

ST. AUGUSTINE PORT, WATERWAY & BEACH DISTRICT
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
Tuesday, May 16, 2017

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, May 16, 2017.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Jerry Dixon 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 Jerry Dixon, Vice-Chairman Barry Benjamin, Commissioner Tom Rivers, Commissioner Mark Helman and Commissioner Chris Way were in attendance. The meeting was also attended by Ken Craig 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 April 30, 2016, the Port has spent \$6,987 on law enforcement overtime, \$39,774 for the SJSO Marine Unit Jet Dock, and other expenses, for total fiscal year-to-date expenses of \$130,423. Deposit accounts contain \$1,845,006 of which \$480,914 is committed for projects. Tax revenues this year total \$438,398 with an additional \$18,727 expected. Currently, the balance of the Summer Haven River restoration project account is \$207,178, which is less than is needed to pay the contractor for current billing. Consequently, recent payments to the contractor have come out of the District's reserve account and will be reimbursed when more funds are received from the State. In response to questions by Chairman Dixon, Ms. Kemper said that in the previous two fiscal years over four hundred thousand dollars has been committed by the board for specific projects with the City of St. Augustine.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion by Commissioner Rivers to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held on April 18, 2017, was seconded by Vice-Chairman Benjamin and passed unanimously.

6. ENGINEERING REPORT

Ken Craig delivered the engineering report on behalf of Taylor Engineering. Mr. Craig provided commissioners copies of Amendment No. 46 to Taylor's contract with the District containing a revised fee schedule and extending the contract through calendar year 2018.

A motion by Commissioner Rivers to approve Amendment No. 46 to the contract for engineering services between the District and Taylor Engineering was seconded by Commissioner Helman and passed unanimously.

After the vote, Vice-Chairman Benjamin thanked Mr. Craig for Taylor's long record of service to the District and congratulated Taylor for its dedication and good service to the District.

Mr. Craig then presented a description of the final construction administration phase of the Summer Haven River Project previously approved by the board. Mr. Craig explained that this proposal governs the release of the final \$90,000 in funding for administration of the project and will carry Taylor's services as contract administrator all the way to the conclusion of the project.

Mr. Craig then displayed an aerial photograph of the St. Augustine Inlet and bay overlaid with depth sampling data obtained by U.S. Naval Academy marine engineering students several months ago. He compared their data collection process to that employed by the Corps of Engineers and provided a depth template for the last actual bottom survey of the bay in 1995. He said a determination of the amount of sand available in the bay for beach renourishment would require a current survey which could cost about \$2,000.00. A reasonable amount of sand needed for one application of beach renourishment would approach 500,000 cubic yards. Calculations based on a current survey, if one was done, would reveal how much sand might be available in the bay area. At this time, the amount available is unknown. In response to questions by Chairman Dixon and Commissioner Helman, Mr. Craig said USACE is not planning a survey in the near future. Commissioner Helman said he would like the District to be prepared if money ever becomes available to dredge the bay and that a survey would be useful for that purpose. Chairman Dixon said the District has many expenses and that now is probably not a good time to do it.

Mr. Craig then presented a spreadsheet outlining the resources and plans established by other agencies along Florida's coast for emergencies. He said most of the agencies are much larger than the District and that emergency plans and reserves funds vary widely from one jurisdiction to the next. Jupiter Inlet, Sebastian Inlet, Ponce Inlet, Port of Fernandina, and Port Manatee all are of similar size to the District. Half of all agencies have emergency plans or such plans are included in their master plans, and reserves average about \$1.8 million dollars each.

7. OLD BUSINESS : NONE

8. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Discussion with regard to establishing a reserve account

Commissioner Way opened the discussion and thanked Mr. Craig for the survey of similar agencies in Florida with responsibility for ports and inlets. He suggested the board set a minimum limit on its reserves for repairs of navigational channels in District waters in the event of an emergency. He said the District needs a reserve fund in case the inlet is damaged and that his question is how large the reserve should be.

In response to questions by Commissioner Rivers, Ms. Kemper said the reserve should be kept in an interest-bearing account with other District funds and that, in her opinion, use of the funds should be restricted to emergencies. Chairman Dixon said one million dollars should be sufficient. Commissioner Helman agreed with that figure as did Vice-Chairman Benjamin. Vice-Chairman Benjamin added he felt the District has been spending very freely and that it should curtail spending in favor of building up the reserve.

In response to questions from Commissioner Helman, Mr. Craig said the recent deposit of 200,000 cubic yards of sand on Vilano Beach cost over 4 million dollars. Jim Piggott, Director of General Services for the City of St. Augustine said the cost of these kinds repairs is so far above the ability of any single local agency that the board should perhaps think in terms of keeping the reserve for the purpose of providing local matching funds, rather than directly funding repairs.

In response to questions from Chairman Dixon, Ms. Kemper said the net funds available for a reserve at this time total about a million dollars. Commissioner Helman said other agencies have reserves closer to 2 million dollars and that he believes that to be a more realistic figure.

Ellis Zahra, Friends of Summer Haven River, reminded the board the contract with DEP for the restoration project requires the State to pay in advance, thereby avoiding a financial strain on the District. He offered to contact State financial officers if payment becomes a problem. Mike Trudnak, Taylor Engineering, said DEP is still holding over one million dollars for the restoration project.

Commissioner Way said the board should get more input from FIND representative Carl Blow before setting a final reserve amount. Chairman Dixon agreed and tabled further discussion until more information is available.

9. GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE COMMENTS:

Jim Piggott, Director of General Services, City of St. Augustine, reported that a repair barge has arrived at the City Marina to replace sections of the breakwater damaged by Hurricane Matthew and that FEMA is paying for three-fourths of the expense. He also noted that dredging will begin soon on the Dolphin Drive boat basin and will then move to Salt Run. The dredge contractor will also be removing hurricane debris which has been stored at the Lighthouse Boat Ramp.

Chris Pacetti, St. Augustine Fire Department, thanked the board for their generous contribution to the purchase of the new fire boat. The City has taken delivery of the boat and Fire Department personnel will be training on it for the next two weeks. The Fire Department will invite the board for a demonstration ride after training is completed. He said there have been several vessel fires lately and having the fireboat will improve the department's ability to respond in those situations.

Corporal Josh Underwood, SJSO, reported his agency spent 138 officer-hours on the water last month, responded to 54 calls, performed 5 vessel inspections, 4 assists, issued 6 warnings, 4 citations, responded to 4 vessels in distress and one accident, and assisted in 47 sanitary device inspections which resulted in 8 citations for defective disposal systems. In response to questions from Commissioner Rivers, Cpl. Underwood said sanitary citations issued by the City carry a fine of \$90. Those issued by the State have \$525 fines. On other matters, he said the SJSO boat and three others are involved in the search for a missing swimmer at Vilano Beach. Also, the Coast Guard has repositioned all buoys around the inlet, some of which had drifted or been forced off-station by the recent dredging.

10. PUBLIC COMMENT

Rich Turnbull, contractor for the Summer Haven River restoration, said they were forced to stop work on a portion of the sand deposit area because several pairs of nesting least terns have moved in. He said work will continue on the remainder of the project but that finishing that 700 foot section of the beach berm will have to wait until the terns migrate. He said no chicks typically survive in that area because of high predation rates but twenty pairs are nesting in the newly-constructed mitigation area northwest of the worksite.

11. COMMENTS BY COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Way suggested that comments from government representatives be moved up on the monthly agenda as a convenience to them. Commissioner Rivers said he believes they should be able to speak at any convenient time. Commissioner Helman said he sent a letter to FWC requesting no-wake signage in the San Sebastian River. In response to a question by Chairman Dixon, Commissioner Helman said wake zones in Salt Run are well-marked but are often disregarded by boaters.

NEXT MEETING

Chairman Dixon announced the next meeting of the board will be held at 3:00 p.m. on June 20, 2017 in the St. Augustine Beach City Commission Room.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business, Chairman Dixon adjourned the meeting at 4:20 p.m.

Secretary-Treasurer

Chairman