



**PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE TENTATIVE FISCAL YEAR 2027
MILLAGE RATE AND ANNUAL SERVICE BUDGET
SOUTHWEST FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT**

Board Members Present

Jack Bispham, Chair
John Hall, Secretary*
Michelle Williamson, Member*
Kelly Rice, Member*
John Mitten, Member*
Robert Stern, Member*
Nancy H. Watkins, Member*
Joshua Gamblin, Member*
Brian Aungst, Jr., Member*
Robert B. Boos, Member*

*Attended via Electronic Media

Board Members Absent

Ashley Bell Barnett, Vice Chair
Dustin Rowland, Treasurer
James Turner, Member

Staff Members

Brian J. Armstrong, Executive Director
Amanda Rice, Assistant Executive Director
Chris Tumminia, General Counsel
Brian Werthmiller, Inspector General
Michelle Hopkins, Division Director
Brian Starford, Division Director
Brandon Baldwin, Division Director
Michelle Weaver, Division Director
Randy Smith, Division Director

Board Administrative Support

Virginia Singer, Manager
Lori Manuel, Administrative Coordinator

1. Call to Order

Chair Jack Bispham called the meeting to order. He led the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Bispham provided information to members of the public wishing to address the Governing Board concerning any item listed on the agenda or any item that does not appear on the agenda. 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 Bispham also requested that several individuals wishing to speak on the same issue/topic designate a spokesperson.

2. Oath of Office

Ms. Virginia Singer, Board & Executive Services Manager, administered the Oath of Office to reappointed Board Member Robert Stern and newly appointed Board Member Rob Boos.

3. Roll Call

Chair Bispham called roll and introduced staff present at the dais.

4. Opening Comments

A Request-to-Speak Card was received.

Mr. David Ballard Geddis, Jr., spoke regarding Tampa Bay Water bond debt.

Chair Bispham stated the first Truth in Millage (TRIM) public hearing is for the purpose of adopting a tentative millage rate and budget for the Southwest Florida Water Management District, pursuant to Sections 373.536 and 200.065, Florida Statutes. He stated this hearing also provided an opportunity for the public to speak and ask questions prior to the Governing Board's adoption of a tentative millage rate and budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2027.

Chair Bispham stated this budget was developed under the guidelines established by the Executive Office of the Governor and Department of Environmental Protection, and in line with the Governor's priorities to restore springs, reduce pollution, and ensure there are adequate water supplies to meet growing demands. The District has accomplished this while achieving the Governing Board's fiscal goals with operating expenditures, which include salaries and benefits, at 75 percent of ad valorem.

Chair Bispham stated the FY2027 tentative budget totals \$250 million compared to \$256.2 million for the adopted FY2026 budget; and continues a significant level of capital investment in our region to ensure the District's core mission is achieved. He stated these investments will continue to protect our water resources. Chair Bispham stated the projects portion of the budget is \$145.1 million. He indicated that nearly \$77.3 million was for development of alternative water supplies for existing and future reasonable and beneficial uses, \$12 million of which is from state appropriations.

Chair Bispham summarized components of the budget that included staffing and operational expenses. He stated this budget will also provide for improvement and management of critical flood control water and conservation structures, surface water restoration initiatives, water quality improvements, watershed management planning and implementation of projects to address potential and existing flooding issues.

Chair Bispham stated the budget included \$139.7 million in ad valorem property tax revenue based on a proposed millage rate of 0.1831 which is the same rate as the current fiscal year.

Chair Bispham thanked Governor DeSantis, the Department of Environmental Protection, and the legislature for state appropriations approved during this year's legislative session. He stated the District has not received written comments from the chairs of legislative committees or subcommittees which were due by September 5.

5. Budget Overview

Mr. Brandon Baldwin, Business and IT Services Division Director, stated there were no changes to the FY2027 budget since it was approved at the July 28, 2026 Governing Board meeting.

6. Public Announcement of the Name of the Taxing Authority, Rolled-Back Rate, Percentage of Increase Over Rolled-Back Rate, and Millage Rate to be Levied for Fiscal Year 2027

Mr. Baldwin presented the required public announcement of the name of the taxing authority, the rolled-back rate, the percentage of increase over the rolled-back rate, and the millage rate to be levied for FY2027 and read into the record as required for the District. He stated that the increase of ad valorem revenues is to ensure mission critical functions continue and to support projects and operations of aging flood control infrastructure.

TAXING AUTHORITY	ROLLED-BACK RATE	PERCENTAGE OF INCREASE OVER ROLLED-BACK RATE	TENTATIVE MILLAGE RATE
Southwest Florida Water Management District	0.1793 mill	2.12%	0.1831 mill

7. Public Comments

a. Letters/Resolutions Received

Chair Bispham noted that letters and resolutions received regarding the tentative millage rate and budget, if any, have been compiled into an Appendix “A” to Agenda Item 7a and are hereby incorporated, by reference, into the public record of this meeting.

b. Persons Wishing to Address the Board

No additional Request-to-Speak cards were presented.

8. Adopt Tentative Fiscal Year 2027 Millage Rate

**SOUTHWEST FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
RESOLUTION NO. 26-05
ADOPTION OF TENTATIVE MILLAGE RATE
FOR FISCAL YEAR 2027**

This resolution is made a part of these minutes as if set forth in full, but for convenience, is filed in the permanent resolution files of the District.

A motion was made to adopt Resolution No. 26-05, Adoption of Tentative Millage Rate for Fiscal Year 2027, of 0.1831 mill. The motion was seconded. The motion carried unanimously. (Audio – 00:09:04)

9. Adopt Tentative Fiscal Year 2027 Budget

**SOUTHWEST FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
RESOLUTION NO. 26-06
ADOPTION OF TENTATIVE BUDGET
FOR FISCAL YEAR 2027**

This resolution is made a part of these minutes as if set forth in full but, for convenience, is filed in the permanent resolution files of the District.

A motion was made to adopt Resolution No. 26-06, Adoption of Tentative Budget for Fiscal Year 2027, in the amount of \$250,019,791. The motion was seconded. The motion carried unanimously. (Audio – 00:10:30)

10. Announcement of Second and Final Public Hearing

Chair Bispham stated the second and final public hearing will be held at the Tampa Office on Tuesday, September 22, 2026, at 5:01 p.m. Final action on the FY2027 budget will be taken at that time.

11. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:18 p.m.