updated. Consiglio stated it is her understanding that Andy Pope and Karen Bruce were going to be doing the new system. If Karen Bruce is leaving at the end of the month, who other that Andy Pope will be doing the this? Attaway stated the Dept. of AG. Consiglio asked if Andy Pope is going to be the only one in house to use the new system? Attaway stated no.

NEW BUSINESS:

Stakeholder Advisory Board (Senate Bill 96): Attaway stated the intent of this bill is to make boards more efficient and to have less boards across the state. The bill removes the Stakeholder Advisory Board and combines it with the Overview Counsel. The Overview Council will be handling the trainers, the E&S material, and the Green Book. He would like to remind the board that there are two board members of the SAB serving on the Overview Council. He stated that is no action needed by the board. He just wanted to make the board aware of what is happening.

CONSERVATION REPORT BY ROBERT AMOS:

APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS:

Amos reported there are some last-minute changes to the appointments for a total of 17. Mr. Willie Matthews will be a new Henry Co. Supervisor. He was just appointed this morning.

The resignations are Keith Cromartie for Flint River SWCD, Neal Hancock, Robert Lancaster, and David Muse for Ocmulgee River SWCD. Consiglio asked what is going on with Ocmulgee River SWCD. Do they have anyone on the board? Dana Tripp stated Bill Martin and Crystal Carroll but George Reeves resigned. Amos stated that Carroll and Reeves were being replaced so there is nothing to do regarding their positions. Winters stated that Mr. Hancock has taken a position with NRCS and he can not do both. Mr. Lancaster and Mr. Muse are having health issues.

Chairman Martin called for a motion on to approve the appointments and resignation. There was a motion by Jason Winters to approve the appointments and resignations, a second by Edwin Nix and the motion carried to unanimous approval.

UPDATES:

Amos stated his folks are very busy with classes, recertification classes, overviews and there are several events planned. Envirothon has 16 teams interested but they have not signed up yet. NRCW is trying to get the numbers up for ABAC, the college has some concerns. ABAC is June 8 through June 13, 2025. There will be more information to come about NRCW.

URBAN REPORT BY BEN RUZOWICZ:

Updates:

Ruzowicz stated there have been 661 plans reviewed from December 10, 2024 through February 5, 2025 and new NPDSE permits have been released. Ruzowicz stated there have been 147 courses with a total of 1,306 attendees. Of that total 871 were re-certifications and 435 were new certifications. The NPDES permits have been process and the education and certification material has been sent out. All concerns have been addressed. All of the test questions have been redone to make sure there are no trick questions.

He stated he is in the process of hiring an intern/part time employee.

Approval of Trainers:

Ruzowicz stated there are 4 people for Trainer 1 that need to be approved, William Daniel, Glenda Harris, Paul Ludwig, and Patrick Millican. Chairman Martin called for a motion for Approval of the Trainers. Consiglio stated she wanted the record to show that she is recusing herself from the vote. Edwin Nix made a motion to approve the trainers, second by Jim Waters, and the motion carried to unanimous approval.

RURAL REPORT BY BEN HYER AND GREG WALKER:

See the attached report.

PARTNER UPDATES BY DANA TRIPP:

Tripp reported that Katie Spornberger is flying back from Salt Lake City in Utah. Group II is complete and Group I is finalized. She would like to thank GSWCC for all of your help. It is truly needed.

The GACD day at the Capitol is on February 25, 2025. The registration page is now open on the GACD events page. You can also register by contacting us.

GACD Board and staff represented GA at NACD. GA received an award for having 100% of their NACD dues paid. Gwinnett County SWCD received a national

grant from NACD. Mark Masters is running for Vice President of NACD. We will find out if he won by Wednesday.

PUBLIC COMMENT: No public comment

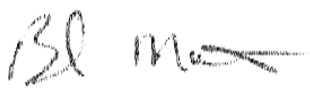
The next meeting will be April 8, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. in person.

Chairman Martin adjourned the meeting at 11:08 a.m.

Respectively Submitted by:

Jacqueline Holt

Approved by:

 4/8/25
GSWCC Chairman Date

 2/11/25
GSWCC Executive Director Date