

ST. AUGUSTINE PORT, WATERWAY & BEACH DISTRICT
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
Tuesday, July 21, 2015

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, July 21, 2015.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Jerry Dixon called the meeting to order at 3:05 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 Barry Benjamin, Tom Rivers and Mark Helman were in attendance. Commissioner Chuck Hennessey was absent. The meeting was also attended by Ken Craig of Taylor Engineering, District Counsel Jim Bedsole, and Secretary-Treasurer Elyse Kemper.

SECRETARY-TREASURER'S REPORT

Secretary-Treasurer Kemper delivered the financial report to the board. Through June 30, 2015, the District has spent \$185,215 of the \$394,000 budgeted for expenses and projects in fiscal year 2014-2015. The majority of these funds have been spent on operating expenses and dredging. Net funds available for use by the District were \$1,859,946 on that date. All but \$600 in expected tax revenue has been collected. As of July 17, 2015, net funds available had dropped to \$1,770,696 due to payments to the City of St. Augustine for dredging.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Rivers moved to approve the minutes of the June 16, 2015 regular meeting, which motion was seconded by Commissioner Benjamin. The motion passed unanimously.

ENGINEERING REPORT

Ken Craig delivered the engineering report on behalf of Taylor Engineering. He told the board the Corps of Engineers hopper dredge Murden began work in the St. Augustine Inlet

on July 17, 2015, and that the material removed from the inlet was being deposited near the shore of critically eroded beaches north of the inlet pursuant to a special permit from FDEP.

The Florida legislature grant of \$400,000 for the Summer Haven River Restoration has been approved and the first activity required will be a bathymetric survey of the site. He said the cost of the survey will be \$39,988.00 and asked the board to approve that amount. Commissioners then discussed the project schedule.

Commissioner Helman moved to approve the \$39,988.00 cost for the bathymetric survey. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rivers and passed by a unanimous roll-call vote.

Secretary-Treasurer Kemper then provided commissioners with budget worksheets for Fiscal Year 2015-2016 showing the projected results of keeping last year's millage rate of 0.0638 versus the "rolled-back" rate of 0.0605. Chairman Dixon said the board should adopt last year's millage rate as the tentative rate until the public hearings in September and October. Ms. Kemper explained the board would be able to use a lower rate as the final rate for 2015-2016, but would not be able to set a rate higher than 0.0638 mils if they choose this rate.

Commissioner Benjamin moved to use last year's rate of 0.0638 mils as the tentative 2015-2016 fiscal year rate. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rivers and passed unanimously.

Ms. Kemper explained that the maximum legal rate allowed by Florida law is much higher than any rate ever adopted by the District but, due to increased assessments by the property appraiser, last year's millage rate will actually increase total revenue. Therefore, the District is required to advertise this rate as a tax increase even though the tax rate has remained unchanged. The first public hearing for the tax will be held on September 17, 2015, and the final hearing will be on October 1, 2015. Both hearings will take place at 5:05 p.m. in the St. Augustine Beach City Hall.

OLD BUSINESS

Chairman Dixon reported to the board about the ceremonial delivery of the check for the restoration grant for the Summer Haven River by Jeff Atwater, Chief Financial Officer of Florida, and other state and local dignitaries. He said the restoration reminds him of the effort to obtain funds for the renourishment of St. Augustine Beach. Linda Ginn thanked the board for its support and sponsorship of the project and said the promises made by commissioners to support the effort had all been kept and that it would have been a much more difficult task without the backing of each commissioner. Mrs. Ginn then presented commissioners the ceremonial check previously given by CFO Atwater.

Chairman Dixon said this project has been an outstanding example of how government agencies can sometimes cooperate to provide something beneficial to a community. Commissioner Helman thanked Mrs. Ginn for all the work she and the members of her organization have put into the project. He said he especially appreciated the video made of the event. Commissioner Rivers commented that the front-page article in the St. Augustine Record had been very favorable publicity.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion regarding port funding for permit application of North Beach renourishment - Commissioner Rivers

FIND Commissioner Carl Blow discussed the need for a permanent permit from FDEP for the placement of sand on beaches north of the St. Augustine Inlet. He said he came to the meeting to discuss FIND's grant process, but that his agency is making plans now for the next dredging events near St. Augustine Inlet and that, if a permit is in place and the cost is not prohibitive, FIND will consider depositing sand on the beaches north of the inlet. FIND's 2015-2016 budget already includes funding to dredge the flood shoal inside St. Augustine Inlet and the Intracoastal Waterway channel near Matanzas Inlet.

Linda Chambliss and Ervin Bullock appeared on behalf of the South Ponte Vedra Beach Homeowner's Association and said the Corps of Engineers now has permission for a one-time placement of sand on the north beaches. A permanent permit will be needed for any further placement and they thanked the board for considering funding the permit application. Chairman Dixon said most of that area lies within the District. Commissioner Rivers asked Mr. Craig the cost of the permit application. Mr. Craig said the previously provided cost proposal of \$119,780.00 is still in effect.

Commissioner Rivers moved to approve the \$119,780.00 cost to have Taylor Engineering prepare the application for the placement of sand on beaches north of St. Augustine Inlet. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Helman and passed unanimously.

In response to a question by Commissioner Benjamin, Mrs. Chambliss said her organization believes it is too early in the process to seek private funding.

PUBLIC COMMENT

FIND Chairman Carl Blow distributed a list of the grant applications FIND received for year 2015-2016 waterway projects totalling 18 million dollars. He said FIND has a budget of 14 million dollars for these projects and that, as a result, some will not be funded. This year, St. Johns County is entitled to \$539,000 in grants and he encouraged the board to take advantage of the funds. Funds not used by St. Johns County agencies will be given to other counties. The District's dredging projects done with the City and the Airport Authority seaplane ramp score very high in FIND's rankings. The City's request for assistance with a kayak ramp did not rate as highly but may be funded if enough projects ahead of it fail to receive permits. It is also possible to obtain an extension for the use of grant funds while FIND holds the money in escrow until needed.

Jim Piggott, Director of General Services for the City of St. Augustine, said extra dredging could be done in several areas of the bay where shoaling occurs. In other matters, he said the St. Augustine Yacht Club has applied for permission to install a private boat dock for cruising vessels from affiliated clubs. Officers of the club are meeting with homeowners in the neighborhood to share information about the request.

Lt. Steve Zukowski, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, said a case involving a derelict vessel near the Crane Boat Ramp was set for trial after the owner disputed it was derelict. He said the local situation is very good with no new derelict vessels. Local FWC officers will now be managed from Titusville and a new officer will be appointed to handle derelict vessels.

Lt. Zukowski thanked the board for approving matching funds for the Vilano Boat Ramp boat lift and dock. He said accessibility to St. Augustine Inlet will make it much easier for their boats to respond to emergencies and to unload victims of boating accidents.

In response to questions by Chairman Dixon, Lt. Zukowski said FWC had monitored nesting least terns on the spoil island known as "Bird Island" during the Fourth of July fireworks and that the birds had experienced no disruption.

COMMENTS BY COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Helman said he recently contacted the Coast Guard regarding several markers in the inlet which had moved. He said Coast Guard Jacksonville responded quickly and relocated the markers.

NEXT MEETING

Chairman Dixon announced the next regular meeting will be held at 3:00 p.m. on August 18, 2015 in the same location.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business, Chairman Dixon adjourned the meeting at 4:30 p.m.

Secretary-Treasurer

Chairman