

Pinellas County



Minutes - Final

Friday, March 13, 2020

3:00 P.M.

Emergency Board of County Commissioners (BCC) Meeting

BCC Assembly Room

Board of County Commissioners

Pat Gerard, Chair

Dave Eggers, Vice-Chair

Charlie Justice

Janet C. Long

Kathleen Peters

Karen Williams Seel

Kenneth T. Welch

ROLL CALL - 3:00 P.M.

Present: 7 - Chair Pat Gerard, Vice-Chair Dave Eggers, Charlie Justice, Janet C. Long, Kathleen Peters, Karen Williams Seel, and Kenneth T. Welch

Others Present: Barry A. Burton, County Administrator; Jewel White, County Attorney; Ken Burke, Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller; and Jenny Masinovsky, Board Reporter, Deputy Clerk

1. Emergency BCC Meeting

Chair Gerard announced that the meeting is being held to discuss the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19); and that the members will be considering declaring a state of local emergency in order to grant the County Administrator certain authority to act as necessary to ensure public safety.

Mr. Burton indicated that the World Health Organization has proclaimed COVID-19 a pandemic; that declaration of a national emergency is anticipated; and that Governor Ron DeSantis has declared a state of emergency in Florida, and several counties have followed suit. He noted that there are two positive cases of the disease in Pinellas County, both travel related; that the primary focus is on slowing down its spread in order to not overwhelm the health and emergency systems; and that discussions with city managers and mitigating measures, such as enhanced sanitation, have commenced; whereupon, he requested that the Board delegate to him the authority for additional measures to be taken as necessary, including cancelling mass gatherings and reducing visitation at long-term care facilities.

At Mr. Burton's request, Dr. Ulyee Choe, Director of Florida Department of Health (DOH) in Pinellas County, provided an update on how the situation relating to COVID-19 has changed since his report to the Commission three days ago, stressing that it is evolving rapidly; and that it is important to obtain accurate information from sources such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the DOH. He discussed the number of COVID-19 cases and associated fatalities in the county, the state, the country, and worldwide; testing for the disease; and individual actions for protection against it, indicating that the current cases are being investigated; and that the DOH is working with community partners on mitigating strategies, focusing on vulnerable populations.

In response to queries by the members, Dr. Choe provided hotline phone numbers for the public to call regarding COVID-19 symptoms and discussed what those symptoms are. He noted that the State has ordered additional testing kits; and that the pandemic could last for a number of months. Emergency Management Director Catherine Perkins provided input regarding capacities of county hospitals, working to understand the needs for supplies, statistics relating to long-term care facilities, and enacting the measures needed to help keep those facilities safe; whereupon, she noted the importance of being kind and supporting one another, especially the most vulnerable residents, in this difficult time.

Mr. Burton provided information pertaining to a COVID-19 dedicated up-to-date online information source, County schools, upcoming elections, and safety measures for County

employees. The members urged the public to stop the hoarding of products such as hand sanitizers and toilet paper because the stores are sold out, and Commissioner Eggers noted that Tampa Bay Water has implemented infectious disease control mechanisms.

Chair Gerard thanked Dr. Choe and Ms. Perkins, County partners, and staff for their efforts in promptly responding to the situation.

A motion was made by Commissioner Long, seconded by Vice-Chair Eggers, that the proposed resolution declaring a State of Local Emergency be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Chair Gerard, Vice-Chair Eggers, Commissioner Justice, Commissioner Long, Commissioner Peters, Commissioner Seel, and Commissioner Welch

Resolution No. 20-16 adopted declaring a State of Local Emergency as of 3:00 P.M. on March 13, 2020, as provided in Section 252.38(3)(a)5, Florida Statutes.

Chair Gerard and Mr. Burton indicated that the resolution will be in effect for seven days, after which it may need to be extended.

ADJOURNMENT - 3:27 P.M.

Chair

ATTEST: KEN BURKE, CLERK

By _____
Deputy Clerk