

Pinellas County



Minutes - Final

Tuesday, June 30, 2020

9:30 A.M.

Virtual Regular Meeting

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 - 9:30 A.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 Amelia Hanks, Board Reporter

Office of Technology and Innovation Director Bryan Zumwalt introduced himself and announced that he would be the Technology Moderator for the virtual meeting; and that Chief Assistant County Attorney Don Crowell would serve as Process Moderator; whereupon, he conducted a roll call of the members.

1. Local State of Emergency

Mr. Burton indicated that the proposed resolution would extend the Local State of Emergency through July 10 and explained that the number of COVID-19 cases in the county continues to rise; and that there are testing and mask distribution sites across the county.

Commissioner Justice moved, seconded by Commissioner Welch, that the order extending the Local State of Emergency be approved.

In response to queries by Commissioner Welch, Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County Director Dr. Ulyee Choe and Emergency Medical Services Medical Director Dr. Angus Jameson provided information regarding Coronavirus cases and the metrics used to gauge the outbreak, reiterated the importance of social distancing and wearing masks, and discussed the occupancy of ICU beds, capacity of emergency rooms, and diversion of patients to other facilities.

Noting that many emails were received from the residents requesting that the beaches be closed, the members indicated that they do not support doing so, and discussion ensued concerning the following topics:

- Beach capacity dashboard and increased presence of Sheriff's deputies on the beaches for the upcoming Fourth of July holiday weekend
- Non-compliance in restaurants, bars, and hotels with regard to large indoor gatherings and wearing masks
- Ordinance violations and enforcement
- Importance of personal and social responsibility and compliance with ordinances
- Being mindful of people who cannot wear masks

In response to queries by Commissioners Eggers and Seel, Drs. Choe and Jameson indicated that the majority of people diagnosed with COVID-19 recover; that hospitalizations have increased and resources are becoming strained; that contact tracing

efforts have been enhanced; and that a greater risk of the virus spread is attributed to the lack of social distancing and gathering indoors rather than on the beaches.

Upon call by Chair Gerard for public comment, the following individuals expressed their concerns:

David Waddell, Clearwater
Christopher Montera, Redington Beach
Barbara Walker, Palm Harbor
Trevor Burgess, St. Petersburg
Glenn Reihing, St. Petersburg
Dawn Bohler, St. Petersburg
Kathleen Gozo, Tarpon Springs
Sherry Simpson, Palm Harbor (spelling uncertain)
Kellie Suvos, Dunedin (spelling uncertain)
Denise Fougere, Largo
Aden Barnes, Largo
John Kurzman, St. Pete Beach
Sara Viola, Clearwater
Alison Otamendi, Tarpon Springs
Matt Winter, Tarpon Springs
Phil Gozo, Tarpon Springs
Haley Goshert, Pinellas Park

Commissioners responded to queries raised by members of the public regarding the impact of COVID-19 on mental health and mask ordinance requirements pertaining to childcare facilities and religious institutions.

A motion was made by Commissioner Justice, seconded by Commissioner Welch, that the resolution 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. 20-57 adopted extending the Local State of Emergency established in Resolution No. 20-16 until 3:00 P.M. on July 10, 2020.

2. Resolution(s) approving Pinellas CARES "Phase 2" program(s).

Mr. Burton introduced the topic of Phase 2 funding distribution under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and discussed the challenges in balancing the financial needs relating to COVID-19 with continuing direct funding assistance to individuals and businesses financially impacted by COVID-19 that began under Phase 1 programs. He indicated that staff needs more time to refine the proposal regarding the allocation of funds, suggesting that the item be brought to the Board for consideration at the July 7 meeting; whereupon, discussion ensued regarding the following:

- What items to include under the funding
- Community navigators
- Processing of COVID-19 related expenses through the Federal Emergency Management Agency
- How Pinellas County programs compare to Hillsborough's

In response to query by Commissioner Seel, Messrs. Burke and Burton provided an update regarding the amount of money that has already been distributed to individuals and businesses under Phase 1 and the number of applications in the processing queue. Commissioners Eggers and Seel stressed the importance of broadening support for the business community and individuals, and Mr. Burton indicated that the criteria pertaining to participation by businesses will be expanded; and that the distribution will occur with focus on the community.

Chair Gerard expressed concern that more individuals have not received financial assistance under Phase 1, and she and Commissioner Seel requested additional data regarding the funding distribution.

In response to queries by the members, Mr. Burton related that the Pinellas CARES Financial Assistance Program for individuals will be extended through July 7 in order to continue receiving applications; and that the Pinellas CARES Small Business Grants Program will close today to allow for the Phase 2 program changes to be made, noting that there will be a message on the County and the 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares websites reflecting the same.

Responding to query by Commissioner Eggers, Mr. Burton indicated that the Appointing Authorities are adhering to the same mask-wearing requirements as the County departments.

Upon call by Chair Gerard for public comment, the following individuals expressed their concerns:

David Waddell, Clearwater
Steven Rodriguez (city not provided)

Commissioner Peters indicated that she would like to see a more thorough onboarding process for incoming Commissioners and voiced her concern with the lack of clarity and guidance provided on various internal practices. The members agreed, shared their experiences, and provided opinions and suggestions regarding the matter; whereupon, Chair Gerard indicated that she will work with Mr. Burton on developing an onboarding manual.

Commissioner Peters related that she received comments from citizens in response to a "Black Lives Matter" virtual background displayed by Commissioner Welch during Zoom meetings. She opined that signs should not be displayed during governmental meetings, and Commissioner Welch stated his position on the matter, noting the need to speak out on issues of importance.

Responding to queries by Commissioners Justice and Seel and following discussion, Mr. Burton indicated that the July 21 Commission meeting will be a hybrid Zoom and in-person meeting that will take place in the Magnolia Room at the Pinellas County Extension facility; and that the meetings of July 7 and July 16 will be virtual.

ADJOURNMENT - 11:59 A.M.

Pat Seel

Chair

ATTEST: KEN BURKE, CLERK

By *Ken Burke*
Deputy Clerk

