



**GOVERNING BOARD MEETING
TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 2026 – 9:00 A.M.
7601 U.S. HIGHWAY 301 NORTH, TAMPA FLORIDA 33637
(813) 985-7481**

Board Members Present

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

*Attended via Electronic Media

Board Member(s) Absent

Michelle Williamson, Member
James Turner, 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

1. Convene Public Meeting

The Governing Board of the Southwest Florida Water Management District (District) met for its regular meeting on March 24 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

Chair John Mitten called the meeting to order. He noted that the Board meeting was being recorded for broadcast on government access channels, and public input would be provided in person. Chair Mitten 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. He 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. Chair Mitten

also requested that several individuals requesting to speak on the same topic designate a spokesperson. He 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

Ms. Virginia Singer, Board and Executive Services Manager, administered the Oath of Office to reappointed Board Member, Mr. Brian Aungst.

1.3 Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Board Member Kelly Rice offered the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.4 Employee Recognition

Chair Mitten recognized Mr. Scott Letasi for his milestone years of service with the District.

1.5 Additions/Deletions to Agenda

Mr. Brian Armstrong, Executive Director, stated there were three additions to the Consent agenda:

Regulation Committee

2.7 Approval of Emergency Order No. SWF 26-004 – Declaration of Emergency Regarding the Middle Pool of the Tampa Bypass Canal (Hillsborough County)

2.8 Approval of Emergency Order No. SWF 26-006 – Declaration of Emergency Regarding the Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority’s Use of the Peace River (DeSoto County)

2.9 Approval of Emergency Order No. SWF 26-007 – Declaration of Emergency Regarding the City of Punta Gorda’s Use of Shell Creek (Charlotte County)

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

1.6 Public Input for Issues Not Listed on the Published Agenda

Mr. David Ballard Geddis, Jr., spoke regarding his attendance at the Withlacoochee Water Supply Authority meeting on March 18.

Ms. Terese Brown spoke regarding purchasing property from the District. Mr. Brian Starford, Operations, Lands and Resource Monitoring Division Director, stated that staff will contact Ms. Brown to discuss her request.

Consent Agenda

Finance/Outreach and Planning Committee

2.1 Water Conservation Month

Staff recommended the Board approve and execute Resolution No. 26-01 declaring April 2026 as “Water Conservation Month.”

Resource Management Committee

2.2 Pasco County Magnolia Valley Storage and Wetland Enhancement (N865) – Scope and Cost Revision

Staff recommended the Board authorize staff to amend the (N865) Pasco County Magnolia Valley Storage and Wetland Enhancement Project to:

1. Revise the Project Description by removing the stormwater storage and wetland enhancement components of the project.
2. Revise the Project Name to Magnolia Valley Flood Protection project.

3. Revise the Measurable Benefit to be "Completion of the design, permitting, and construction of stormwater conveyance improvements within the Magnolia Valley contributing area. Construction will be in accordance with the permitted plans."
4. Reduce the District's funding from \$4,488,450 to \$1,816,822.

2.3 Knowledge Management: Cooperative Funding Initiative Governing Board Policy

Staff recommended the Board approve the Cooperative Funding Initiative Governing Board Policy, as revised.

General Counsel's Report

2.4 Authorization to Issue Administrative Complaint and Order – Water Use Permit Violations; Dry Well Complaint – William E. and Judith C. Meek – Water Use Permit No. 7765.006 (Hillsborough County)

Staff recommended the Board:

1. Authorize District staff to issue an Administrative Complaint and Order to William E. and Judith C. Meek, and any other necessary party to obtain compliance with District rules.
2. Authorize District staff to initiate an action in the Division of Administrative Hearings and/or Circuit Court against William E. and Judith C. Meek, and any other necessary party to recover a civil penalty/administrative fine, enforcement costs, litigation costs, and attorney's fees, if appropriate.
3. Authorize District staff to obtain compliance with the terms of the Administrative Complaint and Order in Circuit Court, if necessary.

2.5 Approval of Settlement Agreement – Polk Regional Water Cooperative v. Tampa Bay Water and Southwest Florida Water Management District – Water Use Permit No. 20011794.003 – Division of Administrative Hearings Case No. 25-5480

Staff recommended the Board:

1. Approve the proposed Settlement Agreement.
2. Authorize the General Counsel to execute all documents necessary to implement the Settlement Agreement and to make minor clarifying or technical revisions as needed to correct errors or ensure consistency with the terms of the Agreement.

Executive Director's Report

2.6 Approve Governing Board Minutes – February 24, 2026

Staff recommended the Board approve minutes as presented.

Regulation Committee

2.7 Approval of Emergency Order No. SWF 26-004 – Declaration of Emergency Regarding the Middle Pool of the Tampa Bypass Canal (Hillsborough County)

Staff recommended the Board approve the Emergency Order as presented.

2.8 Approval of Emergency Order No. SWF 26-006 – Declaration of Emergency Regarding the Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority's Use of the Peace River (DeSoto County)

Staff recommended the Board approve the Emergency Order as presented.

2.9 Approval of Emergency Order No. SWF 26-007 – Declaration of Emergency Regarding the City of Punta Gorda's Use of Shell Creek (Charlotte County)

Staff recommended the Board approve the Emergency Order as presented.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the amended Consent Agenda. The motion carried unanimously. (Audio – 00:08:45)

Finance/Outreach and Planning Committee

Treasurer John Hall called the committee to order.

3.1 Consent Item(s) Moved to Discussion - None

3.2 2026 Legislative Session Update

Ms. Cara Martin, Government and Legislative Affairs Office Chief, provided information regarding the 2026 Legislative Session. She stated that the Fiscal Year 2027 budget was not passed, so a special session will be called. Ms. Martin summarized the bills that passed during session and those that did not pass. Ms. Martin congratulated the Board Members who received Senate confirmation. Staff responded to questions.

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

3.3 Knowledge Management: Administrative Fees Governing Board Policy

Ms. Peggy Meinhardt, Records Manager, presented an overview of the current policy, explained the statutory authority and summarized proposed changes.

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

3.4 Knowledge Management: Records Management Governing Board Policy

Ms. Peggy Meinhardt, Records Manager, presented an overview of the current policy, explained the statutory authority and summarized proposed changes.

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.

Regulation Committee

Board Member James Holton called the committee to order.

4.1 Consent Item(s) Moved to Discussion - None

4.2 Hydrologic Conditions Report

Ms. Tamera McBride, P.G., Hydrologic Data Manager, presented the Hydrologic Conditions report. Districtwide rainfall for February was below average, as was the 12-month rainfall total. Provisional rainfall data for March showed short-term improvement but may still result in a deficit when final March rainfall totals become available. Ms. McBride communicated information regarding historic drought conditions from the National Weather Service. Information was presented regarding rainfall, streamflow, groundwater levels, lake levels, public supply reservoirs and climate forecasts. She stated that stored water supplies are in use to offset dry conditions. The Climate Prediction Center's near-term climate forecast for April, May and June indicated chances of above-normal temperatures and precipitation; however, April is anticipated to be relatively dry. The National Weather Service anticipates a probable transition from La Niña to a neutral condition within the next month, then a transition to El Niño conditions in late summer. Staff responded to questions.

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

4.3 Consider Water Shortage Order(s) as Necessary

Ms. April Breton, Water Use Permitting Bureau Chief, presented information that included an overview of the Florida Administrative Code that administer water shortage plans and emergency orders. She explained the factors that are utilized to determine drought conditions within the District.

Ms. Breton summarized the Districtwide hydrologic conditions by regions within the District. She provided an overview of three emergency orders that were approved by the Board. Ms. Breton presented information from January and February of this year indicating total warnings, violations and citations issued by counties within the District. She explained the modified phase III restrictions will be implemented on April 3. Ms. Breton explained the permanent water restrictions in place for the Southern Water Use Caution Area and the Central Florida Water Initiative area. Staff responded to questions and discussion ensued.

A Request to Speak card was received for this item.

Mr. David Ballard Geddis, Jr., spoke regarding the objective of the use of restrictions.

Staff recommended the Board approve Modified Phase III Water Shortage Order No. SWF 25-015.

A motion was made and seconded to approve staff's recommendation. The motion carried unanimously. (Audio – 01:04:38)

Resource Management Committee

No items were presented.

5.1 Consent Item(s) Moved to Discussion - None

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 - None

7.2 Affirm Governing Board Committee Actions

A motion was made and seconded to approve staff's recommendation. The motion carried unanimously. (Audio – 01:05:23)

Committee/Liaison Reports

8.1 Industrial, Commercial and Institutional Advisory Committee

A written summary of the February 10 meeting was provided.

8.2 Public Supply Advisory Committee

A written summary of the February 10 meeting was provided.

Executive Director's Report

9.1 Executive Director's Report

Mr. Brian Armstrong, Executive Director, thanked the Board for their time and attention during the meeting.

Chair's Report

10.1 Chair's Report

Chair Mitten asked if the Board had any matters which they would like to present.

Vice Chair Jack Bispham requested that the Board be notified if phase IV water restrictions are considered.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 28 at 9:00 a.m., at the Brooksville office.

10.2 Employee Milestones

A written summary was provided.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:08 a.m.