



**NORTHEAST FLORIDA REGIONAL COUNCIL**  
**Board of Directors Meeting**  
**February 5, 2026**

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**MINUTES**

The Northeast Florida Regional Council Board of Directors held a meeting at 100 Festival Park Avenue, Jacksonville, FL on Thursday, February 5, 2026; **1<sup>st</sup> 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:           Commissioner Anderson  
                      Mr. Griffis

CLAY:            Commissioner Condon  
                      Commissioner Renninger  
                      Councilman Ludwig (Virtual)

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

FLAGLER:        Commissioner Dance  
                      Councilmember Gambaro (Virtual)

NASSAU:         Commissioner Huppmann  
                      Commissioner Martin  
                      Commissioner Minshew

PUTNAM:         Commissioner Harvey (Virtual)

ST. JOHNS:      Commissioner Morgan

EX-OFFICIO:     Ms. Donaldson, Florida Department of Environmental Protection  
                      Ms. DeBold, Florida Department of Transportation (Virtual)  
                      Mr. Conkey, St. Johns River Water Management District (Virtual)

Excused:         Commissioner Taylor, Commissioner Wilkinson, Commissioner Whitehurst  
                      and Mr.

Absent:           Councilmember Gay and Mr. Bourre

Guests:          Jacksonville City Council Member Chris Miller (Rep. Rutherford's Aide), John  
                      Nooney, Hilary Cyr – Auditor's Ofc. (V), Joel Addintong (V), Kate (V) and other  
                      members of the public

Staff:            Fara Ilami, Tyler Nolen, Elizabeth Payne, Donna Starling, Leigh Wilsey, and  
                      other staff

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

**1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Dance** welcomed new Board Member: Councilman Brandon Ludwig, City of Keystone Heights.

INVITATION TO SPEAK

**1<sup>st</sup> 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, 2023-0819, 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.

Board Officer Nominations

The Personnel, Budget & Finance Committee nominated and passed a vote for Commissioner Anderson to be the new President representing Baker County for the full Board's consideration.

On behalf of the PB&F Committee, **Commissioner Martin motioned to approve Commissioner Anderson as President of the Board; seconded by Mayor Lynch. Motioned carried unanimously.**

The Personnel, Budget & Finance Committee nominated and passed a vote for Commissioner Condon to be the new Secretary/Treasurer for the full Board's consideration.

On behalf of the PB&F Committee, **Martin motioned to approve Commissioner Condon as Secretary/Treasurer of the Board; seconded by Commissioner Huppman. Motion carried unanimously.**

*President Anderson assumed the role of President from this point forward.*

\*CONSENT AGENDA

**President Anderson asked if anyone wanted to pull any item on the consent agenda. Hearing none, he called for a motion on the consent agenda. Commissioner Condon motioned to approve the Consent Agenda; seconded by Commissioner Renninger. Motion carried.**

OTHER REPORTS/ACTION ITEMS

\*FY 24-25 Audit

Mr. Zach Chalifour, auditor with James Moore & Company, provided an overview of the Council's FY 2024/2025 Audit, and thanked Ms. Starling for her assistance throughout the audit process. He highlighted the audit process which included required communications and any significant difficulties performing the audit or disagreements with management – of which there were none; three audit reports: a report on financial statements and a single audit report on compliance for major federal programs, both received an unmodified opinion – the best opinion that can be issued,

and a report on internal control and compliance that received a clean report with no material weaknesses revealed. He stated that the Council is in good shape. Discussion followed.

**President Anderson called for a motion. Commissioner Martin motioned to approve the FY 24-25 Audit; seconded by Commissioner Condon. Motion carried.**

\*NEFRC Fiscal Year 24-25 Closeout

Ms. Starling stated that with the audit concluded, staff is presenting the reconciliation of budgeted and actual revenues and expenditures. She stated that the Council's final revenues were approximately \$3,187,000, reflecting a \$10,000 decrease. She stated there was a decrease in the expenses of approximately \$96,000.

**President Anderson called for a motion. Commissioner Martin moved approval of the FY 24/25 closeout; seconded by Commissioner Huppman. Motion carried.**

Revised Financial Policies

Ms. Payne stated that, in light of the nomination of a new Treasurer, the PB&F Committee discussed the revision of financial policies and recommended to keep the signatory processes the same. This would mean that the treasurer would still have a plated signature for all of the Regional Council checks that are issued regardless of size or value; and the CEO being the second signature. She stated that based on discussion at the Committee, staff will revise the financial policies and bring them to the Board next month for approval. Ms. Payne stated that staff will also bring a signatory resolution for the CEO to sign checks and providing delegating authority to the Deputy CEO. Discussion followed.

\*Healthcare Coalition Expenditure Request

Ms. Wilsey provided background information on the Healthcare Coalition program, which serves 18 counties in north Florida and has allocated funding to complete regional projects that address mitigation strategies identified in the regional healthcare vulnerability assessment. A Specialty Resource and Gaps Working Group, comprised of subject matter experts identified four projects that address gaps and increase capabilities in regional medical surge and evacuation operations. Three projects will complete previous initiatives, and one new project in 2026 that focuses on hospital evacuations and will purchase medical evacuation sleds designed for hospital patients.

Ms. Wilsey provided information on the two vendors identified as sole distributors in the State of Florida for the equipment to be purchased: Advanced Egress Solutions, and Ethos Evacuations Strategies. Staff requests authorization to purchase equipment from these vendors for the Long-Term Care and Hospital Evacuation Equipment projects. Discussion followed.

**President Anderson called for a motion. Commissioner Martin motioned to approve the equipment purchase from Ethos Evacuation Solutions and Advanced Egress Solutions for the Long-Term Care and Hospital Evacuation Equipment projects; seconded by Councilmember Dance. Motion carried.**

*Commissioners Condon and Renninger left the meeting*

\*Duval County Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) Continuation Recommendation

Ms. Payne stated that Duval 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.

**President Anderson called for a motion. Councilmember Amaro motioned to approve JTA's continuation as the CTC for Duval County and authorize staff to forward the recommendation to the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged; seconded by Mayor Lynch. Motion carried.**

\*Strategic Regional Policy Plan Update

Ms. Payne provided an update on the progress of the Strategic Regional Policy Plan review and request for comments. Upon approval, at the November 2025 meeting, staff submitted the proposed plan and maps to the Executive Office of the Governor, state and regional agencies, and local governments in the Region for their review and comments. The Executive Office of the Governor collects comments from reviewing agencies and has 60 days to provide NEFRC with a Findings and Recommendations Report. The 60-day period has passed, and a report has not been received. Therefore, staff requests approval of the draft SRPP and authorizes staff to proceed with Rulemaking.

**President Anderson called for a motion. Commissioner Dance motioned to adopt the 2025 Northeast Florida Strategic Regional Policy Plan and authorize staff to proceed with Rulemaking; seconded by Mayor Lynch. Motion carried.**

Strategic Planning SWOT Report

Ms. Payne presented the results of the two Strategic Planning Sessions; one with staff on October 2, 2025 and the other with the Board of Directors on November 7, 2025. A brief overview of the results was provided, which touched on the themes and shared values, and a summary of the Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats that were identified. She reminded the Members that, as a result of this exercise, an RFP was submitted for a Strategic Communication Plan; proposals are due on February 20<sup>th</sup> and will come before the Board in March for approval. She stated that the creation of a strategic communications plan will set the foundation for implementing many of the opportunities identified by the Board. A brief discussion followed.

Community Resiliency Update

Ms. Ilami shared information on a newly awarded \$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. She also provided an overview of the Council's resiliency projects, highlighting the Military Installation Readiness Review (MIRR), Regional Resilience Entity, Local Vulnerability Assessments, and partnerships on resilience work with Sea Grant Florida and Flagler County. The Council has partnered with, and will be assisting, the East Central Florida Regional Council on a new MIRR for the Pine Castle Range Complex and for Bug Spring; this would only impact Putnam County as they are the only ones in our region who has land in the within the Pine Castle complex. Discussion followed.

Public Comment – None.

#### LOCAL AND REGIONAL ISSUES DISCUSSION

Baker County – **Mr. Griffis (City of Mcclenny)** stated that the County hosted the Regional Leadership Academy recently and they enjoyed hosting the group.

Duval County: **Mayor Lynch (Town of Baldwin)** thanked Commissioner Dance for stepping up and Commissioner Anderson for keeping the Presidency in Baker County. He also thanked Council Members Amaro and Miller for supporting the Regional Council during the City Council meeting. **Councilman Amaro (County)** commented on their experience with DOGE.

**Council Member Miller** (as Congressman Rutherford’s Aide) reminded everyone that if they need additional support on federal funding grant applications, please visit their congressional offices for reviewing assistance. Then the congressional representative can include a letter of endorsement of support, signed by the Congressman, on top of the packet to give it that little extra support that you would not otherwise have.

Flagler County: **Commissioner Dance** expressed his thanks a gratitude to be able to fill in with the passing of Commissioner Bennett until a new president was selected.

City of Palm Coast – **Councilman Gambaro (City of Palm Coast)** stated that the City of Palm Coast has applied for a 2026 Built Grant with the US Dept of Transportation in support of Old Kings Road Corridor Improvement project. He thanked Ms. Payne for her letter of support.

Nassau County: **Commissioner Martin** (County) reminded Members to stay on their state legislators on the property tax reform initiatives. **Commissioner Huppman** (County) stated that he attended legislative days in Tallahassee and met with the Senate President who encouraged everyone remain calm on the issue of property taxes. He added that the County will be addressing the State Chief Financial Officers findings shortly. **Commissioner Minshew (City of Fernandina Beach)** stated she also was in Tallahassee and met with representatives from DEP and the Budget Director on the Finance side of the House; both talked about the significant reduction in the ability to get appropriations and grants. She encourages Members to be smart about what they ask for. She shared information about the City of Fernandina’s implementation of paid parking.

St. Johns County – **Commissioner Morgan (St. Augustine Beach)** shared the City’s experience with the DOGE process, which was primarily positive.

#### EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS’ REPORT

Florida Department of Transportation – **Paige DeBold** stated she had no report.

Department of Environmental Protection – **Ms. Donaldson** stated she they are awaiting the completion of the Session to determine how they fall with their budgetary requests. She noted that with no hurricanes the season, there have been an increase in fires due unusual dry conditions and lithium-ion batteries disposal. She stated that she is excited to be a part of the Regional Leadership Academy as well.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Ms. Payne shared information from the FRCA Policy Board meeting recently held in Tallahassee. She also providing updated information on the Councils standing committee members. The Regional Council will turn 49 years on February 14<sup>th</sup>. The Councils Community Visioning program provides free visioning services for small municipalities, and the City of Bunnell was the first municipality that was served. This report is almost completed and we are looking forward to finding the next community

Next Meeting Date: March 5, 2026

Meeting Adjourned: 11:30 a.m.

  
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Andy Dance  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice President

  
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Elizabeth Payne  
Chief Executive Officer