



**GOVERNING BOARD MEETING**  
**TUESDAY, JULY 22, 2025 – 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  
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

**Board Members Absent**

Ashley Bell Barnett, Secretary  
Ed Armstrong, 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 July 22 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](http://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**

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

**1.3 Employee Recognition**

Chair Mitten recognized the following staff for their service at the District: Lori Manuel, Jan Burke, and Ed Kouadio.

**1.4 Additions/Deletions to Agenda**

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

Treasurer John Hall requested the following item be moved to Discussion. A Request to Speak card was also received for this item.

**2.6 Water Use Permit No. 20 011794.003, Tampa Bay Water/Alafia River Withdrawal Facility (Hillsborough 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**

Ms. Kizuwanda Everett, Sugar Creek and Buffalo Estates Civic Association, spoke regarding flooding associated with the Bellows Creek outlet.

Ms. Brenda Streeter, Sugar Creek and Buffalo Estates Civic Association, spoke regarding flooding associated with the Bellows Creek outlet.

Mr. Tom Goldtrap, Jr., Sugar Creek resident, spoke regarding flooding associated with the Bellows Creek outlet.

Mr. Shaun McNeil, Sugar Creek resident, spoke regarding flooding associated with the Bellows Creek outlet.

Ms. Michelle Hopkins, Regulation Division Director, explained the subdivision was built prior to the establishment of the Environmental Resource Permitting process. She stated that staff will work with the County and the residents to determine what options are available to assist with the concerns of the residents.

Mr. David Gore spoke in opposition to data used in developing water supply plans.

Mr. David Ballard Geddis, Jr., spoke regarding weather modification.

**Consent Agenda**

**Finance/Outreach and Planning Committee**

**2.1 Knowledge Management: Advisory Committee Policies**

Staff recommended the Board approve the proposed changes to the policies.

**Resource Management Committee**

**2.2 FARMS – Green Grass Farms of Hardee County, LLC – H835 (Hardee County)**

Staff recommended the Board:

1. Approve the Green Grass Farms of Hardee County, LLC project for a not-to-exceed project reimbursement of \$771,933 provided by the Governing Board;
2. Authorize the transfer of \$771,933 from fund 010 H017 Governing Board FARMS Fund to the H835 Green Grass Farms of Hardee County, LLC project fund;
3. Authorize the Assistant Executive Director to sign the agreement.

**2.3 Final Lake Tarpon Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) Plan (W726)**

Staff recommended the Board approve the Lake Tarpon SWIM Plan in accordance with Section 373.453, F.S.

**Operations, Lands and Resource Monitoring Committee**

**2.4 Fifth Amendment to Agreement Between the Southwest Florida Water Management District, Pasco County, and the School Board of Pasco County – SWF Parcel No. 16-010-031X (Pasco County)**

Staff recommended the Board:

- Approve the Fifth Amendment to the Agreement for Construction, Operation and Maintenance of an Environmental Education Center at Jay B. Starkey Wilderness Park and;
- Authorize the Governing Board Chair to execute the Fifth Amendment on behalf of the District.

**Regulation Committee**

**2.5 Water Use Permit No. 20 021107.001, NC Real Estate Projects, LLC/Grenelefe Utility (Polk County)**

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

**~~2.6 Water Use Permit No. 20 011794.003, Tampa Bay Water/Alafia River Withdrawal Facility (Hillsborough County)~~**

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

**2.7 Initiation and Approval of Rulemaking to Amend Rules 40D-2.321 and 40D-2.331, Florida Administrative Code, to Promote the Use of Reclaimed Water and Encourage Quantifiable Potable Water Offsets, in Accordance with Section 373.250(9), Florida Statutes**

Staff recommended the Board authorize initiation of rulemaking and approve the proposed rule language to amend Rules 40D-2.321 and 40D-2.331, F.A.C., to add the proposed language shown in Exhibit A, in accordance with s. 373.250(9), F.S.

**General Counsel's Report**

**2.8 Approval of Consent Order – Environmental Resource Violations; Unauthorized Activities – Joseph A. Brown (Pasco County)**

Staff recommended the Board:

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

**Executive Director's Report**

**2.9 Approve Governing Board Minutes – June 24, 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 –00:27:44)**

**Recognition of Former Governing Board Member**

**3.1 Recognition of Former Governing Board Member Joel Schleicher**

Former Governing Board Member Joel Schleicher was recognized for his service on the Governing Board.

**Finance/Outreach & Planning Committee**

Treasurer John Hall called the committee to order.

**4.1 Consent Item(s) Moved to Discussion – None**

#### **4.2 Investment Strategy Quarterly Update**

Mr. John Grady, Public Trust Advisors, provided an overview of the District's investment portfolios and highlighted investments related to the liquidity of funds for future large-scale project expenditures.

Mr. Grady summarized the current economic forecast, which included tariffs, Gross Domestic Product, inflation, consumer confidence, Federal Open Market Committee Dot Plot, jobs/unemployment rates, and interest rates.

Staff recommended the Board accept and place on file the District's Quarterly Investment Reports for the quarter ended June 30, 2025.

**A motion was made and seconded to approve staff's recommendation. The motion carried unanimously. (Audio – 01:02:38)**

#### **4.3 Proposed Millage Rate and Tentative Budget Update for Fiscal Year 2026**

Mr. Brandon Baldwin, Business and Information Technology Services Director, provided an overview of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 budget development calendar. He presented metrics for project expenditures, operating expenditures, and salaries/benefits. Mr. Baldwin stated there were no changes to the metrics since the June meeting.

Mr. Baldwin presented a comparison of FY25 and FY26 proposed milage rates, expenditures by category, and project reserves balance. He outlined any changes since the June meeting. Mr. Baldwin specifically addressed a modification to the project evaluation sheet associated with the Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program to reflect a 5-year agreement and clarified no funding changes had been made to the program since the budget was approved at the June meeting. He stated that the total FY26 budget amount remains at \$256 million. Mr. Baldwin responded to questions.

Staff recommended the Board:

1. Approve Resolution No. 25-06, Adoption of Proposed Millage Rate for Fiscal Year 2026.
2. Approve the budget changes presented, adjusted for any modifications made by the Governing Board on July 22 and authorize staff to submit the Tentative Budget Submission for FY2026.

**A motion was made and seconded to approve staff's recommendation. The motion carried unanimously. (Audio – 01:11:10)**

#### **4.4 Knowledge Management: Fund Balance Policy**

Mr. Brandon Baldwin, Business and Information Technology Services Director, explained the purpose of the District's Fund Balance Policy. He outlined minor staff edits, and the modifications required to remain compliant with the Governmental Accounting Standards Board. Mr. Baldwin asked the Board Members to review and provide any edits or comments by August 4. Mr. Baldwin stated the final policy will be presented for Board approval at the August meeting.

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

#### **4.5 Budget Transfer Report**

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

#### **4.6 Office of Inspector General Quarterly Update – April 1, 2025 to June 30, 2025**

This item 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**

### **5.2 Offer for Surplus Lands – Tampa Bypass Canal (TBC-32) – SWF Parcel No. 13-001-764S (Hillsborough County)**

Mr. Mike Singer, Real Estate Services Manager, provided a presentation which included historical information, an area map, and the offer amount. Mr. Singer responded to questions.

Staff recommended the Board:

- Accept the offer of \$110,000; and
- Approve the Contract for Sale and Purchase and authorize the Executive Director to sign on the behalf of the District; and
- Authorize the Chairman and Secretary of the Governing Board to execute the Quit Claim Deed; and
- Authorize the conveyance of the District's interest in all phosphate, minerals, metals, and petroleum in or on or under the land upon the request of the Buyer; and
- Authorize staff to execute any other documents necessary to complete the transaction in accordance with the approved terms.

**A motion was made and seconded to approve staff's recommendation. The motion carried unanimously.** (Audio – 01:20:42)

## **Resource Management Committee**

### **6.1 Consent Item(s) Moved to Discussion** - None

No items were presented for discussion.

## **Regulation Committee**

Board Member James Holton called the committee to order.

### **7.1 Consent Item(s) Moved to Discussion**

### **2.6 Water Use Permit No. 20 011794.003, Tampa Bay Water/Alafia River Withdrawal Facility (Hillsborough County)**

Treasurer John Hall requested this item be moved to Discussion.

A Request to Speak card was received for this item.

Mr. Eric DeHaven, Polk Regional Water Cooperative, spoke in opposition to approval for this permit.

Mr. Chris Tumminia, General Counsel, advised the Board of a potential legal challenge to this permit. He asked the Board Members to use discretion during discussion.

Board Member Nancy Watkins asked why the permit cannot be brought to the Board following the conclusion of any legal challenges. Mr. Tumminia stated that a legal challenge must be filed after the Board takes action, and the Polk Regional Water Cooperative has indicated they will file a motion for an extension of time to provide an opportunity for settlement negotiations, if this permit is approved.

Mr. Tumminia explained that potential challenges to this permit will be filed regardless if the Board votes to approve or deny this permit.

Ms. April Breton, Water Use Permitting Bureau Chief, presented an overview of the existing permit, and the modifications requested. She explained that the application for modification meets Conditions of Issuance of Chapter 40D-2, Florida Administrative Code.

Treasurer John Hall asked if a motion could be made to table this item for a future date. Mr. Tumminia explained that the District is required to approve applications within 90 days. If the Board decides to postpone action on this item today, the District could fail to meet the mandated deadline, and the permit could be issued by default. Discussion ensued.

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

**A motion was made and seconded to approve staff's recommendation. The motion carried with nine in favor and one opposed.** (Audio – 01:39:44)

### **General Counsel's Report**

#### **8.1 Consent Item(s) Moved to Discussion – None**

#### **8.2 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 – 01:40:35)

### **Committee/Liaison Reports**

#### **9.1 Agricultural and Green Industry Advisory Committee**

A written summary of the June 10 meeting was provided.

### **Executive Director's Report**

#### **10.1 Executive Director's Report**

No comments were presented.

### **Chair's Report**

#### **11.1 Chair's Report**

Board Members who attended the Florida Environmental Permitting School commended staff for their presentations at the conference.

Chair Mitten stated the next scheduled Board meeting is on Tuesday, August 26 at 9:00 a.m., in the Brooksville office.

#### **11.2 Employee Milestones**

A written summary was provided.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:44 a.m.