



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

OPINION

March 8, 2013

SFWMD Adds Experienced Leaders to Executive Team

I want to respond to coverage in the *Palm Beach Post* regarding the executive management team at the South Florida Water Management District. I believe the *Post's* readers understand that executives in both public and private organizations have the option – and responsibility – to hand-pick key managers who will work effectively with the leadership team and contribute significantly to the organization's success.

Open recruitment with applicant interviews is one potential way to achieve this. But it's not the only way to get the right people on board.

This past week, I selected two new members for the District's leadership team. One is my Chief of Staff, a position that was advertised for many weeks without success in finding a candidate with the skill set I need for this role.

I was surprised and pleased when one of the District's Governing Board members, Dan DeLisi, stepped down from the Board and applied for the position. In an abundance of caution, Dan sought a legal opinion on the correct ethics – which he followed precisely – by first resigning from the Board and then applying for the job. Also, in accordance with state and District ethics policies, he will be resigning and divesting ownership from his Ft. Myers-based firm before starting employment.

After joining the Governing Board in 2011, Dan became thoroughly knowledgeable about District issues and passionate about South Florida's water resources. His professional credentials are impressive: a Master's degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Department of Urban Studies and Planning, Environmental Policy Group; successful business owner; Florida Supreme Court-Certified Circuit/Civil Court Mediator; and member of the American Institute of Certified Planners.

I also named Len J. Lindahl to our executive team, overseeing the District's regulatory and business functions. Len comes with a legacy of public service – his father, Len E. Lindahl, served on the District's Governing Board from 2001 to 2007.

Len is a Professional Engineer (P.E.) with a wealth of experience in water resource management. Most recently he served as District Vice President overseeing Florida water operations for AECOM, Inc., a multinational Fortune 500 company that does work in industries that include energy, water, transportation and the environment.

Len also has served local water control districts here in South Florida as their District Engineer, responsible for regulatory, construction and operational components. He is well versed in intergovernmental work, managing multimillion-dollar budgets and successfully implementing complex water resource projects. He brings valuable experience and talents that I know will serve the District well.

My selections of Dan and Len are the public's gain in two outstanding leaders. Even more important, they join a nine-member executive team that now collectively has more than 200 years of public and private-sector experience to oversee the complex and challenging work we have to do.

These hiring decisions were thoughtful, strategic and focused fully on bringing the best talent to the District. That's been achieved, and I look forward to working with them as we serve South Florida's citizens with responsible and effective water resource management.

Melissa L. Meeker
Executive Director
South Florida Water Management District