

MINUTES

JOINT WATER ADVISORY BOARD AND TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

January 10, 2025

WAB MEMBERS PRESENT: Senator Steve Geller, Chair
Vice Mayor Sandra Welch, Vice Chair
Councilmember Jim Allbritton
Commissioner Doug Bell
Pete Kwiatkowski for Governing Board Member Ron Bergeron
Commissioner Kevin Biederman
Vice Mayor Mark Bogen
Commissioner Anthony Caggiano
Albert Carbon, TAC Chair
Commissioner Rhonda Eaton
Mayor Michelle J. Gomez
Vice Mayor Tom Good
Commissioner Aisha Gordon
Commissioner Denise Horland
Vice Mayor Nancy Metayer-Bowen
Mark Peterson
Councilmember Susan Starkey

WAB MEMBERS ABSENT: Commissioner Denise Grant
Commissioner Mary Molina-Macfie

TAC MEMBERS PRESENT: Albert Carbon, Chair
Alan Garcia
Allison Witoshinsky
Commissioner Doug Bell
Darren Badore
David Walker
Giovanni Batista
Heather Cunniff
Jeff Jiang
Dr. Jennifer Jurado
Jose Lopez
Luis Ochoa
Patrick Davis
Pete Kwiatkowski
Rafael Frias
Renuka Mohammed
Rodrigo de Castro

Stephanie Pearson
Suzanne Mechler
Talal Abi-Karam

**TAC MEMBERS
ABSENT:**

Randy Brown, Vice-Chair
Brett Butler
Dawn Teetsal
Isabel Cosio Carballo
Steve Holmes

**OTHERS
PRESENT:**

Dr. Johnny Johnson, Pediatric Dentist, Diplomate, American Board of Pediatric Dentistry, Life Fellow, American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry
Dr. Rana Aliss, Pediatrician, President, Florida Chapter of American Academy of Pediatrics and University of Florida Associate Professor of Pediatrics
Marty Cassini, Director, Intergovernmental Affairs/Board Section
Gregory Mount, Ph.D., RPA, Assistant Chief Res. Officer
Karen Pannell, Real Time Reporter

A joint meeting of the Water Advisory Board and Technical Advisory Committee was held on Friday, January 10, 2025, at 10:00 a.m., in Room 430 of the Broward County Governmental Center, Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

I. Call to Order

Senator Geller called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

II. Roll Call Broward Water Advisory Board (WAB)

A quorum was present following Roll Call by Real Time Reporter, Karen Pannell.

III. Roll Call Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

A quorum was present following Roll Call by Real Time Reporter, Karen Pannell.

IV. Public Comments

(None.)

V. **WAB Approval of Meeting Minutes from November 8, 2024

Councilmember Starkey made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from November 8, 2024. Commissioner Caggiano seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

VI. Updates and Announcements

- a. **Recognition of Greg Ross-** Chair Geller recognized Greg Ross who was not present.
- b. **Introduction of Vice Mayor Bogen-** Chair Geller explained that Commissioner Tim Ryan had retired and Vice Mayor Bogen will take his place on the WAB/TAC. He introduced Vice Mayor Bogen who spoke against the PFAS that are contaminating the water supply, noting that Coral Springs removes PFAS from the water. Vice Mayor Bogen announced that the federal government decreased the allowable amount of PFAS in the water from 90 parts per trillion to 4 parts per trillion. He stated that people do not need arsenic, prescription medication, and PFAS in the drinking water. He affirmed that his mission is to advocate for the removal of these contaminants from the Broward County water supply through a reverse osmosis process.

Councilmember Starkey welcomed Vice Mayor Bogen to the WAB/TAC. She expressed her support of the PFAS removal. Councilmember Starkey noted that the Florida League of Cities Environmental Committee, State level committees, and municipalities are dedicated to removing these toxins from the water. Commissioner Good stated that PFAS is a national issue.

- c. **Dr. Jurado Announcements-** Dr. Jurado stated that a survey has been sent to all utility directors public and private to inquire on how they will be addressing PFAS. She noted that a Countywide status update will be held in the next few months on the efforts and a target for which the system designs will be met whether it include the minimum of full PFAS removal. She asked members to encourage the utility directors to respond to the survey.

VII. ****Water Advisory Board Sunset Review** (Marty Cassini, Director, Intergovernmental Affairs/Boards Section)

Chair Geller stated that due to the lack of attendance from appointed members from the League of Cities, the WAB/TAC will be taking proper steps to resolve the situation.

Mr. Cassini explained that the Broward County Commissioners could make appointments for municipal representation. He spoke on the name change of the Water Advisory Board Surface Water Coordinating Committee, the sponsoring department, and other code updates. Mr. Cassini discussed upcoming changes to the geographic representation of members and the removal of members with consecutive absences.

Chair Geller spoke on the importance of this board which has the authority to place items on the agenda for the Broward County Commissioners. He mentioned the possibility of changing the name of this board, as it is more than an “advisory board”.

Mr. Cassini answered questions from the members regarding these changes.

VIII. Presentations:

- a. **Water Treatment and Fluoride: History, Health, and What Evidence-based Science Says** (Dr. Johnny Johnson, Pediatric Dentist, Diplomate, American Board of Pediatric Dentistry, Life Fellow, American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry)

Chair Geller introduced Dr. Johnson and his accolades. Dr. Johnson gave a detailed presentation on the history and benefits of fluoride in water. He stated that fluoride is a naturally occurring mineral that has been found to help prevent cavities. Dr. Johnson explained that community water fluoridation is the precise adjustment of the fluoride concentration naturally existing in the water supply to a level known to reduce tooth cavities and promote good oral health. He noted that the optimal level of fluoride in water is 0.7 milligrams per liter.

Dr. Johnson explained the importance of good oral health and spoke on the issues caused by bad oral health such as toothaches and infections. Referencing the presentation, he showed differences in teeth that have had fluoridated water and those that have not. Dr. Johnson stated that continuous exposure to small amounts of fluoride helps both adults and children and that fluoridated water and toothpaste with fluoride provides extra benefits. He provided several examples on how people can get fluoride which include drinking fluoridated water, using fluoride toothpaste, and having fortifying foods.

Dr. Johnson discussed a study on cavity changes in a community after water fluoridation was ceased. He spoke on the costs that are associated with dental care and restarting the water fluoridation process. Dr. Johnson stated that intensive studies have been done to prove the benefits of fluoridation with no health risks. He answered questions from WAB/TAC members.

- b. **Broward County Water and Wastewater Services Community Water Supply Fluoridation Program** (Mr. Alan Garcia, Director, Broward County Water and Wastewater Services)

Referencing a presentation, Mr. Garcia spoke on the history of fluoridation and rules that have affected drinking water in the United States. He stated that Broward County began adding fluoride to water in 1974 when the Safe Drinking Water Act began. Mr. Garcia discussed the recommended reduction of fluoride levels from 1.2 ppm to 0.7 ppm that occurred in 2015, which is the current standard. He announced that in the same year, the CDC named community fluoridation as one of the top 10 public health achievements of the 20th century and in 2024, 77% of all Americans have fluoridated water in their public water systems. Mr. Garcia reported that Broward County has two treatment plants, noting that the background fluoride levels in the raw Biscayne water is typically 0.15 ppm.

Mr. Garcia provided an overview of the water treatment process. He stated that after the water is softened, .55 ppm of fluoride is added before going to the filtration units. Mr. Garcia detailed the future regulatory impacts and will monitor regulatory changes.

- c. **11:00 AM Time Certain** (Dr. Rana Alissa, Pediatrician, President, Florida Chapter of American Academy of Pediatrics and University of Florida Associate Professor of Pediatrics)

Senator Geller introduced and welcomed Dr. Rana Alissa. Dr. Alissa gave a brief overview of her credentials. She stated that over 3,000 scientific studies that have been conducted regarding the safety and ethicalness of fluorinating water. She affirmed that no studies prove that fluoridizing water causes harm. Dr. Alissa noted that the CDC recommends 1.2 milligrams of fluoride per liter of water.

Dr. Alissa reiterated that fluoridation of water is safe at the recommended level and discussed the regulations in place throughout the United States. She spoke on diseases and infections that can occur or worsen without fluoridation. Dr. Alissa affirmed that fluoridation is a simple solution when used in the proper dosage. She answered questions from the WAB/TAC members.

- d. **Discussion of Fluoride Presentations**

Chair Geller reintroduced Dr. Johnson and asked his professional opinion as a Pediatric Dentist, Diplomate, American Board of Pediatric Dentistry, Life Fellow, American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry on the safety of fluoridation for children. Dr. Johnson reiterated that fluoridation is safe at the correct level. He spoke on the cost effectiveness of water fluoridation opposed to fluoride tablets which are only helpful to children. Dr. Alissa agreed and confirmed the data reviewed by Dr. Johnson.

Dr. Johnson answered several questions from the members.

Chair Geller spoke on and referenced a resolution pertaining to the fluoridation of Broward County's water supply. Answering Chair Geller's question, Mr. Alan Garcia stated that the current optimum level for fluoridation is .7. He explained that utility companies are required to know the starting level in the water in order to know how much needs to be added. Mr. Garcia affirmed that testing is necessary before and after, noting that monitoring takes place at the water treatment plants. Mr. Garcia gave his presentation regarding the Broward County Water and Wastewater Services Community Water Supply Fluoridation Program, Item B.

After Mr. Garcia's presentation, Chair Geller read the resolution regarding the fluoridation of Broward County water aloud. He briefly discussed additions that will be made to the resolution stipulating language not to exceed a maximum level and noting remarks that all major studies show that there are no adverse effects at concentrations below 1.5 and that all major studies are in favor of fluoridation of water.

Councilmember Starkey made a motion to approve the resolution regarding the fluoridation of the Broward County water supply. Commissioner Caggiano seconded the motion.

Mr. Good requested an addition to the resolution to include that Broward County's water treatment system would remain consistent with current federal guidelines.

Councilmember Starkey and Commissioner Caggiano accepted the request and amended the motion to include the additional language. The amended resolution passed by voice vote with only Commissioner Biederman voting no.

Before leaving the meeting, Chair Geller turned the meeting over to former Chair Starkey (11:50 a.m.), noting that Vice Chair Welch is unable to Vice Chair due to audio issues.

Councilmember Starkey and the WAB/TAC members thanked presenters: Dr. Johnson, Dr. Alissa, and Mr. Garcia.

IX. New Business

a. Topics for Discussion at Future WAB Meetings

Vice Mayor Metayer-Bowen requested future discussions on public outreach and education regarding misinformation on fluoridation and PFAS.

Dr. Jurado spoke on the importance of addressing this information and providing relevant sources of correct information. Councilmember Starkey stated that these presentations will be posted to Broward County's website for reference. Mayor Gomez requested a uniform presentation that would provide discussion and education items to the community.

X. Discussion

- XI. Lake Okeechobee Water Levels: (ft-NGVD 1929) This month: 15.16; Last month: 15.86; One year ago: 15.89**
Next scheduled Joint WAB/TAC Meeting – March 14, 2025. Vimeo. G.C. East, Room 430
Next scheduled TAC Meeting – February 21, 2025. Hybrid. G. C. East, Room 430.

XII. ADJOURN

Commissioner Horland made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Vice Mayor Metayer-Bowen seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 11:57 a.m.

- XIII. **Requires WAB vote.**