

OFFICE OF SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION
STATE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION

February 26, 2019
1:15 PM

VETERAN'S AUDITORIUM
5825 FLORIDA BLVD.
BATON ROUGE, LA 70806

PROCEEDINGS/MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Skains called the regular monthly Commission Meeting to order at 1:21 P.M. and gave the invocation and ask Mr. Alan Williams to lead in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

The roll was called by Ms. LaClasha "Clay" Alexander.

Members and Alternate Members present:

Mr. Reggie Skains- Chairman
Dr. Ernest Girouard-Vice Chairman
Mr. John Compton- Secretary/Treasurer
Mr. John Alan Williams
Mr. Larry Sayes
Mr. Ed Yerger

Members absent:

Dr. Rogers Leonard, LSU AgCenter
Southern University Agricultural Center
Representative
Mr. David Daigle- LACD President

A quorum was present.

Others Present:

Ms. Amanda Mathis, NRCS State Conservationist
USDA-NRCS

Mr. Brad Spicer, LDAF-OSWC/Executive Director
SSWCC

Dr. Brian Leblanc, LSU AgCenter
Joey Breaux, LDAF-OSWC
Ms. LaClasha "Clay" Alexander, LDAF-OSWC

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairman Skains asked if there were any comments from the public or Commission members and there were none.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Chairman Skains asked for comments from the public or Commission members about the January 22, 2019 State Commission minutes and there were none. Chairman Skains called for a motion to approve the January 22, 2019 State Commission Meeting minutes.

Motion: Dr. Ernest Girouard made a motion to approve January 22, 2019 State Commission Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. John Alan Williams and passed unanimously.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Chairman Skains said they would now take up Unfinished Business and asked Mr. Spicer to review the agenda items with the State Commission.

NRCS/OSWC Farm Bill Cooperative Agreement

Mr. Spicer reported that over one third of the districts had earned over 80% of their allocated farm bill funds. He said that there are a couple of districts that over earned their FB allocated amounts. Ms. Mathis said her and Mr. Spicer will be working to make sure that the districts are funded. Mr. Spicer said they will be reviewing all current farm bill funding sources to ensure that no funds are overlooked.

NACD Spring Fly-In-March 13, 2019

Chairman Skains said the next item on the agenda is *NACD Spring Fly-In* and asked Mr. Spicer if he had any comments. Mr. Spicer said the NACD Fly-In will take place on March 13-14, 2019. He said that Mr. Joey Breaux, Mr. John Alan Williams, Mr. Reggie Skains, and Ms. Amanda Mathis will be participating in the Fly-In as well. He said there will be other functions including NACD scheduled events on Wednesday. He said the agenda for the Fly-In and FY 2019 USDA NRCS Appropriations are included in Commission packets for review. Mr. Spicer said the handouts covering funding for Conservation programs, Watershed Operations and Small Watershed Rehabilitation, as well as 319 Non-Point Source Grant funding have been prepared by NACD for the Fly-In.

NEW BUSINESS

NRCS State Conservationist Report

Chairman Skains said they would now take up New Business and asked Acting NRCS State Conservationist, Ms. Amanda Mathis to give the NRCS report. Ms. Mathis said there are no new NRCS programs being created and none were eliminated in the new farm bill. She said there continues to be great support around the state for current conservation programs.

Ms. Mathis said that the new Farm Bill provisions will be implemented in three different phases. She said phase one will start with implementation of conservation programs under the transition authority. She said that phase two will work simultaneously with phase one by starting the development and publication of Interim Regulations for public comment by beginning of FY 2020. She said lastly phase three will be development and publication of Final Regulations, and associated policy updates, which will serve for remainder of the 2018 Farm Bill. Ms. Mathis said USDA wants to get input from public stake holder groups and organizations. She said headquarters is planning to have a listening session on February 26, 2019 at 9:00 am in Washington, D.C. and will be streamed online.

Ms. Mathis said that due to some system changes, NRCS is still not able to make EQIP obligations but expects to be able to make 2019 obligations within the next few weeks. She said that ACEP did not have many changes in the FB and should be able to start obligating soon. She said CSP will take longer to roll out due to program changes going from an acre based program to a dollar based program.

Ms. Mathis said NRCS will soon announce a competitive call for agreement proposals. She said the call will seek partners to collaborate on such things such as Technical Assistance for EQIP, CSP, ACEP and CRP, Program Support for field offices, Soil Health focused Symposiums, and Technical support for Golden Meadow Plant Material Center.

Ms. Mathis discussed the upcoming Cycle Time Study that NRCS will be conducting. She said this study is being conducted to better assess NRCS workload and the time it takes to complete work products. She said partners were included in the previous phase of the study and will be included in the next phase. She asked that the Commission support the study to ensure partners participate. She said this study has a direct impact on NRCS's ability to seek additional staff and without showing our partners' contributions we will not be showing the total field office workload.

Ms. Mathis said NRCS is still operating with over 70 vacancies including 9 DC positions but expects the Bastrop and Ville Platte DC jobs to be announced soon. She said the supervisory engineer position will be announced afterwards and hopefully the additional DC positions will be advertised later in the year.

Ms. Mathis said lastly she wanted to discuss the latest edition of the Conservation Update which includes conservation with the new NRCS Chief- Mr. Matt Lohr. She said that the conversation gives great insight on his future plans. She said that it gives his main priorities which include implementation of Farm Bill, Developing more effective Customer Service, and Interacting with our Customers and Stakeholders.

Ms. Mathis concluded her report and Mr. Skains thanked her.

Correspondence

Chairman Skains said the first correspondence for review is a letter from the SSWCC and LACD thanking Mr. Charles Severance of Capital SWCD for his 28 years on the Capital SWCD Board and for serving an additional two years as an associate member. Chairman Skains said that they all greatly appreciated his contribution to Louisiana conservation.

Chairman Skains said the next correspondence is an out of state travel request is from Sabine SWCD requesting approval for Mr. John Alan Williams to attend the NACD Spring Fly-In meeting on March 12-14, 2019 in Washington D. C.. Chairman Skains asked for any comments from the public or Commission members and there were none. He said if there were no comments, he would call for a motion to approve Sabine SWCD's out of state travel request.

Motion: Dr. Ernest Girouard made a motion to approve Sabine SWCD's out state travel for Mr. John Alan Williams to attend the NACD Spring Fly-In on March 12-14, 2019 in Washington D.C. The motion was seconded by Mr. Ed Yerger and passed unanimously.

Chairman Skains said next article is the Army Central Review of State Legislative & Regulatory Actions. He said Louisiana' section discusses the Emerald Ash Borer Quarantine which is happening in Caddo Parish for the borer, *Agilus Planipennis Fairmaire*. He said that it also discusses a rule DEQ wants to adopt the revised RECAP regulation that provides for the minimum remediation standards for soil and groundwater. He said that a public hearing is scheduled for March 1, 2019.

Chairman Skains said the next article is *Turning Salt-Damaged Fields into Marshes Could Save Maryland Farmland-and The Chesapeake Bay*. He said the article addresses sea levels rising and saltwater entering farmland near the bay. He said Kate Tulley, and agroecologist at the University of Maryland, is tracking saltwater intrusion in Maryland. He said they believe they need to create a new easement program or financial structure that recognizes the multiple benefits of migrating wetlands onto existing farms. He said this would address nutrient loading, carbon storage and water quality in the bay

Supervisor Resignations/Reappointments/Appointments

Chairman Skains said they would now take up resignations, reappointments, and appointments of supervisors. He said the first item is a letter from Caddo SWCD asking that Mr. Bruce Newt Lynn be removed from their board effective February 26, 2019. Mr. Spicer said the Caddo SWCD board has not been able to get in touch with Mr. Lynn and he has missed 5 board meetings. He said that Mr. Lynn has moved to Arizona, but still has property in Caddo Parish. Chairman Skains asked for any comments from the public or Commission members and there were none. He said if there were no comments, he would call for a motion to approve Caddo SWCD's request to remove Mr. Lynn from their board.

Motion: Mr. Ed Yerger made a motion to approve Caddo SWCD's request to remove Mr. Bruce Lynn Newt from the Caddo SWCD Board of Supervisors effective February 26, 2019. The motion was seconded by Mr. John Compton and passed unanimously.

Chairman Skains said we had 1 resignation this month: Jefferson Davis SWCD, Mr. Dwayne Compton, elected position; effective February 19, 2019.

Chairman Skains asked for comments from the public or the Commission members and there were none. Chairman Skains called for a motion to accept the resignation of Mr. Dwayne Compton.

Motion: Mr. John Compton called for a motion to accept the resignation of Jefferson Davis SWCD, Mr. Dwayne Compton, elected position; effective February 19, 2019. The motion was seconded by Mr. Ed Yerger and passed unanimously.

Chairman Skains said we have several requests for the State Commission to reappoint supervisors to a new term in office. He said we will start with the month of February and they are:

West Carroll SWCD, Ms. Meagan Percle, reappointed to fill her vacant appointed position. Term to begin February 24, 2019 and will expire February 24, 2022.

Avoyelles SWCD, Mr. Ruben Dautat, reappointed to fill his vacant appointed position. Term to begin February 25, 2019- February 25, 2022.

Morehouse SWCD, Mr. Chris Carter, reappointed to fill his vacant appointed position. Term to begin February 25, 2019 and will expire February 25, 2022.

Northeast SWCD, Mr. Drew M. Wiggers, reappointed to fill his vacant appointed position. Term to begin February 25, 2019 and will expire February 25, 2022.

New River SWCD, Mr. Ricky Roussel, reappointed to fill his appointed position. Term to begin February 28, 2019-February 28, 2022.

Chairman Skains asked for any comments from the public or Commission members and there were none. He said if there were no comments, he would call for a motion to approve these February reappointments.

Motion: Mr. Larry Sayes made a motion to approve the February reappointed terms of Ms. Megan Percle, West Carroll SWCD; Mr. Ruben Dautat, Avoyelles SWCD; Mr. Chris Carter, Morehouse SWCD; Mr. Drew Wiggers, Northeast SWCD; and Mr. Rickey Roussel, New River SWCD. The motion was seconded by Mr. John Compton and passed unanimously.

Chairman Skains said the next correspondences are requests for the State Commission to reappoint supervisors to a new term in office for the month of March and they are:

Bodcau SWCD, Mr. Elmore Morris, reappointed to fill his appointed position. Term to begin March 22, 2019 and will expire March 22, 2022

Dorcheat SWCD, Ms. Harol Thompson, reappointed to fill his appointed position. Term to begin March 22, 2019 and will expire March 22, 2022.

DeSoto SWCD, Mr. Jerry Holmes, reappointed to fill his appointed position. Term to begin March 23, 2019 and will expire March 23, 2022.

Sabine SWCD, Mr. John Alan Williams, reappointed to fill his appointed position. Term to begin March 24, 2019 and will expire March 24, 2022

Dugdemona SWCD, Mr. Don Price, reappointed to fill his appointed position. Term to begin March 25, 2019 and will expire March 25, 2022

LaSalle SWCD, Mr. Mike Crooks, reappointed to fill his appointed position. Term to begin March 28, 2019 and will expire March 28, 2022.

Chairman Skains asked for any comments from the public or Commission members and there were none. He said if there were no comments, he would call for a motion to approve these March reappointments.

Motion: Mr. Ed Yerger made a motion to approve the March reappointed terms of Mr. Elmore Morris, Bodcau SWCD; Ms. Harol Thompson, Dorcheat SWCD; Mr. Jerry Holmes, DeSoto SWCD; Mr. John Alan Williams, Sabine SWCD; Mr. Don Price, Dugdemona SWCD; and Mr. Mike Crooks, LaSalle SWCD. The motion was seconded Mr. John Compton and passed unanimously.

Chairman Skains said the next two correspondences are appointments:

Jefferson Davis SWCD, Mr. David Scott Romero, to elected position formerly held by Mr. Dwayne Compton. Term will begin February 19, 2019 and will expire June 30, 2020.

Grant SWCD, Mr. Ken Richardson, to appointed position formerly held by Ms. Ellen Lucille Thompson. Term will begin March 18, 2019 and will expire March 28, 2019.

Chairman Skains asked for comments from the public or Commission members and there were none. Chairman Skains called for a motion to accept the appointments of Jefferson Davis SWCD, Mr. David Scott Romero, to elected position formerly held by Mr. Dwayne Compton. Term will begin February 19, 2019 and will expire June 30, 2020; Grant SWCD, Mr. Ken Richardson, to appointed position formerly held by Ms. Ellen Lucille Thompson. Term will begin March 18, 2019 and will expire March 28, 2019.

Motion: Dr. Ernest Girouard made a motion to accept the appointments of Jefferson Davis SWCD, Mr. David Scott Romero, to elected position formerly held by Mr. Dwayne Compton. Term will begin February 19, 2019 and will expire June 30, 2020; Grant SWCD, Mr. Ken Richardson, to appointed position formerly held by Ms. Ellen Lucille Thompson. Term will begin March 18, 2019 and will expire March 28, 2019. The motion was seconded by Mr. Larry Sayes and passed unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

Chairman Skains asked Dr. Leblanc if he had any comments. Dr. Leblanc said Dr. Leonard sends his regards and requests that he share a few important items with the Commission. He said they are currently working to revise a DEQ proposal on dairy waste that has been discussed in our previous meetings. He said that they are still working with two dairy farms for this proposal. He said if anyone had any questions regarding the proposal that they could get more information from DEQ.

Dr. Leblanc said LSU is currently working to provide education program for the newly required private pesticide applicator license for on the farm tractor drivers. He said they are working with Dr. Ron Levy, Master Farmer Coordinator, to assist in this process. He said tractor drivers are not covered under the farmer's pesticide license and are required to have a license to apply pesticide. He said there were no other changes on other products.

Dr. Leblanc said they are currently looking at candidates to fill the vacant Soil Fertility Specialist position in Northeast Louisiana.

Dr. Leblanc said that he wanted to mention several important events that are coming up:

March 9, 2019- Acadiana Region Cattle Field Day, Iberia Research Station, New Iberia
March 9-10, 2019- Spring Garden Show, LSU AgCenter Parker Coliseum, Baton Rouge
April 8-13, 2019- AgMagic, Parker Coliseum on the LSU Campus, Baton Rouge
May 14, 2019- LSU AgCenter Day- State Capitol, Baton Rouge

Dr. Leblanc said that the Commission can participate in this event if they are interested.

May 29, 2019- 4-H Day, State Capitol, Baton Rouge

June 6, 2019- Tiger Symposium- Sugar Crops in Foods, Lod Cook hotel, LSU campus, Baton Rouge

Chairman Skains thanked Dr. Leblanc for his report.

Chairman Skains said Area 3 and 4 meetings were a great success. He said that they are still working on draft language for the container deposit funding bill that hopefully will be presented at the upcoming Regular Session of the legislature. He said they have to be finish drafting the bill by the end of March and that the Lieutenant Governor is showing great interest. He said they have been reviewing similar legislation from Iowa and they plan to use similar language in the bill that we present to the Louisiana legislature. He said that they are still trying to identify the amounts for the container deposit.

Chairman Skains said next item on the agenda is *Review Supervisor Attendance at Board Meetings*.

Chairman Skains asked Mr. Spicer if he had any comments. Mr. Spicer said that it has come to his attention that a board has skipped monthly meetings and that an increased number of supervisors have been absent from board meetings. He said that he wants to make sure that the boards are aware of the state law governing board meeting guidelines in PPM #9. He said that it states that supervisors will not qualify for reappointment or re-election unless the supervisor has attendees at least 66 2/3% percent of scheduled district meetings. He said that supervisor cannot miss more than 4 meetings per calendar year. He said if a meeting is canceled due to a quorum not being present or any unforeseen circumstances, the chairman or their designee is required to reschedule the meeting for later that month. He said without a board meeting no official district business can be conducted such as paying district expenses., Chairman Skains directed Mr. Spicer, with unanimous consent from the Commission, to communicate to the board chairman about the district board requirements.

Chairman Skains said that we have received a draft application and contract from DeSoto SWCD for Farm Pond Pump-Out. Chairman Skains asked Mr. Breaux if he had any comments. Mr. Breaux said that after reviewing the contract, he would like to get with the district to work on a few suggested changes before requesting Commission approval of the application and contract. He said that DeSoto SWCD should be able to present a new draft to the Commission at March's SSWCC meeting.

Chairman Skains thanked Mr. Breaux for his remarks.

NEXT MEETING

Chairman Skains said the next State Commission Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 26, 2019 at 1:15 P.M. in the Veterans Auditorium, 5825 Florida Boulevard, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70806.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairman Skains asked if there were any other comments from the public or Commission members and there were none.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Skains said if there was no other business or comments from the public or Commission members, he will accept a motion to adjourn.

Motion: Mr. John Compton made a motion to adjourn at 2:37 P.M. The motion was seconded by Mr. Ed Yerger and passed unanimously.


/s/ Reggie Skains

Reggie Skains, Chairman
State Soil and Water Conservation Commission