

APPROVED

WITHLACOOCHEE REGIONAL WATER SUPPLY AUTHORITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Minutes of the Meeting March 20, 2024

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

Vice Chair Estep called the Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority (WRWSA) Board of Directors meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. and requested a roll call.

2. Roll Call

Ms. Suzannah Folsom, WRWSA Executive Director, called the roll and noted a quorum was currently not present.

BOARD MEMBER PRESENT

Craig Estep, *Vice Chair*, Sumter County Commissioner
Jerry Campbell, *Treasurer*, Hernando Co Commissioner
David Bailey, Brooksville City Councilor
Rebecca Bays, Citrus County Commissioner
Gene Davis, Inverness City Councilor
Robert “Bo” Smith, Belleview City Commissioner
Dale Swain, Bushnell City Councilor
Don Wiley, Sumter County Commissioner

BOARD MEMBER(S) ABSENT

Jeff Kinnard, *Chair*, Citrus Co Commissioner
Kathy Bryant, Marion County Commissioner
Beth Narverud, Hernando Co Commissioner
Michelle Stone, Marion County Commissioner
Carl Zalak, Marion County Commissioner

BOARD ALTERNATE(S) PRESENT

Jody Kirkman, Marion County Utilities Director

WRWSA STAFF PRESENT

Suzannah J. Folsom, PE, PMP, Executive Dir
James Hartley, General Counsel Assistant
LuAnne Stout, Administrative Asst.

OTHERS PRESENT

Carrieann Adkins, SWFWMD Govt Affairs Reg Mgr
Alys Brockway, Hernando Co Water Resource Mgr
Debra Burden, Citrus Co Water Conservation Mgr
Trevor Knight, Marion Co Water Resources Liaison
Joseph Quinn, SWFWMD Water Supply Project Mgr
Paige TaraCruz, SWFWMD

WRWSA STAFF ABSENT

Robert W. Batsel, Jr., General Counsel

3. Introductions and Announcements

- Ms. Folsom noted that Ms. Carrieann Adkins is the SWFWMD Government Affairs Regional Manager is here for the first time.
- Ms. Folsom invited members to attend the Sumter County Water Conservation event on April 20.

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

5. Public Comment – There being no members of the audience requesting to address the Board, Vice Chair Estep closed public comment.

6. Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of Minutes** – The January 24, 2024, draft minutes were provided in the Board’s meeting materials.
- b. Bills to be Paid** – February (\$20,466.50) bills paid were provided in the Board’s meeting materials for approval. March bills (\$53,137.36) were provided at the meeting.

- c. **Water Conservation Month Resolution** – Approve Resolution 2024-01.
- d. **Springs Protection Awareness Month Resolution** – Approve Resolution 2024-02.

Mr. Swain moved, second Mr. Wiley, to approve Consent Agenda Items 6.a. 6.b., 6.c. and 6.d. as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

7. Establishment of Proposed Fiscal Year 2024-25 Budget Components

Ms. Suzannah Folsom, WRWSA Executive Director, presented these items

a. Grant Funding Amount and Guidelines

Since 2005, the Authority has funded an annual grants program that provides matching funds for water conservation and water supply development projects. Member governments and other utilities in the region have applied for and received cooperative grants for projects of mutual benefit. The 2024-25 grants cycle will begin with an announcement to be sent to utility directors and water conservation coordinators in the region regarding the Authority's Local Government Grant Program.

For the current fiscal year 2023-24 budget, the Board increased the grant funding budget amount by \$40,000 to \$180,000 funded by surplus unbudget interest funds. This year WRWSA again has benefited from surplus unbudgeted interest funds. In order to provide for this continuing program in the upcoming 2024-25 fiscal year and to allow staff to prepare the 2024-25 budget, staff requests the same amount of \$180,000 for the Grant Program.

Mr. Wiley moved, seconded by Mr. Smith, to set the total allocation of funds in fiscal year 2024-25 budget for the Local Government Grant Program at \$180,000 for water supply and conservation projects. Motion carried unanimously.

b. FY 2024-25 Per Capita Rate

Each year the Authority Board must approve a per capita rate for each of the member counties. The current rate of \$0.19 per capita has been in effect for thirteen years, since the 2009-10 fiscal year. The per capita rate is applied to the latest county population estimates prepared by the Bureau of Economic and Business Research, which prepares the State's official population estimates.

In the coming fiscal year, a per capita rate of \$0.19 will generate a total revenue of \$175,900, an increase of \$6,652 or approximately 3.9% from the current fiscal year.

County	BEBR Population (April 1, 2023)	FY 2024-2025 Assessment
Citrus	162,240	\$30,826
Hernando	204,265	\$ 38,810
Marion	403,966	\$ 76,754
Sumter	155,318	\$ 29,510
Total	925,789	\$ 175,900

The assessments are billed quarterly to each County at a rate of 25% of the amount listed above.

Mr. Wiley moved, seconded by Vice Chair Estep, to approve no change in the per capita rate of \$0.19 for preparation of the Fiscal Year 2024-25 Budget. Motion carried unanimously.

c. **Phase 8 Irrigation Evaluations**

WRWSA will be changing the strategy for implementing the Phase 8 Irrigation Program within the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) service area, which will be reflected as a change in the proposed FY 2024-25 budget.

WRWSA and the cooperating utilities have successfully implemented seven phases of an irrigation evaluation program. This program targets residential customers with very high water usage. Utilities typically see reductions in water usage of 20% after the evaluation have been completed. This helps keep the per capita water usage down for the utility and results in savings for the residential customers on their water bill each month.

Historically the irrigation evaluation program has received 50% co-funding from the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD), with WRWSA contributing 25% and the cooperating utilities contributing 25% of the cost.

The traditional Cooperative Funding Initiative (CFI) at SWFWMD is presently, and for the next few years, prioritizing all of their funding to some large alternative water supply projects in other parts of their district. Therefore, we will be shifting our request for co-funding to the SWFWMD Water Incentives Supporting Efficiency (WISE) program, which is a separate program geared specifically toward water conservation projects. The SWFWMD WISE program has the following differences from the traditional CFI program:

	Traditional CFI funding	WISE program funding
Available funding	50% no maximum	50% up to \$20,000
Prioritization	Alternative water supply project for regional water supply authorities receive priority over all other efforts	First come, first serve until the program annual budget is reached
Application Timeframe	Applications are due in October for work that will start in October of the following year	There is a rolling deadline for applications
Application Approval Timeframe	Applicants know whether they have been approved by September (the month before the project starts) 11 months after the application is sent	Applications can be approved at the next SWFWMD Board meeting
Implementation Timeframe	Project can last for multiple years, but sometimes must reapply each year if the full amount is not authorized in the first year.	Applicants have 12 months to complete the project from approval
Reporting	Applicant submits quarterly reports and a final written report 12 months after the final evaluation comparing pre- and post-evaluation water usage	Reduced reporting requirements

These factors will require an adjustment in strategy for the Phase 8 Irrigation Program:

- Shorter 12-month duration
- Smaller Program of < \$50,000
- Maintain 25% cooperating utility contribution
- Budget for 75% WRWSA share
- Apply for up to \$20,000 reimbursement through the SWFWMD WISE Program

WRWSA staff has discussed this with the cooperating utilities, and have prepared the following estimate, which will be included in the FY 2024-25 budget.

Cooperating Utility	Total Evaluations	Total	WRWSA Share (75%)	Cooperating Utility Share (25%)
Citrus	20	\$ 12,600.00	\$ 9,450.00	\$ 3,150.00
Hernando	20	\$ 12,600.00	\$ 9,450.00	\$ 3,150.00
Marion	20	\$ 12,600.00	\$ 9,450.00	\$ 3,150.00
VCCDD	8	\$ 3,360.00	\$ 2,520.00	\$ 840.00
NSCUDD	16	\$ 6,720.00	\$ 5,040.00	\$ 1,680.00
Total	84	\$ 47,880.00	\$ 35,910.00	\$ 11,970.00

In response to Ms. Bays' inquiry, Ms. Folsom noted that high water users are who is targeted for the audits.

This item was for the Board's information only and no action was required.

8. Legislative Report

Ms. Suzannah Folsom, Executive Director, presented this item. The 2024 Legislative Regular Session began on January 9, 2024 and ended March 8, 2024. Staff gathered information on relevant bills that are related to conservation and water supply from SWFWMD, 1000 Friends of Florida, and the Florida Engineering Society's Conservation and Environmental Quality Committee, and the House and Senate websites.

A summary of the bills that WRWSA staff tracked was provided as an Exhibit to this item. Ms. Folsom noted that 20 bills were tracked and 12 did not pass. She presented information on the eight which passed, particularly SB 1638 to fund environmental resource management.

Senate Bill 1638:

- Allocates Revenues from Gaming
- Establishes funds: minimum of \$100 MM/YR for FL Wildlife Corridor; \$100 MM/YR for uplands management (invasives, state parks, trails, endangered species); \$100 MM/YR for DEP sea level rise resilience plan
- Remaining funds for DEP water quality improvement grant program
- Encourages land acquisition to complete critical linkages within the Florida Wildlife Corridor

Ms. Folsom said to advise her if there are any addition items that should be tracked, and if there is any additional information that can be provided.

This item was for the Board's information only and no action was required.

9. Attorney's Report

Mr. James Hartley, assistant to Mr. Batsel, presented information about Board Member attendance and alternate Board Member attendance for quorum requirements.

Agreement: Revised and Restated Interlocal Agreement

- Each board member gets a vote
- Alternates can attend and vote
- Alternates must be approved by their respective councils or commissions.
- Alternates must be other city council, county commission, or staff members

Statement of Agency Organization and Operation

- Regular meeting quorum requires representation from a majority of the Member Counties
Majority = 3 out 4 Counties
- County and City Members count as the County representatives
- Annual Budget approval requires: four County Commissioners, one Commissioner from each County

Policy: Conduct of Board Members

- Board members may participate by means of communication technology, but a quorum must be physically present

Policy: Alternate Board Members

- Alternates are to sit at the table
- Alternates can only represent one missing board member
- Alternates cannot serve as an officer unless all three officers are not present, and the alternate is elected to serve as chair pro tem
- Alternates can only count toward the quorum requirement for the annual budget if they are also an elected official
- Alternates can vote for the annual budget
- Alternates cannot sign checks for Officers

This item was for the Board's information only and no action was required.

10. **Executive Director's Report** – Ms. Folsom presented the following items which required no action and highlighted items which had activity since last Board meeting. She invited members to visit the booth she is hosting at the Sumter County Water Conservation event on April 20 and receive color-changing cups to celebrate Water Conservation and Springs Protection Awareness Month.

- a. **Water Use Permit Demand Summary** - A summary was in the Board's meeting materials.
- b. **Water Management Information System Water Use Permit Notifications** – A list of notifications was included in the Board's meeting materials. Board members requested information about Cabot Citrus Farms permit and water/sewer agreement. Ms. Brockway said she would provide Ms. Folsom with information to provide members.

Cabot Citrus World Woods Development – located within Hernando County:

- The Cabot Citrus Permit 13279.006 Water Use Permit Modification was issued by SWFWMD on 2/13/24 and expires 12/27/28.
- Annual Average Quantity – 763,900 gpd; Peak Month Quantity – 1,645,000 gpd
- The development has its own Water Use Permit
- Hernando County is providing sanitary sewer service at a Bulk rate of \$5.70 per 1,000 gallons (no cap). This is measured at a sewer master meter.

- c. **Residential Irrigation Evaluation Programs Update** – Ms. Folsom noted that Phase 7 is 70 percent complete and planning is beginning for Phase 8 using the WISE application.
- d. **Correspondence** – Several items were included in meeting materials.
- e. **News Articles** – Several articles were included in meeting materials.

11. **Other Business**

- Ms. Bays requested Ms. Folsom investigate communicating with the Regional Planning Council.
- Vice Chair Estep asked the Board about reading the meeting packet online when notified by email it is available and then receiving the hardcopy at the meeting to save postage cost. Members were in agreement. If any members would prefer to continue to receive the hard copy by mail, staff will continue to do so by request.

12. **Next Meeting Time and Location**

- The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for May 15, 2024, at 3:30 p.m. at the Lecanto Government Building, Room 166.

13. **Adjournment** – Vice Chair Estep adjourned the meeting at 4:07 p.m.

Jeff Kinnard, Chair

Suzannah J. Folsom, Executive Director