



**PUBLIC SUPPLY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**TUESDAY, August 6, 2024 – 1:00 PM**  
**2379 BROAD STREET, BROOKSVILLE, FLORIDA 34604**

**MINUTES**

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Committee Members Present

Bryan Schmaltz – Bay Laurel Center Community Dev.  
Debra Burden – Citrus County Water Resources  
Maggie Dorge – Citrus County Water Resources (alternate)  
Ricky Jaynes – City of Lakeland Water Utilities (alternate)  
Michael Acosta – City of North Port Utilities  
Lynn Spivey – City of Plant City Utilities  
Steve Adams – City of Punta Gorda Utilities  
Sheree Greer – City of St. Petersburg Utilities  
Ryan Smith – City of Tampa Water Department  
Greg Harris – DeSoto County Utilities  
Alys Brockway – Hernando County Utilities  
David Glicksberg – Hillsborough County Utilities  
Olga Wolanin – Manatee County Utilities (Chair)  
Mark Thomas – Marion County Utilities (alternate)  
Jim Guida – Peace River Manasota Reg. Water Supply Auth.  
David Adams – Pinellas County Utilities  
Dan Umberger – Pinellas County Utilities (alternate)  
Tamara Richardson – Polk County Utilities  
Krystal Azzarella – Polk County Utilities (alternate)  
Stoney Pope – Sarasota County Utilities  
Brian Fagan – Sarasota County Utilities (alternate)  
Cathleen Jonas – Tampa Bay Water  
Trey Arnett – The Villages

Staff Members

Adrienne Vining  
April Breton  
Bob Thompson  
Chris Zajac  
Destin Dawsy  
Gabe Herrick  
Jay Hoecker  
Jennette Seachrist  
Jeremy McCay  
John Clarke  
Randy Smith  
Robyn Felix  
Ryan Pearson  
Tamera McBride  
Taylor Greenan  
Ted Gates

Board Administrative Support

Virginia Singer  
Barbara Matrone

Governing Board Liaison

Robert Stern

**1. Call to Order and Introductions**

The Public Supply Advisory Committee (PSAC) of the Southwest Florida Water Management District (District) met for its regular meeting at 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 6, 2024, via Microsoft Teams.

Chair Olga Wolanin called the meeting to order, and attendance was called.

Governing Board Liaison Robert Stern welcomed the committee.

**2. Additions and Deletions to the Agenda**

None.

**3. Approval of the February 13, 2024 and the May 10, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

A motion was made to approve the minutes from the February 13, 2024 meeting and the May 10, 2024 tour. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **4. Public Comments**

None.

#### **5. Hydrologic Conditions Update**

Ms. Tamera McBride, Hydrologic Data Manager, provided a hydrologic conditions update. The District is in the third month of the four-month wet season and has received a lot of rainfall from Hurricane Debby, especially in the western portion of the District. July rainfall was normal to very wet in the northern and central regions and normal to very dry in the southern region. Provisional data show that the 12-month rainfall total through July was below normal. The ENSO, or El Niño/Southern Oscillation is in the neutral phase and the probability of La Niña starts to increase by late summer or early fall, which could drive an active hurricane season.

Looking at the provisional rainfall distribution for July, the District normally averages 8.2 inches of rainfall, but for this July received 8.3 inches of rainfall, which is a .1-inch rainfall surplus.

Ms. McBride showed a figure of the 12-month rainfall distribution from August 2023 through July 2024. The District normally averages 52.7 inches of rainfall for the 12-month period, but provisional data indicate 12-month rainfall totals through July were 47.6 inches. This resulted in a provisional 5.1-inch rainfall deficit, which is in the normal range.

Ms. McBride then discussed recent groundwater levels in the northern, central, and southern counties, as well as surface water levels in the Northern Lakes, Tampa Bay Lakes, Polk Upland Lakes, and Lake Wales Ridge Lakes regions. She showed another set of graphs and discussed the eight-week mean discharge of the Withlacoochee, Hillsborough, Alafia, and Peace rivers. She also discussed public supply levels for the City of Tampa's Hillsborough River Reservoir, public supply volumes for the C.W. Bill Young Regional Reservoir, and the water quantities stored in the Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority's reservoir and aquifer storage and recovery wellfield.

Ms. McBride discussed the Near-Term Climate Forecast and showed seasonal outlooks for temperature and precipitation from August to October 2024. As of July 18, 2024, there is a 50-60% chance of above normal temperatures and precipitation. As predicted by the Climate Prediction Center, the extended precipitation forecast for September 2024 through April 2025 is above normal through the fall with a probability of decline over fall and winter due to drier conditions caused by La Nina.

Ms. McBride concluded by discussing the tropical storm origins for August and September and the 7-day tropical weather outlook from the National Weather Service. She stated that there is a tropical disturbance, but it is not predicted to affect Florida at this time.

#### **6. Sunshine Law**

Mr. Destin Dawsy, Attorney, gave a presentation on government in the Sunshine Law. The Florida Sunshine Law provides a basic right of public access to governmental proceedings at both the state and local levels and is recognized in the Florida Constitution. It also applies to any board, commission, or advisory committee of any state agency, county, municipal corporation, or political subdivision. The Sunshine Law prohibits committee members from engaging in private discussions with each other about District business either in person, by electronic communication or by social media. Additionally, committee members may not use non-members as a liaison to communicate information between members. The three basic requirements of the Sunshine Law are that meetings must be open to the public, reasonable notice of meetings must be given to the public, and minutes for committee meetings must be taken and promptly recorded.

Mr. Dawsy then discussed the requirement of meetings needing to be open to the public. A meeting under the Sunshine Law is any communication between two or more committee members regarding some matter that will foreseeably come before the District's Governing Board for action

and does not require any physical presence. A meeting under the Sunshine Law can be any form of communication such as speaking, whispering, writing, texting, emailing, electronically communicating, or signing a document. A one-way communication does not qualify as a meeting. Committee members should use their best judgement in matters relating to District business and should be considered likely to come before the Board.

Sunshine law violations are treated as noncriminal infractions and can be fined up to \$500 unless a person is knowingly in violation. In that case a person may be charged with a second-degree misdemeanor, can be sentenced to a term of imprisonment for up to 60 days in a county jail, and fined up to \$500. Additionally, the Sunshine Law violation could subject the District to civil lawsuit in which case both the District and committee members would be liable for attorney's fees, and anyone convicted may be suspended or removed from their position. Any action taken by the Board in violation of the Sunshine Law is invalid. If there has been a Sunshine Law violation, and a subsequent vote resulting in agency action, the violations may be "cured." The Board must engage in a fully open, public discussion on the matter and arrive at an independent collective opinion.

There are some implications when it comes to social media. Committee members may post about one-way comments or opinions about District business on social media, but these posts may become Sunshine Law violations if they evolve into online discussions on matters that will foreseeably come before the Board for action. Some examples of those violations would be communicating about District business over the phone or via text, discussing District business during a recess of an advisory committee meeting, or an inaudible discussion while sitting at the dais during an advisory committee meeting. If a member posts a comment on either their personal Facebook page or the District's Facebook page about District business, that is not in violation because it is a one-way communication, but if a member comments, "likes" or shares the post, that would be considered in violation of the Sunshine Law.

In conclusion, Mr. Dawsy stated that advisory committee members are subject to the Sunshine Law and must not discuss District business with other committee members except at a public meeting, and refrain from using social media as a forum for discussing District business.

## **7. Minimum Flows and Levels 2024 Priority List and Schedule**

Dr. Gabe Herrick, Lead Environmental Scientist, provided an annual update on the 2024 priority list and schedule for minimum flows and levels (MFL). The District is required to annually update its minimum flows and levels priority list and schedule per Section 373.042, Florida Statutes (F.S.). The priority list and schedule includes waterbodies for which the District will establish MFLs. A MFL represents the limit at which further withdrawals would be significantly harmful to the water resources or ecology of the area. MFLs are used for water use permitting and water supply planning programs to ensure resource protection and sustainable supplies. The priority list and schedule may also include water reservations, which are rules that exclude water from consumptive use. A reservation reserves a quantity of water at a certain time and place for the protection of fish and wildlife or public health and safety.

The District has established 207 MFLs and two water reservations which includes 14 freshwater river segments, 10 springs/spring groups, 14 estuarine river segments, nine aquifer sites, 34 wetlands and 126 lakes. The reservations include one lake/freshwater river segment on Lake Hancock and one sink/estuarine river segment at Morris Bridge Sink as part of the Lower Hillsborough Recovery Strategy.

The District is required to submit its updated priority list and schedule to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for review and approval by November 15 every year and must include the approved list in the Consolidated Annual Report by March 1. The priority list and schedule has a three-year time frame from 2024-2027. Waterbodies are included based on their importance to the state or the region and based on the existence or potential for significant harm.

They are also based on whether they are experiencing or are expected to experience any adverse impacts due to withdrawals.

The District is required to include all first-magnitude springs and second-magnitude springs within state or federal conservation lands. They are also required to include all reservations on the list and identification of cross boundary and Central Florida Water Initiative (CFWI) impacts as well as in some instances DEP adoption may be appropriate.

Dr. Herrick went over the priority list update schedule and stated that a similar presentation will be provided to the District's Governing Board at their August meeting. A public workshop will be held to solicit stakeholder feedback as well as a teleconference with DEP Office of Water Policy in September. There will be a joint effort with the South Florida and the St. Johns River water management districts to discuss the prioritized water bodies in the CFWI area. This will also be presented to the Environmental Advisory Committee in October before going back to the Governing Board for final approval at the October meeting, and then submitted to DEP.

The proposed schedule for the next three years includes 16 lakes, six freshwater rivers, two estuaries, two springs, one aquifer, and one reservation. All lakes on the schedule are surrounded by dry, upland soils and have been prioritized for reevaluation using the new xeric methodology.

Dr. Herrick concluded by reviewing the plan scheduled for finalization. He discussed the changes included in the proposed 2024 priority list and the waterbodies that were rescheduled, removed, or added, and all of the waterbodies for 2024 through 2027 that were new to be developed or reevaluated.

Ms. Alys Brockway asked if the Withlacoochee River MFLs were on the schedule. Dr. Herrick responded that the three segments of the upper Withlacoochee River are scheduled for 2025 and the Lower Withlacoochee River from the dam downstream is scheduled for 2026. Ms. Brockway asked if there would be a public meeting held in 2025. Dr. Herrick responded that there would be, but right now they are still in the data collection and analysis portion of the process, and a presentation to the Board is required before holding a public meeting.

Mr. David Glicksberg asked about the Southern Water Use Caution Area and if it was being evaluated due to the levels increasing. Dr. Herrick responded that it was just part of the schedule reevaluation.

## **8. Advisory Committee Survey Results**

Ms. Robyn Felix, Communications and Board Services Bureau Chief, provided the results of the 2024 Advisory Committee Engagement Survey. There are four advisory committees: Agricultural and Green Industry, Environmental, Industrial and Public Supply (PSAC). This is the third survey that has been conducted. Previous surveys were conducted in 2014 and 2020. The 2024 survey was conducted from March 25 through April 5, 2024. There were 48 surveys submitted resulting in a 74% response rate, 18 PSAC members took the survey, which made up 38% of the overall responses.

To gauge satisfaction and approval, a series of satisfaction questions and agreement questions were asked. Looking at the overall survey results for all four committees, the average satisfaction rating of very satisfied and satisfied for all statements in the survey was 84%. This rating has stayed about the same from previous year's results of 83% in 2014 and 85% in 2020. The average satisfaction rating for the PSAC was 88%, so the PSAC trended a little higher than the average. The overall average agreement rating of strongly agree and agree for all statements in the survey was 76%. It was 66% in 2014 and 80% in 2020, so the number falls in the middle. The average agreement rating for PSAC was 79% so therefore trended a little bit higher than the average.

The PSAC has a good mix of experience among its members with 44% reporting that they have been on the committee for more than five years, 11% have been on the committee for four to five years, 28% have been on the committee for one to three years, and 17% have been on the committee for less than a year. In terms of meeting logistics, 67% said they preferred to meet four times a year, 67% said they preferred having hybrid meetings, 28% responded that they preferred virtual meetings, and 6% responded that they preferred in person meetings. In addition, 61% said they preferred to have one of the meetings each year be a tour of a site or operation and 39% were neutral on the tours.

Ms. Felix discussed the satisfaction ratings to statements in the survey by the PSAC members compared to the previous surveys in 2014 and 2020. Survey results showed 94% of committee members said that they were either very satisfied or satisfied with the topics presented and 100% were either very satisfied or satisfied with the quality of the presentations made to the advisory committee; 89% were either very satisfied or satisfied with the timeliness of the presentations (11% were neutral.) and 67% were very satisfied or satisfied with the role the advisory committee plays in the overall function of the District (33% were neutral).

Ms. Felix then discussed the ratings of agreement for the PSAC members who responded strongly agree or agree: 83% strongly agree or agree that the District values the feedback provided by the committee (17% were neutral); 44% strongly agree or agree that the committee feedback is used by the Governing Board and the District to shape policies and practices (50% were neutral and 6% disagreed); 61% strongly agree or agree that the advisory committee feedback is used by the District staff to shape policies and practices (33% were neutral and 6% disagreed); 84% strongly agree or agree that they regularly share information they receive at committee meetings with the industries they represent (17% were neutral); 83% strongly agreed or agreed that the makeup of the committee provides appropriate representation (16% were neutral). Almost all committee members strongly agreed or agreed that the meetings are valuable for members as well as their organization with 100% and 94%, respectively.

Ms. Felix concluded by stating that they did receive some good open-ended feedback for topics that committee members would like to see at future meetings.

**9. Development of Agenda Topics**

Chair Wolanin mentioned that she could possibly schedule a tour of the Manatee County Water Treatment Plant in the spring.

**10. Announcements and Other Business**

None.

**11. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:06 p.m.