

ST. AUGUSTINE PORT, WATERWAY & BEACH DISTRICT
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
Tuesday, October 16, 2018

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, October 16, 2018.

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

3. ROLL CALL

Chairman Dixon, Vice-Chairman Barry Benjamin, and Commissioner Tom Rivers were in attendance. Commissioners Chris Way and Mark Helman were absent. The meeting was also attended by Mike Trudnak of Taylor Engineering, District Counsel Jim Bedsole and Secretary-Treasurer Elyse Kemper.

4. SECRETARY-TREASURER'S REPORT

Secretary-Treasurer Kemper delivered the financial report. At the end of fiscal year 2017-2018 on September 30, 2018, the District had received \$489,195 in tax revenue, spent \$110,343 on operating expenses, spent \$223,654 on projects, and had \$2,098,916 on deposit. Ms. Kemper said in the coming year, she will be moving more District records from the accountant's office to the office in St. Augustine City Hall. Mr. Piggott said the city is willing to receive the records on the curb and move them up to the office for Ms. Kemper.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

At the request of Mr. Bedsole, this item was tabled until the next meeting.

6. ENGINEERING REPORT

Mike Trudnak delivered the engineering report on behalf of Taylor Engineering. He said Hurricane Michael had caused logistical problems that have resulted in a delay of the start of the FIND dredging project at Summer Haven. He said Taylor is continuing to coordinate with St. Johns County and the Army Corps of Engineers to facilitate the project.

7. OLD BUSINESS: NONE

8. NEW BUSINESS

A. North Beaches Federal Project - Jason Harrah - USACE

Jason Harrah, project manager for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, explained a recently funded plan to renourish beaches north of St. Augustine Inlet. He said Congress allocated 37 million dollars to repair damage done by Hurricanes Matthew and Irma to three miles of beach from marker R102 to R117. He said the local portion of the cost may be paid from local matching funds over a term of 30 years. It is his understanding the county may initiate a bed tax on short-term rentals to pay for the work. He said the Corps is moving ahead with planning but will not begin the work without the sponsorship of the county. The Corps will shift funds to the Florida panhandle if the Board of Commissioners of St. Johns County fails to take advantage of the opportunity to use these federal funds for renourishment of the north beaches.

Mr. Harrah said the other project planned for the county is the Porpoise Point jetty/groin tightening. The Corps has the information necessary to plan the project but must await funding from Congress. He said the project may result in a rebuilt groin or perhaps the addition of more rocks, with the end result that sand will be able to flow through the groin in an amount sufficient to protect and preserve the homes and streets of Porpoise Point. According to Mr. Harrah, the City of St. Augustine has requested, and the Corps has been authorized, to perform a sea level study of the back bay area. However, the Corps will await federal funding for the study.

In response to questions by Chairman Dixon, Mr. Harrah said flooding of the inner bay is usually caused by storm surge exacerbated by tides and run-off from rainfall.

Florida Inland Navigation District representative for St. Johns County Carl Blow said St. Johns County should not fail to take advantage of this offer by the Corps of Engineers to renourish the north beaches, first, because it may affect how willing the Corps is to offer assistance to our county in the future and, second, because the loan of funds over time will be paid for by a bed tax on visitors and will not come from the pockets of local residents. The Corps plans to remove sand from the inner harbor to renourish the north beaches and this will be a benefit to local marine interests, including recreational boaters. Mr. Blow encouraged the board to pass a resolution in support of the bed tax because passing the tax will require the approval four of the five county commissioners.

Mr. Blow then distributed information to the board about recent FIND grants awarded in the county. The City of St. Augustine received a grant of \$28,000 which was matched by \$7,000 from the District to fund the removal of five derelict vessels from local waters. The city and the District will receive \$150,000 in the next year for dredging Salt Run. This project was scored #2 out of 56 grants funded. The St. Johns County Sheriff's Office will receive a grant of \$53,000 towards the cost of a new rapid response vessel. FIND will be spending an additional \$7.5 million to dredge the Intracoastal Waterway near Matanzas Inlet and inside St. Augustine Inlet, to remove a total of 80,000 cubic yards of sand to nearby beaches. Mr. Blow stressed the need to officially request the Corps to place the sand in the desired locations at Summer Haven beach.

Chairman Dixon reminded Mr. Blow that the District, at the request of the county, used sand from the Summer Haven River restoration project to repair the breach opened by Hurricane Matthew, and that the sand was never replaced by additions to the restoration project. Mr. Blow asked the county engineer to address that issue. Jay Brawley, County Engineer, then addressed the board saying the Corps plans to place sand all along the beach at Summer Haven, including the north end where the restoration project is located. He added that the area of the Matthew breach is still critically low and subject to frequent overwash, so placing sand there is important, as well.

Linda Ginn, Friends of the Summer Haven River, said their concern is placing sand on the east side of the dune built by the restoration project and that obtaining a permit to place sand between R200 and R204 on the north end of the beach is most important. Ellis Zahra, same organization, added that FEMA could potentially fund reconstruction of the dune on the south end, R204 and R208, where the Hurricane Matthew breach occurred.

Mr. Brawley said FEMA will fund reconstruction of the dune, not the road, so the county is seeking FEMA assistance to repair the south dune and tie it into the dune the FDOT created at Highway A1A and Marineland.

At this point, Commissioner Rivers asked to have a letter drafted from the District to the county commission in support of the proposed bed tax to fund renourishment of the north beaches. All commissioners present agreed with this request and District Counsel agreed to draft the letter for signature by the chairman.

9. GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE COMMENTS

Jim Piggott, City of St. Augustine, requested a grant of \$60,000 toward a new police boat. He said the City would contribute as well and ask FIND for the rest. Vice-Chairman Benjamin said the city has received quite a bit from the District in the past two years and that he was not supportive of this request. Commissioner Rivers said he would like the City to give commissioners advance notice of these kinds of requests. Chairman Dixon said the city has a marine police force and is an extension of the District's authority to manage and regulate local waters, so he supports the request.

Ms. Kemper said the city just received \$200,000 from the District for the connectivity project and will be paid another \$100,000 for dredging. All this comes from District's tax revenues of about \$500,000 next year.

Commissioner Rivers said he wanted to see a full presentation on the issue at the next meeting. All commissioners agreed and directed Mr. Piggott to return next month with a presentation.

Teddy Meyer, St. Johns County Parks and Recreation Facilities Manager, appeared and explained the county is planning to upgrade existing boat ramps before building any new

ones. He said improvements to the Crane Park ramp will cost \$210,000, two-thirds of which the county will pay. He then requested the remaining \$70,000 of the cost from the District. Chairman Dixon said he did not want to consider the request without more information and asked Mr. Meyer to return next month with more information.

Cpl. Josh Underwood, St. Johns County Sheriff's Marine Unit, said his agency spent 171 hours on patrol last month performing 26 inspections, issuing 16 warnings and removing 2 hazards to navigation. His agency will also be assisting with the NAS air show security this month, as well. In response to questions by Commissioner Rivers, Cpl. Underwood said children 6 years or younger must wear a personal flotation device while aboard a vessel and one PFD must be available for every person onboard.

Lt. Steve Zukowski, FWC, reported a trimaran grounded near Marineland was moved by flood tides during Hurricane Irma and is now in the adjacent marsh, thereby becoming an environmental hazard. There are two new derelict boats which broke loose from their moorings or anchors near Crane Park and sank, thereby becoming hazards to navigation.

A 71-foot trawler recently lost steering south of the Bridge of Lions at 2:00 a.m. where it crashed into a dock and a boat. The crew then repaired the problem and were able to get back underway. The captain was cited for failing to have an anchor onboard.

The FWC has received a new Boston Whaler which is undergoing tests and modification for use locally. He said several local FWC officers have been temporarily assigned to assist with recovery efforts in the area hit by Hurricane Michael.

10. **PUBLIC COMMENT: NONE**

11. **COMMENTS BY COMMISSIONERS: NONE**

12. **NEXT MEETING:**

Chairman Dixon announced the next regular meeting of the board will be held at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 20, 2018, in the St. Augustine Beach City Commission Room.

13. **ADJOURN**

There being no further business, Chairman Dixon adjourned the meeting at 4:40 p.m.

Secretary-Treasurer

Chairman