

1 A REGULAR MEETING OF THE LAKE COUNTY WATER AUTHORITY BOARD

2 DECEMBER 10, 2025

3 The Lake County Water Authority Board met in regular session on Wednesday, December
4 10, 2025 at 3:30 p.m., in the County Commission Chambers, Lake County Administration
5 Building, Tavares, Florida. Board members present at the meeting were: Robert Hendrick,
6 Chairman; Kristan Zenishek, Vice Chairman; Gavin Rollins; Trampis Bonjorn; and Jonathan
7 Germeroth. Others present were: Bobby Bonilla, Assistant County Manager; Jimmy Crawford,
8 LCWA Attorney; and Stephanie Cash, Deputy Clerk.

9 CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

10 Mr. Gavin Rollins introduced Pastor Josh Douglas, a Chaplain with the Lake County
11 Sheriff's Office (LCSO), and said that he had served in that capacity for about three years.

12 Pastor Douglas gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

13 AGENDA UPDATE

14 Mr. Bobby Bonilla, Assistant County Manager, stated that Tabs 10 and 11 had been added
15 since the agenda was first published.

16 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

17 On a motion by Mr. Rollins, seconded by Ms. Zenishek and carried unanimously by a vote
18 of 5-0, the LCWA Board approved the minutes for the LCWA meeting of November 19, 2025
19 (Regular Meeting) as presented.

20 PUBLIC COMMENT

21 No one wished to address the Board at this time.

22 CONSENT AGENDA

23 On a motion by Mr. Rollins, seconded by Ms. Zenishek and carried unanimously by a vote
24 of 5-0, the LCWA Board approved the Consent Agenda, Tabs 2 through 6, as follows:

25 Water Resources Monthly Staff Report

26 Surplus of Inventory Item #357

27 Approval of Contract #25-448 for Hydrogeotechnical Engineering Professional Services

28 Approval of Fourth Amendment to Management Services Agreement

29 Ethics Training Requirements

30 REGULAR AGENDA

31 OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

32 Mr. Levar Cooper, Director for the Office of Communications, indicated appreciation to
33 the Board for participation in the brand discovery process, including the listening session, giving
34 feedback, and helping to refine it, and noted that the brand discovery informed them about how
35 the Lake County Water Authority (LCWA) engaged with stakeholders and the public, opining that
36 it was important to get it right for the brand and for the mission. He expressed appreciation to Mr.
37 Bonilla and his team for helping them out as well, and said that they had done a second listening
38 session with them. He mentioned that this had led to a strategic shift from Trusted Guardian to
39 Active Steward as the brand archetype, and that the brand pillars were the legacy, the science, and
40 the multiplier; additionally, the key objectives included conservation, preservation, and education.

1 He commented that one approach was a brand refresh, noting that the LCWA had a logo that
2 people recognized, brand equity, the same mission, and the same people; however, it needed to be
3 modernized. He showed the old logo, the brand refresh, and the new concept in some applications,
4 and explained that they preserved the wave in the logo with two different colors. He stated that
5 for the second option, they had a rebrand concept, which was for when there was a significant shift
6 in the perception of the audience or when the business model had changed. He commented that
7 they wanted to capture the different layers of the LCWA mission and the activities offered by
8 having a logo with different layers of colors representing the aquifer, waterbodies, marsh,
9 conservation land, and education, and he showed that concept in some applications. He opined
10 that it was important to consider the audience and how they would perceive each of these brands,
11 and to consider the strategic focus by asking if the LCWA was the same or if there was a significant
12 shift.

13 Mr. Rollins remarked that he liked the full rebrand because there was not much recognition
14 with the old logo, and opined that just the symbol could be recognizable eventually as the LCWA
15 continued consistent communication.

16 Mr. Trampis Bonjorn agreed, and opined that the existing logo did not have much attention,
17 noting that the newer logo would be his choice.

18 Ms. Kristan Zenishek commented that she agreed with the total rebrand, opining that there
19 were some things about the LCWA in the past few decades that were not good. She opined that
20 the LCWA was trying to stand out as a force for good within Lake County; however, she did not
21 like the favicon piece.

22 Mr. Cooper related that this could be reimaged.

23 Mr. Jonathan Germeroth stated that he liked the updated original logo because it was the
24 first thing people saw in marketing, and that he liked that it was consistent.

25 Mr. Rollins wondered if the two options could be combined.

26 Mr. Hendrick commented that he did not like the circle on the logo, opining that it was too
27 busy and did not work in black and white or with two colors.

28 Ms. Zenishek stated that she saw a marsh and the layers of water, opining that it
29 incorporated all the different aspects.

30 Mr. Hendrick mentioned that he would remove the dark green, and pointed out that there
31 was a cattail in the picture.

32 Mr. Jimmy Crawford, LCWA Attorney, questioned if the cattail was an invasive species.

33 Mr. Rollins suggested using a bass since Lake County was known for bass fishing and
34 protecting the waterways, opining that a picture would catch people's eye and be exciting.

35 Ms. Zenishek related that she had received an email from NextFish with a logo to consider.

36 Mr. Bonjorn inquired if there was a way to make the logo look more like a natural wetland
37 with a sunset behind a marsh.

38 Mr. Cooper commented that one of the challenges with the brand was finding a logo that
39 stood out and had its own identity and could work across platforms, opining that many water
40 authority logos were similar. He said that if it was on a shirt, business card, or a billboard, then it

1 should look the same for brand equity purposes, noting that the icon allowed for that. He
2 mentioned that the cattail being an invasive species did not come up; however, they could consult
3 staff for a better representation to put there.

4 Mr. Germeroth opined that staff had done a great job.

5 Ms. Zenishek opined that the logo received from NextFish had some potential, as it looked
6 more official and would fit well on a letterhead or t-shirt. She pointed out that this was done at no
7 cost, and opined that the Board needed to be looking at other options.

8 Mr. Hendrick asked about the timeframe.

9 Ms. Zenishek commented that the Board had wanted it done six months prior.

10 Mr. Bonjorn remarked that the LCSO boat had been in the Christmas parade, and he wished
11 that the LCWA logo had been on it.

12 Mr. Hendrick said that he wanted a logo that was recognizable when going by at 60 miles
13 per hour, and that he liked the simple wave.

14 Mr. Cooper stated that they did not want it to look like a utility.

15 Mr. Germeroth asked to see the brand refresh logo again on the truck, and remarked that
16 he liked that, noting that the brand was still the same.

17 Mr. Hendrick mentioned that it still had the colors.

18 Ms. Zenishek opined that it looked like a Sumter Electric Cooperative, Inc. (SECO) truck,
19 and noted that the LCWA was not a utility.

20 Mr. Bonjorn wondered if the Board members could individually contact Mr. Cooper to
21 give more input to improve the logo, and noted that he liked all the points that had been made. He
22 stated that he wanted to ensure that all the Board members liked it.

23 Ms. Zenishek commented that since the LCWA was involved in stormwater, floodplains,
24 and the basin management action plan (BMAP), she did not want to just settle, and that she did
25 not want to be the old LCWA because there were more opportunities ahead. She said that she
26 wanted to keep working on this until it was right, opining that it needed to be something that would
27 last for decades.

28 Mr. Hendrick agreed, and said that even though this would take time, he did not mind
29 waiting and getting it right.

30 Mr. Rollins agreed, and opined that both options shown were better than what the LCWA
31 currently had. He opined that this was great start, and that all Board members could offer
32 suggestions to come up with a final version. He also remarked that he wanted to discuss the
33 website at some point.

34 Mr. Hendrick questioned if the Board could agree on working with the basics of what was
35 currently done versus finding something totally different.

36 Ms. Zenishek expressed concern about the refresh, opining that a few years prior, there was
37 much negativity associated with the LCWA; additionally, even though a rebrand had been
38 discussed years prior, it had never materialized. She opined that since the LCWA was extending
39 its abilities, such as having a hydrogeologist, the LCWA was much more than it used to be, and
40 that rebranding would help. She opined that people thought that they were a utility that dealt with

1 reclaimed water from the municipalities, and that the LCWA needed something that stated
2 otherwise.

3 Mr. Rollins commented that he would like to see a bass somewhere in the logo, noting that
4 the County had a bird on its logo. He stated that a logo with a fish on it made him think of
5 something fun, and opined that this would help people see the LCWA as a friendly partner in their
6 enjoyment of the great outdoors. He opined that a bass or some other animal could help with that,
7 and said that he would like to see one version with that.

8 Mr. Hendrick opined that with the rebrand logo, the dark green could be eliminated and a
9 bass could be added, and questioned if there could also be a wave in the letters.

10 Mr. Cooper pointed out that adding the wave would continue the legacy.

11 Ms. Zenishek stated that the LCWA did more than just water quality, such as conservation,
12 preservation, and disaster relief, including after the historic rainfall with the ability and the staff to
13 take care of the County. She opined that the LCWA could reach out to the high schools and middle
14 schools and have an art contest over the following month to have the kids draw some logos.

15 Mr. Germeroth opined that he would rather turn down a logo from the Office of
16 Communications than from 1,500 kids.

17 Ms. Zenishek opined that it would generate interest in the LCWA and promote visits to the
18 website.

19 Mr. Rollins opined that the advantage of that was community involvement and the
20 education, noting that he was in favor it.

21 Mr. Hendrick questioned if the Board would vote on it.

22 Mr. Cooper mentioned that this would impact the timeline.

23 Ms. Zenishek opined that the staff could narrow it down to the top five for the Board to
24 vote on, and that the finalists could attend the meeting.

25 Mr. Rollins opined that there could be a two-month timeline through the Christmas holiday
26 and into January 2026 to submit pictures, and that an email could be sent out to all the local schools
27 in Lake County saying that anyone could participate in drawing or digitally producing a logo for
28 the LCWA. He opined that when a winner was selected, that person could come in and be
29 presented with a certificate of appreciation.

30 Ms. Zenishek opined that if the Board did not like any of them, there could be an
31 educational outreach logo that the LCWA did on a biannual basis.

32 Mr. Bonjorn opined that even though this was a good idea, the Board should also be
33 working with Mr. Cooper, and that NextFish could be sent some feedback as well. He commented
34 that even though he liked the idea of public outreach, he did not want to rely on the kids' artwork.

35 Mr. Germeroth opined that the LCWA had an obligation to the community, and that there
36 was already a brand with a beautiful refresh. He opined that the LCWA should move on, as there
37 was work to do.

38 Ms. Zenishek opined that since the LCWA name was being seen at the State level, the
39 Board should consider what it wanted to show when asking for \$1 million in grant funding. She

1 opined that even though she liked what was shown, there had to be something better, and that once
2 this rebranding was done, it would not be done again for a long time.

3 Mr. Rollins made a motion to work with the Office of Communications in having a
4 competition for Lake County Schools, grades six through 12, with a deadline of the end of January
5 2026, and that in the February 2026 LCWA meeting, the top five entries that had been narrowed
6 down by staff would be evaluated.

7 Ms. Zenishek seconded the motion.

8 Mr. Germeroth wondered if this could be baselined to stick with the refreshed logo, opining
9 that the Office of Communications had a large job to do if they were going to be tracing kids'
10 coloring. He stated that he was not embarrassed by the refreshed logo and did not know what the
11 issue would be at State level, opining that it was similar to their current brand and was
12 recognizable.

13 Ms. Zenishek opined that with the responsibilities the LCWA was going to have moving
14 into the future, the brand remake was important, and that there was much negativity associated
15 with the LCWA from the past, which was associated with the old logo. She opined that this was
16 not the old LCWA, and that they were currently part of the County and doing many more things.
17 She opined that their logo should stand out and define all of the hard work and dedication that had
18 happened as they had transitioned over the prior few years.

19 Mr. Hendrick opined that they could have more influence by showing what they were doing
20 on social media and the website, despite what the logo looked like.

21 Mr. Germeroth related that he once had to restructure a business internally, not just the
22 brand, and that it was running well. He opined that the LCWA was already there, that the changes
23 had already been made, and that the LCWA was culturally different that it was 10 years prior. He
24 opined that rebranding was dangerous, and that the LCWA already had a beautiful brand. He
25 stated that even though he liked the idea of having community involvement, he was not in favor
26 of the contest, opining that it would be an issue for staff to go through all the pictures and would
27 be a cost in tax funding.

28 Ms. Zenishek opined that they could all be sent to her, and that more people would be
29 involved that way.

30 Mr. Hendrick opined that including grades six through 12 would mean more work.

31 Mr. Cooper expressed concern about the timeline, and pointed out that the Office of
32 Communications had much work to do with the holidays and the State of the County coming up
33 to try to coordinate with the Lake County Schools.

34 Ms. Zenishek opined that it could be a simple document that was sent to the Lake
35 County School Board that could be disseminated among the schools, and she wondered what more
36 needed to be coordinated than that.

37 Mr. Cooper commented that they would do their best to accommodate whatever the Board
38 decided. He mentioned that there were challenges with bringing much into the branding, and that
39 certain things could get lost.

1 Mr. Rollins opined that the LCWA needed something that connected them to the lakes and
2 waterways so that they would not be mistaken for a water utility, and that since there were many
3 bass tournaments, there could be a bass or other animal in the logo.

4 Ms. Zenishek opined that since staff was busy, NextFish could probably come up with a
5 new logo for the LCWA, and inquired if they could be hired as a subcontractor over the following
6 couple of months to help with the workload.

7 Mr. Cooper relayed that they wanted to provide the LCWA with a brand, and that if the
8 Board wanted to explore that option, then this was something they could facilitate.

9 Mr. Hendrick stated that he would vote against the current motion because of the time and
10 work involved.

11 Ms. Zenishek opined that if NextFish was working for the LCWA as a subcontractor, then
12 they could be sifting through the pictures from the competition, and that the burden would not be
13 on staff. She opined that the LCWA was going to be very busy in the coming year, and that if the
14 Office of Communications was already burdened by the different things they were doing for the
15 Board of County Commissioners (BCC), then the LCWA needed a dedicated communications
16 employee. She opined that this could be a subcontractor in the interim working directly with the
17 Office of Communications.

18 Mr. Rollins withdrew his motion. He also opined that the LCWA needed their own website
19 and not a website embedded on the County's website, and said that he was in favor of moving
20 forward with NextFish.

21 Ms. Zenishek withdrew her second.

22 Mr. Rollins opined that there should still be some kind of school competition in the future
23 to engage the public, and that this could be done with something else that would entice students to
24 learn about the LCWA, such as an essay. He indicated his understanding that as long as the request
25 for NextFish to assist was under \$35,000, then a request for proposal (RFP) would not be required,
26 and that the Executive Director could use his purchasing authority to engage with a private firm.

27 Mr. Bonjorn opined that this was part of the issue, and that when the LCWA was moving
28 towards this before, the Office of Procurement Services said that this was not available. He relayed
29 his understanding that there was a \$5,000 limit, and that this was why there was a hold on hiring
30 NextFish.

31 Mr. Rollins asked if Mr. Bonilla could move forward with it if the Board authorized \$5,000.

32 Mr. Bonilla clarified that \$5,000 was the limit.

33 Mr. Rollins commented that even though he thought that the two logos brought forward
34 were great starts, he wanted to see some additional options.

35 Mr. Germeroth opined that the LCWA should not change the whole brand, noting that the
36 Board would be spending funding as a government entity. He opined that the LCWA had a great
37 brand, and said that he would be in favor of a quick change.

38 Mr. Hendrick agreed, and stated that he liked aspects of the two logos. He opined that the
39 LCWA had an obligation to eliminate the old stereotype from the inside, and that this was

1 happening already. He opined that the public just needed to be educated about it; however, he
2 opined that the logo was not going to sway the public either way.

3 Mr. Bonjorn opined that there was time to give feedback, and that this decision could be
4 made in January 2026.

5 Mr. Hendrick wondered if NextFish would do anything for \$5,000.

6 Mr. Rollins stated that he did not want to spend more than \$5,000 on a logo.

7 Mr. Hendrick inquired if \$5,000 would be okay to spend without an RFP.

8 Mr. Crawford clarified that this was within the limits of Mr. Bonilla's discretionary expense.

9 On a motion by Mr. Rollins, seconded by Mr. Bonjorn and carried unanimously by a vote
10 of 5-0, the LCWA Board approved to authorize up to \$5,000 to improve the LCWA logo and to
11 bring it back at the January 2026 meeting for a final decision.

12 STORMWATER AND FLOODPLAIN REGULATORY STANDARDS UPDATE

13 Ms. Jordan Salinger, Operations Director for the Public Works Department, commented
14 that she would present an update on the County's efforts to implement higher regulations on the
15 stormwater and floodplain front. She recalled that as a result of severe flooding from Hurricane
16 Milton in October 2024, the BCC discussed increasing regulations at the October 22, 2024 BCC
17 meeting and requested that staff explore options to better protect residents from future flood events,
18 and that on December 3, 2024, the Public Works Department did a presentation on the Federal
19 Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) regulations related to substantial improvements
20 and substantial damage and on the findings from the damage assessments that occurred in the
21 weeks following Hurricane Milton. She mentioned that on January 7, 2025, the Public Works
22 Department conducted an in-depth presentation to the BCC on several facets of stormwater,
23 floodplains, and lot grading, and that this included multiple options for higher regulations through
24 ordinance updates. She remarked that the implementation of those recommendations would
25 require multiple ordinance updates, and that this presentation would provide a status update on
26 where they were in that process. She related that there were currently 11 recommendations with
27 more to follow, and that they had hired a consultant, Kimley-Horn, who would assist in updating
28 the ordinances and providing additional recommendations. She said that the recommendations
29 included the following: preserving the hydraulic connectivity of the floodplains, ensuring that the
30 appropriate language was written into the ordinance; prohibiting the use of fill in floodways, which
31 were the areas of land adjacent to rivers, as it was difficult to provide compensating storage within
32 those areas; ensuring that a development requiring compensatory storage remained hydraulically
33 connected to existing special flood hazard areas (SFHA) so that it could function appropriately;
34 defining buildable area, which could be subjective to the size of the proposed structure, noting that
35 they would clean up this language to help preserve the SFHA that may be present on any site being
36 developed; prohibiting fill where sufficient buildable area did not exist outside the SFHA, except
37 for specified purposes, such as septic tanks, which could be accommodated by using compensatory
38 storage; increasing the freeboard requirement from 1.5 feet above the Base Flood Elevation (BFE),
39 which was the flood elevation associated with the one percent annual chance flood or 100 year
40 flood zone as determined by FEMA, to two feet above BFE for properties within the SFHA,

1 ensuring that new development was more resilient to storm events to better protect residents and
2 give the County more points on the Community Rating System (CRS) to achieve flood premium
3 discounts for residents in flood zones; extending the freeboard requirement to at-risk properties
4 adjacent to SFHAs; requiring a cumulative substantial improvement or substantial damage one-
5 year lookback period, ensuring that homes in flood zones were brought into compliance per FEMA
6 requirements within a 12-month period to reduce repetitive flood losses; requiring an engineered
7 plan for undeveloped sites; tightening up language on where stormwater should be directed; and
8 requiring a minimum retention standard, which provided metrics for the review and the inspection,
9 requiring that properties of one acre or less must retain the first one inch of runoff for the entire
10 property and larger properties must retain one inch of runoff of the disturbed area or project site.
11 She commented that this list may expand as they discussed the updates with Kimley-Horn, and
12 that the timeline of events from Hurricane Milton to the present day included the following: in
13 October 2024 Hurricane Milton impacted Lake County; in December 2024, a FEMA substantial
14 damage presentation led to the BCC directing higher standards; in January 2025, the BCC
15 approved the proposed standards; in February 2025, coordination began with Kimley-Horn; in
16 May 2025, Senate Bill (SB) 180 amendments limited local authority; between June and August
17 2025, there were multiple discussions with the Florida Department of Emergency Management
18 (FDEM) and a legal review regarding SB 180; in September 2025, the BCC confirmed intent to
19 proceed with ordinance updates; in October 2025, the government shutdown delayed FDEM
20 feedback, which they had recently received; in October 26, 2025, Lake County experienced heavy
21 rainfall and a flash flooding event in the Cities of Eustis and Mount Dora; and currently, staff was
22 proceeding with moving all ordinances forward. She commented that the ordinances touched on
23 several of Lake County's Land Development Regulations (LDR), and that it was a substantial lift
24 to update all of those. She stated that the ordinances would not be done at the same time, and that
25 there were currently stormwater updates that were pending and lot grading updates that were in
26 progress, noting that they were working through all the components of the floodplain regulations.
27 She remarked that they had received feedback from the State floodplain office, and that after some
28 final updates on both the lot grading and the floodplain, it would be sent it for a thorough legal
29 review, noting that since they had been coordinating with them, the feedback was expected to be
30 minimal. She mentioned that Kimley-Horn would then begin on the stormwater ordinance updates
31 and provide additional recommendations relating to larger subdivisions, commercial
32 developments, transportation infrastructure, and Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4)
33 regulations, since they all tied into stormwater, and that since this was more complicated, they
34 needed Kimley-Horn's assistance to look at other governments and see what those
35 recommendations should look like on that larger scale. She commented that they were going to
36 be completing and implementing these ordinances as quickly as possible, and that they would be
37 brought to the BCC for approval as each one was ready.

38 Mr. Bonjorn stated that he liked the part about less fill in the current wetlands so that it
39 would flow, opining that every time one development was approved, it could flood somebody else.
40 He opined that growth caused much flooding, and said that he liked what they had done and looked

1 forward to the updates being implemented, noting that the LCWA was there to help whenever
2 possible.

3 Ms. Zenishek agreed, and opined that this was no small feat. She opined that even though
4 there were small steps being taken, they would make things better. She questioned if the County's
5 floodplain regulations also had to go through the State.

6 Mr. Karl Bursa, Operations Manager for the Public Works Department and the Floodplain
7 Administrator, replied that the State coordinated with the County, and that the State had a model
8 floodplain ordinance for communities that participated in the National Flood Insurance Program
9 (NFIP) and CRS program, which they were mandated to adopt. He elaborated that the County
10 could amend it to make it stronger because they just had a baseline, and that the Florida Keys had
11 a different model ordinance because of saltwater flooding and coastal issues versus Lake County
12 and the riverine areas. He mentioned that they coordinated with FDEM very closely, and that the
13 ordinance they were currently working on was going through their ordinance consultant.

14 Mr. Hendrick indicated his understanding that the County was not restricted by that, and
15 that Lake County could do the same, or more.

16 Mr. Bursa commented that this was correct, and that FDEM gave them the minimum or
17 the baseline.

18 Mr. Hendrick inquired if they ever received pushback from residents or developers.

19 Mr. Bursa answered that so far, they were receiving good feedback from people who were
20 asking about it, noting that part of his job included reviewing subdivision plans, planned unit
21 developments, and other large-scale projects. He remarked that he was constantly receiving calls
22 from people asking questions about the bigger picture, and that he reminded them that his job was
23 to ensure that people were safe from flooding at the maximum extent possible. He related that
24 when a developer was proposing a development, it was his job to ensure that they followed the
25 letter of the law and minimized their impacts to the maximum extent possible.

26 Mr. Hendrick relayed his understanding that it was site specific, noting that a site with one
27 unit per acre was about 26,000 gallons. He opined that if there was an older house that was not
28 prepared for it, then there was still a potential for flooding, and that it was a difficult job.

29 Mr. Bursa stated that infill development was one of the most difficult issues, as it included
30 many calculations, and that there could be a structure under construction that was surrounded by
31 properties built in three different decades with three different sets of regulations, noting that he
32 had to ensure that this structure did not impact its neighbors or was impacted by its neighbors.

33 Mr. Germeroth asked how it would impact the existing homeowners with their insurance
34 rates if the County made stronger restrictions on the floodplain.

35 Mr. Bursa explained that the CRS was predicated on a County's current status and on how
36 the County was enforcing its laws currently, and that people with older homes from before 1982,
37 which was before the flood insurance rate maps were in effect, were offered the opportunity to
38 purchase flood insurance at a discounted rate, noting that they were currently under a risk rating
39 of 2.0 and would see an annual increase until they reached actuarial parity, which was capped at
40 18 percent. He commented that homes that were constructed after 1982 were assumed to be in

1 compliance with existing regulations, and that in the event that they changed the regulations, at
2 that point, if one had a substantially improved or damaged home, then they would have to meet
3 the two-foot standard or elevate their finished floor six inches. He mentioned that for insurance,
4 this was better because currently, Lake County was at a level seven, and that once they went up to
5 the next level, there would be an additional five percent savings, noting that he was fairly confident
6 that they should be able to reach a level four.

7 Mr. Germeroth inquired if it would affect residents receiving FEMA assistance if they were
8 in the flood zone or moved into a flood zone.

9 Mr. Bursa replied that the County would not move them into the flood zone, and that all
10 they were doing was saying that they were going to regulate to the flood zone standard even in
11 areas that were close to the flood zone but not in the flood zone. He pointed out that the maps
12 were regulatory, and that people inside mapped areas with a federally backed mortgage had to
13 comply with the insurance purchase requirement. He stated that people outside the flood zone,
14 even if the County regulated to the standard, would not be required to purchase flood insurance if
15 they did not want it; however, he would highly recommend it, noting that new data stated that 35
16 to 40 percent of all flood insurance claims came from outside the SFHA, which was up 10 percent
17 from five years prior.

18 Mr. Crawford questioned if any house below the 24 or 18-inch mark would have to be
19 raised no matter where it was located.

20 Mr. Bursa replied that they would have to comply with those regulations in the event of a
21 new construction, such as a new house, a new build, substantial damage or improvement
22 construction, or a site-built accessory structure, including garages.

23 Mr. Crawford mentioned that in low-lying areas that were not economically well-off, when
24 a resident's trailer in the Astor area was flooded and reached 51 percent damage, they could not
25 rebuild or obtain a building permit. He indicated his understanding that there was some grant
26 funding available, such as large-scale block grants to help people who could not afford to raise
27 their homes two or three feet, and asked if that was within their purview.

28 Mr. Bursa answered that there was an immediate program called the Increased Cost of
29 Compliance (ICC) program, and that if one was in a flood zone and had NFIP-backed flood
30 insurance, they would be eligible for ICC grants, which could help elevate the building. He
31 commented that even though they were capped at a certain amount, this was something that could
32 be applied for and received to help fund the improvements to raise a home.

33 Mr. Crawford inquired if he had that information.

34 Mr. Bursa replied that he did, and that he had multiple links that could be provided to
35 people if they were interested in that. He mentioned that even though there were larger scale
36 grants, there was much uncertainty currently because of the changes going on in FEMA, and that
37 the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program was discontinued. He
38 commented that at the State level, there was the Elevate Florida program, which had been received
39 and used by some local residents, and he hoped that the State would turn that into an annual

1 revolving loan program, opining that having that funding consistently available would be helpful
2 for those who were trying help people mitigate flood-prone issues.

3 Mr. Crawford remarked that the general law in the State of Florida for water, which was
4 currently codified in the applicant's handbook for the water management districts, was that
5 downstream properties had to accept the natural flow, and he questioned if that figured into the
6 one-inch calculation, opining that even though a site may have been grass with so many gallons
7 going downhill, they currently had to retain one inch no matter what.

8 Ms. Salinger replied that new development could not block the downhill flow, opining that
9 if a developer proposed a concrete wall around their property at the bottom of a hill, they could
10 not do it because they would be adversely impacting the neighbors upstream, as it could then flood
11 upstream. She commented that the one-inch calculation gave them a metric to gauge swale sizes,
12 and that if there was an individual residential lot, they would not be expected to retain 100 percent
13 of the stormwater flow, noting that they just wanted to size the swales so that all of the water from
14 a normal rain event was not going to their neighbors' properties. She related that they looked at
15 the existing natural flow, and that most of the time, it was flowing through the property, which had
16 to be accounted for.

17 Mr. Crawford indicated his understanding that this flow would still be allowed to flow
18 through; however, it was the impervious surface that they were adding that they had to capture the
19 first one-inch of water from.

20 Ms. Salinger said that this was correct, and remarked that rather than use drainage
21 calculations, it was easier for homeowners to use the first one-inch of the square footage of this lot
22 rather than trying to do the impervious calculations.

23 Mr. Crawford relayed his understanding that the first one-inch for most of that lot was
24 allowed and was legal to move downstream; however, they currently had to stop the whole one-
25 inch from the entire lot.

26 Ms. Salinger explained that this was because they were adding impervious areas.

27 Mr. Hendrick asked about the current issues with SB 180.

28 Mr. Bursa commented that there were currently four competing proposals to amend or
29 delete certain sections of SB 180, and that there was not an update on when or if they would be
30 passed. He mentioned that there were options to reduce the size of the impacted area, which would
31 be a start, and noted that the impacted area was the entire state. He remarked that two of four bills
32 would shrink the affected area to the west coast, and that for the other two there were questions
33 about changing the language, noting that he did not know how much support they had received.

34 Mr. Hendrick opined that at the current time, they did not know if they would be bound by
35 it or not.

36 Mr. Rollins opined that it would need some major revisions, noting that it would sunset in
37 2027.

38 Mr. Bursa relayed that it would only sunset in 2027 if the State of Florida did not get hit
39 by a storm, noting that it would then restart.

1 Mr. Hendrick expressed concern about the water discharge that went to a ditch which led
2 to a creek and then to a lake, opining that this could adversely affect the lakes.

3 Ms. Salinger mentioned that this was another reason for the one-inch over the entire site,
4 and that they had some of that language elsewhere in the code in an environmental section. She
5 commented that the first inch of stormwater runoff was called the first flush, and that this was
6 where all the chemicals and pesticides came from. She related that when developing lots, there
7 would be sod laid and fertilizer, and that there were chemicals being generated by new
8 development. She remarked that this took that one-inch, which was already in the code elsewhere,
9 and applied it consistently, as all water ran downhill. She mentioned that on individual lots that
10 may be adjacent to waterbodies, they were trying to capture that first inch of runoff in those swales
11 before they reached the waterbodies.

12 Mr. Hendrick opined that swales could facilitate percolation, and that it would then be clean
13 water.

14 Ms. Salinger commented that this was a challenge when there were older subdivisions with
15 infill lots; whereas new subdivisions were managed from the site planning. She related that with
16 the infill lots, they were only able to look at the individual lot and do the best they could with the
17 stormwater management and the first flush.

18 Ms. Zenishek asked if they were going to have different standards for new developments,
19 or if their focus was on individual lots.

20 Ms. Salinger commented that individual lots were primarily under their purview, as well
21 as the constant complaints, and that they had many more complaints on the individual lots being
22 developed because the neighbors felt immediately impacted by that development. She stated that
23 even though many of the larger subdivisions did not have neighbors yet, they had surrounding
24 communities that did not want to be flooded out in the future, and that since there were regulations
25 for subdivisions that went through the St Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD),
26 they needed the consultant to help with those so that they could make an appropriate
27 recommendation.

28 Mr. Germeroth said that his question referred to the engineered site plans.

29 Ms. Salinger commented that the language in the current ordinance was not clear and was
30 very conditional based on how far development was from the property line, the size of the new
31 structure, and how much fill was being brought in, noting that it was designed to allow an easier
32 path forward through permitting for owner/builders and smaller developers. She remarked that it
33 had resulted in an ordinance that was at times difficult to comply with, and that even though the
34 ordinance worked, what applicants put on paper did not always materialize on site. She related
35 that without the appropriate information upfront, it was very difficult to regulate, especially after
36 saying that no inspection was necessary, and that once they received a complaint, it was after the
37 structure was built, making it difficult to rectify at that time.

38 Ms. Zenishek asked if they felt confident that these changes would allow them to have
39 more oversight because they were clearer and more stringent.

1 Ms. Salinger answered that they did, and added that they would have an engineered plan
2 instead of a hand-drawn plan. She remarked that the only reason that this would be allowed was
3 because they were staying a certain distance from property lines, which very rarely happened in
4 reality, as they were grading straight to the property lines of their neighbors, and that if that
5 information had been on the plan, then they would have been required to have an engineered plan
6 and an inspection.

7 Mr. Germeroth questioned if the neighboring Counties required engineered site plans,
8 opining that this was expensive for small residential projects. He wondered if that was going to
9 push people away from wanting to build nice homes that would bring revenue to the County.

10 Ms. Salinger did not think that other Counties required this, and said that she would explore
11 this. She commented that they looked for examples in surrounding counties, and that it was hit or
12 miss. She mentioned that the lot grading was also regulated through the building department, and
13 that they had their engineered site plans, depending on how the ordinances were structured. She
14 remarked that the intent was to focus on a new site that had not been previously developed, opining
15 that those were the ones that could have issues. She stated that they wanted to make it more
16 flexible, noting that if a person was doing something on a smaller scale, such as building an
17 addition or a pool, then they needed to see exactly how that grading was being manipulated because
18 it directly impacted the neighbors.

19 Ms. Zenishek opined that in the coming year, the LCWA Board's guidance, direction, and
20 decision-making, could impact the public safety and many critical changes and enhancements that
21 were coming to Lake County.

22 BUDGET CALENDAR SCHEDULE

23 Mr. Bonilla remarked that this was a reminder for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 budget
24 meeting timeline with the BCC and also with the LCWA, and he showed a list of meetings and the
25 dates. He commented that the first budget workshop would be on March 25, 2026, followed by
26 the second budget workshop on April 22, 2026, and that at the May 20, 2026 LCWA meeting, the
27 Board would make a recommendation to the BCC regarding the budget and millage rate for FY
28 2027.

29 HICKORY POINT RECREATION COMPLEX UPDATE

30 Ms. Lindsaia Johansmeyer, Director for the Office of Parks and Trails, stated that since the
31 improvements had been made to the pavilion, they had seen an increase in the rentals over the
32 prior two years. She commented that community events, such as a recent car show, provided a
33 service to the organizations and to the residents and visitors who stopped by the park looking for
34 things to do in the area, and that many of the collectors were passionate about their cars and were
35 happy to have people stop by and ask questions. She related that they also hosted a birthday party,
36 a baby shower, a wedding reception, and a celebration of life, opining that this facility held
37 meaning for many families throughout all seasons of life. She mentioned that staff was there to
38 ensure that events were enjoyable for all who attended, and that many people complimented the
39 beauty of the pavilion and the excellent service provided by staff. She stated that recently they
40 hosted the Lake County Boy Scouts fishing event where children learned to bait their own hooks,

1 cast their fishing rods, and reel in various fish, and opined that happy memories were made that
2 day as children were awarded trophies for their achievements. She relayed that the Florida Bass
3 National Kayak Series – South Region was hosted at Hickory Point Park for 54 fishermen, and
4 that trophies and prizes were awarded to the top eight winners. She stated that Hickory Point Park
5 was home to many cross-country events throughout the year, and that in the current year, the Red
6 Sea Running Club hosted the Central Florida Middle School Championship and the Florida Youth
7 Running Association 2025 Qualifier, which included 45 elementary students and 141 middle-
8 school students with over 300 spectators coming from 10 different counties from as far away as
9 the Cities of Fort Meyers, Miami, and Jacksonville, noting that the event sponsors included
10 Athletic Scoring Providers, Rapid Recovery Team Orlando, and First Class Real Estate Group.
11 She remarked that the Hickory Point Park beach courts were thriving, and that they were currently
12 in their busy season because of the cooler weather, noting that most weekends were filled with
13 major tournaments. She said that recently, Winter Park Volleyball Club hosted a tournament using
14 eight volleyball courts, and that the event had 41 local teams with participants ranging in ages 12
15 to 50 and over 100 spectators in attendance. She commented that Sand Court Experts hosted the
16 American Volleyball Coaches Association – East Coast Qualifiers over two days, and that the
17 event had 78 teams of male and female collegiate athletes from major colleges, including Florida
18 Gulf Coast University, Florida Atlantic University, Stetson University, Jacksonville University,
19 Florida State University, University of South Carolina, and University of Texas. She mentioned
20 that there were about 500 spectators, and that the event was live-streamed through the Hermosa
21 Beach Open with about 20,000 viewers. She related that the SandStorm Volleyball Club hosted a
22 youth beach volleyball clinic and tournament using 10 courts, and that the event had 65 female
23 collegiate athletes participate from the University of Tampa, University of South Florida,
24 University of Alabama at Birmingham, Palm Beach Atlantic University, and Georgia State
25 University, with over 100 spectators. She mentioned that this was a reoccurring event, and that
26 the organizer was very happy with the operations and facilities, and planned to come back. She
27 stated that they also hosted the National Collegiate Volleyball Federation, which used 12 courts,
28 and that they had 41 teams with male and female collegiate athletes from universities coming from
29 the States of Colorado, North Carolina, Oregon, Missouri, Texas, Michigan, and Minnesota, and
30 the Cities of Chicago, Syracuse, and Miami. She said that the final event was live-streamed on
31 YouTube with over 150 viewers, and that the event organizer reported a major influx in their
32 Instagram views with over 11,400 views on top posts from this tournament. She relayed that the
33 event was sponsored by various companies, including Blenders Eyewear, BSN Sports, and All
34 Volleyball, and that the event organizer noted that the complex and amenities exceeded their
35 expectations. She remarked that after each event, staff asked for feedback, including how staff
36 was doing and what could be improved on, and that this was where all of this data came from. She
37 commented that the National Collegiate Volleyball Federation was working to make Hickory Point
38 Park their long-term home for events in the eastern half of the United States (U.S.), and that in the
39 coming weeks, they would have Orlando Beach Tennis, which was a reoccurring event, opining
40 that they always had a great turnout; additionally, p1440 Volleyball, Sandstorm Beach Volleyball

1 Club, and local groups came to practice and play throughout the week. She stated that the
2 multipurpose fields were home to two local leagues, and that the Florida Sol Soccer League used
3 around four fields for their weekly soccer practices, which consisted of both boys and girls ages
4 eight to 15 years, noting that the league hosted between 16 to 30 practices per week. She related
5 that the Central Florida United Soccer League used one field each week for their boys' soccer
6 league games and practices, and that there were five teams that played ranging in age from 14 to
7 16 years old; additionally, there were many community members who came to play and enjoy time
8 with their friends and family. She mentioned that these events did not happen without
9 relationships, teamwork, partnerships, and excellent customer services, and that staff partnered
10 with other departments within the County, such as the Office of Communications and Discover
11 Lake, on marketing and advertising. She added that they also worked with community members
12 and local groups to make connections and build relationships, and that staff was committed to
13 growing the events portfolio, fostering relationships, and providing a beautiful facility for the
14 residents and visitors of Lake County.

15 Mr. Hendrick commented that he was in attendance for a tournament, and opined that staff
16 was attentive, the courts were perfect, and the facility looked great. He mentioned that this facility
17 was given to the Office of Parks and Trails about six months prior, and opined that they did a great
18 job with the way they picked it up and ran with it.

19 Ms. Johansmeyer stated that they saw it as a blank canvas to start from, and that they built
20 it to make it their own, noting that they were extremely proud of staff and the relationships they
21 had built. She remarked that staff hosted weekly meetings with different organizations, tried to
22 recruit tournaments to come to Hickory Point Park, and invited them to come see the facility.

23 Mr. Hendrick remarked that the upgrades, such as the stairs and the flagpole, were much
24 better.

25 Mr. Rollins expressed appreciation for the efforts.

26 HICKORY POINT BOAT RAMP GRANT UPDATE

27 Mr. Sean Beaudet, Grants Program Manager for the Office of Water Resources, recalled
28 that this project was originally pursued to improve public access and safety at the largest public
29 boat ramp facility in Lake County, and that the scope of work was to replace and deepen the eastern
30 six ramps. He stated that even though the Federal grant funding was nearly lost in the fall of 2023,
31 staff was able to save this critical grant funding by working with State partners to extend the
32 agreement expiration date, and that they were also able to negotiate with the Florida Fish and
33 Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) to expand the scope of work to include the western six
34 ramps and reconstruct all 12 ramps at once. He related that in partnership with the FWC and the
35 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the LCWA completed a multi-phase \$2.1 million project to provide
36 a safer and more efficient facility for boaters, anglers, and tournament participants, noting that the
37 certificate of occupancy (CO) was issued by the building department in December 2024 and that
38 the ribbon cutting ceremony was in February 2025. He remarked that the total project cost was
39 \$2,121,724 with the Federal share at 54 percent and the LCWA share at 46 percent, and noted that
40 even though the LCWA was required to increase its share of the cost, it was a benefit because of

1 the following: all ramps were able to be completed at once, significantly reducing the overall
2 project completion timeframe; they were able to maximize the Federal grant and utilize funds that
3 otherwise would have been left on the table; and they were able to save the LCWA \$318,342 by
4 utilizing the remaining Federal funds that otherwise would have been paid out of pocket by the
5 LCWA to reconstruct the western ramps. He mentioned that in completing the necessary closeout
6 paperwork, they experienced some unforeseen delays; however, they had finally received the
7 reimbursement check of \$1,151,672, and he expressed appreciation to Mr. Bonilla, who had
8 suggested approaching FWC on expanding the scope of work to include the western ramps, as well
9 as Mr. Chuck Groves, Associate Director for the Office of Water Resources, and Ms. Marie
10 Baldomero, Financial Associate for the Office of Water Resources. He pointed out that this had
11 been a team effort, and indicated appreciation to the Board for their support on this critical facility
12 for Lake County.

13 Mr. Hendrick commented that this project was saved at the last minute, and he expressed
14 appreciation to staff and to Ms. Zenishek for putting much work into it.

15 REPORTS

16 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

17 A GREAT YEAR

18 Mr. Bonilla opined that it had been a great year, and said that they were pleased to submit
19 the first annual report to the Florida Legislature, the BCC, and the SJRWMD.

20 OFFICE CLOSURES

21 Mr. Bonilla related that County offices would be closed on December 24 and 25, 2025;
22 however, operations would continue seven days per week.

23 APPRECIATION TO THE BOARD

24 Mr. Bonilla expressed appreciation to the Board for continued support and for working
25 with the BCC as they continued to improve quality of life and natural resources. He remarked that
26 they continued to look for other opportunities, such as grants, and that there was significant funding
27 at the State and Federal level, opining that this would allow them to accomplish more items sooner.
28 He opined that since there was much growth in Lake County, the infrastructure needed to be
29 addressed sooner rather than later.

30 LEGAL COUNSEL REPORT

31 CLOSED SESSION

32 Mr. Crawford mentioned that he had previously requested a closed session for litigation;
33 however, it was not needed at that time.

34 PINE MEADOWS EXPANSION PROPERTY ACQUISITION

35 Mr. Crawford commented that there was an access issue with the Pine Meadows expansion
36 property acquisition from the previous year with the neighbor to the northeast, and that he had
37 wanted to discuss this because it would require some surveying work on the easements in question
38 and the ability to file a lawsuit if needed; however, in response to an email he had sent to the Board
39 members, Mr. Hendrick had said that he wanted to negotiate with the owner of the property, which
40 did not require any other authorizations from the Board.

1 BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS AND ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

2 KRISTAN ZENISHEK – DISTRICT 3

3 APPRECIATION TO STAFF

4 Ms. Zenishek indicated appreciation to all of the LCWA partners and staff for all their hard
5 work, and opined that 2026 would be more challenging and exciting; additionally, she hoped that
6 everybody would have a wonderful Christmas and a blessed New Year.

7 GAVIN ROLLINS – DISTRICT 1

8 DEDICATED COMMUNICATIONS EMPLOYEE

9 Mr. Rollins relayed his understanding that the LCWA had been allocated a new position
10 for a dedicated communications employee, and he asked for an update on that position.

11 Mr. Bonilla answered that this position had not been filled yet by the Office of
12 Communications.

13 Mr. Rollins questioned why there was a six-month delay.

14 Mr. Bonilla replied that the funding had been appropriated for FY 2026, which started
15 October 1, 2025.

16 Mr. Rollins opined that it would help to have a dedicated staff member for that purpose,
17 and hoped that Mr. Bonilla would encourage this to happen. He also opined that the LCWA needed
18 its own website, and that the first step would be the logo, which he opined was progressing. He
19 opined that the LCWA website could look very similar to the County's and have much continuity;
20 however, it was currently difficult to find under layers of the County website.

21 GREAT JOB

22 Mr. Rollins opined that everyone was doing a great job, and that there were many exciting
23 opportunities with land acquisitions. He opined that the LCWA was already doing great things
24 with some of the parks, and he asked for an update on the Green Mountain Scenic Overlook and
25 Trailhead.

26 Ms. Angela Harrold, Operations Director for Parks and Water Resources, commented that
27 they were in their third round of bidding, and that they made some changes to the footers, noting
28 that it would close on the following day. She mentioned that if the prices were proportionate to
29 what the BCC had approved, then they could move forward.

30 Mr. Rollins inquired what the estimated timeframe would be if everything went according
31 to plan.

32 Ms. Harrold stated that they would get started quickly as they already had the access road,
33 and that they had estimated about 210 days; however, there were some other items, such as the
34 elevator, that were long-lead items.

35 Mr. Bonilla commented that the Hancock Connector to the Green Mountain Scenic
36 Overlook had been completed, which was a trail extension.

37 Ms. Harrold mentioned that they would be doing a ribbon-cutting on December 19, 2025,
38 and that the next Public Lands and Trails Acquisition Advisory Committee meeting would be on
39 January 15, 2026.

1 Mr. Bonilla elaborated that this trail system was intended to wrap around Lake Apopka and
2 go into the Nutrient Reduction Facility (NuRF), and that it would provide regional connectivity as
3 they tied recreational opportunity, education, and the value of the ecosystem together to get the
4 public out there.

5 TRAMPIS BONJORN – DISTRICT 2

6 MUCH ACCOMPLISHED

7 Mr. Bonjorn opined that staff had accomplished much in the current year, and remarked
8 that he was excited about the NuRF redesign in the coming year. He opined that there was much
9 to be proud of, including the new ideas, contracts, and funding, and he wished everybody a good
10 holiday.

11 JONATHAN GERMEROTH – DISTRICT 5

12 WONDERFUL YEAR

13 Mr. Germeroth opined that it had been a wonderful year for the LCWA Board, and that
14 there was much information available. He expressed appreciation to staff for what they did for the
15 community, and stated that he was excited about 2026. He opined that there would be some great
16 changes, as there was much the LCWA could do, and he wished everyone a Merry Christmas and
17 a Happy New Year.

18 ROBERT HENDRICK – DISTRICT 4

19 BACK TO THE BASICS

20 Mr. Hendrick opined that there could be many items in the coming year, and said that he
21 was glad to get back to the basics of what the LCWA mission should be. He opined that the staff
22 was doing great, and said that he looked forward to seeing how the NuRF worked out, as well as
23 other LCWA properties.

24 PUBLIC LANDS AND TRAILS ACQUISITION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

25 Mr. Hendrick mentioned that the Public Lands and Trails Acquisition Advisory Committee
26 would meet on January 15, 2026.

27 MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR

28 Mr. Hendrick hoped that everybody would have a Merry Christmas and a safe and Happy
29 New Year.

30 ANNOUNCEMENT OF UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

31 Regular Board Meeting, Wednesday, January 21, 2026 (3:30 p.m.), at the BCC
32 Chambers/Admin. Building

33 Stories of Water, Saturday, December 19, 2025 (9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.), at Flat Island
34 Preserve

35 Wetland Excursion, Saturday, January 3, 2026 (9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.), at Lake Norris
36 Conservation Area

37 Paddling Adventure at Blackwater Creek, Saturday, January 10, 2026 (9:00 a.m. – 12:00
38 p.m.), at Lake Norris Conservation Area

39 Watershed Wednesdays, Wednesday, January 14, 2026 (10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.), at
40 Hickory Point Pavilion

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There being no further business to be brought to the attention of the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 5:37 p.m.

ROBERT HENDRICK, CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

GARY J COONEY, CLERK