

**ST. AUGUSTINE PORT, WATERWAY & BEACH DISTRICT**  
**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING**  
**Tuesday, April 21, 2015**

The regular meeting of the St. Augustine Port, Waterway & Beach District was held at the St. Augustine Beach City Commission Meeting Room, 2200 A1A South, St. Augustine Beach, Florida on Tuesday, April 21, 2015.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Jerry Dixon called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America followed.

**ROLL CALL**

Chairman Jerry Dixon, Commissioners Barry Benjamin, Tom Rivers, Chuck Hennessey and Mark Helman were in attendance. The meeting was also attended by Ken Craig of Taylor Engineering, James Bedsole, District Counsel and Secretary-Treasurer Elyse Kemper.

**SECRETARY-TREASURER'S REPORT**

Secretary-Treasurer Elyse Kemper delivered the financial report to the board. As of March 31, 2015, \$10,747 of the District's total non-committed funds of \$263,000 had been spent on law enforcement overtime. Of the \$135,000 budgeted for operating expenses, \$69,547 has been spent. Total funds on deposit equaled \$1,996,698 with a net amount of \$1,744,460 available for use. The District expects to collect another \$41,099 of the projected tax revenue of \$394,290 for this fiscal year. Ms. Kemper said the remaining account at BB&T contains only \$140 and will be closed after tax season.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Commissioner Benjamin moved to approve the minutes of the March 17, 2015 regular meeting, which motion was seconded by Commissioner Helman. The motion passed unanimously.**

**ENGINEERING REPORT**

Ken Craig of Taylor Engineering delivered the engineering report. Mr. Craig said the ACOE plans to begin navigation dredging of the St. Augustine Inlet July 12, 2015. The Corps is in the process of obtaining a permit which will allow the placement of sand on specific beaches to the north of the inlet which have been designated as critically eroded. The Corps plans to use the new shallow draft dredge Murden and expects to remove up to 200,000 cubic yards of sand from the federal channel which passes through the inlet. The Corps has a budget of two million dollars for this project.

In response to a question and a reminder from Chairman Dixon, District Counsel Jim Bedsole said he would prepare a letter to the Corps requesting it to participate with the District in a contributed funds agreement. This would allow the District to add local funds to ACOE projects within the jurisdiction of the District with the intent of enhancing the effect of federal dollars spent here.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Permit Funding for the North Beaches - Commissioner Rivers.**

Commissioner Rivers explained that the deposit of dredged sand onto critically eroded beaches north of the inlet will not take place until some agency is able to obtain a permit from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and that he believes the District should fund the permit application. Obtaining the permit has been estimated to cost as much as one hundred twenty thousand dollars. He said he believes the county will contribute if the District takes the lead in funding. Commissioner Dixon said he believed a better approach may be committing to fund a percentage of the cost and asking the county for the rest because not all of the North Beach area is within the boundaries of the District. He added that the county had failed to follow through and assist with the Summer Haven River permit cost after the District had agreed to participate. He also said the county had failed to consult with the District in the past regarding county decisions affecting the North Beach.

**Commissioner Rivers moved to have the District fund one-half of the permit cost but the motion died for lack of a second.**

In response to a question from Commissioner Helman, Commissioner Rivers said he had recently been contacted by the county engineer about cost sharing the permit. Rivers said he was told the prospects of such funding did not appear possible due to budget constraints in the county.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Enlargement of the District Boundaries**

**Commissioner Rivers moved to have the District pursue legislation to expand the District's boundaries county-wide. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hennessey and passed by a unanimous roll-call vote.**

Commissioner Dixon said he will meet with the cartographer before the next meeting to finalize the new map of the inlet area and that he hoped to have the final version available for review by the board at the next meeting.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND) Commissioner Carl Blow announced that the Corps of Engineers dredge Murden will be working in St. Augustine Inlet beginning in July, 2015. The Murden is a new shallow-draft hopper dredge, longer than the Currituck, and that it will dock at the City Marina during the project. He said the Jacksonville office of the

Corps has budgeted two million dollars for maintenance dredging of the federal channel through the inlet and that 200,000 cubic yards of sand is expected to be placed near shore on Vilano Beach. He also said a contributed funds agreement with the Corps would be especially useful in a situation like this one where local funds could be put to use enhancing or extending the project. He said the Corps uses the money for specified jobs and refunds any surplus. FIND has such an agreement with the Corps.

Mr. Blow then discussed the FIND grant process and illustrated it by distributing a list of grant requests coming before their board from each of the counties comprising their district. FIND has received a record 22 million dollars in grant requests this year but has only 17 million dollars available. He said their board will meet in June to rank all of the grant requests and will start paying them beginning with the top-rated grant. Grants will be paid until all funds are expended. He said Salt Run was number one last year and that the airport barge basin and the San Sebastian River have ranked highly in the past. According to Mr. Blow, the District's working relationship with the City of St. Augustine is very beneficial in that the city has the personnel and expertise to apply for grants and administer the projects while the District provides local matching funds for FIND grants.

Jim Piggott, General Services Director for the City of St. Augustine, discussed the El Galeon, which will be leaving in June, and the recent arrival of the dinner cruise boat Foxy Lady. In response to questions by Commissioner Hennessey, Mr. Piggott said the city's plans to extend the seawall downtown had been on hold because of a lack of funding, but that bids for the project will be opened in October, 2015.

Wil Smith, Director of Parks and Recreation for St. Johns County, said a second barge was being loaded with concrete destined for the Andy King artificial reef. He also said the county is beginning to receive requests from citizens for the dredging of Matanzas Inlet but that the cost is too great to consider at this time. He said Fire and Rescue wants to install boat lifts at the Vilano boat ramp to improve their access and response time, and that they are also considering expanding the boat ramp site.

Commander Steve Fricke, St. Augustine Police, said the Blessing of the Fleet had occurred without incident and that his department needed no money from the District at this time. He also noted that one of his officers had been injured recently while delivering the carcass of a porpoise to Marineland for necropsy.

Lt. Steve Zukowski, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) said FWC also wants to place a new lift at the Vilano boat ramp along with Fire and Rescue and the Sheriff's office. He said that ramp is preferred because of easy access to the inlet. He remarked that passage through Matanzas Inlet is impossible now except during extreme high tide because of the massive shoals which have accumulated there since 2008.

Lt. Zukowski said there were no new derelict vessels this month. Commissioner Dixon said other coastal cities in Florida have had many more difficulties managing their boating environment than has St. Augustine. Lt. Zukowski said it is because full-time marine officers here are able to identify boat owners and get faster responses. He also discussed the

recent drowning of a 9 year-old boy in the St. Johns River who was not wearing a life jacket. He said there have been a number of deaths in recent years of people ejected from small boats without life jackets.

In response to questions from Commissioner Helman, Lt. Zukowski said the signage for the slow speed zones under the bridges is still in the planning stages but that it will definitely be installed soon.

Wil Smith reported the no-wake sign in the San Sebastian River was down but that the county will replace it. Lt. Zukowski said FWC recommends no speed zones from the mouth of the river to Cats Paw Marina as there are no manatees and it is a good water ski area.

### **COMMENTS BY COMMISSIONERS**

There were no commissioner comments

### **NEXT MEETING**

Chairman Dixon announced the next regular meeting will be held at 3:00 p.m. on May 19, 2015 in the same location.

### **ADJOURN:**

There being no further business, Chairman Dixon adjourned the meeting at 4:25 p.m.

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Secretary-Treasurer

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Chairman