



NORTHEAST FLORIDA REGIONAL COUNCIL
Board of Directors Meeting
January 8, 2026

MINUTES

The Northeast Florida Regional Council Board of Directors held a meeting at 100 Festival Park Avenue, Jacksonville, FL on Thursday, January 8, 2026; **1st Vice President Dance** called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Roll call was conducted with the following members present, representing a quorum:

BAKER: Mr. Griffis
Mr. Register

CLAY: Commissioner Condon
Commissioner Renninger

DUVAL: Councilmember Amaro
Mayor Lynch (Virtual)
Ms. Brown

FLAGLER: Commissioner Dance
Councilmember Gambaro

NASSAU: Commissioner Huppmann
Commissioner Martin
Commissioner Minshew

PUTNAM: Commissioner Harvey
Commissioner Wilkinson

ST. JOHNS: Commissioner Taylor
Commissioner Whitehurst
Commissioner Morgan

EX-OFFICIO: Mr. Conkey, St Johns River Water Management District
Ms. Donaldson, Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Mr. Dixon, Florida Department of Transportation
Mr. Hart, Florida Department of Commerce

Excused: Commissioner Anderson and Mr. Bourre

Absent: Councilmember Gay

Guests: Terry Suggs, Ken Storey ECFRPC), John Nooney, Michelle Corum (virtual), and other members of the public

Staff: Fara Ilami, Summer Jones, Tyler Nolen, Elizabeth Payne, Donna Starling, and other staff

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

1st Vice President Dance welcomed new Board Members: St. Johns County Commissioners Taylor and Whitehurst.

A MOMENT OF REMEMBRANCE

The Board took a moment to remember Commission James G. Bennett who unexpectedly passed recently.

INVITATION TO SPEAK

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

Mr. Nooney, 8356 Bascom Rd., Jacksonville, FL 32216, addressed the Board regarding several City of Jacksonville City Council Resolutions, including 2009-442, 2025-0019, 2025-0867. He stated that one year ago the City of Jacksonville's Waterways Commission along with the Parks Division identified three potential acquisition properties that would benefit all the citizens of the City. He also shared his condolences for Commissioner Bennett. He provided a handout and requested that it be made part of the permanent record and will be attached.

*CONSENT AGENDA

1st Vice President Dance asked if anyone wanted to pull any item on the consent agenda. Hearing none, he called for a motion on the consent agenda. Commissioner Martin motioned to approve the Consent Agenda; seconded by Councilmember Amaro. Motion carried.

OTHER REPORTS/ACTION ITEMS

*November 2025 Financial Report

Ms. Starling stated that the Council posted a net income of \$14,237 for the month of November and a year-to-date net income of \$19,028.

1st Vice President Dance called for a motion. Commissioner Huppman motioned to approve the November 2025 Financial Report; seconded by Commissioner Harvey. Motion carried.

*Clay County Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) Continuation Recommendation

Ms. Jones stated that Clay County's CTC contract expires on June 30, 2026. The Jacksonville Transit Authority (JTA) has been the service provider since 2019. Both the County and JTA would like to continue the service partnership. If approved, this would go through 2031.

Commissioner Condon motioned to approve JTA's continuation as the CTC for Clay County and authorize staff to forward the recommendation to the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged; seconded by Commissioner Renninger. Motion carried.

*Resolutions 2026-01 and 2026-02

Ms. Payne presented resolutions 2026-01 and 02 for consideration by the Board. These recognize former Board Members, Commissioners Joseph and Murphy of St. Johns County. Ms. Payne will present the resolutions to the Commissioners at one of their upcoming Board of County Commissioners' meetings. A brief discussion followed.

Commissioner Harvey motioned to approve Resolutions 2026-01 and 2026-02 recognizing St. Johns County Commissioners Joseph and Murphy for their service to the Regional Council and the Northeast Florida Region; seconded by Commissioner Whitehurst. Motion carried unanimously.

*Secretary/Treasurer Nomination

Commissioner Martin nominated Doug Conkey. Ms. Payne, on behalf of Mr. Conkey, stated that he must respectfully decline due to his position at the Water Management District.

Ms. Payne stated that staff have not reviewed the policy regarding the Secretary/Treasurer's role in quite some time. Therefore, she stated that staff could prepare a revised policy and bring to the Personnel, Budget and Finance Committee meeting in February for consideration and then to the full Board, if approved. She also stated that staff are currently exercising a portion of the current policy that allows two internal staff to sign checks until a decision is made on how to move forward. Discussion followed.

Commissioner Harvey motioned for staff to bring a revised policy to the February 5, 2026 PBF Committee for consideration for the full Board; seconded by Commissioner Condon. Motion carried.

President Position Discussion

Discussion was held regarding the President's position. It was stated that it is Baker County's decision to determine who they want to fill the role. Mr. Griffis will reach out to the County to inform them of the situation and inquire how they wish to proceed.

Community Resiliency Update

Ms. Ilami shared that the Council was recently awarded a \$400,000 grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to assess infrastructure vulnerability and aquatic connectivity benefiting resilience of Florida's First Coast; key local partners include Jacksonville University and the University of North Florida.

Ms. Ilami provided an overview on the status of the Council's resiliency projects including the Military Installation Resilience Review, the Regional Resilience Entity Project, and the Multi-Regional project. She stated that the Council recently completed the final adaptation plan for Flagler County's Resilience work. Also highlighted was local vulnerability assessment work being done for Baker County and the Town of Baldwin as part of their ongoing assessments. Lastly, she provided an update on the work being done with the South Atlantic Salt Marsh Initiative, which involves stakeholder engagement and technical analysis conducted by the North Florida Land Trust. Discussion followed.

Regional Leadership Academy

Mr. Nolen informed the Members that the 2026 Regional Leadership class will have a meet-n-greet on January 15th in St. Johns County. This year's participants cover a wide range of industries that include county government, private industry, hospitals, community groups, etc. Mr. Nolen shared the tentative schedule including meeting dates and locations. He provided a brief overview of the topics that will be addressed in each county. The class meets on the last Wednesday of each month and begins January 28th in Baker County.

2025 Regional Awards of Excellence Winners

Mr. Nolen presented the list of 2026 Awards of Excellence winners, who will be honored at the luncheon immediately following the Board Meeting. He added that the luncheon is to also recognize elected officials in our Region for all their hard work. The Regional Leadership award will be presented to Reverend Allison DeFoor of the North Florida Land Trust. Discussion followed.

Public Comment – None.

LOCAL AND REGIONAL ISSUES DISCUSSION

City of Mcclenny – **Mr. Griffiths** shared that the City was recently awarded a \$7 Million grant for a water plant rehab; the largest grant the City has ever received.

Clay County: **Commissioner Condon** informed those who use the Shands Bridge to traverse between Clay and St. Johns Counties, it will be closed this weekend. She urges Members to familiarize themselves with the ‘Blue Ribbon’ Bill that is in both the House and Senate regarding proposed land development changes.

Flagler County: **Commissioner Dance** stated that Senator Leek has sponsored a bill on beach restoration, specifically on clarifying definitions of critically eroded dunes and beach.

City of Palm Coast – **Councilman Gambaro** highlighted two projects; 1) wastewater treatment facility infrastructure improvements, going from a 6.8 mg/day facility to just over 10 mg/day facility; 2) they approved a contract to begin work on the Matanzas Loop road which will connect the western part of the City into the County and into the other road networks. This will be part of a broader discussion on the western expansion.

Putnam County: **Commissioner Wilkinson** shared information on events taking place at Port Putnam. **Commissioner Harvey** stated that Port Putnam is not just a concept, it is a real thing. It’s the furthest inland port in Florida and they are now on the Ports Council. The Shands Bridge have kept them very isolated due to its height; however, the new outer beltway will bring in tremendous opportunities.

Nassau County: **Commissioner Martin** stated that the State’s Chief Financial Officer has requested a venue for a press conference in Nassau; however, it is unknown what the purpose of this visit is. He also commented on the property tax reform and encouraged Members to speak with their Legislative representatives.

City of Fernandina Beach: **Commissioner Minshew** stated that the City recently voted to implement paid parking in downtown Fernandina Beach.

St. Johns County – **Commissioner Whitehurst** stated that Nights of Lights in St. Augustine is coming to an end and acknowledged Commissioner Taylor for her work with the community and stakeholders on this. He shared information he received from a news reporter stating that “St. Johns County is the only county in the entire country with a population of over 300,000 without a single criminal homicide in 2025”. **Commissioner Taylor** shared Commissioner Condon’s concerns regarding the land development bill and encouraged everyone to keep engaged and educate their constituents. She shared that she recently attended a Bio Solids workshop in Flagler

County and, with one of six facilities in the entire state located in St. Johns County, this should be in the forefront as well.

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS' REPORT

FloridaCommerce – **Mr. Register** shared information from an article in Site Selection about closing deals on the local level. He highlighted two things that affect this, 1) the non-disclosure agreement and, 2) the timeline for improving incentives.

Florida Department of Transportation – **Mr. Dixon** thanked everyone for allowing him to be a part of the Board. Unfortunately, this will be his last meeting and stated Ms. Paige DeBold will be his replacement.

Department of Environmental Protection – **Ms. Donaldson** stated she has nothing to report.

St. Johns River Water Management District – **Mr. Conkey** stated it was an honor to have been selected for the Secretary/Treasurer position; however, as a WMD employee he is unable to accept. He shared positive comments regarding Reverend Allison DeFoor being awarded the Regional Leadership Award. He commented on Nassau County's American Beach Septic to Sewer project in which the District contributed through the cost share program. He asked members to educate their constituents that lawn watering should be minimal. Members were informed about SB508 which will mandate training for irrigation installers and will come with enforcement measures on watering restrictions; also, SB 1066 the Northeast Florida Rivers Springs and Community Investment Act that would remove the Rodman Dam and restore the Ocklawaha River. The bill, under the purview of the Florida Department of Environment Protection, requires the development of a plan for restoration of the Ocklawaha River with the creation of an Advisory Council. The bill designates the makeup of the Advisory Council, including members from several of our local governments.

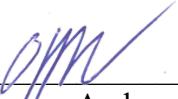
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Ms. Payne shared the Council staff assignments for each county stating that it is the intent that they will be attending at least one BOCC meeting each month.

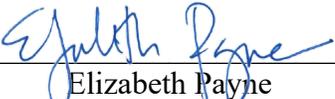
In line with SB1066 Mr. Conkey mentioned, NEFRC has partnered with the East Central Florida Regional Council working on a project, similar to our Northeast Florida Military Installation Resilience Review, for two areas - Bug Springs and the Pinecastle Complex. A portion of the Pinecastle Complex is in Putnam County, including Lake George and the Rodman Dam. The bill referenced by Mr. Conkey is of great interest to the Navy. The impacts of this bill will be discussed at the kick-off meeting of the newest MIRR in February.

Next Meeting Date: February 5, 2026

Meeting Adjourned: 11:46 a.m.



Jimmy Anderson
President



Elizabeth Payne
Chief Executive Officer