



DRAFT MINUTES
MEETING – June 29, 2021
10:30 AM - ABAC - Tifton, GA

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Bob Martin at 10:30 AM. The meeting was held at ABAC in Tifton GA. This meeting was being recorded. Mitch Attaway, Executive Director GSWCC, gave the invocation.

The following board members were present: Chairman Bob Martin, Vice Chairman Vikki Consiglio and Kerry Van Moore. Jason Winters and Edwin Nix attended via Zoom. Attending members of the Commission were Executive Director Mitch Attaway, Conservation Manager Robert Amos, Urban Program Manager Ben Ruzowicz, Rural Project Managers Ben Hyer and Greg Walker, Office Manager Karen Bruce and Administrative Assistant Jerri Helbing. Other people attending were members of GACD.

Mr. Attaway asked for approval of the minutes from the March 17, 2021 meeting. There was a motion by Ms. Consiglio to approve, a second by Mr. Moore and the motion carried unanimously to approve, with the addition of Jason Winters' attendance via zoom being added.

Executive Director's Report - Mitch Attaway started by thanking everyone for coming and how nice it was to see everyone in person. He was pleased to announce the NRCS agreement had been received and will be in force for the next three years starting Sept 1, 2021. Among other things it will provide technical support for GSWCC.

GSWCC is following CDC guidelines pertaining to Covid and the variants. We are moving to reopen slowly adding more staff to the office on various days. Site visits and meetings are now approved to be in person. The public may come to the office to drop off or pick up plans and have interaction with the staff.

Governor Kemp's Public Health State of Emergency is ending July 1, 2021. Starting in July SWCDs will no longer be able to conduct meetings entirely virtual. SWCDs can still offer a virtual platform for their meetings but the quorum of supervisors must be in person.

Mr. Attaway stated GSWCC in partnership with the Attorney General's Office is pleased to announce training on Georgia's Sunshine Laws. This will be an online training offered to all supervisors and the PowerPoints will be available for later use.

The 2021 Handbooks have been received and are in three ring binders so updates may be added. Distribution to all supervisors will start soon.

Personnel/Human Resource Report – Abigail Foster and Alexandra Chesna started their new positions as Soil and Erosion Specialists on April 16, 2021. Also Interns McEver Dugan and Thomas Jackson left in May.

Financial Report – Karen Bruce is working hard on the process of closing out FY'21 and opening FY'22. A positive outcome to this past year is that GSWCC has found some ways to save and be more efficient.

New Business – Mr. Attaway stated that any GSWCC employee that has been employed for more than six months will receive a 2% raise.

Mr. Attaway recommended raising the SWCD allotments by 10%. Ms. Consiglio made a motion to approve and Mr. Moore seconded it and it was approved unanimously. Next Mr. Attaway wanted to raise the supervisors per diem from \$40 to \$45. Mr. Moore made a motion to approve and Ms. Consiglio seconded and it was also approved unanimously.

Mr. Attaway asked if the board wanted to pay for Rockdale's certification training. Ms. Consiglio made a motion not to pay for any certification training that can be provided by GSWCC at no cost. Mr. Hix seconded it and the vote was unanimous to approve. The board mentioned that the training is not a requirement to be a supervisor and that GSWCC staff would continue to offer free training to supervisors that are interested. Mr. Attaway mentioned only 15 District Supervisors are certified and he would like to see that number greatly increased.

Conservation Report – Mr. Amos stated that there is one new and five re-appointed supervisor positions and 6 supervisors' resignations that need to be approved by the board. Mr. Moore made a motion to approve and Ms. Consiglio seconded it and the motion was passed. Mr. Amos stated there are 29 vacancies, mostly elected positions, which we are looking for qualified people to fill. Ms. Consiglio made a motion to send two names to the governor's office to be approved for special appointment. The motion was seconded by Mr. Winters and passed unanimously. Mr. Amos will have all 40 *Annual Plans of Work* from the districts for the next meeting and that the audits are due at the end of August.

Urban Report – Urban Program Manager Ben Ruzowicz reported that he had nothing that the board need to act on. The Virtual Erosion Control Day March 16-17 was a success with over 340 people attending and 225 at one time. The video is on You Tube to be viewed by anyone interested. The first day had the speakers and the second day was a virtual walk around tour of the vendors. He is already working on next years event scheduled for March 29, 2022 with 287 people allowed at one time and 40 plus vendors. Certification classes are going strong and almost 100,000 people have various level Certifications.

Rural Report – Rural Project Manager Ben Hyer and Greg Walker had no action items to discuss. They have obtained Grant Funding to update the manual for the Agriculture sector. Several dams are waiting on attorneys for easement agreement. There will be a final walk through on Palmetto 1 the beginning of July. A new Grant is being finalized with Georgia EPD that will create a new watershed management plan in Morgan and Walton Counties with a start date of summer 2021.

GACD Update – Will send a written update

NCRS Update – Mr. Rudolph gave the NCRS update and mentioned they are nervous about the Covid-Delta variant. They are still following CDC guidelines they are at 25% in the office and plan on going to 50% soon. The field is working by appointment and at full capacity. They are still trying to fill approximately 40 more positions. He thanked everyone for the partnership, leadership and commitment to conservation.

Public Comment- Ms. Consiglio made a motion to keep public comment to two minutes. Mr. Moore seconded it and it was approved. There were no public comments.

The next board meeting is scheduled for August 10, 2021 at 10:30 in Athens. Ms. Consiglio made a motion and Mr. Moore seconded it and it was approved to have the meeting. With no other business to discuss the meeting was adjourned by Chairman Martin.

Respectively Submitted by:
Jerri Helbing

Approved by:



08/10/21



6/29/2021

GSWCC Chairman

Date

GSWCC Executive Director

Date