NORTHEAST FLORIDA REGIONAL COUNCIL
Board of Directors Meeting
September 4, 2025

MINUTES

The Northeast Florida Regional Council Board of Directors held a meeting at 40 East Adams Street, Jacksonville, FL, on Thursday, September 4, 2025; President Renninger called the meeting to order at 10:09 a.m.

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

BAKER:	Commissioner Anderson Commissioner Bennett Mr. Griffis Mr. Register
CLAY:	Commissioner Condon Commissioner Renninger Mr. Kennedy
DUVAL:	Mayor Lynch
FLAGLER:	Councilmember Gambaro
NASSAU:	Commissioner Huppmann (v) Commissioner Martin Commissioner Minshew
PUTNAM:	Commissioner Harvey (v)
ST. JOHNS:	Commissioner Joseph Commissioner Morgan (v) Commissioner Murphy
EX-OFFICIO:	Mr. Conkey – *SJWMD* Mr. Hart
Excused:	Councilmember Amaro, Ms. Craver, Commissioner Dance
Absent:	Mr. Bourre, Ms. Brown, Councilmember Gay, Commissioner Pennington, Mr. Dixon
Guests:	Bill White, Tara McCue, William Hinton, WFSU-Florida Channel, and John Nooney
Staff:	Eric Anderson, Monica Dominguez, Tyler Nolen, Elizabeth Payne, Leigh Wilsey, Annie Sieger, Donna Starling, Robert Jordan, Eleonore Burns, Gary Minar, and other staff

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. Commissioner Condon motioned to approve the Consent Agenda; seconded by Commissioner Minshew. Motion carried.

OTHER REPORTS/ACTION ITEMS

* Sweep Account Investment

Ms. Payne stated that staff met with an account representative of Regions Bank to discuss interest rates. The Council was provided with two Sweep Account Investment options. Mr. Register stated that the PB&F Committee discussed this and recommended, for the Board's consideration, that the Council's reserves be entered into the Fidelity Treasury Only Portfolio sweep account. This account could earn up to 4.0% interest with an anticipated net gain of approximately $318,300+ annually. Discussion followed.

President Renninger called for a motion. Mr. Register motioned that the Council's reserves be entered into the Fidelity Treasury Only Portfolio sweep account; seconded by Commissioner Murphy. Motion carried.

Council 101: Healthcare Coalition Program

Ms. Wilsey and Ms. Sieger provided an overview of the Healthcare Coalition Program, how it was created, its responsibilities, funding, and who they serve in the State of Florida. A brief update on recent activities and accomplishments, and future activities planned for the program were also highlighted. Staff also shared a few funded equipment projects that fill gaps and help healthcare members improve their medical surge capabilities.

Community Resiliency Update

Ms. Ilami provided an overview of staff's resiliency activities in the Region. She highlighted the progress on the Military Installation Readiness Review (MIRR) project, completion of the FY 24-25 Regional Resilience Entity Grant and the Regional Resilience Action Plan, Phase II, and new award for FY 25-26. Information was also provided on the progress of the "Multi-Regional Planning and Mitigation Assessment" project, and the kick-off and early progress on the Town of Baldwin's Vulnerability Assessment. A brief discussion followed.

2026 Legislative Priorities

Ms. Payne informed the Members that the Regional Council's Legislative Committee will have a virtual meeting on September 24th to review the priorities received from local governments. Based on the local government's priorities, the Committee will consider the draft Regional Priorities that could be brought to the October Board meeting.

Strategic Regional Policy Plan (SRPP) Update

Mr. Anderson provided a reminder the Members that the Strategic Regional Policy Plan (SRPP) is a requirement of State Statute and must be updated every five years. An overview of the SRPP highlighted the five goals and policies required as well as additional ones deemed appropriate for inclusion in the SRPP by the Council. In November 2024, the Board approved staff's recommendations to 1) update and expand the cultivation element, 2) create a standalone Resilience Element, 3) add the First Coast Wellbeing Index, 4) Consider removing the Health Element, 5) Consider removing the Energy Element, and 6) Consider removing SRPP alignment with the Florida Chamber Foundation's Six Pillars. Staff will be holding four public meetings; one to provide information on the process and three to allow citizens of the Region the ability to provide their input. During this time, public input will be garnered through our website as well. Staff will bring back a draft following these meetings and incorporate any input received. He stated that this will go through the State's Rulemaking process.

Program Spotlight: Operation Frozen Summer
Mr. Nolen provided an overview of the tabletop exercise facilitated by Council staff in the City of Jacksonville, called Operation Frozen Summer. The exercise brought together public and private partners to examine how our community would respond to a simulated hazardous incident affecting a cold storage facility. This initiative served as more than just a training event, it was an opportunity to validate facility and department response procedures, identify areas for improvement in communication, and highlight what additional training may be needed in the future.

FY 25-26 Discussion
Ms. Payne shared information on the City of Jacksonville's (COJ) Finance Committee's action to withdraw their membership from the Regional Council and withhold their funding. She provided the Members with an overview of her actions since the action was taken and highlighted some of the steps she is taking to get them back as a member, such as identifying a funding source and securing a floor amendment during the budget workshops. However, whether the COJ is in or out as a member, there will be impacts to the NEFRC that will need to be addressed. While the NEFRC has a legal standing, the preferred method is to try to resolve this by other means first. Discussion ensued.

*FY 25-26 Officer Nominations
Mr. Register shared information on how the 2nd Vice President position came about, with COJ represented in that seat. The PB&F Committee discussed the Board Officer nominations for FY25-26 as recommended by the Executive Committee at its August meeting. Following those discussions, the Committee passed a motion recommending that the 2nd Vice President position be left vacant at this time and keeping the remaining officer recommendations by the Executive Committee.

President Renninger called for a motion. Commissioner Martin moved to approve the FY 25-26 slate of officers as: Commissioner Bennett-President, Commissioner Dance-1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President-vacant, and Secretary/Treasurer-Mr. Register; seconded by Commissioner Murphy. On a voice vote, the motion carried.

Public Comment – Mr. John Nooney, 8356 Bascom Rd., Jacksonville, FL, addressed the Board seeking a NEFRC resolution recognizing Nooney's efforts in advancing the Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND) potential land acquisition projects.

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS' REPORT

St. Johns River Water Management District – **Mr. Conkey**
Information was provided on watering guidelines (no watering between 10 and 4), and the Spring Water Systems that work to clean out sprinkler systems. The Water Management District (WMD) is happy to attend meetings of HOAs and/or community organizations to provide guidelines and other information. Everyone was urged to be careful when out on the water due to an increase in algae blooms.

Florida Commerce – **Mr. Register**
Shared information from CNBC's annual poll evaluating top States for business. The 2025 poll ranked Florida at #5 with Virginia #1, North Carolina #2, Texas #3, and Utah #4.

Commissioner Bennett shared information on the Jacksonville Port Authority's tariff-free port and trade zone. An area is set up as a 'foreign trade zone' that allows no tariffs to be charged until the goods leave the trade zone. If the products ship back out, without leaving the zone, no tariffs are paid at all. He offered this information so that if any Member knows of anyone or companies interested in this program, they can reach out to him for more information. He also offered to provide a presentation at a Council meeting on the foreign trade zone.

Chief Executive Officer's Report

Ms. Payne directed the Members' attention to the Return on Investment at their places, which she uses when meeting with the county managers annually. She shared some of the Council projects currently being worked on in the City of Palm Coast and the City of Bunnell. The Regional Leadership Graduation in September.

Ms. Payne informed the Board that the Council received a grant through the Regional Community Institute, a 501 (c) (3) organization, from the Community Foundation. This funding will be used to support the local government's Community Organizations Active in Disasters (COAD).

Bill 180 deemed Emergency and does cover some emergency management concerns. However, it is significantly impacting comprehensive plans. Moving forward the consent agenda will be followed by a list of rejections received in the Region to keep Members informed.

Two student interns were introduced, Eleonore Burns and Gary Minar, in the Jacksonville University Masters' Program. They will be working with our community visioning program and the Healthcare Coalition. Also announced was that our recent emergency management intern, Kyle Higginbotham in the Public Safety program at FSCJ, was recently hired by St. Johns County Emergency Management.

President Renninger thanked everyone for the honor of serving as the Council President.

Meeting Adjourned: 11:51 a.m.   Next Meeting Date: October 2, 2025

James Bennett
President

Elizabeth Payne
Chief Executive Officer