

## MINUTES

### PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE Final FISCAL YEAR 2024 MILLAGE RATE AND ANNUAL SERVICE BUDGET

#### GOVERNING BOARD SOUTHWEST FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

TAMPA, FLORIDA

SEPTEMBER 26, 2023

The Governing Board of the Southwest Florida Water Management District met at 5:01 p.m. on September 26, 2023, at the Tampa Office. The following persons were in attendance:

#### Board Members Present

Ed Armstrong, Chair  
Michelle Williamson, Vice Chair\*  
Jack Bispham, Treasurer  
Kelly Rice, Member\*  
Ashley Bell Barnett, Member\*  
John Hall, Member  
James Holton, Member\*  
Dustin Rowland, Member  
Robert Stern, Member\*  
Nancy H. Watkins, Member

\*Attended via electronic media

#### Staff Members

Brian J. Armstrong, Executive Director  
Amanda Rice, Assistant Executive Director  
Chris Tumminia, General Counsel  
Brian Werthmiller, Inspector General  
Michael Molligan, Division Director  
Jennette Seachrist, Division Director  
Michelle Hopkins, Division Director  
Brian Starford, Division Director  
Brandon Baldwin, Division Director  
Melisa Lowe, Bureau Chief  
Andrea Shamblin, Manager

#### Board Members Absent

John Mitten, Secretary  
Joel Schleicher, Member

#### Board Administrative Support

Virginia Singer, Manager  
Lori Manuel, Administrative Coordinator

This meeting was available for live viewing through Internet streaming. An attendance roster is archived in the District's permanent records. Approved minutes from meetings can be found on the District's website at [WaterMatters.org](http://WaterMatters.org).

#### **1. Call to Order, Roll Call, and Approval of Tentative Fiscal Year 2024 Annual Service Budget Public Hearing Minutes**

Chair Ed Armstrong called the meeting to order. Board Member John Hall led the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Armstrong provided information to members of the public wishing to address the Governing Board concerning any item listed on the agenda or any item that does not appear on the agenda. Chair Armstrong stated that comments would be limited to three minutes per speaker, and, when appropriate, exceptions to the three-minute limit may be granted by the chair. He also requested that several individuals wishing to speak on the same issue/topic designate a spokesperson.

Chair Armstrong introduced each member of the Governing Board and staff present at the dais (this served as roll call). A quorum was confirmed.

Chair Armstrong requested a motion to approve the minutes from the September 12, 2023, Tentative Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Millage Rate and Annual Service Budget Public Hearing.

**A motion was made and seconded. The motion carried unanimously.** (Audio –00:04:21)

**2. Opening Comments**

Chair Armstrong stated the purpose of this final Truth in Millage (TRIM) public hearing was to provide an opportunity for the public to speak and ask questions prior to the Governing Board's adoption of a final millage rate and budget for FY2024.

**3. Budget Overview**

Chair Armstrong stated the FY2024 budget totaled \$224.8 million compared to \$211.7 million for the fiscal year 2023 adopted budget; and continues a significant level of capital investment in our region to ensure the District's core mission is achieved. Those investments will continue to protect our water resources, incentivize the economy, and create jobs. The budget included \$126 million in ad valorem property tax revenue based on reducing the millage rate to the rolled-back rate of 0.2043 mill. This millage rate is 9.6 percent lower than the current fiscal year millage rate of 0.2260 mill. The rolled-back rate is the rate that would give the District the same amount of revenue as the current year plus taxes on any new construction. This will be the 12th consecutive year the Governing Board has voted to roll-back the millage rate to lessen the tax burden for Florida property owners. Chair Armstrong extended gratitude to Governor DeSantis, the Florida Legislature, and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection for state appropriations.

**4. Public Announcement of the Name of the Taxing Authority, Rolled-Back Rate, Percentage of Increase Above Rolled-Back Rate, and Millage Rate to be Levied for Fiscal Year 2024**

Mr. Baldwin, Business and Information Technology Services Director presented the required public announcement of the name of the taxing authority, the rolled-back rate, the percentage of increase above the rolled-back rate, and the millage rate to be levied for FY2024 and read into the record as required for the District.

TAXING AUTHORITY	ROLLED-BACK RATE	PERCENTAGE OF INCREASE OVER ROLLED-BACK RATE	Final MILLAGE RATE
Southwest Florida Water Management District	0.2043 mill	0.0%	0.2043 mill

**5. Reconciliation of Tentative to Final Fiscal Year 2024 Budget**

Mr. Baldwin stated there were no changes to the budget since the tentative budget was adopted at the first public hearing on September 12.

**6. Public Comments**

**a. Letters/Resolutions Received**

Chair Armstrong stated that responses to the letters received regarding the tentative millage rate and budget, and letters and resolutions received regarding the final millage rate and budget since the first public hearing, if any, have been compiled into Appendix "C" of the public hearing materials and are hereby incorporated by reference into the public record of this meeting. Copies of this Appendix are available upon request at the District's Brooksville Office, 2379 Broad Street, Brooksville, Florida.

**b. Persons Wishing to Address the Board**

Mr. David Ballard Geddis, Jr., spoke in opposition of taxation authority.

**7. Adopt Final Fiscal Year 2024 Millage Rate**

**SOUTHWEST FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT  
RESOLUTION NO. 23-08  
ADOPTION OF FINAL MILLAGE RATE FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024**

This resolution is made a part of these minutes as if set forth in full, but for convenience, is filed in the permanent resolution files of the District.

**A motion was made to adopt Resolution No 23-08, Adoption of Final Millage Rate and Certification of Levy to the County Property Appraisers for Fiscal Year 2024, of 0.2043 mill, which was seconded. The motion carried unanimously. (Audio –00:13:39)**

**8. Adopt Final Fiscal Year 2024 Budget**

**SOUTHWEST FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT  
RESOLUTION NO. 23-09  
ADOPTION OF FINAL TENTATIVE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024**

This resolution is made a part of these minutes as if set forth in full but, for convenience, is filed in the permanent resolution files of the District.

**A motion was made to adopt Resolution No. 23-09, Adoption of the Final Budget for Fiscal Year 2024, in the amount of \$224,800,464 which was seconded. The motion carried unanimously. (Audio – 00:14:29)**

**9. Introduce all Materials as Composite Exhibit**

Chair Armstrong stated the record will reflect all materials presented today are part of the permanent record of the public hearing.

**10. Adjournment**

Chair Armstrong adjourned the meeting at 5:17 p.m.