



GOVERNING BOARD MEETING
TUESDAY, MAY 20, 2025 – 9:00 A.M.
7601 U.S. HIGHWAY 301 NORTH, TAMPA, FLORIDA 33637
(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 May 20 at 9:00 a.m., at 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 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

Secretary Jack Bispham offered the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.3 Election of Governing Board Officers

Mr. Chris Tumminia, General Counsel, outlined the process for the election of officers.

Board Member Ed Armstrong made a motion to nominate a slate of officers as follows: Chair, John Mitten; Vice Chair, Jack Bispham; Secretary, Ashley Bell Barnett and Treasurer, John Hall. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

1.4 Employee Recognition

None were presented.

1.5 Additions/Deletions to Agenda

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

1.6 Public Input for Issues Not Listed on the Published Agenda

Mr. David Ballard Geddis, Jr., spoke regarding water jurisdictions.

Consent Agenda

Finance/Outreach and Planning Committee

2.1 Water Reuse Week Proclamation

Staff recommended the Board approve and execute Resolution No. 25-04 declaring May 18-24, 2025, as "Water Reuse Week."

Operations, Lands and Resource Monitoring Committee

2.2 Right of First Refusal – Bronson Conservation Easement, SWF Parcel No. 10-200-1100Cb (Lake County) Regulation Committee

Staff recommended the Board:

- Decline the Right of First Refusal to purchase the remainder fee interest over SWF Parcel No. 10-200-1100Cb encumbered by a District Perpetual Conservation Easement.
- Authorize the Executive Director to execute the necessary documents to decline the Right of First Refusal on SWF Parcel 10-200-1100Cb.

Regulation Committee

2.3 Water Use Permit No. 20 001512.016, Charlotte Harbor Water Association / CHWA Public Water Supply (Charlotte County)

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

2.4 Water Use Permit No. 20 003216.013, T & T Environmental, LLC/Desoto Groves (Desoto County)

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

2.5 Water Use Permit No. 20 005893.014, Town of Dundee/Town of Dundee Public Supply (Polk County)

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

2.6 Water Use Permit No. 20 006409.009, Cameron High Grove, LLC/High Grove (Highlands County)

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

2.7 Water Use Permit No. 20 006624.011, City of Lake Alfred/City of Lake Alfred Public Supply (Polk County)

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

General Counsel's Report

2.8 Amendment and Partial Release of Conservation Easement – Environmental Resource Permit Application No. 887884 – McIntosh Parcel (Polk County)

Staff recommended the Board approve, accept, and execute the attached Amendment and Partial Release of Conservation Easement and Quit Claim Deed for the McIntosh Parcel.

2.9 Authorization to Initiate Litigation – Tsala Apopka Golf Course Control Structure Project (C680)

Staff recommended the Board authorize the Office of General Counsel to initiate litigation against Metalizing Technical Services, LLC (Contractor) and any necessary part.

Executive Director's Report

2.10 Approve Governing Board Workshop Minutes – March 25, 2025

Staff recommended the Board approve minutes as presented.

2.11 Approve Governing Board Minutes – April 22, 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 –00:11:26)

Finance/Outreach & Planning Committee

Treasurer Ashley Bell Barnett called the committee to order.

3.1 Consent Item(s) Moved to Discussion - None

3.2 Legislative Update

Ms. Amber Smith, Senior Government and Community Affairs Regional Manager, presented an overview of the 2025 Legislative Session. She stated the regular session convened on March 4 and ended on May 2. However, the budget was not finalized. Ms. Smith stated both chambers are continuing budget discussions. Ms. Smith stated 1,952 bills were filed and 255 bills passed both chambers. She provided a summary of bills that passed. These included Mitigation Banks, Administrative Procedures, State Land Management and State Emergency Management. Ms. Smith provided an overview the bills that did not pass. She provided an update regarding the House Select Committee that will meet during the summer to draft a bill for the 2026 session addressing property tax relief.

Ms. Smith congratulated the Governing Board members who were successfully confirmed.

This was for information only. No action was required.

3.3 Budget Transfer Report

This 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 2025 Regional Water Supply Plan

Mr. Ryan Pearson, Water Supply Supervisor, presented an overview of the public draft of the 2025 Regional Water Supply Plan (RWSP). He stated the RWSP is statutorily mandated and is included in the District's Strategic Plan. Mr. Pearson stated the RWSP assesses projected water demands and potential sources of water to meet those demands. He stated the RWSP will cover 2025 through 2045. Mr. Pearson outlined the RWSP process and the five key

components in the RWSP. Mr. Pearson proceeded to discuss these five components, including an overview of resource protection criteria, a summary of demand estimates and projections through 2045, an evaluation of potential water sources, water supply and resource development projects, including project options and projects already under development, and mechanisms to fund those projects. Mr. Pearson then provided the RWSP schedule, stating a request to approve the final 2025 RWSP will be brought to the Governing Board in December 2025 following the public comment period.

Chair Williamson asked if the Tampa Bay Water (TBW) desalinization (desal) facility project option representing two percent of potential source availability would require expansion of the existing facility or would a new facility be required. Mr. Warren Hogg, Tampa Bay Water, responded that they've identified expansion of desalination with either seawater or brackish groundwater, separate from their recent facility renovations. Mr. Hogg indicated there is additional space available in the current building. However, staff are still evaluating options.

Treasurer Ashley Bell Barnett asked about the number of operating pipeline connections associated with the Tampa Electric Company (TECO) and whether there are future opportunities to expand upon these connections. Mr. Hogg explained the different tunnel connections currently between TBW and TECO that have a high assurance of delivering seawater. Mr. Hogg added that TBW discharges brine back into these tunnels, so it mixes with water from the cooling plant before discharging to Tampa Bay, which is why no salinity changes are seen at the mouth of the discharge canal. Mr. Hogg confirmed that TBW continues to partner with TECO on their construction and renovation projects.

This was for information only. No action was required.

4.3 2024 District-wide Seagrass Mapping Results (W331/B017)

Dr. Chris Anastasiou, Ph.D., presented information that included the importance of seagrass, the mapping process, and gains and losses of seagrass prior to the 2024 hurricane season for the Spring Coast areas and Suncoast estuaries. He explained why seagrass is mapped and provided historical information. Dr. Anastasiou stated that the District is recognized as a leader in the mapping of seagrass. He summarized the three elements of seagrass mapping, this includes image acquisition, photointerpretation and field verification. Dr. Anastasiou stated that seagrass can be an indicator of the health of an estuary. He responded to questions.

A Request to Speak card was received for this item.

Mr. David Ballard Geddis, Jr., asked if infrared technology can provide adequate distinction when mapping submerged areas. Dr. Anastasiou explained that infrared does not penetrate the water column and therefore is not effective for benthic mapping. He explained that there are other technologies like hyperspectral sensors but are cost prohibitive at the landscape scale at which the District maps seagrass.

This was for information only. No action was required.

Operations, Lands and Resource Monitoring Committee

Board Member Robert Stern called the committee to order.

5.1 Consent Item(s) Moved to Discussion – None

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

None were presented.

General Counsel's Report

7.1 Consent Item(s) Moved to Discussion – None

Mr. Chris Tumminia provided an update regarding the Board's approval at the February meeting to allow Office of General Counsel to intervene in DOAH Case No. 25-000274RP rule challenge, Florida Springs Council, Inc. v. Florida Department of Environmental Protection. He stated that the administrative law judge ruled in the District's favor. Mr. Tumminia commended Ms. Elizabeth Fernandez, Deputy General Counsel and Mr. Andrew Thornquest, Senior General Counsel, for their efforts in getting this accomplished.

7.2 Affirm Governing Board Committee Actions

No committee actions were taken. No vote was required.

Committee/Liaison Reports

8.1 Environmental Advisory Committee

A written summary of the April 8 meeting was provided.

Executive Director's Report

9.1 Executive Director's Report

Mr. Brian Armstrong, Executive Director, stated that the District was recognized in the Journal of Dam Safety for its risk-based asset management program. This was a result of a recommendation from the State Dam Safety Officer, Ms. Tracey Woods, that the District be acknowledged.

Mr. Armstrong stated the District received an award at the Governor's Hurricane Conference for public information. This District was recognized for innovative and effective ways residents were kept informed during Hurricane Milton.

Chair's Report

10.1 Chair's Report

Chair Williamson provided an overview of her tenure as Chair including recent successes, ongoing activities, and future challenges. Chair Williamson congratulated the incoming officers. Board Member Ed Armstrong recognized Chair Williamson for her leadership.

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, June 24 at 9:00 a.m., in the Brooksville office.

10.2 Employee Milestones

A written summary was provided.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:32 a.m.