

Pinellas County



Minutes - Final

Thursday, September 3, 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; Jeanette Phillips, Chief Deputy Clerk; other interested individuals; and Jenny Masinovsky, Senior Board Reporter, Deputy Clerk

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. Citizens To Be Heard

Dawn Bohler, St. Petersburg
Aden Barnes, Largo
David Happe, Tarpon Springs
David Waddell, Clearwater
Vicki Love, Dunedin
Devyn Waitt, Oldsmar
Virginia Frizzle, Largo
Dawn Lechner, Clearwater
Sheryl Evarts, Redington Shores
Karen Mullins, Dunedin
Kristy Alvarez, Largo
Nichole Mattheus, Dunedin
Yvette Gaugh, St. Pete Beach
Elena Levine, Dunedin
Diane Lebedeff, Safety Harbor
Susan Mack, North Redington Beach
Beth Weinstein, Tarpon Springs
Lucinda Johnston, St. Petersburg
Jeremy Reynolds, Dunedin
Sharon Herman, Dunedin
Carla Rudolph, St. Petersburg
Katie Green, Dunedin
Tommy Frain, Tarpon Springs
Joelyn Murphy, Dunedin (spelling uncertain)
Liz Drayer, Clearwater

2. Local State of Emergency

Mr. Burton stated that the proposed resolution would extend the Local State of Emergency (LSE) to September 11 and commented regarding the improving trend in

COVID-19 cases. He indicated that the impact of the recent reopening of schools on the case numbers remains to be seen; and that Pinellas County Schools Superintendent Dr. Michael Grego supports continuing the mask mandate.

In response to query by Chair Gerard, District Six Medical Examiner Dr. Jon Thogmartin explained that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) data shows that for six percent of all COVID-19-related deaths, COVID-19 was the only cause. He indicated that the virus is typically not a threat to healthy individuals under 40 years old; that the risk increases with each health condition and other contributing cause; that 40 to 60 percent of the American population have chronic illnesses; and that the district's numbers reflect the CDC data; whereupon, he reported that the number of COVID-19 deaths in the County is on a definite decline.

Commissioner Long related that she reached out to HCA West Florida Chief Medical Officer Dr. Larry Feinman to find a physician in his organization who did not consider measures such as mask wearing and social distancing effective in combating COVID-19. She suggested that it may be valuable to hear a viewpoint that is opposite of the information and recommendations presented by the doctors regularly appearing on the BCC meeting panel, and Commissioner Eggers agreed; whereupon, discussion ensued concerning the following topics:

- Ongoing research regarding COVID-19
- Addressing the importance of wellness and nutrition
- Importance of continuing to listen to citizens' input on the matter
- Maintaining status quo with regard to the mask wearing mandate, social distancing, and other related measures preventing the virus spread
- Advising the public on proper use of masks
- The need to provide the public with criteria for the end of the LSE and mask mandate
- The purpose of the LSE order

Commissioner Welch stated for the record that the Commission bases its decisions on the science and advice from the health professionals, rather than on the number of citizen calls regarding the matter; whereupon, he referred to the CDC recommendations pertaining to mask wearing, noting that the County's mask ordinance reflects the same.

In response to queries and comments by Commissioners Peters and Gerard, Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County Director Dr. Ulyee Choe discussed the risks of infectious diseases for populations with underlying health conditions and encouraged everyone to get a flu shot.

At the request of Commissioner Eggers, Mr. Burton indicated that staff will research COVID-19 trends for those Florida counties that do not have a mask mandate, noting that most of the urban counties have instituted them, including Pasco, Manatee, and Hillsborough.

A motion was made by Commissioner Seel, seconded by Commissioner Welch, that the order extending the Local State of 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. 20-77 adopted extending the Local State of Emergency established in Resolution No. 20-16 until 3:00 P.M. on September 11, 2020.

Deviating from the agenda and responding to query by Commissioner Eggers, Mr. Burton provided a status update regarding the Gladys Douglas Hackworth property in the City of Dunedin, indicating that staff will continue working with all the parties involved to explore opportunities for purchasing the property; and that the County must be judicious in reviewing the alternatives and develop objective criteria with regard to purchasing properties for preservation, noting that funds are limited. Commissioners Justice and Eggers provided input regarding the importance of considering nonprofit organizations, private donors, and the Penny for Pinellas surtax as funding sources, and brief discussion ensued.

In response to query by Commissioner Peters, Mr. Burton explained that the Tides Golf Club property is not for sale and indicated that he will provide an update on the matter soon.

3. Status report on the project to improve the development services system

Mr. Burton introduced the item and congratulated staff on their commitment to improve the system during challenging times; whereupon, Assistant County Administrator Tom Almonte discussed the professional credentials of the project's consultant, George N. Arimes, and emphasized that the project involves a partnership between staff and the customers.

Mr. Arimes referred to a PowerPoint presentation titled *Development Services System Improvement Project* and provided an overview of the project, including the process improvement steps, progress and accomplishments, and the next steps, discussing the following:

- Evaluation of the current system
- Major improvement needs
- Importance of gathering perspectives from customers and staff
- Project progress to date
- Current best practices
- Key customer feedback
- Primary customer service objectives
- Improvement opportunities
- Accela technology enhancements
- Next steps

Mr. Arimes indicated that a major aspect of the system that needs improvement is coordinated movement of a customer's application to a decision point, with efficient

resolution of issues; that customers would like their requests to be completed in a timely manner and have a better partnership with staff; that the Accela technology, which is currently being implemented, will provide customers with an opportunity for efficient application tracking; and that regulatory changes to simplify processing and remove unnecessary obstacles will be presented for review to staff and the Local Planning Agency in the near future.

Robert Pergolizzi, Gulf Coast Consulting, provided input regarding the process improvements made relating to design elements, access management standards, pre-application meeting process, and related matters, noting the need for more staff in order to reduce application review times. Joseph Kokolakis, Kokolakis Contracting, thanked the County leadership and staff for improving the culture of the Development Review Services Department and remarked that the enhanced review process will have a tremendous impact on every project and property owner, as well as on staff.

Discussion continued, and Messrs. Kokolakis, Pergolizzi, and Arimes and staff responded to queries by the members.

Meeting Recessed: 11:56 A.M.

Meeting Reconvened: 12:30 P.M.

4. Agenda Briefing

Mr. Burton and Attorney White provided a review of the agenda items to be addressed at the September 10, 2020 Commission meeting, and Mr. Burton and Chair Gerard responded to queries and requests for additional information by the members regarding the following items and related matters:

- Item No. 12 Award of bid to Allied Universal Corporation for supply of liquid chlorine cylinders
- Item No. 15 Purchase agreement with the Florida Department of Transportation for an easement and a portion of a County-owned parcel in support of the U.S. Highway 19 North road improvement project
- Item No. 17 Fiscal Year 2021 Elite Event funding recommendations from the Tourist Development Council
- Item No. 20 First Option of Renewal with the Homeless Leadership Alliance of Pinellas, Inc. for bridge housing
- Item No. 24 Coronavirus Relief Fund Subrecipient Agreement with the Florida Housing Finance Corporation

Item No. 34 Resolution to adopt the restated plan document and amend the Cafeteria Plan.

Commissioner Peters provided information regarding Item No. 41, amending a resolution relating to the Youth Advisory Committee, indicating that the Committee members would like to extend their tenure from a school year to a calendar year. She discussed the Committee's work, including webinars on various topics such as mental health and substance abuse. She also noted that she will be submitting Municipal Services Taxing Unit funding requests to the Commission next week.

Responding to query by Commissioner Long, Commissioner Peters explained why the students wish to extend their tenure and noted their interest in learning about local government, and Commissioners Eggers and Long complimented Commissioner Peters on her work with the Committee.

Chair Gerard inquired about offering an additional opportunity for the public to provide general comment during the evening portion of the meeting. The members opined on the matter, and Attorney White and Mr. Burton provided recommendations.

Following discussion, Chair Gerard indicated that the September 10 meeting agenda will include the Public Comment item at 2:00 P.M. and at 6:00 P.M.; and that the Local State of Emergency item will be addressed after the Public Comment item in the evening. Responding to her query, Attorney White advised that comment on the two latter items can be combined, as long as the public is advised. In response to query by Commissioner Seel as to allowing ten minutes when speaking on behalf of a group, Attorneys White and Crowell indicated that the practice does not pertain to virtual meetings due to enforceability and technology issues.

In response to query by Commissioner Justice pertaining to evaluating the treatment of weeds in Philippe Park in Safety Harbor, Mr. Burton indicated that he co-chaired a task force regarding weed control and related matters; and that a report on best practices will be presented to the Commission and the municipalities after it is vetted by the environmental groups, and brief discussion ensued.


Commissioner Long indicated that noise issues relating to St. Pete-Clearwater International Airport continue; that noise over Safety Harbor may be caused by a changed flight pattern due to construction; and that she is in communication with a citizen who had complained, as well as with Airport Director Thomas Jewsbury. Commissioner Eggers provided comments, relating that Mr. Jewsbury is working to resolve the situation; whereupon, Mr. Burton indicated that the matter will be scheduled for a discussion with Mr. Jewsbury for the September 17 BCC meeting.

ADJOURNMENT - 1:26 P.M.

Pat Seroid
Chair



ATTEST: KEN BURKE, CLERK

By 
Deputy Clerk