



**GOVERNING BOARD MEETING
TUESDAY, JUNE 24, 2025 – 9:00 A.M.
2379 BROAD STREET BROOKSVILLE, FLORIDA 34604
(352) 796-7211**

Board Members Present

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

*Attended via Electronic Media

Board Members Absent

Dustin Rowland, 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 June 24 at 9:00 a.m., in the Brooksville Office at 2379 Broad Street, Brooksville, Florida 34604. 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 wishing 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 Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Treasurer John Hall offered the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.3 Employee Recognition

None were presented.

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, Jr., spoke regarding the watershed boundaries.

Consent Agenda

Finance/Outreach and Planning Committee

2.1 Independent Auditing Services Contract

Staff recommended the Board:

1. Exercise the renewal option within the current contract and approve the fourth amendment to the agreement engaging JMCO to perform the FY 2024-25 auditing services; and
2. Authorize the Executive Director or designee to execute the fourth amendment to the current contract with JMCO to perform the FY2024-25 auditing services.

2.2 Adopt Resolutions to Identify New Slate of Officers for Financial Documents

Staff recommended the Board:

1. Authorize the new slate of officers to apply their signatures to the required financial documents and;
2. Adopt Resolution No. 25-05 authorizing the signatures of the newly elected officers of the Governing Board of the District and the use of facsimile or manual signatures on all warrants or checks of the District and;
3. Adopt the Truist Resolution for Deposit Account document to identify the new slate of officers as authorized signers on existing accounts and give the officers the authority to give direction or confirmation to the Bank on all matters regarding the District's deposit accounts and;
4. Adopt the Truist Corporate Resolution document to identify the new slate of officers as authorized

2.3 Resolution No. 25-01 Commending Joel Schleicher for His Service as a Member of the Southwest Florida Water Management District Governing Board

Staff recommended the Board approve Resolution No. 25-01, commending Joel Schleicher for his service as a member of the Southwest Florida Water Management District Governing Board.

2.4 Governing Board Travel – Annual Environmental Permitting Summer School

Staff recommended the Board approve Governing Board travel as presented.

Resource Management Committee

2.5 FARMS – T&T Environmental, LLC – DeSoto Groves – H832 (DeSoto County)

Staff recommended the Board:

1. Approve the T&T Environmental, LLC – DeSoto Groves project for a not-to-exceed project reimbursement of \$652,782 provided by the Governing Board;
2. Authorize the transfer of \$652,782 from fund 010 H017 Governing Board FARMS Fund to the T&T Environmental, LLC – DeSoto Groves project fund;
3. Authorize the Assistant Executive Director to sign the agreement.

2.6 FARMS – Jim Rash, Inc. – Zoffay Road – H834 (Polk County)

Staff recommended the Board:

1. Approve the Jim Rash Inc. – Zoffay Road project for a not-to-exceed project reimbursement of \$64,214 provided by the Governing Board;
2. Authorize the transfer of \$64,214 from fund 010 H017 Governing Board FARMS Fund to the H834 Jim Rash Inc. – Zoffay Road project fund;
3. Authorize the Division Director to sign the agreement.

Operations, Lands and Resource Monitoring Committee

2.7 Amendment to Easement – USGS Coastal Springs Monitor Well No. CSPR-4 – SWF Parcel No. 15-020-046 (Citrus County)

Staff recommended the Board:

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

2.8 Easement Agreement – Inverness DOT Replacement Well Site – SWF Parcel No. 19-020-129 (Citrus County)

Staff recommended the Board:

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

2.9 Management Agreement with Camp-N-Paddle for Chassahowitzka Campground and Boat Ramp – SWF Parcel No. 15-347-129X (Citrus County)

Staff recommended the Board approve the Third Amendment to the Management Agreement Between the Southwest Florida Water Management District and Camp-N-Paddle LLC.

Executive Director's Report

2.10 Approve Governing Board Minutes – May 20, 2025

Staff recommended the Board approve the minutes as presented.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion carried unanimously. (Audio –00:09:20)

Finance/Outreach & Planning Committee

Treasurer John Hall called the committee to order.

3.1 Consent Item(s) Moved to Discussion - None

3.2 Recommended Annual Service Budget for Fiscal Year 2026

Mr. Brandon Baldwin, Business and Information Technology Services Director, presented a timeline for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Recommended Annual Service Budget (RASB) development cycle. He summarized budget development goals from FY2022 through FY2026 proposed budget. Mr. Baldwin presented information outlining sources of funding and expenditures by category for the current and proposed budget. He reminded the Board that this was the final year the Salary and Benefits metrics will be used for budget development. He stated that staff will continue to report salaries and benefits as related to ad valorem revenue. Mr. Baldwin provided an overview of the Districtwide budget of \$256 million, explaining sources

of funds and expenditures by category.

Ms. Jennette Seachrist, Resource Management Division Director, provided an overview of the proposed FY2026 division budget. She stated the proposed budget is approximately \$145.6 million dollars which is an increase of approximately \$24 million from FY2025. Ms. Seachrist explained the increases and decreases in the budget. She specifically addressed grant funding that was indicated in the preliminary budget in the amount of \$130,000 for the Coastal and Heartland National Estuary Program (CHNEP). Ms. Seachrist stated the District will take over the water quality monitoring at a cost of \$74,000 and will provide \$56,000 directly to CHNEP for implementation of their program. This will save the estuary program, Charlotte County, and the taxpayers in our District approximately \$187,000 per year, which could be redirected to other efforts to support the recovery of Charlotte Harbor.

Board Member Josh Gamblin asked about the timeline associated with CHNEP applying for federal matching grant funding. Ms. Seachrist stated that CHNEP's budgeting process allows for changes to funding before and after it is adopted. Mr. Gamblin asked why CHNEP has a one-year agreement versus other estuary programs that have a five-year agreement. Ms. Seachrist responded that the Office of General Counsel is coordinating with CHNEP to develop a five-year agreement.

Mr. Brian Starford, Operations, Lands and Resource Monitoring Division Director, provided an overview of the proposed FY2026 division budget. He stated the proposed budget is approximately \$47 million, which is a decrease of approximately \$3.4 million from FY2025. Mr. Starford explained significant increases and decreases in the budget.

Ms. Michelle Weaver, Employee, Outreach and General Services Division Director, provided an overview of the proposed FY2026 division budget. She stated the proposed budget is approximately \$19 million, which is an increase of approximately \$1.6 million. Ms. Weaver explained the increases and decreases in the budget.

Mr. Baldwin provided an overview of the proposed FY2026 Business and IT Services Division. He stated the proposed budget is approximately \$18.4 million, which is an increase of approximately \$564,000. Mr. Baldwin explained the increases and decreases in the budget.

Mr. Baldwin provided a summary of District expenditures by programs and Areas of Responsibility (AOR).

Board Member Kelly Rice commended the District on their efforts related to the budget. He suggested that consideration be given to determine what contracted services can be accomplished by District staff.

Three Request to Speak Cards were received for this item.

Ms. Jennifer Hecker, CHNEP, spoke in opposition to the amount of proposed FY2026 funding associated with CHNEP.

Ms. Brooke Langston, Big Waters Land Trust, spoke in opposition to the amount of proposed FY2026 funding associated with CHNEP.

Ms. Abbey Tyrna, Suncoast Water Keeper, spoke in opposition to the amount of proposed FY2026 funding associated with CHNEP.

Mr. Brian Armstrong, Executive Director, provided a timeline with additional information regarding the discussion related to CHNEP and responded to questions.

Board Member Kelly Rice asked if CHNEP was in agreement with the District assuming the water quality monitoring associated with their agreement. Ms. Hecker responded as long as the programmatic funding remains unchanged. Board Member Rice asked if there was consideration to provide CHNEP with the preliminary funding amount and then request reimbursement for the District's water quality monitoring costs. Mr. Chris Tumminia, General Counsel, expressed concerns regarding this approach. Discussion ensued.

Staff recommended the Board to authorize staff to prepare the Tentative Budget Submission for FY2026 based on the proposed budget as presented, adjusted for any modifications made by the Governing Board on June 24, changes in estimated ad valorem revenue based on the July 1 certifications of taxable value, and any additional funding provided by the state.

A motion was made and seconded to approve staff's recommendation. (Audio – 01:32:40)

Board Member Josh Gamblin moved to amend staff's recommendation to include \$130,000 for the total funding agreement with CHNEP. No second was made. The motion to amend failed. (Audio – 01:32:48)

The original motion to approve staff's recommendation passed with ten votes. (Audio - 01:33:54)

3.3 Knowledge Management: Advisory Committee Policies

Ms. Robyn Felix, Communications and Board Services Bureau Chief, provided background regarding the District's four Advisory Committees. She summarized the Advisory Committee policies that were reviewed and outlined the changes that were made. The final policies will be presented for Board approval at the July meeting.

This was for information only. No action was required.

3.4 Budget Transfer Report

This was for information only. No action was required.

Resource Management Committee

Chair John Mitten called the committee to order.

4.1 Consent Item(s) Moved to Discussion – None

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 Hydrologic Conditions Report

Ms. Tamera McBride, P.G., Hydrologic Data Manager, presented the Hydrologic Conditions report. She stated that the wet season started June 1 along with hurricane season. Experts predict a chance of an above-average hurricane season. Ms. McBride stated provisional rainfall data through June 22 indicates a two-inch deficit from the historic June average. The 12-month rainfall total remains above average. Ms. McBride provided information regarding rainfall, streamflow, groundwater levels, lake levels, public supply reservoirs and climate forecasts. She stated that

water supply storage systems have been in use due to drier conditions but are starting to recover. Ms. McBride stated the near-term climate forecast indicates chances of above-normal temperatures and above-normal precipitation. However, the Climate Prediction Center indicates uncertainty for future predictions as a result of the El Niño-Southern Oscillation neutral conditions.

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

5.3 2025 Hurricane Season Preparedness

Mr. Dave Dickens, General Services Bureau Chief, presented the District's 2025 hurricane season preparedness activities. He provided a recap of the 2024 storm season, and an overview of the 2025 Atlantic Basin Hurricane Forecast. Mr. Dickens outlined the primary responsibilities of the District during emergency operations. He stated that although the District is not a first responder, it is a member of the State Emergency Response Team (SERT). This authorizes the District to provide support to the missions of the State Emergency Operations Center. Mr. Dickens provided a video that showed emergency preparedness exercises performed by the District. He outlined additional preparedness and recovery exercises completed by staff.

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

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

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 – 02:01:03)

Committee/Liaison Reports

8.1 Industrial Advisory Committee

A written summary of the May 6 meeting was provided.

8.2 Public Supply Advisory Committee

A written summary of the May 6 meeting was provided.

Executive Director's Report

9.1 Executive Director's Report

Mr. Brian Armstrong, Executive Director, thanked the Board for the thoughtful discussions and wished everyone a happy Fourth of July.

Chair's Report

10.1 Chair's Report

Chair Mitten recognized Board Member Michelle Williamson for her tenure as the previous Chair.

Vice Chair Jack Bispham encouraged the continuing cooperation between the District and CHNEP.

Chair Mitten stated the next scheduled Board meeting is on Tuesday, July 22 at 9:00 a.m., in the Tampa office.

10.2 Employee Milestones

A written summary was provided.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:05 a.m.