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

Board Members Present
Jack Bispham, Chair
Ashley Bell Barnett, Vice Chair*
Dustin Rowland, Treasurer
Michelle Williamson, Member*
Kelly Rice, Member
Nancy H. Watkins, Member
Joshua Gamblin, Member
James Turner, Member*
Brian Aungst, Jr., Member
Robert B. Boos, Member

*Attended via Electronic Media

Board Members Absent
John Hall, Secretary
John Mitten, Member
Robert Stern, 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, Roll Call, and Approval of Tentative Fiscal Year 2027 Annual Service Budget Public Hearing Minutes**

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.

Chair Bispham called roll and introduced staff present at the dais. A quorum was confirmed.

Chair Bispham requested a motion to approve the minutes from September 8, 2026 Tentative Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 Millage Rate and Annual Service Budget Public Hearing.

A motion was made and seconded. The motion carried unanimously. (Audio – 00:03:43)

A Request-to-Speak card was received.

Mr. David Ballard Geddis, Jr., spoke regarding ad valorem and levies.

2. **Opening Comments**

Treasurer Dustin Rowland stated the final Truth in Millage (TRIM) public hearing is for the purpose of adopting a final 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 final millage rate and budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2027.

Treasurer Rowland stated this budget was developed under the guidelines previously 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 responsibilities.

Treasurer Rowland stated the FY2027 final budget totals $251.5 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 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.

Treasurer Rowland thanked Governor DeSantis, the Department of Environmental Protection, and the legislature for state appropriations approved during this year's legislative session. The District has not received written disapproval of any provision in the budget from the Executive Office of the Governor or the Legislative Budget Commission.

3. **Budget Overview**

Mr. Brandon Baldwin, Business and IT Services Division Director, stated there have been changes to the FY2027 budget since the tentative budget was adopted at the first public hearing on September 8. The changes were presented during item 5.

4. **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	FINAL MILLAGE RATE
Southwest Florida Water Management District	0.1793 mill	2.12%	0.1831 mill

5. **Reconciliation of Tentative to Final Fiscal Year 2027 Budget**

Mr. Baldwin stated that since the adoption of the tentative budget on September 8, the budget has increased by $1.5 million. He explained the increase was due to expenditures for the Hillsborough River Tampa Bypass Canal Watershed Alternatives Analysis project. This project was approved at the Board meeting earlier today. This increases the category of

Contracted Services for District Projects from $15 million to $16.5 million.

6. Public Comments

a. Letters/Resolutions Received
Treasurer Rowland noted that letters received regarding the tentative millage rate and budget, and letters and resolutions received regarding the final millage rate and budget since the first public hearing, if any, have been compiled into Appendix "C" of the public hearing materials and are hereby incorporated by reference into the public record of this meeting. Copies of this Appendix are available upon request.

b. Persons Wishing to Address the Board
No Request-to-Speak cards were presented.

7. Adopt Final Fiscal Year 2027 Millage Rate

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
RESOLUTION NO. 26-07
ADOPTION OF FINAL MILLAGE RATE AND
CERTIFICATION OF LEVY TO THE COUNTY PROPERTY APPRAISERS
FOR FISCAL YEAR 2027

This resolution is made as 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. 26-07 Adoption of Final Millage Rate and Certification of Levy to the County Property Appraisers for Fiscal Year 2027, of 0.1831 mill, which was seconded. The motion carried unanimously. (Audio – 00:12:13)

8. Adopt Final Fiscal Year 2027 Budget

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
RESOLUTION NO. 26-08
ADOPTION OF FINAL BUDGET
FOR FISCAL YEAR 2027

This resolution is made as 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. 26-08 Adoption of the Final Budget for Fiscal Year 2027, in the amount of $251,519,791 which was seconded. The motion carried unanimously. (Audio – 00:13:21)

9. Introduce All Materials as Composite Exhibit
Chair Bispham stated the record will reflect all materials presented today are part of the permanent record of the public hearing.

10. Adjournment
The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m.