



NORTHEAST FLORIDA REGIONAL COUNCIL
Board of Directors Meeting
March 5, 2026

MINUTES

The Northeast Florida Regional Council Board of Directors held a meeting at 40 E. Adams Street, Jacksonville, FL on Thursday, March 5, 2026; **1st Vice President Dance** called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m.

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

BAKER: Commissioner Iverson
Mr. Griffis

CLAY: Commissioner Condon
Commissioner Renninger
Councilman Ludwig
Mr. Bourre

DUVAL: Councilmember Amaro
Mayor Lynch

FLAGLER: Commissioner Dance
Councilmember Gambaro

NASSAU: Commissioner Huppmann
Commissioner Martin
Commissioner Minshew

ST. JOHNS: Commissioner Taylor
Commissioner Whitehurst
Commissioner Morgan (*virtual*)

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

Excused: Commissioner Anderson, Commissioner Harvey and Ms. Brown

Absent: Councilmember Gay and Commissioner Wilkinson

Guests: Kristin Thompson (Sen. Moody) and other members of the public

Presenter: Angi Enyedi, National Weather Service-Jacksonville

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

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

1st Vice President Dance welcomed new Board Member: **Councilman Brandon Ludwig**, City of Keystone Heights; **Commissioner Blake Iverson**, Baker County; and **Ms. Laurie Santana**, Florida Department of Transportation.

*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

*Revised Financial Policies

Ms. Payne stated that, with a new Secretary/Treasurer, staff reviewed and revised two financial policies regarding Financial Responsibilities and Cash Disbursement. She provided an overview of these policies. These policies were presented to the PB&F Committee who reviewed and approved the revisions.

1st Vice President Dance called for a motion. **Commissioner Whitehurst** moved approval of the revised financial policies; seconded by **Commissioner Condon**. Motion carried.

Commissioner Iverson arrived.

*Resolution 2026-05-Revised Signatory Authorization

Ms. Payne stated that this resolution is the implementation arm of the revised financial policies. She provided an overview of the revised resolution and highlighted that it allows her to delegate signatory authority to the Deputy CEO on certain occasions; and adds a section on emergency authorizations that allows the CEO to exceed spending limits. Following discussion in the Personnel, Budget & Finance Committee meeting, an amendment was added to the resolution in Section three (3), item b, that spending limits is not to exceed \$500,000. Discussion followed.

1st Vice President Dance called for a motion. **Commissioner Condon** motioned to approve the revised Signatory Authorization Resolution 2026-05; seconded by **Councilmember Amaro**. Motion carried.

*RFPs & Resolutions – TD Recommendations: Baker (26-06), Putnam (26-7), SJC (26-08)

Ms. Payne provided a brief overview of the Transportation Disadvantaged program and the role of the Regional Council as the Designated Official Planning Agency (DOPA). One of the responsibilities of the DOPA is to provide the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged a recommendation for the Community Transportation Coordinator in each county. The Members were informed that RFPs were issued for Community Transportation Coordinators (CTC) in Baker, Putnam, and St. Johns Counties. A selection committee was formed to review the responses received and ranked each one for each county. Based on the Committee's review/ranking, staff presented to the Local Coordinating Boards and now to this Board that the Baker County Council on Aging, Putnam County's Ride Solutions, Inc., and the St. Johns County Council on Aging be recommended to the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged to serve as the CTCs for the next five years. A brief discussion followed.

1st Vice President Dance called for a motion. Commissioner Condon move to approve staff's recommendation to the Commission for Transportation Disadvantaged to maintain Baker County Council on Aging in Baker County, the Ride Solutions, Inc. in Putnam County, and the St. Johns Council on Aging in St. Johns County as the Community Transportation Coordinators for the next five years; seconded by Councilmember Amaro. Motion carried.

*RFQ – PVC Adult Stretcher, Surge Overflow Bed Packages

Ms. Wilsey provided background information on the Healthcare Coalition (HCC) 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. The HCC program previously purchased these PVC Adult Stretchers for some hospitals in the 18-county region and can do so again this year. Ten hospitals have requested these Stretchers. Staff issued a request for quotes with one quote received from All Terrain Medical & Mobility, LLC. at a cost of \$6,652 each. Staff request authorization to purchase ten PVC Adult Stretcher, Surge Overflow Bed Packages from All Terrain Medical & Mobility, LLC in the amount of \$66,520. A brief discussion followed.

1st Vice President Dance called for a motion. Commissioner Condon moved approval to purchase of PVC, Adult Stretcher, Surge Overflow Bed Packages from All Terrain Medical & Mobility, LLC in the amount of \$66,520; seconded by Commissioner Renninger. Motion carried.

*RFP – Strategic Communication Plan

Ms. Payne stated that, as a follow-up to the two strategic planning sessions held with staff and the Board, staff was authorized to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a Strategic Communications Plan. She provided an overview of the RFP that was issued, the review and scoring process of the five (5) responses were received. The responses were reviewed and ranked by a selection committee. Based on the rankings, staff request authorization to begin negotiations with the top-ranked firm, Raftelis or the second-ranked firm, MWB, if negotiations are unsuccessful. Discussion followed. A brief discussion followed.

1st Vice President Dance called for a motion. Councilmember Amaro motioned to authorize the CEO to negotiate and enter into a contract with Raftelis for a Strategic Communication Plan. However, if the negotiation is unsuccessful, the CEO is authorized to enter negotiations and contract with the second ranked MWB; seconded by Commissioner Martin.

*James Bennett Scholarship Contribution

Ms. Payne provided an overview of the establishment of a scholarship honoring Mr. James Bennett by JaxPort and the University of North Florida who are seeking contributions from interested parties. She directed Members to their agenda packets where additional information is provided regarding criteria for the scholarship as well as the amount received to date of approximately \$76,000. The plan is to create an endowment that would allow awarding scholarships in perpetuity. Discussion followed.

Commissioner Condon stated that the Personnel, Budget & Finance Policy Committee discussed this and settled on a one-time donation of \$10,000.

1st Vice President Dance called for a motion. Commissioner Iverson motioned to approve Council’s donation of \$10,000 to the James Bennett Scholarship as presented; seconded by Mr. Griffis. Motion carried.

Presentation: Drought/Fire Risk, National Weather Service, Jacksonville

Ms. Angela Enyedi, the Warning Coordinator Meteorologist with the National Weather Service, Jacksonville, provided a presentation on the fire weather outlook for Northeast Florida. Her presentation highlighted the six-month rainfall trend, the tropical season impact, 90 and 30-day rainfall trends, the southeast and local drought status, drought & wildfire local impacts and burn bans, precipitation outlook, long range weather outlook, drought outlook, and the wildfires outlook that shows an increase potential through the month of May. Discussion followed.

Community Resiliency Update

Ms. Ilami stated that a kick-off meeting was held for the Aquatic Connectivity project, a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and the Council has begun contract discussions with the University of North Florida and the Jacksonville University for fieldwork. She also provided an update on the Military Installation Readiness Review (MIRR), the Pinecastle Bombing Range and Bugg Spring MIRR, Regional Resilience Entity project – a Regionwide Vulnerability Assessment Analysis survey will be sent to the full Collaborative for approach confirmation with a separate survey sent to the NEFRC Board. She also provided an update on the Multi-Regional Planning & Mitigation Assessment and stated that the final report is due March 31st. A partnership has been formed with the St. Marys Riverkeeper to develop a resilience plan for the St. Marys Watershed, which includes Baker and Nassau counties.

1st Vice President Dance had to leave and passed the gavel to 2nd Vice President Amaro who lead the meeting going forward.

Public Comment – None.

LOCAL AND REGIONAL ISSUES DISCUSSION

Clay County – **Commissioner Condon** stated that the Blue Ribbon Bill that would have impacted the framework for development across the State has died. However, the author of the Bill, Senator McClain has been challenged to re-write the Chapter, which he has accepted. In doing so, the Senator stated he will be seeking input from stakeholders. She encourages the Regional Council to get with the Senator’s staff to help guide what that should look like for local governments.

Nassau County – **Commissioner Minshew (City of Fernandina Beach)** mentioned the Car Show in Amelia Island on the weekend.

St. Johns County – **Commissioner Whitehurst** stated that the Players Tournament begins next weekend. **Commissioner Taylor** also encouraged Members to engage in what is going on in Tallahassee to stay informed. She also mentioned the concern of the property tax bill.

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS’ REPORT

Florida Department of Transportation – **Ms. Santana** shared information on some regional projects currently ongoing. These are primarily on I-95; mostly widening projects, and two new road construction projects on First Coast Expressway currently under construction.

St. Johns River Water Management District (WMD) – **Mr. Conkey** stated that on February 10th the District issued a Modified Phase I Moderate Water Shortage for Duval County and portions of Alachua, Baker, Bradford and Marion Counties. This was due to a lack of rainfall and the levels of the groundwater. On the 2nd, the District issued a Modified Phase II Severe Water Shortage for portions of northeast and central Florida due to continued limited rainfall and declining water levels to include all of Northeast Florida; all water users are encouraged to reduce water use and conserve water to the maximum extent possible. Wasteful and unnecessary water use is prohibited. He added that all residential and landscape irrigations are limited to one time per week regardless of the time of year. Water usage for aesthetic or Homeowners Association requirements. No person or entity, such as an HOA, can enforce any deed restrictions or other community standards that would cause violation of the WMD’s Ordinance. Water users are also encouraged to proactively plan for extended dry conditions, and the potential for additional mandatory restrictions should the water shortage advance to a more severe phase.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER’S REPORT

Ms. Payne introduced new additions to the Council: Ms. Jennifer Bryla, Community Development Manager; Ms. Annette Bardge, Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinator; Ms. Arani Cooray, Resiliency Student Intern; and Ms. Kaitlyn Williams, Emergency Preparedness Student Intern.

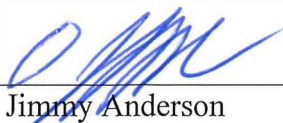
Smart North Florida, focused on public sector technology, has a free pilot program for local governments to help test out software and new opportunities for technology. Ideas can be submitted online, and they will work with the local government to determine if there is a good use case for it. More information will be provided via email.

Mr. Eric Anderson has worked on and was successful in getting community foundation philanthropic funding for County Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD). This funding of \$3,500 can be used to help provide training/exercises to individuals who assist after a disaster.

The Councils’ Community Visioning program provides free visioning services for small municipalities. The Council recently concluded the City of Bunnell’s visioning and are currently looking for the next community to serve. Members are asked to contact staff if they are interested.

Next Meeting Date: May 7, 2026

Meeting Adjourned: 11:47 a.m.



Jimmy Anderson
President



Elizabeth Payne
Chief Executive Officer