

ST. AUGUSTINE PORT, WATERWAY & BEACH DISTRICT
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
Tuesday, January 15, 2019

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, January 15, 2019.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Barry Benjamin called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

3. ROLL CALL

Chairman Barry Benjamin, Commissioners Chris Way, Matt Brown, and Sandy Flowers were in attendance. Vice-Chairman Tom Rivers arrived at 3:20 p.m. 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. As of December 31, 2018, the District had spent a total of \$14,723 for marine law enforcement overtime and equipment, \$9,031 for derelict boat removal, \$47,145 in operating expenses, and \$200,000 for the City of St. Augustine's seawall connectivity project, for a grand total of \$270,899. As of that date, the District had \$2,117,878 in accounts, and \$204,476 in a segregated account for the Summer Haven River restoration project. Projected tax revenue for the 2018-2019 fiscal year is \$526,341, of which \$284,364 had been collected as of December 31, 2018.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion by Chairman Benjamin to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of December 18, 2018, was seconded by Commissioner Way and was unanimously approved by the board.

6. ENGINEERING REPORT

Mike Trudnak delivered the engineering report on behalf of Taylor Engineering. He said he had contacted four contractors regarding the repairs to the marker down in Salt Run and that he has had no responses. In response to comments by Chairman Benjamin, Mr. Trudnak said

rates are somewhat high this year for these kinds of repair services, and the single bidder for \$6,500 found by Commissioner Way reflects those rates. Chairman Benjamin said he would like to have more bids because he felt \$6,500 was too high. Commissioner Way said the quote did not include a new sign.

Mr. Trudnak said the Summer Haven River contractor has been working to complete the project but work has slowed because of a dredge malfunction. He said he has asked FDEP to extend the deadline to complete the project and anticipates an extension will be granted.

In response to questions by Chairman Benjamin and Commissioner Flowers, Mr. Trudnak said the project was originally scheduled to end in 2017 but was extended because of the damages from Hurricanes Matthew and Irma, and the resultant shortage of funds. He added there is no strict deadline for finishing the project and that the contractor could have abandoned the project after the hurricanes but did not, and has stayed with it through all the problems.

Contractor Rich Turnbull, owner of Turnbull Environmental, said he is aiming for a March 15, 2019 completion date for dredging operations, and that the site will be monitored for turtles until the work is completed. He said the Hurricane Matthew breach is still low and causing problems with over washes at high tide.

7. OLD BUSINESS: NONE

8. NEW BUSINESS: NONE

9. GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE COMMENTS

Sgt. Josh Underwood, SJSO Marine Unit, said his agency spent 141 officer-hours on local waters last month, responded to 45 calls for assistance, issued 10 citations and 12 warnings, and performed 12 marine sanitation inspections which resulted in 8 citations. In response to a question by Commissioner Flowers, Sgt. Underwood said sanitation violations are criminal in nature and subject to a \$500 fine, if proven.

Teddy Meyer, St. Johns County Parks and Recreation, said he had met with representatives of the Florida Inland Navigation District and with local legislators last month to discuss pending marine issues in the county.

Carl Blow, St. Johns County's representative to the Florida Inland Navigation District, provided the board with exhibits detailing the amount of funds FIND transferred to the City of St. Augustine in 2018 for derelict vessel removal, and the city's request for funds in 2019. In 2018, FIND paid \$20,776, and the District paid approximately \$7,000 for derelict vessel removal. The city's request in 2019 is approximately \$18,000. He explained processing a derelict vessel costs \$5,000 to \$10,000 per vessel, which does not include the city's administrative costs. The city bids out the contracts for removal and administers the contracts after the jobs are awarded, thereby making the process less expensive.

In response to questions by Commissioner Flowers, Mr. Blow said the cost for a new jetty at St. Augustine Inlet has been estimated at 40-50 million dollars. He said the inlet is a low

priority item for federal funding because it is classified as a shallow draft inlet which is primarily recreational in use. He said Ponce Inlet has a jetty because it is home to a Coast Guard station. Mr. Trudnak said his firm obtained a permit for extension of the jetty at Ponce Inlet 15 years ago but no federal funding was ever been secured for the work.

Mr. Blow said that a new jetty at St. Augustine Inlet would help protect Vilano Beach but would cause the sand protecting the Porpoise Point neighborhood to deplete. The Corps of Engineers recently decided not to sand tighten the jetty because of the threat to homes on Porpoise Point. He said sand flows mainly north to south down the east coast of Florida and that an effective jetty would need to extend three to four thousand feet seaward to stop sand migration. He added that federal funds for such projects are very difficult to obtain because of their political sensitivity and the need to employ lobbyists in Washington, D.C., at high expense.

Commissioner Flowers said the old version of the inlet management plan for St. Augustine Inlet included the projected extension of the jetty. She asked why funds could not be obtained to do that. Mr. Blow said the political aspects needed to obtain funding would require years to accomplish and would cost a great deal.

Mr. Blow said the Corps of Engineers has combined with FIND to dredge Ponce Inlet and the adjoining intracoastal waterway of 400,000 cubic yards of sand for near-shore placement south of that inlet. He said near-shore placement is not possible south of Brevard County because of the existence of living reefs near the beach.

In response to a question from Commissioner Flowers, Mr. Trudnak said Jason Hannah, USACE, is the Corps of Engineers officer responsible for St. Augustine Inlet.

10. PUBLIC COMMENT: NONE

11. COMMENTS BY COMMISSIONERS

In response to questions by Commissioner Brown regarding the expansion of District boundaries, Commissioner Rivers said he is in contact with all local legislative representatives. He said contacting the representatives is the surest way to influence them, and that they all seem open to the idea of expanding District boundaries to encompass the entire county.

Commissioner Flowers said the board should consider owning a barge for projects like repairing the markers in Salt Run. She said a barge could be outfitted with any necessary equipment and could remain in the water, thereby eliminating the need for dry storage. Commissioner Way said the cost of operating a commercial vessel is extremely high, especially for insurances such as workers compensation. Commissioner Flowers reiterated that the District could purchase a barge for a relatively reasonable cost and keep it ready to respond to any local need without the necessity of finding contractors for everything.

12. NEXT MEETING:

Chairman Benjamin announced the next regular meeting of the board will be held at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 19, 2019, in the St. Augustine Beach City Commission Room.

13. ADJOURN

There being no further business, Chairman Benjamin adjourned the meeting at 3:45 p.m.

Secretary-Treasurer

Chairman

wk/rg/port/minutes-2019/Minutes 1-15-19 meeting