



NORTHEAST FLORIDA REGIONAL COUNCIL
Board of Directors Meeting
January 9, 2025

MINUTES

The Northeast Florida Regional Council Board of Directors held a meeting at 100 Festival Park Avenue, Jacksonville, FL on Thursday, January 9, 2025; **President Renninger** called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

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

BAKER: Commissioner Bennett
Mr. Register

DUVAL: Councilmember Amaro
Mayor Brown
Mayor Lynch

CLAY: Commissioner Condon
Commissioner Renninger
Mr. Kennedy

FLAGLER: Commissioner Dance
Councilmember Gambaro

NASSAU: Commissioner Huppmann
Commissioner Martin
Commissioner Minshew

PUTNAM: Commissioner Harvey (via Zoom)
Commissioner Wilkinson (via Zoom)

ST. JOHNS: Commissioner Joseph
Commissioner Murphy

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

Excused: Commissioner Anderson, Mr. Bourre, and Mr. Griffis

Absent: Councilmember Gay

Presenter: Eric Houston, Jacksonville Transportation Authority

Guests: John Nooney, Ken Storey, Sanaa Hodge, Julian Carter, Liz Peak, and other members of the public

Staff: Eric Anderson, Donna Starling, Robert Jordan, Tyler Nolen, Elizabeth Payne, Andrew Prokopiak, Kenajawa Woody and others

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

President Renninger welcomed new Board Members: Nassau County Commissioner Huppmann, City of Fernandina Beach Commissioner Minshew, Putnam County Commissioner Wilkinson, St. Johns County Commissioners Joseph and Murphy, and City of Palm Coast Council Member Gambaro.

INVITATION TO SPEAK

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

*CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. Register motioned to approve the Consent Agenda; seconded by Ms. Brown. Motion carried unanimously.

OTHER REPORTS/ACTION ITEMS

Presentation: Coordinated Mobility Plan

Mr. Eric Houston, Jacksonville Transit Authority's Program Manager for Strategic and Regional Planning, provided a presentation on the 2024 Northeast Florida Coordinated Mobility Plan. A brief discussion followed.

*October 2024 Financial Report

Ms. Starling stated that for the month of October, the Council posted a net income of \$7,921. As this is the first month of the Council's fiscal year, the year-to-date is the same. A brief discussion followed.

Commissioner Martin motioned to approve the October 2024 Financial Report; seconded by Commissioner Condon. Motion carried unanimously.

*November 2024 Financial Report

Ms. Starling stated that for the month of November, the Council posted a net loss of \$17,941 with a year-to-date loss of \$10,020. The main reason for the loss is the Council's quarterly dues. Additionally, following our move in August, there were expenses paid in November for cubicle installations, signage, and the open house. Discussion followed.

Commissioner Condon motioned to approve the November 2024 Financial Report; seconded by Commissioner Martin. Motion carried unanimously.

*Resolutions 2025-01, 02, 03, 04, and 05

Ms. Payne presented five Resolutions recognizing former Board Members Commissioner Paul Adamczyk of Putnam County, Commissioner Roy Alaimo of St. Johns County, Vice Mayor David

Sturges of Fernandina Beach, Hon. John Drew of Nassau County, and Commissioner Christian Whitehurst of St. Johns County, for consideration by the Board.

Councilmember Amaro motioned to approve Resolutions 2025-01, 02, 03, 04, and 05; seconded by Commissioner Condon. Motion carried unanimously.

Resolutions 2025-01 Commission Adamczyk, 2025-02 Commissioner Alaimo, and 2025-03 Vice Mayor Sturges will be mailed following the meeting. Ms. Payne read and presented Resolutions 2025-04 to Mr. Drew and 2025-05 to Commissioner Whitehurst. A brief discussion followed.

*2025 Legislative Priorities

Ms. Payne provided an overview of the process utilized to obtain the Regional Legislative Policies. The priorities received were reviewed by the Legislative Policy Committee. The Committee identified the following issues for consideration by the Board: Resiliency, Housing, Infrastructure, Public Camping & Sleeping.

Commissioner Martin motioned to approve the 2025 Legislative Priorities as presented; seconded by Mr. Register. Discussion followed.

Additionally, the Legislative Policy Committee also wanted to include a statement of ongoing support for the Black History Museum in St. Augustine. Discussion followed.

Commissioner Martin amended his motion to include a statement supporting the Black History Museum in St. Augustine; Mr. Register also amended his second. Amended motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Payne stated that once the flyer and palm cards are printed, they will be provided to each county at their BOCC meeting prior to the start of the 2025 Legislative Session. Members are encouraged to utilize these when communicating with their legislative delegates and when in Tallahassee during the Legislative Session.

*NEFRC 2025 Workplan

Ms. Payne informed the Members that each calendar year she facilitates a discussion with the Board regarding a regional issue that the Council can work on. In the past, the Council has addressed issues such as affordable housing, opioid epidemic, ecotourism and trails. This year the issue being put forward for consideration is solid waste, trash and potentially recycling. Discussion followed.

Ms. Craver, Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), stated that, in reference to recycling, the DEP offers assistance to local municipalities, whether it be in the form of grant funding or just assistance in developing programs for recycling. She encourages anyone interested in this assistance to feel free to contact her for that information.

Commissioner Condon motioned to approve the NEFRC 2025 Workplan; seconded by Mayor Lynch. Motion carried unanimously.

Community Resiliency Update

Mr. Prokopiak, Sr. Regional Resiliency Planner, provided an overview of resiliency projects currently being addressed by the Regional Council. He highlighted phase two of the Regional Resiliency Action Plan, local governments vulnerability assessments, and the multi-regional project. He also provided an update on recent resiliency activities, healthcare resiliency project, the Military Installation Resilience Review, and the South Atlantic Salt Marsh Initiative. Staff is also working on a compilation of vulnerability assessments to draft a regional vulnerability assessment. Discussion followed.

Program Spotlight: Strategic Regional Policy Plan Review-Part 1

Mr. Anderson provided an overview of the process involved in revising the Regional Council's Strategic Regional Policy Plan, which is done every five years. He reviewed the proposed changes, shown as strikethrough and underlined, of the first four elements. **Element 1: Demographics and Equity. Determination:** Delete this element – it is not a required element, and this type of data is available anywhere. **Element 2: Community and Affordable Housing. Determination:** This was based on the former Elevate Northeast Florida project, now sunset. We have added information about the First Coast Well-Being Index, which is the digital platform where we house data in real time. **Element 3: Economic Development. Determination:** This was also based on the former Elevate Northeast Florida project along with the Florida Chamber's 6 pillars. We just deleted that reference and made some very small changes to the goals and policies to clean up language. **Element 4: Emergency Preparedness and Resiliency of the Built Environment. Determination:** Take out Resiliency and make it its own standalone element. This will come back to the Board in April. We have taken everything related to resiliency and maintained all the emergency preparedness, related information.

Mr. Anderson indicated that this process will be repeated over the next several months with a final draft presented to the Board for adoption in June 2025. The Members were asked to provide any feedback to staff for consideration. A brief discussion followed.

Regional Leadership Academy

Mr. Nolen directed the Members' attention to the list of attendees in this year's Regional Leadership Academy (RLA) class. These participants represent different agencies, organizations, and subject matters. Ultimately, the RLA graduates become members of the Regional Community Institute; the policy think tank for the Regional Council. He stated the class will meet one day in each of the seven counties, which includes a military installation day. The class meets on the last Wednesday of each month and begins January 29th in Baker County.

2024 Regional Awards of Excellence Winners

Mr. Nolen informed the Members of the process involved in the solicitation of nominations and selection of winners. However, due to meeting conflicts in December, the Executive Committee did not meet to complete this task, and an alternate process was utilized through the President. A press release was issued announcing this year's winners. Among those is a special achievement award in conservation to former St. Johns County Commissioner Henry Dean for his work in conservation. Our regional leadership award goes to former City of St. Augustine Commissioner Roxanne Horvath. Staff look forward to acknowledging all the achievements in the ceremony to immediately follow this meeting.

Public Comment

Mr. John J. Nooney, 8356 Bascom Rd., Jacksonville, FL 32216, Re: Potential Northeast Florida Regional Council (NEFRC) public park on Pottsborg Creek. He stated it is almost two years since he addressed the NEFRC. He requested that his handout be made part of the permanent record, so the Members can all look at it later. He stated that when he came here April 6, 2023, before the elections, Joyce Morgan and Randy DeFoor were the Duval County representatives. He was here advocating for the Beth Payne Northeast Florida Regional Center for Resiliency. After the election is the resiliency stuff and stated he's in it four times. That is a port inland navigation district. Now there is new leadership on Waterways in Duval County, and he stated this was the October 18th Finance Subcommittee meeting. You have land acquisition, there are two projects. A month later, the November 14th Waterways Commission, now there are three and it is on Pottsborg Creek, 2.5 acres, category one wetlands. He shares that when you are talking about resiliency quality of life, they hit every box: JEA, JTA, and the Council on Elder Affairs. This was the October meeting, and he was on the agenda. He urges people to know their Tree Commission. He will be at that meeting on January 15th. But the thing is, you all have control of this place, hit every box you want, and then just tell the world to visit Jacksonville, not only Jacksonville, the North Florida Region. Thank you very much for listening. A copy of handout is attached.

Local and Regional Issues Discussion – Nothing to report.

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS' REPORT

FloridaCommerce – Mr. Register shared an article from LinkedIn on the fastest growing jobs for 2025. Their research shows that 64% of workers feel overwhelmed by the pace of the workplace shifts that we are seeing today. He shared a few highlights from the article on the fastest growing jobs: Number one – AI Engineer; number 2 - AI consultant; number 4 - workforce development managers; number 9 – sustainability specialist; number 11 - community planners; and number 12 - AI researchers.

Florida Department of Transportation – **Mr. Dixon** stated that FDOT's 5-year tenants of work program is now online and provided directions on accessing the information via Google Search.

Department of Environmental Protection – Ms. Craver announced that DEP will be launching their 2025 Environmental Resource Permitting Workshop series with their target audience being local municipalities, environmental consultants, and real estate agents. The first workshop is scheduled for February 19th and will then take place quarterly throughout 2025. Topics will range from the general permitting process, dock permitting requirements, shoreline stabilization permitting requirements. The goal is to focus on commonly missed items to ease the permitting process for those that are coming into our offices. If anybody is interested, details are on the DEP website. Ms. Craver stated she is a resource here for the Members, and is happy to collaborate, coordinate, and continue our working relationship.

St. Johns River Water Management District – Mr. Conkey shared that beginning in December 2023, local governments have 18 months to comply with the statutory requirement to update their water supply facilities workplan. He noted that some 30+ communities or governments have not yet done so. The District will be reaching out to them.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

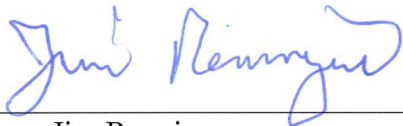
Ms. Payne stated she is excited to have all these new faces around the table and looks forward to meeting one-on-one with you soon.

Ms. Payne reminded the Members of the recent hiring of an attorney for the Regional Council; the Douglas Law Firm with Mr. Jeremiah Blocker as our main point of contact. She will discuss this at the next Personnel, Budget & Finance Committee meeting in February.

We look forward to some fellowship with you all downstairs. Thank you so much for being here.

Next Meeting Date: February 6, 2025

Meeting Adjourned: 11:52 a.m.



Jim Renninger
President



Elizabeth Payne
Chief Executive Officer