



WITHLACOOCHEE REGIONAL WATER SUPPLY AUTHORITY

Board Meeting Package

November 13, 2019
3:30 p.m.

Meeting Location:

Lecanto Government Building
Room 166
3600 W. Sovereign Path
Lecanto, Florida 34461

Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority

Board of Directors

Effective April 2019

Office	Board Members
Chair	The Honorable Michelle Stone
Vice Chair	The Honorable Stephen Printz
Treasurer	The Honorable Jeff Holcomb

Jurisdiction	Board Members
Citrus County	The Honorable Scott Carnahan
	The Honorable Jeff Kinnard
Hernando County	The Honorable Steve Champion
	The Honorable Jeff Holcomb
Marion County	The Honorable Kathy Bryant
	The Honorable Michelle Stone
	The Honorable Carl Zalak
Sumter County	The Honorable Al Butler
	The Honorable Stephen Printz
City of Belleview	The Honorable Gary Ernst
City of Brooksville	The Honorable William Kemerer
City of Bushnell	The Honorable Dale Swain
City of Crystal River	The Honorable Ken Brown

Meeting Dates

The schedule of meetings for the 2019-2020 fiscal year are as follows:

November 13, 2019
January 15, 2020
March 18, 2020

May 20, 2020
July 15, 2020
September 16, 2020



November 1, 2019

MEMORANDUM

To: Water Supply Authority Board of Directors and Interested Parties

From: Richard S. Owen, Executive Director

Subject: Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority Board of Directors Meeting

The Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority will hold a regular business meeting on **Wednesday, November 13, 2019, 3:30 p.m., at the Lecanto Government Center Building, Room 166, 3600 Sovereign Path, Lecanto, FL 34461.**

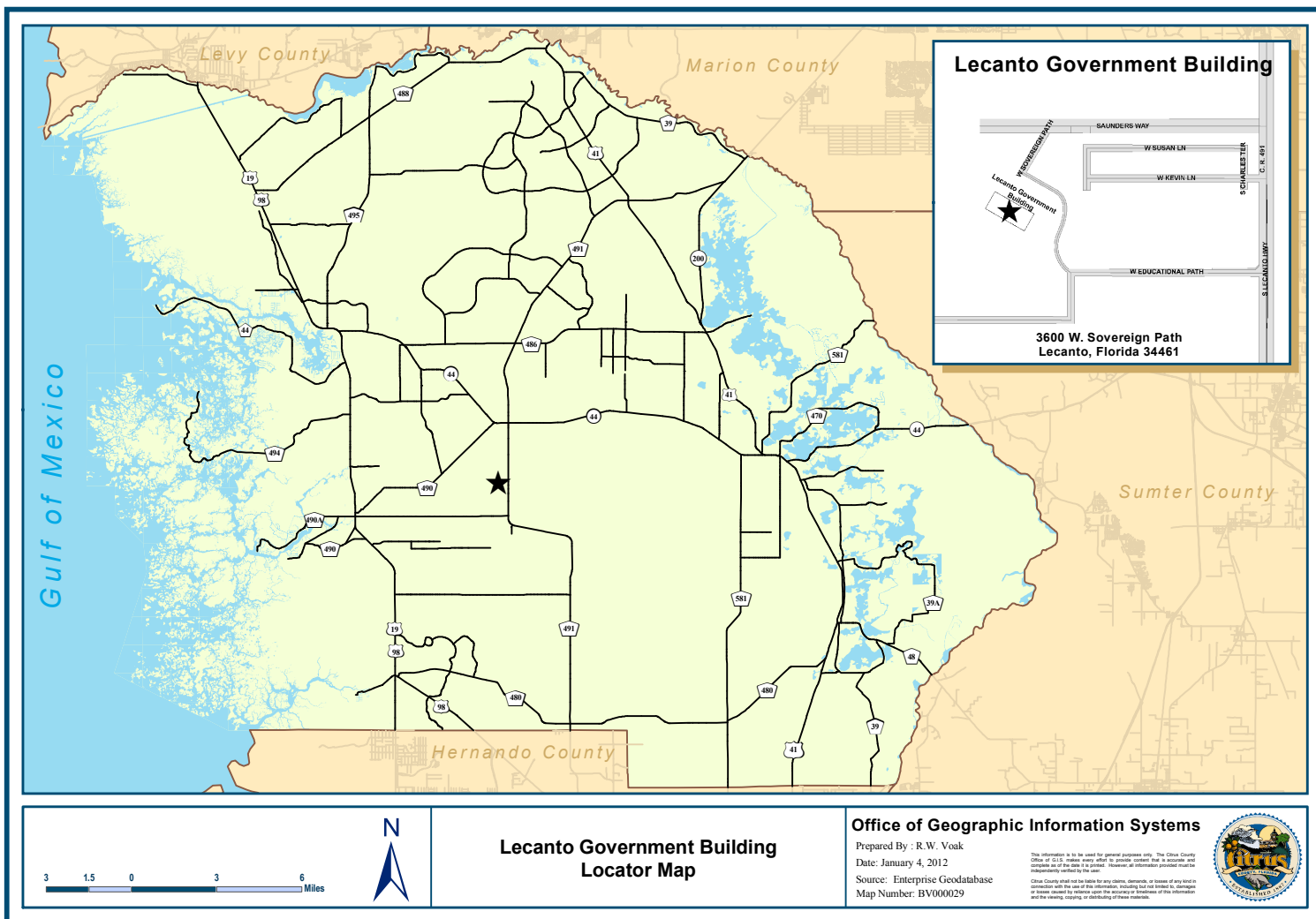
Enclosed for your review are the following items:

- Agenda
- Minutes of the September 18, 2019
- Board Package*

Please note that if a party decides to appeal any decision made by the Board with respect to any matter considered at the above cited meeting, that party will need a record of the proceedings, and for such purpose, that party may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes that testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

Enclosures

- * Copies of the Board Package are available through the Internet. Log on to www.wrwsa.org.
- On the Authority's Home Page go to the left side of the page and click on "Meetings."
 - On the slide out menu is a button for the current Board Package.
 - Click on the Board Package to download and/or print.



Driving Directions to 3600 W. Sovereign Path, Lecanto Government Building

From Brooksville:

- Go North on N. Main St. toward S. Broad St./E. Jefferson St.
- Take the 1st Left onto S. Broad St./W. Jefferson St.
- Turn Right onto US 98/Ponce De Leon Blvd.
- Turn Right onto CR 491 toward Lecanto (about 13.5 miles)
- Turn Left on W. Educational Path (traffic signal)
- Turn right at the Park onto W. Sovereign Path; continue to the right to the Lecanto Government Building

From Ocala

- Go southwest on SR 200 into Citrus County
- Turn Right onto CR 491 (stay on 491 through Beverly Hills, crossing Hwy. 486 and SR 44)
- Turn Right on Saunders Way
- Turn Left onto W. Sovereign Path; follow to Lecanto Government Building

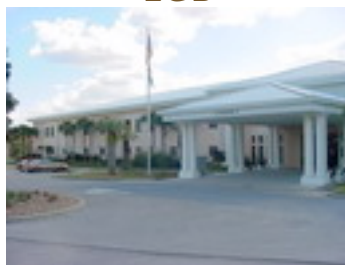
From Bushnell

- In Bushnell, Go West on FL-48W
- Turn Right onto US 41; continue to follow US 41 N
- Continue straight onto FL 44 W/W Main St.; continue straight on SR 44
- Turn Left onto CR 491
- Turn Right onto Saunders Way
- Turn Left onto W. Sovereign Path; follow to Lecanto Government Building

From Wildwood

- Go West on SR 44W; continue on SR 44 through Inverness
- Turn Left onto CR 491
- Turn Right onto Saunders Way
- Turn Left onto W. Sovereign Path; follow to Lecanto Government Building.

LGB



**WITHLACOOCHEE REGIONAL WATER SUPPLY AUTHORITY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

A G E N D A

November 13, 2019 -- 3:30 p.m.

**LECANTO GOVERNMENT BUILDING -- ROOM 166
3600 W. Sovereign Path, Lecanto, Florida 34461**

At the discretion of the Board, items may be taken out of order to accommodate the needs of the Board and the public.

PAGE

1. **Call to Order** . . . Michelle Stone, Chair
2. **Roll Call** . . . Richard Owen, WRWSA Executive Director
3. **Pledge of Allegiance** . . . Led by the Board
4. **Additions/Deletions to the Agenda** . . . Richard Owen, WRWSA
5. **Public Comment**
6. **Consent Agenda** . . . Michelle Stone, Chair
 - a. **Approval of Minutes** [September 18, 2019] 9
 - b. **Bills to be Paid** [October bills in the Board materials; November bills to be provided at the meeting] 15
7. **Executive Director Recruitment – Contract Approval** . . . Rob Batsel, WRWSA Attorney 17
8. **Extension of Present Executive Director Contract and Associated Budget Amendment** . . . Rob Batsel, WRWSA Attorney 19
9. **Regional Water Supply Plan** . . . Gregg Jones, Brown and Caldwell 21
10. **Charles A. Black Wellfield Fiscal Year 2018-19 Revenues** . . . Richard Owen, WRWSA 23
11. **Minimum Flows and Levels – Priority Lists and Schedules** . . . Richard Owen, WRWSA 25
12. **Legislative Report – Annual Legislative Priorities** . . . Richard Owen, WRWSA 29
13. **Attorney’s Report** . . . Rob Batsel, WRWSA Attorney 31
14. **Executive Director’s Report** . . . Richard Owen, WRWSA
 - a. **Correspondence** 33
 - b. **News Articles** 37
 - c. **Other**
15. **Other Business**
16. **Next Meeting** . . . January 15, 2020; 3:30 p.m.; Lecanto Government Building, Room 166
17. **Adjournment**

Please note that if a party decides to appeal any decision made by the Board with respect to any matter considered at the above cited meeting, that party will need a record of the proceedings, and for such purpose, that party may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes that testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

Item 6.a.

Consent Agenda

Approval of Minutes

DRAFT

WITHLACOOCHEE REGIONAL WATER SUPPLY AUTHORITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Minutes of the Meeting September 18, 2019

TIME: 3:30 p.m.
PLACE: Lecanto Government Building
ADDRESS: 3600 W. Sovereign Path, Room 280, Lecanto, Florida 34461

The numbers preceding the items listed below correspond with the published agenda.

1. Call to Order

Chair Stone called the Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority (WRWSA) Board of Directors meeting to order at 3:31 p.m. and requested a roll call.

2. Roll Call

Mr. Richard Owen, WRWSA Executive Director, called the roll and a quorum was declared present.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESIDING

Michelle Stone, *Chair*, Marion County Commissioner
Jeff Holcomb, *Treasurer*, Hernando Co Commissioner
Kathy Bryant, Marion County Commissioner
Scott Carnahan, Citrus County Commissioner
Gary Ernst, Belleview City Commissioner
Jeff Kinnard, Citrus County Commissioner
Dale Swain, Bushnell City Councilor

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Stephen Printz, *Vice-Chair*, Sumter County Commissioner
Ken Brown, Crystal River City Councilor
Al Butler, Sumter County Commissioner
Steve Champion, Hernando Co Commissioner
William Kemerer, Brooksville City Councilor
Carl Zalak, Marion County Commissioner

ALTERNATE(S) PRESIDING

Alys Brockway, Hernando County Water Res Mgr
Ken Frink, City of Crystal River
Jody Kirkman, Marion Co Environmental Services
Richard Radacky, City of Brooksville Public Works

3. Introductions and Announcements

- Mr. Owen said there are no additions or deletions to the agenda.

WRWSA STAFF PRESENT

Richard Owen, Executive Director
Rob Batsel, Attorney
LuAnne Stout, Administrative Asst.

OTHERS PRESENT

Debra Burden, Citrus Co Water Conservation
Allen Dethloff, Reiss Engineering
Michon Fabio, Marion Co Water Res Liaison
Suzannah Folson, PE, PMP, Juturna Consulting
Frank Gargano, SWFWMD Govt Affairs Regional Manager
Josh Madden, SWFWMD Environmental Scientist
Joe Quinn, SWFWMD Water Supply Project Manager

4. Pledge of Allegiance – Chair Stone led those present in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

5. Public Comment – Chair Stone opened public comment. No audience members requested to address the Board.

6. Consent Agenda

- a. **Approval of Minutes** – The July 17, 2019 draft minutes were provided in the Board's meeting materials and recommended for approval as presented.

- b. **Public Officials Liability Insurance Policy** – Staff recommended approval of the Public Officials Liability Insurance renewal, payment in the amount of \$2,741.01 and Executive Director signing the Surplus Lines Disclosure and Acknowledgment form.
- c. **Bills to be Paid** – Staff recommended approval of bills for July (\$119,956.76), August (\$22,977.89) and September (\$47,255.92).
- d. **Third Quarter Financial Report** – Staff recommended acceptance of the Fiscal Year 2018-19 Third Quarter Financial Report.

Ms. Bryant moved, seconded by Mr. Kinnard, to approve Consent Agenda Items 6.a., 6.b., 6.c. and 6.d., as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

- e. **Fiscal Year 2019-20 Calendar of Board Meeting Dates** – Staff recommended approval of the regular monthly board meetings dates - November 20, 2019; January 15, 2020; March 18, 2020; May 20, 2020; July 15, 2020; September 16, 2020.

Since several Board members had conflicts or are attending the Florida Association of Counties conference in November, the meeting date was changed to November 13, 2019.

Mr. Carnahan moved, seconded by Ms. Bryant, to approve Consent Agenda 6.e., as amended, for the Board's regular monthly meetings dates to be November 13, 2019; January 15, 2020; March 18, 2020; May 20, 2020; July 15, 2020; September 16, 2020. Motion carried unanimously.

7. Contract for General Counsel Services

Mr. Owen noted that, at the Authority's July 17, 2019 meeting, the Board accepted the Review Committee's ranking of firms that submitted statements of qualifications to provide general counsel services. The Board authorized staff to enter into negotiations with the firms in ranked order. Staff have negotiated a contract with the law firm of Gilligan, Gooding, Franjola & Batsel, P.A., the top ranked firm. A copy of the proposed contract was included as an exhibit in the Board's meeting materials.

Following consideration, **Mr. Carnahan moved to approve the General Services Contract between the WRWSA and Gilligan, Gooding, Franjola & Batsel, P.A., as shown in the exhibit and authorize the Chair to sign the Contract. Mr. Swain seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.**

The Board welcomed Mr. Batsel as the Authority's General Counsel. He joined the Board at the dais.

8. Executive Director Recruitment – Board Interview of Applicant

Mr. Owen said that, at the Authority's July 17, 2019 meeting, staff was authorized to advertise for the position of contracting Executive Director. The position was advertised with the American Water Works Association - Florida Section, American Water Resources Association - Florida Section, on the Citrus and Marion counties' recruitment websites, the Florida League of Cities, and the Florida Association of Counties. Applications were accepted through August 16, 2019.

In response to this recruitment effort, one application was received from Suzannah J. Folsom, PE, PMP with Juturna Consulting, LLC. Ms. Folsom's cover letter, resume and references were included as an exhibit in the Board's meeting materials.

Mr. Owen said Ms. Folsom does meet the minimum qualifications approved by the Board at the July meeting. The purpose of this agenda item is for the Board to interview Ms. Folsom and then provide direction to staff to either enter into negotiations with Ms. Folsom for the contract Executive Director position or to further advertise the position to potentially gain additional applicants.

At this time, Ms. Folsom addressed the Board and began by introducing herself and provided background information regarding her experience and positions held.

Chair Stone opened the floor for Board members to ask questions of Ms. Folsom. Following the interview, Ms. Folsom left the meeting room.

Following discussion and consideration, **Ms. Bryant moved to direct the Chair, Executive Director and General Counsel to enter into negotiations with Ms. Folsom for the contract for the Executive Director position; and to request Mr. Owen's availability to assist Ms. Folsom for an additional six months, and the Chair and General Counsel will negotiate a contract with Mr. Owen. Mr. Ernst seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.**

Mr. Owen invited Ms. Folsom to return to the meeting room. Chair Stone welcomed Ms. Folsom and said the Board has authorized contract negotiations and staff will be in contact with her.

9. Fiscal Year 2018-19 Budget Amendment for Advertising & Liability Insurance

Mr. Owen said the Authority's Fiscal Year (FY) 2018-19 budget includes \$1,000 for advertising. Due to costs associated with advertising two special meetings and one rescheduled meeting, and with advertising for executive director recruitment, advertising expenditures for the year will exceed the budgeted amount. The purpose of this item is, in part, for the Board to authorize the transfer of \$1,200 in funds from Administrative Reserves to Advertising.

In addition, the Authority has recently received its Public Officials Liability Insurance Renewal information. The premium amount rose by 8.9 percent compared to the current liability insurance policy. The FY 2018-19 budget for liability insurance is \$2,530, which included an anticipated 5.0 percent cost increase. The actual cost for the liability insurance renewal is \$2,741.01, \$211.01 over the budgeted amount. The purpose of this item is also for the Board to authorize the transfer of \$211.01 in funds from Administrative Reserves to Liability Insurance.

In response to Ms. Bryant's inquiry, Mr. Batsel said he will need to contact each entity and review their liability insurance policies. Mr. Owen said that, when he first researched liability insurance, he was unable to purchase it only for the Executive Director.

Resolution 2019-06, Amendment of the Adopted Budget for Fiscal Year 2018-19, to Increase Advertising from \$1,000.00 to \$2,200.00 and Liability Insurance from \$2,530 to \$2,741.01, was included in the Board's meeting materials.

Ms. Bryant moved to approve Resolution 2019-06 amending the FY 2018-19 adopted budget to increase the amount budgeted for Advertising from \$1,000.00 to \$2,200.00, and to increase the amount budgeted for Liability Insurance from \$2,530 to \$2,741.01; and directed Mr. Batsel to review the member governments' liability insurance policies to determine whether Board members are covered and if a policy can be found for just the Executive Director and, if not, then maintain status quo.

In response to Mr. Holcomb's question, Mr. Owen said that Board members, alternates and staff are identified and furnished to the insurance company. Chair Stone noted that, if only the Executive Director is covered, then alternates would not be. Mr. Batsel said he felt exposure is small and will provide an email to each entity's legal counsel.

Mr. Ernst seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

10. SWFWMD Fiscal Year 20-21 Cooperative Funding Initiative Application

Mr. Owen said the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) has opened the application period for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020-21 Cooperative Funding Initiative and applications are due by October 4, 2019. The purpose of this item is to request Board authorization to submit a

cooperative funding request to the SWFWMD, for continuation of the Regional Irrigation System Audit Program.

The Phase 6 total project budget is recommended at \$121,200, with the Authority committing to fund 50 percent at \$60,600 and the SWFWMD requested to fund a like amount. Utilities potentially participating in the proposed Phase 6 program and their approximate local match include Citrus County (\$8,000), Hernando County (\$6,300), Marion County (\$10,000) and The Villages Village Center Community Development District (\$2,000) and the North Sumter County Utility Dependent District (\$4,000), for a total local contribution of \$30,300.

As part of the application submittals, the Authority must provide a commitment to include its 50 percent of the project cost in its FY 2020-21 budget as well as a ranking letter. Both draft letters were included as exhibits in the Board's meeting materials.

In response to Chair Stone's inquiries, Mr. Owen said the program is achieving success. He noted that there are still many residents using more than 30,000 gallons per month. Mr. Owen noted that this is one way for utilities to meet their water use permit requirements with the water management districts. He said the mailings target high users but more invitations are required to reach residents who want to participate. Mr. Owen said Citrus County led the way in tailoring each letter to let residents know the amount of water and costs that could be saved which improved participation. He noted that the SWFWMD has provided mailing services at a savings for the entities.

Mr. Holcomb moved, seconded by Ms. Bryant, to approve the FY 2020-21 Cooperative Funding Initiative application for Phase 6 of the Regional Irrigation System Audit Program in the total project amount of \$121,200, ranked as the Authority's number one application, including authorization for the Executive Director to sign the funding commitment and ranking letters. Motion carried unanimously.

11. As-Needed Technical and Engineering Services Work Orders

Mr. Owen said that, at its September 2017 meeting, the Board authorized the award of contracts for General Professional Engineering/Technical Services with six firms including the following listed below in alphabetical order.

Firms	Location
Intera	Gainesville, Jacksonville, Tampa
HSW	Tampa
Progressive Water Resources	Sarasota, Spring Hill
Reiss Engineering	Tampa, Winter Springs
Weber & Associates	Tampa
WRA	Tampa, Sarasota, Ft. Myers

The agreements with these firms do not authorize any work; work must be authorized through the issuance of subsequent Work Orders, which must be approved by the Board. The agreements took effect October 1, 2017 and are valid for a three-year period (through September 30, 2020) and may be extended for two (2) one (1) year periods upon mutual written agreement of both parties.

The Board also authorized the issuance of work orders to two of these firms, including Weber and Associates and WRA. These work orders have subsequently expired. In order to provide technical and engineering support on an as-needed basis in the coming fiscal year, it is necessary for one or more new work orders to be issued. Staff recommended issuance of the following Work Orders for As-Needed General Engineering/Technical Services.

Reiss Engineering – The purpose of this Work Order is to provide continuing general engineering and technical support services to the Authority Board and Executive Director on an as-needed Basis. The Work Order amount is \$15,000. A copy of the proposed Work Order was included as an exhibit to this item.

Weber and Associates – The purpose of this Work Order is to provide the Authority Board and Executive Director with expertise and assistance on an as-needed basis on water use permitting, ground water modeling and related matters. The Work Order amount is \$10,000. A copy of the proposed Work Order was included as an exhibit to this item.

Mr. Carnahan moved, seconded by Mr. Swain, to authorize the Executive Director to issue a Work Order to Reiss Engineering in an amount not to exceed \$15,000 for the period through September 30, 2020, and a Work Order to Weber and Associates in an amount not to exceed \$10,000 for the period through September 30, 2020. Motion carried unanimously.

Chair Stone noted that, for the record and to ensure no conflict of interest, Ms. Folsom's husband is employed by HSW Engineering.

12. Attorney's Report

Chair Stone noted the information provided in the Board's meeting materials.

13. Attorney's Report

Mr. Batsel had nothing to report at this time.

14. Executive Director's Report

Mr. Owen referred to the information provided in the Board's meeting materials. He noted that he has submitted a request to the SWFWMD for extension of the internal timeline for the Regional Water Supply Plan Update project; no contract amendment is needed.

- a. **Correspondence** – Board members were provided a copy of the Hernando Chamber of Commerce Letter of Support for Hernando County's participation in the WRWSA.
- b. **News Articles**
- c. **Other**

15. Other Business

Ms. Brockway announced the Springs Protection Workshop is scheduled for May 8, 2020 and requested volunteers to speak. She noted that she has spoken to county staffs and said it would be great to have elected officials speak as well.

16. Next Meeting Time and Location

- Next Regular Board Meeting – November 13, 2019 at 3:30 p.m. at the Lecanto Government Building, Room 166.

17. Adjournment – Chair Stone adjourned the meeting at 4:42 p.m.

Michelle Stone, Chair

Richard S. Owen, Executive Director

Item 6.b.

Consent Agenda

Bills to be Paid

**October bills in the meeting materials;
November bills to be provided at meeting.**

Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority
3600 W. Sovereign Path, Suite 228, Lecanto, Florida 34461

Bills For Payment
10/10/2019

<u>Administrative Invoices</u>	<u>Invoice Number(s)</u>	<u>Invoice Date</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Richard S. Owen, AICP, Executive Director	2019-09	10/8/2019	\$6,739.19
Rob Batsel, General Counsel			\$0.00
Diane Salz, Governmental Affairs (Professional Fee)	#093019	9/30/2019	\$3,500.00
C. LuAnne Stout, Admin Asst (Services)	8-Oct-19	10/8/2019	\$3,125.00
Kathy Bryant (Board Travel Jul/Sep)	9/18/2019	9/18/2019	\$72.98
Don Burgess (Board Travel Jul)	7/17/2019	7/17/2019	\$27.59
Al Butler (Board Travel Jul)	7/17/2019	7/17/2019	\$27.59
Gary Ernst (Board Travel Jul/Sep)	9/18/2019	9/18/2019	\$72.98
Jeff Kinnard (Board Travel Sep)	9/18/2019	9/18/2019	\$11.13
Dale Swain (Board Travel Jul/Sep)	9/18/2019	9/18/2019	\$55.18
Karen Allen (Web Maintenance)	116	10/5/2019	\$125.00
FL Dept of Economic Opportunity	73969	10/1/2019	\$175.00
Citrus Co Chronicle (Mtg Cal)	12943205	9/24/2019	\$59.09
Citrus Co / Riverland News (Mtg Cal)	12943191	9/26/2019	\$59.09
Citrus Co / Sumter Co Times (Mtg Cal)	12943213	9/27/2019	\$59.09
Daily Commercial (Mtg Cal)	82660	9/29/2019	\$137.16
Ocala Star Banner (Mtg Cal)	8206665	9/29/2019	\$133.96
Times Publishing (Mtg Cal)	19320	9/29/2019	\$63.00
Sun Trust Business Card Statement	10.2.2018	10/2/2019	\$574.84
Total Administrative Invoices			\$15,017.87

<u>Water Supply Studies and Facilities</u>	<u>Contract/ Budget</u>	<u>Balance Remaining</u>	<u>Current Invoice(s)</u>
General Services Contract	\$75,000.00	\$75,000.00	
Regional Water Supply Plan Update	\$299,940.00	\$51,765.71	
FY2018-19 Water Conservation Grants Program			
Citrus County	\$36,875.00	\$36,875.00	
Hernando County	\$48,350.00	\$48,350.00	
Marion County	\$42,595.00	\$41,981.50	
FY19-20 Water Conservation Grants Program			
Citrus County	\$45,998.50	\$45,998.50	
Hernando County	\$48,350.00	\$48,350.00	
Marion County	\$33,095.00	\$33,095.00	
Crystal River	\$9,090.00	\$9,090.00	
Phase 4 Irrigation Program	\$200,000.00	\$60,439.78	\$1,400.00 (1)
Phase 5 Irrigation Program	\$200,000.00	\$135,922.01	\$4,188.43 (2)
Total Project Invoices	\$1,039,293.50	\$586,867.50	\$5,588.43

Total Bills to be Paid	\$20,606.30
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State Board of Administration	Transfer from SBA2 to SBA1	\$5,588.43
State Board of Administration	Transfer from SBA1 to SunTrust Bank	\$20,606.30

Notes:

(1) Phase 4 (N822) - Irrigation Audit Reinspections

Jack Overdorff, ECO Land Design	\$100.00	Invoice 373
Jack Overdorff, ECO Land Design	\$1,300.00	Invoice 376
	<u>\$1,400.00</u>	

(2) Phase 5 (Q040) - Irrigation Audits

Jack Overdorff, ECO Land Design	\$3,888.43	Invoice 372
C. LuAnne Stout, Admin Services	\$300.00	Invoice 09-Sep-Q040 2019
	<u>\$4,188.43</u>	

Item 7

Executive Director Recruitment – Contract Approval

This item will be provided prior to or at the meeting.

Item 8

Extension of Present Executive Director Contract and Associated Budget Amendment

This item will be provided prior to or at the meeting.

Regional Water Supply Plan

Gregg Jones, Brown and Caldwell, will present this item.

The Authority entered into a cooperative funding agreement with the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) in March 2018 for Regional Water Supply Plan Update project. The Authority entered into a contract with Cardno, Inc, in April 2018 to undertake the project. With the assistance of the SWFWMD, St. Johns River Water Management District, and a Technical Advisory Committee comprised of representatives from member governments and public supply utilities in the four-county region, the Plan Update has been completed. The Final draft of the Plan is included as an Exhibit.

See Exhibit: Final Draft Regional Water Supply Plan Update (provided under separate cover)

Staff Recommendation:

Board acceptance of the Final Draft Regional Water Supply Plan Update and authorization for submittal to the SWFWMD.

Charles A. Black Wellfield Fiscal Year 2018-19 Revenues

Richard Owen, WRWSA Executive Director, will present this item.

The end of Fiscal Year 2018-19 represented the third full year operating under the revised Water Supply Contract with Citrus County. The purpose of this agenda item is to report to the Board the status of water sales to Citrus County and revenues for the fiscal year. The following table summarizes quantities of water sold water and revenues for FY 2018-19.

Month	Pumpage Reported by Citrus Co.	Rate	Payment	Avg Daily Quantity	Permitted Quantity	Difference
Oct	148,464,000	0.1335	\$19,819.94	4,789,161	4,597,000	192,161
Nov	131,355,000	0.1335	\$17,535.89	4,378,500	4,597,000	-218,500
Oct COLA Amendment*			\$348.83			
Nov COLA Amendment*			\$308.63			
Dec	112,685,000	0.1358	\$15,302.62	3,635,000	4,597,000	-962,000
Jan	118,095,000	0.1358	\$16,037.30	3,809,516	4,597,000	-787,484
Feb	114,596,000	0.1358	\$15,562.14	4,092,714	4,597,000	-504,286
Mar	158,078,000	0.1358	\$21,466.99	5,099,290	4,597,000	502,290
Apr	152,157,000	0.1358	\$20,662.92	5,071,900	4,597,000	474,900
May	179,049,000	0.1358	\$24,314.85	5,775,774	4,597,000	1,178,774
Jun	143,874,000	0.1358	\$19,538.09	4,795,800	4,597,000	198,800
Jul	127,256,000	0.1358	\$17,281.36	4,105,032	4,597,000	-491,968
Aug	126,828,000	0.1358	\$17,223.24	4,091,226	4,597,000	-505,774
Sep	163,364,000	0.1358	\$22,184.83	5,445,467	4,597,000	848,467
Total	1,675,801,000		\$227,587.65	4,591,236	4,597,000	-5,764
Contract Minimum Production Charge			\$224,000.00			
Difference			\$3,587.65			
* Note: COLA takes effect in October.						
October and December payments were based on previous rate.						
Adjustments made in December.						

Staff Recommendation:

This is an information item only and no Board action is required.

Minimum Flows and Levels Priority Lists and Schedules

Richard Owen, WRWSA Executive Director, will present this item.

The purpose of this item is to provide a status report to the Board of the establishment of minimum flows and levels (MFLs) in the Authority's four-county area.

Chapter 373, Florida Statutes, requires each of the water management districts to have a Priority List and Schedule for the establishment of MFLs. The Priority List and Schedule identifies water bodies for which the District plans to establish minimum flows and levels and also identifies planned water reservations. Minimum flows and levels are limits set by the District Governing Board for surface waters and groundwater systems that are intended to prevent significant harm to the water resources or ecology of the area that may be caused by water withdrawals. Reservations set aside water from withdrawals for the protection of fish and wildlife or public health and safety. The Districts are required to update this List and Schedule each year and provide the updated List to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) by November 15th.

Included as exhibits to this item are the MFLs that have been established to-date and the proposed Priority Lists and Schedules for waterbodies within the WRWSA four-county area that are to be approved by the District Governing Boards for submittal to the DEP in November.

Staff Recommendation:

This is an information item only and no Board action is required.

Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority
Minimum Flows and Levels Adopted To-date
As of October 20, 2019

WMD	Waterbody Name	Waterbody Type	County(s)	Year Adopted
SJRWMD	Kerr	Lake	Marion	1996
SJRWMD	Weir	Lake	Marion	2000
SJRWMD	Charles	Lake	Marion	2003
SJRWMD	Halfmoon	Lake	Marion	2003
SJRWMD	Bowers	Lake	Marion	2004
SJRWMD	Hopkins Prairie	Lake	Marion	2004
SJRWMD	Nicotoon	Lake	Marion	2004
SJRWMD	Smith	Lake	Marion	2004
SJRWMD	Silver	Spring	Marion	2017
SJRWMD	Silver Glen	Spring	Marion	2017
SWFWMD	Bonable	Lake	Marion	2013
SWFWMD	Chassahowitzka River/Chassahowitzka Spring Group (OFS) and Blind Spring	River/Spring Group	Citrus, Hernando	2013
SWFWMD	Ft. Cooper	Lake	Citrus	2007
SWFWMD	Tsala Apopka – Floral City, Inverness and Hernando Pools	Lake	Citrus	2007
SWFWMD	Crystal River/Kings Bay Spring Group (OFS)	River, Spring Group	Citrus	2018
SWFWMD	Gum Slough Spring Run	Spring	Sumter	2016
SWFWMD	Hunters	Lake	Hernando	2005
SWFWMD	Lindsey	Lake	Hernando	2005
SWFWMD	Little Bonable	Lake	Marion	2013
SWFWMD	Mountain	Lake	Hernando	2005
SWFWMD	Neff	Lake	Hernando	2005
SWFWMD	Spring	Lake	Hernando	2005
SWFWMD	Tooke	Lake	Hernando	2013
SWFWMD	Weekiwachee Prairie	Lake	Hernando	2005
SWFWMD	Whitehurst	Lake	Hernando	2013
SWFWMD	Homosassa River / Homosassa Spring Group (OFS)	River, Spring Group	Citrus	2013
SWFWMD	Rainbow River/Rainbow Spring Group (OFS)	River, Spring Group	Citrus, Marion	2017
SWFWMD	Big Gant	Lake	Sumter	2007
SWFWMD	Black	Lake	Sumter	2007
SWFWMD	Deaton	Lake	Sumter	2007
SWFWMD	Miona	Lake	Sumter	2007
SWFWMD	Okahumpka	Lake	Sumter	2007
SWFWMD	Panasoffkee	Lake	Sumter	2007
SWFWMD	Tiger	Lake	Marion	2013
SWFWMD	Weeki Wachee River/Weeki Wachee Spring Group (OFS)	River, Spring Group	Hernando	2009

Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority
Minimum Flows and Levels Priority Lists and Schedules
As of October 20, 2019

WMD	Year	New or Re-Evaluation	Waterbody Name	Waterbody Type	County(s)	Cross-Boundary Impacts from Adjacent WMD?
SJRWMD	2020	Reevaluation	Weir	Lake	Marion	Yes
SWFWMD	2019	Reevaluation (first)	Chassahowitzka River	River, Estuary	Citrus, Hernando	No
SWFWMD	2019	Reevaluation (first)	Chassahowitzka Spring Group (OFS)	Spring	Citrus, Hernando	No
SWFWMD	2019	Reevaluation (first)	Blind Spring	Spring	Citrus, Hernando	No
SWFWMD	2019	Reevaluation (first)	Homosassa River	River, Estuary	Citrus	No
SWFWMD	2019	Reevaluation (first)	Homosassa Spring Group (OFS)	Spring	Citrus	No
SWFWMD	2019	New (emergency rule replacement)	Rainbow River	River	Marion	Yes
SWFWMD	2027	New (emergency rule replacement)	Rainbow Spring Group (OFS)	Spring	Marion	Yes
SWFWMD	2024	New	Withlacoochee River (lower segment)	River, Estuary	Citrus, Levy	No
SWFWMD	2024	New	Withlacoochee River (upper segment, U.S. Geological Survey Holder gage to U.S. Geological Survey Wysong gage)	River	Citrus, Marion, Sumter	Yes
SWFWMD	2024	New	Withlacoochee River (upper segment, U.S. Geological Survey Wysong gage to U.S. Geological Survey Croom gage)	River	Citrus, Sumter, Hernando	Yes
SWFWMD	2024	New	Withlacoochee River (upper segment, upstream of U.S. Geological Survey Croom gage)	River	Hernando, Sumter,	Yes

					Pasco, Lake, Polk	
SWFWMD	2026	Reevaluation	Gum Slough Spring Group	Spring	Sumter	Yes
SWFWMD	2027	Reevaluation	Crystal River	River, Estuary	Citrus	Yes
SWFWMD	2027	Reevaluation	Kings Bay Spring Group (OFS)	Spring	Citrus	Yes
SWFWMD	2027	Reevaluation	Rainbow River	River	Marion	Yes
SWFWMD	2027	Reevaluation	Rainbow Spring Group (OFS)	Spring	Marion	Yes
SWFWMD	2029	Reevaluation (second)	Chassahowitzka River	River, Estuary	Citrus, Hernando	No
SWFWMD	2029	Reevaluation (second)	Chassahowitzka Spring Group (OFS)	Spring	Citrus, Hernando	No
SWFWMD	2029	Reevaluation (second)	Blind Spring	Spring	Citrus, Hernando	No
SWFWMD	2029	Reevaluation (second)	Homosassa River	River, Estuary	Citrus	No
SWFWMD	2029	Reevaluation (second)	Homosassa Spring Group (OFS)	Spring	Citrus	No

Item 12

Legislative Report

Annual Legislative Priorities

DRAFT

Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority 2020 Legislative Issues November 13, 2019

Issue	Type of Change	Further Detail
Support the allocation of state funds that promotes regional partnerships for water resource and supply development through existing statutes and not create additional bureaucracy, or inappropriate funding diversions.	Legislative and Water Management Districts	Continue funding at least \$40 million annually, with emphasis on funding regionally significant water projects.
Support continued and enhanced funding for restoration and protection of springs, with an emphasis on an appropriate amount of funding for activities addressing the springsheds within the WRWSA region.	Legislative and Water Management Districts	Oppose any diversions away from at least \$100 million annually for springs restoration and protection.
Support funding for the Water Protection and Sustainability Program, and funding for implementing the WRWSA Regional Water Supply Plan.	Legislative (section 403.890 and 403.891, F.S.) and Water Management Districts	Emphasis on implementing the WRWSA Regional Water Supply Plan.
Support Senate confirmations of Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) Executive Director Brian Armstrong and Governing Board Members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kelly Rice (Citrus, Sumter) • Roger Germann (Hillsborough) • Joel Schleicher (Charlotte, Sarasota) 	Legislative (section 373.073, FS)	Each SWFWMD Governing Board Member will be confirmed for a 4-year term.
Support Senate confirmations of St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) Executive Director Ann Shortelle and Governing Board Members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daniel Davis (Area 2) • Ron Howse (At Large) 	Legislative (section 373.073, FS)	Each SJRWMD Governing Board Member will be confirmed for a 4-year term.
Monitor legislation to implement Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Reclaimed Water recommendations and the Potable Reuse Commission's recommendations.	Legislative and Regulatory	Legislation expected to be filed for 2020 Legislative Session.
Support a collaborative approach to water management when there are cross-district impacts for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water supply planning; • Setting Minimum Flows and Levels (MFLs), Reservations; and • Resource recovery or impact prevention strategies. 	Legislative and Regulatory	Monitor Central Florida Water Initiative for potential statewide impacts.
Monitor efforts to grant legal rights to rivers or revise the existing surface water classification system or to reclassify surface waters within the region which may limit water resource development opportunities.	Legislative and Regulatory	Continue to monitor initiatives and rules for the use of surface water for drinking water.

Item 13

Attorney's Report

To be provided at meeting

Item 14.a.

Executive Director's Report

Correspondence



August 28, 2019

RECEIVED SEP 18 2019

Dear AWE and CalWEP Member:

2018 was an important year for the Alliance for Water Efficiency and our network. We celebrated the federal authorization of the U.S. EPA WaterSense® program, undertook new projects with our first state chapter, the California Water Efficiency Partnership, welcomed over a hundred new members, and continued to educate and help transform a growing number of communities to become more efficient and sustainable water users. We invite you to read our enclosed 2018 Annual Report to see all that we accomplished with your support and participation in 2018.

This year, we have focused our work on moving us towards our 2030 Vision, including the development of resources that support our goal to assist homeowners and businesses to be smart water users both indoors and out. Enclosed you will find our latest resources, *Sustainable Landscapes: A Utility Program Guide*, and order information for the national edition of the *Practical Plumbing Handbook*.

Sustainable Landscapes: A Utility Program Guide provides actionable information for utilities beginning or enhancing outdoor water efficiency programs. The guide discusses general program considerations and specific program types, and contains detailed case studies of successful programs from AWE members. This guide was made possible through funding provided by The Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation.

We are taking orders for the newly redesigned national version of the AWE and CalWEP *Practical Plumbing Handbook*. Since the California version has been a best-selling resource (over 34,000 copies sold!), we updated it to make it possible to distribute to residential customers nationwide. The handbook is a member-only benefit and provides user-friendly instructions on how to repair and perform preventative maintenance on the fixtures in the home. Those of you from California know how valuable this Handbook has been!

We are grateful for your membership. Thanks to your commitment and fervent belief that water efficiency is the most important thing we can do to achieve a sustainable water future, our movement continues to thrive. Looking to the future, we are focused on making even greater strides in water efficiency, and we look forward to working with you to get there.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mary Ann Dickinson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mary Ann" and the last name "Dickinson" clearly legible.

Mary Ann Dickinson
President and CEO

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Agenda Memorandum – *City of Inverness*

DATE: October 15, 2019
ISSUE: Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority
Municipal Agreement and Meeting Dates for 2020
FROM: City Manager
CC: City Clerk
ATTACHED: Email by Richard Own, WRWSA Executive Director

The WRWSA is in receipt of the fully adopted Interagency Agreement that provides municipal participation on the Water Authority Board. By reference to Mr. Richard Owen's communication, one item should be noted and one acted by City Council: Dates of WRWSA Meetings and selection of a Board Alternate in the event the appointed City Elected Official is unable to attend.

WRWSA 2020 Meeting Dates

- > January 15, 2020
- > March 18, 2020
- > May 20, 2020
- > July 15, 2020
- > September 16, 2020

Recommended Action –

Please motion, second and vote to confirm the City representative to the WRWSA per their meeting dates will be Councilman Ken Hinkle, and that the City Manager will be authorized to serve as Board Alternate in the event the appointed Council Member is unable to attend.

Amazingly, this matter is final.

Frank DiGiovanni

Item 14.b.

Executive Director's Report

News Articles

Next Florida Senate president puts focus on businesses, water, children

By Ana Ceballos / The News Service of Florida
Posted Oct 15, 2019 at 5:48 PM
Updated Oct 15, 2019 at 8:43 PM

Trilby Republican Wilton Simpson vowed to tackle Florida's economy with "common-sense, fiscally conservative principles"

TALLAHASSEE — Shortly after Trilby Republican Wilton Simpson was formally elected Tuesday as Florida's next Senate president, he characterized himself as a farmer and an entrepreneur — and not a politician.

And with that introduction, the 53-year-old owner of an egg farm and an environmental-remediation company vowed to tackle Florida's economy with "common-sense, fiscally conservative principles" and to foster a business-friendly environment.

"If you are a Florida business, we will do all we can to keep you here," Simpson said. "If you are a business located in a high-tax, over-regulated, unwelcoming state — consider moving to Florida where we believe the American Dream and the Florida Dream are one in the same."

Simpson will succeed President Bill Galvano, R-Bradenton, after the November 2020 elections and will hold one of the most powerful political jobs in Florida. When he takes over the chamber, he will also oversee the Senate's redistricting efforts following the 2020 Census.

Other issues that Simpson said he wants to tackle between 2020 and 2022 will deal with improving the quality of Florida's water resources and helping children who are "stuck in the foster care system" and at-risk youth.

One thing he would like to see fixed in the foster care system is cutting down the waiting time for qualified parents to adopt children. He also wants to keep children from bouncing from foster home to foster home.

While Simpson recognized fixing the problems in the system are likely to be costly, he told reporters on Tuesday, it would be "more expensive not to do it."

To accomplish those goals, he hopes to partner with First Lady Casey DeSantis, who is one of the top advisers to her husband, Gov. Ron DeSantis. This year, she has worked on a number of initiatives aimed at helping Florida children.

"I think she is going to be an outstanding partner," Simpson said, adding that he would let her take the reins on specific initiatives and "welcome her comments and her decisions."

Speaking to Senate Republicans, state leaders and family members, Simpson also addressed water-related issues such as seeing a Northern Everglades water-storage project completed because it "tackles the root cause of many of our water quality and quantity problems in the region."

Waterways such as the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee rivers have been plagued in recent years by toxic algae that stems, at least in part, from polluted water discharged from Lake Okeechobee.

Simpson also pointed to long-discussed efforts to move residents onto sewer systems instead of using septic tanks.

"We also need to get serious about a septic-to-sewer program because it's the root cause of many of our pollution problems around the state," Simpson said. "It is going to take resources. We need to offer incentives to local government for replacing outdated, harmful systems."

When Simpson takes over as president, his counterpart as House speaker will be Palm Harbor Republican Chris Sprowls. Together, Simpson and Sprowls will bring clout for the Tampa Bay region.

In September, when Sprowls was elected as the next House speaker, he said he would like to prioritize fixing "spending problems" in state government.

"We treat the state budget like it's our own private charitable foundation to be used for the naming rights of buildings or programs," Sprowls said. "We need to do better than this."

Simpson vowed to work with the House in partnership, "without gridlock, animosity and stubbornness."

"There'll always be feisty debates. But no, there's not going to be fighting or discord," Simpson told reporters. "We can do all of this without discord."

Citrus County Chronicle

New flow rates set for Homosassa, Chassahowitzka rivers

Michael D. Bates
Oct 22, 2019 Updated

BROOKSVILLE — About 250 people packed the meeting room Tuesday of the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) in Brooksville to plead with board members not to tinker with the existing minimum flows and levels (MFLs) of the Chassahowitzka and Homosassa rivers.

To do so, they said, would cause further degradation to already stressed rivers.

But dozens of speakers and two hours later, the seven district board members unanimously approved a staff recommendation adopting a revised MFLs rate for both rivers that would allow for further flow reductions and possibly greater water withdrawals.

Members said they were guided by science and based their decision on the best available data, computer models and information from 20 separate independent peer reviews. Rather than harm the rivers, reducing flows will help them because now there is a benchmark to control future development, they said.

But audience members weren't buying it. Science, they said, should give way to common sense.

Tuesday's action increases the levels from the existing 3 percent (where they've been since 2013) to an 8 percent flow reduction for the Chassahowitzka and a 5 percent reduction for Homosassa.

Minimum flows and levels are defined by state statute as the limit at which further withdrawals from a body of water would be significantly harmful to the water resources or ecology of the surrounding area.

Water districts use them in water-supply planning and in determining water-use permitting and environmental resource regulation.

But speakers, many representing environmental groups, said they didn't need science or peer reviews. Many live on the rivers and told the board they can see for themselves the degradation of their spring-fed water bodies. Further flow reductions, they said, would continue to harm the rivers.

They wanted the district to keep the existing MFLs. Several speakers urged the water district to instead enact more stringent water-conservation measures or find other resources.

District staffers blamed water degradation not so much on flow reductions but on continued pesticide pollution from septic tanks and fertilizer runoff. Even with the flow changes, anyone wanting to withdraw water must still obtain a water use permit.

Jennette Seachrist, the district's resource management director, said she understands the concern of homeowners, especially when they see the dying trees along the coastline, the increase in algae and reduced water clarity.

The district shares those concerns, she said, but those problems are the result of sea level rise and increased nutrients dumped into the rivers.

That's why setting MFLs are so important, she said, because they protect the rivers from excessive groundwater withdrawals.

Dan Hilliard, president of the Florida Springs Council, said after the meeting he was not surprised by the district's decision.

"I didn't think they would bend to their constituents' demands," Hilliard said.

Here's a look at how Tuesday's meeting played out.

Audience comments:

- Katherine Spratt of Homosassa, holding a bottle of water from the river that she said is precious to her, pleaded with district officials to leave the current MFLs in place.

"How can an agency entrusted to take care of and protect Florida's most precious resource - the water - how can you accept this?" she asked. "Why change something that is currently working?"

Several speakers said the Chassahowitzka and Homosassa rivers should not be further degraded to satisfy the needs of big development and agricultural interests in areas where water resources are depleted.

"Are you allowing those with deep pockets to dictate the use of our natural resources?" she asked.

- Brad Rimbey, who sits on the Homosassa River Alliance and Withlacoochee Aquatic Restoration boards, said the water district is using the same scientific metrics on these world-class rivers as if they were mud holes found in Hillsborough County.

"(That) makes no sense to me," he said. "Leave things alone."

- Harriet Heywood of Homosassa noticed only seven of the 13 board members were there Tuesday and called for a moratorium on a vote until a full board is present. The district has six open positions and the governor has yet to fill those slots.

"I don't understand how a decision can be made when we really don't understand the full implications coming from climate change and sea level rise," she added..

- The youngest speaker, 9-year-old Katie Johnson of Brooksville, said the springs "are very important to many kids like me" and she aspires to be a Weeki Wachee mermaid.

"Taking the water out of the springs will pollute them and algae and salt water will take its place," she said. "Tourists come here to see the springs. My mom loves kayaking and people love swimming in them."

- Shellie Mitchell, a lifelong resident of Citrus County, said healthy rivers are tourist magnets and further degradation would lead to fewer visitors and ultimately harm the economy of the county.

- Richard Owen, executive director for the Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority, defended the district's scientific approach in reaching the MFL limits.

"It strikes the right balance between protecting the systems while allowing for water use," Owen said.

Owen was the only speaker who supported the district's staff recommendation and the only speaker not to receive applause from the audience after leaving the podium.

Board comments:

- Board member Joel Schleicher, responding to some people's comments that they were influenced by developers and others in creating MFLs, said that is absolutely not the case.

"We're serving as volunteers and we want to do what's right," he said. "We have to be guided by something other than public opinion and science is where we have to go. If we don't make science guide us, then we have no basis to stand on."

Schleicher said it is not the board's job to make everyone happy but to do what is right.

"If some people are unhappy about that, I can't help that," he said.

- Kelly Rice said it is offensive when people imply that he and his colleagues are influenced by "deep pockets."
- Rebecca Smith, who attended the meeting via telephone, said the district's mission is to protect the water supply.

The board is statutorily mandated to set MFLs and they rely on science "to make sure we establish an absolute limit."

- Chairman Mark Taylor said the district's mission is to protect water resources, explore minimum flood risks and ensure people's water needs are met.

Sometimes, he said, that mission gets complicated, as it has with setting MFLs for the Homosassa and Chassahowitzka rivers.

"This is the best approach we have today," Taylor said.

Contact Chronicle reporter Michael D. Bates at 352-563-3205 or mbates@chronicleonline.com.

Decision on flow rates fails to protect waterways

Editorial / November 1, 2019

T New flow reduction rates approved by the water management district for Homosassa and Chassahowitzka rivers.

poor decision contrary to common sense.

Originally, it seemed like a good idea. Florida law required the state to identify the limits at which further withdrawals from our aquifers, rivers and other water bodies would significantly harm the resource or the ecology of the area.

In the beginning, it sounded like the state was adding teeth to efforts to preserve water quantity and quality. But over the years, that hasn't proven to be the case.

In our area, the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) was tasked with establishing the minimum flows and levels (MFLs) for the Homosassa and Chassahowitzka rivers, among other water bodies. After a hard-fought battle, advocates for the rivers prevailed and in 2013 the allowable withdrawal rates were reduced to 3% for both.

Now, after a required reevaluation, the SWFWMD Governing Board has increased the allowable withdrawal rate for the Homosassa River from 3% to 5%, and for the Chassahowitzka River from 3% to 8%.

It's the wrong decision, for a number of reasons.

First, the Homosassa and Chassahowitzka river systems were long ago designated as "Outstanding Florida Waters" (OFW), which means that they are worthy of special protection because of their natural attributes. The OFW program is administered through the state-level Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), not the regional water management district. Further, these two systems are among just 41 of Florida's 1,700 OFW locations to be identified as "Special Waters" — they are of "exceptional recreational or ecological significance," providing environmental, social and economic benefits.

What's the regulatory significance? According to DEP, projects within an OFW "must not lower existing ambient water quality ..." and activities that degrade an OFW "must meet the more stringent public interest test of being clearly in the public interest instead of not contrary to the public interest."

Granted, the DEP's Outstanding Florida Waters program focuses on discharges into water bodies, and SWFWMD's minimum flows and levels program focuses on withdrawals from water bodies. But it's clear to us and to many others that these programs are two sides to the same coin — preserving and protecting our waters.

Case in point: A SWFWMD manager acknowledged at the recent hearing — in true "not my job" fashion — that the public's concerns regarding reduced water clarity and increased algae are due to sea-level rise and increased nutrients dumped into the rivers (by implication, not due to decreased flows).

We're not going to quibble with the studies performed by SWFWMD technical staff. It's the Governing Board, which is supposed to be guided by what's in the public interest, that makes the final decisions. We do not believe that the decision it recently made, to allow for greater harm to an Outstanding Florida Water, can possibly be construed as being in the public interest, nor is it reasonable or beneficial.

Speaking of the governing board — Florida law states that water management districts have 13-member governing boards. SWFWMD's board is still short nearly half its members, because Gov. Ron DeSantis has not appointed the missing six. That means the board's recent decision to allow higher withdrawals from the Homosassa and Chassahowitzka river systems was essentially made by a skeleton crew. It should not have happened. Decisions of this magnitude should be considered, discussed and voted upon by a full board.

When it comes to water issues, everyone must adopt the big picture as a common starting point: it is critically important and in the public interest to preserve and protect Florida's waters for social, environmental, economic and sustainability reasons. Silo-thinking just does not work and cannot be allowed.