

IMMOKALEE WATER & SEWER DISTRICT

1020 Sanitation Road, Immokalee, FL 34142

Telephone: (239) 658-3630

Regular Board of Commissioners Meeting

Tuesday, December 23, 2025

3:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Board Members		
Title	Name	Attendance
Chair	Joseph Brister	Present
Vice-Chair	Robert Halman	Present
Secretary	Bonnie Keen	Present
Treasurer	Magda Ayala	Absent
Commissioner	Patricia Anne Goodnight	Present
Commissioner	VACANT	
Commissioner	VACANT	
Staff Present	Professional Staff Present	Guests Present
Louis Brunetti	Gary Ferrante	See sign-in sheet
Sarah Catala	Laura Donaldson (online)	
Misty Smith		

I. Call to Order

Mr. Joseph Brister, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:08 p.m.

II. Preliminaries

- a. Pledge of Allegiance
Mr. Brister led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- b. Roll Call
Ms. Misty Smith, Executive Assistant, conducted roll call. A quorum was reached.
- c. Adoption of Agenda
The agenda was accepted as presented, without a formal motion.
- d. Public Concerns
There was no public in attendance.
- e. Staff Good Cause Items
 - i. FirstBank Check Presentation
Mr. Bernardo Barnhart of FirstBank was in attendance to present a \$1,000.00 check to the District to sponsor the 2026 Drop Savers Water Conservation Poster Contest which will be used to purchase prizes and supplies for the contest. The Board showed their gratitude for the donation. A photo was taken to commemorate the moment.
- f. Board Concerns
There were no Board concerns.
- g. Old Business
 - i. Smart Utility/AMI Project Update
Mr. Eric Corey of Core & Main was in attendance to provide an update on the

Smart Utility/Advance Metering Infrastructure (AMI) project. Mr. Armando Reyes, IWSD Wastewater Collection Crew Chief, and Mr. Wilbert Jean, IWSD Water Distribution Supervisor, were also in attendance to provide updates alongside Mr. Corey.

The following overview was provided: an update on the advanced wastewater monitoring solutions that have been installed, an update on advanced water metering and monitoring solutions, and a status update on the progress of the smart utility. No questions were asked.

- ii. Water Softening Update
Mr. Doug Eckmann of Kimley-Horn was in attendance to provide an update on the Water Softening project. Mr. Eckmann reported that the sampling and testing of water from each well has been completed, and next steps are to conduct pilot testing and prepare preliminary design, system analysis, prepare preliminary facility design report, and prepare design and construction documents.

Mr. Brister asked about the project timeline. A brief discussion ensued.

- h. New Business
There was no new business.

III. Consent Agenda

- a. Adoption of Previous Meeting Minutes (11/12/25)
- b. Fixed Assets, Acquisitions, Disposals – *none to report*
- c. Amendment to Contract – Phrasing of Expense Allowance Payment
- d. Annual Deep Injection Well Report Proposal

Motion: Ms. Goodnight made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Mr. Halman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Action Agenda

- a. Boston Avenue Extension – Utility Relocation Agreement
The item was tabled until January 2026.
- b. Amendment to 401(a) Plan Removing Allowance for Loans Against Account
Ms. Sarah Catala, Executive Director, reported that details and reasons to modify the plan were included in her write-up to the Board. Her recommendation for the Board was to proceed with removing the allowance of loans within the 401(a) plan. There were no questions asked.

Motion: Ms. Goodnight made a motion to approve the Amendment to the 401(a) plan as discussed. Ms. Keen seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously

- c. Florida Environmental Fire & Government Law P.A. - Laura Donaldson Engagement Letter – District Attorney
Ms. Catala reported that she received a restructuring letter from Ms. Laura Donaldson, District Attorney, advising that effective January 1, 2026, she will operate independently under her newly established law firm, Florida Environmental Fire & Government Law P.A. The Board had no questions regarding the new contract.

Motion: Ms. Goodnight made a motion to approve the contract from Florida Environmental Fire & Government Law P.A. Mr. Halman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously

- d. Florida Environmental Fire & Government Law P.A. - Laura Donaldson Legislative Representation Engagement Letter
Ms. Catala reported that as the District pursues appropriations for a new water and wastewater treatment plant in the northwest quadrant of its boundary, having a lobbyist based in Tallahassee with access to agency offices and meetings is highly beneficial. She stated that Ms. Donaldson has been a valuable asset in identifying proposed legislation or language that could impact the District, providing recommendations and assisting with negotiations. She recommended entering into an agreement in an amount not to exceed \$20,000.00. The Board had no questions regarding the letter.

Motion: Ms. Goodnight made a motion to approve the letter for lobbying services in the amount not to exceed \$20,000.00. Mr. Halman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- e. RCMA – Master Lift Station C Cost Share Agreement
Ms. Catala reported that the agreement pertained to reserving capacity within the District’s system, specifically for capacity at Master Lift Station C. The agreement provided for a payment of \$90,000.00 for a childcare center and \$164,000.00 for a future charter school. RCMA notified District staff that although construction of the charter school has not yet commenced, they wish to reserve capacity at this time. Under the terms of the agreement, \$90,000.00 will be due within 30 days of execution, with the remaining balance due in February 2026. The projected flows were calculated by RCMA’s engineer. The agreement remains subject to execution.

Ms. Catala further reported that construction of the master lift station is complete and, if all goes as planned, the station could be operational by the end of January 2026.

Motion: Ms. Goodnight made a motion to approve the RCMA Cost Share Agreement as presented. Mr. Halman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

V. Discussion Agenda

- a. Executive Director’s Report
 - i. 2025 Performance Evaluation
Ms. Catala reported that the evaluation form is being reformatted to make it more user-friendly and will be distributed to the Board once finalized. She noted that no merit increase will be associated with the evaluation.
 - ii. Rural Counties Day
Ms. Catala reported that the next board meeting is scheduled for January 21, 2026, which coincides with Rural Counties Day in Tallahassee. She requested confirmation of attendance from each Board member, at their convenience, to ensure a quorum. Commissioner Ayala will be at the event in Tallahassee.
 - iii. Other
Ms. Catala reported that the District invested \$18,050.00 to secure a grant from the Department of Commerce, in the amount of \$10.8 million to enhance the headworks of the Wastewater Treatment Plant. She noted that this investment will yield a return of approximately \$60,000 for every dollar the District contributed to obtaining the grant. Ms. Catala reported that Fox4 News was on site today to interview staff regarding the grant, and the segment is scheduled to air this evening. She also reported that the Audubon Society conducted their annual December bird count, recording a total of 518 birds. Mr. Halman asked for photos of the birds, and Ms. Catala stated that she would request the photos.
- b. Finance Director’s Report
Mr. Jeff Carpenter, Finance Director, was not in attendance.

- c. District Engineer's Report – Weston & Sampson
Mr. Gary Ferrante, District Engineer, reported that Master Lift Station C started up last week and that FDEP clearance paperwork was submitted last Friday; approval from FDEP is pending to finalize the project. He also noted that milling and resurfacing will take place from January 12-14, 2026, which may result in traffic detours. Regarding the carports, he stated that the contractor has completed all the work within their control, and the remaining delay is with the county.
- d. Project Engineer's Report
Mr. Louis Brunetti, Project Engineer, reported that the paving project will leave a remaining amount of FDEM grant funds (\$48,000.00), and the District has received approval to use those funds to pave three additional roads. Regarding the Notice of Intent (NOI) for the Water Reuse project, Ms. Catala reported that she received it yesterday, and 90% plans were sent out last week, with a review meeting to be scheduled soon. Mr. Brunetti also reported that the roof work on the maintenance building is commencing.
- e. District Attorney's Report
Ms. Donaldson reported that she has been working closely with the attorney for the Boston Avenue project and the agreement should be done soon, and she is still working on the Radio Fiesta lease.
- f. Executive Assistant's Report
Ms. Smith reported that the District's float placed first in the Immokalee Chamber Christmas Parade. She also reported she set up an information table at a local toy drive over the weekend, organized by Project Help, to provide information to families about water meter replacements.

VI. Other Public Interests

There were no public interests.

VII. Adjournment

The Board meeting adjourned at 4:43 p.m.