



**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF
THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF
LAKE WORTH DRAINAGE DISTRICT
HELD AT THE DELRAY BEACH OFFICE ON
July 17, 2024 AT 8:30 A.M.**

Board Members Present:

John I. Whitworth, III
Jeffrey Phipps, Sr.
James M. Alderman

Board Member Absent:

Carrie P. Hill

Board Member Present On the Phone:

Stephen Bedner

1. Call to Order

Sr. Vice President Alderman called the meeting to order at 8:30 A.M. and confirmed the quorum.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Supervisor Phipps led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Agenda Revisions – Tommy Strowd, Executive Director

There were no agenda revisions.

4. Abstentions by Board Members from Items on the Agenda

There were no abstentions.

5. General Public Comment (limited to 5 minutes)

There was no general public comment.

6. Approval of minutes, check register and financial statement for the previous month

A motion was made by Supervisor Whitworth to approve the minutes, check register and financial statement for the previous month, seconded by Supervisor Phipps and approved unanimously.

DISCUSSION

7. Approval to piggyback South Florida Water Management District herbicide contracts for the term ending June 30, 2025 (Project #16-8816L.10) – Michelle Sinclair, O&M Specialist/Procurement Coordinator

Vegetation Management Section Leader Megan Hoffman opened the item, introducing Aquatics Crew Leader Charles Burn and Lead Applicator Sean Gallagher and recognizing them for their leadership on the Aquatics Crew. Sr. Vice President Alderman commended the Crew on their efforts to manage aquatic vegetation.

Ms. Sinclair stated pursuant to the LWDD procurement policy section 1.5.5, goods may be purchased by piggybacking off purchasing agreements with other government bids. She highlighted significant similarities between the aquatic vegetation management programs of South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) and the Lake Worth Drainage District (LWDD). One notable advantage is the lower costs associated with herbicides, which can lead to considerable savings. Additionally, Ms. Sinclair pointed out that the LWDD can streamline its operations by piggybacking onto the existing contract of the SFWMD by avoiding the time-consuming bidding process.

Ms. Sinclair provided a chart demonstrating the Bid Comparison from the year 2023 to the current year 2024. She stated that an additive used by LWDD, called Lovert, was not included in the herbicide contract of SFWMD. She requested that Lovert be purchased from its sole manufacturer, Brewer International.

Staff recommended approval to piggyback on SFWMD's Aquatic Herbicide Chemical Contracts, and approval to purchase Lovert from Brewer International as a sole source provider.

A motion was made by Supervisor Phipps to approve staff recommendation, seconded by Supervisor Whitworth and approved unanimously.

8. Approval of Fiscal Year 2024-25 Preliminary Operating Budget and authorization to advertise – Karen Hoyt, Director of Finance & Administration

Ms. Hoyt presented the preliminary budget in accordance with the District's budget procedures, marking the second phase of the budget process. The final budget, which is the third and final phase, will be presented in August.

The current presentation includes a balanced budget of \$17.349 million. There were a few minor modifications compared to the proposed budget presented last month. Confirmation from the property appraiser indicated an increase of 391 taxable parcels, equating to approximately \$21,000 in additional revenue. Furthermore, the District has initiated the conveyance process through their agreement with the C-51 Reservoir, adding annual usage fees of about \$80,000 to the budget.

Additional increases include \$20,000 allocated for contract work related to public relations, specifically for updating the District's outreach videos. The net impact of these changes total \$81,000, necessitating a reduction in the carry-forward amount by the same figure to maintain the balanced budget of \$17.349 million.

Ms. Hoyt also mentioned that they were asked to consider an option to reduce the assessment rate. She presented a \$1.00 reduction, which would decrease revenues associated with the non-ad valorem assessment by \$291,000. To balance this, it would be required to increase the carry-forward of surplus funds by \$231,000.

Staff recommended approval of FY25 Preliminary Operating Budget totaling \$17,349,000 with a non-ad valorem assessment rate of \$48.50, reduced by \$1.00 when compared to last year and authorization to advertise public notice.

A motion was made by Supervisor Phipps to approve staff recommendation. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Whitworth and approved unanimously.

STAFF REPORTS

13. Executive Director's Report

Mr. Strowd reported that LWDD has been working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and SFWMD on development of the new Lake Okeechobee System Operating Manual (LOSOM) for approximately five years. He stated the LWDD Board passed a resolution in April 2019 encouraging the USACE to carefully consider water supply implications, with particular emphasis on the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) Savings Clause and water shortage operations. He noted that Draft LOSOM Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) clearly showed water supply impacts to LWDD and southeast Palm Beach County, particularly during droughts. He stated that LWDD expressed its concerns in multiple meetings with the USACE, made multiple public comments to the SFWMD Governing Board and submitted multiple letters to Col. Booth (USACE), published multiple op-eds and other articles in local media, and made multiple presentations to local coalitions, governments, legislators and congressman.

He stated that the USACE has now finalized the EIS with only cursory consideration of LWDD's concerns, pointing to the broad flexibility in the LOSOM Water Control Plan, which contains 'no' specific language addressing issues raised by LWDD. He noted that the SFWMD has never commented on LWDD's issues. Further, the draft Lower East Coast Regional Water Supply Plan (LECRWSP) under development by SFWMD made no evaluation of the water shortage identified in LOSOM. Although LWDD submitted specific language to address our concerns, they were not incorporated into the final draft documents. However, they did retain the discussion of the Site 1 Reservoir at our request.

Mr. Strowd summarized that there is no assurance that regional water will be available in the lead-up to the next major drought and no assurance that the Refuge or SFWMD will support LWDD's future requests to use water below the WCA-1 floor elevation of 14 ft. NGVD. Furthermore, there is no proposal for new storage projects

that could offset the projected shortfall, despite new CERP storage reservoirs and Aquifer Storage & Recovery projects being implemented north of Lake Okeechobee. He concluded that LWDD will not be in a position to support new utility wellfield increased allocations within its boundaries, and these will be brought to the Board for case-by-case consideration. He stated that LWDD will continue to comment on the LECRWSP and work with SFWMD and USACE in developing new regional storage options. Mr. Strowd stated that managing major water shortages will be significantly more difficult in the future.

Sr. Vice President Alderman commended Mr. Strowd on his efforts and knowledge of the complex water supply issues facing the region.

Supervisor Whitworth inquired about the necessity for generators to power water supply pumps during an emergency. Mr. LasCasas stated that they will look into the costs and advantages and present a recommendation at a future board meeting.

Ms. Walker reported that Karen Hoyt has announced her plans for retirement before the end of the year. Ms. Hoyt stated that she is committed to helping the District with the hiring and training process. Ms. Walker indicated the position will be posted soon and expressed confidence in finding a qualified candidate noting that Ms. Hoyt will be very hard to replace.

Ms. Walker also mentioned that final budget numbers will be presented next month, including health insurance information. She also stated that staff is reviewing the budget for wildlife and iguana control, with plans to increase it next year. Joe Spetla has been working with vendors on a pilot project to establish qualifications and a reasonable budget for the following fiscal year.

14. District Counsel's Report


No additional items to report.

15. Board Reports & Comment

No additional reports or comments.

16. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:20 A.M.



President – Stephen Bedner



Recording Secretary – Sandra Acosta