



Barefoot Bay Recreation District

An Independent Special
District of the State of
Florida established in 1984.

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Garrett M. Olsen, Esq.
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July 24, 2024

Brevard County Board of County Commissioners
2725 Judge Fran Jamieson Way
Viera, FL 32940

RE: Issues Concerning Barefoot Bay Water and Sewer District

Dear Commissioners,

The Board of Trustees for the Barefoot Bay Recreation District ("District") respectfully sends this correspondence to the Brevard County Board of County Commissioners ("Commission") in its capacity as the Board for the Barefoot Bay Water and Sewer District ("BBWSD").

Over the last year, district residents have complained of serious issues regarding the BBWSD. Particularly, residents have complained of customer service issues, water quality issues, and obscenely high rates. While the District understands that past decisions with respect to financing plant improvements and the legal status of the BBWSD as a dependent district limit some of what the Commission can do, the District nevertheless finds that it would be appropriate for the Commission to direct county staff to work with the District to address the specific issues discussed herein.

First, district residents believe that BBWSD staff have failed to provide responsive customer service on all issues related to the provision of utility services within their control, including issues concerning to utility billing, meter readings, utility usage, and appropriate staffing to provide direct customer service to District residents who wish to discuss the accuracy of their bills or have other related issues evaluated and resolved.

District residents have made district staff aware that the local BBWSD operations center is not operating during normal business hours and that residents are having issues in having their billing issues resolved in a timely and efficient manner. This is concerning in part because when the BBWSD was operated by a third-party company, the former Barefoot Bay System Utility Operations Agreement between the County and the third-party company provided that a customer service center would be required to be operational and "open to the public during Normal Business Hours" which the agreement defined as "8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday except holidays." Why the County cannot now appropriately staff the local BBWSD operations center to operate to the same standard it required of the third-party company



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raises concerns, especially as district residents are paying the highest water utility rates in Brevard County.

While the District understands that this particular office recently underwent staffing issues, the District requests that the Commission commit additional resources to improve customer service, including operating the customer service center during normal business hours to make BBWSD staff available to address the concerns of district residents.

Further, BBWSD residential users pay the following rates:

Monthly Base Facility Charge for Meter Size $\frac{3}{4}$ - \$68.89
Consumption Charge- \$10.55 Per 1,000 to Max of 6,000 Gallons
Minimum Billing - \$68.89

For comparison, City of Melbourne users pay a base rate of \$22.61 for water and sewer services while City of Cocoa users pay a base rate of \$36.62 for water and sewer services. The District believes its residents pay the highest base rates for water and sewer service in all of Brevard County.

While the District is aware that the County is required by bond resolutions to establish and maintain such user rates that will always provide sufficient revenue for debt service, operations and maintenance, and all other reserve requirements pertinent to the prior bond issues, the BBWSD had revenues over operating and maintenance expenses exceed 2.6 million dollars for 2023. Such a figure exceeds the 2023 debt service requirement of \$954,300.00 by 280%. While rate increases are sometimes justified to develop a healthy program to maintain reliability and quality of water and wastewater services, many District residents live on a fixed income and simply cannot afford to pay \$68.89 a month whether they use water or not.

Accordingly, the District would like to know if it would be possible to adjust the current rates given the excess revenue generated by the BBWSD system. Further, it would be helpful to understand the County's plans to improve the existing system, given that the current system has well exceeded its current life cycle. Water quality issues have also severely impacted district residents. The District is aware of residents who feel forced to rely on other solutions to deliver quality water, including purchasing water cooler dispensers and water subscription services to guarantee reliable water.

The District is very thankful that BBWSD staff were able to attend a June 3, 2024 town hall meeting organized by the CVO, a district club, to begin to address the above concerns. However, other than the customer service issues raised, BBWSD staff consistently noted that it would be impossible to address the issues raised without action by the Commission.

Accordingly, the District finds it is appropriate to request that the Commission strongly consider merging the BBWSD plant into the existing Brevard County infrastructure system to lower rates and to provide district residents with equal services and water quality as provided to other Brevard County water customers. To this end, the District would appreciate an ongoing dialogue with the Commission and



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BBWSD staff to study this question and the significant positive impacts merger would have on district residents. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Bruce Amoss

Chairman

Barefoot Bay Recreation District