

ST. AUGUSTINE PORT, WATERWAY & BEACH DISTRICT

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

Tuesday, May 15, 2012

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 15, 2012.

CALL TO ORDER

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

ROLL CALL

Chairman Jerry Dixon, Commissioners Herb Rippe, Tom Rivers, Jay Bliss and Barry Benjamin, were in attendance. The meeting was also attended by District Counsel Jim Bedsole, Dr. Steve Schropp of Taylor Engineering and Secretary-Treasurer Elyse Kemper.

SECRETARY-TREASURER'S REPORT

The report was delivered by Elyse Kemper. As of April 30, 2012, total funds on deposit were \$1,853,345. Net committed funds and Florida State Board of Administration Fund B total \$118,061, leaving net funds available of \$1,735,284. Of total taxes of \$368,165 expected in fiscal year 2011-2012, \$349,044 have been collected. Balance of current year taxes expected is \$19,121 and balance of prior year's taxes outstanding is \$7,200. As of May 8, 2012, net funds available total \$1,725,984.

Commissioner Rippe asked whether there was a line item in the report which reflected actual operating expenses year-to-date. Ms. Kemper said such information may be found on the general ledger provided to Board members each month but is not shown as an item on the report. Commissioner Rippe said he would like for the monthly report to include a line item for such information per month and year-to-date. Commissioner Bliss agreed it would be a useful addition to the report. Ms. Kemper said the District's auditors were finishing the audit of fiscal year 2010-2011, and have advised her that every expenditure in excess of the adopted budget should be accompanied by a resolution amending the budget.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Rivers moved to approve the minutes for the April 17, 2012 regular meeting. Commissioner Bliss suggested that the minutes should reflect questions by both Commissioners Rippe and Benjamin as to the propriety of financial assistance to the St. Augustine Maritime Heritage Foundation. He also requested a revision in the account of that discussion to include Commissioner Bliss' comments in support of their request. Mr. Bedsole said he would review the audio tapes and include any comments by Commissioner Bliss.

Commissioner Bliss moved to approve the minutes of the April 17, 2012 regular meeting with his suggested amendments. His motion was seconded by Commissioner Benjamin and passed unanimously.

ENGINEERING REPORT

Dr. Schropp delivered the report on behalf of Taylor Engineering. He said efforts by the contractor to replace the down marker in Salt Run have been delayed by windy weather but that the job should be completed within a week. He said FDEP staff are still working to complete a draft of the new Inlet Management Plan. They hope to have it available for Board review by June with an FDEP representative available for the July meeting to discuss the new IMP. As a final topic, he said the permit application for the Summer Haven River restoration is being fine-tuned and should be ready for review within three weeks.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Salt Run Feasibility Study Reimbursement - Chairman Dixon.

Chairman Dixon discussed the topic of the Corps of Engineers' request for payment for the Salt Run Feasibility Study which was terminated in 2002 because of a conflict with the Coastal Barrier Resources Act. Mr. Bedsole said no new information had been received since April and that further information had been requested. He added that changes in internal policy at the Corps had prompted regional USACE counsel to suspend a response on the pending emergency dredging MOA until the Corps assigned a new contact person for review of the proposed agreement.

B. Port Handbook Update - Ken Krauter.

Ken Krauter distributed draft copies of the proposed Board Handbook authorized at the February 21, 2012 meeting. He said the handbook would be useful to board members of any level of experience, and that the complete book would contain all of the information immediately useful such as the District's charter, a map of its boundaries, a list of its real property interests, contact information for board members and consultants, relevant statutory provisions and financial reports and information. Mr. Krauter said he envisions the handbook as a living document which will change over time.

Commissioner Rippe thanked Mr. Krauter for his work on the handbook and clarified through his questions that the 2008-2009 fiscal year audit is contained in the handbook.

Commissioner Bliss said it was good the handbook contained a map of the District's boundaries. Chairman Dixon said he thought the book would be useful to all Board members. In response to questioning by Commissioner Rivers, Mr. Krauter said the book is primarily for the use of Board members and staff although it is a public document. Commissioner Bliss said he thought a copy should be available to the public through the County library.

Commissioner Rippe invited Wil Smith of St. Johns County Parks and Recreation to give an update on the progress of the Vilano Floating Dock. Mr. Smith said the installation of the floating sections has begun and that the contractor should have it done within two weeks. The dedication of the dock will take place at 3:00 p.m. on June 2, 2012, and all Board members are invited to attend the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Commissioner Rippe discussed what a resounding success the visit by the tallship Bounty had been for the ship and for St. Augustine. Five thousand people visited the ship in less than three days and the ship created a huge impression on those who witnessed its arrival and departure. He said many local officials now support a tallship festival here and that such an event would aid the local economy.

Commissioner Rippe continued with a discussion of the positive effects the inlet dredging has had on maritime accessibility and safety. He said the challenge now is to publicize the fact the inlet is straight, deep and clean all the way inshore to the Intracoastal Waterway and the bay. Commissioner Bliss said the Coast Guard did change the designation of St. Augustine Inlet from "hazardous shoaling" to merely "frequent shoaling" which is a more benign classification.

Commissioner Dixon said the Inlet will never get the chart coverage or permanent buoys of the larger commercial inlets because the Coast Guard views small, unmaintained inlets as unimportant. Commissioner Rippe said he thinks the City of St. Augustine and St. Johns County should lobby for tourist development tax money to help advertise the Inlet.

Commissioner Rippe then asked Commissioner Rivers if he had followed up on the concept of expanding the boundaries of the District to encompass the entire county. Commissioner Rivers responded that he had made contact with a number of legislators and that he had been invited by Representative Renuart to discuss the matter after the primary election.

Commissioner Dixon reported he had attended a meeting of the St. Augustine City Commission and that he had spoken in favor of converting the bayfront miniature golf course into something with a nautical theme, such as an outdoor museum. He said the current lessee of the property will probably keep it for another five years, at least, but that the golf course is not financially viable because of its age and low use. He said the land could definitely be put to a better use.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Request funding for two personal watercraft for emergency water rescue - Joel Sneed, SJCFR.

Deputy Chief Joel Sneed of the St. Johns County Fire and Water Rescue presented information to the Board regarding his department's activities and responsibilities. He reminded the Board it had funded two life-saving boats in 2009 which have been put to good use saving the lives of boaters. He said because of high use and the wear and tear of the salt environment, the department's personal watercraft wear out in about five years. They now need two new personal watercraft and this occurs at a time when County beach parking revenues have fallen. He said his budget from the County contains no money for new equipment. The two machines they have chosen cost a total of \$23,700 and he requested that money from the Board.

A motion by Commissioner Rivers, seconded by Commissioner Benjamin, to give \$23,700 to St. Johns County Fire and Rescue for the purchase of two personal watercraft and related equipment was unanimously approved on a roll-call vote.

A related motion by Chairman Dixon, seconded by Commissioner Rivers, to amend the Fiscal Year 2011-2012 budget to allow the money to be taken from reserve funds was unanimously approved on a roll-call vote.

Chairman Dixon asked Wil Smith if the City of St. Augustine objected to commercial activity on the Vilano Floating Dock. Mr. Smith said the City had refused to allow the dock unless the County would agree no commercial activity would be allowed. Commissioner Rippe said he was surprised the City was involved to that extent and that he may not have supported the dock if he had known.

In response to a question by Commissioner Benjamin, Mr. Smith said the Sheriff's office intends to enforce the four hour time limit on boats at the dock.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Sgt. Jay Bucher, St. Johns County Sheriff's Office, reported the Sheriff's Office Marine Unit had worked the recent Mug Race for sail boats from Palatka to Orange Park. He said they had also offered their assistance at the First Annual Recycled Bottle Raft Race at Vilano Beach. Students built rafts from 2-liter bottles which were then raced by faculty members.

Lt. Steve Zukowski, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), reported on efforts to begin enforcement of the new idle speed zones around local bridges. He said a campaign will soon begin to inspect all marine sanitation devices and night anchor lights.

He said the State is considering whether to bring charges against the owners of two sunken vessels in the area because their owners will not remove them. He reported several minor accidents since the last meeting due mainly to large powerboat wakes striking docks and boats. He said FWC assesses responsibility for damage based on size of the wake and the

condition of the object or vessel struck by the wake. Some damage is caused or exacerbated by the poor condition of the affected dock or by improperly mooring vessels.

COMMENTS BY COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Rivers commented that the 2-liter boat races were fun and exciting and that the Sheriff's Office had done a great job keeping everyone safe.

Commissioner Bliss discussed the Board's denial of funding for the St. Augustine Maritime Foundation at the April meeting. He said he believes the Board has the legal authority to fund an education program if it so pleases. He said the Attorney General Opinion from 2009 was inapplicable on its facts and was also supportive in that the Attorney General supported the Board's authority to make its own decisions. District Counsel Jim Bedsole said Board members should consult the District charter if there is any doubt about the District's statutory powers or purposes.

NEXT MEETING

The Chairman announced the next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 19, 2012, at 3:00 p.m. in the same location.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business, Chairman Dixon adjourned the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

Secretary-Treasurer

Chairman

wk/rg/port/minutes5-15-12