



NORTHEAST FLORIDA REGIONAL COUNCIL
Board of Directors Meeting
October 2, 2025

MINUTES

The Northeast Florida Regional Council Board of Directors held a meeting at 40 East Adams Street, Jacksonville, FL on Thursday, October 2, 2025; President Renninger called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

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

BAKER: Commissioner Bennett
Mr. Register

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

DUVAL: Councilmember Amaro
Mayor Lynch
Ms. Brown

FLAGLER: Commissioner Dance
Councilmember Gambaro (v)

NASSAU: Commissioner Huppmann
Commissioner Martin

ST. JOHNS: Commissioner Morgan
Commissioner Murphy

EX-OFFICIO: Mr. Conkey - SJRWMD
Mr. Dixon – *FDOT*
Mr. Hart

Excused: Commissioner Anderson, Commissioner Harvey, Mr. Griffis, Commissioner Joseph, Commissioner Minshew, Commissioner Pennington and Ms. Craver

Absent: Councilmember Gay

Presenters: Chris Folds, Interim CEO, First Coast Habitat for Humanity
Carol Bolden, First Coast Habitat for Humanity

Guests: William Hinton, John Brown

Staff: Eric Anderson, Monica Dominguez, Fara Ilami, Tyler Nolen, Elizabeth Payne, Donna Starling, and other staff

PASSING OF THE GAVEL

Outgoing President Renninger thanked everyone for the opportunity to serve. Incoming President Bennett also thanked everyone for allowing him the opportunity to serve in this role for the next year.

2ND VICE PRESIDENT NOMINATION

Chair Register, Personnel Budget & Finance Committee (PB&F), reminded the Members of the reason why this position was omitted when the Board Officers were approved at the last meeting. Now it is being brought back for consideration with Councilmember Ken Amaro as the nominee. He stated that the PB&F Committee approved the nomination at their meeting earlier today for the Board's consideration.

President Bennett called for a motion on the 2nd Vice President Nomination. Mr. Register motioned to approve Councilmember Ken Amaro as the 2nd Vice President; seconded by Commissioner Martin. Motion carried.

President Bennett introduced the NEFRC's FY 25-26 Board Officers.

FY 25-26 COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

President Bennett presented the FY 25-26 Committee Assignments and stated that the assignments remain the same as last year. However, if anyone wishes to serve on any committee to let staff know so it can be accommodated.

Mr. Kennedy announced his retirement and would be stepping away for serving on the Board. **Comm Huppman** volunteered to join the Legislative Committee.

Ms. Payne shared the FY 25-26 Membership listing and meeting schedule for information.

INVITATION TO SPEAK

President Bennett 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 Bennett called for a motion on the consent agenda. Commissioner Martin motioned to approve the Consent Agenda; seconded by Commissioner Renninger. Motion carried.

OTHER REPORTS/ACTION ITEMS

* Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Update & Resolution 2025-08

Ms. Dominguez provided an overview of the CEDS annual report; a requirement of the Economic Development Administration (EDA) in order to be designated as an Economic Development District. The CEDS is updated every five years with annual reports, submitted to the EDA for approval, has a committee representative of the main economic interests of the Region, and enables various EDA funding. The 2025 annual report highlighted 1) Technical Assistance provided

through both EDA and State grants to several of our local governments, 2) Projects conducted in support of CEDS goals such as the Regional Shrimp Study, etc., 3) Economic Modeling (using REMI) to analyze projects for Clay and Duval counties, and 4) Economic Resiliency. Resolution 2025-08 is required to approve the 2025 update as was presented for consideration. The approved resolution will be submitted to U.S. EDA. A brief discussion followed.

President Bennett called for a motion. Mr. Register motioned to accept and approve the CEDS update as presented and Resolution 2025-08; seconded by Councilmember Amaro. Motion carried.

* 2026 Draft Legislative Priorities

Ms. Payne informed the Members of the action taken by the Legislative Policy Committee at their September 25th meeting where they voted to recommend: Infrastructure, Beach Renourishment, amendments to Senate Bill 180, Property Tax Reform, Affordable Housing, and Flood Mitigation as the 2026 legislative priorities. Ms. Payne also included the continued support for the Black History Museum in St. Johns County. Discussion followed.

President Bennett called for a motion. Commissioner Martin motioned to approve the 2026 Legislative Priorities as presented; seconded by Councilmember Amaro. After discussion, the motion and second were withdrawn.

Further discussion occurred regarding the specific wording and order of the priorities as presented; and addition changes were needed.

Commission Martin motioned that staff reformat the recommended priorities, providing this to the full Board via email for comments, and convene a meeting of the Legislative Policy Committee for approval of the 2026 Legislative Priorities; seconded by Mayor Lynch. Motion carried.

FY 24-25 Attendance Roster

Members were presented with the attendance roster for FY 24-25 and asked to provide staff with any corrections by October 16th. Once finalized, a copy will be sent to the appointing member and the Governor's office.

FY 24-25 Annual Report

Ms. Payne provided an overview of the NEFRC's annual report for FY 24-25. Once finalized, staff will print copies for the Membership, as well as provide an electronic version for their use.

Presentation: Establishing Affordable Homeownership Together

Mr. Chris Folds provided a presentation on the newly rebranded First Coast Habitat for Humanity, organization that builds attainable home ownership for lower to moderate-income families in Northeast Florida. Their work spans Duval, Nassau, and Baker Counties. The presentation highlighted Laying Groundwork and Framing the Future, their activities in each County including county specific challenges, and their regional approach. A brief discussion followed.

Community Resiliency Update

Ms. Ilami provided an overview of staff's resiliency activities in the Region by highlighting the Military Installation Readiness Review (MIRR) project in which all installations included in the

review have been toured to gain an understanding of mission-critical facilities and needs; the Baker County Vulnerability Assessment; the Regional Resilience Entity Project received a \$194,000 grant from the Department of Environmental Protection, and announced the phase 2 launch on October 27th, which all are invited. Also highlighted were the Multi-Regional Project; and Flagler County's compound flooding analysis and adaptation plan. A brief discussion followed.

Program Spotlight: St. Marys River/Mary Shoals Park

Ms. Taylor provided an overview of the National Park Service – River, Trails, & Conservation Assistance Program (NPS-RTCA) and highlighted the work being done in Baker County at the St. Marys River/Mary Shoals Park. With the RTCA's assistance a Paddling Trail is being developed along the St. Marys River. This included RTCA staff visiting the site in August and conducting a charette design workshop. The result revealed the need for better vehicle access, more signage, and more amenities. Next steps were shared that includes the RTCA developing conceptual designs in coordination with Baker County. The Council will keep Baker County Commissioners informed of the progress and will also continue to work with the St. Mary's Riverkeeper and the County to implement any of the recommendations that come out of this process. A brief discussion followed.

Regional Leadership Academy Graduation / RCI Membership

Mr. Nolen provided an overview of the 2025 program and highlighted the areas of each county visited. The 2025 class recently concluded with graduation held in September. The RLA program has now graduated 339 leaders across the Region to date. As graduates, the participants become members of the Regional Community Institute of Northeast Florida (RCI) to help advance and promote the vision of regionalism. The RCI is the Council's 501C3 non-profit group that we can task with special projects and initiatives to assist the Council on regionalism. Mr. Nolen shared some notable initiatives of the RCI, i.e., First Coast Vision and Heirs Property. A brief discussion followed.

Public Comment – None.

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS' REPORT

Florida Department of Transportation – Mr. Dixon

The Main Street Bridge will be opening soon as maintenance has concluded.

St. Johns River Water Management District – Mr. Conkey

Provided positive comments on the Council's work and achievements and thanked Mayor Lynch for his efforts in keeping the City of Jacksonville a member of the Council.

Florida Commerce – Mr. Register

Information was shared from an article that ranks the top states for business.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Mr. Anderson shared information on the requirements for the Strategic Regional Policy Plan update that includes four public meetings: one to share the Plan Process and three to share the Plan Content. These meetings have been advertised for October 1st, 3rd, 7th, and 9th. Following these

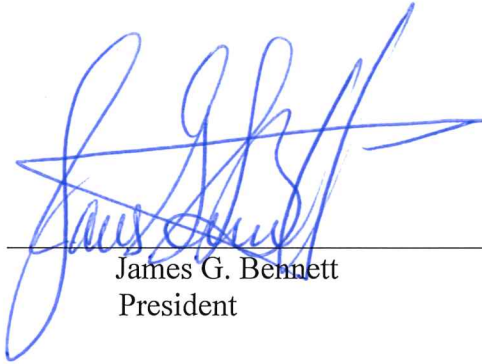
meetings, staff will bring the proposed changes to the November Board meeting for approval to open up for public input; to be followed by the Rulemaking process.

Ms. Payne informed the Members that the November meeting will be abbreviated to allow for the Strategic Planning Session. This meeting will take place in the Council offices (suite 320).

The Councils Regional Awards of Excellence is an opportunity to recognize the excellent work taking place in the Region that is not widely known. The nomination period is now open and closes November 7th. The winners, selected by the Executive Committee, will be honored at the awards ceremony immediately following the January 2026 meeting.

Meeting Adjourned: 11:44a.m.

Next Meeting Date: November 6, 2025



James G. Bennett
President



Elizabeth Payne
Chief Executive Officer