

ST. AUGUSTINE PORT, WATERWAY & BEACH DISTRICT
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
Tuesday, December 19, 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, December 19, 2017.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairman Jerry 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, and Commissioners Tom Rivers, Chris Way and Mark Helman were in attendance. The meeting was also attended by Mike Trudnak 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 November 30, 2017, the District had spent \$404 of the \$361,000 set aside for projects, \$40,268 in operating expenses, and \$24,000 in emergency funds for debris clean-up in Matanzas Bay after Hurricane Irma. Funds on deposit total 1.9 million dollars with \$1,663,000 available for use. Taxes budgeted for fiscal year 2017-2018 are projected at \$488,000 with \$172,000 having been collected to date.

5. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

The board considered the minutes for the regular meeting of November 21, 2017.

A motion by Commissioner Rivers to approve the minutes of the November 21, 2017, regular meeting was seconded by Vice-Chairman Benjamin and passed unanimously.

6. **ENGINEERING REPORT:**

Mike Trudnak delivered the engineering report on behalf of Taylor Engineering. Mr. Trudnak reported the contractor will be in Salt Run later this week to repair Marker 7 as previously approved by the board. He said Marker 2 is down now, as well. The contractor

may be able to repair both markers at the same time. He also said he has been notified the application for restoration of South Ponte-Vedra Beach and Vilano Beach is finally complete. The emergency work done in Summer Haven after hurricane Irma appears to be reimbursable in the amount of two hundred thousand dollars, more or less, and he will learn more about that in the coming months. He said the requests for reimbursement from Matthew are still pending and that the work after Matthew was treated differently because it involved rebuilding of a county road.

Commissioner Helman questioned the status of the letter Mr. Helman wrote to FWC asking for slow or no wake signs to be placed in the San Sebastian River. Lt. Steve Zukowski, FWC, responded that the San Sebastian River is not within FWC jurisdiction because it is not part of the Intracoastal Waterway. He said St. Johns County has jurisdiction and that the easiest way to post signs in the river is by using buoys. Commissioner Helman said the only signs now are at the mouth of the river and that no one launching from the river sees any signs at all.

Wil Smith, Director of Parks and Recreation for St. Johns County, said the county will post the signs as needed if the District will pay for it. Commissioner Helman suggested adding at least two signs and buoys, too. Commissioner Way said signs should be placed at Cat's Paw Marina and at the Boatyard for vessels leaving those facilities. Mr. Smith said he would get some prices for the signs and come back to the board.

7. OLD BUSINESS:

Corporal Josh Underwood appeared on behalf of the Sheriff's Marine Unit. He reported the Sheriff's Office has agreed to split the \$90,000 cost of the airboat needed by the Marine Unit. Corporal Underwood said their office has been using an airboat operated by U.S. Customs but that it was unable to negotiate extremely shallow areas because it was too heavy. Commissioner Helman said he supports the idea of such a vessel, but that it will need to be a part of next year's budget. Secretary-Treasurer Kemper said budget discussions begin in July. Vice-Chairman Benjamin advised Corporal Underwood to return with this request in April. No action was taken on this item.

8. NEW BUSINESS:

St. Augustine Beach Commissioner Undine George appeared and reminded the board that the District supported the city in 2005 with a donation for planting sea oats. She said the current cycle of beach renourishment will complete early in 2018 and that it would be ideal if the District could assist in March or April with an extensive planting project on the new sand. She requested one hundred thousand dollars. Chairman Dixon said the last project was very successful and that he was in favor of participating again. Secretary-Treasurer Kemper said a budget amendment would be necessary to authorize the funding from reserves. Commissioners Rivers and Helman were supportive, as well. No vote was taken on this item.

Jason Harrah, United States Army Corps of Engineers, presented a project overview of the St. Augustine Inlet area. He recounted that the Shore Protection Project for St. Augustine Beach, which is beach renourishment, began in 2003 and is repeated every 5 years, with a

50-year project life. Eighty percent of the cost is paid by the federal government and twenty percent from local sources. This year's project will place 800 thousand cubic yards of sand on St. Augustine Beach between Pope Road and 10th Street and will cost 13 million dollars. He said work will proceed 24 hours a day and that the Corps will post progress notices on its social media page. Most of the sand will come from the federal inlet channel and from the south lobe of the ebb shoal.

Another project is the Coastal Storm Study from Vilano Beach to the Duval County line. He said most of the severe damage occurred between markers R117 and R102, and that the study contemplates placing 1.3 million cubic yards of sand along that three-mile area. The cost will be 78 million dollars and will be paid for with 23% federal funds and 77% state and local funds. The ratio of federal dollars to local dollars is much less than with St. Augustine Beach because public access to the beach north of the inlet is not adequate to qualify for greater federal participation. The county would need to open up existing public easements and provide parking in order to gain a better funding ratio. He added that sand was last placed north of the inlet in April, 2017, when fifty thousand yards was deposited there. The next regular dredging of the federal channel will occur in 2019-2020 and some of that sand may be deposited north of the inlet, as well.

The last project discussed was the north groin of the inlet. He said studies indicate about 200 feet of the groin has disappeared since it was built. The missing portion needs to be replaced and the groin needs to be better sealed to prevent sand leaking into the inlet. He said his agency has not decided how the groin will be sealed, but the movement of sand into the inlet needs to be stopped. Chairman Dixon recalled that in 1975 the groin structure was much larger and no sand was collecting on Porpoise Point as it does today. He added that sand accumulating in the inner harbor has become a problem, as well.

FIND Commissioner Carl Blow said his agency is interested in anything that will reduce the need to dredge the Intracoastal Waterway. He said tightening the groin would also benefit the inner harbor by decreasing the accumulation of sand. Mr. Harrah said the work on the groin will be funded 100% by the federal government.

9. GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE COMMENTS:

Jim Piggott, City of St. Augustine, said fuel sales are resuming at the City Marina for both gas and diesel. He also announced that FIND will be providing a 25% match for repair of the city pier at Lighthouse Park and that the contribution was made possible through the efforts of FIND Commissioner Carl Blow. FIND has also approved a 25% match for repair of the City Marina. Bids are being solicited now, and the work will begin with the south dock.

Corporal Josh Underwood, St. Johns County Sheriff's Office, reported the Marine Unit spent 132 hours on the water last month, responded to 69 calls for assistance, performed 16 inspections, assisted with the recovery of an NOAA data buoy from St. Augustine Inlet, and wrote 14 citations for navigation lights. Additionally, his agency assisted with boater safety at the Regatta of Lights in St. Augustine and Palm Valley.

Lt. Steve Zukowski, FWC, reported the annual Regatta of Lights went well and the weather was cold. FWC has been assisting the U.S. Coast Guard with vessels displaced by Hurricane Irma. The vessels, mostly sunken, will be removed by the Coast Guard at government expense. He then introduced Officer Bill Miller who worked in the local marine industry prior to becoming a FWC officer. FWC and the Coast Guard have identified eleven vessels for salvage or destruction: 2 in the St. Johns River, 6 at Crane Park, one in East Creek, and one in Hospital Creek.

FIND Commissioner Carl Blow discussed the recent letter from FIND denying the District's request for financial assistance with the expense of repairing the breach caused by Hurricane Matthew. Mr. Blow said FIND's rules do not allow it to reimburse an agency for work already performed. He added that something like fifty thousand yards of sand was deposited in the Intracoastal Waterway by Hurricane Irma which will have to be removed eventually, and could be placed on the beach at Summer Haven. He explained that the City of St. Augustine was able to receive financial aid from FIND for Hurricane Irma damage because none of the repair work had been done yet.

Chairman Dixon discussed changes over time in FIND's sand placement template at Summer Haven. He said it used to encompass the entire Summer Haven beach but now has shifted to the south. Mr. Trudnak said FIND and the Corps of Engineers have a permit, and so does St. Johns County. He said the District has been able to use both permits and can place sand over the entire area.

Mr. Blow also discussed a proposal by the Florida Constitution Revision Commission that could eliminate the taxing authority of special districts such as the Port, FIND and the St. Augustine Airport, as well as numerous hospitals and ports throughout the state. He said only water management districts are proposed to be exempt. The commission convenes every twenty years to review the Florida Constitution and usually recommends proposals which are placed on the ballot for referendum. Without special district sponsors, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers would be without authority to act in many cases. He recommended the board get involved in protecting the job special districts do for the citizens.

Wil Smith, St. Johns County Parks and Recreation, reported the county has applied for a permit to build a four-lane boat ramp on the west bank of the Intracoastal Waterway at the Palm Valley Bridge. The permit will require about eighteen months for approval.

The Florida Department of Transportation has agreed to give the concrete from the Shands Bridge to the county for offshore reefs when the bridge is replaced. The bridge is situated such that the concrete could be loaded directly onto barges and taken offshore immediately.

Mr. Smith also reported that dredging is almost complete at the Vilano Boat Ramp, but that a jetty will be needed on the south side of the access channel to avoid the continuing silt problem. Normally, dredging the ramp every three to four years yields four thousand yards of sand. After Hurricanes Matthew and Irma, thirteen thousand yards were removed. In response to a question from Commissioner Rivers, Mr. Smith said the sand has been piled in the parking lot of the ramp to dry out before shipment inland. He said the sand is not beach quality and cannot be used for renourishment.

10. **PUBLIC COMMENT: NONE**

11. **COMMENTS BY COMMISSIONERS: NONE**

12. **NEXT MEETING**

Chairman Dixon announced the next meeting of the board will be held at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 16, 2018, in the St. Augustine Beach City Commission Room.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business, Chairman Dixon adjourned the meeting at 4:40 p.m.

Secretary-Treasurer

Chairman

wk/rg/port/minutes-2017/Minutes 12-19-17 meeting