



NORTHEAST FLORIDA REGIONAL COUNCIL
Board of Directors Meeting
January 6, 2022

MINUTES

The Northeast Florida Regional Council Board of Directors, pursuant to Chapter 120.525, F.S., held a hybrid meeting both in-person, at 100 Festival Park Avenue, Jacksonville, FL, and virtually via Zoom, on Thursday, January 6, 2022, at 10:00 a.m.

First Vice President DeFoor welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order with the following members present:

BAKER: Commissioner Jimmy Anderson (**in person**)
Commissioner James Bennett (via zoom)
Mr. Darryl Register (**in person**)

CLAY: Mr. Michael Bourre (**in person**)
Commissioner Betsy Condon (**in person**)
Commissioner Jim Renninger (**in person**)

DUVAL: Councilmember Randy DeFoor (**in person**)
Mayor Sean Lynch (via zoom)

FLAGLER: Mayor Catherine Robinson (via zoom)
Commissioner Joseph Mullins (**in person**)
Commissioner David Sullivan (**in person**)

NASSAU: Mayor Michael Lednovich (via zoom)
John Martin (**in person**)

PUTNAM: Donald Holmes (via zoom)
Commissioner Jeff Rawls (**in person**)

ST. JOHNS: Commissioner Roxanne Horvath (**in person**)
Commissioner Paul Waldron (via zoom)
Commissioner Christian Whitehurst (**in person**)

EX-OFFICIO: Mr. Curtis Hart (DEO) (**in person**)
Mr. Brian Austin *for* Ms. Karen Taulbee (DOT) (via zoom)
Mr. Doug Conkey (SJRWMD) (**in person**)

Excused: Mr. John Drew, Mr. Michael Griffis, Commissioner Larry Harvey,
Councilmember Joyce Morgan, and Greg Strong

Absent: Mayor Elaine Brown

Staff Present: Nick Cole, Kate Haigh, Fara Ilami, Robert Jordan, Margo Moehring, Elizabeth Payne, Jack Shad, Donna Starling and Sheron Forde

Others Present: Mayor David Alfin, Ms. Brooks Dame, Mr. George Friedline, Commissioner Greg Hansen, Sean Lahav, and Endrea Frazer

1st Vice President DeFoor welcomed everyone to the meeting and recognized new Board Member Mr. Doug Conkey of the St. Johns Water Management District.

INVITATION TO SPEAK

1st Vice President DeFoor stated that members of the public are welcome to speak on any item before the Board and will also be recognized during public comment.

*CONSENT AGENDA

1st Vice President DeFoor asked if anyone would like to pull any item on the consent agenda for discussion. Hearing none, she **called for a motion on the consent agenda. Mr. Register motioned to approve the consent agenda; seconded by Commissioner Horvath. Motion carried.**

OTHER REPORTS/ACTION ITEMS

Comprehensive Plan Policy Issue

Ms. Moehring provided information related to a recently reviewed Clay County comprehensive plan amendment that was in close proximity to a toll road; the First Coast Expressway. Per State Statute, that development impacts related to a toll road cannot be taken into account when considering potential impacts on regional facilities. Staff reached out to the North Florida Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) for guidance. It was determined that what can be done is an analysis on the potential for impacts to other significant roads in proximity to the toll road. She stated that the TPO has a scope of a modeling study for this and is currently working with St. Johns County.

Affordable Housing Committee Update

Vice Chair Mullins provided a brief overview of the Committee meeting where they discussed housing options and the scheduling of meetings in each county followed by a regional meeting.

Ms. Moehring further explained that the Committee's scope of work already included a meeting in each county. The idea of having a regional meeting arose during discussions at the last meeting. For the County meetings, staff will invite all the SHIP Coordinators and others on the Council's extensive list of interested parties. Discussion would be around what is working and what is not working. The County meetings would be followed by the Regional meeting to hopefully answer the question of what has been working and what has not.

Chair Bourre added that the idea is to bring everyone together for open discussions and sharing information about what works in each county. He said the goal is to make sure we are providing affordable housing, utilizing the programs that the State offers, to the best of our abilities.

Discussion followed on the current state of affordability and the need of workforce housing in the Region.

Community Resilience Update

Ms. Payne introduced new hire, Ms. Fara Ilami, formerly of the Department of Fish and Wildlife. She is the Council's new Regional Resiliency Manager.

Ms. Ilami provided an update on resiliency activities, highlighting 1) Resilient First Coast Collaborative, where coordination efforts are beginning, gathering perspective from potential members around the Region, and ideas on moving forward; 2) the \$125,000 Florida Department of Environmental Protection grant focused on analyzing local and regional resilience priorities in the Region with a completion date of June this year, and highlighted the deliverables; 3) the South Atlantic Coastal Study's draft report and appendices comment period is closed and the Army Corps is currently reviewing those comments in preparation for a final report. She stated that the report includes a Florida appendix that contains a Northeast Florida Focus Area Action Strategy, which identifies four sub focus areas of Amelia Island Back Bay and Timucuan Preserve, Duval County Intercoastal Waterway, St. Johns River and Tributaries and St. Augustine. She will be working with the local governments identified in the Florida appendix to help educate them on the data; and 4) the continuing resilience work such as finalization of the scope of work for the Community Development Block Grant focused on healthcare resiliency through the Department of Economic Opportunity, anticipation of the Sentinel Landscape announcement expected soon, and facilitation of outreach, upcoming educational webinars, and symposia. A brief discussion followed.

Program Spotlight: Community Engagement

Mr. Jordan highlighted the Council's work with local governments, such as technical assistance work with the City of Bunnell as part of their Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) of their comprehensive plan update, a Department of Economic Opportunity technical assistance grant to assist Crescent City, Interlachen, and Welaka to update their EAR. As they moved into the community engagement process, staff decided not to limit these meetings just to the technical statutory process of making sure the comprehensive plans were consistent with statutory changes. The elements of the Comprehensive Plans were broken down into common themes, i.e., conservation and open space, etc. There were notepads based around these elements and community members were invited to speak with staff about their concerns related to these topics. Mr. Jordan shared some of the meetings already held and some of the comments received.

Mr. Shad stated that the Council is working on DEO grants received to assist the City of Palatka and Baker County with economic development strategic planning. The City of Palatka recently held their meeting, which was well attended. He provided a brief overview of the process employed in obtaining public input at the meeting. Baker County's first strategic planning public meeting is scheduled for January 13th and will include the Baker County Chamber of Commerce. A brief discussion followed.

Mr. Holmes complimented council staff on how they conducted themselves at the Palatka meeting and stated that he has had nothing but positive feedback from the citizens. He even received comments from citizens who regretted not attending the meeting. The recommended format worked very well, and they look forward to scheduling another meeting.

Broadband Activities Update

Commissioner Mullins shared Flagler County's approach to, and handling of, their broadband issues. He stated that the County has made significant achievements in this area. The County

established a task force that included private and public individuals, as well as their IT Department. The first step was to identify (map) where the gaps were in the County. Then they partnered with a private partner, Charter, utilizing federal funding. Charter was then provided with rights to the County's infrastructure and IT. They were also provided with the ability to make money from this partnership; the same as providing power and water. This could be done through partnerships with developers. Flagler County is expected to break ground shortly on this project with an expectation of having approximately 98 percent broadband coverage at the end of the project in about 24 months. Discussion followed.

Regional Leadership Awards

Ms. Payne reminded the Members that last year's ceremony was not held due to Covid, instead she traveled to each of the winners and presented them with their award. Therefore, the 2020 winners will also be recognized at this year's event. She provided a reminder of those 2020 winners. She also gave an overview of the 2021 Regional Leadership award winners.

Ms. Payne informed the Members that in December the Executive Committee, sitting as the Awards Selection Committee, selected the 2021 winners in each category as follows: Affordable Housing has two winners - the Urban Land Institute, and Jacksonville Withintrification Strategy; Historic Preservation – Take Pride in the Westside; Economic Development and Tourism – Visit Putnam County, FL APP; Healthcare/Emergency Preparedness – Flagler County Fire Rescue Community Paramedicine; Environmental Stewardship - Groundwork Jacksonville-Emerald Trail; Planning & Growth Management – Nassau County SR200/A1A Corridor Master Plan; Public Safety – Central County Fire Station #50 in Baker County; Quality of Life category, the Putnam County Quality of Life Survey; Resilience – Jacksonville City Council Special Committee on Resiliency; Transportation – City of St. Augustine Mobility Plan and Mobility Fee; A special Recognition to the Northeast Florida Economic Resilience Task Force; and the anchor award, the Regional Leadership Award – Mr. Jerry Cameron.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

MEMBERS' REPORT / LOCAL & REGIONAL ISSUES DISCUSSION

Commissioner Rawls shared that he was informed by a developer stating that Putnam County's rents increase between 19 and 30 percent for a one bedroom to a bedroom apartment from year to year.

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS' REPORTS

Department of Economic Opportunity

Mr. Darryl Register shared information from Site Selection Group that recently published their annual evaluation of the States based on economic development. Florida came in at #4 in the business climate index; #7 for working age adults training for job skills; #27 for workers compensation premium rates; and #14 for the overall physical health of the State.

Florida Department of Transportation

Mr. Brian Austin stated that the Federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (H.R. 3684) was signed into law on November 16, 2021. The Act is a reauthorization of the FAST Act and provides

\$973 billion in funding over five years from FFY 2022 through FFY 2026. FDOT is estimated to receive \$13.5 billion but at this time we are still evaluating what the bill brings and the impacts to FDOT projects.

St. Johns River Water Management District

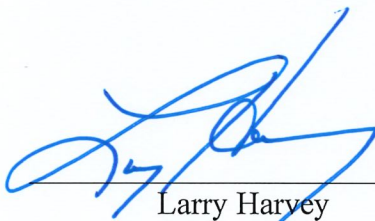
Mr. Doug Conkey informed the Members that the WMD's cost share program is currently open through February 18, 2022; more information will be provided to Beth for distribution to the Members. He also provided information on the Blue School grants; waiving the costs of plugging unused and abandoned artesian wells; entering final phase of the North Florida Water Supply Plan, more information will be provided going forward; and Mr. Tom Frick, the District's Assistant Executive Director is the WMD's resiliency person and believes they will be involved in the Council's resiliency efforts. A brief discussion followed.

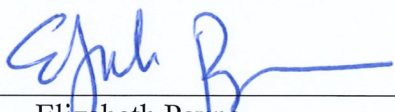
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Ms. Payne directed the Members' attention to the final workplan, adopted by the Executive Committee in December; a revised list of staff liaisons assigned to each county; a save the date flyer for the rescheduled Overdose Summit on March 31, 2022; updated meeting schedule and meeting invites to follow shortly; 2022 legislative priorities are provided for your use with the Session beginning in a few days. Additionally, a nomination form for the Regional Leadership Academy is provided for nominating someone to participate in the program. The Members were urged to recommend people who would be a good fit for the program. The February meeting topic is on workforce development; a representative from JAXUSA will provide a presentation on their ongoing workforce development work in the Region.

Next Meeting Date: February 3, 2022

Meeting Adjourned: 11:39 a.m.



Larry Harvey
President

Elizabeth Payne
Chief Executive Officer