

**ST. AUGUSTINE PORT, WATERWAY & BEACH DISTRICT**  
**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING**  
**Tuesday, May 21, 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, May 21, 2019.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Barry Benjamin called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM.

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

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

**3. ROLL CALL**

Chairman Barry Benjamin, Vice-Chairman Tom Rivers, and Commissioners Matt Brown, Sandy Flowers and Chris Way were in attendance. 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 April 30, 2019, the District had spent \$86,668 in operating expenses, \$61,812 for projects budgeted in this fiscal year, and \$200,000 for the Seawall-Connectivity project for the City of St. Augustine, for a sum total of \$348,480 spent to date. As of April 30, District funds on deposit totaled \$2,265,737, plus \$126,293 in a separate account for the Summer Haven River restoration project. Projected tax revenue for fiscal year 2018-2019 is \$526,341 of which \$499,418 has been received.

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A motion by Vice-Chairman Rivers to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of April 16, 2019, was seconded by Chairman Benjamin and passed unanimously.**

**6. ENGINEERING REPORT**

Mike Trudnak delivered the engineering report on behalf of Taylor Engineering. He said the construction work for the Summer Haven River restoration will be substantially completed within days and the contractor will then be cleaning up the area and doing an as-built survey before the final grading. In response to questions from Commissioner Flowers, Mr. Trudnak

said the expense of the restoration work from this time forward is completely the responsibility of the contractor. He explained the work has had delays because of personnel issues, equipment issues with the contractor, and problems with the dredge. Commissioner Flowers asked for a copy of all Taylor's records for the project which Mr. Trudnak said he would provide.

In regards to changes to the markers in Salt Run to some other type, such as floating aids to navigation, Mr. Trudnak said changing to floating markers would require about six months to accomplish. He added that installing lighted markers is another possibility but that any change in the current system will require approval from the US Coast Guard. Chairman Benjamin said he had already authorized the contractor to repair the two downed markers because of the advent of boating season. He said traffic is high and the markers were necessary immediately for safety reasons. Commissioner Flowers said changing the markers is a decision for the board, not just the chairman acting alone.

In response to questions from Commissioner Way, Mr. Trudnak said markers all along the intracoastal are being hit because of the high traffic volume. In response to questions by Commissioner Brown, Mr. Trudnak said an application will be needed to redesign Salt Run's markers if lights are installed, along with an engineering analysis determining that the new markers will not migrate. The total for design and permitting would be ten to fifteen thousand dollars plus the cost of the construction. He added that the permitting and design costs will remain the same even if the board simply wants to add lights to the existing markers. He said marine contractors cost about five to six thousand dollars for each day equipment is in the field. He said he would gather all the relevant pricing information and present it to the board.

7. **OLD BUSINESS:** NONE

8. **NEW BUSINESS:**

A. **Doug Crane Boat Ramp Improvements**

Teddy Meyer appeared on behalf of the St. Johns County Parks and Recreation Department and discussed various improvements the county wants to make at Doug Crane Park in St. Augustine South. He said the construction of a new gangway, docks, and parking improvements will cost an estimated \$100,000 and the county will be asking the District to fund three-fourths of the cost. In response to questions from the board, Mr. Meyer said the design includes ADA compliant facilities, and paving and striping the parking lot to increase capacity and ensure adequate trailer parking. In response to questions from Commissioners Brown and Flowers, Mr. Meyer said the county is trying to limit impact on the neighborhood while improving the experience of boaters and others using the park.

## **B. Proposed Boat Ramp, Hospital Creek**

Commissioner Flowers discussed options and information as to the possibility of establishing a small vessel boat ramp at the northeast corner of the Hospital Creek Bridge on May Street/A1A North. Jim Piggott, City of St. Augustine, provided an aerial photograph showing that the parking area now used by boaters is part of the right of way of Highway A1A. Part of the actual launching ramp is on District property but the majority of the area appears to be owned by the Florida DOT. Mr. Trudnak said approval would be needed from DOT to park on the right of way. Commissioner Rivers said people are already using the ramp and parking on the roadside. Mr Trudnak said he would contact DOT and report back to the board.

## **9. GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE COMMENTS**

Jim Piggott, COSA, asked the board to help fund the removal of a large derelict vessel sunk near a private dock in the City of St. Augustine. He said the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission has agreed to fund 75% of the cost and that the city is asking the District to contribute \$3,750 to cover the remainder.

**A motion by Commissioner Rivers to approve a \$3,750.00 payment to the City of St. Augustine for the removal of the derelict vessel was seconded by Chairman Benjamin and passed unanimously.**

Mr. Piggott said two new derelict vessels have been discovered near the Doug Crane Ramp and that the city is requesting a 75% grant from FIND and will be asking the District for 25% in the near future. He said the city will also be coming back to the District for help funding the Salt Run dredging this year as well as some funds for the city's fire boat.

Josh Underwood, SJSO Marine Unit, reported his agency last month spent 139 hours on the water, responded to 82 calls for assistance, issued 14 safety warnings, wake zone and registration violations, and six citations for navigation light violations. He said they had run a 6 PM to 6 AM navigation light patrol that netted several commercial fishing vessels.

Chris Pacetti, COSA Fire Chief, said his officers had engaged recently in helicopter rescue training which was very beneficial to the department. He also thanked Commissioner Way for attending part of the training as an observer.

## **10. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Ellis Zahra, Friends of the Summer Haven River, addressed the board to remind them of the long history of the river restoration effort beginning in 2008 with the initial breach of the river during a severe northeaster. The organization came to the board to request the District to sponsor the restoration project. The board agreed to become the government sponsor of

the project and to fund the application for the permit to restore the river. The Friends organization was instrumental in finally obtaining approximately four million dollars in funding from the Florida Legislature to begin the project and to repair the damages inflicted by Hurricanes Matthew and Irma in 2016 and 2017.

In response to questions from Mr. Zahra, Mr. Trudnak said the money available now is enough to complete the project even if FEMA refuses to offer assistance. Mr. Zahra said he hopes the contractor will be able to re-dredge the north end of the project before completing work as many areas have gradually filled with sand since the original work and are again in need of dredging.

**11. COMMENTS BY COMMISSIONERS:**

Commissioner Brown said he has invited members of the Army Corps of Engineers to come to the next meeting to discuss Vilano Beach and the inlet study. In response to questions from Commissioner Flowers, Mr. Trudnak said FEMA has tentatively approved the District's request for \$92,000 assistance for the restoration of the Summer Haven River and that the money, if received, would go into the Summer Haven separate account. He cautioned, however, that FEMA has a history of disorganization and that he would not be surprised if having awarded the money, they later ask for it to be refunded.

**12. NEXT MEETING:**

Chairman Benjamin announced the next regular meeting of the board will be held at 3:00 PM on Tuesday, June 18, 2019, in the St. Augustine Beach City Commission Room.

**13. ADJOURN**

There being no further business, Chairman Benjamin adjourned the meeting at 4:00 PM.

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Secretary-Treasurer

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Chairman