



GOVERNING BOARD MEETING
TUESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2025 – 9:00 A.M.
7601 U.S. HIGHWAY 301 NORTH, FLORIDA 33637
(813) 985-7481

Board Members Present

Michelle Williamson, Chair
John Mitten, Vice Chair
Jack Bispham, Secretary
Ed Armstrong, Member
Kelly Rice, Member
John Hall, Member
Dustin Rowland, Member
James Holton, Member
Robert Stern, Member*
Nancy H. Watkins, Member
Josh Gamblin, Member

*Attended Via Electronic Media

Board Members Absent

Ashley Bell Barnett, Treasurer

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 January 28 at 9:00 a.m., at 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 Michelle Williamson called the meeting to order. She noted that the Board meeting was being recorded for broadcast on government access channels, and public input would be provided in person. Chair Williamson 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. She 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 Williamson also requested that several individuals wishing to speak on the same topic designate a spokesperson. She 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

None were presented.

1.4 Additions/Deletions to Agenda

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

Secretary Jack Bispham requested the following item be moved from Consent to Discussion:

Finance/Outreach & Planning Committee

2.2 Budget Development Metrics

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

Mr. David Ballard Geddis spoke regarding reclaimed water.

Mr. Don Balaban spoke regarding flooding associated with Lake Thonotosassa.

Mr. David Parrish, representing Shangri-La Homeowners Association, spoke regarding flooding concerns related to Lake Shangri-La and the operation of structures.

Ms. Sandy Zale requested a video be played regarding a zoning issue in Hillsborough County related to a salvage yard.

Ms. Elaine Lopez spoke regarding a zoning issue in Hillsborough County related to a salvage yard.

Mr. Chris Tumminia, General Counsel, stated that staff is investigating the issue as it relates to the District. He advised that due to the potential of litigation, discussion should be limited.

Ms. Michelle Miles spoke regarding a zoning issue in Hillsborough County related to a salvage yard. She provided a handout to the Board members.

Chair Williamson clarified that the District does not have authorization regarding zoning and permitting as it relates to a county's jurisdiction.

Mr. John Franco spoke regarding flooding associated with Lake Thonotosassa.

Mr. Alan Zale asked the Board to please review the information that was provided by Ms. Miles.

Mr. Kevin Cash spoke regarding coordination with the District and Hillsborough County regarding lowering the Shangri-La Lake level.

Chair Williamson reminded everyone that a workshop will be held in March addressing flooding concerns.

Ms. Michelle Hopkins, Regulation Director, provided historical information regarding Lake Shangri-La (lake). She explained the coordination between Hillsborough County (County) and the District regarding decisions that are made during adverse events to pump water from the Lake. Ms. Jennette Seachrist stated a minimum level has not been set for this lake. Secretary Jack Bispham asked which entity sets the level. Ms. Hopkins stated there is collaboration

between the District and the County, however, the District makes the final decision. Chair Williamson asked that information regarding this lake be addressed at the March Governing Board Workshop.

Consent Agenda

Finance/Outreach & Planning Committee

2.1 Office of Inspector General Calendar Year 2025 Audit Plan

Staff recommended the Board approve the Office of Inspector General Calendar Year 2025 Audit Plan.

2.2 Budget Development Metrics

~~Staff recommended the Board:~~

- ~~1. Approve retirement of the Project Budget metric beginning with the FY2027 budget development.~~
- ~~2. Approve retirement of the Salaries and Benefits metric beginning with the FY2027 budget development.~~
- ~~3. Authorize the Chair to approve and execute an amendment to the agreement between the District and the Executive Director to address the retirement of budget metrics, along with any related and necessary revisions.~~

Operations, Lands and Resource Monitoring Committee

2.3 Gilley Creek North Cattle Lease, SWF Parcel No. 21-601-120X (Manatee County)

Staff recommended the Board approve the award of the Gilley Creek North Cattle Lease to Little Everglades Cattle Company and authorize the Governing Board Chair to execute the Lease on behalf of the District.

2.4 Gilley Creek South Cattle Lease, SWF Parcel No. 21-601-121X (Manatee County)

Staff recommended the Board approve the award of the Gilley Creek South Cattle Lease to Little Everglades Cattle Company and authorize the Governing Board Chair to execute the Lease on behalf of the District.

2.5 Perpetual Easement for Lake Okahumpka, SWF Parcel No. 19-020-127 (Sumter County)

Staff recommended the Board:

- 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.

General Counsel's Report

2.6 Approval of Consent Order – Environmental Resource Violations and Permit Condition Violations – Tampa Oaks Senior Living, LLC – Environmental Resource Permit No. 43042559.000 (Hillsborough County)

Staff recommended the Board:

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

2.7 Amended Perpetual Exclusive and Non-Exclusive Easements – Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority PR3 Reservoir Project – RV Griffin Reserve – SWF Parcel Nos. 20-223-124X and 20-223-125X (DeSoto County)

Staff recommended the Board approve, accept, and execute the attached Amended Perpetual Exclusive Easement over the RV Griffin Reserve to provide the requisite legal interest to the Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority to construct its PR3 Reservoir Project.

Executive Director's Report

2.8 Approve Governing Board Minutes – December 17, 2024

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 – 00:48:06)

Discussion

Finance/Outreach and Planning Committee

Chair Michelle Williamson called the committee to order.

3.1 Consent Item(s) Moved to Discussion

2.2 Budget Development Metrics

Secretary Jack Bispham requested this item be moved to Discussion.

Mr. Brandon Baldwin, Business and Information Technology Services Director, stated this was a follow-up action that was discussed at the December Governing Board Workshop. He provided historical information regarding the establishment of metrics. Mr. Baldwin explained the three metrics that are used for guidance and budget development. He outlined the three metrics: Goal 1 - Project budget must be at least 50 percent of total budget; Goal 2 - Salaries and benefits funded with ad valorem must not exceed 50 percent of ad valorem revenue; and Goal 3 - The operating budget must not exceed 80 percent of ad valorem revenue. He explained that staff have determined that the first two metrics have fulfilled their intended purposes and staff propose retiring them.

Mr. Baldwin explained that the objective for Goal 1 is projected to be achieved within the next five years. This was due to the implementation of the District's long-term financial planning model prioritizing funding for large-scale alternative water supply development with three regional water supply authorities.

Mr. Baldwin explained that because salaries and benefits have been included within the Operating Budget metric (Goal 3), the metric for Goal 2 is no longer beneficial.

Mr. Baldwin stated that staff are proposing no changes to the metric for Goal 3, the Operating Budget. He stated that staff anticipate meeting all three metrics with the FY2026 budget development. Staff proposed changes to metrics would go into effect in the FY2027 budget development cycle. Additionally, since budget metrics are part of the Executive Director's employment agreement, an amendment to that agreement is necessary to reflect these changes. Discussion ensued.

Staff recommended the Board:

1. Approve retirement of the Project Budget metric beginning with the FY2027 budget development.
2. Approve retirement of the Salaries and Benefits metric beginning with the FY2027 budget development.
3. Authorize the Chair to approve and execute an amendment to the agreement between the District and the Executive Director to address the retirement of budget metrics, along with any related and necessary revisions.

A motion was made and seconded to approve staff's recommendation. The motion carried with ten in favor and one opposed. (Audio – 00:57:57)

3.2 Investment Strategy Quarterly Update

Mr. Mark Cregar, Public Trust Advisors, presented an overview of the current economic forecast, which included Gross Domestic Product, Inflation, Consumer Price Index, Federal Open Market Committee Dot Plot, jobs/unemployment rates, and interest rates. Mr. Cregar responded to questions.

Mr. John Grady presented an overview of the District's portfolio strategy for the last quarter (October 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024). He also provided a 12-month review of investment strategy and performance information. Mr. Grady responded to questions.

Staff recommended the Board accept and place on file the District's Quarterly Investment Reports for the quarter ended December 31, 2024.

A motion was made and seconded to approve staff's recommendation. The motion passed unanimously. (Audio – 01:26:39)

3.3 Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Amendment for Repair of Damage and Debris Removal Resulting from Hurricanes Debby, Helene and Milton

Mr. Brandon Baldwin, Business and Information Technology Services Director, provided an overview of the proposed budget amendment. He acknowledged the Florida Department of Environment Protection and the Governor's office for their approvals.

Mr. Baldwin stated that \$2.2 million of the additional funding requested will be allocated for debris removal for Flint Creek and Peace Creek Canal. He stated the District has applied to the Natural Resources Conservation Services for reimbursement. If approved the District could receive up to 100 percent reimbursement. Mr. Baldwin provided an overview of the debris removal projects.

Mr. Baldwin explained the remaining funds will be applied to other critical impairment projects that involve structures and canals, conservation lands, capital equipment and overtime labor costs. He summarized the projects. He stated improvement to structures and canals would involve the Tampa Bypass and Lake Tarpon Outfall Canals and outlined the improvements. The District has requested rehabilitation assistance from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE). If approved, the USACOE will perform the work to provide all the necessary repairs. Mr. Brian Starford provided additional information and explained the process and a timeline associated with the USACOE assistance. Discussion ensued that included options and processes associated with obtaining vendors for debris removal.

Staff recommended the Board approve Resolution 25-02, First Amendment of the Fiscal Year 2025 Annual Service Budget to address impairments resulting from Hurricanes Debby, Helene and Milton utilizing District assigned fund balance for Project Reserves in the amount of \$4,340,600.

A motion was made and seconded to approve staff's recommendation. The motion carried unanimously. (Audio – 01:43:48)

3.4 Status of the 2025 Consolidated Annual Report

Mr. Patrick Doty, Senior Planner, presented an overview and status update regarding the 2025 Consolidated Annual Report (CAR). He explained that water management districts are statutorily mandated to provide this report. Mr. Doty summarized the ten reports that are comprised within the CAR. He outlined highlights and summarized updates to the 2025-2029 Strategic Plan. Mr. Doty explained that due to extreme weather in 2024, flood protection was added as a regional priority in all four planning regions. In addition, cybersecurity has been added as a new core item in business processes. He also explained the data and project

information that was updated. A timeline associated with finalizing the report was also presented.

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

3.5 Budget Transfer Report

This was for information only. No action was required.

3.6 Office of Inspector General Quarterly Update – October 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024

This 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 Pinellas County Chesnut Park ASR & Aquifer Recharge – Third-Party Review (Q142)

Mr. Jay Hoecker, Water Resources Bureau Chief, provided an overview of the Pinellas County Chesnut Park and Aquifer Storage and Recovery & Aquifer Recharge project. He outlined the benefits associated, an estimate of costs and budgeting of funds, and summarized the third-party review.

Secretary Jack Bispham asked about the cone of influence and nitrogen standards associated with the project. Mr. David Adams, Pinellas County Utilities, explained it is considered more of a freshwater bubble and explained how it would disperse. Mr. Adams stated that the concentration of nitrogen is well below the drinking water standards.

A Request to Speak Card was received for this item.

Mr. David Ballard Geddis spoke in opposition to the project.

Staff recommended the Board:

1. Authorize continuation of the project to proceed with final design, permitting, construction and Independent Performance Evaluation (IPE) of Pinellas County Chesnut Park Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) & Aquifer Recharge (AR) project.
2. Update the overall cost to \$27,524,000 with the District's share not to exceed \$4,600,000 for the Chesnut Park ASR and AR Project (Q142).

A motion was made and seconded to approve staff's recommendation. The motion carried unanimously. (Audio – 02:00:13/02:05:35)

Operations, Lands and Resource Monitoring Committee

Chair Michelle Williamson called the committee to order.

5.1 Consent Item(s) Moved to Discussion – None

5.2 Offer for Surplus Lands – Tampa Bypass Canal (TBC-11), SWF Parcel No. 13-001-747S (Hillsborough County)

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

Mr. Mike Singer, Real Estate Services Manager, provided a presentation that included historical information regarding the properties, appraised values and offer amounts for each property.

Staff recommended the Board:

- Accept the offer of \$85,000; and
- Approve the Contract for Sale and Purchase and authorize the Executive Director to sign on 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 – 02:09:50)

5.3 Offer for Surplus Lands – Tampa Bypass Canal (TBC-31), SWF Parcel No. 13-001-763S (Hillsborough County)

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

Staff recommended the Board:

- Accept the offer of \$75,000; and
- Approve the Contract for Sale and Purchase and authorize the Executive Director to sign on 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 – 02:10:14)

Regulation Committee

Board Member James Holton called the committee to order.

6.1 Consent Item(s) Moved to Discussion - None

6.2 Denials Referred to the Governing Board

No denials were presented.

General Counsel's Report

7.1 Consent Item(s) Moved to Discussion - None

7.2 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 – 02:11:13)

Committee/Liaison Reports

8.1 Agricultural and Green Industry Advisory Committee

A written summary of the December 3 meeting was provided.

Executive Director's Report

9.1 Executive Director's Report

Mr. Brian Armstrong, Executive Director, reiterated a public workshop is scheduled for March at the Tampa office that will discuss flooding issues related to discussions today.

Chair's Report

10.1 Chair's Report

Chair Williamson asked if the Board had any items to be discussed at the next meeting. No items were presented.

Board Member Kelly Rice expressed his appreciation to the Board for their decorum and staff's engagement as related to the public input at the beginning of the meeting. He asked to be kept apprised of the concerns that were addressed.

Board Member Nancy Watkins expressed concerns regarding allowing the use of electronic media related to public comments. Mr. Armstrong stated he was not aware of a written policy relating to this. However, files are scanned prior to allowing anything to be presented. Board Member Watkins expressed concerns regarding the use of staff time to accommodate this. Mr. Armstrong stated that he will address this topic and keep the Board informed.

Chair Williamson stated the next scheduled Board meeting is on Tuesday, February 25 at 9:00 a.m., in the Brooksville office.

10.2 Employee Milestones

A written summary was provided.

The meeting recessed at 11:18 a.m., for a Closed-Door Attorney-Client Session.

Adjournment

The Governing Board meeting was reconvened and was adjourned at 11:57 a.m.