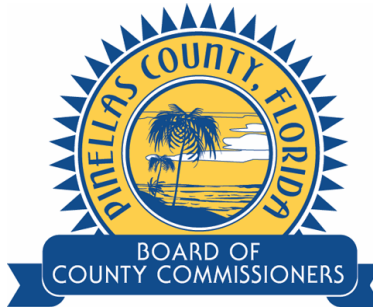


# Pinellas County

12600 Roosevelt Blvd N  
St. Petersburg, FL 33716



## Minutes - Final

Friday, January 31, 2025

9:30 A.M.

Joint BCC/State Delegation Meeting

St. Petersburg Marriott Clearwater

## Board of County Commissioners

*Brian Scott, Chair*  
*Dave Eggers, Vice-Chair*  
*René Flowers*  
*Chris Latvala*  
*Vince Nowicki*  
*Kathleen Peters*  
*Chris Scherer*

**ROLL CALL - 9:43 A.M.**

Board of County Commissioners (BCC)

Present: Chair Brian Scott, Vice-Chair Dave Eggers, Commissioner Chris Latvala, Commissioner Vince Nowicki, Commissioner Kathleen Peters, and Commissioner Chris Scherer

Not Present: Commissioner René Flowers

State Legislative Delegation

Present: Representative Adam Anderson, Representative Kimberly Berfield, Representative Linda Chaney, Senator Nick DiCeglie, Senator Ed Hooper, Representative Berny Jacques, Representative Michele Rayner, and Senator Darryl Rouson

Not Present: Representative Lindsay Cross

Others Present: County Administrator Barry A. Burton, County Attorney Jewel White, Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller Ken Burke, Supervisor of Elections Julie Marcus, Public Defender Sara Mollo, Property Appraiser Mike Twitty, Board Reporter Jessica Oakes, and other interested individuals

1. Welcome

- Commissioner Brian Scott, Chair, Board of County Commissioners
- Representative Adam Anderson, Chair, Legislative Delegation

Chair Scott called the meeting to order and led a moment of silence for the victims of a recent plane crash at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport; whereupon, he noted that there are members of the public who have indicated that they would like to speak; and that while the public notice for this meeting did not contain an opportunity for public comment, a determination regarding whether this can be accommodated will be made at the end of the meeting.

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

Chair Scott provided brief comments regarding recent hurricanes that impacted Pinellas County and opportunities for rebuilding, recovery, and resilience; whereupon, Representative Anderson welcomed the Board of County Commission (BCC) members and indicated that the Delegation is eager to work with the BCC toward strengthening the community and providing support to residents.

2. Pinellas County 2025 Legislative Program

Referring to a PowerPoint presentation titled *2025 State Legislative Program*, Assistant County Administrator Matthew Spoor reviewed several accomplishments from 2024, including that Pinellas County received grants from the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. He also noted that the County has submitted applications for two notable grants in 2025, which would be utilized for improvements to both the Gulf Beach Water Booster Station and the wastewater collection systems for manufactured home communities.

Mr. Spoor provided information regarding the legislative priorities for the current year, including details related to E-911 funding, the Local Option Fuel Tax (LOFT), a disaster recovery bill, and beach nourishment funding; whereupon, he indicated that appropriation requests pertain to funding for East Lake Road Corridor improvements, the Unincorporated Seminole Sports Association, hardening of hurricane shelters, and the raising of 35 traffic signal cabinets for protection during future storm events.

In response to a query by Representative Berfield, Messrs. Spoor and Burton briefly discussed costs of 911 services and the E-911 fee; whereupon, responding to a query by Senator Hooper, Mr. Spoor confirmed that Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program funding will be requested for one of the locations operated and maintained by the Unincorporated Seminole Sports Association.

In response to queries by Representative Anderson, Mr. Spoor, with input by Mr. Burton, provided details related to the planned improvements for the East Lake Road Corridor, indicating that staff is currently looking into potentially widening bridges and roads along the corridor; and that additional funding sources may be necessary to address the funding gap for the improvements; whereupon, Senator Hooper noted that he is working with Pasco County to ensure that Trinity Boulevard and the Pasco portion of East Lake Road are also under consideration for widening and capacity improvements.

At the request of Representative Chaney, Mr. Spoor provided an update regarding beach renourishment, noting that staff is working with members of the County's federal delegation to facilitate discussion with the United States Army Corps of Engineers; and that while language was added to the Water Resources Development Act, which changed perpetual easements to 50-year easements, nothing else was modified.

Commissioner Peters briefly discussed a letter she will be sending to the President and the County's congressional delegation, which will include a request for the Corps' recognition of the erosion control line; whereupon, brief discussion ensued wherein Representative Berfield suggested that Representative Anderson could also compose a letter on behalf of Delegation members who would like to express their support.

Chair Scott emphasized the importance of LOFT funding and noted that, due to a shortfall in funds, the County has added three level-of-service millage rates for paving local roads. He

also provided information regarding the Dunedin Causeway and indicated that while a federal grant application for a bridge replacement project has been submitted, it is unlikely to be successful.

Chair Scott highlighted the need to encourage smaller communities to work together regarding hurricane response and recovery, particularly related to debris management, permitting, and inspections; whereupon, Senator DiCeglie noted that he is working with Representative Chaney regarding legislation to address permitting challenges in barrier island communities; and that the topic is one of his top priorities for this legislative session.

Commissioner Peters expressed appreciation to the State and Federal governments for their assistance related to hurricane recovery efforts and discussed collaboration with Visit Florida related to Visit St. Pete-Clearwater's "Still Shining" campaign; whereupon, Representative Chaney provided information related to hurricane recovery assistance provided by the State.

Mr. Burton expressed appreciation to Florida Division of Emergency Management Director Kevin Guthrie and provided additional details regarding hurricane recovery assistance provided by the State; whereupon, he also briefly discussed scalability issues faced by smaller municipalities.

### 3. Constitutional Officers

#### Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller Ken Burke

Mr. Burke discussed the following topics:

- Creation of a national task force by the National Association of Counties, which will be tasked with advising the presidential administration with regard to revising the Federal Emergency Management Agency
- Allocation of funds to Pinellas County by the Department of Housing and Urban (HUD) Development regarding disaster relief for homeowners
- Importance of allocating funds for additional staff when new judges are selected

Thereupon, brief discussion ensued regarding HUD's allocation to the County, potential ineligibility for some residents to receive disaster relief due to income level, and upcoming efforts by staff to create an action plan regarding the allocation of disaster relief funds, which will be submitted to HUD.

#### Supervisor of Elections Julie Marcus

Ms. Marcus discussed the following topics:

- Preparations for the 2024 presidential election amidst recent hurricanes

- Assistance provided by poll workers, County staff, and the Secretary of State
- Importance of maintaining a balance with regard to different voting methods
- Request to amend legislation currently impacting the process associated with confirming that voters would like to receive a mail ballot

Property Appraiser Mike Twitty

Mr. Twitty discussed various topics related to impacts of recent hurricanes, including the following:

- Processing of over 3,000 Catastrophic Event Tax Refund forms
- Completion of nearly 250 Building Value Reconsiderations
- Assistance provided to the private appraisal community
- Modification of an internal calamity policy

Mr. Twitty also briefly discussed the Property Appraisers' Association of Florida's key legislative priorities for the year; whereupon, Mr. Burton noted that the County will be completing an after-action review regarding its response to recent hurricanes.

Public Defender Sara Mollo

Ms. Mollo discussed the following topics:

- Concerns related to staffing and pay
- Challenges associated with employee recruitment and retention
- Potential health insurance premium increase for public sector employees

Responding to a query by Representative Rayner, Ms. Mollo provided information regarding employee turnover, costs associated with training new attorneys, and the consequences of inexperienced attorneys taking on more complex cases due to the shortage in staff.

**4. Open Discussion with Legislative Delegation**

Discussion ensued regarding various topics, including the following:

- Challenges associated with insurance and potential reform
- Affordability of living in Pinellas County

- Issues related to wastewater treatment and stormwater drainage

Deviating from the agenda and upon the Chair's call for public comment, the following individuals appeared and provided brief comments:

Angie Harris, St. Petersburg  
Sharon Calvert, Tierra Verde

**ADJOURNMENT - 11:48 A.M.**