

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting
of the South Indian River Water Control District
Held on July 18, 2024**

The regular meeting of the South Indian River Water Control District was held on July 18, 2024, 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 Tom Powell, John Jones, John Meyer, and Susan Kennedy. Also present in person were Chad Kennedy, Executive Director; Dustin Fazio, Supervisor of Operations; Charles Haas, treasurer; Karen Brandon and Robert Eustice, engineers; William Capko, attorney; Donna DeNinno, public information; and Jane Woodard, secretary. Four landowners were present in person. Supervisor Mike Howard and two landowners were present via Zoom video conferencing.

Mr. Powell called the meeting to order and the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag was given.

Mr. Jones made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Mr. Meyer seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Mr. Powell opened the floor to landowner discussion. Ms. Greta Foriere, landowner on 153rd Court North, inquired about the status of her road paving petition. It was noted that this project had been bid on twice with the last bids higher than the first. She stated the bids are so high because of the contractor's requirement for the base of the road, which 9.5 inches. Ms. Foriere has a geo report which shows only 6 inches are needed. She asked if the specifications could be adjusted accordingly. The difference in cost is significant. Mr. Powell explained that the Board's policy is for paved roads to be according to County standards. This standard has been used since 1990. If the District gives a road over to the County for maintenance, it must meet their standards. Options were discussed. Ms. Foriere stated she does not want to wait another year or two to see if there are any other petitions for paving that she can join. The Board and staff were not aware of any roads that were paved to substandard requirements. There is still an option for the landowner to go back to the first bidder. Ms. Foriere inquired about the procedure for stopping the project and requesting a refund of the money being held in escrow. It was noted that expenses were incurred to obtain the current bids. There was also discussion about changing the design of the road, using Open Graded Emulsified Mix instead of asphalt. Changing the design would require a new petition and incur more expenses for the new design and another request for bids. The landowner was advised she could accept a current bid, spend money for another re-bid, initiate a new petition for an Open Graded Emulsified Mix road instead of asphalt, or stop the project until or unless there is another paving project she can bundle with. If the landowner decides to stop the project, the remaining approximately \$78,000 held in escrow will be refunded.

At this time, Mr. Powell presented Ms. Holly Rigsby, office administrator, with flowers and a Certificate of Appreciation plaque for her hard work and dedication. Ms. Rigsby joined the office staff as a part-time employee in 2008.

Ms. DeNinno presented the public information report. The next newsletter will include a biography on Mr. Fazio as well as election information. Ballots for the annual landowners' meeting will be sent out in August.

Mr. Haas presented the treasurer's report. He noted that the annual audit report was received at the end of June and distributed to the Board members. All Board members confirmed receipt of the report. He stated the auditors are under contract and have a separate engagement letter every year. He recommended and requested approval to sign the current engagement letter. **Ms. Kennedy made a motion authorizing Mr. Haas to sign the auditors' engagement letter for the audit of the 9/30/24 financial statements. Mr. Meyer seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.**

Mr. Haas presented the proposed budget for the next fiscal year. He explained the budget controls the financial affairs of the District and what is needed to assess landowners for those services. There will be a formal public hearing at the August meeting. Discussions at this time are for Board input and to establish rates for the Truth in Millage (TRIM) bill. Mr. Haas discussed highlights of the budget which is increased by \$195,500; half is for additional wages and services and the other increases are for items that the Executive Director wants to put more emphasis on. Overall, there is less than a 2% increase. Jupiter Farms has an increase of \$15 for acreage assessments and a decrease of \$12 in per parcel assessments. Palm Beach Country Estates has an increase of \$5 in maintenance acreage assessments and a decrease of \$32 in debt parcel assessments. Egret Landing and Jupiter Commerce Park have an increase of \$5 in maintenance acreage assessments.

Mr. Haas explained an increase in assessments for the Palm Beach Country Estates water distribution system. Prior assessments were less than the annual debt service. Now the surplus in that fund is at the point of requiring an adjustment in order to avoid a large increase in a few years.

The overall budget increase for Palm Beach Country Estates is \$55,000. The overall budget increase for Jupiter Farms is \$85,000. Mr. Haas noted that the assessments for the second phase of the modeling project is being kept at the previous year's rate. He also noted this is the final year of debt service for the 17th Plan of Improvements.

Mr. Haas stated the Budget Committee has reviewed the proposed budget presented tonight. The deadline for submitting for the TRIM bill is July. The budget can still be adjusted in August. There were no questions or further discussion by the Board. Mr. Haas recommended transmitting these proposed assessment rates to the Property Appraiser for inclusion in the TRIM Notice. **Mr. Jones made a motion authorizing the treasurer to submit the proposed assessments as recommended. Ms. Kennedy seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.**

All Board members confirmed they want to continue receiving hard copies of future detailed budgets from the treasurer.

Mr. Kennedy presented the Executive Director's report. He discussed easements in Jupiter Farms, stating that there is currently no good survey showing where the easements start and stop. He suggested a three-year contract with a surveyor to provide easements and structure locations, including elevations, on a survey of Jupiter Farms. The information would be made available on the District's website for landowner access. Mr. Powell noted many of the canals are out of alignment and questioned how they would be defined. Mr. Eustice stated information would be taken from what is recorded with the County, and the surveys would also identify where canals are out of their easements and address prescriptive easements. He suggested using Legacy Surveying, a small local surveying company. He estimated the survey work would be \$105,000. They would gather culvert information, location, size, material and

elevations. Some of the work in Section 18 has already been performed by this surveyor. There would be an overlay of background data to show where each canal is vs. where it should be. They would also show the date of construction, including culvert replacements. The data would be available to staff as well as residents. A GIS database could also be established, adding to the District's ability to access data. With this included, the total estimate would be \$140,000. Mr. Kennedy noted, with this information available, he could start developing a schedule for replacements and forecast expenditures. **After a discussion by the Board, Mr. Howard made a motion to go forward with the project to obtain surveys of Jupiter Farms as discussed, proceeding over a three-year period. Mr. Meyer seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.** Mr. Kennedy requested Board approval to proceed with grant requests to help fund the Jupiter Farms survey project. **Ms. Susan Kennedy made a motion to authorize proceeding with grant requests. Mr. Jones seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.**

Mr. Kennedy discussed vegetation management. The current contract for canal spraying expires in September. He requested authority to obtain bids for this service to be sure we are using the most economical contractor, and the Board agreed.

Mr. Kennedy stated he and Mr. Fazio would like to attend and participate in the Florida Association of Special District certified manager program. It is a week-long course costing \$1,200. The Board was in favor of this and felt it would be of benefit to the District.

Mr. Kennedy requested that two John Deere mowing tractors and a Kobelco excavator be declared surplus as they are over 20 years old and out of service. **Mr. Meyer made a motion to declare the mowing tractors and excavator surplus. Ms. Kennedy seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.** Mr. Kennedy also reported there are several mowing decks that should be declared as surplus. **Mr. Howard made a motion to declare the mowing decks as surplus as recommended by the Executive Director. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.** Mr. Kennedy then requested replacing the two mowing tractors with new equipment costing less than \$130,000, noting there are funds available in the budget. **Mr. Jones made a motion approving the expenditure to replace the mowing tractors. Ms. Kennedy seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.**

Lastly, Mr. Kennedy recognized Ms. Holly Rigsby for her work in the office. He also recognized Philip Walton and Lorenzo Barajas for obtaining their Commercial Drivers License Class A licenses.

Mr. Fazio presented the Supervisor of Operations' report. A surplus motor grader was listed in an online auction. He will advise the Board when it is sold. The Rocky Pines overlay project is scheduled to start in September and be completed by the end of the year.

Ms. Brandon presented the engineer's report. The Palm Beach Country Estates paving petitions ballots are being drafted and cost estimates finalized. She plans to be more conservative on costs. The area has been defined for the no-pave petition, and ballots are being drafted. Cost estimates still need to be finalized and will be ready by the next Board meeting..

Regarding the Canal C project, Rio-Bak wants to wait until after the wet season, in October or November. The grant deadline is the end of December when half of the work needs to be complete. Ms. Brandon will try to get an extension from the Department of Environmental Protection.

The hydraulic model development is progressing in Palm Beach Country Estates, and modeling should be completed by September.

Ms. Brandon reported on the asphalt overlay of Haynie Lane which is being completed. The contractor has finished the “pink roads” in Palm Beach Country Estates. Final pay application is expected by the end of this month.

Ms. Brandon reported there were no water quality issues this month. Samples were taken early in June before the rainfall.

Mr. Kennedy reported on his meeting with the Loxahatchee River District Director regarding the culvert discharge. The pipe has been closed for some time and they have not been discharging. It was Mr. Kennedy’s opinion that the canal bank needs to be fenced in order to eliminate the source of contamination from a dog boarding facility. Ms. Brandon noted she spoke with the facility’s manager about a year ago who said they were looking to relocate.

Mr. Capko presented the attorney’s report. He stated Mr. Kennedy is doing a good job keeping the attorneys advised of issues before a problem arises. Mr. Capko will be meeting with the Supervisor of Elections next week to discuss our upcoming election.

Mr. Haas reported on the Verizon cell tower lease. Discussions have been put on hold. There is some concern about Verizon’s right of first refusal. The deal is still active.

Mr. Powell inquired about the status of discussions with Busch Wildlife Sanctuary. Ms. Brandon stated there has been no response from them. They may be looking at a new connection to the east by Rocky Pines.

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned.

ADJOURNED.