

**ST. AUGUSTINE PORT, WATERWAY & BEACH DISTRICT**  
**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING**  
**Tuesday, July 16, 2019**

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 16, 2019.

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Barry Benjamin 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**

Chairman Barry Benjamin, and Commissioners Matt Brown, Sandy Flowers and Chris Way were in attendance. Vice-Chairman Tom Rivers was absent. 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 June 30, 2019, the District had spent a total of \$375,823 in Fiscal Year 2018-2019, including \$111,745 in operating expenses and \$264,078 for projects. As of that date, the District had collected \$524,978 in tax revenues and had a total of \$2,264,546 on deposit, of which \$2,114,028 was available for use. The Summer Haven River account balance was \$114,568.

5. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A motion by Chairman Benjamin to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of June 18, 2019, was seconded by Commissioner Brown and passed unanimously.**

6. **ENGINEERING REPORT**

Mike Trudnak delivered the engineering report on behalf of Taylor Engineering. He said the Florida Department of Transportation responded to his letter regarding the use of FDOT right-of-way for parking at the May Street boat launch with a request for a meeting. He said the proposed use is regarded as unusual by FDOT and that it may require a lease. Also, the District will be responsible for installing any improvements and will have to maintain them. Commissioner Flowers said she would like to attend any meeting with the city and Mr. Trudnak said he would let her know the schedule.

In response to further questions from Commissioner Flowers, Mr. Bedsole and Mr. Trudnak explained the procedure for payment of the contractor's most recent draw for Summer

Haven. Mr. Bedsole said the board approves payment upon completion of the work when it approves the applicable change order. The contractor notifies the engineer when the work is finished and the engineer then verifies the work has been satisfactorily completed. When the District receives the engineer's verification, the contractor is paid for the work completed. This was the process used throughout the project. Mr. Trudnak then clarified that the as-built survey recently provided by the contractor only covered the portion of the project subject to Change Orders 7 and 8, not the entire project.

Commissioner Flowers renewed her request for Taylor Engineering's entire file regarding the Summer Haven River restoration. Mr. Trudnak said he is compiling the information and will supply it as soon as possible. Commissioner Flowers said she wanted every email and text message, as well. She went on to say she had spoken to a dredge operator who told her a seventy-foot dredge with a fourteen-inch pipe will fit into the river. Mr. Trudnak said no contractor with such a dredge bid on the job when it began. He said Turnbull Environmental's proposed methods were much less expensive than a floating dredge. Now, the cost will be 25 to 30 dollars per cubic yard, versus \$15 per yard charged by Turnbull, if a dredge operator does more work. Turnbull dredged 58,000 cubic yards this year for \$805,000, which equals about \$14 per cubic yard.

Vice-Chairman Rivers said Commissioner Flowers' comments reflect her personal position and not the position of the board. Commissioner Flowers agreed.

## **7. GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE COMMENTS**

Josh Underwood, St. Johns County Sheriff's Office Marine Unit, said his agency's staff spent 134 hours on the water last month, responded to 92 calls for service, issued 27 warnings and 12 citations, and participated in 3 search and rescues. He said the new patrol boat partly funded by the District will arrive in August and that board members will be invited to the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the boat. He also asked the board to consider paying for a mooring ball in the city field so SJSO has a place to temporarily moor vessels taken into custody. Chairman Benjamin said the city would probably give them one free.

Corey Sickle, City of St. Augustine, said they were picking up the new police boat today. They collected two derelict floating docks last week near Maria Sanchez Creek and have been unable to identify their owner.

Lt. Steve Zukowski and Officer Bill Miller, FWC, reported there were no new derelict vessels this month. Two boats were grounded after fireworks on July 4<sup>th</sup> and two others collided. One left the scene, resulting in a citation for leaving an accident. On July 3, a cabin cruiser caught fire at Matanzas Inlet and burned to the water line. There were no injuries. One BUI occurred during July 4 weekend.

FIND Commissioner Carl Blow said his agency will be dredging in the county from August to October, 2019, where 300,000 cubic yards of sand will be removed from the ICW near Matanzas Inlet and placed on the beach at a cost of \$3,000,000. He said FIND is now engaged in a similar job in northern Flagler County and that the sand is pumped to a facility through five miles of pipe.



He said grant presentations for this year are complete and the FIND board is scoring the applications. He said five applications came from St. Johns County, mostly for the improvement of county boat ramps. He said there is \$10 million set aside for the grant program which goes to the top grant applications until the money is spent. He said \$36 million in grants were requested. A total of \$704,000 was available this year for grants in St. Johns County, but grant requests this year total only \$433,000. Flagler County asked for nothing at all.

In response to comments from Vice-Chairman Rivers, Mr. Blow said there are not enough boat ramp and water access points in St. Johns County to keep up with the growing demand. Some counties ask FIND for help funding boat ramp design costs, which are funded on a 50/50 basis.

## **8. OLD BUSINESS**

### **A. Dredge/Driver inquiry - Commissioner Flowers**

Commissioner Flowers presented information regarding the District purchasing a dredge. She said a new dredge can be purchased for \$1,200,000 and that a loan payment would be \$10,600 per month if the District bought one with a loan. She said dredges like this rent for \$65,000 per month and that the District could rent it out to contractors. Commissioner Flowers said this is only her opinion and she does not want the board to vote on it. She then asked Secretary-Treasurer Kemper why Kemper had labeled Commissioner Flowers' emails as spam. Ms. Kemper said it was probably done automatically by someone's computer, probably Commissioner Flowers' own. Commissioner Flowers said her car and boat have also been vandalized recently.

Commissioner Way said buying a barge or dredge means the District would become a marine contractor. He said he cannot support the idea. Vice-Chairman Rivers said the big problem is storing a barge. Carl Blow said the most vexing problem in the dredge business today is where to off-load the dredged material. He said the material has to be dried out at a temporary site, then hauled to a permanent site. FIND has hundreds of acres of land along Florida's coast just for this purpose. FDEP has recently compounded the problem by prohibiting dumping material from salt water because of the chemical content. He said the most helpful thing would be acquiring land for temporary storage. These sites are lined with impermeable material and are equipped with monitoring wells. He said sites need to be 10 to 15 acres and cleared.

In response to questions from former Commissioner Jerry Dixon, Mr. Blow said trucking dredge material to a licensed or out-of-state site is now \$60 per cubic yard, versus \$30 a few years ago.

**Chairman Benjamin asked for a roll-call vote on whether the board should continue to discuss buying a barge or dredge. Chairman Benjamin voted no. Vice-Chairman Rivers voted no. Commissioner Way voted no. Commissioners Brown voted yes. Commissioner Flowers voted yes.**

**9. NEW BUSINESS:**

**A. Proposed Millage Rate - TRIM**

Secretary-Treasurer Elyse Kemper presented information on possible millage rates and budget choices for the 2019-2020 fiscal year.

**A motion by Vice-Chairman Rivers to use last year's millage rate of 0.0638 as the tentative rate, was seconded by Chairman Benjamin and passed by a unanimous roll-call vote.**

**10. PUBLIC COMMENT: NONE**

**11 COMMENTS BY COMMISSIONERS**

Commissioner Way said he received a call inquiring about no-wake zones. Lt. Steve Zukowski said FWC has control of the designation of speed zones and that ramps on the ICW are within state jurisdiction. Usually, zones are imposed where fuel is sold or where accidents are likely to occur. Ramps not on the ICW may receive zone designation by FWC upon request by a city or county.

Commissioner Flowers asked Teddy Meyer, St. Johns County Parks and Recreation, about the status of the Butler Boat Ramp. He said the boat ramp will be re-opened after the Treasure Beach dredging project is finished. He added that the work on Doug Crane Park will begin when the FIND grant money is received. Commissioner Flowers further reported that boats in dry storage are leaving St. Augustine and the State of Florida because some insurance companies now refuse to insure boats kept here.

Steve Mattich, St. Augustine Marine, said insurers are unwilling to cover boats in Florida. He said his business and others are losing money because of the loss of these customers. He said dry or hard storage is prohibited in Florida by some carriers.

Commissioner Flowers asked Vice-Chairman Rivers if there was any progress with expanding the District to all of St. Johns County. Vice-Chairman Rivers said there has been no progress. Commissioner Flowers then discussed the Corps of Engineers' aquatic ecosystem preservation program. Commissioner Brown said the Corps director for St. Johns County will come to a meeting and explain the program. Commissioner Flowers said she will invite him to the next meeting, if possible.

Vice-Chairman Rivers recognized former Commissioner Jerry Dixon. Mr. Dixon said he took his boat out of the water during the hurricanes and received no damage, while local boats in the water received extensive damage.

13. **NEXT MEETING:**

Chairman Benjamin announced the next regular meeting of the board will be held at 3:00 PM on Tuesday, August 20, 2019, in the St. Augustine Beach City Commission Room.

14. **ADJOURN**

There being no further business, Chairman Benjamin adjourned the meeting at 4:40 PM.

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Secretary-Treasurer

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Chairman

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