

Pinellas County

315 Court Street
Clearwater, Florida 33756



Minutes - Final

Tuesday, October 1, 2019

10:00 A.M.

Joint BCC/State Delegation Meeting

Clerk's Conference Room, 4th Floor

Board of County Commissioners

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

ROLL CALL - 10:03 A.M.

Present:

Board of County Commissioners (BCC) – Karen Williams Seel, Chair; Pat Gerard, Vice-Chair; Dave Eggers; Charlie Justice; Janet C. Long; Kathleen Peters; and Kenneth T. Welch

Pinellas County Legislative Delegation – Representative Chris Sprowls, Chairman; Representative Nick DiCeglie; Senator Ed Hooper; Representative Chris Latvala; Representative Wengay Newton, Sr. (late arrival); Senator Jeff Brandes; Representative Ben Diamond; Senator Darryl Rouson; and Representative Jennifer Webb

Not Present: Representative James Grant

Others Present: Barry A. Burton, County Administrator; Jewel White, County Attorney; Brian Lowack, Intergovernmental Liaison; Ken Burke, Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller; Julie Marcus, Deputy Supervisor of Elections, representing Supervisor Deborah Clark; Bernie McCabe, State Attorney; Anthony Rondolino, Chief Judge, Sixth Judicial Circuit; Charles W. Thomas, Tax Collector; Mike Twitty, Property Appraiser; other interested individuals; and Jenny Masinovsky, Board Reporter, Deputy Clerk

1. Welcome:

- Commissioner Karen Williams Seel, Chairman, Board of County Commissioners
- Representative Chris Sprowls, Chairman, Legislative Delegation

Chair Seel called the meeting to order, welcomed the Delegation members and visitors, and introduced Delegation Chairman Chris Sprowls, who thanked the Commission for the opportunity to meet and discuss matters important to the County.

At the Chair's request, those in attendance introduced themselves.

2. Connecting Our Community Presentation:

- Barry Burton, County Administrator

Mr. Burton related that his dialogue with community groups, municipal officials, and Forward Pinellas regarding transportation has been focused on making strategic investments and utilizing existing resources more effectively; whereupon, he referred to a PowerPoint presentation titled *Connecting Our Community: Using transportation to link people to jobs, housing, and training* and discussed the following:

- Diminishing transportation funding options
- Traffic: the number one concern of the residents
- Transportation: the need to connect residents to jobs, job-training facilities, and affordable housing

- Balanced solution to improving traffic and transportation by implementing programs to reduce road congestion, make transportation corridors safer, and enhance transit services
- Anticipated program costs and possible funding sources

3. Funding Requests:

- Tampa Bay Innovation Center
- Pinellas County Marchman Beds

Tampa Bay Innovation Center

Economic Development Director Mike Meidel discussed an opportunity to build a world-class purpose-built business incubator in St. Petersburg's Innovation District, designed to connect resources for advancement of small businesses in target industries such as information and financial technologies, marine and life sciences, advanced manufacturing, and data analytics.

Mr. Meidel indicated that a \$7.5-million grant toward building the facility was received from the U.S. Economic Development Administration; and that a \$4.5-million local match is still needed. He requested that the State consider funding \$2 million of the amount, noting that the County along with private sources would provide the remainder; that the City of St. Petersburg is donating 2.5 acres of land; and that minority- and veteran-owned local businesses will be recruited for the facility design and construction to maximize benefits to the County.

Mr. Meidel stressed the importance of supporting small business growth, remarking that 95 percent of the county's businesses have fewer than 50 employees and employ half of the residents.

Pinellas County Marchman Beds

Assistant County Administrator Lourdes Benedict indicated that the County is lacking a secure Marchman Act receiving facility; and that it supports the \$1.5-million request of the Central Florida Behavioral Health Network for a facility that would serve 690 individuals per year and the Florida Department of Children and Families proposal to issue a grant for five receiving units across the state.

Ms. Benedict noted that the County has increased funding for behavioral health in the last few years; that a total of \$11 million, consisting of grants and a \$7.2 million General Fund allocation, was budgeted in the last fiscal year for a variety of current programs; and that a letter of interest was recently released to hire a consultant to help with program planning, applying national best practices.

During discussion and responding to queries by the members, Ms. Benedict and Commissioner Peters emphasized the need for Marchman beds. Commissioner Peters opined that the substance abuse problem is escalating and may turn into a massive statewide crisis if fentanyl is mixed with marijuana; that the Marchman Act in Florida has not been implemented as intended by the legislation; and that mandating that Baker Act beds be flexible and available to Marchman Acted persons for detoxification would help resolve the issue, and Ms. Benedict agreed.

Mr. Burton provided input, indicating that the County is striving to maximize the existing services and at the same time seek additional funding for Marchman beds; and that the consultant is expected to facilitate system improvement; whereupon, responding to Representative Newton's comment relating to Manatee County's successful handling of the opioid problem, Ms. Benedict and Mr. Burton provided information as to various programs involving joint efforts with law enforcement, courts, and other entities to address the problem locally.

4. Open Discussion

Chair Seel recognized Mr. Lowack for his efforts in handling legislative matters for the County; whereupon, the members and others provided comments and initiated discussions on various topics as follows:

Mike Twitty

- Related that his office is advocating for a constitutional amendment allowing for greater homestead exemption portability.

Commissioner Long

- Referring to a summary document, which was distributed to the members and made a part of the record, discussed a conflict created by the House Bill 1393 with regard to flood insurance, and requested that the Delegation review the matter, noting that a constitutional amendment would fix the problem.

Julie Marcus

- Thanked the Delegation for passing legislation protecting the County's mail ballot drop-off locations.
- Requested funding for County participation in the nationwide Electronic Registration Information Center consortium to improve the integrity of the voter registration database.

Commissioner Justice

- Thanked the Delegation for providing a grant for improvements at the St. Pete-Clearwater International Airport, an increase in beach nourishment funding, and \$500,000 for the Lofty Pines sewer/stormwater retrofit project.

- Discussed consolidation of the University of South Florida (USF) and USF St. Petersburg and academic autonomy of USF St. Petersburg.

Commissioner Eggers

- Emphasized the importance of the Delegation's continued commitment to veterans.
- Thanked the Delegation for making Florida attractive to relocating businesses and continuing to review the impact of dredging in Tarpon Springs.
- Discussed governance model and priorities of the Tampa Bay Transportation Management Area Leadership Group, including State Road 60, I-275 exchange, U.S. 19 north corridor interchanges, the Gateway Project, and access to beaches.
- Discussed the importance of the Tampa Bay Water Board work, the County's continuous leadership, and local government accountability with regard to developing quality water and disposing of reclaimed water throughout the region.

Representative Newton

- Discussed the impact of the I-275 widening project on surrounding properties.

(Clerk Burke and Mr. McCabe left the meeting at 10:58 and 10:59 A.M., respectively)

Commissioner Peters

- Discussed problems related to mental health facilities, Agency for Persons with Disabilities, and Baker-Acting children with behavioral issues.
- Congratulated Representative Sprowls on becoming the House Speaker next year.

Brian Lowack

- Thanked the Delegation for passing legislation regarding Pinellas County Construction Licensing Board, providing for more consumer protection.

5. Public Comment

In response to the Chair's call for persons wishing to be heard, the following individuals appeared and expressed their concerns:

Kathryn Driver, Pinellas County Housing Finance Authority, Clearwater, re Affordable Housing

Thomas Rodgers, Gulfport, re Lead Paint (distributed business cards)

Peter Jaciw, Gulfport, re Legislative Inclusion of Title X

David Ballard Geddis, Jr., Palm Harbor, re Direct Injecting a Fee (Simple) Title

Mr. Lowack concluded the meeting by echoing the Commissioners' comments of appreciation to the Delegation and discussing plans for future partnership. He noted that a Pinellas County Day meeting with the legislators and representatives from the surrounding counties is scheduled for January 15; whereupon, Chair Seel expressed pride with regard to Representative Sprowls' role as the House Speaker and the Delegation Chair, and thanked everyone for attending.

ADJOURNMENT - 11:18 A.M.