



NORTHEAST FLORIDA REGIONAL COUNCIL
Board of Directors Meeting
May 4, 2023

MEETING WORKSHOP

The Northeast Florida Regional Council Board of Directors, pursuant to Chapter 120.525, F.S., held a hybrid meeting both in-person, at 100 Festival Park Avenue, Jacksonville, FL, and virtually via Zoom, on Thursday, May 4, 2023, at 10:00 a.m.

First Vice President Whitehurst welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order with the following members present:

BAKER: Commissioner Anderson (**in person**)
Mr. Register (**in person**)

CLAY: Mr. Bourre (**in person**)
Commissioner Condon (**zoom**)
Mr. Steve Kennedy (**in person**)
Commissioner Jim Renninger (**in person**)

DUVAL: Mayor Lynch (**in person**)

FLAGLER: Mayor David Alfin (**in person**)
Mayor Catherine Robinson (**zoom**)

NASSAU: Mr. Drew (**zoom**)
Commissioner John Martin (**in person**)
Vice-Mayor Sturges (**in person**)

PUTNAM: Commissioner Harvey (**zoom**)

ST. JOHNS: Commissioner Arnold (**zoom**)
Commissioner Horvath (**in person**)
Commissioner Christian Whitehurst (**in person**)

EX-OFFICIO: Mr. Brian Austin, FDOT (**zoom**)
Mr. Doug Conkey, SJRWMD (**in person**)

Excused: Commissioner Bennett, Ms. Katlyn Craver, Councilmember Randle DeFoor, Mr. Griffis, Mr. Hart, Mr. Holmes, Councilmember Joyce Morgan, and Commissioner David Sullivan

Absent: Commissioner Adamczyk, and Mayor Brown

Presenters: Manny Sarria, Assistant Executive Director, Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust

Guests: iPhone3

Staff: Matamron Bacon, David Chudzik, Monica Dominguez, Margo Moehring, Annie Sieger, Jack Shad, Donna Starling, Elizabeth Payne, and Sheron Forde.

1st Vice President Whitehurst welcomed new Board Member, Vice-Mayor David Sturges to the Northeast Florida Regional Council Board of Directors.

INVITATION TO SPEAK

1st Vice President Whitehurst stated that members of the public are welcome to speak on any item before the Board and will be recognized during public comment.

CONSENT AGENDA

1st Vice President Whitehurst called for a motion on the consent agenda. Mr. Register moved approval of the consent agenda; seconded by Commissioner Anderson. Motion carried.

OTHER REPORTS/ACTION ITEMS

Presentation: Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust – Food & Beverage Tax

Mr. Manny Sarria, Assistant Executive Director of the Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust, provided a presentation on the Food and Beverage Tax of 1992 that benefited the homeless and domestic violence shelters. He provided background information on who was subjected to this tax, the creation of the Homeless Trust; the structure of the Homeless Trust; he explained that the Trust is not a service provider, but funds agencies with more than 100 programs that provide services for the homeless. They operate on the belief that the only real solution for someone who is homeless is to provide them with a home. They are expecting an increase in HUD grant funds of approximately \$40 million, which will be their major funding source. He shared information on the food and beverage tax generated, as well as State grants; under the federal programs, approximately \$0.70 of every dollar spent is on housing. He also shared information on what the tax allows them to do; they can utilize the tax to match federal or state funding, right-size programs not entirely funded federally, and have flexibility with program rules. Some considerations include avoiding the ‘feel good’ programs such as feeding the homeless, etc., which could actually enable homelessness. Consider how your system is performing before developing new programs so you don’t hurt the ability to leverage more funding. When funding permanent subsidies, be sure to have a reliable funding stream. Discussion followed.

Regional Community Institute Work – Cultivation: Things to Consider

Ms. Moehring provided an overview of the Regional Community Institute (RCI), whose members are comprised of Regional Leadership Academy graduates. Mr. Conkey was recognized as a member of the RCI Board and Chair of the Cultivation Committee. The RCI functions as a think tank for the Regional Council on important regional policy issues. Work on the issue of Cultivation, defined as agriculture, fishing and silviculture has been ongoing over the last year and the with the information being shared today, concludes the work.. Ms. Moehring provided background information on the cultivation issue, which was added to the Council’s Strategic Regional Policy Plan in 2021. She also informed the Members of the approach that was taken to obtain input, which included discussion meetings in Nassau and Putnam Counties. She then informed the Members that data on Cultivation will be included in the First Coast Well Being Index, to be released in the coming months. Discussion followed.

Commissioner Anderson informed the Members of legislation that is being considered to restrict hunting, fishing and other recreational outdoor activities and suggested that the RCI look into that.

Program Spotlight: Town of Welaka's Downtown Vision

Mr. Shad and Ms. Dominguez provided an update on staff's assistance to the Town of Welaka on their Downtown Vision; a Department of Economic Opportunity Competitive Florida Grant. Mr. Shad highlighted the Town's make up and location, the DEO Competitive Florida Grant process; and some of the reasons behind the Town's need for a downtown vision. A public engagement process was designed, using a variety of tools, to obtain public input. A draft plan was developed and submitted to the Town officials for their review.

Ms. Dominguez provided an overview of the proposed projects, which includes pedestrian preferred streets, green infrastructure, sample mixed used areas, maintenance of historic properties, reorientation of the downtown park as public gathering space, expanded river use, creation of a distinctive entry feature, new Town signage, and creation of a Community Redevelopment Agency to help fund some of these projects. Discussion followed.

Community Resiliency Update

Ms. Payne provided an update on resiliency activities, highlighting the Resilient First Coast Collaborative that now has 20 signed partner agreements. She recognized Commissioner Horvath who is a co-Chair of the Collaborative. An overview of the April Collaborative meeting was provided; the next Steering Committee meeting is to take place on May 24th. Ms. Payne informed the Members that a Regional Planner was recently hired to assist with the Resiliency program, Ms. Paige DeBold, as well as a student intern from Jacksonville University, Ms. Payton Jamieson. An update was provided on the Military Installation Resilience Review process and progress made thus far; the EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant, which the City of Jacksonville is the lead for the Region. Discussion followed.

Mayor Alfin requested a 'pocket card' on the importance of having a resiliency structure in place. **Commissioner Horvath**, as co-Chair of the Collaborative, stated that they would be able to put something together.

Commissioner Martin requested that a 'pocket card' also be developed on what the Regional Council does as well. Ms. Payne agreed to do so.

Ms. Payne concluded her update with the ongoing resiliency tasks that includes the Regional Resilience Entity grant deliverables, geodatabase analysis for Flagler County Vulnerability Assessment, Baker County Vulnerability Assessment work plan, the Town of Welaka Vulnerability Assessment opportunity, CDBG Healthcare Resilience project, and conducting model runs for CDBG Multiregional project.

Regional Leadership Academy Highlights

Mr. Bacon provided an overview of the Regional Leadership Academy's April session, which took place in Nassau County. The theme of this session was Evolving Development and Equality. Highlights of the day included a visit to historic American Beach with presentations about its history, the water and sewer conversion project, and conservation lands acquisition and management. The class also visited Traders Hill Farm where they received a presentation and tour of the hydroponics farm that focuses specifically on growing green leafy vegetables. He

mentioned that one of this year's class members is also an employee of Traders Hill Farm. Mr. Bacon stated that the next session will take place in St. Johns County, which will include tours of Blue Sky and Tater farms. A brief discussion followed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

Local and Regional Issues Discussion

Baker: Reminded everyone that this is Police Memorial Week. The County will hold an event in honor of fallen officers.

Clay: County voted on the Green Cove Springs CRA and now they are working on the statutory requirements. The County recently completed the most attended County Fair; Police memorial on Tuesday with the military memorial in two weeks; opening of a 200 yard gun range for police certification and public participation; 250 acre public park to open later this year; 14 pickleball courts recently opened.

Flagler: the City of Palm Coast will be hosting the annual Songwriters Festival this weekend. HB 101, and its companion bills, will add several fallen first responders to allow their spouses to be tax exempt.

Nassau: All are invited to the Shrimp Festival in the City of Fernandina Beach this weekend.

St. Johns: Inquiry about the Blue Zone. Ms. Payne indicated that staff sits on one of the subcommittees. She added that one of the RLA participants is the Jacksonville Executive Director.

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS' REPORTS

Florida Department of Economic Opportunity – Mr. Register stated that Area Development Magazine recently released their top 10 site selection factors based on a survey across industries. With 48 percent of respondents representing manufacturing, the selection factors were: 1) labor costs, 2) quality of life, 3) availability of labor, 5) construction cost, 6) internet capacity and broadband, and 10) availability of land.

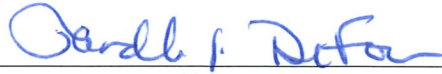
Florida Department of Transportation – No agency report at this time. He encouraged members to check out the Shared Use Path along the Fuller-Warren Bridge.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Staff recently completed work with Baker County on their Opioid SWOT analysis; looking to work with Nassau and St. Johns County in the near future. Staff is working with Clay County on their strategic plan. Many staffers are currently in St. Johns County for their annual Hurricane Exercise today. The JEA and City of Jacksonville's Hurricane Exercise will take place in two weeks. Ms. Payne stated that an update on the Healthcare Coalition's purchase of Pediatric Restraints for ambulances will be provided at the June meeting.

Next Meeting Date: The next meeting will be June 1, 2023.

Meeting Adjourned: 11:43 a.m.



Randle P. DeFoor
President



Elizabeth Payne
Chief Executive Officer