

## **PORT ST. JOE, FLORIDA**

**MAY 15, 2008**

### **WORKSHOP**

The Gulf County Board of County Commissioners met this date in workshop session with the following members present: Chairman Billy E. Traylor, Commissioners Jerry W. Barnes, Nathan Peters, Jr., Carmen L. McLemore, and Bill Williams.

Others present were: City of Port St. Joe Mayor Mel Magidson, Jr., City of Port St. Joe Commissioner Benny Roberts, City of Port St. Joe Manager Charlie Weston, City of Wewahitchka Mayor Ray Dickens, City of Wewahitchka Commissioners Tony Justice, Philip Gaskin, and Brian Cox, EDC Board Members Tom Graney, Jim Garth, Jerald Gaskin, Eddie Fields, Joe Rentfro, Ralph Rish, Andrew Rowell, and Jenny Vincent, NCDS Representative Arty Allen, County Attorney Tim McFarland, Clerk of Circuit Court Rebecca L. Norris, Deputy Clerk Kayla Duke, Chief Administrator Don Butler, Deputy Administrator Lynn Lanier, Human Resource Director Denise Manuel, Building Official Lee Collinsworth, Building Inspector George Knight, Solid Waste Director Joe Danford, and G.I.S. Director Scott Warner.

Chairman Traylor called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m., E.T.

#### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (EDC)**

Chairman Traylor thanked the City of Port St. Joe and Wewahitchka Mayors and Commissioners for showing their support by attending this meeting.

President of the EDC Tom Graney appeared before the Board and gave a PowerPoint Presentation to update the public on the EDC process. Graney recognized members of the EDC Board. Graney stated that the purpose of the EDC is to establish a public-private partnership to deal with the need for economic growth in Gulf County. Graney stated the mission and functions of the EDC, and expressed the need to improve inter-agency correspondence. Graney introduced National Community Development Services (NCDS) Representative Arty Allen, who appeared to discuss the requirements of a model economic development program. Mr. Allen discussed the history of NCDS, and discussed different communities that they have worked in, and gave statistics for two communities that are similar to Gulf County. Allen discussed factors that you must have to have a successful EDC, such as a clear strategy and committed leadership, etc. Allen discussed steps taken to increase economic growth in various counties. Graney stated statistics for Gulf County jobs and payroll. Chairman Traylor inquired regarding the statistics that Graney gave. Graney stated that the number he gave for people employed in Gulf County does not include self-employed or government employed. Mr. Allen continued his presentation, stating that the emphasis should be on the program, and the program should be based on the specific needs of Gulf County. Allen discussed going into the community and testing the plan, and raising funds for the program. Graney stated that it is important to realize the individual responsibilities of each person on the Board. Graney discussed the budget for

the EDC, and stated that economic development is a competitive business. Graney stated that the EDC needs \$30,000.00 to get through this budget year and discussed that the amount should be split between the three governments. Graney discussed bringing in NCDS or a similar company to assist in developing a plan for economic growth. Chairman Traylor inquired if any of the EDC Board members wished to speak. Ralph Rish discussed that the EDC is committed to this plan, and there will be positive results if everyone contributes. City of Port St. Joe Mayor Mel Magidson Jr discussed that he is aware of the need for economic growth, and stated that his concern is that there are businesses who are trying to locate here unsuccessfully. Chairman Traylor discussed competition between different counties that have more to offer than Gulf County, and discussed the need for the EDC to remain committed. Commissioner Williams thanked the EDC for the presentation, and stated the need to support EDC in the upcoming budget. Williams inquired about the budget for EDC. Graney discussed where the different funds will be going. Commissioner McLemore thanked the EDC, and discussed his concerns with the problem of funding. Williams stated that if the EDC continues to be led by businessmen, there will be positive results. Commissioner Peters stated that he supports EDC completely, and is very pleased with the presentation. He further discussed unfair prices and favoritism that has been shown by the City of Port St. Joe to local businesses and stated that it is very important for the cities to work together with the County to support the EDC and provide fair prices for companies that want to buy property. Commissioner Barnes stated that he believes the EDC will bring good job opportunities into the County. Chairman Traylor discussed what Mayor Mel Magidson Jr. addressed earlier concerning businesses that are trying to come in unsuccessfully. Chairman Traylor stated that in the past years they have had a bad relationship with EDC, but it will not happen again. Chief Administrator Butler stated the importance of having someone from the EDC to sit on the EZDA. Graney introduced temporary hire Jenny Vincent, who has worked in this capacity before. <Mayor Mel Magidson, Jr. left the meeting.> City Manager Charlie Weston expressed his support of the EDC Board and stated the importance of economic stability. Chairman Traylor expressed his gratefulness at the outcome of the meeting, and stated that the Board will meet with the cities to discuss sharing the cost of funding for the EDC.

There being no further business, the meeting did then adjourn at 3:47 p.m., E.T.

**BILLY E. TRAYLOR**  
**CHAIRMAN**

**ATTEST:**

**REBECCA L. NORRIS**  
**CLERK**

