



NORTHEAST FLORIDA REGIONAL COUNCIL
Board of Directors Meeting
October 5, 2023

MINUTES

The Northeast Florida Regional Council Board of Directors, pursuant to Chapter 120.525, F.S., held a hybrid meeting both in-person, at 200 San Sebastian View, Ste., 2300, St. Augustine, FL 32084, and virtually via Zoom, on Thursday, October 5, 2023, at 10:00 a.m.

President Whitehurst welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order with the following members present and in person unless otherwise noted:

BAKER: Commissioner Anderson
Commissioner Bennett (**via zoom**)
Mr. Griffis (**via zoom**)
Mr. Register

CLAY: Commissioner Condon
Commissioner Renninger
Mr. Bourre
Mr. Kennedy

DUVAL: Councilmember Amaro (**via zoom**)
Mayor Lynch

FLAGLER: Commissioner Sullivan
Mayor Alfin

NASSAU: Commissioner Martin (**via zoom**)
Vice-Mayor Sturges

PUTNAM: Commissioner Harvey

ST. JOHNS: Commissioner Arnold
Commissioner Horvath
Commissioner Whitehurst

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

Excused: Councilmember Gay, Mayor Robinson, and Mr. Drew

Absent: Mayor Brown, Commissioner Adamczyk

Presenter: Mr. Joe Cone, Assistant Director, St. Johns County Health & Human Services

Guests: Joy Andrews, Jessica Beach, Kelly Wilson, Hon. Andy Dance, Bill White, Joel Sneed, and other members of the public

Staff: Eric Anderson, Joseph Cearley, Monica Dominguez, Fara Ilami, Robert Jordan, Tyler Nolen, Elizabeth Payne, Annie Sieger, Donna Starling, and Sheron Forde.

President Whitehurst introduced Ms. Joy Andrews, St. Johns County's Interim County Administrator, who welcomed the Members and guest to St. Johns County.

FY 23/24 COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

President Whitehurst stated that the FY 23/24 Committee Appointments are included in the meeting packet. Members are asked to let him, or staff, know if there are any preferences or changes so they can be addressed.

FY 23/24 MEETING SCHEDULE & MEMBER ROSTER

Ms. Payne informed the Members that the upcoming meeting schedule through 2024 and the NEFRC Membership roster are provided for their information.

INVITATION TO SPEAK

President Whitehurst 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

President Whitehurst called for a motion on the consent agenda. Commissioner Harvey moved approval of the consent agenda; seconded by Commissioner Anderson. Motion carried.

OTHER REPORTS/ACTION ITEMS

*2024 Northeast Florida Regional Legislative Priorities

Chair Harvey presented the 2024 Northeast Florida Regional Legislative Priorities as approved by the Legislative Committee for the Board's consideration. These are: Transportation Infrastructure, Resiliency, Affordable Housing, and Conservation. Additionally, the Committee agreed to Issues to Support that included, Broadband expansion and continued funding, and State supported tourism efforts and programs.

President Whitehurst called for a motion on the 2024 Northeast Florida Regional Legislative Priorities. Commissioner Condon moved approval; seconded by Commissioner Sullivan. Motion carried.

Ms. Payne stated that, once finalized, Members will be emailed a copy of the Priorities. This will be followed up with hard copies of the flyer and palm cards, when printed, being distributed to the Members for their use at their Legislative Delegation meetings and during the Legislative Session. She stated that there will be a QR code on the Priorities that, when scanned, will take the scanner to the Council's website where the Regional and county/municipal priorities will be located.

Presentation: St. Johns County Affordable Housing

Mr. Joseph Cone, Assistant Director, St. John's County Health and Human Services, provided an overview of affordable housing in St. Johns County. The presentation highlighted the challenges and accomplishments of the County's efforts, such as direct housing services, community development block grant, SHIP, community workforce housing innovations, and community partnerships, as well as activities going forward. Discussion followed.

Mr. Conkey stated that the St. Johns River Water Management and Florida Department of Environmental Protection are good sources for assistance in finding solutions to many of the challenges mention in the presentation.

Ms. Payne thanked Mr. Cone for his presentation and stated that one reason for this presentation request was due to the County's allocation of their disaster recovery funding for affordable housing; setting a great precedent across the State. It was mentioned that the County received upwards of \$85 million.

2022-2023 NEFRC Annual Report

Ms. Payne directed the Members' attention to the NEFRC's FY 2022-2023 Annual Report. She reminded them that this report is published at the end of our fiscal year. These are provided for your information. Additional copies can be made available upon request.

Emergency Preparedness Program: Exercise Update

Mr. Anderson provided an overview of the St. Johns County Hurricane Exercise, JEA and City of Jacksonville Exercise, and the Jacksonville Transportation Authority Exercise. He highlighted the reasons why annual preparations are done, and the different types and progression of exercises. The SJC Hurricane exercise, Hurricane Skywalker, was discussed and highlighted the objectives and core capabilities, and exercise expectations. Also discussed were the 'Planning P' process which was the focus of the JEA and City of Jacksonville exercise, which has impacts beyond the City. The Jacksonville Transportation Authority was a discussion-based exercise. He encourages the Members to get involved in these exercises when they are provided in their counties. Discussion followed.

Program Spotlight: CDBG Healthcare Grant

Ms. Dominguez provided an overview of the CDBG Healthcare Grant stating that the goal is to improve healthcare facilities' ability to function in the face of climate change and extreme weather events. She stated that this is a four year grant and that the first two elements, 1) Methodology for climate and facilities, and 2) Healthcare facilities maps and Climate Exposure Analysis have been completed. Over the next remaining two years of the grant, staff will be finalizing mitigation strategies, writing a final report, providing 2-D and 3-D flood maps, and identifying additional exposure elements.

Community Resiliency Update

Ms. Ilami provided a brief overview of recent resiliency activities that included: the Annual Florida Resilience Conference; the September Resilient First Coast meeting, recognition of the leadership of Resilient First Coast: Chair Commissioner Horvath and Vice Chair Jessica Beach; the current projects being worked on by staff, with the possibility of another one being added; new resiliency staff; the award of an additional \$66,623 for the Regional Resilience Entity Grant for an additional

task - Regional Significant Asset Identification and Verification. Also provided was an update on local government assistance in Flagler and Baker Counties, the EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant, grant applications submitted and other ongoing resiliency tasks. Ms. Ilami stated that the City of Jacksonville will be unveiling its Resiliency Plan at the upcoming environmental symposium.

Public Comment – None.

Local and Regional Issues Discussion

Commissioner Sullivan – Flagler County has officially joined the Volusia River to Sea Transportation Planning Organization.

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS' REPORTS

Florida Department of Commerce

Mr. Register shared an article from the Area Development Magazine regarding the warehouse and distribution markets and the changes in occupancy rates between 2021 and 2023.

Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Ms. Craver informed the Members that the ERP program at the Jacksonville Regional Office has hired a new Environmental Manager, Ms. Taylor Homan; joining Mr. Paul Duff in overseeing the program. Members are encouraged to contact either of them should they need permitting assistance.

St. Johns River Water Management District

Mr. Conkey provided an update on activities of the SJRWMD and highlighted the completion of the North Florida Water Supply Plan, support of the Council's resiliency efforts and legislative priority, identification of four Basins - with a new manager focused on things in the lower St. Johns Basin, and HB1379 that applies to affordable housing.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Ms. Payne stated that additional staff is being hired for the growing resiliency program. She introduced the first new hire, Mr. Joseph Cearley, Senior Regional Resiliency Planner. She also provided an update on Council activities and highlighted staff's intent to apply for Brownfield Grants, staff is now accepting nominations are for the Regional Leadership Academy, and that nominations for the 2023 Regional Awards will open shortly. Members were encouraged to consider projects in their county for nomination.

Next Meeting Date: The next meeting will be November 2, 2023.

Meeting Adjourned: 11:48 a.m.



Christian Whitehurst
President



Elizabeth Payne
Chief Executive Officer