

**MINUTES OF A JOINT MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
AND THE SCHOOL BOARD OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY
ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA
SEPTEMBER 27, 2007
(9:00 A.M.)**

Proceedings of a joint meeting of the Board of County Commissioners and The School Board of St. Johns County, Florida, held at the St. Johns County Permit Center Building, 4040 Lewis Speedway, in Conference Room 1A & B, St. Augustine, Florida.

Present were: Board of County Commissioners:
Ben Rich, District 3, Chairman
Thomas G. Manuel, District 4, Vice Chairman
Cyndi Stevenson, District 1
Ron Sanchez, District 2
Michael D. Wanchick, County Administrator
Patrick McCormack, County Attorney
Terry Bulla, Deputy Clerk

School Board:
Beverly Slough, District 1, Chairman
Tommy Allen, District 2
Bill Mignon, District 3
Bill Fehling, District 4
Carla Wright, District 5
Dr. Joseph Joyner, Superintendent

Also present: Darryll Locklear, Assistant County Administrator
Joe Vonasek, Assistant County Administrator
Meredith Strickland, Assistant School Superintendent

(09/27/07 - 1 - 9:04 a.m.)
CALL TO ORDER

Rich called the meeting to order.

(09/27/07 - 1 - 9:05 a.m.)

Lee gave the Invocation and Rich led the Pledge of Allegiance.

(09/27/07 - 1 - 9:06 a.m.)
ROLL CALL

Rich stated that four commissioners were present with Bryant absent. Slough stated that all five board members were present.

(09/27/07 - 1 - 9:07 a.m.)

Rich stated that Slough had asked to make her presentation first since she would have to leave the meeting at 10:30 a.m.

1. REPORT/DISCUSSION ON :

A. DISCUSSION REGARDING INMATE WORKERS IN THE VICINITY OF SCHOOLS (SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER SLOUGH)

Beverly Slough explained that she had to leave early, and then spoke on the issue of inmates working in the vicinity of schools. She noted she had received complaints from parents that prisoners were working too close to children. Locklear stated that he had seen the item on the agenda and that he had spoken with the Sheriff's Department. He said there was a policy in place that prisoners were not to work within the area close to schools. He said the situation had been noted and they would follow up on it. Rich noted that all prisoners were supervised by armed personnel.

B. DISCUSSION ON THE AFTER SCHOOL ARTS PROGRAM (COUNTY COMMISSIONER TOM MANUEL)

(9:10 a.m.) Manuel led a discussion on the After School Arts Program and the fact that the program was challenged for funding. He said the arts were critical to economic development within the county. He noted that we were blessed with a wonderful school system and that he hoped that Dr. Joyner would continue to promote the need for the arts on the State level. He stated that he was going to Palm Beach to study their model. He said they needed to work with the private sector to get enough cash to support this program. He stated that he would stay on the issue at the Tourist Development Council level as well as at the school level. Dr. Joyner stated that the After School Arts Program would be continuing and they were geared up at Southwoods, Cunningham and Webster schools. Meredith Strickland, Assistant School Superintendent, said she was thankful for his support and said it was vital to teach the whole child. She said their biggest need was for transportation funds. Manuel asked her how much they needed. She responded \$105,000. Manuel asked that she share her proposals with him and stated he felt confident that he could find funding. Dr. Joyner said that he had been asked to do an extensive survey in that area, and that generally that meant something was going to happen. He said their electives had suffered due to unfunded mandates and shortfalls in revenue. Manuel said he hoped to have a structure in place soon that would become a conduit for the private sector contributions. Slough commented that there was no time left in the day for the arts due to other mandates and she would like to see some discussion on that issue. She said she would also talk with her Palm Beach colleagues and see how they handled the situation in their system. Tommy Allen said the key words were After School Arts program. He reviewed the hours dedicated to academics and said there was very little time left for electives. He said he didn't see how they could stuff another minute in for what the teachers already had to deal with. He said he supported them in their efforts for the arts programs. Manuel responded that the after school program was the first step for expended efforts toward moving it into the curriculum. Allen noted there was an art and music teacher in every school. Manuel said they were just looking at increasing the intensity. Sanchez noted that he was in complete support of the project. He said that dance instruction should be included as physical education credits. Stevenson stated she had discussed this issue with Slough and that she had studied the programs in the Jacksonville school system and that after school programs were often critical to children.

Rich noted there might be legal issues involved as many children rode the bus and were not in a position to stay after school. He asked them to take a careful look to see that all children were allowed to participate. Dr. Joyner explained that was why they were placing emphasis on transportation.

Wright asked what companies were providing funding. Manuel responded that anyone could contribute through the Arts Association which would become a conduit for the funding.

Tommy Allen said he had had several discussions with Cathy Brown regarding using the Sunshine Bus Service at a reduced rate. General discussion ensued. Dr. Joyner said he had spoken with Brown as well, but funding would not allow them to do other than mandated requirements and they were running short financially. He said the legality of their children riding the Sunshine Bus needed to be investigated. Rich noted that the Transportation Committee of the Board would be interested in the issue, and that Commissioner Bryant was the representative to that committee.

Wright asked Manuel if he would report back to them after his trip to Palm Beach. He said he would be happy to. He explained why he had chosen to study the Palm Beach model. He noted that the program was a magnet in the elementary schools.

C. DISCUSSION ON SIDEWALKS IN THE VICINITY OF MILL CREEK ELEMENTARY, CUNNINGHAM CREEK ELEMENTARY AND FUTURE SCHOOLS (SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS TOMMY ALLEN & BEVERLY SLOUGH)

(9:40 a.m.) Tommy Allen stated that he wanted to have a discussion regarding sidewalks as they related to school buildings. He said the most recent one was at World Golf Village to Mill Creek along International Golf parkway. He said he had had a number of calls regarding the close proximity of the sidewalks to the traffic. He asked if they could be planned so that there could be some grass strips between the sidewalks and the roadway to provide for greater safety for the students who used it.

Darrell Locklear responded that in that particular area there was a design issue caused by the need for the upkeep on the grass. He said that what they had done was to have a four foot wide sidewalk and in that area they were actually eight feet wide. He noted that the standard was for two travel lanes and a bike lane and then a sidewalk so that a buffer would be provided. He noted that in that particular area they had elected not to put in a bike path. Allen said he realized that it was difficult to irrigate small grass strips but there was still a general concern for the children, even in the area of the widened sidewalks. He said he was glad to hear their plans for the future. General discussion ensued. Stevenson said she liked the idea of painting a line to signal kids which area was safe to walk in and it would serve as a good reminder.

Michael Wanchick, County Administrator, stated that they pushed the sidewalks as far away from the roadway as possible and suggested that they look at other possibilities. Allen said they needed to do what they could, that was reasonable, to protect the kids. General discussion ensued.

Patrick McCormack, County Attorney, clarified that their interest was more for general future development and that the Land Development Code provided requirements for sidewalks. He suggested they might want to look at those regulations and make suggestions. He said a two-mile rule might be applicable to this situation. He said the school board was a constituent to those regulations. Sanchez commented that they should require sidewalks throughout all new developments.

D. DISCUSSION ON TRASH COLLECTION AND PICK-UP IN THE VICINITY OF MURRAY MIDDLE SCHOOL AND WEBSTER ELEMENTARY (SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER CARLA WRIGHT)

(9:58 a.m.) Carla Wright discussed the issue of trash collection in the vicinity of Murray Middle School and Webster Elementary School. She said she had received a call from Len Weeks who reported trash and garbage along the street at both schools. She said upon investigation, she found it was a constant problem, and asked if there was any

way this could be monitored more closely. Rich said it was probably raccoons that were getting into garbage that individuals had dropped along the roadways. He suggested she talk with the Sheriff about having his crew to clean up in the area on a regular basis. General discussion ensues.

(09/27/07 - 4 - 10 :05 a.m.)
PUBLIC COMMENT

There was none.

(09/27/07 - 4 - 10:05 a.m.)
OTHER BUSINESS

Manuel discussed the recent Supreme Court hearing regarding COPS funding. Slough said she was going to a hearing, that it had a lot of support and she was very hopeful. He asked Slough for a report when she returned from the hearing. Manuel said money was an issue and discussed the increase of the impact fee and said it was not nearly adequate for the school system. He said the BCC was willing to look at that issue. Slough stated that impact fees were a part of the legislative issue. Stevenson said impact fees had been adjusted 2 ½ years ago for inflation. General discussion ensued. Sanchez said he did not like impact fees and they were not designed to cover everything. He said the whole system did not work and it would not return the money that they needed.

Stevenson said they had all received a letter from Attorney Upchurch as to whether the BCC would stand behind them. She said she was delighted to hear the support of the Commission for the financial challenge.

Dr. Joyner expressed gratitude for their support of the Growth Management legislation. He said their plan went a long way from where they were toward proportionate share and mitigation. He agreed that impact fees were not the answer. He said the potential for school concurrency would assist them. He said if they lost the funding for COPS they would be in trouble. He said he was hopeful, but concerned, with the Supreme Court legislation. He said it would be re-addressed by the Supreme Court on October 8. He noted they had filed an amicus which would be reviewed at that time. Stevenson said the Florida Association of Counties was also active in that fight. She said she was concerned whether DRIs were trying to back peddle. Joyner said that as a rule, they were not.

McCormack said that Upchurch and others had been meeting on that particular item and had some progress with the developers. General discussion ensued. Stevenson said they would stand behind them.

Allen said impact fees were not sufficient and he said the part that troubled him was that the burden was on the backs of the current tax payer who was not being taken care of by the developer. He said that there had to be some mechanism of relief for taxpayers who had been here for many years and had suffered for the new development. Manuel concurred and said growth had been subsidized by every resident. He said the question was where the equity line was to be drawn. He said sprawl was expensive and urban density should be examined. General discussion ensued.

(09/27/07 - 5 - 10:25 a.m.)

SET NEXT MEETING DATE - SCHOOL BOARD TO HOST

The next joint meeting date was set for November 15.

Motion by Sanchez, seconded by Manuel, carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

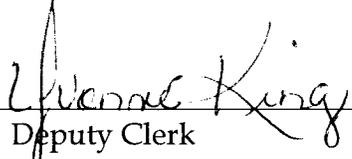
With there being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 10:25 a.m.

Approved October 16, 2007

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA

By: 
Ben Rich, Chairman

ATTEST: CHERYL STRICKLAND, CLERK

By: 
Deputy Clerk

