



GOVERNING BOARD MEETING
TUESDAY, MARCH 25, 2025 – 9:00 A.M.
7601 U.S. HIGHWAY 301 NORTH, TAMPA, FLORIDA 33617
(813) 985-7481

Board Members Present

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

1. Convene Public Meeting

The Governing Board of the Southwest Florida Water Management District (District) met for its regular meeting on March 25 at 9:00 a.m., at the Tampa Office at 7601 U.S. Highway 301 North, Tampa, Florida 33617. 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 Michelle Williamson 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. Chair Williamson 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. Chair Williamson also requested that several individuals wishing 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 Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Vice Chair John Mitten offered the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.3 Employee Recognition

Chair Williamson recognized Dave Kramer for his years of service.

1.4 Additions/Deletions to Agenda

Mr. Brian Armstrong, Executive Director, stated there were no additions or deletions to the agenda.

1.5 Public Input for Issues Not Listed on the Published Agenda

Mr. David Ballard Geddis spoke against the injection of phosphate mining wastewater into the aquifer.

Chair Williamson introduced Major Cory J. Bell, Deputy District Commander for South Florida, United States Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District. She recognized Major Bell's assistance with the high-hazard potential Medard Reservoir facility and Lake Bonny in Lakeland.

Consent Agenda

Resource Management Committee

2.1 FARMS – Midway Farms, LLC – Raulerson Road – H833 (Polk County)

Staff recommended the Board:

1. Approve the Midway Farms, LLC – Raulerson Road project for a not-to-exceed project reimbursement of \$45,468 provided by the Governing Board;
2. Authorize the transfer of \$45,468 from fund 010 H017 Governing Board FARMS Fund to the H833 Midway Farms, LLC – Raulerson Road project fund;
3. Authorize the Division Director to sign the agreement.

Operations, Lands and Resource Monitoring Committee

2.2 Amendment to Withlacoochee River Electric Cooperative Easement – Green Swamp Wilderness Preserve West Tract, SWF Parcel No. 10-400-179X (Pasco County)

Staff recommended the Board:

- Approve the Amendment to Easement and authorize the Chair and Secretary to execute on behalf of the District; and
- Authorize staff to execute any other documents necessary to complete the transaction in accordance with the approved terms.

Regulation Committee

2.3 Water Use Permit No. 20 008734.008, Mosaic Fertilizer, LLC / Redland Growers (Hardee County)

Staff recommended the Board approve the proposed permit attached as an exhibit.

Executive Director's Report

2.4 Approve Governing Board Minutes – February 25, 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 –00:13:23)

Finance/Outreach and Planning Committee

Treasurer Ashley Bell Barnett called the committee to order.

3.1 Consent Item(s) Moved to Discussion - None

3.2 Water Conservation Month: District FY24 Conservation Efforts

Ms. Katherine Squitieri, Lead Communications Coordinator, provided a history of the District's water conservation efforts and an overview of efforts that occurred across multiple bureaus and

divisions in Fiscal Year (FY) 2024. She stated this is the seventh year of this report. Ms. Squitieri summarized the four cost-share funding programs the District offers that support water conservation projects. This included the Cooperative Funding Initiative (CFI), Water Incentives Supporting Efficiency (WISE) Program, the Facilitating Agricultural Resource Management Systems (FARMS) and Mini-FARMS programs.

Ms. Squitieri provided information regarding agricultural and utilities services provided by the District to enhance system efficiencies and reduce system losses. She provided an overview of the District's Water Conservation Initiative that works collaboratively with utilities on water conservation efforts. She summarized the education and outreach efforts provided by the District. Ms. Squitieri outlined the research partnership with the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS). She described the regulatory programs used by the District to establish effective conservation practices.

Staff recommended the Board approve and execute Resolution No. 25-03 declaring April 2025 as "Water Conservation Month."

A motion was made and seconded to approve staff's recommendation. The motion carried unanimously. (Audio – 00:27:23)

3.3 Submit & File: Budget Transfer Report

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

Resource Management Committee

Chair Williamson called the committee to order.

4.1 Consent Item(s) Moved to Discussion - None

4.2 Draft Lake Tarpon Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) Plan (W726)

Dr. Chris Anastasiou, Ph.D., Chief Water Quality Scientist, presented a brief history of the SWIM Program and the basis for creating SWIM plans. He provided background information regarding the ecological status of Lake Tarpon and provided an overview of the goals and actions outlined in previous SWIM Plans. Dr. Anastasiou discussed the findings of several diagnostic studies completed over the past two decades and how they impacted the evolution of our scientific understanding of Lake Tarpon. Dr. Anastasiou then outlined the goals and management actions contained in the draft 2025 SWIM Plan update for water quality and natural systems. Lastly, Dr. Anastasiou provided the Board with an update on the SWIM Plan's timeline and next steps. Staff responded to questions.

Staff recommended the Board authorize staff to submit the draft 2025 Lake Tarpon SWIM Plan Update to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services and appropriate local governments in accordance with Section 373.453, F.S.

A motion was made and seconded to approve staff's recommendation. The motion carried unanimously. (Audio – 00:50:38)

Operations, Lands and Resource Monitoring Committee

Board Member Robert Stern called the committee to order.

5.1 Consent Item(s) Moved to Discussion - None

5.2 Memorandum of Agreement for Joint Purchase of Conservation Easement with Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Florida Rural and Family Lands Protection Program for Headwaters Ranch, SWF Parcel No. 10-200-1306C (Lake County)

Ms. Ellen Morrison, Land Resources Bureau Chief, presented information regarding the property and stated the area is within the District's Green Swamp Wilderness Preserve project. She provided historical information and outlined the benefits of acquiring the property and the District's three areas of responsibility that are met with this acquisition. Staff responded to questions.

Staff recommended the Board:

- Accept the appraisals;
- Approve the Memorandum of Agreement and authorize the Chair or designee to sign on the behalf of the District;
- Designate SWF Parcel No. 10-200-1306C as having been acquired for conservation purposes;
- Authorize staff to make minor changes or corrections to conform documents or correct errors; any substantive changes will be subject to Governing Board review and approval;
- Authorize staff to execute any other documents necessary to complete the transaction in accordance with the approved terms; and
- Approval to encumber and roll the funds for payment in the following year, in the event the closing does not occur before the end of the current fiscal year.

A motion was made and seconded to approve staff's recommendation. The motion carried unanimously. (Audio – 00:56:15)

Regulation Committee

Board Member James Holton called the committee to order.

6.1 Consent Item(s) Moved to Discussion - None

6.2 Denials Referred to the Governing Board

No denials were presented.

Chair Williamson recognized this was the last meeting for Mr. Darrin Herbst, Water Use Permitting Bureau Chief. He has accepted a job with the St. Johns River Water Management District.

General Counsel's Report

7.1 Consent Item(s) Moved to Discussion - None

7.2 Affirm Governing Board Committee Actions

Staff recommended the Board affirm the actions taken by the Governing Board Committees.

A motion was made and seconded to approve staff's recommendation. The motion carried unanimously. (Audio – 00:58:28)

Committee/Liaison Reports

8.1 Industrial Advisory Committee

A written summary was provided.

8.2 Public Supply Advisory Committee

A written summary was provided.

Executive Director's Report

9.1 Executive Director's Report

Mr. Brian Armstrong, Executive Director, recognized Mr. Darrin Herbst and thanked him for his years of service with the District. He also recognized Ms. April Breton, who will be replacing Mr. Herbst.

Mr. Armstrong commended Dade City for adopting Florida Water Star codes into ordinance.

Chair's Report

10.1 Chair's Report

Chair Williamson asked if the Board had any items to be discussed at the next meeting. No items were presented.

Chair Williamson stated the next scheduled Board meeting is on Tuesday, April 22 at 9:00 a.m., in the Brooksville office.

10.2 Employee Milestones

A written summary was provided.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:01 a.m.