



NORTHEAST FLORIDA REGIONAL COUNCIL
Board of Directors Meeting
June 2, 2022

MINUTES

The Northeast Florida Regional Council Board of Directors, pursuant to Chapter 120.525, F.S., held a hybrid meeting both in-person, at 100 Festival Park Avenue, Jacksonville, FL, and virtually via Zoom, on Thursday, June 2, 2022, at 10:02 a.m.

President Harvey welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order with the following members present:

BAKER: Commissioner Jimmy Anderson **(in person)**
Michael Griffis **(in person)**
Mr. Darryl Register **(in person)**

CLAY: Mr. Michael Bourre **(in person)**
Commissioner Betsy Condon **(zoom)**
Mr. Steve Kennedy **(zoom)**
Commissioner Jim Renninger **(in person)**

DUVAL: Councilmember Randy DeFoor **(in person)**
Mayor Sean Lynch **(zoom)**
Councilmember Joyce Morgan **(in person)**

FLAGLER: Commissioner Joseph Mullins **(in person)**
Commissioner David Sullivan **(in person)**

NASSAU: Mayor Michael Lednovich, **(zoom)**
Commissioner John Martin **(in person)**

PUTNAM: Commissioner Larry Harvey **(in person)**
Mr. Donald Holmes (via zoom)

ST. JOHNS: Commissioner Roxanne Horvath **(in person)**
Commissioner Paul Waldron **(zoom)**
Commissioner Christian Whitehurst **(in person)**

EX-OFFICIO: Mr. Brian Austin *for* Ms. Karen Taulbee (DOT) **(zoom)**
Mr. Doug Conkey (SJRWMD) **(zoom)**

Excused: Commissioner James Bennett, Mayor Catherine Robinson, Mr. Curtis Hart

Absent: Mayor Elaine Brown, Mr. John Drew, Commissioner Jeff Rawls, Greg Strong

Presenter: Mayor Alfin, City of Palm Coast

WELCOME & INVITATION TO SPEAK

President Harvey welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited members of the public to speak on any item before the Board. He also stated that that public will also be recognized during public comment portion of the meeting.

*CONSENT AGENDA

President Harvey asked if anyone would like to pull any item on the consent agenda for discussion. Hearing none, **he called for a motion on the consent agenda. Commissioner Whitehurst motioned to approve the consent agenda; seconded by Councilmember DeFoor. Motion carried.**

OTHER REPORTS/ACTION ITEMS

FY 21/22 Proposed Amended Budget

Ms. Starling provided an overview of the amendments to the FY 21/22 budget. It is estimated that the budget will be decreased by approximately \$13,000; primarily due to not receiving the CDBG funding that was expected earlier in the year. It is also expected that expenses will decrease by approximately \$10,000. She noted that the salary and fringe have increased due to the hiring of three new staff and a replacement position for Ms. Moehring. Additionally, a one-time cost of living incentive for staff have been factored into this budget. A brief discussion followed.

Mr. Register moved approval of the FY 21/22 Proposed Amended Budget; seconded by Councilmember DeFoor. Motion carried.

FY 22/23 Proposed Budget

Ms. Starling stated that the proposed FY 22/23 budge is estimated to be \$2,311,000. She highlighted county dues will remain at level funding; some of last fiscal year grants will not roll over into this fiscal year that is direct result in the decrease in revenues; however, staff has applied for multiple funding opportunities of approximately \$750,000 to help offset the decrease. Expenses are estimated at \$2,448,000; a four percent pay increase for staff, two percent across the board cost of living and two percent merit, have been included in the budget. Ms. Starling stated that the Council is currently projecting a \$137,000 shortfall, but hope to receive some of the multiple funding applied for to help with that. A brief discussion followed.

Mr. Register moved approval of the FY 22/23 Proposed Budget; seconded by Commissioner Horvath. Motion carried.

Affordable Housing Committee Update

Mr. Bourre acknowledged staff's efforts in producing the 2022 Affordable Housing Strategy booklet for the Members' information and use. A formal presentation on this will be provided in the near future. Based on last month's Committee discussions, staff also created a flyer with scannable bar codes to resources and additional information regarding the FDIC and lenders working within the program. He stated the Committee will be meeting following this meeting if anyone is interested in attending. Discussion followed.

MedNex Project

Mr. David Alfin, Mayor, City of Palm Coast, provided a presentation on the MedNex project in the City. He stated that part of what is occurring in the City is driven by the affordable house issue. He provided an overview of the City of Palm Coast, which was conceived as a pre-retirement community. The City currently has approximately 27,000 acres within the city limits that are unimproved/undeveloped. It is their intent to expand westward, building a more balanced demographic population who can afford or attain housing in the City. MedNex is a satellite type areas throughout the Region to expand their educational opportunities. The City determined they could be a regional destination for healthcare service training. The City partnered with UNF and has a relationship with JU to educate Nursing students and other disciplines. They have had their first graduations in December 2021 and are moving forward. They continue to grow this training. They have a second advent health campus with another hospital coming soon. This will broaden the delivery and spectrum of services. In addition, they have an arrangement with the largest provider of fiber optical cable in the US for a \$50 million investment to make the City a Gate City within 24 months. This will allow the City to attract, not just the hospitals and universities, but the related businesses that want to be within close proximity to the research and the activities of universities as well. He stated that MedNex continues to grow and have outgrown the City's town center area and is another reason they are moving westward. It is the City's hope to become a regional destination and economic impact for the Region. Discussion followed.

Program Spotlight: Healthcare Coalition Update

Ms. Wilsey provided an update on the Healthcare Coalition program's year-end report. She provided an overview of the program, which the Council has managed since 2014. There are approximately 783 members from 494 organizations, agencies, or facilities. She highlighted the benefits of membership such as equipping or project funding; planning, training and exercise activities; and next steps.

Community Resilience Update

Ms. Ilami provided a brief update on the Council's resiliency activities, highlighting the Resilient First Coast Formation Breakfast taking place on June 15th and the goals of that meeting, staff's involvement in the Urban Land Institute's Florida Summit Panel Discussion, and an update on the FDEP Resilient Florida Grants as well as working with Flagler County on an application for FDEP Regional Resilience Entity grant for next year. She also informed the Members of other ongoing tasks such as the working on tasks two and four of the CDBG Mitigation grant, several tasks associated with the CDBG Mitigation Multiregional Grant, and working with partners in facilitating outreach, educational webinars and symposia. Discussion followed.

2022 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Update

Ms. Payne provided an update on the rewrite of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) timeline, which is due to the Economic Development Administration by September 30th. Monthly hybrid meetings are being held to discuss issues and review drafts of the required elements of the CEDS. The May meeting focused on economic resilience, building on the work of the Economic Resilience Task Force. The Committee will review the draft plan in August before being presented to the Board for approval in September of this year.

Workplan Progress Report

Ms. Payne provided an update of the adopted 2022 workplan. The action -oriented items: 1) Mental Health/Opioid Epidemic – staff held a successful summit on March 31st with over 120 participants, 18 partner agencies, 19 speakers and 12 vendors. Staff will continue the coordination efforts and implementing plans for settlement funds. 2) Affordable Housing – through monthly meetings of the Committee, staff have convened local and regional meetings and continues to align with partners. An Affordable Housing Strategy has been finalized identifying projects and tasks to better inform the Region, as well as exploring funding of a regional housing coordinator. 3) Agriculture as Economic Development – this work was taken on by the Regional Community Institute (RCI) Board as their policy issue. Staff worked with RCI to compile a workplan, a stakeholder aggregated list, and created first draft of survey. Committees will be formed on agriculture, silviculture, and fisheries, as well as discussions being planned with the head of the Farm Bureau. The coordination and support items: 4) Workforce Training/Development – no actions, but support as needed with partner agencies, i.e., CareerSource. 5) Strategic Planning for Local Governments – staff will collect each county’s planning issues, analyze for regional implications, and use to determine regional priorities and ongoing tasks in the coming year. 6) Broadband – support the Office of Broadband on their efforts, continue to collaborate on grant availability for local governments and follow federal funding opportunities, and collect information on what is happening across the Region and share best practices.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

MEMBERS’ REPORT / LOCAL & REGIONAL ISSUES DISCUSSION

Councilmember Morgan shared her concerns on the housing crises in the City of Jacksonville and is seeking to find if there is any relief that they may be able to provide as the City or the State.

Mr. Register invited everyone to Baker County on July 2nd for their Independence Day celebration 5pm until approximately 9pm.

Commissioner Mullins stated that affordable housing is a big issue and that they are focusing on the strong points of their communities and coming together. He encourages the Members to utilize the opioid funding, when received, where it actually does something to address the problem, i.e., services.

Mr. Griffiths stated that there has been increased interest in people moving to Baker County. However, a large majority of residents don’t want to lose the rural character of the County. The Challenge is how do they do that with the growth potential they are seeing and keeping its rural heritage and character.

Commissioner Anderson stated that there is a hiring and supply chain issue. Housing for seniors is as much an issue as it is for the working class.

Commissioner Horvath reiterated the housing crisis and resiliency.

Mr. Bourre challenged the elected officials on the Board to meet with their housing departments in the next 30 days and have an open conversation about what they are seeking, what works, what doesn't work. He would be happy to join them in these meetings if needed.

Commissioner Martin stated that affordable housing is a concern. He appreciated the presentation provided by the Mayor of the City of Palm Coast. He likes the term 'attainable housing' and looks forward to seeing how this progresses. He stated that the City of Fernandina had a successful Shrimp Festival last month after postponement due to COVID.

Mayor Lednovich stated that it was great to have the tourists and local visitors back for Shrimp Fest and are looking forward to the same for their July 4th celebration. He found the City of Palms Coasts' discussion on the sustainability of finances through property tax and the challenge that the City of Fernandina Beach faces is that they have an unsustainable economic model based on property tax. With 1.4 million visitors per year utilizing their infrastructure, the question is how do they pay for the wear and tear of that use. This is what they are trying to figure out.

Commissioner Renninger stated that the opioid issues is far reaching, affecting the health of our community. We should take a serious look at the opioid epidemic up front, before the funds start flowing, to do better than the tobacco settlements did in the past.

Councilmember DeFoor stated the City of Jacksonville has a housing crisis where they have seen a 20% increase in rent, which will ultimately increase homelessness. Typically, homelessness is centered around mental health. She believes it will, for the first time, be seen as a matter of financial inability to pay rent. The City will continue to see aging infrastructure issues. The resignation of the City's Sheriff brings up and highlights the need for local control.

President Harvey shared his thoughts on the opioid crisis, COVID is still a present concern, and housing causing mental issues.

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS' REPORTS

Department of Economic Opportunity

Mr. Darryl Register shared information about the Jax USA Economic Development Partnership's recently released biennial report on projects. In it, the seven-county Region announced 66 projects that were 7,166 new jobs and \$2.39 billion in capital investments regionally.

Florida Department of Transportation

Mr. Austin stated that FDOT has no agency report at this time.

St. Johns River Water Management District

Mr. Conkey reminded of hurricane season and the District is there to help if needed.

President Harvey asked for information showing the amount of cost-share funding Putnam County has received from the water management district over the past three to four years.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Ms. Payne introduced a new employee; Mr. Matamron Bacon who is the Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinator and will be working with the seven Local Coordinating Boards in the Region. Ms. Payne reminded the Members about completing their Financial Disclosures. She informed the Members of upcoming hurricane exercises, and that Council staff will be available to provide assistance to counties in the event of a hurricane. Ms. Payne shared information on discussions for use of funding being received via the opioid settlements and that the Council stands ready to work with the Counties if needed. With the beginning of budget season, she informed the members that she will be meeting with each county administrator and the Chairs of the Board of County Commissioners/Councils to remind them of the work of the Council over the past year.

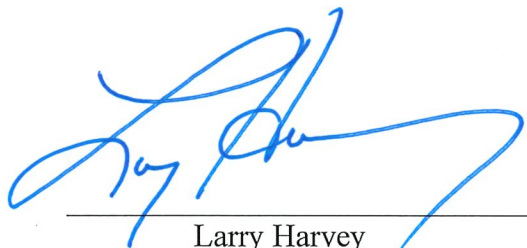
Ms. Payne informed the Members that while Ms. Moehring is retiring from her role as the Director of Planning and Policy at the end of August, she will be staying on part time with the Council to work with the Regional Community Institute to continue the policy work that they do.

Next Meeting Date:

Commissioner Whitehurst made a motion to cancel the July 7th Board meeting; seconded by Commissioner Martin. Motion carried unanimously.

The next meeting will be September 1, 2022.

Meeting Adjourned: 11:43 a.m.



Larry Harvey
President



Elizabeth Payne
Chief Executive Officer