

ST. AUGUSTINE PORT, WATERWAY & BEACH DISTRICT
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
Tuesday, February 20, 2018

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 20, 2018.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:**

Vice-Chairman Barry Benjamin 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:**

Vice-Chairman Benjamin, and Commissioners Chris Way, Tom Rivers 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 January 31, 2018, the District had spent \$99,969.00 of its budget for Fiscal Year 2017-2018, the largest expenses being operating expenses and removal of debris from Matanzas Bay after Hurricane Irma. As of that date, District funds available totaled \$2,236,466.00 of which \$392,581.00 remained for this fiscal year. Expected remaining tax revenue for this year is \$92,239.00. The segregated fund for the Summer Haven River Restoration Project contains \$28,552.00 of the \$50,000 grant received from FIND. All of the funds provided by the Florida Legislature for this project have been expended.

5. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

The board considered the minutes of the regular meeting of January 16, 2018.

A motion by Commissioner Helman to approve the minutes of the January 16, 2018, regular meeting was seconded by Commissioner Benjamin and passed unanimously.

6. **ENGINEERING REPORT:**

Mike Trudnak delivered the engineering report on behalf of Taylor Engineering. He said the marine contractor was finally able to replace Markers 2, 4 and 7 in Salt Run but added

that Markers 1 and 12 had disappeared since the last meeting and also needed to be replaced. He requested the board to approve the replacement of markers 1 and 12 at a cost of approximately \$1,650.00 per marker. The board unanimously approved the request.

7. **OLD BUSINESS:** NONE

8. **NEW BUSINESS:**

A. Sea Oats Project - Mayor Undine George. St. Augustine Beach Mayor Undine George failed to appear as scheduled. In her place, City Manager Max Royle said he would obtain a firm estimate of the amount the City of St. Augustine Beach would need for sea oats replanting and present that at the next regular meeting.

B. Resolution for Supervisor of Elections. District Counsel Jim Bedsole presented a proposed resolution for the board's review and approval in response to the request by the St. Johns County Supervisor of Elections for ballot information. The proposed resolution, No. 18-01, details current commissioner information, the seats scheduled for election, the terms of office for each seat, and the date on which new board members will be assuming office.

A motion by Vice-Chairman Benjamin to approve Resolution No. 18-01 was seconded by Commissioner Rivers and passed unanimously.

9. **GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE COMMENTS:**

Jim Piggott, Director of General Services, City of St. Augustine, asked the board to approve a shift of overtime funds for marine law enforcement to include the Fire Department so funds can be used for Fire Department overtime. He said during periods of peak demand, both agencies field marine staff and should be treated equally.

Vice-Chairman Benjamin moved to approve the City's request to fund overtime for fire fighters serving on marine duty from the \$8,000 fund in this year's budget. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Way and passed unanimously.

Corporal Josh Underwood, St. Johns County Sheriff's Office Marine Unit, reported on his organization's activities for the past month which included inspections, enforcement actions, derelict vessel identification, and public education events. He said next month they will conduct emergency flare identification practice off St. Augustine Beach near the county pier.

Carl Blow, St. Johns County's member of the board of the Florida Inland Navigation District, reported that grant requests from agencies in St. Johns County to FIND total only \$203,000 this year, and encouraged interested parties to take advantage of the remaining funds in FIND's budget by filing additional grant requests. Mr. Blow then distributed written information regarding cost sharing between FIND and the federal government for maintenance dredging of the Intracoastal Waterway and the Okeechobee Waterway across lower Florida. He said FIND was originally created in the 1970s to obtain the real estate needed for dredging operations but that, as federal funds diminished over the ensuing

decades, FIND began assuming more of the cost of actual dredging operations, even though maintenance of federal waterways is a federal responsibility. He said many local agencies affected by the Intracoastal Waterway have joined together to form the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway Association which serves as a lobbying agency and clearinghouse for information regarding the waterway.

In response to questions from Commissioner Helman, Mr. Blow said FIND supports public access to water through grant funds. He said the county is planning an expanded boat launch facility under the west side of the PVPV bridge, but that none of the \$600,000 cost can be paid by FIND this year because the county does not yet have a permit for the work. He also said plans to renourish beaches north of the inlet depend on the issuance of a final permit and the contribution of eighty percent local funds. He said the greatest problem facing the project now is the hugely diminished value of oceanfront parcels damaged by the recent hurricanes.

Commissioner Rivers asked Ellis Zahra, Friends of Summer Haven River, to elucidate on a photograph Mr. Zahra had provided to commissioners. Mr. Zahra said the photograph is of the north end of the river near the Mellon Park Boat Ramp. He said the ramp is now open but the north end of the river near the A1A bridge is clogged. He said FOSHR members are contributing one hundred thousand dollars of their own funds to have the contractor open the clogged area. Linda Ginn, FOSHR, said the sand removed by the contractor will be placed on the berm east of the river and will be planted with stabilizing vegetation.

Responding to comments and questions from Commissioner Rivers, Mr. Blow said FIND's disaster reserve fund increased from one million to 2.7 million dollars but that almost all of it has been spent on requests from Volusia County, St. Augustine, Cocoa, and Miami-Dade County. He said the fund was established as a one-time disaster reserve which will not be replenished because FIND's primary concern is the maintenance of the Intracoastal Waterway. Public access to the waterway is its secondary purpose. He said FIND must avoid becoming a funding source for local governments because the needs are too great. Accordingly, he advised the board to carefully maintain its own reserve fund.

- 10. **PUBLIC COMMENT: NONE**
- 11. **COMMENTS BY COMMISSIONERS: NONE**
- 12. **NEXT MEETING**

Vice-Chairman Benjamin announced the next meeting of the board will be held at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 20, 2018, in the St. Augustine Beach City Commission Room.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business, Vice-Chairman Benjamin adjourned the meeting at 4:00 p.m.

Secretary-Treasurer

Chairman