



**NORTHEAST FLORIDA REGIONAL COUNCIL**  
**Board of Directors Meeting**  
**September 7, 2023**

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**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, September 7, 2023, at 10:00 a.m.

**President Whitehurst** welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order with the following members present and in person unless otherwise noted:

BAKER: Commissioner Anderson  
Mr. Register

CLAY: Commissioner Condon  
Commissioner Renninger  
Mr. Kennedy

DUVAL: Councilmember Amaro  
Councilmember Gay  
Mayor Lynch

FLAGLER: Commissioner Sullivan  
Mayor Alfin  
Mayor Robinson (**via zoom**)

NASSAU: Mr. Drew (**via zoom**)  
Vice-Mayor Sturges

PUTNAM: Commissioner Harvey  
Commissioner Adamczyk (**via zoom**)

ST. JOHNS: Commissioner Arnold  
Commissioner Horvath  
Commissioner Whitehurst

EX-OFFICIO: Mr. Hart, DEO  
Mr. Conkey, SJRWMD  
, FDEP  
Mr. Dixon, FDOT (**via zoom**)

Excused: Commissioner Bennett, Mr. Bourre, Mr. Griffis, Commissioner Martin, and Ms. Craver

Absent: Mayor Brown

Presenters: Mr. Aundra Wallace, JaxUSA

Guests:

Staff: Eric Anderson, Sonya Abu-Sharar, Monica Dominguez, Fara Ilami, Robert Jordan, Tyler Nolen, Elizabeth Payne, Annie Sieger, Jack Shad, Donna Starling, Cassidy Taylor and Sheron Forde.

**President Whitehurst** welcomed two new Board Members, representing the City of Jacksonville: **Councilman Ken Amaro** and **Councilman Mike Gay**.

INVITATION TO SPEAK

**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

**President Whitehurst called for a motion on the consent agenda. Commissioner Harvey moved approval of the consent agenda; seconded by Commissioner Renninger. Motion carried.**

OTHER REPORTS/ACTION ITEMS

Comprehensive Plan Amendment Policy Issue

Mr. Jordan provided the Members with information regarding Nassau County's comprehensive plan amendment that is intended to aid in the provision of affordable housing and encourage the redevelopment of non-conforming uses, nuisance properties and highlights areas through the establishment of a County Tiny Home Development program. Discussion followed.

Presentation: The Future is Now-Northeast Florida Regional Economic Development Strategy

Mr. Aundra Wallace, JaxUSA Partnership President, stated that the JAXUSA Partnership is the private, nonprofit division of JAX Chamber that is Jacksonville's regional economic development initiative overseeing the efforts of the seven counties of Northeast Florida. Mr. Wallace provided an overview of JaxUSA's Northeast Florida Regional Strategic Plan, which covered competitiveness, regionalism, economic mobility, innovation, and resilience. Discussion followed.

\*CEO Contract Renewal

Mr. Register provided an overview of the CEO's evaluation survey responses, which resulted in an outstanding review for Ms. Payne. He added that the Executive Committee authorized the President to negotiate with Ms. Payne on her contract renewal. The Personnel, Policy & Finance Committee discussed and approved the recommendations of a 9% salary increase and health insurance coverage for the Board's consideration. Discussion followed.

**Commission Condon moved approval to renew the CEO contract by 9% and add insurance coverage for the CEO; seconded by Commissioner Harvey. Further discussion followed with some dissent.**

**Commission Condon amended her motion to renew the CEO contract to \$140,800 without health insurance, with the deferred compensation amount remaining at \$8000.**

**Commissioner Harvey amended his second to the revised/amended motion. Motion carried unanimously.**

Regional Leadership Academy: End of Year Recap

Mr. Nolen provided a program overview of the 2023 Regional Leadership Academy and highlighted each monthly session and topics covered. Unfortunately, due to Hurricane Idalia, the last class was cancelled. However, this year's class will be invited to attend the class in 2024. The 2023 class graduation is scheduled for September 25<sup>th</sup>. Nominations for the 2024 class is now open and a tentative schedule was provided. The Members will be provided, via email, nomination information shortly.

Program Spotlight: CDBG Healthcare Grant – This item was removed from the agenda.

Community Resiliency Update

Ms. Ilami provided an update on resiliency activities, highlighting the August meeting of the Collaborative, the launching of the Resilient First Coast website, the Regional Resilience Entity Grant, and update on local government assistance in Flagler and Baker counties, and the EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant in which the City of Jacksonville is the lead agency. She also provided information on grant applications in which the Council is partnering, and other ongoing resiliency tasks.

Save the Date

Ms. Payne directed the members attention to the Save the Date flyer for the upcoming Regional Awards Ceremony that will take place following the January 2024 meeting. A brief discussion followed.

Local and Regional Issues Discussion

Members shared information on events/activities occurring in their county/municipalities.

**Commissioner Renninger** – highlighted his attendance at the Affordable Housing Conference.

**Commissioner Anderson** – Baker County is considering a partnership with five other counties to form a regional utilities group, which would provide more weight when applying for grants.

**Mr. Kennedy** – FLC's Legislative Committee is discussing the live local act and how they are looking to mitigate some of the perilous legislation that came out of the act.

**Commissioner Sullivan** – Flagler County will be having an opening of their pedestrian bridge over State Road 100 on September 19<sup>th</sup>.

Public Comment – None.

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS' REPORTS

Florida Department of Economic Opportunity – Nothing further to add at this time.

St. Johns Water Management District – **Mr. Conkey** stated that cost shares are just around the corner so it's a good time to determine what projects you may have to apply.

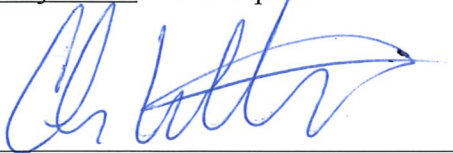
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Ms. Payne introduced two new staff members; Ms. Sonya Abu-Sharar, Communications Specialist and Ms. Cassidy Taylor, Post Disaster Economic Recovery Coordinator. She stated that our

Resiliency Intern, Ms. Payton Jamieson's time is coming to a close and thanked her for her assistance to the Resiliency Program. She directed the Members attention to the Return on Investment handout for their county, and that she has been meeting with each County Commission Chair and Manager to share the value of the Regional Council. She also provided a copy of a new Regional Council flyer describing the work of the Council. Mr. Nolen will provide an Opioid presentation in St. Johns County on October 25<sup>th</sup> as a part of presentations across the Region. As the Chair of the Florida Regional Council Association's Executive Directors, Ms. Payne participated in a podcast with the Florida Association of Counties to help educate elected officials across the State on what Regional Councils do.

Next Meeting Date: The next meeting will be October 5, 2023 in St. Johns County.

Meeting Adjourned: 11:58 p.m.



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Christian Whitehurst  
President



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Elizabeth Payne  
Chief Executive Officer