

ST. AUGUSTINE PORT, WATERWAY & BEACH DISTRICT
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
Tuesday, January 17, 2017

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, January 17, 2017.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Dixon called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

3. ROLL CALL

Chairman Jerry Dixon, Vice-Chairman Barry Benjamin, Commissioner Tom Rivers, Commissioner Mark Helman and Commissioner Chris Way were in attendance. The meeting was also attended by Ken Craig 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 December 31, 2016, the Port had spent \$65,701 in committed and non-committed funds on marine law enforcement overtime, the Regatta of Lights, channel marker repairs, computers for the Sheriff Office Marine Unit, and operating expenses. On that date, the District had deposit accounts totaling \$1,510,840 with expected tax income of \$97,015. Ms. Kemper also reported the District has received two additional checks from FDEP for the Summer Haven River project totaling \$317,000.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion by Vice-Chairman Benjamin to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held on December 20, 2016, was seconded by Commissioner Helman and passed unanimously.

6. ENGINEERING REPORT

Ken Craig and Mike Trudnak delivered the engineering report on behalf of Taylor Engineering. Mr. Trudnak said the restoration project at Summer Haven is on schedule with no major issues. He said there is no shortage of sand for the project even though thirty thousand cubic yards were used to repair the recent breach from Hurricane Matthew. Mr. Craig said St. Johns County is applying for FEMA funds to assist in the expense of breach

repairs. He said the county has agreed to assume sponsorship of the South Ponte Vedra-Vilano Beach restoration permit application and that the permit application will be withdrawn and resubmitted by the county in order to extend the application period. Also, several marine science students from the U.S. Naval Academy will be here next week obtaining some field experience time with Taylor Engineering.

In response to a question by Commissioner Helman, Mr. Trudnak said the county is making a comprehensive application to FEMA for hurricane relief funds and that the cost of the breach repair will be added to it.

Chairman Dixon said he met with county representatives last month about the amount of sand used to close the breach. He said about thirty thousand cubic yards were used out of the District's sand budget and that the District needs to be compensated. Mr. Trudnak said there is more than enough sand remaining to complete the restoration project and reach the amount permitted for the restoration design.

In response to questions by Chairman Dixon, Mr. Trudnak said the county will withdraw and re-submit the restoration permit for the north beaches. He said the temporary permit to allow sand from the current FIND project in Intracoastal Waterway to be pumped north of the inlet is a separate permit and is still in force.

7. **OLD BUSINESS : NONE**

8. **NEW BUSINESS:**

A. **SAFD Fire Boat Financial Assistance - Jim Piggott**

Jim Piggott, City of St. Augustine Director of General Services, said the city's fireboat was destroyed in Hurricane Matthew and will cost \$175,000 to replace. He said the city is requesting assistance from the District in the amount of \$60,000 to purchase a replacement fireboat. He said the original plan had been to apply for a FIND grant for the new boat but that option would take too long to fulfill this critical public safety need.

In response to a question by Vice-Chairman Benjamin, city officials said the old fireboat was 30 years old and was totally destroyed by having been sunk during the hurricane. Repairing it was determined to be a waste of public funds. He said the fireboat recovered 120 people in the last 8 years and that its response time is only minutes, adding an important safety resource to local waters. The new boat is a 27 foot fiberglass Boston Whaler which will furnish a much more stable platform for operations such as working accidents in the St. Augustine Inlet where conditions are often very rough and made even more difficult in a smaller boat. A consensus of commissioners agreed the expense of the fireboat would be worthwhile for the District.

B. FIND Grant Application Request - Jim Piggott

Mr. Piggott then presented a request by the City of St. Augustine for a commitment to provide local matching funds for grant requests to the Florida Inland Navigation District. Requests this year include \$50,000 for Salt Run dredging, \$60,000 for a new police boat, and \$90,000 for a city Kayak launch.

Mr. Piggott said the amount requested for dredging Salt Run is the same as for the last two years and that, in addition to \$50,000 from the District, FIND will fund \$150,000. Chairman Dixon noted that the District's budget already contains \$150,000 in funds committed for dredging . Local matching funds represent 25% of the total.

The second request was for \$60,000 for one-half the cost of a police boat for the city and the third request was \$90,000 for the kayak launch on Riberia Street. Mr. Piggott said the last two requests are for 50% matching funds. The total requested under all three grants is \$200,000 from the District and \$300,000 from FIND.

Chairman Dixon said the District has fewer resources than any agency in the county yet all the other agencies seem to request help from the District. Additionally, there are damages all over the county from Hurricane Matthew and the District will probably be asked for even more funding assistance this year. Commissioner Rivers said he understood the need for all the requests except the kayak launch. Commissioner Helman said the requests here are in addition to other funds already committed by the District and that he believed the only project urgently needed was the new fireboat.

A motion by Commissioner Helman to fund \$60,000 for the new City of St. Augustine fireboat was seconded by Commissioner Rivers and passed unanimously.

City of St. Augustine Commissioner Leanna Freeman appeared and thanked the board for its contribution to the fireboat. She explained the kayak launch has been planned for a long time to assist visitors and locals in accessing local waters via kayak, canoe and other unpowered craft. She said the city is building the access road with its own funds. She said the entire area is a public park and would be a benefit to public access by the millions of visitors coming to St. Augustine each year.

A motion by Commissioner Helman to approve three interlocal agreements with the City of St. Augustine for matching funds for a police boat for \$60,000, the dredging of Salt Run for \$50,000, and a kayak launch for \$90,000, was seconded by Commissioner Rivers and passed unanimously.

Mr. Piggott then explained to the board that as a result of its years-long pilot program, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission is recommending that only counties be empowered to implement local rules for waterways. Mr. Piggott said the city's position is that it should be able to formulate its own rules for waters within its jurisdiction. He said the city may in the future request support for this position from the board.

9. GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE COMMENTS:

St. Johns County FIND Commissioner Carl Blow presented the board with a written report from USACE on the status of joint FIND/USACE Intracoastal Waterway projects at Matanzas Inlet and St. Augustine Inlet. Periodic maintenance dredging is scheduled to begin but has been slowed by damage from Hurricane Matthew. Applications to modify the permits for these projects to allow changes in dredge material placement areas have been filed with appropriate agencies and the projects are expected to begin in February, 2017. USACE has stated the agency is willing to modify the placement areas of these projects if other agencies pay for the increase in cost which will result from the necessary change orders.

In response to questions by Mr. Blow and Chairman Dixon, Ken Craig said it is not clear whether sand from FIND's SJ-1 site will be needed, but that the option to use it should be preserved. Mr. Blow said FEMA is reimbursing governments in southern Florida at the rate of 75% for hurricane damages.

Sgt. Keith Oakes and Cpl. Josh Underwood, St. Johns County Sheriff's Office Marine Unit, reported their office now has a full-time marine unit for all waters, beaches and shores with a focus on public safety. They thanked the board for its historic support of their organization and promised to report regularly on future developments.

Lt. Steve Zukowski, FWC, offered his personal opinion that the 27-foot Boston Whaler is a very good boat which should be serviceable for many years. He introduced Officer Megan Aswall, a new fisheries officer transferred from Martin County. He said the Blessing of the Fleet this year will occur April 9. All derelict vessels beached along the Shore Drive are scheduled to be removed.

He reported the boat lift project at the Vilano Boat Ramp has been delayed by the discovery of unfavorable bottom conditions which have drastically increased construction costs.

10. PUBLIC COMMENT: NONE

11. COMMENTS BY COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Rivers said St. Johns County's legislative delegation will be meeting this week. He reminded commissioners that the board gave him authority to promote the expansion of the District county-wide and that he intends to pursue this with the legislative delegation.

NEXT MEETING

Chairman Dixon announced the next meeting of the board will be held at 3:00 p.m. on February 21, 2017 in the St. Augustine Beach City Commission Room.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business, Chairman Dixon adjourned the meeting at 4:45 p.m.

Secretary-Treasurer

Chairman

wk/rg/port/minutes-2017/Minutes 1-17-17 meeting