



**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING
OF THE LANDOWNERS OF THE
LAKE WORTH DRAINAGE DISTRICT
HELD ON JANUARY 7, 2026 AT 9:00 A.M.**

Attendees:

James M. Alderman
Jeffrey P. Phipps, Sr.
Reagan Walker
Chris Johnson
Nicole Smith
Juan Tobar
Andre Cima

Stephen Bedner
John I. Whitworth, III
Tommy Strowd
Anthony LasCasas
Sherilla White
Kevin Costello
Charles Burn

Carrie Hill
Mark Perry
Megan Hoffman
Brian Tilles
Sandra Acosta
Robert Hayes
Theodore Winsberg

1. Call to Order

Tommy Strowd called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Steve Bedner led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Presentation of Advertised Meeting Notice

Mr. Strowd confirmed that the legal advertisement for the Landowners' Meeting was published according to noticing requirements.

4. Nomination and Election of Meeting Chairman and Secretary

Mr. Strowd opened nominations for Chairman of the meeting. Stephen Bedner nominated Kevin Costello. Carrie Hill seconded the nomination. There being no further nominations, a unanimous vote was cast for Kevin Costello.

Chairman Costello opened nominations for Secretary of the meeting. John Whitworth, III nominated Theodore Winsberg. Carrie Hill seconded the nomination. There being no further nominations, a unanimous vote was cast for Theodore Winsberg to serve as Secretary of the landowners meeting.

5. Call for Ballots and Proxies for Board of Supervisors Election Sub-Districts 2 & 4

Sub-District 2 and Sub-District 4 seats were up for election. The incumbents, Stephen Bedner and Carrie Hill, respectively, were the only qualified candidates that submitted their notice of their intent to run. In accordance with the published meeting procedures, given there is only one qualified candidate for each Sub-District 2 and Sub-District 4, the election shall be concluded by a verbal affirmation of the landowners present.

Mr. Costello asked for motion to accept Steve Bedner as Board Supervisor for Sub-District 2.

Nicole Smith made a motion to accept the election of as Board Supervisor for Sub-District 1. Jeffrey P. Phipps, Sr. seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Costello asked for motion to accept Carrie Hill as Board Supervisor for Sub-District 4.

Stephen Bedner made a motion to accept the election of as Board Supervisor for Sub-District 1. John I. Whitworth, III seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

6. Approval of Minutes - January 8, 2025 Landowners' Meeting

Landowners were provided with time to review the minutes of the 2025 Landowners' Meeting. Chairman Costello asked for comments. With no comments, Chairman Costello called for a motion to approve the 2025 meeting minutes.

John I. Whitworth, III made a motion to approve the minutes. Jeffrey P. Phipps, Sr. seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

7. Annual Report to Landowners

Executive Director & District Engineer Tommy Strowd presented a report reflecting on the Lake Worth Drainage District's annual activities, accomplishments, and progress. A report summary is provided herein. A copy of the presentation is provided as part of the meeting record.

Mr. Strowd stated that the District is 110 years old and that many changes have occurred over the century of water management. As an indication of the vast changes, he presented a graphic illustrating the District's history which was presented entirely by Artificial Intelligence simply by looking at past meeting minutes.

In 2025, the District experienced less than average annual rainfall (86% of normal rainfall), with eastern Palm Beach County experiencing significantly less than normal rainfall (80% of normal rainfall; ~1 foot rainfall deficit). Early forecasts

predicted above normal probability of hurricane activity, but actual activity was slightly below normal. None of the tropical activity affected the District.

In 2025, because there were not any significant rainfall events, it was an uneventful year for drainage, but the District conducted a lot of water supply pumping, about half of its maximum permitted allocation.

A new Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule (LOSOM) was in place in 2025. The current water stage for Lake Okeechobee stands at 13.30 ft. NGVD. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers utilized the new schedule to drawdown the Lake during the 2025 Spring Dry Season for ecological benefits. This operation placed water users at higher risk of water shortage in the Spring 2026 Dry Season.

In 2025, LWDD continued to coordinate with SFWMD for requests to pass-through water from the C-51 Reservoir. The District delivered 920 acre-feet of water over 5 months – 184 acre-feet each in April, May, June, July and August. The District received the annual fee of \$110,000 and was reimbursed for pumping costs totaling \$3,000.

The District completed development of a District-Wide Surface Water Model. A final report to supersede the prior 'Interbasin Study 1996 rev' was delivered in 2025. To complement the model, staff implemented a Canal Bathymetry program to take sonar measurements of the bottom of canals to help identify where dredging or drainage improvements are necessary.

After completing the Canal Rehabilitation Program (CRP) Phase I in 2024, CRP Phase II (Maintenance Restoration Program - MRP) is underway. The goal of CRP Phase II is to reconstruct, realign and rehabilitate canals for future sustainable maintenance. The inventory includes 500 projects over 250 miles for completion within 20 years. In 2025, the District completed restoration of the L-45 Canal between Lyons Road and Golf Course Road, realigning and hardening the restricted maintenance bank. Staff also completed rehabilitation of the L-32 Canal between the E-3 Canal and Military Trail. Restoration of both the L-7 Canal between Jog Road and E-3 Canal and the L-5 Canal between Jog Road and Fergusson Road is underway.

To maintain cleared rights-of-way, the Low Maintenance Crew continued to expand its scope in 2025 and is currently maintaining ~65 miles of low-maintenance or restricted canal bank two times per year. Additional miles are continually being added as MRP projects create accessible banks. Low Maintenance Crew work includes flat/slope mowing, isolated tree removal, routine side-trimming for short distances, small washout repair, weed eating, and debris removal.

Routine maintenance included mowing ~1,626 miles of flat mowing (271 miles, 6x per year) and 1,143 miles of slope mowing (381 miles, 3x per year). This District contracted an additional 167 miles of flat mowing 6x per year, 198 miles of slope mowing 2x per year for \$308,000.

Staff also treated 7,505 acres of aquatic vegetation – 1,034 acres of floating vegetation, 1,111 acres of submerged vegetation, 1,117 acres of littoral vegetation, and 4,243 acres of littoral/floating combined treatment. Staff also treated approximately 653 acres of terrestrial treatments on restricted low-

maintenance banks that are unable to be mowed. The District continued use of contracted aquatic services for treatment north of the C-51 Canal (discontinued in April 2025) and in the Boca Basin for \$66,500. To help manage aquatic weeds and trash, staff are maintaining a total of 206 boom sites throughout District canals. In 2025, 22 booms were replaced due to wear and tear. Staff continued mechanical removal of aquatic vegetation at boom sites to supplement chemical treatments.

Approximately 26 miles of routine canal dredging was completed to maintain conveyance and remedy shoaling, and approximately 77 miles of canal were vertical side-trimmed to remedy encroaching vegetation.

District staff continued to perform regular maintenance services on 14 major water control structures. Water operations staff perform continual monitoring of system components to ensure efficient operation of structures and flood gates. To support water operations in 2025, staff completed the replacement of SCADA servers and updates to associated software, and continued making enhancements to the eRIS water management dashboard.

In 2025, staff repaired and installed a refurbished pump at Control Structure #12 and completed the replacement of radial gates at Control Structure #2.

The District installed 14 new access gates at arterial and local roads where warranted and constructed a new campus pole barn for equipment storage.

District staff continues to maintain a fleet of 59 light/heavy vehicles, 37 machines/heavy equipment, 12 tractor mowers, and 7 boats. Equipment usage is tracked and reported annually. Heavy equipment utilization averaged 54% for 2025. Mower usage averaged 62%.

In 2025, the District processed 294 right-of-way applications and issued 267 permits. Staff tracked 3,517 permit compliance deliverables for 1,767 individual permits and realized a 92% compliance rate; 19% of the deliverables are recurring annual deliverables.

The District continued to update its mapped canal right-of-way ownership. Staff also researched and responded to 1,257 Chancery Case 407 review requests and conducted 903 plat and development reviews for county and municipal projects.

The District opened 129 new compliance cases and resolved or closed 142 cases. The District estimates ~900 legacy compliance issues that staff are working to resolve. Over 100 cases were acted upon. If cases are not resolved through current compliance processes, a Notice of Encroachment is recorded in the public record to notify current/future owners. Future removal of encroachments is prioritized based on canal bank restoration schedules. Mr. Strowd presented before and after photos of several resolved encroachment issues in 2025, including a major project to repair a failing pipe on the L-25 Canal in the Pine Tree neighborhood that resolved a long standing compliance issue.

District IT staff continue to make GIS enhancements to support field and regulatory staff. In 2025, the ArcGIS Enterprise Portal was updated to a new version. They also continued to create operational dashboards for field crews and

publish updated GIS data sets. Staff also implemented a new photo and video management system to catalogue decades of LWDD media.

The District's outreach team responded to 1,000+ public inquiries and continued to maintain the agency's presence on social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, and Linked In. The District also hosted its 11th annual flood control workshop for HOAs, and created a new "Day at the Office" video series highlighting the work of field crews. To enhance communication with communities during the storm season, the District also hosted an inaugural Wet Season Coordination call to streamline operations and communicate with property managers.

The District adopted a Fiscal Year 2026 budget totaling \$18.6 million with no change in the previous non-ad valorem assessment rate of \$48.50. The budget was balanced with surplus and carryforward funds reflecting the District's ongoing commitment to maintaining and improving infrastructure while responsibly considering the financial implications to landowners. District auditors issued an unqualified opinion for FY2024 and confirmed that the financial records and statements were fairly and appropriately stated in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

In FY2025, the District received \$700,000 in revenue for permit fees, \$1,500 in quit claim deeds, \$2.77 million in interest earnings, \$135,000 in tower lease payments, and \$89,000 for sale of surplus equipment.

The District's Hazard Mitigation Fund is fully funded at \$19.6 million. The District's capital projects funding totals approximately \$30.7 million for future infrastructure and water supply improvements.

Over the past 10-15 years, the District has maintained costs for salaries, healthcare, and property/casualty insurance costs. The total number of staff has not increased in the past 15 years; the District budgeted for 93 positions, with 2 current vacancies. Current employees average 10 years of service; 17 employees were hired 2025. Four employees retired in 2025, and 10 employees are enrolled in DROP and will be retiring within the next 8 years. In 2025, the District completed and implemented a comprehensive classification and compensation study to ensure fair and competitive wages; minimum hourly rates were adjusted accordingly for field staff.

Looking ahead, the District will continue Phase II of the Canal Rehabilitation Program which includes restoration of low-maintenance canal banks and management of existing structural encroachments on rights-of-way remaining following the Phase I vegetation removal projects. The District will also continue ongoing capital projects including secondary control structure remediation and enhancements of the District-wide hydrologic modeling effort. The District continues to address regional water supply challenges, collaborate on the Lake Okeechobee Operating Schedule and Lower East Coast Water Supply Plan, and coordinate with Turnpike widening projects to preserve canal integrity.

Mr. Strowd recognized Board Supervisor John I. Whitworth, III for his 35 years of service on the LWDD Board and shared photos from an event held in his honor. In 2025, the E-1 Canal was renamed the Whitworth Canal.

Mr. Strowd stated that the 2025 Report to Landowners provides an overview of the District's annual activities, including District activities undertaken in furtherance of the adopted water control plan. He recommended acceptance of the report pursuant to Florida Statutes, Ch. 298.26.

A motion was made by Stephen Bedner to approve the report, seconded by Jeffrey P. Phipps, Sr., and approved unanimously.

Board Supervisors John I. Whitworth, III and James Alderman recognized staff and expressed their thanks and approval for management and staff efforts. Board President Steve Bedner thanked Mr. Costello and Mr. Winsberg for their attendance and leading the meeting.

8. Financial Report

Copies of the Balance Sheet and Budget Report for Year-End September 30, 2025, were furnished, and Chris Johnson, Director of Finance, stated the year-end audit report is still on-going. The final audit report will be posted on the District's website once completed. Mr. Johnson indicated the District is in a good financial position.

A motion was made by Jeffrey P. Phipps, Sr. to approve the financial report, seconded by Carrie Hill and approved unanimously.

9. New Business

There was no new business.

10. Adjourn

There being no further business, a motion was made by Stephen Bedner to adjourn the meeting, seconded by John I Whitworth, III, and approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 A.M.

District Secretary – Tommy Strowd