



**GOVERNING BOARD MEETING
TUESDAY, JANUARY 27, 2026 – 9:00 A.M.
7601 U.S.HIGHWAY 301 NORTH, TAMPA FL 33637
(813) 985-7481**

Board Members Present

Ashley Bell Barnett, Secretary (Acting Chair)
Jack Bispham, Vice Chair*
John Hall, Treasurer
Kelly Rice, Member
Michelle Williamson, Member
Dustin Rowland, Member
James Holton, Member
Robert Stern, Member
Nancy H. Watkins, Member
Josh Gamblin, Member*
James Turner, Member
Brian Aungst, Jr., Member

Staff Members

Brian J. Armstrong, Executive Director
Amanda Rice, Assistant Executive Director
Chris Tumminia, General Counsel
Brian Werthmiller, Inspector General
Jennette Seachrist, Division Director
Michelle Hopkins, Division Director
Brian Starford, Division Director
Brandon Baldwin, Division Director
Michelle Weaver, Division Director

Board Administrative Support

Virginia Singer, Manager
Lori Manuel, Administrative Coordinator

*Attended via Electronic Media

Board Member(s) Absent

John Mitten, Chair

1. Convene Public Meeting

The Governing Board of the Southwest Florida Water Management District (District) met for its regular meeting on January 27 at 9:00 a.m., in the Tampa Office at 7601 U.S. Highway 301 North, Tampa, Florida 33637. 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.

1.1 Call to Order

Secretary Ashley Bell Barnett called the meeting to order. She noted that the Board meeting was being recorded for broadcast on government access channels, and public input would be provided in person. Secretary Barnett stated that anyone wishing to address the Governing Board concerning any item listed on the agenda or any item that does not appear on the agenda should complete and submit a "Request to Speak" card. She 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. Secretary Barnett also requested that several individuals requesting to speak on the same topic designate a spokesperson. She introduced each member of the Governing Board and staff present at the dais (this served as roll call). A quorum was confirmed.

1.2 Oath of Office Board for Board Member

Secretary Barnett stated that Governor DeSantis appointed Mr. Brian Aungst, Jr., to the Governing Board.

Ms. Virginia Singer administered the Oath of Office to the new Board Member.

1.3 Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Board Member James Holton offered the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.4 Additions/Deletions to Agenda

Mr. Brian Armstrong, Executive Director, stated the following item was being moved from Consent to Discussion:

General Counsel's Report

2.6 Authorization to Issue Administrative Complaint and Order – Water Use Permit Violations: Overpumpage – Taylor Woodrow Communities at Artisan Lakes, L.L.C. – Water Use Permit No.: 20003744.013 (Manatee County)

There was good cause to approve the amended agenda as allowed by Section 120.525, Florida Statutes.

1.5 Public Input for Issues Not Listed on the Published Agenda

Mr. David Gore spoke regarding managing of Florida hydrology.

Ms. Kim Wagler spoke in opposition of a proposed sand mine that may impact Saddlebag Lake Resort.

Ms. Kathy Pratt requested the District pre-empt the normal sequencing review process to evaluate potential environmental impacts for a proposed sand mine that may affect Saddlebag Lake Resort.

Mr. Vincent Accomando spoke regarding maintaining a fire break between his property in the Thousand Oaks subdivision and the District's adjacent property. He also requested that the District address trees that have fallen on his property as a possible result of previous fire break maintenance done by the District.

Mr. Brian Starford, Operations, Land and Resource Monitoring Division Director, stated that maintenance of fire breaks is prioritized based on the drought index of the District's properties. Staff are aware of Mr. Accomando's concerns and will contact him to re-evaluate conditions on the District's property. Board Member Michelle Williamson asked to be kept apprised.

Mr. David Ballard Geddis, Jr., addressed concerns related to county-authority regarding imposed fees and potential requirements for water pipe replacements by homeowners.

Consent Agenda

Finance/Outreach and Planning Committee

2.1 Office of Inspector General Calendar Year 2026 Audit Plan

Staff recommended the Board approve the Office of Inspector General Calendar Year 2026 Audit Plan.

Resource Management Committee

2.2 FARMS – Bowlegs Citrus, LLC – H840 (Polk County)

Staff recommended the Board:

1. Approve the Bowlegs Citrus LLC project for a not-to-exceed project reimbursement of \$76,550 provided by the Governing Board;
2. Authorize the transfer of \$76,550 from fund 010 H017 Governing Board FARMS Fund to the H840 Bowlegs Citrus, LLC project fund;
3. Authorize the Division Director to sign the agreement.

2.3 FARMS – Sweet Roots Family Farms Corp – H844 (Polk County)

Staff recommended the Board:

1. Approve the Sweet Roots Family Farms Corp project for a not-to-exceed project reimbursement of \$36,378 provided by the Governing Board;
2. Authorize the transfer of \$36,378 from fund 010 H017 Governing Board FARMS Fund to the H844 Sweet Roots Family Farms Corp project fund;
3. Authorize the Division Director to sign the agreement.

2.4 FARMS – Magic Greens Inc. – H845 (Hillsborough County)

Staff recommended the Board:

1. Approve the Magic Greens Inc. project for a not-to-exceed project reimbursement of \$544,985 provided by the Governing Board;
2. Authorize the transfer of \$544,985 from fund 010 H017 Governing Board FARMS Fund to the H845 Magic Greens Inc. project fund;
3. Authorize Assistant Executive Director to sign the agreement.

2.5 Starkey M10 Stormwater Facility Quality Improvements – Reduction of Scope and Budget (W106)

Staff recommended the Board authorize staff to amend the Starkey M10 Stormwater Facility Quality Improvements (W106) Cooperative Funding Agreement to:

1. Remove Pond 6C from the scope of work;
2. Decrease the treatment acres to 74, the TN removal to 310 lbs./yr., and the TP removal to 96 lbs./yr.;
3. Revise the project budget from \$648,000 to \$408,240 with the District and the County each contributing \$204,120.

General Counsel's Report

~~2.6 Authorization to Issue Administrative Complaint and Order – Water Use Permit Violations: Overpumpage – Taylor Woodrow Communities at Artisan Lakes, L.L.C. – Water Use Permit No.: 20003744.013 (Manatee County)~~

- ~~1. Authorize District staff to issue an Administrative Complaint and Order to Taylor Woodrow Communities at Artisan Lakes, L.L.C., and any other necessary party, to obtain compliance (including permit revocation), to recover an administrative fine/civil penalty, and to recover enforcement costs, litigation costs, and attorney's fees, if appropriate.~~
- ~~2. Authorize District staff to pursue additional enforcement measures to obtain compliance with the terms and conditions of the Administrative Complaint and Order, including filing any appropriate actions in circuit court, if necessary.~~

2.7 Approval of Settlement Agreement and Consent Order – Permit Challenge DOAH Case No. 25-4171– Southeastern Freight Lines, Inc. v. Piper Road Owner, LLC and Southwest Florida Water Management District – Environmental Resource Permit No. 43045609.000 (Charlotte County)

Staff recommended the Board:

1. Approve the Consent Order.

2. Approve the Settlement Agreement.
3. Authorize District staff to pursue additional enforcement measures to obtain compliance with the terms and conditions of the Consent Order and Settlement Agreement, including filing any appropriate actions in circuit court against any necessary party, if necessary.

Executive Director's Report

2.8 Approve Governing Board Minutes

Staff recommended the Board approve minutes as presented.

2.9 Approve Governing Board Workshop Minutes – December 16, 2025

Staff recommended the Board approve minutes as presented.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion carried unanimously. (Audio – 00:24:09)

Finance/Outreach and Planning Committee

Treasurer John Hall called the committee to order.

3.1 Consent Item(s) Moved to Discussion – None

3.2 Investment Strategy Quarterly Update

Mr. John Grady, PTMA Financial Solutions, summarized the current economic forecast, which included Gross Domestic Product, inflation, consumer confidence, crypto currency, jobs/unemployment rates, consumer price index, interest rates and expectations. Mr. Grady provided an overview of the District's investment portfolios.

Staff recommended the Board accept and place on file the District's Quarterly Investment Report for the quarter ended December 31, 2025.

A motion was made and seconded to approve staff's recommendation. The motion carried unanimously. (Audio – 00:43:32)

3.3 Status of the 2026 Consolidated Annual Report

Ms. MaryMargaret Hull, PMP, APR, Senior Planner, presented an overview and status update regarding the 2026 Consolidated Annual Report (CAR). She explained that water management districts are statutorily mandated to provide this report. Ms. Hull summarized the reports that are comprised within the CAR. She outlined highlights and summarized updates to the 2026-2030 Strategic Plan and annual work plan. A timeline associated with finalizing the report was also presented.

Ms. Hull stated that due to extreme weather in 2024, flood protection was added as a priority in all four planning regions and is reflected in funding associated with the Cooperative Funding Initiative program. In addition, resiliency has been added as a new core business process. She also explained the data and project information which was updated. Ms. Hull asked the Board to provide any comments by February 6.

This item was for information only. No action was required.

3.4 Office of Inspector General Quarterly Update – October 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025

This item was for information only. No action was required.

3.5 Budget Transfer Report

This item was for information only. No action was required.

3.6 Florida Department of Revenue (FDOR) – Truth in Millage (TRIM) Certification

This item was for information only. No action was required.

Resource Management Committee

Board Member Dustin Rowland called the committee to order.

4.1 Consent Item(s) Moved to Discussion - None

4.2 Initiation and Approval of Rulemaking to Amend Rule 40D-8.624, Florida Administrative Code, to Adopt Revised Minimum Levels for Lake Angelo and Lake Denton in Highlands County and Accept the Final Draft Reports

Mr. T.J. Venning, PWS, Senior Environmental Scientist, outlined the criteria, legal directives and adaptive management processes that are used to develop and implement Minimum Flows and Levels (MFLs). Mr. Venning provided a timeline of activities associated with the re-evaluation of MFLs currently established for Lakes Angelo and Denton. He summarized the processes, environmental criteria, and hydrologic modeling that were used. Mr. Venning described the peer-reviewed standards, including the Xeric Wetland Offset Standard, that were used for development of re-evaluated, proposed MFLs for each lake. He also summarized screening information that was assessed for the lakes to ensure all relevant environmental values were considered for development of the proposed MFLs. Mr. Venning responded to questions.

Staff recommended the Board:

1. Accept the report entitled "Reevaluation of Minimum Levels for Lake Angelo in Highlands County, Florida, November 18, 2025."
2. Accept the report entitled "Reevaluation of Minimum Levels for Lake Denton in Highlands County, Florida, November 18, 2025."
3. Authorize staff to make any necessary minor clarifying edits that may result from the rulemaking process and to complete report finalization.
4. Initiate rulemaking and approve the proposed rule language to amend Rule 40D-8.624, F.A.C., to replace the previously approved minimum levels with the proposed minimum levels for Lakes Angelo and Denton in Highlands County, as shown in the Exhibit.

A motion was made and seconded to approve staff's recommendation. The motion carried unanimously. (Audio –01:15:37)

4.3 Lower Hillsborough River Recovery Strategy – Third Five-Year Assessment

This was for information only. No action was required.

Regulation Committee

Board Member James Holton called the committee to order.

5.1 Consent Item(s) Moved to Discussion – None

5.2 Modification of Water Shortage Order SWF 25-015 from Phase I to Modified Phase II

Ms. April Breton, Water Use Bureau Chief, provided information regarding current hydrologic conditions. This included data indicating current conditions are critically below normal. She summarized the four phases of the District water shortages. Ms. Breton provided an overview of the proposed modified water shortage order.

Staff recommended the Board approve the First Modification to Water Shortage Order No. SWF 25-

015 to move from Phase I to a modified Phase II water shortage.

A motion was made and seconded to approve staff's recommendation. The motion carried unanimously. (Audio – 01:23:43)

Operations, Lands and Resource Monitoring Committee

No items were presented.

6.1 Consent Item(s) Moved to Discussion - None

General Counsel's Report

7.1 Consent Item(s) Moved to Discussion

2.6 Authorization to Issue Administrative Complaint and Order – Water Use Permit Violations: Overpumpage – Taylor Woodrow Communities at Artisan Lakes, L.L.C. – Water Use Permit No.: 20003744.013 (Manatee County)

Mr. Chris Tumminia, General Counsel, explained that this item was moved due to a conflict of interest for Board Member James Turner.

Board Member Turner recused himself from any discussion and voting on this item. He explained his family maintains a contractual relationship with Taylor Morrison.

1. Authorize District staff to issue an Administrative Complaint and Order to Taylor Woodrow Communities at Artisan Lakes, L.L.C., and any other necessary party, to obtain compliance (including permit revocation), to recover an administrative fine/civil penalty, and to recover enforcement costs, litigation costs, and attorney's fees, if appropriate.
2. Authorize District staff to pursue additional enforcement measures to obtain compliance with the terms and conditions of the Administrative Complaint and Order, including filing any appropriate actions in circuit court, if necessary.

A motion was made and seconded to approve staff's recommendation. The motion carried unanimously. (Audio – 01:24:41)

7.2 Affirm Governing Board Committee Actions

A motion was made and seconded to approve staff's recommendation. The motion carried unanimously. (Audio – 01:24:38)

Board Member Michelle Williamson asked about the request that was presented during public comments regarding a potential sand mine. She asked General Counsel if the District has the authority to review for environmental impacts prior to receiving a permit. Mr. Chris Tumminia stated that the District does not control the order of sequencing for projects. He summarized statutory language that prohibits the District from conditioning a permit from another agency.

Board Member Williamson asked if there were merits to the issues presented. Ms. Michelle Hopkins, Regulation Division Director, stated that at this time there is a lack of information to provide that determination. She explained that a water use permit will be required and staff will make determinations based on evaluation of the application. Ms. Hopkins stated the District's statutory authority is limited but staff will provide any assistance possible. Discussion ensued.

Committee/Liaison Reports

8.1 Agricultural & Green Industry Advisory Committee

A written summary of the December 2 meeting was provided.

Executive Director's Report

9.1 Executive Director's Report

No items were presented.

Chair's Report

10.1 Chair's Report

Secretary Barnett asked if the Board had any matters which should be considered for discussion or action at the next meeting. None were presented.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 24 at 9:00 a.m., at the Brooksville office.

10.2 Employee Milestones

A written summary was provided.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:36 a.m.