Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the South Indian River Water Control District Held on June 18, 2026

The regular meeting of the South Indian River Water Control District was held on June 18, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. at the District Work Center, 15600 Jupiter Farms Road, Jupiter, Florida, and via Zoom video conferencing. Present in person were Supervisors Susan Kennedy, Beth McElroy, John Meyer, and Bob Berman. Also present were William "Chad" Kennedy, Executive Director; Dustin Fazio, Supervisor of Operations; Ryan Grigg, Chief Financial Officer; Charles Haas, Treasurer; Seth Behn, Attorney; Robert Eustice, Engineer; and Donna DeNinno, Public Information. Approximately 12 landowners were present in person. Approximately 4 landowners were present via Zoom video conferencing, including Kyle Wekenmann, Office Assistant.

Ms. Kennedy called the meeting to order and the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag was given.

Ms. Kennedy asked if there were any corrections to the minutes and requested a motion to approve the minutes of the May Meeting. **Mr. Meyer motioned to approve the minutes of the May 21, 2026, board meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. McElroy, and it carried unanimously.**

Ms. Kennedy asked for any corrections to the warrants list and requested a motion to approve the warrant list. **Mr. Meyer motioned to approve the warrant list. The motion was seconded by Ms. McElroy, and it carried unanimously.**

Landowner comment: Ms. Erin Hodel of Jupiter Farms spoke about tree trimming in Jupiter Farms along the canals and said she appreciates District maintenance of waterways in preparation for storm season. However, she expressed concerns regarding the timing and intensity of these operations in relation to migration of birds and endangered bats during their mating season, which extends through August for birds and mid-July for bats. She appreciated Mr. Kennedy's response and willingness to discuss the issue. She is asking the Board to reevaluate the schedule and methods so as not to impact the birds and bats and felt alternatives are available.

Landowner comment: Mr. Matt Gitkin of Jupiter Farms wanted to address the ongoing attempts to break up the consent agenda, an issue that has been addressed at the last seven meetings. The District already uses modern technology to record and transcribe meetings through Zoom. These can be reviewed and corrected if necessary. It is standard practice. He cited one Supervisor's repeated removal of minutes from the consent agenda for his preference of a more condensed summary. This has occurred at seven meetings, taking additional Board and staff time. Counsel has repeatedly confirmed that the current approach is fully compliant and by continuing to bring up the issue, it doesn't improve transparency or efficiency. The current detailed minutes ensure nothing is lost, filtered, or subject to interpretation, reflects what is said, and allows the public to draw their own conclusions, while a synopsis, while concise, introduces subjectivity and a risk of omission.

Landowner comment: Mr. Charles Bratten of Palm Beach Country Estates spoke about the Budget Workshop and felt that the Board should be ashamed of what is happening in the financials of this organization. We are now going to double the dirt road maintenance in Jupiter Farms because we haven't been collecting the correct amount, and money for dirt roads has been used for paved roads and paved roads for dirt roads. He said we paid the Treasurer $400,000 in 2024, and thanks to Bob Berman, we now have a new Chief Financial Officer. This Board owes the landowners an answer as to what has been going on with the money over the last ten years and are now going to assess the landowners more money, more than the cost of inflation, because the books haven't been done correctly. He felt this hasn't been done to standard accounting principles. As far as the audit is concerned, the District has been using the same auditor for 30 years and he thought this was not standard procedure and should be changed. If the Board doesn't let landowners know what is going on, he will do so on Facebook.

Ms. DeNinno presented the Public Information report. She said she had provided her report to the Board and did not have anything additional at this time. Mr. Meyer asked about the Policies and Procedures Manual update, and she replied she is working with Mr. Kennedy and staff on a significant number of updates, changes, and additions, which will be made over the next few months. Updates will be provided to Mr. Meyer as chair of the Policies and Procedures Committee.

Mr. Hass presented the Treasurer's report. We have the audit report, and Mr. Grigg has been charged with working with the auditor this year. Mr. Grigg said the state filings are due at the end of the month and he needs verbal approval to ensure that the Board has received the reports. Ms. Kennedy asked for a motion to receive and file the report. **Mr. Berman motioned to receive and file the report. The motion was seconded by Mr. Meyer, and it carried unanimously.**

Mr. Kennedy presented the Executive Director's report. He said the Board has received his report and he had nothing else to add. Ms. Kennedy asked Mr. Kennedy or Mr. Fazio to respond to Ms. Hodel's concerns. Mr. Kennedy stated they are cutting back vegetation, and it is a slow process. They make every effort to do this in the dry season, but they need to continue with the approaching hurricane season. The five-month window Ms. Hodel cited makes this a little difficult, but he said operators haven't reported any bird displacement. He requests that they be allowed to stay on track. Mr. Fazio said Jupiter Farms should be completed in a week or two.

Mr. Fazio presented the Supervisor of Operations report. He said they are budgeting for repair and maintenance for five water control structures in Jupiter Farms – Canals 2, 3, 4 ,5, and C-14. He met with the original contractor, who will work up an estimate. Ms. Kennedy asked what type of repairs are needed and Mr. Fazio replied they are slide gates and seals are starting to leak. The problem is they don't make those types of gates any longer so we are looking into a single gate. There is also an electrical issue with telemetry on Canals 4 and 5.

Mr. Eustice presented the Engineer's report. The District received one road construction petition prior to the April 30th cut-off date. It is for 129th Place North between Sandy Run and 150th Court North. There are 14 lots within the Petition area. Preparation of the referendum package has been completed and sent to Mr. Kennedy for review. They will be speaking with Mr. Grigg about the assessment per parcel.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service Grant Phase 2 work was completed on June 10th. Preliminary discussions with the Natural Resources Conservation Service Grant Manager indicate there may be additional funds available under the original agreement. A final inspection is tentatively scheduled for June 24th for work that has been completed to date and for potential additional funds. They are looking to request a possible $1.5 million in additional funding, but Natural Resources Conservation Service has stated that all work would have to be completed by November 17, 2026, so that will affect how much funding they may be able to receive.

Mr. Eustice stated they had met with Florida's Turnpike Enterprise and we've received their pre-development model for review. We have identified significant errors in how the Palm Beach Country Estates system was modeled. We will be meeting with them to address our concerns and issues with how they are modifying the District's model. Staff had a Teams meeting with South Florida Water Management District's Regulatory staff on June 10, 2026, to let them know our concerns and they are in agreement with our findings and they have reassured us that they will not allow Florida's Turnpike Enterprise to modify our discharge structure without our approval as we are the sole holders of the permit. Currently all of the East Basin drains through one fixed crest weir and we have a permit with South Florida Water Management District on how much water we can discharge through that structure. In order for Florida's Turnpike Enterprise to widen the road, they will need to either provide a compensating source for the additional pavement or they will need to gain access to additional discharge, but they are currently limited under our permit and must gain our approval. Their calculations based on the District's modeling are currently showing almost double the amount of discharge by the District and we don't agree. They are trying to set up another meeting for next week to go over the issues. Mr. Meyer asked if more discharge is needed, how this can be accomplished. Mr. Eustice said the easiest path is to modify our fixed crest weir, lowering it to increase the amount of discharge. Florida's Turnpike Enterprise could go through a permit from the Army Corp of Engineers and South Florida Water Management District, but that is a very long process. Mr. Meyer asked if we go with the weir route, could we partner with them. Mr. Eustice responded that Florida's Turnpike Enterprise were initially against anything outside of their ownership, but he thinks they will have a difficult time meeting the discharge requirements without partnering with us. Mr. Berman asked if we would need to make drainage improvements based on our modeling regardless of this issue. Mr. Eustice said some of the weirs may need to be modified as a result of years of silting. We are receiving more water so we may want to discharge more water. This may also be accomplished by removing silt. Mr. Berman asked which is more important, discharge or storage, to which Mr. Eustice replied they are equally important. Mr. Berman said last month he was authorized to contact the Chief Executive Officer of Florida's Turnpike Enterprise and for the record she has been extremely responsive. Things seemed to improve with her involvement, and he will continue to engage with her. Mr. Meyer asked about the paving petition and the additional costs for referendums that were incorporated into the petition earlier in the year. Ms. Kennedy said those changes were approved. Mr. Kennedy said they were added to the petition form. She asked Mr. Kennedy and Mr. Eustice to follow up.

Mr. Behn presented the attorney's report. He spoke about House Bill 145 to increase sovereign immunity, which has been sent to the governor, who can sign it, veto it or let pass into law without a signature. In speaking with some insurance people at the Florida Association of Special Districts Conference, he expects costs could increase as a result of the legislation. He reminded everyone about the July 1 deadline to file Form 1. He thanked the Board for allowing some of the staff to attend the Florida Association of Special Districts Conference, which provides a great learning and networking opportunity, and once again, he conducted this year's ethics training seminar.

Mr. Behn said the work has been completed on the road-paving policy statement that was requested by the Board and was included in the Board package.

Mr. Behn stated that he had a request from their legislative team, who has been engaged in a larger number of issues than usual on the District's behalf and continue to do so. Ms. Weinberger's staff has indicated they will be interacting more with them in the near future. They have basically been doing this at no charge and have asked for a formal monthly agreement for $2500 per month, which may be cancelled and revisited at any time. He doesn't expect it to impact the legal budget and that it should fall within their cap. Ms. Kennedy asked what kind of report we would receive. Mr. Behn said it would be a monthly report on actions and services performed. He added that the agreement information was included in the Board's meeting package. Board members said they did not recall seeing it. Mr. Kennedy apologized that it wasn't included in the Board package. Mr. Behn said he would get that to the Board and can revisit it at the next meeting. This work could be a precursor to legislative action relating to recent legislation regarding the District should the Board deem it necessary. Mr. Berman asked why this wouldn't just be done during the legislative session and Mr. Behn said there has been ongoing communication. Ms. Kennedy asked that this be tabled until the next meeting.

Under new business, Mr. Grigg, Chief Financial Officer, discussed the District's financial investing. The District is currently investing in certificates of deposit and a money market account. These are excess funds in the fund balance. We are currently making .01 percent, and he is asking the Board if they would like to consider a fund called Florida PRIME, a state investment pool with secure and safe investments such as bonds and securities, that is currently earning between 3.7 and 3.8 percent. It maintains an AAA rating, which is the highest rating, and money can be pulled out at any time. There are other accounts he can look into as well. The District could earn as much as $100,000 to $150,000. Mr. Haas said the current policy was established decades ago and reaffirmed a few years ago. He had brought up changing the investment policy at that time, which was investment only in a super safe qualified public repository, but Mr. Jones, who was on the Budget Committee at that time and a Certified Public Accountant, was against changing the policy and felt it wasn't worth the risk. Ms. Kennedy said it was a different time. Mr. Behn said Florida PRIME was specifically set up to meet statutory requirements. Mr. Haas said it has a long history, and issues from years ago have been addressed. He supports this change. Ms. Kennedy asked for a motion to change the policy to allow investment into this type of investment pool. **Mr. Berman motioned to change the policy and come back to the Board with a proposal. The motion was seconded by Mr. Meyer.** Ms. McElroy said she'd like to see risk levels and what other districts are doing with their investments. **The motion was carried unanimously.**

Under Supervisor Comments, Mr. Berman said we had received an email from Deborah Drum, program supervisor for the Department of Environmental Resources. Many years ago, there was a proposed development west of Jupiter Farms called Indian Lakes Estates and there was an agreement in place for contract drainage. It was intended to evolve into the 8th Plan of Reclamation, at which time, it would have been annexed into the District, but it didn't happen. The property was acquired by the County, and since then, no fees have been collected for discharging into the District. He said this was not addressed in the email, but the Board may need to look into this and provide a response. Ms. Kennedy said what she is hearing is that we need to gather the necessary documentation associated with the discharge and find out the current status. Mr. Haas said his recollection is that when the County took it over, it became a natural area, and there would be higher water levels. Mr. Kennedy said we do receive some water from them, and he would look into the documentation. The control structure is on their side, and the pipe enters into the very west end of the Perimeter Canal.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

ADJOURNED

Recording Secretary　　　　　　　　　Approved