

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING  
of the  
LAKE COUNTY WATER AUTHORITY  
April 22, 2020**

The Regular Hearing of the Board of Trustees of the Lake County Water Authority was held at 3:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 22, 2020 by way of Online/Zoom Meeting.

**Members Present-District #**

Amy Stone, Chairman (#5)  
Carolyn Maimone, Vice Chair (#3)  
Trampis BonJorn (#2)  
Peggy Cox (#1)  
Keith Farner (At-Large)  
Butch Hendrick (#4)  
Courtney Stokes (At-Large)

**Staff Present**

Ron Hart, Executive Director  
Jason Danaher, Water Resources Director  
Biago Gugliotti, Land Resources Director  
Ben Garcia, Office/IT Manager  
Anna Ely, Recording Secretary  
Kevin Stone, Attorney

A list of others present at the meeting is part filed in the permanent files of the Water Authority.

**1. CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The meeting was called to order at 3:35 p.m. and everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**VICE CHAIR MAIMONE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE LAKE COUNTY WATER AUTHORITY MEETING OF THE MARCH 25, 2020.**

Ms. Cox seconded the motion.

**Motion approved 7-0.**

**3. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Hart read a letter Cathy Benton, citizen of Lake County, to the Board, requesting that we open our preserves. He stated that although our preserves have already been opened to the public, they were not at the time she had written the letter, and she had asked that it be read to the Board.

**4. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT**

Mr. Hart addressed the Board and gave the current rainfall report. He discussed the possible opening of Hickory Point Park boat ramp.

He introduced Steve Crawford who is new to the agency, he noted that Mr. Crawford previously worked for Florida Fish and Wildlife and has many years of experience in his field.

**5. CONSENT ITEMS**

**MR. BON JORN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA.**

Mr. Hendrick seconded the motion.

**Motion approved 7-0.**

Tab 2 a. Authorize the Release of the Engineering Services RFP Jason Danaher

**AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO RELEASE AN RFO FOR ENGINEERING SERVICES.**

Tab 3 b. Adopt Lake County FMLA Policy Ben Garcia

**ADOPT THE LAKE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONER'S POLICY REGARDING FMLA LEAVE INTO THE WATER AUTHORITY PERSONNEL MANUAL'S SECTION 28 - FMLA LEAVE POLICY.**

Tab 4 c. 2019 Financial Audit Anna Ely

**ACCEPT THE FY 2018-2019 AUDIT FROM PURVIS GRAY & COMPANY.**

**6. REGULAR AGENDA**

Tab 5 a. Hunt Island Easement Exchange Ron Hart

Mr. Hart explained the request and stated that historically, staff would drive the southern boundary of the old easement to avoid driving in soft areas along the wetland. The new upland route, maintained by the Keoghs, will ensure good access to the eastern levees even when the lakes are at flood stages. In addition, the agency will gain a wetland area of approximately 36 acres and is composed of nearly pristine habitat. The conservation easement will be over the northern wetlands all the way out into Cherry Lake.

He stated that it is staff's opinion that the Keoghs have more than compensated the Water Authority and public for the value of the old easement and recommend approval of the proposed easement exchange

Attorney Jimmy Crawford addressed the Board and stated that he was available to answer any questions.

**MR. BONJORN MADE A MOTION TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO ELIMINATE THE OLD EASEMENT AT HUNT ISLAND IN EXCHANGE FOR NEW INGRESS/EGRESS AND CONSERVATION EASEMENTS UTILIZING THE LANGUAGE APPROVED BY ATTORNEY STONE.** Mr. Hendrick seconded the motion.

**WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT FINAL APPROVAL WILL BE MADE AT A FUTURE MEETING, ONCE THE LANGUAGE CHANGES HAVE BEEN MADE.**

**Motion approved 7-0.**

Tab 6      b. Minneola Investigative Sampling Results

Jason Danaher

Mr. Lumbard addressed the Board with the final report regarding Lake Minneola.

Mr. Hendrick asked whether it is known what caused the algal bloom and Mr. Lumbard stated not at this time, as there has been no inflow of water into the lake.

Dr. Danaher spoke regarding the second phase of the testing and suggested pursuing the testing of possible septic tank seepage. He stated that he would be glad to work with Mr. Lumbard to put together a scope of work and bring it back to the Board.

Mr. Farner requested that Dr. Danaher and Mr. Lumbard also review the Devo Report for information for any information that might be pertinent.

Tab 7      c. Surplus of LCWA Lands

Ben Gugliotti

Mr. Gugliotti gave a report on the smaller parcels land owned by the Water Authority and it was noted that none of those parcels would provide any tax revenue to the County if the Water Authority were to surplus them, and that many of them are conservation easements.

No action needed.

Tab 8      d. Comparison of Cost to Burn Landscape Debris vs. Landfill

Ben Gugliotti

Mr. Gugliotti explained the difference in the cost of manpower between having one or two pile burns a year versus the cost in manpower and landfill fees when hauling vegetation and trimmings to the landfill.

He noted that it is cheaper and far more efficient to have a pile burn than to move and pile up trimmings, just to have to move them again to take them to the landfill.

Mr. Farner stated that he still didn't like the idea of burning and would like it further investigated.

Vice Chair Maimone stated that she would like to see it burned versus putting it in the landfill, plus the fact that it is good training for staff. She stated that she didn't think they needed to put any more time into discussion of the subject. Chairman Stone agreed with Vice-Chair Maimone and stated it wasn't work spending more time on.

Tab 9      e. Privatization of the Nutrient Reduction Facility (NuRF)

Jason Danaher

Dr. Danaher stated that whether they privatize the operation of the NuRF or not he would like to see improvements made to the facility. He stated that they need to make those improvements sooner than later and would like to have any improvement made before the facility is privatized/if it should be privatized.

Mr. Hendrick spoke regarding the report by Pegasus and stated that if we could get the right contractor everything would be worked out and he doesn't want to keep throwing money at it until they look into privatization.

Several members of the Board noted that it might be best to have a Board workshop before making any decision regarding privatization.

Mr. Farner and Ms. Cox stated that while they are both okay with having a workshop, Dr. Danaher has been working hard to get the facility back in shape that they would like to see everything brought up to date before it is possibly privatized. Ms. Cox noted that if they were to privatize the facility in its current condition, the Water Authority would be blamed if anything went wrong

Mr. BonJorn stated that he is tired of talking about it and the Water Authority is going to have to pay for any upgrades and repairs no matter who runs the facility. He stated that we owe it to the taxpayers to get thing repaired and even though he is for privatization of the facility.

Ms. Stokes stated that while they should explore privatization, the timeframe that it would take and the fact that hurricane season is approaching, she is in favor with moving forward with fixing some of the things at NuRF now.

Vice-Chair Maimone stated that she didn't want her comments to sound like an attack on staff, but the Board needs to give them permission to repair and do what we need to do now, and not keep putting things on the back burner. She stated that in the meantime while things are being repaired, they can hold a workshop and explore the options.

Chairman Stone noted that staff has asked several times over the last few years to repair or upgrade equipment at the NuRF and that the Board has either denied the requests or have delayed giving them permission, and the Board cannot afford to continue putting off the repairs and upgrades that are needed.

Ms. Cox stated that they need to start the process of improving the NuRF to be as efficient as it can be. She stated that they can look at privatization, but they need to give staff the go ahead and start approving projects that will help the facility run at capacity.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Linda Moss asked why anyone thinks a private company can do any better job than the Water Authority is already doing.

Tab 10 f. Approve Quote to Cleanout Sediment in Boat Ramp  
Stormwater Pond at Hickory Point

Ron Hart

**VICE CHAIR MAIMONE MADE A MOTION TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO AWARD THE REMOVAL OF SEDIMENT FROM THE BOAT RAMP STORMWATER POND AND SWALES TO ALL TERRAIN SERVICE FOR AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$15,814.** Mr. Hendrick seconded the motion.

**Motion approved 7-0.**

**7. LEGAL COUNSEL REPORT**

Attorney Stone spoke regarding have a restricted boating area with Hiawatha Canal and Lake Hiawatha. Ordinance passed by a general-purpose government and he had conversation with

Lake County and it would go directly to FWC with the reason of a blind corner and would have a definitive answer. But they would only do it if the LCWA Board passed a resolution first.

Mr. Farner stated that he would like to move ahead and asked Attorney Stone if he would have a resolution ready for the next meeting.

It was noted that FWC hands are tied due to the legislative requirement and if we are going to present it as a blind corner it would be a better evidence later in the season when there is more vegetation.

## **8. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Mr. Hendrick pointed out that they had not addressed the staff recommendation on Tab 09, Privatization of the NuRF.

Chairman Stone read the staff's recommendation for Tab 09 to AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO ENTER INTO CONTRACT WITH PEGASUS ENGINEERING AND PROCEED FORWARD WITH DESIGN OF FOCUS AREA 3A AND 3B PHASE I IMPROVEMENTS AT THE NURF AND DELAY ANY FURTHER NURF PRIVATIZATION DISCUSSIONS UNTIL TWO YEARS AFTER COMPLETION OF PHASE I UPGRADES.

Mr. Farner asked to table that recommendation until another meeting and Mr. Hendrick asked to separate out the motion into two parts.

VICE CHAIR MAIMONE MADE A MOTION TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO ENTER INTO CONTRACT WITH PEGASUS ENGINEERING AND PROCEED FORWARD WITH DESIGN OF FOCUS AREA 3A AND 3B PHASE I IMPROVEMENTS AT THE NURF. (with omission of the phrase “until two years after completion of Phase I upgrades). Mr. Hendrick seconded the motion.

Motion approved 7-0.

## **9. BOARD MEMBER ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA**

## **10. INFORMATION ITEMS**

- a. Staff Reports
- b. Monthly Financial Reports – March 2020

## **11. ANNOUNCEMENT OF UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS**

- Board Meeting - Wednesday, May 27, 2020 (3:30 pm) Online/Zoom Meeting

## **12. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:57 pm.