GOVERNING BOARD MEETING
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2026 –9:00 A.M.
2379 BROAD STREET, BROOKSVILLE, FLORIDA 34601
(352) 796-7211

Board Members Present
Jack Bispham, Chair
Ashley Bell Barnett, Vice Chair*
John Hall, Secretary
Kelly Rice, Member
Michelle Williamson, 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
Dustin Rowland, Treasurer
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. Convene Public Meeting

The Governing Board of the Southwest Florida Water Management District (District) met for its regular meeting on October 27 at 9:00 a.m., in the Brooksville office at 2379 Broad Street, Brooksville, Florida 34604. 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 Kelly Rice offered the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.3 Election of Governing Board Officers

Mr. Chris Tumminia, General Counsel, outlined the process for the election of officers.

Board Member Michelle Williamson made a motion to nominate a slate of officers as follows: Chair, Jack Bispham; Vice Chair, Ashley Bell Barnett; Secretary, John Hall and Treasurer, Dustin Rowland. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

1.4 Employee Recognition

Chair Bispham recognized Misty O'Neal, Matt Jablonski, Allen Yarbrough and Kelly Keck for their milestone years of service with the District.

1.5 Additions/Deletions to Agenda

Mr. Brian Armstrong, Executive Director, stated the following item was being deleted from the Consent Agenda:

Operations, Lands & Resource Monitoring Committee

2.4 Perpetual Canal Maintenance Easement – Peace Creek Drainage Canal – SWF Parcel No. 20-696-269P (Polk County)

There was good cause to amend the published agenda as allowed by Section 120.525, Florida Statutes.

1.6 Public Input for Issues Not Listed on the Published Agenda

Mr. David Ballard Geddis, Jr., spoke regarding the significance of legal language.

Ms. Ashley Stout-Fuchs spoke in opposition to proposed public supply wells in the Centralia area of Hernando County.

Mr. Scott Matthew spoke in opposition to proposed public supply wells in the Centralia area of Hernando County.

Mr. Tony Claude spoke in opposition to proposed public supply wells in the Centralia area of Hernando County.

Mr. Eric Lenio spoke in opposition to proposed public supply wells in the Centralia area of Hernando County.

Mr. Greg Gardner spoke regarding maintaining the Starkey Road watershed.

Ms. Alison Clark spoke regarding flooding from the Withlacoochee wetlands mitigation bank.

Mr. Robert Anazolone spoke in opposition to a proposed data center in Fort Meade.

Consent Agenda
Finance/Outreach& Planning Committee

2.1 Office of Inspector General Performance Measures

Staff recommended the Board approve the OIG performance measures.

2.2 Resolution to Request Disbursement of Funds from the Land Acquisition Trust Fund for Land Management

Staff recommended the Board approve Resolution 26-09, Request to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection for Disbursement of Funds from the Land Acquisition Trust Fund for Land Management.

Resource Management Committee

2.3 Minimum Flows and Minimum Water Levels Priority List and Schedule Update

Staff recommended the Board approve the District's Minimum Flows and Minimum Water Levels 2026 Priority List and Schedule for submission to DEP for review and approval as required by Chapter 373, F.S.

Operations, Lands & Resource Monitoring Committee

~~**2.4 Perpetual Canal Maintenance Easement – Peace Creek Drainage Canal – SWF Parcel No. 20-696-269P (Polk 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.~~

2.5 Right of First Refusal – Bronson Conservation Easement SWF 10-200-1100Cb (Lake County)

Staff recommended the Board:

- Decline the right of first refusal to purchase the remainder fee interest over SWF Parcel No. 10-200-1100Cb encumbered by a District Perpetual Conservation Easement.
- Authorize the Executive Director to execute the necessary documents to decline the right of first refusal on SWF Parcel 10-200-1100Cb.

2.6 Right of First Refusal – Modica Conservation Easement SWF 10-200-1144C (Lake County)

Staff recommended the Board:

- Decline the right of first refusal to purchase the remainder fee simple interest for SWF Parcel No. 10-200-1144C that is subject to a District conservation easement; and
- Authorize the Executive Director to execute the necessary documents to decline the first right of refusal on SWF Parcel No. 10-200-1144C.

2.7 Budget Transfer Request – Management Agreement – Chassahowitzka River Campground – SWF Parcel No. 15-347- 105X (Citrus County)

Staff recommended the Board:

- Approve the FY2026 budget transfer of one hundred seventy-seven thousand five hundred dollars ($177,500) from contracted services for expert assistance with agricultural permitting (P414) in the Environmental Resource Permit Bureau to the Real Estate Services Section of the Land Resources Bureau for a contribution for capital improvements associated with the Agreement between the District and Citrus County for the Chassahowitzka River Campground.
- Authorize staff to execute any other documents necessary to complete the transaction in accordance with the approved terms.
- Approve the encumbrance and roll of the funds for payment in the following fiscal year, in the Event that the County does not meet their obligations under the Agreement before the end of the current fiscal year.

Regulation Committee

2.8 Water Use Permit No. 20008694.010 – Harper's RC Properties, LLC / J Bar C Ranch (Manatee County)

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

General Counsel's Report

2.9 Approval of Amendments to Emergency Order Nos. SWF 26-004, SWF 26-006, and SWF 26-007

Staff recommended the Board:

- Approve the Third Amendment to Emergency Order No. SWF 26-004.
- Approve the Second Amendment to Emergency Order No. SWF 26-006.
- Approve the Second Amendment to Emergency Order No. SWF 26-007.

2.10 Delegation of Authority – IRS Information Return Intake System (IRIS) API Client ID Application

Staff recommended the Board delegate authority to the Executive Director, or designee, to serve as the District's Principal for the IRS API Client ID Application, and to sign and submit all related applications, updates, renewals, and authorizations necessary to electronically file information returns with the IRS through IRIS.

2.11 Knowledge Management: Conduct of Board Meetings Policy

Staff recommended the Board approve the proposed revisions to the Conduct of Board Meetings Policy.

2.12 Approval of Emergency Order No. SWF 26-057 (Hurricane Isaias)

Staff recommended the Board approve Emergency Order No. SWF 26-057.

Executive Director's Report

2.13 Approve Fiscal Year 2027 Final Budget Hearing Minutes

Staff recommended the Board approve minutes as presented.

2.14 Approve Governing Board Minutes – September 22, 2026

Staff recommended the Board approve minutes as presented.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion carried unanimously. (Audio – 00:40:30)

Discussion

Finance/Outreach & Planning Committee

Chair Jack Bispham called the committee to order.

3.1 Consent Item(s) Moved to Discussion - None

3.2 Knowledge Management: Annual Review of Governing Board Investments Policy

Mr. Brandon Baldwin, Business and Information Technology Division Director, presented the required annual overview of the District's investment policy. and outlined the proposed changes. The final policy will be presented at the November meeting for Board approval.

This was for information only. No action was required.

3.3 Investment Strategy Quarterly Update

Mr. John Grady, PTMA Financial Solutions, summarized the current economic forecast, which included Gross Domestic Product, inflation, gasoline prices, consumer confidence, jobs/unemployment rates, labor force participation rate, consumer price index, interest rates and expectations. He presented an overview of the District's investment portfolios. Mr. Grady responded to questions.

Staff recommended the Board accept and place on file the District's Quarterly Investment Reports

for the quarter ended September 30, 2026.

A motion was made and seconded to approve staff's recommendation. The motion carried unanimously. (Audio – 01:08:40)

3.4 Office of Inspector General Quarterly Update – July 1, 2026 to September 30, 2026
This was for information only. No action was required.

3.5 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 Initiation and Approval of Rulemaking to Amend Rule 40D-8.624, Florida Administrative Code, to Adopt Revised Minimum Levels for Lake Wailes in Polk County and Accept the Final Draft Report
Mr. Jason Patterson, P.G., provided a presentation that included the establishment and defining of Minimum Flows and Levels (MFLs) and the environmental values associated. He presented a timeline of the re-evaluation of the Minimum Lake Levels for Lake Wailes and the processes associated. Mr. Patterson summarized the use of models, standards and screening processes used to extrapolate and assess data.

Staff recommended the Board:
- Accept the report entitled, "Reevaluation of Minimum Levels for Lake Wailes in Polk County, Florida, September 15, 2026"
- Authorize staff to make any necessary minor clarifying edits that may result from the rulemaking process and to complete report finalization.
- Initiate rulemaking and approve the proposed rule language to amend Rule 40D-8.624, F.A.C., to replace the previously approved minimum levels with the proposed minimum levels for Lake Wailes in Polk County, as shown in the Exhibit.

A motion was made and seconded to approve staff's recommendation. The motion carried unanimously. (Audio – 01:27:40)

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

This was for information only. No action was required.

5.3 Initiation and Approval of Rulemaking to Amend Chapter 40D-9, Florida Administrative Code, to Adopt Proposed Revisions to Land Use Rules

Mr. Allen Milligan, Project Manager, provided a summary of the objectives for amending Chapter 40D-9, F.A.C., and the District's land use rules. He explained that outreach was provided and appropriate stakeholder input was included in the proposed amendments. Mr. Milligan presented an overview of the proposed amendments, associated benefits and a timeline. Staff responded to questions.

Staff recommended the Board:

- Approve the request to initiate the rulemaking process for the adoption of the amendment to Chapter 40D-9, F.A.C., to update the District Land Use Rules.
- Approve the proposed amendment to Chapter 40D-9, F.A.C.
- Authorize staff to make any necessary clarifying or minor technical changes that may result from the rulemaking process.

A motion was made and seconded to approve staff's recommendation. The motion carried unanimously. (Audio – 01:48:19)

Regulation Committee

No Items were presented.

6.1 Consent Item(s) Moved to Discussion - None

General Counsel

7.1 Consent Item(s) Moved to Discussion – None

7.2 Affirm Governing Board Committee Actions

A motion was made and seconded to approve staff's recommendation. The motion carried unanimously. (Audio – 01:49:44)

Mr. Chris Tumminia, General Counsel, provided an update regarding an item presented at the August meeting. He stated that the Board approved staff to initiate rulemaking to amend rule 40D-8.041, F.A.C., to adopt Minimum Flows and Level (MFLs) for the Upper Peace River. Mr. Tumminia stated the Polk Regional Water Cooperative (Cooperative) has filed a request for a public hearing on the proposed rule. He stated the expectation is this is a pre-curser to a rule challenge. Mr. Tumminia explained that the Cooperative has also submitted a lower cost regulatory alternative to the rule, requesting the adoption of a less stringent MFL. The District is required to evaluate the alternative before the rule can proceed. Mr. Tumminia stated he will keep the Board informed.

Committee/Liaison Reports

8.1 Agricultural and Green Industry Advisory Committee

A written summary of the September 8 meeting was provided.

Executive Director's Report

9.1 Executive Director's Report

Mr. Brian Armstrong, Executive Director, provided a summary of his FY2027 goals. A detailed written summary was provided to the Board.

Mr. Armstrong explained the process associated when evaluating water use permits. This was in reference to the public comments received regarding a permit application for proposed public supply wells in the Centralia area of Hernando County.

Mr. Armstrong also referenced the public comment regarding the proposed Fort Meade data center. He stated there was no permit currently under review.

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. None were presented.

Chair Bispham asked for an overview of the Governing Board workshop scheduled for the November Board meeting. Mr. Armstrong stated that the workshop discussion will include the budget, allocation of funds and feedback from the Board.

The next Board meeting with a workshop is on Tuesday, November 17 at 9:00 a.m., in the Tampa office.

10.2 Employee Milestones

A written summary was provided.

10.3 2026 Employee Evaluation and 2027 Performance Goals for the Executive Director and Inspector General

Chair Bispham thanked the Board members for their feedback regarding both performance evaluations.

Chair Bispham affirmed that individual scores were received from the Board Members for the executive director's performance evaluation.

Chair Bispham stated that in accordance with District policy, the inspector general's performance score is recommended by the Treasurer. He affirmed that Treasurer Rowland received the individual scores.

Staff recommended the Board:

- Adopt and approve the 2026 employee evaluations of Executive Director Brian J. Armstrong and Inspector General Brian R. Werthmiller that were completed by the Governing Board Chair and the Governing Board Treasurer, respectively.
- Adopt and approve the 2027 Executive Director goals.

A motion was made to accept the recommended performance scores, and merit increases for both the executive director and the inspector general. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. (Audio – 01:57:47)

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.