



Commissioners Approve SPLOST Funding for Water Treatment Plant Infrastructure

Posted on October 6, 2025 by Carey Fauscett-Anderson

The Dade County Board of Commissioners has approved the use of Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) funds to replace the aging backwash tank at the Dade County Water Treatment Plant, ensuring continued reliability of the county's water system.

The project, requested by the Dade County Water & Sewer Authority (DCWSA), will cost \$453,312 and addresses a critical need at the facility. The existing steel tank, installed in 1962, has deteriorated due to decades of corrosion and has developed a persistent leak at its base.

DCWSA Manager Elizabeth Zeller told the commission that the tank currently loses approximately five gallons per minute, or more than 7,200 gallons per day—totaling about 216,000 gallons each month. While the water loss does not affect the public supply or water quality, the leak represents significant inefficiency and structural risk.

“The tank has run its life,” Zeller explained. “It’s a crucial part of treating the county’s water, and repairs are no longer possible. Replacing it now prevents a potential failure that could interrupt service.”



The new tank will be fabricated from carbon steel, constructed on the same foundation as the existing one, and expanded in capacity from 71,000 to 95,000 gallons. It will measure 26 feet in diameter and 24 feet in height, six feet taller than the current tank.

To maintain uninterrupted service, a temporary 25,000-gallon storage tank will be installed on-site during demolition and construction. Both the tank fabricator, McLean Tank, and maintenance contractor, American Tank Maintenance, have provided cost-saving measures, including:

- No charge for temporary storage of the new tank.
- No charge for interior and exterior coatings, valued at more than \$159,000 if billed separately, covered under the county's existing tank maintenance agreement.
- No additional engineering fees, resulting in an estimated \$67,000 savings.

When commissioners asked whether grant funding might be available to offset costs, Zeller explained that the need for replacement was too urgent for a grant cycle. “We haven’t applied for grants for this project because if the tank fails, we have no way to provide treated water,” she said. “We can’t risk waiting through an application process.”

Chairman Don Townsend acknowledged the importance of moving forward. “This is a major upgrade that ensures reliability in our water system,” Townsend said. “It’s one of those projects that people don’t often see, but everyone depends on.”

Construction is expected to take 13 to 15 weeks once work begins, including demolition of the old tank, fabrication, coating, and system testing. The new tank will remain under the county’s existing maintenance contract for continued inspection and upkeep.

The project was approved for inclusion on the board’s consent agenda and will be funded entirely through SPLOST proceeds.

