

**Minutes  
Of the  
GALVESTON COUNTY  
CONSOLIDATED DRAINAGE DISTRICT**

**REGULAR BOARD MEETING**

**SEPTEMBER 10, 2024**

Those Present:

Board Members

Rusty Burkett, David Johnson, Kim Girouard, Jason Jones, Jim Gibson

Employees:

Joseph Anderson – Operations Manager

Kathy Grace – Administrative Manager

Samantha Haritos – Chief Operating Officer

Scott Sheridan – District Engineer

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE GALVESTON COUNTY CONSOLIDATED DRAINAGE DISTRICT ON AUGUST 13, 2024, AT 6:00 PM AT THE DISTRICT'S OFFICE LOCATED AT 1605 WHITAKER DRIVE, FRIENDSWOOD, TEXAS.**

**1. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER**

President Rusty Burkett called the meeting of September 10, 2024, to order @ 6:00 PM.

**2. INVOCATION**

President Rusty Burkett led the invocation.

**3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Director Burkett led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**4. CITIZENS COMMENTS (Members of the public are invited to give comments at this time, lasting no longer than 3 minutes. Comments may be general in nature or may address a specific agenda item, and should be directed at the entire Board, not individual members of Board or staff. Any speaker making personal attacks or using vulgar or profane language shall forfeit his/her remaining time and shall be seated)**

Director Burkett invited attendees to address the Board with comments.

A. Peggy Zahler. Not in attendance.

B. Don Johnson, Melody Lane – Don presented a PowerPoint discussing the Timber Creek Golf Course hump/plug formation located in Clear Creek. As the golf course was being built, a high flow by-pass was put in upstream and downstream of Clover Leaf Oxbow. The intent of the bypass was to make the path of the water much quicker. Turkey Creek merges into the oxbow at this location. Don is requesting that GCCDD look into removing this plug. He believes that with the improvements at Imperial Estates the plug will provide benefits.

C. Charlie Organ, Myrtlewood – First time he attended a District meeting he'd received a call from the City about a huge swarm of bees in tree. Came to Texas in 1980 and found perfect home in Friendswood on Myrtlewood Drive. Concerned about flooding because the creek was across the street from his home. He was told that USACE had completed a study and would be taking care of the problem. In 2002, Allison flooded them badly. Had 4ft of water in 2017 (Harvey). In 2020, six homes flooded including his. Moved down the street to 1006 Myrtlewood (took FEMA buyout). Mentioned nobody has seriously touched the creek near Myrtlewood. Lots of water coming down from north. Pinch point at FM 2351. Coming down at 200,000 gal/min or so, the oxbow that has sedimented in is functioning like a dam. Homes have lost value. Despite all of the work going on elsewhere, he implores District to get something done up near his residence. He would at least like to see it cleared out, if we can't get a project done there.

## **5. PUBLIC HEARING**

### **THE GALVESTON COUNTY CONSOLIDATED DRAINAGE DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS CALL A PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING THE 2024 – 2025 TAX RATE (0.11301/\$100).**

Discussion and Action: Hearing open at 6:17pm. No discussion. Hearing closed at 6:19pm.

## **6. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS:**

A. Discussion & Possible Action on the GCCDD's 2024 – 2025 Budget.

MOTION TO Discuss – Director Girouard made a motion to discuss. Director Johnson seconded the motion.

Director Burkett asked Joseph Anderson to give an overview of the 2024-2025 Budget. Director Gibson asked why there was an increase in Notice and Publications, and it was explained that the District will be communicating with citizens in the form of a mailed newsletter, putting out notices for project pursuits to satisfy grant requirements, and providing increased public communication in general. Joseph mentioned that this is a working budget, and adjustments can be made as the year moves forward.

MOTION – Director Girouard made a motion to adopt the 2024-2025 Budget. Director Jones seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

B. Motion to Establish the 2024 – 2025 Tax Rate (0.11301/\$100) Resolution 2024 – 04 – 2024 – 2025 Tax Rate.

MOTION TO Propose – Director Burkett made a motion to adopt a tax rate of 0.11301. Director Girouard seconded the motion.

Discussion: Director Gibson commented we currently have reserve plus the \$3.2 million we still owe for FM 1959. Concerned this will bring reserve down to bare bones acceptable of \$2.3 million which is about 6 months of operating budget. Wanted to make it clear we will have to be very careful we do not overextend ourselves. Operations Manager Anderson commented that this year will be a year of studies and that we can revisit the tax rate next year based on the projects that we have moving to construction. We currently

have several projects that will be in engineering design and the timeline on these studies is 6 to 8 months. Anderson believes the current tax rate is acceptable based on the budget but that this is likely a one-time deal.

Joseph clarified that we still owe \$3.1 million for the FM 1959 project but due to the reduced scope of the project the amount we owe towards this project may be less.

Director Burkett mentioned that we will be moving in different directions and will study projects adequately before moving to construction.

The motion carried unanimously.

Joseph Anderson had all Board Directors sign a sheet approving the budget.

C. Discussion & Possible Action on Goodwin Estates – Final Plat – Pro-Surv Surveying & Mapping.

MOTION TO Discuss – Director Jones made a motion to discuss. Director Girouard seconded the motion.

District Engineer Scott Sheridan gave a project overview. This project is able to go through the District's Minor Plat Process and is able to go straight to the final plat. It is in compliance with the District's criteria for a Final Plat and a Letter of No Objection was received from the City.

MOTION TO Adopt – Director made a motion to accept the Final Plat.

The motion carried unanimously.

D. Discussion & Possible Action on Updating GCCDD's Hazard Mitigation Plan.

MOTION TO Discuss – Director Gibson made a motion to discuss. Director Johnson seconded the motion.

Operations Manager Anderson indicated that the District's Hazard Mitigation Plan expired in 2018. A Hazard Mitigation Plan is required to receive Federal or State funding (i.e. grants).

MOTION To Table – Director Burkett made a motion to table possible action on the Hazard Mitigation Plan to October 2024 meeting where we can determine a course of action. Director Gibson seconded the motion.

Board directed staff to investigate the cost to contract the Hazard Mitigation Plan versus completing the study in house and determine the best path forward.

The motion carried unanimously.

## **6. CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. Approval of the September 10, 2024, Bills
- B. Approval of the August 13, 2024, Minutes

MOTION - Director Gibson made a motion to approve the September 10, 2024, Bills & August 13, 2024, Minutes. Director Girouard seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

Director Girouard recommended making minor corrections to the minutes. Samantha will work to correct the minutes.

## 7. OPERATIONS MANAGERS REPORT

### A. Project Updates:

Mowing Update: The mowing crew was able to start back up this week after lots of rain, but they are still playing catch up. The field crew will go back on 5 – 10's and an 8, starting tomorrow. The brush truck is out of commission, so staff is looking into getting a rental.

### Maintenance Update:

Myrtlewood – Staff have moved in and are removing debris.

Old Channel – GCCDD does not own easements, but we are working with a property owner to allow entry. The contractors will be moving in but there will be a lot of hand work due to limited space.

Sixteenth (16<sup>th</sup>) Budget- Operations Manager Anderson completed his 16<sup>th</sup> Budget and is thankful for the support of the Board.

Employee Recognition: Operations Manager Anderson would like to recognize Joe Royster for his 43 years of service. He knows the ins and outs of the District and represents who the District is.

Dickinson Bayou Background (History) – GCCDD has provided maintenance to Dickinson Bayou for 23 years, since the District's inception. The District provides regular maintenance on Coyote Creek, Deer Ditch, Lundy Ditch, Box Ditch, Madeira Ditch, Dickinson Bayou, Dickinson Bayou Pass, and the Girl Scout Camp. Maintenance includes mowing 3 to 5 times per year on approximately 80 to 90 miles of creek. The District additionally provides vegetation control and repairs slope and bank failures, and clearing.

Girl Scout Camp (99 Acres off McFarland Road) - GCCDD worked diligently with the San Jacinto Girl Scouts and was able to acquire an easement all the way through the 99-acre property, where we performed extensive clearing and reshaping of the banks. The District earned an award from our service to the San Jacinto Girl Scout Camp.

620 Ac-Ft Detention Pond (71 Acres) –Back in 2010 there was an old sand pit (over 71 acres). We approached the property owner and negotiated purchase of the property after Phase 1 and Phase 2 environmental studies were completed. We were able to construct a 620 acre-feet regional detention facility along Madeira Ditch which feeds into the main artery of Dickinson Bayou. The District coordinated and partnered with Galveston County (\$1,902,155), League City (\$172,924), and GCCDD (\$531,5050) to complete the project. The GCCDD oversaw the project from start to finish. The total cost was a little over \$2.6 million in 2010 and would likely cost approximately \$20 million today. The District was only receiving \$100,000 to \$120,000 in tax revenue from the Dickinson Bayou portion of our jurisdiction at the time, but saw this as an excellent investment of taxpayer funds.

## 8. ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGERS REPORT

District is Nearing the end of the fiscal year (September 30<sup>th</sup>). Met with Auditor today and District Audit will start January 21<sup>st</sup>. We sent flowers to Joseph's family. Microphones are on order and will soon be installed.

## 9. DISTRICT ENGINEERS REPORT

Summary of Preliminary Plats & Plans Signed Since Last Board Meeting

a. G240068 Sterling Falls Wedding Venue – Reviewed by WGA.

District Engineer's Report – One Preliminary Plat (Sterling Falls Wedding Venue west of Rancho Viejo). Submitting a drainage plan soon. Preliminary plat approved at staff level. Once City approves, the final plat will be submitted to both City and District.

Barge Update – Working through several different iterations. District was hoping to use a local contractor but could not find a contractor able to meet our needs. We looked towards Beaumont and Port Arthur to talk to larger barge manufacturers. We finally found the firm, Barge Works, based out of Florida – our need is why they got into the market. Ed Sheeks owner is close to giving us an update on cost. They will purchase small track hoe and then will have to perform modifications. Dimensions will be approximately 14ft x 40ft. The barge will come with a trailer. We will need to work with agencies to determine what type of registrations or licenses will be required. This will be an amazing benefit to the District: reducing costs for maintenance, allowing more frequent creek maintenance, and will allow us to provide emergency debris services following hurricanes and large storms.

## **10. CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER – FINANCIAL PROCUREMENT, PARTNERSHIPS, & STRATEGIC PLANNING REPORT**

COO Samantha Haritos gave a PowerPoint Presentation discussing the installation and maintenance costs of various gage alternatives and highlighted District's three part strategy to investigate the need for higher flood standards: a) White Paper on Higher Flood Standards in Communities Across the United States; b) Statistical Analysis of Historic Storm Events and Impacts to Jurisdiction; c) Hydrology and Hydraulic Model Studying the Impacts of Land Use on the Clear Creek and Dickinson Bayou Watersheds.

Samantha gave a brief overview on the "Sponge City" concept and discussed the District is looking to implement this concept in conjunction with traditional flood reduction strategies moving forward. The District plans to investigate alternative flood reduction techniques similar to the "Sponge City" concept at the Frenchmen's Creek Project site. Director Rusty mentioned that we are working with Texas A&M in conjunction with investigating soils and plants with high absorption rates to determine effectiveness.

PowerPoint available on the GCCDD website: <https://gccdd.dst.tx.us/agendas-and-notifications/>

## **11. CITY COUNCIL LIAISON REPORTS**

- a. City Council Liaison Report. Council Member Griffon provided an update on the newly adopted City tax rate. The City has hired a new staff member name Mara Blackburn who will be focusing on flooding concerns and projects and will be in touch with the District soon if she hasn't already. Griffon mentioned that he is very excited about the barge and getting flood control projects built efficiently and cost effectively.

Operations Manager Anderson mentioned that in 2008 the District was mowing, clearing, and desnagging 60 miles of creek and today the District is maintaining over 200 miles. He wanted to express how much the operations and maintenance duties of the District have increased.

Director Gibson inquired about the City's debris reimbursement process through FEMA. The City has spent over \$5 million on debris for Hurricane Beryl. They have been documenting everything and working with FEMA to have expenses reimbursed but it is a long process. The funding is coming for their emergency reserve. The Board and District staff discussed that the District did not have excessive recovery expenses but the debris removal was notable.

- b. City Engineer Report. City Engineer not in attendance.
- c. Planning & Zoning Liaison Report. No P&Z Liaison in attendance.

## **11. CITY OF LEAGUE CITY REPORT**

- a. City Council Liaison Report. No Council Liaison in attendance.

- b. City Engineer Report. Assistant City Engineer, Matt gave a report on development in League City, primarily Westland Ranch. Magnolia Bayou Drive at 90% complete. Muldoon Parkway Phase 4 Extension will be accepted soon.

The Legacy Development – League City Parkway connections are complete. The contractor is working on excavating their detention ponds. The City has approved plans for Legacy Drive, West Boulevard, and the first two sections. Matt will keep the District informed as construction comes on line.

Director Burkett inquired about the Center Point pedestal construction within GCCDD’s easement and District Engineer Sheridan mentioned that we have not received a response and it will likely go to our legal department.

- c. Planning & Zoning Liaison Report. No P&Z Liaison in attendance.

**12. BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT**

Director Gibson – Gave an update on the Friendswood Regional Stormwater Detention Basin and showed recent construction pictures. Noted that the contractors are removing dirt at the rate of 16 dump trucks an hour. Director Gibson estimates that they are close to 40% complete.

Director Girouard – Excited about the barge for our own use and to aid other entities.

Director Johnson – Mentioned we are looking into the plug and have not forgotten about it. Discussed District meeting with Harris County Flood Control District and the US Army Corps of Engineers in Galveston. Also discussed an impressive meeting with Dr. Sam Brody at the Institute for Disaster Resilient Texas. We found out that the GCCDD Board committed funding to the Coastal Texas Study several years ago and Dr. Sam Brody happens to be the one that spent it (somewhere between \$500,000 and \$750,000). Former Board Director Harold Whitaker had much foresight in funding the Coastal Texas Study early on.

Director Jones – We are working to implement additional safeguards for who is eligible to run for the GCCDD Board. Mentioned that anyone working against the GCCDD Board currently is working against the citizen’s taxpayer money.

Director Burkett – Tell your friends and citizens that for 23 years the Friendswood side of GCCDD has spent money on the Dickinson Bayou side of the District in preparation for future development. We will not let politicians strip the League City portion of our District away. Also mentioned that the new homes are probably not going to flood, it is likely the older areas that will flood and need our investment. He wanted to make the point that development in the League City portion of the tract will likely impact downstream portions of Dickinson Bayou and that we plan on keeping on eye out for these areas. He is proud of the Board, the fiscally concerned. Mentioned that he is very impressed by the meeting with Dr. Sam Brody and excited about having him contribute to the work the District will be doing.

**13. ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION to Adjourn - Director Burkett moves for adjournment. Director Jones seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:18 PM.

ATTEST:

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Joseph Anderson – Operations Manager

Rusty Burkett – President