

ST. AUGUSTINE PORT, WATERWAY & BEACH DISTRICT
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
Tuesday, August 14, 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, August 14, 2018.

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

Chairman Benjamin, and Commissioners Mark Helman, Tom Rivers and Chris Way were in attendance. Commissioner 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 July 30, 2018, the District had spent \$29,274 this fiscal year for budgeted projects, \$194,020 for non-budgeted projects, and \$101,555 for operating expenses, making a sum total of \$324,849 spent so far in the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018. As of July 30, District accounts held a total of \$2,107,212, and the separate account established for the Summer Haven River restoration project contained \$358,161.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

There were no additions or corrections to the minutes of the July 17, 2018 meeting.

A motion by Commissioner Rivers to approve the minutes of the July 17, 2018 regular meeting was seconded by Commissioner Way and passed unanimously.

6. ENGINEERING REPORT

Mike Trudnak delivered the engineering report on behalf of Taylor Engineering. He said FDEP officials had executed the agreement for the completion of the Summer Haven River restoration through the release of the \$450,000 legislative grant passed this year. Mr.

Trudnak also provided the board with a revised scope of services for Taylor through the end of the Summer Haven River project for a fee of \$45,000.00 as previously agreed to by the board.

7. **OLD BUSINESS**

Fiscal Year 2018-2019 Millage and Budget

Secretary-Treasurer Kemper discussed the effect of using last year's millage rate and projected the rate will create a gross tax revenue of \$526,000 which, after operating expenses, will yield net funds of \$397,000 available for projects. A discussion then took place regarding the various projects board members favor and the amount of estimated operating expenses. The board also discussed possible line items including derelict vessels, marine law enforcement overtime and equipment.

Chairman Benjamin made a motion to list St. Johns County Sheriff's Department Overtime as a twenty-thousand dollar (\$20,000) allocation in next year's budget, and pay for marine law enforcement equipment requests, if any, from the "unspecified marine projects" fund. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Way and passed unanimously.

In response to questions from Commissioner Rivers, Ms. Kemper said the proposed budget contains \$25,000 within "unspecified marine projects" for sea oats for St. Augustine Beach and \$12,335 for St. Johns County Sheriff's Office marine electronics. Jim Piggott, City of St. Augustine, said two dredging projects next year will require \$100,000 in matching funds from the District, and that another \$100,000 may possibly be needed for the city's seawall connectivity project on the bayfront.

Commissioner Helman said he was taking over the map project at the request of Commissioner Dixon and that he wanted the allocation of \$30,000 for that item to remain in next year's budget. A concensus of the board agreed with Commissioner Helman.

Wil Smith, St. Johns County Parks and Recreation Director, discussed projects planned by the county for next year including artificial reefs, possible changes for local boat ramps, commercial use of the Vilano Floating Dock, and the need to create revenue to maintain the county's marine access facilities, generally.

As to artificial reefs, Mr. Smith stressed that the county's FDEP permit for adding material to artificial reefs will expire next year and that the airport is planning to expand onto the property where the concrete for reefs is stored. After a discussion, the board tentatively agreed to place \$25,000 in next year's budget for moving a portion of the concrete to artificial reefs.

All commissioners joined in a discussion of ways to increase revenue for County marine facilities. Mr. Smith said the county board favors user fees for boat ramps because so many boaters are from out of the county. The county also wants to charge for commercial use of the Vilano Floating Dock by water taxis, but needs the District's consent to do so. Commissioner Rivers said the use should be allowed, as they already do it, anyway. Vice-

Chairman Helman said use of the dock should be allowed for taxis, but not for tour boats because tours do not alleviate traffic downtown, whereas water taxis possibly could.

Commissioner Way discussed his experiences at busy boat ramps in other counties where there was a user fee and traffic directors on site for ramp users. He said the system works efficiently, raises money, and allows for the maximum number of users during peak periods. Mr. Smith said the county wants to avoid hiring staff for boat ramps and is looking at parking kiosks combined with the honor system for slow periods.

As tentative budget line items, the board agreed to list the following: St. Johns County Sheriff's Office overtime \$20,000; COSA PD/FD overtime \$11,000; artificial reefs \$25,000; derelict boats 0.00; navigation aids \$10,000; maps \$30,000; unspecified projects \$201,000 (including St. Johns County Sheriff's Office electronics \$12,335 and SAB sea oats \$25,000); and, dredging \$100,000.

8. NEW BUSINESS: NONE

9. GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE COMMENTS:

Jim Piggott, Director of General Services, City of St. Augustine, announced a ribbon cutting ceremony for the City Marina dock repairs and the connectivity project will be at 9:00 a.m. on September 2, 2018. Commissioner Helman asked whether these projects would include a turning basin within the City Marina. Mr. Piggott said they would not. Mr. Piggott added that the top of the new bayfront seawall will be 7.1 feet above sea level.

Cpl. Josh Underwood, St. Johns County Sheriff's Office Marine Unit, said his agency spent 164 officer hours on the water last month, responded to 58 calls, performed 15 inspections and assisted in another 4, issued 22 warnings, 4 citations for equipment, one citation for a resource violation, and engaged in training with the Coast Guard for commercial vessel stops.

Lt. Steve Zukowski, together with Officers Harris and Miller, FWC, reported that no new speed zone markers will be available for local bridges until September. He also reported a fatal boating accident in Flagler County where a disabled occupant was left alone in a boat and fell overboard and drowned. Another accident happened beneath the S.R. 312 Bridge when a boat overtook a slower vessel and hit it, causing property damage.

Officer Harris said the red snapper weekend season was very crowded and resulted in a number of BUIs and other alcohol-related arrests.

Officer Miller said he participated in a dive by FWC officers on several sunken vessels south of the S.R. 312 Bridge. He said all of the vessels were too broken up to move and that the only hazard to navigation appeared to be the mast of a sailboat too near the surface. He said the mast will need to be removed.

Vice-Chairman Helman asked if FWC officers had ever located a sunken sailboat reported to be near the Butler Boat Ramp. Lt. Zukowski responded that the boat is not visible above water at high tide and that they will go back and look again during low tide.

Chris Pacetti, COSA Fire Department, reported his agency had responded to 16 marine emergency calls last month, and that the floating boat lift provided by the District saves his agency a lot of maintenance costs.

10. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Linda Ginn, Friends of Summer Haven River, said she recently received a message from her organization's sea oats seedling provider. She said the plants, which cost them 50 cents apiece, are now on sale for 36 cents and that she had informed staff at the City of St. Augustine Beach.

11. **COMMENTS BY COMMISSIONERS: NONE**

12. **NEXT MEETING**

Chairman Benjamin announced the next regular meeting of the board will be held at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 11, 2018, in the St. Augustine Beach City Commission Room.

The first Public Hearing for the 2018-2019 millage and budget will be the same location and day at 5:05 p.m.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business, Chairman Benjamin adjourned the meeting at 4:30 p.m.

Secretary-Treasurer

Chairman