

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
ENGLEWOOD WATER DISTRICT BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
201 SELMA AVENUE, ENGLEWOOD, FL 34223
April 10, 2025 @ 8:30 A.M.**

Board of Supervisors:

Lani Gaver, Chair
Taylor Meals, Vice-Chair
Robert C. Stern, Jr.
Sydney B. Crampton
Tony Mr. Babington

Staff:

Keith R. Ledford, Jr., P.E., Interim Administrator
Robert H. Berntsson, District Counsel
Dewey Futch, Water Operations Manager
David Larson, Wastewater Operations Manager
Lisa Hawkins, Finance Director
Ashley Aguiar, Executive Assistant

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & ROLL CALL
2. **ANNOUNCEMENTS** – Additions or Deletions
 - Deletion of Discussion 6a. EWD Emergency Declaration Policy
 - Addition of Action Item 7c. FDEP Amendment No. 1 to Agreement No. LPA0283
3. **PUBLIC INPUT** - None
4. **PRESENTATIONS**
 - 4a. Annual Financial Audit Report – Wade Sansbury, Mauldin & Jenkins

Mr. Sansbury delivered his presentation, noting that an unmodified opinion was issued. The Auditor's analysis revealed no findings in the financial statements and included no recommendations.

Mr. Meals moved, “to accept,” seconded by Mr. Stern.

UNANIMOUS

25-04-10 A

Full motion read: To accept as presented, the Audited Financial Statements as of and for the years ended September 30, 2024 and 2023 and the Auditor's Discussion and Analysis dated September 30, 2024, in accordance with Section 10 of the Enabling Act.

5. **CONSENT SECTION** - Chair Gaver called for a motion to approve. Mr. Stern moved, “to approve the consent agenda presented,” seconded by Mr. Meals.
 - 5a. Minutes of the Regular Meeting dated March 13, 2025
Recommended Action: Approve the meeting minutes.
 - 5b. Big W Law Invoice dated April 1, 2025.
Recommended Action: Approve the attorney's invoice in the amount of \$2,250.00.
 - 5c. Oertel, Fernandez, Bryant & Atkinson Invoice dated April 3, 2025
Recommended Action: Approve the attorney's invoice in the amount of \$2,535.00

UNANIMOUS

CS 25-04-10 A-C

6. **DISCUSSION** – None

7. ACTION ITEMS

7a. WRF Surge Basin Cleaning – US Submergent Technologies – Mr. Ledford led the discussion. The Board previously approved a requisition of \$158,200 for US Submergent Technologies in February 2025 to address the removal of waste materials from the surge basins of Plants 3 and 4, based on estimated quantities. However, this amount was only sufficient for the cleaning of the Plant 3 surge basin, as actual waste volumes exceeded initial projections. This was primarily due to the higher-than-expected presence of grease and rags, a result of the ongoing construction of the new WRF headworks. US Submergent Technologies has now provided an additional estimate of \$168,700 to complete the cleaning of the Plant 4 surge basin. This work is necessary to mitigate potential odor issues at the WRF facility. Vendor invoices will reflect the actual quantities of waste removed, and pricing, terms, and conditions will be in accordance with City of Orlando IFB23-0211. Although staff initially intended to absorb this unforeseen expenditure within the existing budget, other essential repairs at the WRF have made this unfeasible. Accordingly, staff is requesting a budget amendment in the amount of \$326,900, which will fully cover the costs associated with the removal of grease and rags from both Plants 3 and 4. This amendment will leave approximately \$167,149 available in the WRF system repair and maintenance account for the remainder of FY25.

Mr. Babington moved, “**to approve,**” seconded by Mr. Stern.

UNANIMOUS

25-04-10 B

Full motion read: To authorize US Submergent Technologies to remove the grease from the Plant 4 Surge Basin and approve a budget amendment in the amount of \$326,900.

7b. Administrator Position – Mr. Ledford led the discussion and noted that during the March board meeting, the potential opportunity for him to assume the Administrator position was addressed. Before making a final decision, he requested individual meetings with each board member to discuss important matters related to EWD and its future direction. After meeting with all board members individually, Mr. Ledford formally expressed his readiness to accept the position, contingent upon the Board’s decision.

Mr. Babington moved, “**to approve,**” seconded by Mr. Stern.

UNANIMOUS

25-04-10 C

Full motion read: To appoint Keith R. Ledford, Jr., P.E. as Administrator and to authorize the Board Chair to sign the employment agreement on behalf of the Board of Supervisors.

7c. FDEP Amendment No. 1 to Agreement No. LPA0283 - The original grant agreement for designing the North Water Reclamation Facility has expired. To extend the agreement, an amendment is necessary.

Mr. Meals moved, “**to approve,**” seconded by Ms. Crampton.

UNANIMOUS

25-04-10 D

Full motion read: To authorize the Chair to sign FDEP Amendment No. 1 to Agreement No. LPA0283

8. **INTERIM ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT – Keith R. Ledford, Jr., P.E.**

- FEMA Visit - On April 2nd and April 3rd, FEMA conducted a site visit to assess specific areas, taking photographs for documentation purposes. The inspection process remains in the inventory stage, and updates will be provided in the coming weeks as further information becomes available.
- South Manasota Sandpiper Key Association Presentation - Mr. Ledford delivered a presentation to the Association after the scheduled guest speaker canceled at the last minute. Approximately 30 attendees were present in person, with additional participants joining via Zoom. The presentation covered various topics including the history of EWD, EWD's plants, master planning, expansion plans, hurricane damage, and smoke testing. The audience engaged with insightful questions throughout the session.
- FASD Annual Conference - The Florida Association of Special Districts (FASD) annual conference will take place at Sunseeker Resort in Charlotte Harbor from June 15th-19th. Mr. Ledford intends to attend, and any board members interested in participating should notify himself or Ms. Aguiar for registration and scheduling arrangements.

8a. WATER OPERATIONS MANAGER – Dewey Futch

Production:

- Total send-out for March 2025 was 100.23 mg, compared to 101.69 mg in 2024.
- The average send-out was 3.23 mgd, while the average for 2024 was 3.28 mgd.
- The highest send-out was 3.53 mgd, with the 2024 high reaching 3.59 mgd.
- Rainfall for March 2025 was 1.53', while in 2024 it was 1.77'.
- Operators have been performing regular maintenance and operations, with no major issues to report.
- Chlorine Conversion – EWD will be participating in the Chlorine Conversion scheduled from April 22nd to May 6th, in coordination with neighboring areas. During this period, free chlorine will be used as the primary disinfectant, replacing the usual combination of chlorine and ammonia (chloramines). This standard procedure is recommended by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to ensure the continued maintenance of water quality throughout the distribution system. Although there are no current indications within our system that suggest any issues, this procedure is a beneficial practice and is being implemented in conjunction with neighboring areas.

Distribution:

- There was one incident to report:
 1. On 3-17-25, a contractor working on S. McCall Rd. accidentally damaged a two-inch water main. Repairs were completed, and a boil water notice was issued, then rescinded on 3-20-25.
- New meter sets for March included:
 - 20 single-family meters
 - 20 ERC's
 - 44 radio heads were replaced.
 - 27 customer requests for turn-offs were completed.

8b. WASTEWATER OPERATIONS MANAGER – David Larson

WRF:

- MADF 1.658 MGD March 2025
- MADF March 2024 1.986 MGD
- Peak Flow 1.856 MG
- The grease removal project on Plant #3 has been completed.
- Plant staff have been working to get Plant #1 ready to be put back into service
- Normal Operations and Maintenance

Collections:

- Collections staff added one new vacuum pit as part of a service extension.
- Collections had 16 cap offs for the month of March
- Repaired 31 vents and cleanouts for the month
- Collections staff, along with our in-house electrician, restored six lift station panels on Manasota Key (#s 201, 202, 203, 231, 235, and 236) to normal operation. While these panels are now functioning, they still require permanent repairs and need to be elevated to prevent future flooding damage.

8c. TECHNICAL SUPPORT MANAGER – Keith R. Ledford Jr., P.E.

- **Hurricane Milton I&I** – The smoke testing for the southern portion of the key has been completed by USSI. A total of 69 locations were identified where smoke was escaping inappropriately. Of these, approximately 30 were manholes, which EWD is expected to address promptly. Additionally, 24 instances were traced to damaged homes where plumbing systems, including toilets, had been removed/damaged. All such cases have been thoroughly documented. Furthermore, 15 locations outside of the homes were identified, and it remains to be determined whether these are on the public or private side. Customer Service will be issuing notifications requesting that customers undertake necessary repairs. Mr. Ledford expressed commendation for the efficiency demonstrated in the process. On April 9, 2025, both Mr. Ledford and Chair Gaver visited the end area, which provided valuable insights. Mr. Ledford has formally approved the continuation into the next phases.
- **South WRF – New Headworks/Drying Bed** – The new headworks and drying bed sections have been completed in accordance with the original contract specifications. An additional feature, not included in the initial agreement, was incorporated towards the end of the project—an auto-dialer system designed to notify operators of any system alarms. Furthermore, the staff is currently working with Veolia to address and resolve warranty-related concerns regarding the grit system.
- **Utility Rate Study** - Staff met with Raftelis on March 27, 2025, to review the model for the rate study and discuss the potential rate increase amounts. The next meeting is scheduled for April 11, 2025, to finalize the miscellaneous portion of the rates while we continue to work on the required capital improvement section of the rates.
- **V1 Station Rehab** – The final restoration of the site is nearly complete. A few remaining punch list items need to be addressed, along with the submission of close-out documentation and final invoices.

8d. FINANCE DIRECTOR – Lisa Hawkins

March Financial Statements

- Operating revenues for March totaled \$11.4 million, representing an increase of approximately \$663,000 compared to the previous March. Operating expenses amounted to \$8.8 million, reflecting a decrease of around \$378,000 from the previous year. This results in an operating surplus of approximately \$2.6 million through March.
- Other revenues saw an increase of \$45,000, attributed to insurance proceeds received for the truck that was totaled.
- EWD has reached the midpoint of the fiscal year, with the Accounting Manager, Ms. Burge, currently preparing the Midyear Budget Forecast. The report is expected to be completed in time for the May board meeting. In June, EWD will begin the budgeting process for fiscal year 2026.

March Investment Statements

- March concluded with \$18.3 million invested in RBC and \$3.7 million at Centennial Bank, bringing total cash and investments to \$22 million.

9. ATTORNEY'S REPORT – Robert H. Berntsson – A telephonic Texas unemployment hearing was held on Tuesday, April 8th, concerning former EWD Administrator Michael Collard. Human Resources Manager, Ms. Bagshaw, and Board Member, Mr. Stern participated in the proceedings. EWD is currently working in coordination with its labor counsel in Florida regarding Mr. Collard's unemployment claim. While Mr. Collard disputes the circumstances surrounding the conclusion of his employment at EWD, EWD maintains its position, as outlined by Attorney Berntsson during the hearing, that Mr. Collard voluntarily resigned. Should Mr. Collard ultimately be deemed eligible for benefits in the state of Texas, EWD would not bear any financial liability for those payments. The hearing experienced some procedural challenges and, due to time constraints, was continued to a future date, which has yet to be scheduled. Adding challenges to the matter, an additional hearing has been set for Friday, April 11th, with a subsequent hearing also anticipated. Although the issue stems from a single unemployment claim, it is currently being addressed through two separate cases.

10. OLD BUSINESS

10a. Winchester Ranch Development – Mr. Ledford led the discussion. Following up on the March Public Workshop, recent updates have been received from Kimley Horn & HDR, but the necessary data to prepare a presentation for the board is still being finalized. Concerns about the raw water source persist, which could pose challenges. The plant sizing is still under review, and final numbers are not yet available for presentation. Construction costs have risen significantly, but those figures are not yet ready for discussion. Mr. Meals had inquired about the status of updates regarding the Florida Statutes related to annexation, as this issue was not resolved during the previous meeting. Attorney Berntsson responded to Mr. Meals inquiry that Winchester Ranch has not yet provided any further information. A comprehensive update will be provided at the May board meeting.

11. NEW BUSINESS – Chair Gaver shared a personal health update, disclosing that she was recently diagnosed with stage 4 pancreatic cancer. She noted that, despite the diagnosis, she currently feels well and remains committed to continuing in her role for as long as it is feasible. While her intention is to retain her seat, she also acknowledged that it is not too early to begin considering future representation for District 1, should there come a time when she needs to make a decision about her ability to continue serving.

12. **PUBLIC COMMENT – ANY TOPIC** – None

13. **BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS** – Mr. Stern extended his congratulations to Ms. Hawkins on the successful completion of the audit and to Mr. Ledford on his recent appointment as Administrator, also acknowledging Ms. Crampton for her ongoing contributions. Ms. Crampton encouraged EWD to pursue more innovative and strategic approaches, with particular emphasis on the importance of safeguarding the organization’s resources. Mr. Meals also offered congratulations to Ms. Hawkins and Mr. Ledford, and commended Mr. Ledford for his proactive decision to meet individually with each board member. He expressed confidence in Mr. Ledford’s ability to lead and implement the necessary steps for continued progress. Mr. Meals further acknowledged the work related to the Wellen Park initiative, noting the demanding nature of the 30-day timeframe, but expressed hope for a timely and effective resolution. He extended his sympathies to Chair Gaver, while emphasizing his confidence in EWD’s continued success. Mr. Babington echoed the congratulations to Ms. Hawkins and Mr. Ledford, and expressed his support and well wishes to Chair Gaver during this time. He affirmed EWD’s ongoing commitment to supporting her in her role. Chair Gaver extended her congratulations to Mr. Ledford and provided an update on recent smoke testing activities. She noted that the inspector was impressed with the results and indicated that the issue was not as severe as initially anticipated—an outcome that reflects positively on EWD’s continued diligence in maintaining operational standards. Chair Gaver also shared a personal health update, disclosing her recent diagnosis of stage 4 pancreatic cancer. Despite the seriousness of the diagnosis, she expressed optimism and a commitment to maintaining a positive outlook. She conveyed her gratitude for the kind words and support during this time.

14. **ADJOURN @ 9:22am**


Taylor Meals - Vice Chair

APPROVED/aa