



**GOVERNING BOARD MEETING
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2025 – 3:00 P.M.
7601 U.S.HIGHWAY 301 NORTH, TAMPA FL 33637
(813) 985-7481**

Board Members Present

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

*Attended via Electronic Media

1. Convene Public Meeting

The Governing Board of the Southwest Florida Water Management District (District) met for its regular meeting on September 23 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

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 requesting 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 Oath of Office

Ms. Virginia Singer administered the Oath of Office to newly appointed Board Member James L. Turner.

1.3 Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Board Member Michelle Williamson offered the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Mitten recognized the passing of Board Member Ed Armstrong and highlighted his 11 years of service on the Board.

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 ad valorem lien and levies.

Mr. David Gore spoke regarding the 2025 Regional Water Supply Plan.

Consent Agenda

Finance/Outreach and Planning Committee

2.1 Office of Inspector General Employee Reimbursements Follow-up Audit

Staff recommended the Board approve the Office of Inspector General Revenue Collections Follow-Up Audit.

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Staff recommended the Board approve the Office of Inspector General Revenue Collections Follow-Up Audit.

2.3 Board Encumbrance of the Capital Field Equipment Fund

Staff recommended the Governing Board approve the encumbrance of up to \$1,141,120 in FY2025 fund balance within the Capital Field Equipment Fund to carry forward into FY2026 for planned expenditures as approved through the budgetary process.

Resource Management Committee

2.4 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 DEP conversations before finalizing within the CAR with no further Board action..

2.5 FARMS – Windmill Farms Nurseries, Inc.– Phase 3–H838 (Hardee County)

Staff recommended the Board:

1. Approve the Windmill Farms Nurseries, Inc. – Phase 3 project for a not-to-exceed project reimbursement of \$46,240 provided by the Governing Board;
2. Authorize the transfer of \$46,240 from fund 010 H017 Governing Board FARMS Fund to the H838 Windmill Farms Nurseries, Inc. – Phase 3 project fund;
3. Authorize the Division Director to sign the agreement.

2.6 Approve the Coastal Zone 5 Watershed Management Plan Floodplain Information for Regulatory Use and to Update Flood Insurance Rate Maps in Pinellas County (Q149)

Staff recommended the Board approve use of the Coastal Zone 5 Watershed Management Plan floodplain information for best information available by the District ERP program and to update Flood Insurance Rate Maps in Pinellas County.

Operations, Lands and Resource Monitoring Committee

2.7 Residential Security Lease Agreement for Green Swamp West – SWF Parcel No. 19-706-119X (Pasco County)

Staff recommended the Board:

- Approve the Residential Security Lease Agreement Between the Southwest Florida Water Management District and Officer Phillips; and
- Authorize the Governing Board Chair to execute the Agreement on behalf of the District; and
- Authorize staff to make minor changes or corrections to conform documents or correct scrivener's 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.

2.8 Intergovernmental Agreement–Withlacoochee State Forest – SWF Parcel No. 15-347-130X, 19-707-110X (Hernando and Citrus Counties)

Staff recommended the Board:

- Approve the Intergovernmental Agreement Between the Southwest Florida Water Management District and the Florida Forest Service for the Management of Natural Resources and Recreation on the Two Mile Prairie-Tsala Apopka Connector Project, and Chassahowitzka River and Coastal Swamps Project; and
- Authorize the Governing Board Chair to execute the Intergovernmental Agreement on behalf of the District; and
- Authorize staff to make minor changes or corrections to conform documents or correct scrivener's 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.

Regulation Committee

2.9 Water Use Permit No. 20 021258.000, Fresh Plants LLC / Fresh Plants (DeSoto County)

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

General Counsel's Report

2.10 Release of Conservation Easement – Environmental Resource Permit Application No. 914841 – Shady Hills (Pasco County)

Staff recommended the Board approve, accept, and execute the attached Release of Conservation Easement and Quit Claim Deed for the Shady Hills Project.

2.11 Initiation and Approval of Rulemaking to Amend Rule 40D-2.091, Florida Administrative Code, to Incorporate by Reference the Outstanding Florida Springs Rules Adopted in Rules 62-41.400 through 62-41.402, F.A.C.

Staff recommended the Board initiate rulemaking and approve the proposed rule language to amend Rule 40D-2.091, F.A.C., to incorporate Outstanding Florida Springs permitting criteria into Chapter 40D-2, F.A.C.

2.12 Interagency Agreement between SFWMD and SWFWMD–Designation of Regulatory Responsibility to SFWMD for the Southeast Wellfield (Polk County)

Staff recommended the Board approve the Interagency Agreement designating regulatory responsibility for the Southeast Wellfield to the South Florida Water Management District.

Executive Director's Report

2.13 Approve Governing Board Minutes – August 26, 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 – 00:20:33)

Finance/Outreach & Planning Committee

Treasurer John Hall called the committee to order.

3.1 Consent Item(s) Moved to Discussion - None

3.2 Fiscal Year 2027 Business Plan Update

Ms. Mary Margaret Hull, PMP, APR, Senior Planner, presented an update on the Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 Business Plan. She explained the purpose of the Business Plan and how it integrates with the budget process and the District's Strategic Plan. Ms. Hull summarized the plan development that assisted in identifying the resource needs over a five-year period (FY2027-FY2031). She stated that Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threat (SWOT) Analysis was performed to determine the overall strategic position. She outlined and summarized drivers associated with five programmatic teams. These included changing work force, population/new construction growth, water resource challenges, regulations and legislation. She summarized improvements to the business planning process, performance metrics, staffing considerations and resource trends. She outlined the next steps associated with the Business Plan. Ms. Hull responded to questions.

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

3.3 Office of Inspector General Fiscal Year 2025 Annual Report

Mr. Brian Werthmiller, Inspector General, provided the FY2025 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. Mr. Werthmiller responded to questions. Discussion ensued.

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

A Request to Speak card was received for this item.

Mr. David Gore spoke regarding a request he said he made to the Inspector General.

3.4 Budget Transfer Report

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

Resource Management Committee

Board Member Dustin Rowland called the committee to order.

4.1 Consent Item(s) Moved to Discussion – None

4.2 Knowledge Management: Springs Coast Steering Committee Governing Board Policy

Dr. Madison Trowbridge, Ph.D., Springs Scientist, presented proposed updates to the current policy. She provided a historical overview of the Springs Coast Steering Committee (SCSC). Dr. Trowbridge explained the reasons for the proposed changes and the benefits associated.

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

4.3 Surface Water Improvement and Management Priority Water Body List

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

Operations, Lands and Resource Monitoring Committee

Chair Mitten called the committee to order.

5.1 Consent Item(s) Moved to Discussion - None

5.2 Offer for Surplus Lands – Tampa Bypass Canal (TBC-14), SWF Parcel No. 13-004-317S (Hillsborough County)

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

Staff recommended the Board:

- Accept the offer of \$220,000;
- Approve the Contract for Sale and Purchase and authorize the Executive Director to sign on behalf of the District;
- Authorize the Chairman and Secretary of the Governing Board to execute the Quit Claim Deed and the Access Easement;
- 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;
- 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 with eleven in favor and one opposed. (Audio – 01:05:05)

Regulation Committee

No items were presented for discussion.

6.1 Consent Item(s) Moved to Discussion - None

General Counsel's Report

7.1 Consent Item(s) Moved to Discussion - None

7.2 Approval of the District's Annual Regulatory Plan for 2025-2026

Ms. Elizabeth Fernandez, Deputy General Counsel, provided an overview of the annual regulatory plan, statutory authority and processes associated. She explained the primary changes, a timeline of rules that are being reviewed and tracking requirements. Ms. Fernandez responded to questions.

Staff recommended the Board approve the District's Annual Regulatory Plan for 2025-2026 and execute the certification required by Section 120.74(1)(d), F.S.

A motion was made and seconded to approve staff's recommendation. The motion carried unanimously. (Audio – 01:13:53)

7.3 Management Agreement Between the Southwest Florida Water Management District and Citrus County, Florida for the Chassahowitzka River Campground, SWF Parcel No. 15-347-105X (Citrus County)

A Request to Speak card was received for this item.

Ms. Danielle Mosichuk spoke in support of the Chassahowitzka River Campground management agreement.

Mr. Chris Tumminia, General Counsel, presented historical information and an overview of the management agreement. He summarized key terms of the agreement. Staff responded to questions.

Staff recommended the Board:

- Approve and authorize the Chair to execute the proposed Management Agreement.
- Approve and authorize Citrus County to execute a short-term agreement with the existing management vendor pending the procurement of a longer-term agreement.

A motion was made and seconded to approve staff's recommendation. The motion carried unanimously. (Audio – 01:26:34)

7.4 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 – 01:27:01)

Committee/Liaison Reports

8.1 Industrial, Commercial & Institutional Advisory Committee

A written summary of the meeting was provided.

8.2 Public Supply Advisory Committee

A written summary of the meeting was provided.

Executive Director's Report

9.1 Executive Director's Report

Mr. Brian Armstrong, Executive Director, provided highlights of his accomplishments for FY2025. A written summary was provided.

Chair's Report

10.1 Chair's Report

Chair Mitten asked if there were any additional comments the Board would like to present. None were presented.

Chair Mitten stated the Final FY2025 Budget Hearing will begin at 5:01 p.m. today.

The next regularly scheduled Governing Board meeting is at 9:00 a.m., Tuesday, October 28 at the Brooksville Service Office.

10.2 Employee Milestones

A written summary was provided.

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

Chair Mitten 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. Packets were distributed 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.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.