

**MINUTES OF MEETING
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA
JANUARY 27, 2015
8:30 A.M.**

Proceedings of a special meeting of the Board of County Commissioners of St. Johns County, Florida, held at the Airport Conference Center, Meeting Room A, 4730 Casa Cola Way, St. Augustine, Florida.

Proof of publication of a special meeting to discuss development trends, future growth, community programs and services, economic vitality, and future St. Johns County revenue options was received, having been published in *The St. Augustine Record* on January 16, 2015.

Present: Rachael Bennett, District 5, Chair
Jeb S. Smith, District 2, Vice Chair
Cyndi Stevenson, District 1
William A. McClure, District 3
John H. Morris, District 4
Michael Wanchick, County Administrator
Patrick McCormack, County Attorney
Lenora Newsome, Deputy Clerk

(01/27/15 - 1 - 8:33 a.m.)
CALL TO ORDER

Bennett called the meeting to order.

(01/27/15 - 1 - 8:33 a.m.)
ROLL CALL

The clerk called the roll, and all board members were present, with the exception of Stevenson, who arrived late.

(01/27/15 - 1 - 8:34 a.m.)
INVOCATION

Smith gave the invocation.

(01/27/15 - 1 - 8:34 a.m.)
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Bennett led the Pledge of Allegiance.

(01/27/15 - 1 - 8:35 a.m.)
ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA

There were none.

Bennett mentioned there would be an opportunity for public comment after each session.

(01/27/15 - 1 - 8:36 a.m.)
APPROVAL OF SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA

Motion by Morris, seconded by Smith, carried 4/0 with Stevenson absent, to approve the Special Meeting Agenda, as submitted.

(01/27/15 - 2 - 8:36 a.m.)

1. DEVELOPMENT TRENDS: DISCUSSION OF FUTURE GROWTH, COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES, ECONOMIC VITALITY

Bennett explained that the first half of the meeting would be about growth and development and the second half would be about revenue options. She stated that the County had always been proactive; rather than taking a reactive role. She spoke on housing, school population, the Sunshine Bus and Council on Aging, and infrastructure and transportation. She said the Board would resume holding concurrency workshops in June of 2015. *There was consensus of the Board to resume holding concurrency workshops in June, 2015.* She asked, "Where do we want to be in ten years?"

(8:42 a.m.) Stevenson entered the meeting.

(8:43 a.m.) Bennett spoke on the environment, Amendment 1 opportunities, planning initiatives and recreation. She mentioned having park concurrency by zone and asked for consensus. *There was consensus by the Board to have park concurrency by zone.*

(8:45 a.m.) Bill Zeits, Assistant Director of Parks and Recreation, reviewed on- beach and off-beach parking use, *Exhibit A*. Bennett spoke on Cultural Services, including the Amphitheatre and Fairgrounds; Social Services/Health, including Homeless & Mental Health; Fire, Rescue and Law Enforcement; and libraries. Bennett reviewed Cultural Services, and asked for the Board's thoughts on privatizing the Amphitheatre and golf course. Discussion ensued on privatizing the golf course, volunteers at the amphitheater, a University of Florida tourism study, the convention center and growth patterns.

(8:55 a.m.) Suzanne Konchan, Director of Growth Management, addressed growth patterns. Bennett stated that growth patterns had doubled since 2010. She reviewed the Comp Plan applications the Planning Department was facing, and asked if they wanted to handle development by infill. Bennett discussed residential growth and providing infrastructure. She said that at some point, there would be "break-even" density, but they were not there yet. She suggested continuing to examine ways to encourage non-residential development.

(8:58 a.m.) Bennett spoke on school concurrency infill incentives, economic development being very good, and stated that she would like to see analysis of the incentives program going back to 2010. She reviewed the regulatory process in the future of CRAs, stating that most CRAs were upside down. She spoke on the Land Development Code update and stated that Konchan and staff were rewriting the Code. Bennett said impact fees were maintained, changed and modified. McClure asked about putting them into residential and commercial. Bennett said that some counties imposed a moratorium on them and were suffering the consequences of doing that. She said there was going to be a concurrency workshop in June. Bennett said that "regulatory creep" was always a problem and they did not want to see it in this county.

(9:05 a.m.) Bennett said they had begun meeting with some of the other jurisdictions, the City of St. Augustine and the City of St. Augustine Beach. She asked how they wanted to move forward and establish good communication. Stevenson spoke on the Intergovernmental Committee being a communication vehicle.

(9:07 a.m.) Bennett said the item listed as the Matanzas Inlet permit was actually the Summerhaven River Permit. She mentioned the citizens of Summerhaven were awarded the permit and were now seeking funding for engineering.

(9:09 a.m.) Bennett mentioned that representatives of the National Marine Sanctuary were rewriting their application and she suggested supporting it at the February 3, 2015, BCC meeting. *There was consensus of the Board to do so.* Stevenson spoke on mental health.

(9:10 a.m.) Bennett said that affordable housing was missing from the list, and that it needed to be added. She explained that they had 44 boards that they were trying to get in line, with bylaws and resolutions. She said that the Commission would be hearing from some of the Boards in April, and that there would be an in depth discussion later.

Public Comment

(9:13 a.m.) A member of the public spoke on County revenue and expenditures, and encouraged the Board to work on increasing the financial state of the County by increasing the tax base and being proactive. Smith spoke on Amendment 1, and protecting agricultural in the County; discussion ensued.

(9:18 a.m.) Pat Hamilton spoke on farming, clean water, and protecting the water shed.

(9:20 a.m.) John Metcalf spoke on the Land Development Code, holding workshops and getting public input, and said that staff rewriting the Code without public input would not be good. Bennett and Smith agreed with Metcalf. Konchan spoke on public input and on-going public meetings.

(9:23 a.m.) Heather Neville spoke on traffic deaths, return on investments, building communities, access to jobs, and addressing bike and pedestrian safety.

(9:28 a.m.) Bill McCormack, 9224 July Lane, spoke on the National Marine Sanctuary. He suggested the Commission take an in-depth look into the work that was done, and stated that they needed the Board's support. Bennett said that they needed letters of support for their application, specifically from the government.

(9:30 a.m.) Neil Arminleon, 201 Owens Avenue, spoke about water issues and said that St. Johns County had the best water quality on the east coast. He requested the Commission have meetings at night; discussion ensued.

(9:34 a.m.) Bill Lazar, 6872 Sea Cove Avenue, spoke on affordable housing. He said 2,400 new houses were built in the county last year and that St. Johns County had one of the best school districts in the State. He spoke on water, sewer and infrastructure issues, the lack of affordable housing and getting people to stay and pay taxes in this county. McClure spoke on maintaining the highest household income. Lazar spoke on the Housing Trust Fund.

(9:39 a.m.) Tom Reynolds, 880 A1A Beach Blvd., agreed with Lazar on paying taxes.

(9:40 a.m.) Stevenson commented on affordable housing, and bike and pedestrian transportation safety.

(9:43 a.m.) Bennett said that the Sunshine Bus was in transition right now. Stevenson said that six-lane roads should be discouraged. Bennett said that six-lane roads create pockets of isolation. McClure commented on young people wanting to live/work where they could bike or walk to work and not have to drive. Discussion ensued on shifting development patterns, certain reactions discouraging non-residential development, costs to build, commuting and transit connections.

(9:50 a.m.) CR Howell, Jr., said he would drive a car, but not ride a bike.

(9:51 a.m.) Beth Breeding, 10175 Fortune Parkway, Jacksonville, spoke on the County giving developers more flexibility, so they could be more creative on what they could offer the county.

(9:53 a.m.) Bennett spoke on public safety, the Sheriff's Training Center, and needing additional fire stations.

(9:54 a.m.) Joel Bolante, Sheriff's Office, said he was there for any questions.

(9:54 a.m.) Carl Shank, Fire Rescue, said he was there for any questions.

(9:54 a.m.) Bennett said the Sheriff's Office and Fire Rescue did a great job. She said the Sheriff's Office was involved in a lot of social aspects for the County.

(9:55 a.m.) Jimmy Johns, 336 N. Elverton Place, said that St. Johns County had a lot to be proud of, but needed to maintain the area, increase benefits to stay ahead of the curve. He said there was a need for pedestrian/bike paths.

(9:57 a.m.) A member of the public suggested that the Board hold meetings later in the evenings, as most people did not leave work until 5:00 p.m. Bennett suggested having the next night meeting at 6:30 p.m.

The meeting recessed at 9:58 a.m. and reconvened at 10:15 a.m.

(01/27/15 - 4 - 10:16 a.m.)

2. BALANCING REVENUES WITH COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS:
DISCUSSION OF FUTURE ST. JOHNS COUNTY REVENUE OPTIONS

Wanchick thanked the Board for doing the workshop and spoke on meeting times. He said nothing happened in government without revenue and suggested the Board not take any action today, but place items on upcoming agendas.

Wanchick gave a PowerPoint presentation. He reviewed the budget adoption process and said the County needed property tax growth of 5% annually to fund existing levels of County programs. He reviewed the increased demand for programs, managing success, maximum growth projections at 7% to 8% this year, underfunded and unfunded programs, needing additional revenue, revenue and expenditure analysis, the FY 2015 Tax dollar allocation, the FY 2015 property tax allocation, and having no discretionary money left.

Wanchick reviewed St. Johns County Services; including, public safety, court services, physical environments, Health and Human Services, General Fund reserve utilization, the Fire District Fund reserve utilization, Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) reserve utilization, drawing down on reserves, TTF pavement management and maintaining roads, falling CIP investments (net utility services). He summarized the requested future CIP needs.

He spoke on managing the County's success, St. Johns County in the media, the price of government in St. Johns County decreasing, untapped revenues and new challenges.

Wanchick remarked on statewide sales tax rates, and stated that St. Johns County had a higher quality of life with lower taxes. He said he needed direction from the Commission on guidelines for this year's budget. He suggested exploring sales tax as the primary new revenue source and recommended hiring a consultant to poll the

community to find out what its position is on an increased sales tax. Bennett suggested placing something on the ballot.

Doug Worth spoke on approaching citizens about upcoming issues.

(10:57 a.m.) Bill McCormack, 9224 July Lane, asked about property taxes; Doug Timms, Office of Management and Budget, responded.

(10:59 a.m.) Timms discussed the Utility System fund. Stevenson spoke on utilities and revenues, Fire Rescue, parks, strained roads, and needing to be realistic so costs did not go up. Bill McCormack said that he supported a 1% sales taxes increase. He mentioned educating the public first.

(11:05 a.m.) Cathy Brown, 49 Sylvan Drive, spoke on understanding taxes, having an exact base, and being truthful.

(11:08 a.m.) John Metcalf spoke on solving problems and generating growth. Discussion ensued on percentages, projections not always being realized, increasing supply and demand, and reducing impacts. Wanchick said the Board needed to give him direction on how to handle being "out of balance," and spoke on new revenue sources and sales taxes.

(11:28 a.m.) A member of the public spoke on having a representative from businesses to speak.

(11:28 a.m.) A member of the public commented on non-residential development.

(11:29 a.m.) Tom Reynolds spoke on increasing the gas tax, the bed tax, parking meters, increasing fines and low wages in St. Johns County. He said that Florida was hurt during the recession. Timms reviewed maximum growth projections and said that he thought they would have a good year at 8% percent. Morris supported having a citizen committee.

(11:40 a.m.) Stevenson spoke on the County competing for big jobs with other states, seeing smaller office spaces, people working from their cars, out-of-county businesses and opportunities for the next generation.

(11:44 a.m.) John Metcalf spoke on the sales and gas tax. Wanchick spoke on capital investments and needing money for basic operations. McClure spoke on struggling businesses, reallocating funds, setting priorities and long-term policy fixes. Wanchick said the commission and administration were creating a government the citizens wanted. He suggested presenting the facts, not touching property tax, and letting the voters decide the tax issue.

Discussion ensued on having an evening meeting and the date and time of that meeting. Bennett said the public should present ideas and suggestions to Administration.

(12:04 p.m.) Tom Reynolds spoke on second-hand smoke.

(12:05 p.m.) Bennett said as soon as a meeting date/time was set, they would inform the public. McCormack spoke on meeting notices.

(01/27/15 - 6 - 12:07 p.m.)

3. OTHER BUSINESS

Wanchick said that Visit Florida asked the Commission to waive the \$250 fee for filming on the beach. *There was consensus of the Board to waive the \$250 fee.*

(01/27/15 - 6 - 12:07 p.m.)

ADJOURN

With there being no further business to come before the Board, the special meeting adjourned at 12:07 p.m.

Approved February 17, 2015

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA

By:  _____
Priscilla L. Bennett, Chair

ATTEST: CHERYL STRICKLAND, CLERK

By:  _____
Deputy Clerk

