

ST. AUGUSTINE PORT, WATERWAY & BEACH DISTRICT
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
Tuesday, March 20, 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, March 20, 2018.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:**

Vice-Chairman Barry Benjamin 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:**

Vice-Chairman Benjamin, and Commissioners Chris Way, Tom Rivers and Mark Helman were in attendance. Chairman Jerry Dixon was 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. As of February 28, 2018, the only committed funds spent were \$5,583 for St. Johns County Sheriff Department overtime. Since the beginning of the fiscal year, \$72,485 has been spent in operating expenses. Of non-committed funds, a total of \$39,020 has been spent. On that date, District deposit accounts contained a total of \$2,261,094, of which \$1,885,62 is available for use. Tax revenue received to date is \$437,177 with another \$7,971 expected this year.

5. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

The board considered the minutes of the regular meeting of February 20, 2018.

A motion by Commissioner Way to approve the minutes of the February 20, 2018, regular meeting was seconded by Commissioner Rivers and passed unanimously.

6. **ENGINEERING REPORT:**

Mike Trudnak delivered the engineering report on behalf of Taylor Engineering. Mr. Trudnak reported he will be coordinating with the contractor this month to replace or repair Markers 1 and 12 in Salt Run. On the Summer Haven River restoration project, he requested

the board extend the current Department of Agriculture tern nesting area monitoring contract until September 30, 2018 for an additional cost of \$6,000.

A motion by Vice-Chairman Benjamin to approve an extension of the monitoring contract with the U.S. Department of Agriculture through September 30, 2018 at an additional cost of six thousand dollars, was seconded by Commissioner Helman and passed unanimously.

Mr. Trudnak said the Friends of Summer Haven River organization was successful in obtaining an additional grant of \$450,000 from the Florida Legislature which funds will be available through the Florida Department of Environmental Protection some time after July 1, 2018.

In response to questions by Commissioner Helman, Mr. Trudnak said the scheduled beach renourishment project for St. Augustine Beach is proceeding this year as scheduled, and that sand removed for the project will count against the total sand transfers allowed this year under the Inlet Management Plan. Consequently, the amount of sand theoretically available from the inner harbor for the north beaches would be limited to the amount remaining in the sand budget for the inlet area after beach renourishment.

7. **OLD BUSINESS: NONE**

8. **NEW BUSINESS: NONE**

9. **GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE COMMENTS:**

Jim Piggott, Director of General Services, City of St. Augustine, reported repairs on the City Marina will begin during the month of April. Also, the Blessing of Fleet ceremony will be next week and the City's fireboat will be deployed for the event. He also asked for the chair or vice-chair to attend the next city commission meeting to accept a check from the Florida Inland Navigation District for local dredging expenses.

Corporal Josh Underwood, St. Johns County Sheriff's Office Marine Unit, reported the unit spent 112 hours on the water last month, responded to 48 calls for service, performed 3 vessel safety inspections, 10 wake zone patrols, assisted other agencies 6 times, issued 3 warnings and 5 citations, identified one new derelict vessel, and responded to 2 instances of boaters in distress. He said he also spoke at the Harbor Safety and Security Committee meeting on March 19, 2018 regarding marine issues. He said American Cruise Lines will begin booking river cruises out of St. Augustine this Summer.

Officer Bill Miller, FWC, said his agency will be coordinating with the city, county, Coast Guard, and federal agencies to maintain order and safety among vessels during the upcoming Blessing of the Fleet. In response to a question by Commissioner Way, Mr. Piggott said the ceremony is on the south side of the bridge because the City Marina is there and furnishes a platform for the Bishop to perform blessings. If the event were to the north of the bridge, a barge would need to be used instead, and there would be a greater expense.

Commissioner Carl Blow, St. Johns County's member of the board of the Florida Inland Navigation District, encouraged all board members to attend the check presentation ceremony at the next city commission meeting. He said the city commission needs to see the commissioners and be reminded of the importance of the district's assistance in funding local marine projects. He said the city commission has lost touch with the actual importance the inlet has for St. Augustine and its history. One commissioner actually contacted the Corps of Engineers with questions about how the inlet could be closed in order to prevent flooding from storms and concerns about sea-level rise. In response to questions from Commissioner Way, Mr. Blow said lobbyists bombard legislators with sometimes biased information in an effort to obtain funding for certain industries, and legislation is often driven by these special interest groups.

Mr. Blow said recent flooding of streets in the Porpoise Point neighborhood adjacent to the St. Augustine Inlet prompted the Corps of Engineers to perform an assessment of the condition of the north jetty structure, known as a "groin." The Corps had recently placed sand in the area near homes in order to compensate for erosion. The Corps will begin repairs to tighten the groin on its west end to alleviate further erosion. In response to questions from Commissioner Helman, Mr. Blow said the Corps was now opposed to decreasing the amount of sand leaking into the inlet because the area was used by least terns as a nesting area.

10. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ellis Zahra, Friends of Summer Haven River, said the organization is very pleased to again receive a grant from the Florida Legislature to complete the restoration project. This year, the district will receive an additional \$450,000 for the restoration and FOSHR is following the FEMA reimbursement process closely, as well. He said Taylor Engineering has been working with the contractor and FOSHR to keep the project going until the legislative grant money is released. He requested the board engage the contractor in anticipation of the grant by approving an expenditure from reserves of \$100,000 to keep the work going until the grant is released and the job can finally be completed.

In response to concerns regarding the possible need to re-bid, Mr. Trudnak advised the board no re-bid will be necessary for the continuation of the project under the DEP permit. However, use of FEMA funds, if they are awarded, will likely require a re-bid. In response to questions by Vice-Chairman Benjamin, Secretary-Treasurer Kemper said her experience with DEP leads her to believe there may be delays in receiving the money, but that it will eventually be received. District Counsel Jim Bedsole said he concurred with the Treasurer's opinion.

A motion by Commissioner Rives to approve the expenditure of an additional \$100,000 from District reserves for the Summer Haven River restoration project, with the stipulation the funds will be reimbursed from the legislative grant of 2018, was seconded by Commissioner Way and passed unanimously.

Linda Ginn, FOSHR, announced her organization will be sponsoring the planting of twenty-two thousand sea oats and other plants on the dunes of Summer Haven the weekend of April

6-8, 2018. Turnbull Environmental will manage placement of the plants and FOSHR will be providing breakfast and lunch to volunteers. She invited everyone to attend and participate.

11. COMMENTS BY COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Rivers commented about the proposal from the Florida Constitution Revision Commission to require all special districts to be approved by a voter referendum every ten years. Commissioner Blow said the proposal had been taken off the table after many, many objections were received from the public. He said special districts such as FIND and the Port attend to the needs of specific limited areas of concern which would likely be overlooked by other agencies or administered in a way much more expensive to taxpayers. He encouraged the board to join the Florida Association of Special Districts, an organization devoted to the existence, administration and improvement of services by special districts.

12. NEXT MEETING

Vice-Chairman Benjamin announced the next meeting of the board will be held at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 17, 2018, in the St. Augustine Beach City Commission Room.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business, Vice-Chairman Benjamin adjourned the meeting at 3:55 p.m.

Secretary-Treasurer

Chairman

wk/rg/port/minutes-2018/Minutes 3-20-18 meeting