SUWANNEE RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

MEMORANDUM

TO: Governing Board

FROM: Matthew Cantrell, Project Manager, Office of Agriculture and Environmental Projects

THRU: Steve Minnis, Deputy Executive Director, Business and Community Services

DATE: October 2, 2020

RE: Equipment Purchase for On-Farm Best Management Practices and Sustainable Suwannee Project

RECOMMENDATION

Authorize the Executive Director to purchase equipment for the On-Farm Best Management Practices and Sustainable Suwannee Project for an amount not to exceed $682,000.

BACKGROUND

At the September 13, 2016, Governing Board Meeting, the Board approved the District to enter into a contract with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) to receive $5,000,000 in Springs Funding for the Sustainable Suwannee Program. Under the original program, agriculture producers were invited to submit proposals to implement lower input rotations in their operations that will cost-effectively reduce nutrients (nitrogen) in groundwater that contributes to spring flow.

The scope of this project was amended with FDEP in September 2020 to add a task for equipment purchases related to a best management practices (BMPs) on-farm demonstration project. This project is a part of a five-year collaborative effort between the District, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, and University of Florida IFAS Extension. The University of Florida will, through North Florida Research and Education Center – Suwannee Valley, implement this project to demonstrate to growers the benefits of side-dressing applications, soil moisture sensors, and cover crops. These demonstrations will occur on approximately 2,100 acres with 15 producers over the five- year period.

The following equipment and approximate cost related to this project is listed below. Competitively procured contracts will be considered for maximum value.

Equipment	Estimated Cost with Contingency
Retrofitted Sprayer with Y-drops and Air Seeder	$438,600
Semi-Truck	$140,100
35-Ton Detachable Lowboy Trailer	$59,300
4X4 Pick-up Truck	$44,000
Total	$682,000

The retrofitted sprayer with Y-drops and an air seeder will be used to side-dress fertilizer throughout the growing season and help establish cover crops. The semi-truck and lowboy trailer will be used to safely transport the retrofitted sprayer between project locations throughout the District. The 4X4 pick-up truck will be used by UF-IFAS staff to travel to the project location and be the escort vehicle when moving the retrofitted sprayer by semi. This equipment will be used for the duration of the five-year project to increase knowledge and demonstrate benefits of implementing the technologies and practices proposed. It is estimated that this project will result in a 50-pound per acre of nitrogen reduction based on previous results in on-farm trials.

Funding for this project is included in the Fiscal Year 2021Final Budget under account code 06-2586-7-2400-06-03.

MC/tm