

Pinellas County

*315 Court Street
Clearwater, Florida 33756*



Minutes - Final

Thursday, September 7, 2017

10:00 AM

**Pinellas County Public Safety Campus
10750 Ulmerton Road, Room 180
Largo, FL 33778**

Board of County Commissioners

*Janet C. Long, Chairman
Kenneth T. Welch, Vice-Chairman
Dave Eggers
Pat Gerard
Charlie Justice
John Morroni
Karen Williams Seel*

REGULAR AGENDA**ROLL CALL - 10:01 A.M.**

Members Present: Chairman Janet C. Long, Vice-Chairman Kenneth T. Welch, Dave Eggers, Pat Gerard, Charlie Justice, and John Morroni

Members Absent: Karen Williams Seel

Others Present: Mark S. Woodard, County Administrator; Don Crowell, Chief Assistant County Attorney; other interested individuals; and Tony Fabrizio, Board Reporter, Deputy Clerk

Chairman Long called the meeting to order, noted the seriousness of the occasion, and related that several elected officials from around the state have called to offer their assistance. At her request, the members and Mr. Woodard introduced themselves.

1. Hurricane Irma Update:
 - Forecast Update
 - Preparations
 - Potential Impacts
 - Emergency Declaration

Introduction

Mr. Woodard related that the meeting was called for the purposes of discussing the status of Hurricane Irma and County preparations and for the Board to consider adopting a resolution declaring a State of Local Emergency.

Forecast Update, Preparations, Potential Impacts

Assistant County Administrator John Bennett conducted a PowerPoint Presentation titled *Doing Things! Board of County Commissioners Special Meeting, Hurricane Irma Update* and discussed the following:

- The latest National Weather Service forecast track and the County's vulnerability within the error cone.
- The timetable for the hurricane's projected turn north toward Florida and arrival.
- Threat-level scenarios for wind, storm surge, and flooding.
- The potential need to assist neighboring counties if the storm impacts them more severely.
- Sandbag operations, sheltering, pet accommodations, and Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) bus schedules.
- Communication with the public, including social media messaging, County website postings, Alert Pinellas, the Ready Pinellas app, and the Citizens Information Center.

- School and state facility closures and the status of County facility closures.
- County asset protection in the Public Works Emergency Response Building and the Public Safety Complex.
- Collaboration with contractors, the Southwest Florida Water Management District, and the Wastewater/Stormwater Task Force.
- Department-level planning and prioritization for County staffing needs.
- Evacuation recommendations by zones and logistics, and FDOT regional evacuation corridors.

Responding to queries by Commissioner Eggers, Mr. Bennett discussed complaints about long lines for sandbags in the East Lake area and steps that staff are taking to meet the demand and coordinate with municipal partners.

Mr. Woodard discussed how Penny for Pinellas tax revenue has made the county safer, citing the Board's allocation of Penny funds after the dangerous hurricane seasons of 2004 and 2005 for construction of the Public Safety Complex and Emergency Response Building, both of which were built to withstand Category 5 hurricane winds.

Mr. Bennett provided an overview of the State of Local Emergency declaration, explaining that it would leverage the governor's statewide State of Emergency order, grant certain authority to the County Administrator, establish Sheriff Gualtieri as the Chief Law Enforcement Officer of the county, engage local consumer protections, and provide the legislative framework for ordering evacuations.

In response to queries by Commissioner Welch, Mr. Bennett confirmed that staff is recommending mandatory evacuations beginning Friday morning of all Level A, special needs, and mobile home residents, with tentative plans to order mandatory evacuations Saturday of Level B and C residents.

Mr. Bennett discussed staff's rationale for the recommendations and how they will be adjusted based on the storm's track, and Mr. Woodard commented that the guiding strategy is to plan for the worst and hope for the best. Sheriff Gualtieri provided additional information about the varying risks and evacuation logistics; whereupon, he responded to queries by the members as follows:

- His understanding is that seven shelters would be open for the initial evacuations, more locations would be added as needed, and the locations are spread throughout the county.
- Evacuation routes have been communicated to the public, and the flow of traffic will be aided by law enforcement officers and the Intelligent Traffic System, which manages traffic signals.
- The public can obtain traffic information by calling 511.

- All municipalities on the barrier islands and Tierra Verde are utilizing a program started three years ago in which residents, business owners, and employees who registered for and obtained a Special Access Permit can return to their properties before and after the storm.

Addressing a concern by Chairman Welch that few gas stations have gas, Mr. Bennett indicated that federal and state entities have assured him that adequate quantities will come in; that the County's internal supply is stable; and that the Consumer Protection division will watch for gas stations that hold fuel to sell it at a higher price or price gouge.

Responding to query by Commissioner Eggers, Mr. Bennett indicated that mobile homes were included in the first round of evacuations because of their vulnerability to wind. Mr. Woodard related that the thresholds for determining evacuation levels are pursuant to the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan adopted by Board, and Item No. 9 in the proposed resolution would authorize the County Administrator to implement the policy.

At this time, Chairman Long indicated that the Board would take a break to review the proposed resolution individually.

Meeting Recessed: 10:59 A.M.

Meeting Reconvened: 11:20 A.M.

Public Comment

No one responded to Chairman Long's call for citizens wishing to be heard.

State of Local Emergency Declaration

Chairman Long indicated that the Board would now consider the proposed resolution declaring a State of Local Emergency, noting that it would be in effect for seven days if adopted and can be renewed in seven-day increments as needed.

Discussion ensued, and Mr. Bennett, Director of Human Services Lourdes Benedict, Emergency Management Director Sally Bishop, Attorney Crowell, and Mr. Woodard responded to queries by the members on the following topics:

- Special needs shelters and registration for residents needing medical attention.
- The prospect of adding a sandbag location on the west side of Lake Tarpon and coordinating with municipal partners on directing residents to alternate locations.
- The evacuation of homeless shelters, and transportation and shelters for the homeless.
- PSTA bus routes and transportation to shelters.
- When the County Administrator can withdraw an evacuation order.

- Communication with the Response Operations Coordination Group that collaborates with municipalities and first responders.
- Shelter locations and their disbursement throughout the county.
- The authority that the resolution would delegate to the County Administrator to appropriate funds from reserves to support emergency operations.
- The importance of the County Administrator coordinating with the Board and the Sheriff's Office on any decisions that change the course agreed upon today.

Attorney Crowell clarified that the Board's mechanism for ordering evacuations is to provide the County Administrator with direction and adopt the resolution delegating him the authority to take action.

A motion was made by Commissioner Gerard, seconded by Vice-Chairman Welch, that Resolution No. 17-58 be adopted declaring a State of Local Emergency. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Chairman Long, Vice-Chairman Welch, Commissioner Eggers, Commissioner Gerard, Commissioner Justice, and Commissioner Morroni

Absent: 1 - Commissioner Seel

ADJOURNMENT - 11:45 A.M.

ATTEST: KEN BURKE, CLERK

By _____
Deputy Clerk

Chairman