



**Richland Soil and Water Conservation District (RSWCD)**

2020 Hampton Street, Room 3063A

Columbia, SC 29204

Phone: (803) 576-2080 • Fax: (803) 576-2088

[soilandwater@richlandcountysc.gov](mailto:soilandwater@richlandcountysc.gov) • [www.richlandcountysc.gov/rswcd](http://www.richlandcountysc.gov/rswcd)

**Meeting Minutes**

July 8, 2024, 6 pm

Lizard's Thicket, 7938 Garners Ferry Road, Columbia, SC 29209

**Commissioners Present**

Kenny Mullis, Chair

Mary Burts

Tim McSwain

**Associate Commissioners Present**

Kirstin Bullington

Sarah Burnham

Mary Frances Hendrix

Mary Beth McSwain

Logan Richardson

Charles Weber

**Additional Attendees**

Chanda Cooper

Jessie Egan

Quinton Epps

Jane Hiller

Chelsea Holliday

Emma Holsclaw

Faith Isreal

Aric Jensen

Elizabeth Jensen

Carol Kososki

Jennifer Mancke

Rosemary Martin-Jones

Bailey Parker

Clay Parker

Robert Ridgell

Nancy Stone-Collum

Jessica Thompson

**Welcome, Introductions, and Invocation:** Mullis called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm. Introductions were made and A. Jensen gave the invocation.

**Approve Agenda and Minutes:** Cooper requested to amend the agenda and add Education/Outreach Renewal under new business. Burts motioned to approve the amended agenda. T. McSwain seconded the motion. The motion was brought to a vote and passed unanimously. T. McSwain motioned to approve the minutes. Burts seconded the motion. The motion was brought to a vote and passed unanimously.

### **Reports:**

**Financial:** Cooper provided the following financial overview:

#### **Operating Account (06/30/24 Statement)**

- Beginning Balance: \$61,239.66 (06/01/24)
- Deposits and Credits: \$2000.00
- Checks: \$3,918.24-
- Expenses and Debits: \$4,313.70-
- Ending Balance: \$55,007.72 (06/30/24)

#### **Credit Card (07/05/24 Statement)**

- Beginning Balance: \$2,577.22 (07/05/24)
- Payments: \$2,577.22
- Purchases: \$2,123.93
- Credit Card Rewards: \$446.78
- Ending Balance: \$2,123.93 (07/05/24) <paid in full (07/08/2024)

#### **Easement Stewardship Account (04/30/24 Statement)**

- Starting Account Value: \$53,321.99 (04/01/24)
- Ending Account Value: \$53,635.27 (04/30/24)
- Ending Account Value with Accrued Income: \$53,989.44

#### **SCACD Contribution Agreement Account (06/30/24 Statement)**

- Starting Balance: \$16,732.22 (06/01/24)
- Credits: \$0.00
- Debts: \$16,499.21-
- Ending Balance: \$233.01 (06/30/24)

#### **PayPal Account (06/30/24 Statement)**

- Beginning Available Balance: \$0.00 (06/01/24)
- Ending Available Balance: \$0.00 (06/30/24)

Cooper does not have an updated Easement Stewardship Account statement and presented the last available statement, the April statement which was presented during the June board meeting. Mullis and Epps explained the Easement Stewardship funds are to enforce the District's easement at the Mill Creek property. The District holds one easement.

**Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS):** Mullis stated South Carolina has a new acting state conservationist, Odessa Armstrong, who will be with NRCS for 120 days.

**South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR):** Egan reported SCDNR has been attending local work groups across the state. Districts must complete their local work group meetings by the end of August. SCDNR was approved for two new full-time conservation district coordinators, resulting in four regional coordinators supporting South Carolina Conservation Districts. Egan called out key dates for SCDNR: the East Piedmont Area meeting is August 26; the SCACD Mid-Year meeting is September 16; and the Conservation Partnership Conference is January 13-15, 2025.

**Richland County Conservation Commission (RCCC):** Weber reported RCCC's grant cycle came to a successful end and the Commission will begin a new grant cycle once approved by County Council. On July 9, Council will hold a public hearing for the new penny at which Weber will present on behalf of the Natural Resources Committee. Weber stated not a lot of true information is circulating regarding the program. A. Jensen elaborated on the penny program stating one penny on top of sales tax funds the program. The program addresses roadways, trails, sidewalks, and similar projects. The current penny program has been in effect for approximately twelve years and will expire once it receives the maximum revenue. If Council approves how to allocate the funds for the new penny program, the program will be on the November 2024 ballot.

**Richland Soil and Water Conservation District (RSWCD) Programs:** Thompson reviewed the provided RSWCD Program Report.

**National Association of Conservation Districts Southeast (SE NACD) Regional Conference:** T. McSwain, M. McSwain, Thompson, and Holliday spoke about their experience at the SE NACD meeting. Participants engaged in networking opportunities, work sessions, and field trips.

**Conservation Items Before County Council:** Mullis acknowledged Weber's previous comments regarding the new penny program.

**Commissioner Advocacy:** N/A

### **Old Business:**

**Blythewood/Scout Motors Meeting Plan:** Epps reported he has been in contact with Scout Motors Connection Center and is determining options to visit the center later this year.

**RSWCD Travel Policy:** Commissioner Laney raised three concerns with the current draft of the travel policy: per diem meal reimbursement versus reimbursement by receipt, pay in advance versus only pay after travel has been completed, and the starting and ending address for mileage. T. McSwain stated using the per diem rate is a simpler process than having individuals keep receipts for reimbursement. It also allows for a standard meal reimbursement among individuals. The District deferred these concerns until the next meeting.

### **New Business:**

**Bank Signature Authority & Credit Card Holder:** Burts motioned for Epps to replace Cooper as the bank signature authority. T. McSwain seconded the motion. Burts amended her motion to include Epps to replace Cooper as the credit card holder. T. McSwain seconded the motion. The motion was brought to a vote and passed unanimously.

**FY25 Budget Proposal:** Cooper reviewed the FY24 budget and presented the FY25 budget proposal. Cooper projects an income of \$71,825.00 and expenses totaling \$76,455.68 equating to a proposed net profit of (\$4,630.68). Cooper explained with growing programs and new staff, some expenses will be greater than last year. Cooper was conservative in the budget proposal and did not factor in funds from Dominion Energy because the District has been awarded funds for the last three years. However, Cooper recommended the District still apply for a grant from Dominion Energy this fall.

Cooper presented five suggested motions: move to approve the FY25 budget as proposed or as amended; move to authorize staff to request a \$20,000 contribution agreement from SCACD; move to authorize staff to apply for a \$10,000 grant from Dominion Energy; move to authorize staff to request a \$7,500 Ag + Art Tour sponsorship from RCCC; move to authorize staff to develop a Little Free Library community engagement program; and move to authorize renewal of Education/Outreach Contract. T. McSwain made a motion to approve the five suggested motions as presented. Burts seconded the motion. The motion was brought to a vote and passed unanimously.

Cooper reminded attendees to focus on resource development to increase income so the District does not continue to dip into savings each year. Attendees discussed the pros and cons of requesting a larger grant from Dominion Energy. T. McSwain amended his motion to authorize staff to request up to a \$15,000 grant from Dominion Energy. Burts seconded the motion. The motion was brought to a vote and passed unanimously.

**Executive Session:** N/A

**Public Input:** Mullis referenced the upcoming events listed on the agenda including the Local Work Group Meeting on August 1.

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 9 at 6 pm at Lizard's Thicket, 7938 Garners Ferry Road, Columbia, SC 29209.

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 7:20 pm.