Statement on behalf of the West Villages Improvement District
re: Independent Review & Report

The West Villages Improvement District (WVID) Board of Supervisors appreciates the comprehensive review of governance, conflicts of interest and litigation conducted by DownsAaron Attorneys & Advisors PLLC. The findings of the year-long independent review concluded that Supervisor John Meisel appears to have acted in conflict with his duties as a supervisor by participating in litigation against the District, potentially using his Board position to obtain and share District information for use in those proceedings.

After considering the best interests of residents and larger District community, the Board of Supervisors voted 4-0, with Supervisor Meisel abstaining, to act on the following recommendations from the report:

- **Petition the Governor's Office for suspension and removal of Supervisor Meisel under Article IV, Section 7 of the Florida Constitution.**
- **File a complaint with the Florida Commission on Ethics regarding Supervisor Meisel's consulting role with Gran Paradiso Property Owner's Association's litigation counsel while serving on the WVID Board of Supervisors.**
- **Direct District staff to bring conflict-of-interest, recusal and ethics policies and procedures forward for Board adoption.**

The Board of Supervisors deferred a decision on whether to pursue litigation against Supervisor Meisel to a future meeting.

In March 2025, the Board of Supervisors voted 3-0, with Supervisor Meisel abstaining, to retain DownsAaron to conduct an independent review of Supervisor Meisel's involvement in matters related to litigation between the District and the Gran Paradiso Property Owners Association (POA) and provide guidance to the Board and staff regarding how to navigate the unprecedented situation.

The decision followed guidance from District general counsel after the WVID learned through discovery that Supervisor Meisel had been retained by Herbert and Associates Law as a consultant related to irrigation litigation between the District and POA. Around the same time, District general counsel learned that Supervisor Meisel had also retained Mr. Herbert as his personal attorney regarding matters related to his ownership interests in Gran Paradiso, water rights issues and other related matters. Communication between the two were therefore considered privileged.

The WVID Board of Supervisors is appreciative of DownsAaron's diligence into this matter.

To see the full report click here: (PDF) (RTF)