



NORTHEAST FLORIDA REGIONAL COUNCIL
Board of Directors Meeting
June 1, 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, June 1, 2023, at 10:01 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. Griffis **(in person)**
Mr. Register **(in person)**

CLAY: Mr. Bourre **(virtual)**
Commissioner Condon **(virtual)**
Mr. Kennedy **(virtual)**
Commissioner Renninger **(in person)**

DUVAL: Councilmember DeFoor **(in person)**
Mayor Lynch **(in person)**
Councilmember Morgan **(in person)**

FLAGLER: Mayor Alfin **(in person)**
Mayor Robinson **(virtual)**
Commissioner Sullivan **(in person)**

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

PUTNAM: Commissioner Harvey **(in person)**

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

EX-OFFICIO: Mr. Austin, FDOT **(in person)**
Mr. Conkey, SJRWMD **(in person)**
Ms. Craver, FDEP **(in person)**
Mr. Hart, DEO **(in person)**

Excused: Commissioner Bennett

Absent: Commissioner Adamczyk and Mayor Brown

Presenters: Kody Glazer, Esq., Legal & Policy Director, Florida Housing Coalition

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

INVITATION TO SPEAK

President DeFoor 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

President DeFoor called for a motion on the consent agenda. Commissioner Harvey moved approval of the consent agenda; seconded by Mr. Register. Motion carried.

OTHER REPORTS/ACTION ITEMS

Due to a scheduling conflict, presentation of Resolution 2023-04 was taken out of agenda order to be heard first.

Resolution 2023-04: Councilmember Morgan

Ms. Payne read the attached resolution honoring Councilmember Morgan for her service to the Regional Council and the Region into the record. It was shared by President DeFoor that this would be her last meeting with the Council due to her election as the first female, African American Duval County Property Appraiser.

President DeFoor called for a motion. Mr. Register moved approval of Resolution 2023-04; seconded by Commissioner Anderson. Motion Carried.

Mr. Griffis left the meeting.

Proposed FY 22/23 Amended Budget

Ms. Starling presented the proposed FY 22/23 amended budget; highlighting the changes since the budget was approved in June 2022: estimated increase in revenues to approximately \$2,800,000, expenses to \$2,754,000 resulting in a projected net income of approximately \$45,000. A brief discussion followed.

Mr. Register, Chair of the Personnel, Budget & Finance (PBF) Committee, provided an overview of the Committee's discussion regarding the proposed amended budget. He stated that discussion was also held on the County dues with regard to the use of the 2018 per capita calculations and that the Committee will discuss this at a future meeting.

President DeFoor called for a motion. Mr. Register moved approval of the proposed FY 22/23 amended budget; seconded by Commissioner Harvey. Motion carried.

Proposed FY 23/24 Budget

Ms. Starling provided the proposed FY 23/24 budget indicating that revenues are estimated at approximately \$2,700,000 and expenses at \$2,800,000 resulting in a shortfall of approximately \$100,000. She reminded the Members that with the budget being presented in June, and the fiscal

year beginning in October, there are unknowns at this time. However, staff have applied for grants and contracts to help fill the shortfall. An overview of the proposed budget was provided.

Mr. Griffis returned to the meeting.

Mr. Register stated that while the budget is showing a projected loss of approximately \$100,000, the Personnel, Budget & Finance Committee was informed of nine grants that staff has applied for in the amount of approximately \$694,000 that is not included in the proposed budget. He noted that included in the budget is a three percent increase for cost of living and another three percent for merit increase. If approved, the merit increase will create a pool that will be distributed among qualified staff based on performance at the discretion of the CEO.

President DeFoor called for a motion. Mr. Register moved approval of the proposed FY 23/24 operating budget; seconded by Commissioner Renninger. Motion carried.

FY 23/24 Officer Nominations

Mr. Register stated that due to the current President's decision not to run for re-election and the current 2nd Vice President's election to higher office, the PBF Committee is acting early to present its officer nominations to fill those roles to take effect in July; with the exception of the President's position that will take effect today following the Passing of the Gavel later on the agenda. The Committee nominates St. Johns County Commissioner Whitehurst for President, Clay County Commissioner Renninger for 1st Vice President, and Mr. Register of Baker County for Secretary Treasurer. The 2nd Vice President position will remain vacant until the City of Jacksonville appoints new members.

President DeFoor called for a motion. Commissioner Horvath moved approval of the FY 23/24 officer nominations as presented; seconded by Councilmember Morgan. Motion carried.

Resolution 2023-03: Mr. Holmes

Ms. Payne read the attached resolution recognizing Mr. Donald Holmes, City Manager of the City of Palatka, a municipal representative of Putnam County, for his service on the Northeast Florida Regional Council Board of Directors.

President DeFoor called for a motion. Commissioner Harvey moved approval of Resolution 2023-03; seconded by Councilmember Morgan. Motion carried.

Councilmember Morgan left the meeting.

Presentation: Affordable Housing – Legislative Impacts

Mr. Kody Glazer, Esq., Florida Housing Coalition's Legal & Policy Director, stated that he is able to join the meeting today through a state program called the Affordable Housing Catalyst program, a partnership between the Florida Housing Coalition and the Florida Housing Finance Corporation, that provides free training and technical assistance on all things affordable housing. His presentation included information on the work of the Florida Housing Coalition and highlighted impacts to local governments related to the Live Local Act. The impacts highlighted included: Funding of up to \$811 million for SHIP and SAIL programs; Tax Incentives – an optional exemption on specified affordable housing developments, a required exemption for nonprofit owned land utilized specifically for affordable housing with a 99-year ground lease, and a required

'missing middle' property tax exemption for newly constructed multifamily developments with more than 70 affordable units for qualified households; and Land Use Preemption as it relates to affordable housing, i.e., local governments cannot regulate the use, density, or height of an affordable housing development proposed for a commercial, industrial or mixed-use district with 40 percent affordable units. Mr. Glazer also shared some things local governments can do now regarding land use standards for affordable housing, and resources. He stated that the Act is still in the early stages and there are many nuanced legal interpretations and recommended the County/City Attorneys be consulted. Discussion followed.

Workplan: Ecotourism & Trails Update

Mr. Anderson provided an update on the Ecotourism & Trails project. He highlighted the 34 member Steering Committee that includes a wide variety of individuals, i.e., government, tourism, advocates and consultants. The project timeline showed the work recently completed, which included collection of economic impact data, an inventory of existing resources, and concluding the inventory of existing programs, studies, and legislation. Over the next two months, the Committee will be transitioning to the next two items on the task list that includes a checklist of official designations and highlighting successful places.

Mr. Anderson informed the Members that the Florida Senate passed SB 106, funding the expansion for access to Florida's Wildlife Corridor. The Bill was signed by the Governor in April. This connects the Corridor, approximately 17.7 million acres, to the SUN Trail Network and trail towns across Florida. It will include components that connect to nature trails, loop trails, or other points of public access wholly within a single park or natural area as potential parts of the SUN Trail Network. To include construction of shared use nonmotorized trails, the bill increased funding from \$25 million to \$50 million the annual amount allocated to the SUN Trail Network from motor vehicle registration fees. A \$200 million, nonrecurring, appropriation to the Florida Department of Transportation for the planning, design and construction of the SUN Trail Network. This also codifies an existing campaign of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to recognize communities located along or in proximity to long-distance nonmotorized recreational trails as Trail Towns to promote trail-based tourism.

The Steering Committee is also working on GIS and Mapping storyboards. He shared an example of a draft of Clay and City of Palatka that shows the existing and proposed trails and amenities. However, it is now on hold until the SUN Trail inventory is completed. Resources were shared for program assistance. The next Ecotourism and Trails Steering Committee is scheduled for July 13, 2023. Discussion followed.

Mr. Hart asked for consideration on allowing private sector developments to connect directly to the trail; they are currently not allowed to do so. He asked that the steering committee consider reviewing possible standards and recommendations for private developers.

Ms. Payne stated that she believes this is a great example of a regional project that could bring federal funding into the Region. The partnership with the National Park Service could be up to two years so that they would come in and help facilitate putting this kind of thing together with all local control.

Ms. Craver stated that she can provide contacts for the FDEP funding sources that was mentioned, for installation and maintenance, and encouraged the Members to reach out to her for assistance if needed.

President DeFoor stated she believes, if done right, this could be a money maker and not a drain. This would also make it easy to show a return on investment for this agency.

Program Spotlight: Pediatric Restraint Purchase Update

Ms. Wilsey stated that the Healthcare Coalition received approximately \$68,000 from the Department of Health to fill a gap. The funding was used to purchase pediatric restraints for EMS agencies. The regular stretcher utilized by ambulances are designed to hold patients 100lbs or more; small children under 100lbs require specialized restraints. The statewide gap was realized during Hurricane Ian when a hospital had to be evacuated; there were 67 NeoMates, very small babies. She stated that staff worked with local and state agencies to purchase the same type of equipment to be shared around the State when needed. The Healthcare Coalition is purchasing the PediMate+ that fits a child 10-100lbs; most children will fit in these. A survey of the Regional EMS agencies, county and municipal, was conducted to identify the need. There were 500 requests of varying types of equipment. The Council identified an additional \$14,000 that could be utilized, totaling approximately \$82,000, to purchase 1) 183 PediMate+, all that was requested, 2) 43 NeoMates of the 157 requested, and 3) 19 of the KangooFix pouches of the 162 requested. For the Northeast Florida Region, 134 PediMate+ and 14-15 KangooFix pouches will remain here. It has not yet been determined how the NeoMates will be distributed. Now that the need is known, staff will continue to purchase these whenever funding is available. A brief discussion followed.

Regional Community Institute Heirs Property Update

Ms. Moehring stated that the Regional Community Institute (RCI) is currently considering the issue of Heirs Property. Inherited property does not have clean title unless it goes through probate. The issue is that this is not intuitive. It makes it difficult to sell, get funding for improvements and is a source of land loss for low income households. The RCI Board is looking into the potential for Heirs Property being a regional policy issue where they could add some value. The Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC) has been working on this issue for some time in the City of Jacksonville and has some experience and lessons learned to share. This issue impacts all counties in our region, and all types of properties. The RCI can add value by sharing information. The RCI Board meets again on June 26th and will discuss next steps. A brief discussion followed.

Community Resiliency Update

Ms. Ilami provided an update on resiliency activities, highlighting the actions taken at the May Resilient First Coast Collaborative meeting, i.e., approved resiliency talking points; revised and approved the scope, outline and timeline for the Regional Resiliency Action Plan. She announced that Resilient First Coast now has a website recently built. She provided an update on the EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant in which the City of Jacksonville recently submitted a full application for the five-county Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) with a letter of support from the Council. It is the intent that the final deliverables will include Flagler and Putnam County, who are not part of the MSA, but are in our region. The Council's contribution will be to form an interagency working group, a committee of the Collaborative, to focus on stakeholder engagement. The Council will also provide technical assistance and coordination as needed to ensure consistency among all the entities involved in the project. This will lead to opportunities for competitive implementation grants.

Ms. Ilami also highlighted the status of Vulnerability Assessments, in which staff is working on completion of the deliverables. Staff is also working to finalize new contracts to begin work for Baker County and the Town of Welaka. She also shared information on ongoing resiliency tasks. The next Steering Committee will be July 19, 2023.

2023 Hurricane Season Update

Mr. Anderson shared the predictions for the 2023 Atlantic Hurricane Season. The National Hurricane Center is predicting 12-17 named storms, 5-9 hurricanes, and 1-4 of these could be major hurricanes; which are similar to the State of Colorado predictions. Mr. Anderson provided an overview of the St. Johns County Hurricane Exercise conducted in partnership with the Council in preparation of the Hurricane Season; provided annually. Another longstanding partnership is with JEA. The Council has worked with JEA annually to conduct their Hurricane Exercise for over 10 years with this year's exercise being held June 5-7. They have even invited other utilities to take part to see how they prepare and do things. The Council recently signed an agreement to conduct an exercise with the Jacksonville Transportation Authority in August. Additionally, information was shared regarding Council staff support during disasters, as requested by the local emergency managers, highlighting the number of hours of staff support provided since 2016 at no cost to local governments. A brief discussion followed.

1st Vice President Whitehurst stated that this is an example of the value of the Regional Council. St. Johns County is aware of the value of the Council through Mr. Anderson's work with the Emergency Operations Center.

President DeFoor agreed and stated that the Regional Council does so much that it is difficult to explain it. It is incumbent on the Members to ensure their Council/Commission understands what the Regional Council does for our communities.

Commissioner Horvath inquired about a Commodity Flow Study for Hazardous Materials that was completed a while ago and how often it is done. Mr. Anderson stated that it is something that is currently on our radar. They are seeking additional funding to conduct a regional study on the hazardous materials that are transported through the region. However, the difficulty is access to data as much of it is proprietary in transportation. However, it is something they are looking at.

Mr. Conkey stated that he has reached out to the EOC Directors to update information in case there is an opportunity for the Water Management District to help during a disaster. Should the need arise, they have equipment, boats, pumps, etc., they are available to provide assistance.

Regional Leadership Academy Highlights

Mr. Nolen provided an overview of the Regional Leadership Academy's May session, which took place in St. Johns County. This session addressed agriculture and affordable housing. Highlights of the day included a tour of the Blue Sky Farms that grow potatoes; and a tour of Tater Farms, the largest sod grower in the State. The class also received presentations on Agriculture in Northeast Florida from Mr. David Dinkins, and Affordable Housing in St. Johns County from Mr. Joseph Cone. The next session will take place in Clay County, including a tour of NAS Jax, on July 26, 2023. A brief discussion followed.

Commissioner Horvath suggested that staff request a presentation by Mr. Cone on utilizing the CDBG Disaster Recovery funding towards affordable housing. Ms. Payne agreed a request could be made for a future meeting.

CEO Evaluation

Ms. Payne informed the Members that the CEO evaluation will be emailed to them following this meeting. She encouraged them to complete the evaluation and provide their feedback for discussion at the August Executive Committee meeting.

Public Comment – None.

Local and Regional Issues Discussion – None.

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS' REPORTS

Florida Department of Economic Opportunity – Mr. Register stated that the Governor recently signed HB 5, which consolidates the responsibilities of Enterprise Florida into the Department of Economic Opportunity and also renamed the department to the Department of Commerce. It creates a new direct support organization responsible for international economic development within the Department and also reconstitutes Visit Florida and the Florida Sports Foundation as direct support organizations within the Department of Commerce. He also announced the Governor's intention of appointing Alex Kelly, who is currently his Chief of Staff, to lead the Department of Commerce. A brief discussion followed.

Florida Department of Transportation – No agency report at this time.

Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) – **Ms. Craver** stated that recently there were over \$100 million land acquisitions approved by the Governor, of which 40,000 acres were put into Conservation within the Wildlife Corridor. Four of the land acquisitions were approved by FDEP through the Florida Forever program. While there weren't any for this region, recent legislation has appropriated \$100 million through the Florida Forever program for future land acquisition. She added that the FDEP's Northeast District office is looking to provide more technical assistance for living shoreline and restoration projects. They have partnered with UF IFS to participate in different workshops. She will provide staff with flyers about these upcoming events. A brief discussion followed.

St. Johns Water Management District – **Mr. Conkey** commented on Ecotourism, stating the District has 8,000 acres of which 96 percent are open to the public and plays a part in Ecotourism; on the Black Creek project, a Kayak launch will be added in Clay County; on the hurricane forecast, the District is doing their part by purchasing lands and creating flood plains to mitigate the issues encountered by local governments. Finally, he thanked President DeFoor for her leadership and service over the years.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Ms. Payne directed the Members attention to the handout of the Resiliency Talking Points. It is provided to assist Members in summarizing what resiliency is. The talking points on the Regional Council will be reviewed by the Executive Committee in August when staff rolls out the Return

On Investments. Members were reminded about completing their Financial Disclosures. Members were also informed of an open position for a Post Disaster Economic Recovery Coordinator that is funded through an Economic Development Administration grant.

Passing of the Gavel

President DeFoor stated that it has been an honor to be a part of this Council and an even bigger honor to be President of it. She noted that when you sit around a room and there are Mayors, County Commissioners and City officials, it is so impressive and it makes her heart sing to know the type of representation we have for Northeast Florida. She stated that the truth of the matter is, one can't succeed without the other, and when we understand that, the better off we all are. She added that she will do everything in her power to ensure that Duval County remains a part of this.

Outgoing President DeFoor passed the Gavel to Incoming President Whitehurst.

President Whitehurst thanked Councilmember DeFoor for her service to the Regional Council and to the City of Jacksonville, for her leadership and vision in so many different areas. She certainly will be missed.

President Whitehurst also recognized former Commissioner Waldron, who was the senior representative from St. Johns County on this Council; his father was a long time County Commissioner before him, who also served on this Council. He stated that he is not only filling the remaining term of Councilmember DeFoor, but also filling the shoes of Commissioner Waldron. It is with that in mind that he humbly accepts the Presidency of this Council; it's a great honor and he looks forward to serving this Council.

Resolution 2023-05

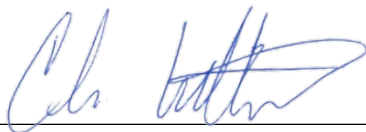
Ms. Payne read the attached resolution honoring Councilmember DeFoor for her service to the Regional Council, the City of Jacksonville, and the Region into the record.

President Whitehurst called for a motion. Commissioner Anderson moved approval of Resolution 2023-05; seconded by Mr. Register. Motion Carried.

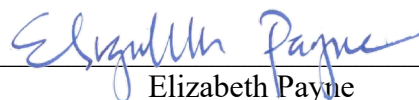
Councilmember DeFoor was presented with Resolution 2023-05 and a Plaque in appreciation for her service as President.

Next Meeting Date: The next meeting will be September 7, 2023.

Meeting Adjourned: 12:03 p.m.



Christian Whitehurst
President



Elizabeth Payne
Chief Executive Officer