

# IMMOKALEE WATER & SEWER DISTRICT

1020 Sanitation Road, Immokalee, FL 34142

Telephone: (239) 658-3630

**Charrette (Public Meeting)**  
**Grant Pursuit Strategy Master Plan**  
Monday, September 23, 2024  
9:00 a.m.

## MINUTES

Board Members		
Title	Name	Attendance
Chair	Joseph Brister	Present
Vice-Chair	Patricia Anne Goodnight	Present
Secretary	Bonnie Keen	Present
Treasurer	Robert Halman	Present
Commissioner	Magda Ayala	Present
<b>Staff Present</b>		<b>Guests Present</b>
Jeff Carpenter	See sign-in sheet	
Sarah Catala		
Misty Smith		

### I. Call to Order

Mr. Joseph Brister, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

### II. Introduction and Overview of Charrette

Ms. Sarah Catala, Executive Director, provided an overview of the purpose of the charrette and introduced the host.

Mr. Lee Hale, Founder and Grant Strategist at Hale Innovation, gave an introduction and explained how the charrette would work and explained that after the charrette, he would meet with staff to gather additional data.

Mr. Hale pointed out that it's better to consider projects that are two years out to be effective in obtaining grants. Mr. Hale then proceeded with his PowerPoint presentation, highlighting past and current projects for which he has successfully obtained grants for. He also outlined the master plan process as part of the consulting service he provides:

1. Step 1 – Grant charrette
2. Step 2 – Staff meetings
3. Step 3 – Initial draft (a deliverable that can take a few weeks to develop)
4. Step 4 – Review process
5. Step 5 – Final document presented
6. Step 6 – Once the master plan is complete, pursue funding

### III. Charrette Activities

Mr. Hale opened the floor to the public to ask questions and share comments.

Some of the concerns and factors raised by staff, commissioners and the public were the following:

- a. The District does not have enough staff to share the workload as it relates to grant writing (labor intensive) and the administration of the grants once awarded.

- b. Not much success obtaining grants in the past because it is a very competitive process.
- c. The size and demographic of the town (aiming to prevent passing on the cost to customers by raising rates).
- d. Looking at the existing infrastructure and finding ways to work to renew or enhance it as opposed to taking on brand new projects. For Example:
  - Line repairs on private roads.
  - Septic to sewer.
  - Lead and Copper pipes and fixtures in older homes.
- e. Making sure to include public outreach in grant applications.
- f. Water is much more difficult to fund as opposed to wastewater.
- g. Upsizing to get better service – best strategy is to tie it to economic and safety benefits (Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) or commerce grants).
- h. Focus on prioritizing all the District’s projects, with a major focus on the three big projects: wastewater reuse, water softening, and advanced meter infrastructure (AMI).
- i. Using impact fees as match money for grants – the District does not currently have impact fees in place, however, will be conducting an impact fee study in early 2025.
- j. Each grantor has their own uniqueness in their process, so it’s important to know that and navigate the wrinkles.
- k. Ensuring tight/strong cyber security and including that in grant application and considering finding specific grants for this.
- l. Highlighting the fact that our District as a public utility takes pride in maintaining its systems and sharing that important aspect when speaking with legislatures and when walking the halls in Tallahassee and Washinton, DC.
- m. Brainstorm the idea of partnering (the “dig once” approach) with local government (Collier County) to combine projects and needs for one full project.
  - “Teaming” is not as common but is a possibility.
  - Consider interlocal agreements.
- n. Buddling smaller projects together to get one large grant, but then phasing it out to keep it manageable.
- o. New growth coming will mainly be for gated communities (for-profit) which is a new concept for the Immokalee Community as we have not dealt with this much locally.

Mr. Hale will gather all the notes to use as part of his initial draft of the master plan that he will be developing.

#### **IV. Public Comment**

Beyond the comments already shared, there were no additional public comments.

#### **V. Adjournment**

Final thoughts were shared by staff and Mr. Hale, and the Charrette adjourned at 10:40 a.m.