

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF
THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF
LAKE WORTH DRAINAGE DISTRICT
HELD AT THE DELRAY BEACH OFFICE ON
September 17, 2025 AT 8:30 A.M.**

Board Members Present:

John I. Whitworth, III
Carrie Hill

James M. Alderman

Jeffrey Phipps, Sr.

Board Members Present on the Phone:

Stephen Bedner

1. Call to Order

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

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Sandra Acosta, District Clerk led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Agenda Revisions – Reagan Walker, Assistant 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 3 minutes)

There were no general public comments.

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 Vice President Hill and approved unanimously.

DISCUSSION

7. Petition from Garrett Bender, Manager of Whitworth Estates PUD LLC to appear before the Board of Supervisors to discuss proposed donation of land Location: L-36 1/2W Canal. (Project #RI-25-0059)

Ms. Walker introduced Garret Bender, Manager, Whitworth Estates PUD.

Supervisor Whitworth inquired to District Counsel Mark Perry if there was a conflict with him participating in the discussion. Mr. Perry indicated there was no conflict and confirmed he could participate in the discussion.

Mr. Bender stated that Whitworth Estates PUD purchased the 100-acre property from LWDD and subsequently leased it back to LWDD for a term of ninety-nine (99) years with the option to renew the lease for four (4) additional terms. He stated that Whitworth Estates PUD would like to donate the land back to LWDD.

Ms. Walker stated that staff does not currently have a recommendation for the Board's consideration but provided a brief presentation providing details on the background of the sale and lease agreement. Ms. Walker shared that the horticultural site is west of the District's E-1WN Canal and north of the District's L-36½W Canal. In January 2005, LWDD sold fee simple ownership of ~100 acres to Ascot Real Estate, Inc. for a purchase price of \$9.25 million. In August 2005, the District entered into a lease agreement with assignee, Whitworth Estates PUD for a one-time rental fee of \$750,000. A conservation easement was subsequently recorded on the property, and Whitworth Estate PUD was responsible for clearing exotics from the property. Maintenance of the property is currently the responsibility of Whitworth Estates, PUD.

Mr. Bender provided the option for LWDD to accept all the property or only the ~25 acres that is being used as the horticultural waste disposal site.

Supervisor Whitworth indicated the property is mostly wetlands and difficult to clear.

Supervisor Phipps inquired if the County requires the site to be maintained free of exotic vegetation. Ms. Walker explained that the site has a recorded conservation easement which requires maintenance of exotic vegetation.

Vice President Hill inquired if the conservation easement would remain over the entire property if LWDD accepts only a portion of the property. Mr. Perry confirmed that the conservation easement would remain.

Sr. Vice President Alderman commented regarding the existing heavy exotic vegetation on the property and inquired who cleared the property because it does not appear it was or has been maintained.

Mr. Bender provided invoices to confirm that the property was cleared of exotics in August 2006.

Sr. Vice President Alderman indicated his concern about accepting ownership given the maintenance responsibilities.

Ms. Walker stated that the current lease is sufficient for LWDD and accepting the donation would incur additional costs for maintenance of the vegetation. Given the expense involved, staff was not supportive of accepting donation of the property.

Vice President Hill inquired if LWDD is currently maintaining the ~25 acres used for the horticultural site and if the District would have a need for the additional acreage in the future. Ms. Walker confirmed the horticultural site is used and maintained by the District, and that the District does not have any use for the additional acreage.

Ms. Walker indicated that uses for the unmaintained property would have to be investigated further; however, the property would still require clearing maintenance regardless of the use.

Supervisor Whitworth indicated that farming the property is not a viable option provided the soil conditions.

Vice President Hill recommended that staff consider the offer to accept only the horticultural site property as the District does not have a use for the additional unmaintained acreage.

Ms. Walker indicated that staff would discuss options with Mr. Bender.

Supervisor Phipps inquired about how the property would be maintained. Mr. LasCasas confirmed that using equipment was not an option, that it would require hand clearing.

Supervisor Whitworth recommended tabling the issue for a future meeting to provide an opportunity for staff to consider the option to accept the donation of the full property or a portion currently being used.

A motion was made by Supervisor Whitworth to table the discussion and decision for a future board meeting. Vice President Hill seconded, the motion passed unanimously.

8. Approval of surplus and disposal of designated items – Chris Johnson, Director of Finance

Mr. Johnson stated in accordance with Chapter 274 of the Florida Statutes, the District has the discretion to declare property as surplus if it is obsolete, uneconomical, unsafe, inefficient, or no longer serves useful function. Staff has identified eight (8) items that meet these criteria and is requesting that they be declared surplus and disposed of through the recommended disposal method.

Mr. Johnson provided a list of the items to surplus, a copy of which is attached as part of the meeting record.

Staff recommended approval to declare listed items surplus and authorize disposal of items through the recommended disposal method.

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

STAFF REPORTS

9. Executive Director's Report

Mr. Strowd reported that Lake Okeechobee was currently at 13.05 feet. He noted that although it is the peak of hurricane season, there are no weather systems expected to bring rain within the next week to ten days. Mr. Strowd stated that if the area does not receive rain soon, next month's discussion will likely focus on strategies for managing through the upcoming dry season.

Mr. LasCasas reported that all operations were running smoothly, with no major weather events affecting the system. He noted that while there had been some localized rain events, none had caused significant issues. Mr. LasCasas stated that a few major projects were nearing completion, including the L-5 Canal project, which was expected to be finished within the week.

Ms. Walker stated that Mr. LasCasas would be presenting the results of the District's modeling efforts during next month's workshop.

She also highlighted that Gabe Margasak has been creating social media posts and content for public engagement. She introduced a video he produced showcasing a day at the office for the Tree Crew.

10. District Counsel's Report

No additional items to report.

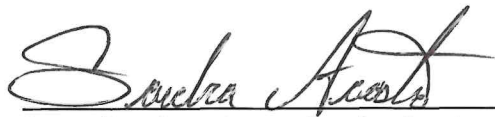
11. Board Reports & Comment

No additional reports or comments.

12. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:09 A.M.



President – Stephen Bedner

Recording Secretary – Sandra Acosta