

SEPTEMBER 6, 2011

PORT ST. JOE, FLORIDA

SPECIAL MEETING

The Gulf County Board of County Commissioners met this date in a special meeting with the following members present: Chairman Warren J. Yeager, Jr., Vice Chairman Bill Williams, and Commissioners Carmen L. McLemore, Ward McDaniel, and Tan Smiley.

Others present were: Clerk of Court Rebecca L. Norris, Deputy Clerk Tracy Tharpe, Sheriff Joe Nugent, Supervisor of Elections Linda Griffin, County Attorney Jeremy Novak, Chief Administrator Don Butler, Assistant Administrator Michael Hammond, Deputy Administrator Lynn Lanier, Grant Writer Towan Kopinsky, G.I.S. Coordinator Scott Warner, Building Official Lee Collinsworth, Planner David Richardson, Emergency Management Director Marshall Nelson, and T.D.C. Director Tim Kerigan.

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m., E.T., by Chairman Yeager.

LOT 10, BLOCK "C" HIGHLAND VIEW-EUBANKS ESTATES CONVEYANCE

County Attorney Novak discussed Lot 10, Block "C" in Highland View (Clay Eubanks estate currently in Probate), stating the subject property has code violations and the personal representative and attorneys for the estate have offered the property to the County for public use in lieu of the code fines. He noted there was a lien by Vision Bank against the property and after discussion with the banks attorneys, they indicated as long as the county took possession of and used the property for public use, they would release the lien. County Attorney Novak stated he would issue a general release of liability to the bank upon conveyance of the property to the County. Mr. Novak presented pictures of the property to the Board for review. Upon inquiry by Commissioner McLemore concerning the location and possible use of the property, Chairman Yeager stated it could be sold after the real estate market improves. Commissioner Williams discussed the restructuring of the S.H.I.P. program, stating it may be something they could do with critical personnel with law enforcement as part of the County's ongoing affordable housing strategy. Commissioner Williams moved to accept County Attorney Novak's recommendation to accept the property and asked that he (the attorney) follow up with the Fire Department and Sheriff regarding critical personnel. Commissioner McDaniel seconded the motion for discussion and inquired about the acreage. County Attorney Novak responded stating he wasn't sure but no more than $\frac{1}{4}$ of an acre. Commissioner McLemore reported the property has an old house on it that would need to be torn down and would be the only expense for the County. The motion then passed 5-0.

F.E.M.A./CBRA

Chairman Yeager discussed ongoing critical issues at the Cape, noting one being a project over \$15 million dollars that F.E.M.A. is holding up. He stated if these issues are going to be pushed through; the County needs the federal lobbyist. Chairman Yeager informed the Board that he and Mr. Butler had an extensive discussion with this group (The Ferguson Group, LLC) who feel they not only can assist with the F.E.M.A. issue, but also the CBRA issue, stating they have been successful with this same issue with other clients. Chairman Yeager reported an amount has been negotiated but benchmarks need to be established to measure the goals and to determine if the money is being well spent. Chief Administrator Butler pointed out two (2) strong-points; (1) the County needs F.E.M.A. reimbursement, and (2) CBRA removal at St. Joseph Peninsula. Chief Administrator Butler stated there were other items this group could assist with, such as, infrastructure and Port issues. Chairman Yeager reported a negotiated monthly amount of \$6,500.00 that had been reached but the benchmarks would need to be tied down within the next day or two. Chairman Yeager stated The Port Authority is applying for a Tiger III grant (for the Inter-Coastal canal side and Arizona Chemical site) and for an additional \$1,000.00 the lobbying firm could assist with getting that set up. Chairman Yeager stated for \$7,500.00 a month this firm could work on these three (3) issues and noted this was a budgeted item. Commissioner Williams discussed, then moved to accept the administrations recommendation to enter into a contract with The Ferguson Group, LLC, with benchmarks and periodic reviews (Bid/R.F.Q. #2011-32). Commissioner McLemore seconded for discussion and inquired about whether any timelines had been developed. Chairman Yeager stated that is the reason there will be benchmarks and noted this firm has indicated results within 6 months to 12 months. He further stated there will be a "30-day out" to end the contract. The second and motion were amended to include a review in 6 months. Upon Commissioner McDaniel's inquiry it was noted that The Ferguson Group, LLC have offices located in Washington, D.C., South Carolina, and Florida. Commissioner Williams stated that The Port Authority will have to come to bear with funds too. Commissioners McDaniel and McLemore pointed out that it was a gamble for 6 months at \$50,000.00 with the possibility of millions in return. The motion then passed 5-0.

Commissioner Williams discussed potential funding from the T.D.C. to help with this. Commissioner McLemore stated Chairman Yeager and Commissioner Williams can do this and he felt comfortable with them being in Washington (travel) helping to promote this. Chairman Yeager acknowledged that he and Commissioner Williams will go when called upon to do so.

REDISTRICTING

Commissioner McLemore recognized the map on display as the scenario tentatively approved to this point and recommended the Board use this map as a starting point. G.I.S. Coordinator Scott Warner distributed four (4) other possible scenarios. At Commissioner Williams' request, County Attorney Novak discussed the requirements and directives of the redistricting process, noting the deviations in numbers should be kept between 1% and 3%. He warned the Board that anything over 10% is a "red flag" to the State, however District 4 is an exception due to the Federal Consent Decree and

the Board still had to take this into consideration. Discussion continued among Commissioners about the process, possible boundaries, the Federal Consent Decree, and the study done by the law firm of Sniffen and Spellman, P.A. Upon inquiry by Chairman Yeager, G.I.S. Coordinator Warner confirmed the scenario on display is what the Board tentatively adopted at the previous meeting with boundary changes for Districts 1, 2, and 3. Mr. Warner discussed the 4 other scenarios that he provided at the beginning of the meeting. Supervisor of Elections Linda Griffin appeared and asked if the Board had considered eliminating the voting precinct in Overstreet due to the changes made to this point. Discussion followed about future cost factors related to the 2014 A.D.A. compliance requirement, and early and absentee voting history for that area. Barbara Radcliff appeared before the Board and stated the first thing the Board should do is realign each district so they are within the 1-3 percent range as the law requires, stating the intent of the law is one person one vote. She recommended the Board follow that for all five (5) districts based on the State requirement. Discussion followed with County Attorney Novak giving a brief overview of the history behind the Federal Consent Decree, also noting the recommendation of Michael Spellman. Discussion ensued about county-wide voting. Chairman Yeager called for everyone to stay on topic, which is redistricting. Patricia Hardman addressed the Board stating they must redistrict because the law says they must redistrict; and they must stay within that 1-3 percent margin. Ms. Hardman recommended the Board leave District 4 alone for now but make the others in conformance with the law; send it to the State then let the State fight that argument with the Court, not the County. Assistant Administrator Hammond stated that sending it to the State with a 1-3 percent margin will not work because Gulf County does not include the prisoners like everyone else does. Commissioner McLemore moved to adopt scenario #4 which put Districts 1, 2, 3, and 5 very close, and leaving District 4 as it is. Commissioner Smiley seconded the motion. For clarity, Commissioners McDaniel and McLemore confirmed the District 1 and 2 boundary line would remain at the Jehu Road, with District 3 proceeding to Pleasant Rest Cemetery straight into the canal. At Commissioner Williams request, the motion and second were amended for District 3 to include the Eastern side of County Road 386 (Buddy Floor down to Fire Station) and everything South of the canal. The motion then passed 5-0. Commissioner Yeager directed that Scenario #4 be posted to the County website and be placed in the Boards upcoming agenda.

There being no further business and upon motion by Commissioner McLemore, the meeting did then adjourn at 5:05 p.m., E.T.

**WARREN J. YEAGER, JR.
CHAIRMAN**

**ATTEST:
REBECCA L. NORRIS
CLERK**