

**ST. AUGUSTINE PORT, WATERWAY & BEACH DISTRICT**  
**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING**  
**Tuesday, February 18, 2020**

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, February 18, 2020.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Vice-Chairman Tom Rivers called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM.

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

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

**3. ROLL CALL**

Vice-Chairman Tom Rivers, Commissioners Matt Brown and Chris Way were in attendance. Chairman Barry Benjamin joined the meeting later and Commissioner Sandy Flowers was absent for the entire meeting. The meeting was also attended by Mike Trudnak of Taylor Engineering, District Counsel Jim Bedsole and Secretary-Treasurer Elyse Kemper.

**4. ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

**A motion by Commissioner Brown to approve the agenda as prepared by Secretary Kemper was seconded by Vice-Chairman Rivers and unanimously approved.**

**5. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Vice-Chairman Rivers invoked a point of privilege to introduce visiting former commissioner Harry Frantz. Commissioner Frantz thanked Vice-Chairman Rivers and recounted that he was elected to the board in 1982 and again in 1986, and served as chairman for all eight years. He was chairman when the lens of the St. Augustine Lighthouse was destroyed by vandals. The Coast Guard replaced the lens with an electric light that did not rotate or shine toward the City of St. Augustine, and there were complaints. The Junior Service League came to the board with a request for funds to repair the lighthouse. The board ultimately approved some thirty thousand dollars for the repair.

**6. GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE COMMENTS**

Jim Piggott, Director of General Services for the City of St. Augustine, reported two derelict vessels were removed by the city from District waters in January and requested \$9,000.00 to complete disposal of the vessels.

**A motion by Commissioner Way to approve giving the City of St. Augustine \$9,000.00 from the District's derelict boat fund to process the two vessels was seconded by Commissioner Brown and passed unanimously.**

Mr. Piggott also reported the city has already turned in its grant application to the Florida Inland Navigation District for the next cycle of Salt Run dredging.

Vice-Chairman Rivers asked why a derelict boat was left on the ground without a trailer in the Vilano Boat Ramp parking lot.

Officer Josh Underwood, St. Johns County Sheriff's Office Marine Unit, addressed the board and said the boat had been tied to a floating dock at the boat ramp and abandoned. Afterwards, the boat sank. Rather than allow the vessel to stop traffic at the ramp, authorities decided to pull it from the water and leave it on the side of the ramp parking area until it can be removed and destroyed. Officer Underwood said the boat's registration records indicate it had been sold to a scrap company and that an investigation is continuing.

Officer Underwood continued, reporting that last month his agency performed 18 inspections, issuing 2 citations and 9 warnings. He said the Coast Guard's aids-to-navigation repair vessel will be out of commission until at least August, 2020, and that a notice to mariners has been posted on the USCG website. He also asked the board to consider installing lights on the end of the Vilano Boat Ramp jetty because at high tide, the jetty is submerged and invisible to boaters. Vice-Chairman Rivers asked Officer Underwood to obtain some cost estimates for the work. Commissioners Way and Brown also expressed support. The board directed Mr. Trudnak to look at the cost and report to the board.

Chairman Benjamin arrived at this point in the meeting.

Commissioner Brown asked Officer Underwood how well he thought zip ties would work as locks for marine sanitation devices given the fact they are easily removed. He also asked whether the locks would simply be handed out to boaters or if SJSO intends to apply them to each vessel.

Officer Underwood said the devices are not a perfect solution to the problem of waste dumping by boaters but will have an important effect after they are affixed by SJSO. He said most of the boaters are at marinas and City mooring fields and are therefore required to use the available city pump-out services. Boaters cannot legally remove locks unless they are offshore, so periodic checks of the locks should have a very positive effect.

**A motion by Commissioner Brown to spend up to \$200.00 to provide zip-tie style marine sanitation device locks to SJSO was seconded by Chairman Benjamin and passed unanimously.**

Teddy Meyer, St. Johns County Parks and Recreation, reported Butler Park West is now open. He said the plans for renovations at Doug Crane Park have been submitted to the State and he expects the permit for construction will be issued by May 1, 2020. He also reported the parking lot of the Vilano Boat Ramp will be paved soon and that the county expects to do the work in sections so as to avoid closing the ramp during paving.

Officer Joshua Lawrence, FWC, said his agency had been busy in the prior month with boating, fishing and oyster harvesting violations. The local branch of FWC has been notified they will receive a refurbished 29 foot Donzi patrol boat in the near future. He said FWC

would like to keep the vessel at the new Public Safety Dock at the Vilano Ramp with the SJSO and St. Johns County Fire and Rescue boats. FWC intends to request financial help from the District for the new boat lift and Officer Lawrence will return with cost figures when they receive them.

Carl Blow, St. Johns County's representative to the Florida Inland Navigation District, greeted the board and reported the City of St. Augustine had already filed its annual grant application to FIND. He said he will be meeting soon with county officials and expects to address with them issues such as Vilano Beach parking, the Butler Boat Ramp and the Palm Valley boat ramps.

## **7. SECRETARY-TREASURER'S REPORT**

Secretary-Treasurer Kemper delivered the financial report. As of January 31, 2020, the District has spent \$19,369 in committed funds, \$64,817 in operating expenses, and \$4,919 for the Summer Haven River project. As of that date, the District had on deposit \$2,575,357. Additional tax revenues of \$90,962 are expected in Fiscal Year 2019-2020. The board accepted the report without comment.

## **8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A motion by Commissioner Brown to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of January 21, 2020, was seconded by Vice-Chairman Rivers and passed unanimously.**

## **9. ENGINEERING REPORT**

Taylor Engineering had no report this month.

## **10. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A) Secretary/Treasurer Election**

**A motion by Chairman Benjamin to elect Elyse Kemper Secretary-Treasurer was seconded by Vice-Chairman Rivers and passed unanimously.**

### **B) Final presentation - May Street boat ramp**

Tabled

## **11. OLD BUSINESS**

### **A) Summer Haven Insurance Claim**

Mr. Bedsole reported he had spoken to several attorneys and had not yet located a qualified and willing attorney. Mr. Bedsole added the chief librarian of St. Augustine Historical

Society has agreed to assist with the archives. Mr. Bedsole said he has been advised the applicant will attend the next board meeting with a proposal for consideration by the board.

B) Engineering Services

Commissioner Way began the discussion by polling board members and FIND Commissioner Carl Blow regarding their experiences with Taylor Engineering. Commissioner Blow, Chairman Benjamin and Vice-Chairman Rivers, who together have over three decades of experience with Taylor Engineering, each reported they have nothing but positive impressions regarding the firm. Commissioner Brown said he had spoken to the county's engineers who emphasized Taylor's expertise in hydrological engineering. Commissioner Brown said Taylor's expertise and long history with the District leads him to support Taylor as the right choice. Chairman Benjamin said he appreciates the fact Taylor has always attended meetings without charge and provided a single, personal contact at their firm who is available at any time to answer his questions.

**A motion by Chairman Benjamin to approve Taylor Engineering as the District's engineer was seconded by Commissioner Way and passed unanimously.**

Mr. Bedsole said Taylor should provide a new contract for a term of at least two years. Mr. Trudnak suggested their usual contract term is three (3) years in order to facilitate continuity of planning, and that he will present a new contract for approval at the next meeting.

FIND Commissioner Blow said his agency reviews Taylor's billing practices annually and that they are always competitive. He also praised Taylor's expertise in dredging and hydrological engineering.

**12. PUBLIC COMMENT - NONE**

**13. COMMENTS BY COMMISSIONERS - NONE**

**14. NEXT MEETING:**

Chairman Benjamin announced the next regular meeting of the board will be held at 3:00 PM on Tuesday, March 24, 2020, in the St. Augustine Beach City Commission Room.

**15. ADJOURN**

There being no further business, Chairman Benjamin adjourned the meeting at 3:31 p.m.

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Secretary-Treasurer

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Chairman