



GOVERNING BOARD MEETING
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2025 – 9:00 A.M.
2379 BROAD STREET, BROOKSVILLE, FLORIDA 34604
(352) 796-7211

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

*Attended via Electronic Media

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 December 16 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

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 Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Board Member Kelly Rice offered the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.3 Additions/Deletions to Agenda

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

1.4 Public Input for Issues Not Listed on the Published Agenda

Mr. David Ballard Geddis, Jr., spoke regarding municipal water infrastructure.

Consent Agenda

Resource Management Committee

2.1 Surface Water Improvement and Management Program Priority Water Body List

Staff recommended the Board approve the District's SWIM priority list with no changes to the existing twelve priority water bodies.

Operations, Lands & Resource Monitoring Committee:

2.2 Sale of Easement to Tampa Electric Company – Tampa Bypass Canal – SWF Parcel No. 13-004-326X (Hillsborough County)

Staff recommended the Board:

- Accept the offer of \$451,900.00; 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

2.3 Water Use Permit No. 20 006509.019, Polk County BOCC/Northeast Regional Utility Service Area (Polk County)

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

General Counsel's Report

2.4 Release of Conservation Easements – Environmental Resource Permit Application No. 902207 – Cooper Creek Phase 5 (Manatee County)

Staff recommended the Board approve, accept, and execute the Release of Conservation Easement and Quitclaim Deed for the Cooper Creek Phase 5 Project.

2.5 Knowledge Management: Delegation of Authority to Executive Director for Final Action on Permit Applications

Staff recommended the Board approve the proposed changes to the policy.

Executive Director's Report

2.6 Approve Governing Board Minutes – November 18, 2025

Staff recommended the Board approve minutes as presented.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion carried unanimously. (Audio – 00:07:49)

Finance/Outreach & Planning Committee

Treasurer John Hall called the committee to order.

3.1 Consent Item(s) Moved to Discussion – None

3.2 Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2027

Mr. Brandon Baldwin, Business and IT Services Director, presented the Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) Preliminary Budget. He provided an overview and timeline of the budget development cycle. Mr. Baldwin presented a budget development goal for operating expenses. He provided comparison information on source funds and expenditures for FY26 and FY27 and summarized changes. The total FY27 preliminary budget is \$227.6 million, which is a decrease of 11 percent. Mr. Baldwin outlined the use of some funds that are currently in reserves.

Staff recommended the Board authorize staff to prepare the Preliminary Budget Submission for FY2027 based on the preliminary budget as presented, adjusted for any modifications made by the Governing Board on December 16, for submission to the Florida Legislature on or before January 15, 2026.

A motion was made and seconded to approve staff's recommendation. The motion carried unanimously. (Audio – 00:24:56)

3.3 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 Fiscal Year 2027 Cooperative Funding Process

Mr. Kevin Wills, Cooperative Funding Initiative Lead, presented proposed changes regarding the FY27 Cooperative Funding Initiative (CFI) review process. This included eliminating the Regional Subcommittee meetings. He provided a schedule for reviewing, scoring, and approving funding requests.

Mr. Wills provided a summary of the applications received for FY27. This included the number received, draft priority ranking and the funding amounts requested. He presented a comparison of funding requests for FY23 through FY27 and noted the continued decrease in applications received. Mr. Wills provided a proposed agenda for the CFI presentation at the February 2026 Board meeting.

Staff recommended the Board approve eliminating the Regional Subcommittee meetings for the FY2027 CFI review process.

A motion was made and seconded to approve staff's recommendation. The motion carried unanimously. (Audio – 00:032:12)

Mr. Wills asked for the Board to provide direction regarding proposed changes to the CFI policy that would remove the subcommittees. He stated that any proposed changes would be presented to the Board for approval. Discussion ensued.

A motion was made to allow staff to make changes to the policy and then return to the Board for approval; however, Board Member Dustin Rowland explained a motion was not required.

4.3 2025 Regional Water Supply Plan

Mr. Ryan Pearson, Water Supply Manager, presented an overview of the 2025 Regional Water Supply Plan (RWSP). This plan covers a planning horizon from 2025 through 2045. He summarized the process timeline and outreach. Mr. Pearson outlined the purpose of the RWSP, resource protection criteria, demand estimates and projections, evaluation of water sources, water supply and resource development projects, and funding mechanisms. He summarized the 2025 RWSP findings. Mr. Pearson responded to questions.

Staff recommended the Board approve the Draft Final 2025 Regional Water Supply Plan.

A motion was made and seconded to approve staff's recommendation. The motion carried unanimously. (Audio – 01:00:58)

A Request to Speak card was received for this item.

Mr. David Ballard Geddis expressed his concern regarding the use of direct potable reuse.

4.4 Proposed Minimum Flows for the Upper Peace River Prior to Independent Scientific Peer Review

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

4.5 Annual Status of the Southern Water Use Caution Area Recovery Strategy

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

Operations, Lands & Resource Monitoring Committee

Board Member Robert Stern called the committee to order.

5.1 Consent Item(s) Moved to Discussion - None

5.2 Hydrologic Conditions Report

Mr. Joseph Fogel, Senior Hydrologic Data Analyst, presented the hydrologic conditions update. He stated the 12-month Districtwide rainfall total was below average, with a deficit of 13.3 inches. Hydrologic indicators were mixed, but many are in the low-normal to below-normal range. Public water supplies, including the Hillsborough Reservoir, the C.W. Bill Young Regional Reservoir, and the Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority Reservoirs 1 and 2/ASR Wellfield have been in use due to the dry conditions.. Phase I Water Shortage went into effect December 1. Staff will assess the need for future recommendations based on hydrologic conditions. The near-term and extended climate forecasts were presented.

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

Regulation Committee

No items were presented.

6.1 Consent Item(s) Moved to Discussion - None

General Counsel's Report

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 – 01:13:33)

Committee/Liaison Reports

8.1 Public Supply Advisory Committee

A written summary of the November 4 meeting was provided.

Executive Director's Report

9.1 Executive Director's Report

Mr. Brian Armstrong, Executive Director, expressed appreciation to the Governor, the Legislature and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection for grant funding received to support water quality improvements, springs restoration and long-term water supply projects.

Mr. Armstrong, in relation to earlier discussions, credited Alternative Water Supplies with helping to improve the environment and provided examples.

Mr. Armstrong stated that the District's Communications and Government Affairs earned three PRestige Awards and Best in Show from the Tampa Bay Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America.

Mr. Armstrong expressed his appreciation to staff for partnering with the Hernando County Foster Association for over 20 years. Staff's generosity provided gifts for 26 children this year.

Mr. Armstrong wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Chair's Report

10.1 Employee Milestones

A written summary was provided.

10.2 Chair's Report

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

Chair Mitten reminded the Board that a workshop will follow today's meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 27 at 9:00 a.m., in the Tampa office.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:21 a.m.