



GOVERNING BOARD MEETING
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2024 – 9:00 A.M.
7601 U.S. HIGHWAY 301 NORTH, TAMPA FLORIDA 33637
(813) 985-7481

Board Members Present

Michelle Williamson, Chair
John Mitten, Vice Chair
Jack Bispham, Secretary
Ashley Bell Barnett, Treasurer
Ed Armstrong, Member*
Joel Schleicher, 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

Kelly Rice, 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

1. Convene Public Meeting

The Governing Board of the Southwest Florida Water Management District (District) met for its regular meeting on November 19 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

Treasurer Ashley Bell Barnett offered the invocation, and the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.3 Employee Recognition

Chair Williamson recognized Michelle Weaver for 30 years of service.

1.4 Additions/Deletions to Agenda

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

Board Member Joel Schleicher requested the following item be moved to Discussion:

Resource Management Committee

2.3 FARMS – McClure Properties, LTD Phase 2 – H830 (Manatee County)

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, Jr., spoke regarding levies.

Mr. Stephen Denick, completed a Request to Speak card but did not speak.

Mr. Jay Bolnick spoke regarding the recent flooding that affected his property in the Lake Thonotosassa area.

Mr. Don Balaban spoke regarding the recent flooding that affected his property in the Lake Thonotosassa area.

Mr. John Franco spoke regarding the recent flooding that affected his property in the Lake Thonotosassa area.

Mr. Nathan Schirmer spoke regarding the recent flooding that affected his property in the Lake Thonotosassa area.

Ms. Lois Slatton spoke regarding the recent flooding that affected his property in the Lake Thonotosassa area.

Mr. Chris Ryan spoke regarding the recent flooding that affected his property in the Lake Thonotosassa area.

Mr. Jamie Slatton spoke regarding the recent flooding that affected his property in the Lake Thonotosassa area.

Chair Williamson stated that she recalled a local restaurant on the lake flooding frequently in the 1980s. Mr. Brian Armstrong, Executive Director, provided background information related to the tributaries that flow into and out of Lake Thonotosassa (Lake), which includes Baker Creek, Pemberton Creek and Flint Creek. He explained that Baker and Pemberton Creeks are mostly privately owned. Flint Creek is maintained by Hillsborough County. Mr. Armstrong stated that the District performed debris removal in 2023 to assist with the operation of the Flint Creek water conservation structure (Structure). He explained that prior to Hurricane Milton, the Lake was lowered an additional three inches, for a total of 14 inches, to its minimum guidance level. Mr. Armstrong stated the Lake's minimum guidance level has not changed since August 2000. The only change that was made was to the datum under which the elevation is recorded. He explained the District changed to North American Vertical Datum (NAVD) from National Geodetic Vertical Datum (NGVD) for the collection of data. Mr. Armstrong stated that even after lowering the Lake level, the

structure was unable to contain the historic rainfall from Hurricane Milton. He emphasized that all information is public record and encouraged the public to view it. Discussion ensued.

Board Member Joel Schleicher suggested workshops be considered that would involve other agencies to discuss coordination and preparation for future storm events.

Mr. Armstrong explained the challenges associated when balancing the efforts related to environmental and human concerns when operating structures.

Chair Williamson asked if the flooding issue could be added to discussion at the December Board Workshop. However, if time does not allow it, she asked that a separate workshop be considered for the first of the year. Mr. Chris Tumminia, General Counsel, stated although the agenda for the workshop has been set, staff will give it consideration.

Consent Agenda

Finance/Outreach and Planning Committee

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

Staff recommended the Board approve Resolution 24-09, Request to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection for Disbursement of Funds from the Land Acquisition Trust Fund for Land Management, as shown in the Exhibit.

2.2 Knowledge Management: Approval of Governing Board Policy, Investments

Staff recommended the Board approve and accept the recommended updates to the District's Investment Policy.

Resource Management Committee

2.3 FARMS – McClure Properties, LTD Phase 2 – H830 (Manatee County)

~~Staff recommended the Board:~~

- ~~1. Approve the McClure Properties, LTD Phase 2 project for a not-to-exceed project reimbursement of \$195,706 provided by the Governing Board;~~
- ~~2. Authorize the transfer of \$195,706 from fund 010 H017 Governing Board FARMS Fund to the H830 McClure Properties, LTD Phase 2 project fund;~~
- ~~3. Authorize the Assistant Executive Director to sign the agreement.~~

Operations, Lands and Resource Monitoring Committee

2.4 Perpetual Easement – Peace River at Fort Meade; SWF Parcel No. 20-020-189 (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.

General Counsel's Report

2.5 Approval of Settlement Agreement between Southwest Florida Water Management District and MGM of West Florida, LLC – Unauthorized Construction and Permit Condition Violations – Environmental Resource Permit No. 30586 (Manatee County)

Staff recommended the Board approve the Settlement Agreement between the District and MGM of West Florida, LLC.

2.6 Interagency Agreement between St. Johns River Water Management District and Southwest Florida Water Management District – Designation of Regulatory Responsibility to St. Johns River Water Management District for Environmental Resource Permits – Interstate-75 Widening (Marion and Sumter Counties)

Staff recommended the Board approve the Interagency Agreement between the St. Johns River Water Management District and the Southwest Florida Water Management District for the designation of regulatory responsibility for ERP for the Florida Department of Transportation for Phases I and II of the above-described Project.

Executive Director's Report

2.7 Approve Governing Board Minutes – October 22, 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 – 00:57:03)

Discussion

Finance/Outreach and Planning Committee

Treasurer Ashley Bell Barnett called the committee to order.

3.1 Consent Item(s) Moved to Discussion – None

3.2 Budget Transfer Report

This item was for information. No action was required.

Resource Management Committee

Board Member Dustin Rowland called the committee to order.

4.1 Consent Item(s) Moved to Discussion

2.3 FARMS – McClure Properties, LTD Phase 2 – H830 (Manatee County)

Board Member Joel Schleicher requested this item be moved to Discussion.

Ms. Carole Estes, FARMS Program Manager, presented an overview of the project, benefits associated and project costs. Ms. Estes responded to questions, which included outreach performed by the District.

Staff recommended the Board:

1. Approve the McClure Properties, LTD Phase 2 project for a not-to-exceed project reimbursement of \$195,706 provided by the Governing Board;
2. Authorize the transfer of \$195,706 from fund 010 H017 Governing Board FARMS Fund to the H830 McClure Properties, LTD Phase 2 project fund;
3. Authorize the Assistant Executive Director to sign the agreement.

A motion was made and seconded to approve staff's recommendation. The motion carried with eleven in favor and one opposed. (Audio – 01:07:05)

4.2 Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority Update

Mr. Richard Anderson, Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority Executive Director, presented an overview of the Authority which included a history, funding partnerships, water supply demands, current projects and proposed projects related to demand projections. Mr. Anderson responded to questions.

This item was for information. No action was required.

Operations, Lands and Resource Monitoring Committee

Board Member Robert Stern called the committee to order.

5.1 Consent Item(s) Moved to Discussion – None

5.2 District Hurricane Response

Mr. Dave Dickens, General Services Bureau Chief/Emergency Manager, presented an overview of the recent hurricanes and the District's preparedness activities. He explained the District uses the structured response process called National Incident Management System (NIMS) for emergency management. Mr. Dickens specifically addressed preparedness activities, staff actions during Hurricane Milton and post storm activities.

Mr. Dickens outlined the continuing assessment of damages associated with District lands and structures. He stated that due to the magnitude of Hurricane Milton, the District created a GIS damage assessment tool to assist field staff and explained how it is utilized. Mr. Dickens thanked the United States Army Corps of Engineers for providing pumps at the Medard Reservoir and engineering support for culverts at the Tampa Bypass Canal.

Mr. Dickens presented a video narrated by staff member Dr. Mark Fulkerson, Watershed Management Chief Professional Engineer, that outlined the impacts to watersheds and the District's responses as a result of Hurricane Milton. The Withlacoochee River was specifically addressed. Mr. Dickens explained that flooding conditions from the Withlacoochee River during Hurricane Milton broke the record established by Hurricane Donna in 1960. Mr. Dickens outlined the various agencies the District partnered with to assist with flooding as a result of Lake Bonny in Polk County.

This item was for information. No action was required.

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 – 01:56:34)

Committee/Liaison Reports

8.1 Environmental Advisory Committee

Due to the cancellation of the October 8 meeting, no update was provided.

Executive Director's Report

9.1 Executive Director's Report

Mr. Brian Armstrong, Executive Director, expressed appreciation to the Board for the confidence they have in staff.

Chair's Report

10.1 Chair's Report

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

Secretary Jack Bispham suggested, in light of the public comments at the beginning of the meeting, consideration be given to developing documentation that will clarify the responsibilities of municipalities/agencies within the District.

Chair Williamson stated the next scheduled Board meeting is on Tuesday, December 17 at 9:00 a.m., in the Brooksville office. There is also a Governing Board Workshop following the meeting.

10.2 Employee Milestones

A written summary was provided.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:04 a.m.