



NORTHEAST FLORIDA REGIONAL COUNCIL
Board of Directors Meeting
May 1, 2025

MINUTES

The Northeast Florida Regional Council Board of Directors held a meeting at 40 East Adams Street, Jacksonville, FL on Thursday, May 1, 2025; President Renninger called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

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

BAKER: Commissioner Bennett
Mr. Griffis
Mr. Register

CLAY: Commissioner Condon
Commissioner Renninger
Mr. Kennedy
Mr. Bourre (v)

DUVAL: Councilmember Amaro (v)
Councilmember Gay
Mayor Lynch
Ms. Brown

FLAGLER: Commissioner Dance (v)
Councilmember Gambaro (v)

NASSAU: Commissioner Huppmann
Commissioner Minschew

ST. JOHNS: Commissioner Joseph (v)
Commissioner Morgan
Commissioner Murphy

EX-OFFICIO: Mr. Conkey, St Johns River Water Management District
Mr. Dixon (*DOT*)
Mr. Hart (v)

Excused: Commissioner Anderson, Ms. Craver (*DEP*), Commissioner Harvey,
Commissioner Martin, Commissioner Pennington, and Commissioner
Wilkinson

Presenters: Dr. Michelle Covi, Marine Extension, and Georgia Sea Grant, Coastal Resilience DOD Liaison; and Heather Nagy, Strategic Initiatives Manager, North Florida Land Trust
Jessica Beach, Chief Resilience Officer, City of St. Augustine; and Anne Coglianesse, Chief Resilience Officer, City of Jacksonville

Guests: Allison Boss, Resilience Office, City of Jacksonville

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

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

President Renninger called for a motion on the consent agenda. Mr. Register motioned to approve the Consent Agenda; seconded by Commissioner Huppman. Motion carried unanimously.

OTHER REPORTS/ACTION ITEMS

* Formation of Strategic Planning Ad Hoc Committee

Ms. Payne stated that with the current state of what's happening in Tallahassee and some of the legislation filed earlier this Session, she believes it's important for the Council to stay relevant and make sure our value is realized across all levels of government. An Ad Hoc committee could help determine the type of work we do; are there things that we aren't doing that we should be? Are there different avenues that we could take to be more effective and to better serve not only our local governments, but the Region? With the Council approaching its 50th year serving northeast Florida in 2027, this committee could be timely, to make sure our next 50 years is just as successful as our first. Discussion followed.

President Renninger called for a motion. Mr. Register moved to approve the formation of a Strategic Planning Ad Hoc Committee, allowing the President and CEO to work on the structure, Chair, and membership for further discussion at the June meeting; seconded by Commissioner Condon. Discussion followed.

President Renninger clarified that an Ad Hoc Committee does not continue indefinitely; it is time certain. It exists for fulfilment of its mission for a brief time and will be sunset at the conclusion. He stated that a broader spectrum of participants will be sought from the community to add value to this committee.

On voice vote, Motion carried unanimously.

Presentation: Resilient First Coast Collaborative

Ms. Jessica Beach, Chief Resilience Officer for the City of St. Augustine, and Co-Chair of the Resilient First Coast Collaborative began the presentation by discussing what is Resilient First

Coast and why a regional resilience collaborative is needed. She provided a recap of the timeline from its beginning in 2023 through August of 2025; and the organizational structure.

Ms. Anne Coglianese, Chief Resilience Officer for the City of Jacksonville, and Co-Chair of the Resilient First Coast Collaborative highlighted information on the Collaborative's organizational structure; the action of the organization; a brief overview of the Collaborative's Regional Resilience Action Plan; and the tentative timeline moving forward. A brief discussion followed.

Presentation: South Atlantic Salt Marsh Initiative

Dr. Michelle Covi is the Coastal Resilience DOD Liaison for the University of Georgia Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant, and the Incoming Chair for the Regional South Atlantic Salt Marsh Initiative. Dr. Covi provided an overview of the South Atlantic Salt Marsh Initiative (SASMI) and their partners. She highlighted the Salt Marsh values, threats, and how it supports the military, i.e., NS Mayport in northeast Florida.

Ms. Heather Nagy, Strategic Initiatives Manager of the North Florida Land Trust, shared information on the work of SASMI in Florida and highlighted information about the State Implementation team; development of a Roadmap; and how partners, like the Regional Council, are collaborating on a multi-state grant funded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation entitled, Community Capacity Building and Planning in Vulnerable Communities of the SASMI. She shared the phases of the grant project pipeline, potential nature-based solutions, and project activities. Discussion followed.

Council 101: Regional Community Institute

Ms. Payne shared information on the Regional Community Institute (RCI), a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization of the Council. The RCI, comprised of Regional Leadership Academy graduates, assist the Council with supplemental projects, regional collaboration, and policy recommendations. They have assisted with some major issues in the past, such as First Coast Vision, Water Beyond Borders, First Coast Well-Being Index, and the re-write of the Strategic Regional Policy Plan and the Community Economic Development Strategy. They are currently assisting with the Eco-Tourism and Trails initiative. Mr. Nolen is the coordinator of the RCI as well as the Regional Leadership Academy. A brief discussion followed.

Regional Leadership Academy Update

Mr. Nolen provided an update on the Regional Leadership Academy class, which completed its third program in Flagler County that highlighted 'Emergency Preparedness and Resiliency & Tourism. They also completed the fourth program, taking place in Nassau County and highlighted 'Evolving Development, Sustainability & Tourism'. The next program will take place in St. Johns County.

Military Installation Readiness Review (MIRR)

Ms. Payne provided a brief overview of the MIRR grant from the Department of Defense. A kick off meeting was held recently with opening remarks from Congressman Rutherford, Councilmember Nick Howland, President Renninger, and the State Chief Resilience Officer Dr. Wesley Brooks. Presentations were provided by Officers of the four installations included in the Review. The tour of NS Mayport highlighted the beach erosion, the loss of their security tower, the tremendous loss of sand from recent hurricanes, infrastructure, assets, etc. She stated that the consultant team, Jacobs, worked on most of the other MIRRs in the State and brings a lot of

knowledge. While Northeast Florida is the last region to do an MIRR, it will reap the benefits of knowledge gained from the previous ones. The project timeline is 18 months that will include Base and community engagement, assessments modeling of potential threats, Installations and local government support, recommendations and implementation plan, final report and development of community partnerships. The goal is to come up with projects and strategies that address issues that can unlock unique funding opportunities. The next steps include data collection, forming a steering and technical committees, and additional site visits. She thanked everyone for their support and attendance at the kickoff.

*Request to Amend Funding Amount to Purchase Disaster Stretchers for Hospitals.

Ms. Wilsey provided a brief overview of the Healthcare Coalition program and the Executive Committee's approval to purchase Disaster Stretcher units for Hospitals for an amount not to exceed \$86,000. As her fiscal year ends in June, a final budget review was conducted that revealed funds remaining to allow for purchase of three additional units. Therefore, staff requests approval to increase the not to exceed amount from \$86,000 to \$107,000 to allow for the additional purchase of Disaster Stretchers. A brief discussion followed.

Commissioner Bennett moved approval to increase the not to exceed amount from \$86,000 to \$107,000; seconded by Commissioner Murphy. On voice vote, motion carried.

Public Comment – None.

Local and Regional Issues Discussion

Huppmann – Shrimp Festival weekend, all are invited!

Condon – Would like to have a discussion on how to deal with the increased Applications for Development, possibly at a future meeting. This is becoming a challenge in Clay.

Bennett – Spoke from his position at the Port. There has been a lot of discussion about tariffs; what's going to happen, etc. No one knows what the impact will be, but they are watching this, especially as it will have a regional impact.

Minshew – Shared information on the grand opening of Alachua Street onto Front Street in the City of Fernandina Beach, stating this has been a 20-year project. She stated that this will help with development along the waterfront. They also kicked off the development of their waterfront park, which is slated for completion at the end of this year. Additionally, the Brett's restaurant that sits over the waterfront will be demolished at the end of this year when its lease is up with upcoming discussions on preliminary plans for the location. The City has issued an RFP for Premier Downtown Parking fees. They would be happy to speak with us about their history with waste management

Murphy – They have a huge challenge in the Summer Haven area and will meet with Ms. Nagy to further discuss the multi-pronged issue of beach renourishment and resiliency for the State Road A1A, restoration of Summer Haven River, erosion issues in the inlet, etc.

Kennedy – Happy the Council survived this Legislative Session. He inquired about how best the Council could present its impacts on the Region and across the State. The City of Green Cove Springs’ River Fest event is upcoming.

Morgan – St. Augustine Beach’s Art-n-Bark in the Park is this weekend. She stated that last year the City Commission voted on a stormwater utility, and this is the first year it has been assessed, and they are experiencing some growing pains. She asked for some insights from anyone who has a stormwater utility in place on who they have dealt with for certain situations.

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS’ REPORT

St. Johns River Water Management District – Mr. Conkey

The North Florida Water Supply Facility Workplans are important as they are used to determine how water is being used. He also commented on the MIRR and its impacts of height restrictions at Cecil Field; and the deep well injection plans at NS Mayport. He reminded the Members of restrictions on reclaimed water use in some counties.

Florida Department of Transportation – Mr. Dickson

FDOT recently completed a \$20.78 million project on Main Street, from State Street to Trout River Roadway. Some of the improvements included signals, signage, sidewalks, bike paths and landscaping, installed pedestrian beacons.

Florida Commerce – Mr. Register

Shared information from an article in Site Selection Magazine which published the result of its 39th annual survey of corporate executives on what is important when selecting economic development sites. The top five most important factors were 1) labor costs, 2) quality of life, 3) energy availability, 4) energy costs, and 5) skilled labor.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER’S REPORT

Ms. Payne reiterated that we should get through this Legislative Session with our Bill being temporarily postponed and that there is no movement in the House. However, we will continue to be vigilant until the close of the Session.

The first solid waste meeting will be held tomorrow, at which time staff will assess who is there and who needs to be included.

Mr. Anderson works with our local governments and their Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD) to help during disasters, as well as preparing throughout the year. He is currently working with the Community Foundation on Northeast Florida on a grant opportunity, with the Council being the pass-through for the funding, to help the Region’s local government in those efforts.

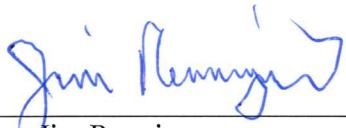
A former Board Member, David Sullivan, was appointed to the Palm Coast City Commission due to a vacancy on their Board.

Ms. Payne shared some of the Council staff’s anniversaries.

President Renninger added the need for, and encourages, Members to meet with legislators in person, if possible, to share the good work of Regional Councils.

Meeting Adjourned: 11:51 a.m.

Next Meeting Date: June 5, 2025



Jim Renninger
President



Elizabeth Payne
Chief Executive Officer