

**MINUTES OF MEETING
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA
JULY 12, 2011
(9:00 A.M.)**

Proceedings of a special meeting of the Board of County Commissioners of St. Johns County, Florida, held in the auditorium at the County Administration Building, 500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine, Florida.

Proof of publication of the notice of the special meeting was received, having been advertised in *The St. Augustine Record* on June 24, 2011.

Present: J. Ken Bryan, District 5, Chair
Mark Miner, District 3, Vice Chair
Cyndi Stevenson, District 1
Ron Sanchez, District 2
Jay Morris, District 4
Michael Wanchick, County Administrator
Darrell Locklear, Assistant County Administrator
Patrick McCormack, County Attorney
Robin Platt, Deputy Clerk

(07/12/11 - 1 - 9:00 a.m.)
CALL TO ORDER

Bryan called the meeting to order.

(07/12/11 - 1 - 9:00 a.m.)
ROLL CALL

The clerk called the roll: all commissioners were present.

(07/12/11 -1 - 9:00 a.m.)
INVOCATION

Reverend Ronnie Warren, Christ Redeemer Church, led the invocation.

(07/12/11 - 1 - 9:01 a.m.)
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Ken Bryan led the Pledge of Allegiance.

(07/12/11 - 1 - 9:01 a.m.)
PUBLIC COMMENT

There was none.

(07/12/11 - 1 - 9:01 a.m.)
ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA

Miner requested to add, as Item 1A, an item regarding the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Project.

Bryan requested to add, as Item 1B, approval of a proclamation recognizing Florida Memorial University Day.

(07/12/11 - 2 - 9:02 a.m.)

APPROVAL OF SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA

Motion by Miner, seconded by Stevenson, carried 5/0, to approve the special meeting agenda, as amended.

(07/12/11 - 2 - 9:03 a.m.)

1A. DISCUSSION OF THE NATIONAL UNDERGROUND RAILROAD NETWORK TO FREEDOM PROJECT

Derek Hankerson, 734 Medina Ave., introduced Dr. Turkiya Lowe, Southeast Regional Program Manager; and Diane Miller, Director of the National Park Service National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program, who explained their program.

(07/12/11 - 2 - 9:11 a.m.)

1B. APPROVAL OF PROCLAMATION FOR FLORIDA MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY DAY

Bryan mentioned that the proclamation was going to be read at the Florida Memorial A. L. Lewis Archway dedication in West Augustine on Thursday, July 14, 2011, at 11:00 a.m. *There was consensus by the Board to approve the proclamation.*

(9:11 a.m.) McCormack reiterated that the Board, by consensus, adopted and approved the proclamation pertaining to the Florida Memorial University Day.

(07/12/11 - 2 - 9:12 a.m.)

1. FISCAL YEAR 2012 RECOMMENDED BUDGET PRESENTATION - THE ANNUAL COUNTY BUDGET PROCESS REQUIRES A NUMBER OF STEPS, RANGING FROM ITS PREPARATION THROUGH ITS ADOPTION. FLORIDA STATUTES (F.S. 129.03(3)) AND TRUTH IN MILLAGE (TRIM) LEGISLATION SPECIFY THAT A TENTATIVE BALANCED COUNTY BUDGET MUST BE SUBMITTED TO THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS WITHIN 15 DAYS OF CERTIFICATION OF TAXABLE VALUE BY THE COUNTY PROPERTY APPRAISER (JULY 1). AT THIS POINT IN TIME, THE FY 2012 RECOMMENDED COUNTY BUDGET HAS BEEN BALANCED WITH EXPENDITURES AND ADEQUATE RESERVES WITHIN EACH FUND EQUAL TO PROJECTED FUND REVENUES. COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BELIEVES THE RECOMMENDED COUNTY BUDGET REPRESENTS A FUNDING LEVEL THAT CAN REASONABLY ASSURE THE ACHIEVEMENT OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY'S OPERATIONAL NEEDS, WHILE MINIMIZING THE TAX IMPACT ON ITS CITIZENRY. A BOARD WORKSHOP ON THE FY 2012 RECOMMENDED BUDGET IS SCHEDULED FOR JULY 19, 2011. THE TENTATIVE COUNTY MILLAGE RATES ARE REQUIRED TO BE SET DURING THE BCC MEETING ON AUGUST 2, 2011. FOR PRACTICAL PURPOSES, ONCE THE TENTATIVE MILLAGE RATES ARE SET, THEY CAN STILL BE DECREASED BY THE COMMISSION, BUT NOT INCREASED

Doug Timms, Office of Management and Budget Director, gave an overview of the budget process; stated that there was an overall 5 percent reduction in property values, following a 10.2 percent reduction last year, which created a \$4 million budget deficit; reviewed budget guidelines, certain issues affecting the budget, like rising fuel costs, and the recommended budget.

Timms stated that the total projected budget was \$545 million, but that number could vary due to certain undetermined costs. He said reserves were experiencing a temporary increase due to turnbacks from the constitutional officers. Other issues affecting this, and future budgets, were: new reserve standards issued by the rating

agencies; further property devaluation; increasing fuel prices; escalated costs due to deferred maintenance; Federal and State mandates regarding stormwater and water quality standards; restoration of the Board employee pay plan; and healthcare expenditure escalation.

He discussed the option of increasing user fees, but said it would not create enough revenue to cover the deficit; said the loss of the mental health program created a reduction of 44 positions; a millage rate increase of .75 mills was being recommended; that it was wise to set tentative rates at the maximum, as they could be lowered, but not raised.

(9:30 a.m.) Timms said the recommended County budget would reflect continued efficiencies that would forestall further impacts to public services, fund the new mandated upgrade to the emergency radio system, avoid a fund deficit for the Fire Services fund, maintain adequate reserves and meet the new minimum reserve standards. Discussion ensued on general fund reserves, and how they could be appropriated.

(9:36 a.m.) Morris commented on the public budget process, how it differed from the private sector, County revenue losses, spending by previous boards, and the lack of public participation during the budget hearings that were held in May. He said that the Federally mandated radio system upgrade had to be completed by January 1, 2013, and that the Fire Services fund would soon be depleted if the millage rate was not increased.

(9:43 a.m.) Bryan explained how upgrading the radio system affected public safety; he encouraged the users of the system, police officers, fireman, the Council on Aging and the School Board, and other emergency workers, to educate the public on the need for the new system.

(9:48 a.m.) Sanchez said that he voted according to what he thought was best for the County; he supported the Fire Services and radio system upgrade millage increases; commented on how State budget cuts were impacting children.

(9:55 a.m.) Stevenson commented on past budget decisions, and asked for clarification on certain aspects of the budget: Timms elaborated on property tax revenue. Stevenson recommended looking for other revenue sources, other than ad valorem taxes, to pay for the radio system upgrade. She supported the system upgrade, and commented on some of the County's accomplishments, moving forward in the current economy, and being poised for recovery.

(10:07 p.m.) Jerry Cameron, Assistant County Administrator, entered the meeting.

(10:09 a.m.) Miner commented on what cutting the Fire Services fund would mean, e.g. closing fire stations, which would cause an increase in homeowners' insurance rates; said he supported the Fire Service and emergency communication system millage increases, but that he still needed more information on the general fund increase.

(10:12 a.m.) Bryan commented on quality of life issues in St. Johns County, from Animal Control to libraries, the beaches and emergency services. Discussion ensued on user fees and the level of control the State and Federal governments had over the County.

(10:21 a.m.) Wanchick said most people didn't understand all aspects of the budget, the OPEB trust fund, for example; he spoke on trust between the commission and staff and the public, and encouraged the public to become more involved in the budget process.

Sanchez spoke on the difficulties in understanding the Save Our Homes program, and how it affected people's taxes. He requested that a short summary, explaining how the program affected taxes, be sent out with TRIM notices.

(10:26 a.m.) Stevenson agreed that an insert would be helpful. Wanchick said that last year they had placed an insert in the tax bills, and if there was time, they would try to get an insert in the TRIM notices this year. (10:29 a.m.) *There was Board consensus for putting an insert in the TRIM notices.*

The meeting recessed at 10:29 a.m. and reconvened at 10:40 a.m., with Deputy Clerk Lenora Newsome present.

(10:40 a.m.)
Public Comment:

McCormack outlined the procedure for public comment.

(10:43 a.m.) Alfred Guido, 104 Dogwood Dr., Chairman of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, supported the proposed millage increase, as quality of life needed to be maintained.

(10:47 a.m.) Phil McDaniel, 51 Water Street, urged the Board to do whatever it took to keep the good quality of life in St. Johns County.

(10:50 a.m.) Becky Reichenberg, 1177 Linwood Loop, supported the proposed millage increase and the communication system. She said they needed to keep the quality of services in St. Johns County.

(10:53 a.m.) Casey Welch, 182 Blanco Street, supported the proposed millage increase to preserve the services provided by St. Johns County.

(10:56 a.m.) Stan Gustetic, Jr., 8253 Seven Mile Drive, Ponte Vedra Beach, Chairman of the Health and Human Services Advisory Council, supported the proposed millage increase, and spoke on County mental health services.

(10:59 a.m.) Laurel Welch, 182 Blanco Street, supported the proposed millage increase and asked the commission to recognize the efforts of educators and parents.

(11:01 a.m.) Dwala Willis, 895 South Orange Street, thanked the commission for their interest in the community of West Augustine, and stated she supported the proposed millage increase.

(11:03 a.m.) Wanchick mentioned that he would like to have Cameron speak on the County's approach to mental health services.

(11:04 a.m.) Jerry Cameron said that the services were contracted by the Department of Children & Family (DCF) with Putnam Behavioral Services, who planned to change their name to St. Johns County/Putnam Behavioral Services, and to increase their board membership to reflect their participation in St. Johns County. He said that he was assured by DCF that the services for health care would continue to be provided. He stated that they were very concerned about the quality of service and the level of service provided. He spoke on services that St. Johns County provided that they should not be providing. Bryan said the services provided now were still continued under DCF and the individual patients, who were currently serviced, would continue to go to the same facility. Cameron said that some of their employees had already been hired by the new agency to continue their work there.

(07/12/11 - 5 - 11:08 a.m.)

2. OTHER BUSINESS

There was none.

(07/12/11 - 5 - 11:08 a.m.)

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Commissioner Morris:

Morris spoke on the way the County functioned with the revenue loses.

(11:09 a.m.) Commissioner Sanchez:

No report.

(11:09 a.m.) Commissioner Miner:

Miner read a prepared statement regarding Harlan Mason's continued service on the St. Johns County Industrial Development Authority. Bryan said that everyone needed to work on the same page. Sanchez spoke on regulations, and asked for a consensus to have the County Attorney's Office bring back a way to tighten the regulations. (11:16 a.m.) *There was a consensus for the County Attorney to come back with a way to tighten regulations.* McCormack spoke on bringing something back on regulations. Bryan spoke on moving on.

(11:18 a.m.) Commissioner Stevenson:

Stevenson asked for a meeting to answer questions regarding the Hopewell settlement. Bryan said he did not have a problem with it, but everyone needed to be civil.

Stevenson requested a workshop to clarify the way that the CR 210 corridor would function, and to add it as an agenda item at the BCC meeting. Bryan said that he was reluctant to bring in any discussion that would involve spending money.

Stevenson requested a workshop for the Race Track Road corridor. Bryan said as long as everyone understood that these were projections of capital improvement up to 10 to 20 years out. Sanchez stated that it would be an informational only workshop. (11:25 a.m.) *There was a consensus from the Board to place both workshops on the agenda.*

(11:26 a.m.) Commissioner Bryan:

Bryan spoke on a trend of antigovernment sentiment sweeping the nation regarding anyone working for the government. He said that he would work with everyone on defending the County employees from abuse. Sanchez complimented Cheryl Strickland and her employees. He also complimented County staff.

(07/12/11 - 5 - 11:33 a.m.)

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Wanchick mentioned the reoccurring questions from the town hall meetings regarding Fire Rescue services. He spoke on doing a study on how services were handled. He asked the Board's permission to put an RFP on the agenda for a fire consultant to come in and study how those services were delivered. (11:34 a.m.) *There was a consensus of the Board.*

Wanchick mentioned that they had a request from Jacksonville Port Authority (Jax Port), for a letter of support to come from the County Commission, through the Chairman, because they were interested in creating a regional foreign trade zone. He stated that they asked for letters from the surrounding counties and mentioned that it would help in the County's economic development activities because it would lower tariffs and duties when parts were brought into the country, assembled and shipped back out. *There was a consensus of the Board.*

Wanchick informed the Board that he would be on vacation, out of town, during the week of July 17th.

(07/12/11 - 6 - 11:36 a.m.)

COUNTY ATTORNEY'S REPORT

McCormack mentioned there had been a petition for formal administrative proceedings filed pertaining to dredging and beach renourishment. He recommended that the County intervene in that matter and represent the County's interest in coordination with St. Augustine Beach, the Port Authority, et cetera. He stated that the actual permit would be held by the U.S. Army of Corps of Engineers. (11:37 a.m.) *There was a consensus of the Board to allow the County Attorney's Office to initiate an intervention in that matter.*

McCormack mentioned that the State had to have their redistricting done by March 2012, but the individual counties needed to have it done by the end of the 2011 calendar year.

(11:39 a.m.) Stevenson commented on the review of the fire area for efficiency and delivery.

(11:40 a.m.) Sanchez commented on redistricting.

(11:41 a.m.) Bryan commented on the communication system.

(07/12/11 - 6 - 11:41 a.m.)

CLERK OF COURT'S REPORT

No report.

With there being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 11:42 a.m.

Approved August 16, 2011

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA

By: J. Ken Bryan
J. Ken Bryan, Chair

ATTEST: CHERYL STRICKLAND, CLERK

By: Yvonne King
Deputy Clerk

