

PORT ST. JOE, FLORIDA

FEBRUARY 12, 2008

SPECIAL MEETING

The Gulf County Board of County Commissioners met this date in special session with the following members present: Chairman Billy E. Traylor (entered at 5:08 p.m.), Vice Chairman Nathan Peters, Jr. and Commissioners Carmen L. McLemore, Bill Williams, and Jerry W. Barnes.

Others present were: County Attorney Timothy McFarland, Deputy Clerk Kari Summers, Clerk Finance Officer Carla Hand, Chief Administrator Don Butler, Deputy Administrator Lynn Lanier, Building Official Lee Collinsworth, Emergency Management Director Marshall Nelson, G.I.S. Director Scott Warner, Grant Writer Loretta Costin, Human Resources Director Denise Manuel, Mosquito Control Director Mark Cothran, Planner David Richardson, Public Works Director Gerald Shearer, Road Department Superintendent Bobby Knee, Assistant Road Department Superintendent Chris Wood, Solid Waste Director Joe Danford, Union Steward Doug Kelly, Veterans' Service Officer James Kennedy, Sheriff Joe Nugent, and Sheriff's Office Major Bobby Plair.

Vice Chairman Peters called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m., E.T.

BUDGET

SOLID WASTE / LANDFILL

Upon inquiry, Solid Waste Director Danford reported that he has no additional information since last week's meeting.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Emergency Management Director Nelson reported that when he attended conference, he was told that there is a good possibility that the County will lose the Federal grant (50/50) of \$23,000.00 during the next budget cycle.

UNION

Upon inquiry by Acting Chairman Peters, Union Steward Kelly stated that they received the letter from the Board.

SOLID WASTE / LANDFILL

Upon inquiry by Commissioner Williams, Solid Waste Director Danford stated that it is too early to know if his grant funds will be affected.

STATE BUDGET

Commissioner Williams discussed that the State is looking at a \$2 billion shortfall in their budget, and this is generally passed down as cuts to the County. He also stated that the Tax Reform Commission is considering placing a referendum on the ballot in November regarding going to the 2005-06 rolled-back rate.

PROPERTY ASSESSMENTS

Upon inquiry by Commissioner McLemore, Chief Administrator Butler reported that 200 parcels have been added to the tax roll. Commissioner McLemore requested that Chief Administrator Butler set him up a meeting with Property Appraiser Colbert next week.

<Acting Chairman Peters passed the Chair to Chairman Traylor at 5:08 p.m.>

COUNTY DEPARTMENT CONSOLIDATION

Upon inquiry by Chairman Traylor, Commissioner Peters reported that he and Chief Administrator Butler met with Clay Smallwood of The St. Joe Company regarding the possibility of a land swap for a location for consolidation of the County Departments. He stated that we would swap the 40 acres at Fleming's Curve for 30 acres near the intersection of Doc Whitfield (Howard Creek Road, C. R. 50 and S. R. 71). He presented a map showing the location that was agreed upon, and stated that Mr. Smallwood is going to Jacksonville to discuss it with The St. Joe Company (it looks very favorable). Chief Administrator Butler reported that Mr. Smallwood liked the idea because The St. Joe Company can use the low area at Fleming's Curve to grow pine trees. He stated that St. Joe Company would also benefit from the County running water and sewer to the new site. Commissioner Peters stated that Mr. Smallwood requested that the Board submit the recommendation for the 100 acres St. Joe is donating to the County for the landfill. Chairman Traylor commended Marie Logan for her reporting in *The Star* on the budget meeting from last week. After discussion by members of the Board regarding the costs associated with consolidation and how much it would save, Commissioner Peters motioned to proceed with the land swap if it is approved by The St. Joe Company. Commissioner McLemore seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. Chairman Traylor passed the Chair to Vice Chairman Peters, and left the meeting (5:20 p.m.). After further discussion regarding the benefits to the County, Commissioner Williams discussed the Board needs to know the long-term savings to the County, grants available for infrastructure, etc. Commissioner McLemore stated this just has to be taken one step at a time.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Marjorie Stitt appeared before the Board to state that she is not in support of another one-half cent sales tax because of the utility taxes the public will be facing in the future.

M.S.B.U.

Commissioner Williams discussed the proposed M.S.B.U. and the feasibility study that will be done, stating that he has received opposition to this at town hall meetings. He stated that it is important to reduce ad valorem taxes to offset the M.S.B.U. Upon inquiry by Acting Chairman Peters, Solid Waste Director Danford stated that they cannot proceed further with the M.S.B.U. until the feasibility study is complete. <Acting Chairman Peters passed the Chair to Chairman Traylor at 5:27 p.m.> Upon inquiry by Commissioner Peters, Chief Administrator Butler reported that they have advertised for proposals (this may be a sole-source item, but they will not know until proposals are received). County Attorney McFarland stated that the Company will tell us how to apportion the fee among the various parcels of land. After further discussion, Chief Administrator Butler reported that the proposals will be opened on March 3rd.

PARKS & RECREATION

Commissioner Williams reported that Bobby Pickels will be leaving Congressman Boyd's Office (someone else will be hired next week, and must live in Bay or Gulf County). He stated that Mr. Pickels is going to work with Progress Energy, and he has agreed to ask the company to come in to do feasibility studies on each County Park to help save utility costs.

There being no further business and upon motion by Commissioner McLemore, the meeting did then adjourn at 5:31 p.m., E.T.

**BILLY E. TRAYLOR
CHAIRMAN**

ATTEST:

**REBECCA L. NORRIS
CLERK**