GOVERNING BOARD MEETING
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2026 – 3:00 P.M.
7601 U.S. HIGHWAY 301 NORTH, TAMPA, FLORIDA 33637
(813) 985-7481

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

*Attended via Electronic Media

Board Members Absent
John Hall, Secretary
John Mitten, 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. Convene Public Meeting

The Governing Board of the Southwest Florida Water Management District (District) met for its regular meeting on September 22, at 3:00 p.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.

1.1 Call to Order

The meeting was called to order. It was announced that the Board meeting was being recorded for broadcast on government access channels, and public input would be provided in person. 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. Comments would be limited to three minutes per speaker, and when appropriate, exceptions to the three-minute limit may be granted by the Chair. It was suggested, if there are several individuals requesting to speak on the same topic a spokesperson may be designated. Each member of the Governing Board and staff present at the dais was introduced (this served as roll call). A quorum was confirmed.

1.2 Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance
Board Member Josh Gamblin offered the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.3 Employee Recognition
No milestones 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 United States Constitution.

Mr. Joe Obusek spoke regarding Lake Carroll lake levels.

Consent Agenda
Finance/Outreach& Planning Committee

2.1 Office of Inspector General Employee Reimbursements Follow-up Audit
Staff recommended the Board approve the Office of Inspector General Employee Reimbursements Follow-Up Audit.

2.2 Knowledge Management: Election of Governing Board Members Policy
Staff recommended the Board approve revisions to the Election of Governing Board Officers Policy.

2.3 Knowledge Management: Procurement Policy
Staff recommended the Board approve the Governing Board Policy, Procurement, as revised.

2.4 Board Encumbrance of the Capital Field Equipment Fund
Staff recommended the Governing Board approve the encumbrance of $989,037.21 in FY2026 fund balance within the Capital Field Equipment Fund to carry forward into FY2027 for planned expenditures as approved through the budgetary process.

Resource Management Committee

2.5 Safety Harbor Watershed Management Plan Floodplain Information for Regulatory Use and to Update Flood Insurance Rate Maps – Q340 (City of Safety Harbor)
Staff recommended the Board approve use of the Safety Harbor Watershed Management Plan floodplain information for best information available by the District ERP program and to update Flood Insurance Rate Maps in the City of Safety Harbor.

2.6 FARMS – 6M Farms, LLC – H855 (Polk County)
Staff recommended the Board:
- Approve the 6M Farms, LLC project for a not-to-exceed project reimbursement of $66,669 provided by the Governing Board;
- Authorize the transfer of $66,669 from fund 010 H017 Governing Board FARMS Fund to the H855 6M Farms, LLC project fund;
- Authorize the Division Director to sign the agreement.

2.7 FARMS – 734 LMC Groves, LLC – Alico Charlotte Grove – H853 (Charlotte County)
Staff recommended the Board:
- Approve the 734 LMC Groves, LLC – Alico Charlotte Grove project for a not-to-exceed project reimbursement of $165,222 provided by the Governing Board;
- Authorize the transfer of $165,222 from fund 010 H017 Governing Board FARMS Fund to the H853 734 LMC Groves, LLC – Alico Charlotte Grove project fund;
- Authorize the Assistant Executive Director to sign the agreement.

2.8 FARMS –T&T Environmental, LLC – DeSoto Groves – Phase 2 – H854 (DeSoto County)

Staff recommended the Board:

- Approve the T&T Environmental, LLC – DeSoto Groves–Phase 2 project for a not-to-exceed project reimbursement of $296,198 provided by the Governing Board;
- Authorize the transfer of $296,198 from fund 010 H017 Governing Board FARMS Fund to the T&T Environmental, LLC – DeSoto Groves–Phase 2 project fund;
- Authorize the Assistant Executive Director to sign the agreement.

2.9 Five-Year Water Resource Development Work Program

Staff recommended the Board:

- Authorize staff to submit the proposed Five-Year Water Resource Development Work Program to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection for review.
- Authorize staff to make minor changes to the report following Florida Department of environmental Protection feedback before finalizing within the CAR with no further Board action.

Operations, Lands & Resource Monitoring Committee

2.10 Sale of Easement to Florida Power & Light Company – Charlotte Harbor Preserve State Park – SWF Parcel No. 20-708-141X (Charlotte County)

Staff recommended the Board:

- Accept the offer of $3,450.00; and Approve the Purchase/Sale Agreement and authorize the Executive Director to execute on behalf of the District; and
- Approve the Easement and authorize the Chair and Secretary to execute on behalf of the District; and
- Authorize staff to execute any other documents necessary to complete the transaction in accordance with the approved terms.

Regulation Committee

2.11 Water Use Permit No. 20013370.004, Jack Paul Properties, Inc. / Red Wing Groves (DeSoto County)

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

General Counsel's Report

2.12 Approval of the District's Annual Regulatory Plan for 2026-2027

Staff recommended the Board approve the District's Annual Regulatory Plan for 2026-2027 and execute the certification required by Section 120.74(1)(d), F.S.

2.13 Approval of Emergency Order No. SWF 26-048 – Declaration of Emergency Regarding the Tampa Bypass Canal Water Supply (Hillsborough County)

Staff recommended the Board approve Emergency Order No. SWF 26-048.

Executive Director's Report

2.14 Approve Governing Board Minutes – August 25, 2026

Approve minutes as presented.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion carried unanimously. (Audio – 00:10:44)

Discussion

Finance/Outreach & Planning Committee

Treasurer Dustin Rowland called the committee to order.

3.1 Consent Item(s) Moved to Discussion - None

3.2 Office of Inspector General Fiscal Year 2026 Annual Report

Mr. Brian Werthmiller, Inspector General, provided the FY2026 Annual report for the Office of Inspector General (OIG). He explained this report is required pursuant to Florida Statute and Governing Board policy. Mr. Werthmiller provided an overview of his required work functions. He provided a summary of the completed work products and other activities associated with the Inspector General office. He highlighted audits, investigations and reviews.

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

3.3 Budget Update for Fiscal Year 2027

Mr. Brandon Baldwin, Business and Information Technology Division Director presented changes to the Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 budget, since the tentative budget was adopted on September 8. He stated that the budget has increased by $1.5 million to cover the District's portion of the Hillsborough River Tampa Bypass Canal Watershed Alternatives Analysis project. This is a joint project with the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE). Mr. Baldwin stated the total project cost is $3 million and will be split evenly with ACOE. He stated the use of project reserves will increase from $19.1 million to $20.6 million. This increases the category of Contracted Services for District Projects from $15 million to $16.5 million. The total budget will increase from $250 million to $251.5 million.

Staff recommended the Board approve the changes to the FY2027 budget, as presented, for adoption at the final budget hearing scheduled to be held on September 22, 2026 at 5:01 p.m.

A motion was made and seconded to approve staff's recommendation. The motion carried unanimously. (Audio – 00:23:52)

3.4 Budget Transfer Report

This was for information only. No action was required.

Resource Management Committee

Chair Jack Bispham called the committee to order.

4.1 Consent Item(s) Moved to Discussion - None

4.2 Wysong-Coogler Dam Refurbishment

Ms. Jillian Berbakov, Design and Construction Manager, presented information regarding the refurbishment of the Wysong-Coogler dam. This included historical information and an overview of the structure. She explained that cost estimates were higher than expected so the District looked at alternative approaches. Low water conditions caused by the extended drought created an opportunity for the District to pursue a hybrid construction approach. This approach utilized both in-house staff and contracted services. Ms. Berbakov detailed the necessary repairs and outlined the other options that were considered and the costs associated. She stated that construction began in April of this year and was completed in July. Ms. Berbakov stated the cost of the project totaled $1,678,043. She explained that because of this hybrid approach, the District saved over $10 million and also extended the lifespan of the dam for an additional 20 years. A video was presented of this project. The Board commended the project. Ms. Berbakov responded to questions.

This was for information only. No action was required.

Operations, Lands & Resource Monitoring Committee

Board Member Josh Gamblin called the committee to order.

5.1 Consent Item(s) Moved to Discussion – None

5.2 Purchase and Sale Agreement – C&D Ranch/Lower Peace River Corridor Project, SWF Parcel No. 20-695-121C (Hardee and DeSoto Counties)

Items 5.2 and 5.3 were presented together but required separate motions.

Ms. Morrison provided a presentation that included an overview of the District's conservation easement program. She summarized how this property meets the District's Areas of Responsibility (AOR), location maps, property information, and terms of the offer to acquire.

Staff recommended:

- Accept the appraisals for the conservation easement;
- Approve the Purchase and Sale Agreement and authorize the Executive Director or designee to sign on behalf of the District;
- Designate SWF Parcel No. 20-695-121C as having been acquired for conservation purposes;
- Authorize staff to make minor changes or corrections to conform documents or correct errors; any substantive changes will be subject to Governing Board review and approval; and
- Authorize staff to execute any other documents necessary to complete the transaction in accordance with the approved terms.
  Approval to encumber and roll the funds for payment in the following year, in the event the closing does not occur before the end of the current fiscal year.

A motion was made and seconded to approve staff's recommendation. The motion carried unanimously. (Audio - 00:47:56)

5.3 Purchase and Sale Agreement – Rock Bend Ranch/Lower Peace River Corridor Project, SWF Parcel No. 20-695-117C (DeSoto County)

Items 5.2 and 5.3 were presented together but required separate motions.

Ms. Morrison provided a presentation that included an overview of the District's conservation easement program. She summarized how this property meets the District's Areas of Responsibility (AOR), location maps, property information, and terms of the offer to acquire. Ms. Morrison responded to questions.

Staff recommended:

- Accept the appraisals for the conservation easement;
- Approve the Purchase and Sale Agreement and authorize the Executive Director or designee to sign on behalf of the District;
- Designate SWF Parcel No. 20-695-117C as having been acquired for conservation purposes;
- Authorize staff to make minor changes or corrections to conform documents or correct errors; any substantive changes will be subject to Governing Board review and approval; and
- Authorize staff to execute any other documents necessary to complete the transaction in accordance with the approved terms.
- Approval to encumber and roll the funds for payment in the following year, in the event the closing does not occur before the end of the current fiscal year.

A motion was made and seconded to approve staff's recommendation. The motion carried unanimously. (Audio – 00:53:00)

Regulation Committee

6.1 Consent Item(s) Moved to Discussion - None

6.2 Hydrologic Conditions Report

Ms. Tamera McBride, P.G., Hydrologic Data Manager, presented the Hydrologic Conditions report. She stated that rainfall for August was below average and the Districtwide 12-month rainfall total also remained below average. Ms. Tamera stated strong El Niño conditions are predicted for the fall and winter seasons. Information was presented regarding rainfall, streamflow, groundwater levels, lake levels, public supply reservoirs and climate forecasts. Ms. McBride stated that stored water supplies are being replenished. She summarized the Climate Prediction Center's near-term climate forecast for October, November and December as related to temperatures and precipitation. A chart was provided that indicated the amount of precipitation for past El Niño events. A current tropical outlook was presented. Staff responded to questions.

This was for information only. No action was required.

6.3 Extend Modified Phase III Water Shortage Order SWF 25-015

Ms. April Breton, Water Use Permitting Bureau Chief, presented information outlining current district-wide conditions and public supply reservoir storage information. She provided an overview of the previous emergency orders that were approved by the Board. Staff responded to questions.

Staff recommended the Board:

- Approve the Fourth Modification to Water Shortage Order No. SWF 25-015.
- Authorize the Executive Director to enter an order reducing or rescinding Water Shortage Order No. SWF 25-015 prior to March 31, 2027, if necessary.

A motion was made and seconded to approve staff's recommendation. The motion carried unanimously. (Audio – 01:11:35)

General Counsel

7.1 Consent Item(s) Moved to Discussion – None

7.2 Knowledge Management: Conduct of Board Meetings Policy

Mr. Chris Tumminia, General Counsel, summarized the purpose of the policy and the proposed revisions. The final policy will be presented at the October meeting for Board approval.

A Request-to-Speak card was received for this

Mr. David Ballard Geddis, Jr., expressed his concerns about not allowing public comments. The Board explained that public comments will always be allowed. The modifications to the policy addresses when the Request-to-Speak cards must be submitted. Discussion ensued.

This was for information only. No action was required.

7.3 Affirm Governing Board Committee Actions

A motion was made and seconded to approve staff's recommendation. The motion carried unanimously. (Audio – 01:23:54)

Committee/Liaison Reports

8.1 Industrial, Commercial & Institutional Advisory Committee

A written summary of the August 11 meeting was provided.

8.2 Public Supply Advisory Committee

A written summary of the August 11 meeting was provided.

Executive Director's Report

9.1 Executive Director's Report

Mr. Brian Armstrong, Executive Director, provided highlights of his accomplishments for FY2026. A written summary was provided.

Chair's Report

10.1 Chair's Report

Chair Bispham asked if the Board had any matters which they would like to discuss at the next meeting.

Board Member Kelly Rice remarked that a disproportionate amount of attachments was emailed with the evaluations for the Executive Director and Inspector General. Discussion ensued.

Chair Bispham reminded everyone that the Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 Budget Hearing will occur at 5:01 p.m., today.

10.2 Employee Milestones

A written summary was provided.

10.3 Executive Director's and Inspector General's Annual Evaluations

Chair Bispham stated that in accordance with Board Policy 710-2, the executive director and inspector general will present their annual reports and accomplishments for the current fiscal year to the Governing Board. Evaluations were emailed to the Board Members to be completed. He explained that the Human Resources Office will compile and distribute a Performance Evaluation Summary for both the executive director and the inspector general. The Chair will recommend a final score for the executive director and the Treasurer will recommend a final score for the inspector general. The Board will vote on both recommendations at the October Board meeting.

This was for information only. No action was required.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m.