**PASQUOTANK COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA**

 **MARCH 1, 2022**

The Pasquotank County Board of Commissioners met today in a special meeting with the Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisors and staff on Tuesday, March 1, 2022 at 12:00 Noon in the Community Room at the Pasquotank County Public Safety Building.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Charles Jordan, Vice- Chairman

 Cecil Perry

 William “Bill” Sterritt

 Barry Overman

 Jonathan Meads

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Lloyd E. Griffin, III

 Sean Lavin

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Sparty Hammett, County Manager

R. Michael Cox, County Attorney

Lynn Scott, Clerk to the Board

 Sheri Small, Finance Officer

 Steve Harris, Pasquotank SWCD Chairman

 Maurice Berry, Pasquotank SWCD Supervisor

 Dwane Hinson, Pasquotank SWCD Technician

 Brian Lannon, Pasquotank/Camden SWCD Technician

 Glenn Harris, Pasquotank SWCD Supervisor

 Cathy Smith, Pasquotank SWCD District Administrator

Steve Harris, Pasquotank Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) Chairman, welcomed everyone. He gave the invocation and lunch was served.

Following lunch, SWCD Technician Dwane Hinson provided an overview of current drainage projects, and their budgets. He noted that they have been applying for grants to help with projects throughout the County. He stressed the importance of getting the pubic involved. He stated that flooding can’t be completely solved, but the goal is to use the funds provided by the County to help identify the problems and try to get the flood waters to leave more quickly.

Commissioner Overman asked how much of a problem alligator weed is. Mr. Hinson said alligator weed is a significant issue in areas where it is not controlled. He said they have approximately twenty areas they are currently working on.

Finance Director Sheri Small asked what work is being performed on Florida Road. Mr. Hinson said there is a problem with debris in the culverts. DOT is addressing the issue.

Commissioner Perry asked about salt content in Flatty Creek. He noted that some crops near the creek are not producing as they had previously. Mr. Hinton said the salt is probably coming from high saline waters coming in during the fall. He said it is not unusual. He noted that the problem could be helped with some tide gates in those areas.

Mr. Berry explained that there are test wells in Weeksville that are monitoring the salt content, but they have not come up with a definite reason for the salt. They do not know if it is coming from flooding on top or it’s coming in subsurface. Commissioner Perry asked if there is salt being discharged into the sound. Mr. Berry asked if he is referring to the Reverse Osmosis plant discharge. Mr. Hammett stated that there has been no documentation of that being the case. Mr. Hinton said the discharge is insignificant with the volume of water.

Mr. Hammett noted that the County has a grants writer starting March 7th. Her initial focus will be on infrastructure and broadband because there is a lot of federal money out there through AARP funds. He said water management will line up as the third focus.

Mr. Hinton said in order to improve water quality we must improve drainage. We need to put in filtration systems and water control systems so the canals do not drain continuously beyond the point needed. He said we used to dig canals to get rid of water. These canals run continuously, pulling down water tables, which do not need to be dried out in order to utilize the land. He said over the past thirty years they have found that we just need to control water flow. We need to build some instream wetlands to filter the nitrates and take care of erosion problems on the banks. Controlling the total volume that leaves a site is the most significant thing that we can do.

Commissioner Sterritt asked if RC&D is still active. Mr. Hinton answered yes. Mr. Lannon noted that RC&D was just awarded $1 million statewide for this budget year. He said the Albemarle area will receive $100,000 of those funds for projects.

Mr. Lannon noted that the Soil & Water Conservation District is not a regulatory agency, but is a voluntary program. They can’t make citizens do practices on their land. If there is a contract between the Soil & Water District and a landowner, they will hold them to the provisions of the contract. It is incentive driven, and is done to improve soil and water quality.

Mr. Lannon reviewed different cost share programs that are available.

Mr. Harris thanked the County Manager and the Board. He said the first time he met Mr. Hammett four years ago he was told drainage was not on his priorities list for that year, but the following year he would put it at the top of his list, and he did. He said he is very thankful for the funds that he and the Board have made available, and also for the County setting up the Water Management (Drainage) Committee. He said he has received a lot of positive comments from citizens who are very thankful that their problems have been solved.

Vice-Chairman Jordan thanked the Soil & Water Conservation supervisors and staff for their update and for the lunch that was provided. The meeting was adjourned at 1:15 PM.

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 CHAIRMAN

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CLERK TO THE BOARD