

MINUTES OF MEETING
ALABAMA AGRICULTURAL AND CONSERVATION
DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Room 300 RSA Union Building
September 22, 2021

The Alabama Agricultural and Conservation Development Commission (AACDC) meeting was held at 2:00 pm on September 22, 2021, as an in-person/virtual meeting.

Members present: Dr. Carol Knight, Vice-Chairman, designated by the Governor; Charles Holmes, Soil and Water Conservation Committee (SWCC); Patty Lambrecht, appointed citizen; Sue Gaines, appointed citizen; Patrick Moody, Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries (Proxy); Johnny Lee, Alabama Association of Conservation Districts (AACD); Brian Hardin, ALFA (Proxy); Erin Beasley, AL Cattlemen's Association (Proxy); Ginny Shaver, ex-officio House; Reed Ingram, ex-officio House; Danny Crawford, ex-officio House; and William Puckett, Executive Director

There was a lawful quorum.

Also, in attendance Brandon McCray, NRCS; Lori Woodfin, AACDC; Steve Musser, NRCS; Ashley Henderson, SWCC; Rhonda Bryars, AACDC; Sabra Sutton, AACD; Courtney Curenton, AACD; Kathy Gotcher, SWCC; Shelly Hyde, AACDC; Cayla Jackson Mitchell, AACD; Tonda Miller, Chambers SWCD; Emmie Burke, Houston SWCD; Donna Lake, Tuscaloosa SWCD; Dorris Skipper, Coffee SWCD; Peggy Kerr, Clay SWCD; Angie Porter, Pickens SWCD; Stephanie Kaylor, Marengo SWCD; Stephanie Evers, Lauderdale SWCD; Stephanie Platt, Washington SWCD; Margaret Brown, Fayette SWCD; Rachel McCartha, Crenshaw SWCD; Kim Teel, Tallapoosa SWCD; Jack Wadsworth, Autauga SWCD; Micky Smith, Sumter SWCD; Christopher Davis, NRCS; Eve Brantley, Auburn University; Tara Hetzell, Attorney General representative

The meeting was conducted in person and via WebEx and meeting materials were mailed and emailed to Committee members prior to the meeting.

Call to order- Dr. Carol Knight called the meeting to order.

Invocation- Sue Gaines

Recognition of Board Members and Guests- Dr. Carol Knight administered a roll call of board members. Dr. Knight then asked each on-line or call-in participant to type their name and affiliation in the chat box or email their information to Rhonda Bryars.

Approve Minutes- Motion made by Brian Hardin to approve the minutes from the May 5, 2021 meeting; seconded by Johnny Lee; motion carried with no objections. Roll call was required for voting: Charles Holmes, yes; Patty Lambrecht, yes; Sue Gaines, yes; Patrick Moody, yes;

Johnny Lee, yes; Brian Hardin, yes; Ginny Shaver, yes; Reed Ingram, yes; Erin Beasley, yes; Danny Crawford, yes. Passed Unanimously

Review 2021 Financial Statement and Fiscal Year 2022 Budget - Dr. Puckett reviewed the Fiscal Year 2021 financial statement and the Fiscal Year 2022 budget. After review of proposed FY22 budget, Johnny Lee made a motion to approve; seconded by Reed Ingram; motion carried with no objection. Roll call is required for voting: Charles Holmes, yes; Patty Lambrecht, yes; Sue Gaines, yes; Patrick Moody, yes; Johnny Lee, yes; Brian Hardin, yes; Ginny Shaver, yes; Reed Ingram, yes; Erin Beasley, yes; Danny Crawford, yes. Passed unanimously

Update on FY20/FY21 Financial Assistance Programs for Districts – Rhonda Bryars gave an update on Conservation Incentive Programs. Ms. Bryars stated that FY20 had been closed out. A total of \$340,349.67 was spent and \$61,650.33 was reverted to be pooled with FY22 funding. Ms. Bryars also updated the board that for FY21, 117 applications were approved of which \$467,979.60 was obligated and a total of \$131,637.21 had been paid. NRCS staff have been very helpful in assisting with the technical needs of the district’s programs.

Update on Alabama Feral Swine Control Program

Alabama Feral Swine Control Pilot Program (Federally Funded) – Ashley Henderson gave an update on the NRCS Feral Swine Control Pilot Project. The project outreach has continued through social media, website update, educational sessions, and word of mouth. The Conservation Incentive Program (federally funded) in four areas of the state is continuous with monthly batching periods. The Committee has requested that NRCS consider the entire county as eligible for CIP if it has part of the identified watershed in it.

FY 2022 State Conservation Incentive Program – Ashley Henderson requested that the Commission consider tailoring the 2022 CIP Program to address the feral swine control issue outside of the Federal project. The Committee recommends that the Commission target up to \$400,000 of CIP funds to feral swine control with the parameters set forth in the Technical Note Three (attached), approve the AFI-5C trap job sheet (attached) and approve the counties to be targeted with the funding based on response from NRCS (map attached.) If NRCS does not approve the expansion of the Federal program, all counties in the hatched area on the map will be included in the State CIP program. If NRCS does approve the expansion of the Federal Program, the counties that are fully included in the Federal program will not receive state funds. Additionally, the Committee recommends that each producer be capped at \$2,000 with a 70% cost share rate based on receipts. The Committee also requests that the ALSWCC staff be allowed to make minor modifications to the implementation of the program if necessary, for operational control.

Reed Ingram made a motion to approve the FY 2022 State Conservation Incentive Program as presented; Charles Holmes, seconded. Roll call is required for voting: Charles Holmes, yes; Patty Lambrecht, yes; Sue Gaines, yes; Patrick Moody, yes; Johnny Lee, yes; Brian Hardin, yes; Ginny Shaver, yes; Reed Ingram, yes; Erin Beasley, yes; Danny Crawford, yes; The motion passed unanimously.

Update on Alabama Irrigation Initiative (ALII) – Ashley Henderson

Ashley Henderson updated the Commission on the progress of the ALII. In the Middle Tennessee River Basin approximately \$1,597,852.15 has been spent to help 16 producers complete 24 pivots and increase irrigation by 1600 acres. Additionally, 6 Irrigation Water Management Systems have been completed. In the Choctawhatchee-Pea River Basin, the plan has been approved for the issuance of a Finding of No Significant Impact. The team is currently working on ranking applicants. In the Middle Alabama River Basin, the team has held 3 public listening sessions, the AU-UAH team has completed draft preliminary investigation and is researching practices to cost-share at a higher rate for socially disadvantaged producers.

Update on Alabama Agriculture Conservation Foundation – William Puckett

Dr. Puckett lead a discussion of the future of the Alabama Agriculture Conservation Foundation and an issue of funds. The Foundation was reviewed by the Examiners of Public Accounts as part of their review of the Commission. Dr. Puckett asked the Examiners to determine if a contribution to the Alabama Association of Conservation Districts (AACD) which is a 501 3(c) was within the scope of its powers.

The contribution was made when the Foundation closed out its bank account in about 2018. The Foundation transferred about \$2,000 to AACD to hold until future directions of the Foundation could be determined. The Examiners determined that the foundation’s relationship with AACD was outside the scope of their review and the contribution of \$2,000 to AACD was not considered a finding. Additional discussion is needed on the future of the Foundation.

Other Business- No further business.

Next Meeting Date – January 26, 2022, 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Motion made by Johnny Lee to adjourn meeting; Seconded by Reed Ingram; Meeting adjourned at 2:09 p.m.

Dr. Carol Knight
Vice Chair

Board Member

Board Member

Board Member

Rhonda Bryars
Recording Secretary