

# **Pinellas County**



## **Minutes - Final**

**Thursday, July 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:** 6 - Vice-Chair Dave Eggers, Charlie Justice, Janet C. Long, Kathleen Peters, Karen Williams Seel, and Kenneth T. Welch

**Absent:** 1 - Chair Pat Gerard

**Others Present:** Barry A. Burton, County Administrator; Don Crowell, Chief Assistant County Attorney; Jeanette Phillips, Chief Deputy Clerk; and Jenny Masinovsky, 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.

Vice-Chair Eggers congratulated Mr. Zumwalt on his birthday; whereupon, he extended prayers and well wishes to residents for loss or suffering endured as a result of the pandemic. He thanked the County leaders, staff, partners, volunteers, medical professionals, and first responders for stepping up their efforts during a challenging time.

**1. Citizens To Be Heard - None.**

Vice-Chair Eggers opened the floor for public comment regarding any topics outside of the agenda, asking that callers refrain from commenting on issues pertaining to COVID-19 until Item 2, and no response was received.

**2. State of Local Emergency**

Mr. Burton indicated that the proposed resolution would extend the Local State of Emergency from July 31 through August 7 and provided information regarding the continuing efforts in testing for COVID-19, noting that testing at the Mahaffey Theater site will be suspended on July 31 and August 1 due to impending Tropical Storm Isaias.

Responding to queries by Commissioner Welch, Assistant County Administrator Lourdes Benedict related that the testing site will be closed pursuant to the direction from the State out of concerns for safety of the residents and staff. Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County Director Dr. Ulyee Choe expressed appreciation to the community partners working together to address and monitor COVID-19 and provided an update regarding the virus data trends, indicating that the substantial decline in case counts and positivity rates was due to regulatory measures regarding mask wearing, social distancing, and bar closures; and that it is important to keep wearing masks and adhering to social distancing guidelines to continue the trend.

Responding to query by Vice-Chair Eggers, Emergency Medical Services Medical Director Dr. Angus Jameson indicated that hospital capacity has improved; and that

epidemiologists expect to see ongoing varying levels of the virus in the community; whereupon, he stressed that the hospitals are taking the necessary precautions to keep patients safe; and that residents experiencing significant medical issues should feel comfortable calling 9-1-1 or accessing hospital care, and should do so without delay.

At the request of Mr. Burton, Emergency Management Director Catherine Perkins discussed potential impacts of incoming Tropical Storm Isaias and activities occurring in preparation. She related that 1.5 inches of rain and tropical storm force winds are currently predicted for the area on August 1 and 2; that no life-threatening storm surge is expected and no evacuation is needed; and that staff will continue monitoring the situation, and Mr. Burton addressed a question by Commissioner Long as to staffing at shelter facilities in case of evacuations.

In response to query by Commissioner Eggers, Sheriff Bob Gualtieri stated that no complaints have been received by his office regarding noncompliance with COVID-19-related regulations at bars.

Commissioner Peters related that she had been contacted by several local business owners who were charged large late fees for not paying taxes on time as a result of lost revenue due to COVID-19, and asked what can be done with regard to waiving the fees. Mr. Burton and Attorney Crowell indicated that the County has no legal authority to do so, and following discussion regarding possible ways to assist businesses, Attorney Crowell indicated that he will help the Chair craft a letter to the Governor and perhaps to the Florida House of Representatives and Senate leaders regarding the matter.

Responding to the Vice-Chair's call for citizens wishing to be heard, the following individuals expressed their concerns:

David Waddell, Clearwater  
Dawn Bohler, St. Petersburg  
Orlando Acosta, St. Petersburg  
Amy Wright (city not provided)  
Jane Smith (city not provided)  
Yvette Gaugh, St. Pete Beach  
Karen Mullins, Dunedin

**A motion was made by Commissioner Long, seconded by Commissioner Welch, that the order extending the Local State of Emergency be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 6 - Vice-Chair Eggers, Commissioner Justice, Commissioner Long, Commissioner Peters, Commissioner Seel, and Commissioner Welch

**Absent:** 1 - Chair Gerard

Resolution No. 20-71 adopted extending the Local State of Emergency established in Resolution No. 20-16 until 3:00 P.M. on August 7, 2020.

### 3. Use of Force Investigation Presentation

Sheriff Gualtieri provided background information and an overview of the changes in conducting use of force investigations by the County's law enforcement authorities when that use of force results in serious bodily injury or death, and responded to queries by the members, discussing the following topics:

- Reasons for the changes
- Old investigation process versus the new
- Pinellas County Use of Deadly Force Task Force
- Exclusion of an agency employing the officer or deputy who used deadly force from the investigation
- Importance of the community's perception and confidence in the objectivity of investigations
- Sheriff's Office's leadership in implementing audio recording devices and dashboard cameras
- Body camera costs and concerns
- Continuing reforms and discussions

### 4. Duke Energy Florida Clean Energy Connection Program

Sustainability and Resilience Coordinator Hank Hodde presented information regarding Duke Energy's community solar program, relating that it would provide an opportunity to offset some of the energy use by the County; that based on the staff analysis, the program will be beneficial; and that a return on investment is expected in five to seven years. He and Mr. Burton indicated that there will not be a contract until the solar plants go into production in 2022; and that at this time they are seeking the Board's direction regarding pursuing an early subscription; whereupon, they responded to queries by the members.

During discussion, Commissioners Welch and Eggers stressed that while the program appears to fit within the Board's strategic priorities, they would like to have more information regarding the rates, cost-benefit analysis, and other details. Mr. Burton indicated that additional information and a resolution will be provided to the Board for consideration in October; that the cost for subscribing could be \$1,000 to \$2,000 per month; and that the risk is minimal. He and Mr. Hodde explained that participation can be cancelled at any time, but if the County does not make the commitment shortly, there is a chance it may not get into the program later.

There being no opposition, Mr. Burton indicated that he will proceed with the subscription.

Vice-Chair Eggers requested that staff provide an update regarding the Waste-to-Energy facility at a future meeting.

5. Establish maximum millage rates for certification to the Property Appraiser

Mr. Burton introduced the item, requesting the Board's consensus in establishing the maximum millage rates. Office of Management and Budget Director Bill Berger referred to a PowerPoint presentation titled *Maximum Millage Rates Feedback Regarding FY21 Proposed Budget* and indicated that the rates must be certified to the Property Appraiser by August 4; that the Truth in Millage (TRIM) notices informing property owners of the rates will be mailed out on or about August 20; and that after the certification, millage rates may be decreased, but not increased.

Mr. Berger explained the changes to the proposed rates, relating that staff recommends decreases for six unincorporated fire districts; and that Seminole was included on that list in error. He asked for the members' feedback regarding the Fiscal Year 2021 proposed budget to determine if any desired changes would influence the staff's recommendation on the millage rates, and discussion ensued.

Responding to queries by Vice-Chair Eggers, Messrs. Burton and Berger provided information regarding the Board meeting schedule and opportunities for additional budget discussions, and Attorney Crowell informed the members that the Governor had adopted an emergency order extending virtual meetings to September 1; whereupon, the members opined on conducting the upcoming meetings virtually and/or in person.

Later in the meeting and responding to query by Vice-Chair Eggers, the Commissioners expressed their consensus to establish the proposed maximum millage rates for certification to the Property Appraiser.

Behavioral Health System Discussion

Deviating from the agenda and at the request of Commissioner Long, Mr. Burton and Assistant County Administrator Lourdes Benedict referred to a recent report to the Board by the KPMG Consulting team and discussed a plan to improve the County's behavioral health system. They indicated that the plan would entail collecting and analyzing data regarding the current system first and then establishing a Coordinated Access Model, emphasizing the involvement of community partners in the process. Responding to query by Vice-Chair Eggers, Ms. Benedict explained that the data is necessary to determine how to improve the system, noting that funding is limited.

Commissioner Peters expressed her concerns regarding various behavioral and mental health problems experienced by the county's residents and subsequent impacts, and stressed that improving the current system should be a priority. She indicated that implementation of a coordinated system of care would address the vast majority of the issues, and asked that Mr. Burton budget \$1 million for the cause, as suggested by KPMG, in order for the system to move forward at the same time as the data is collected.

Commissioner Eggers requested that staff discuss the possibility of a parallel effort with respect to data collection and implementing a coordinated system of care at the Board meeting on August 6, and discussion continued regarding the following:

- Sequential versus parallel implementation of the plan steps
- Importance of cooperation and coordination with the community partners
- Clarifying the plan to the members of Faith and Action for Strength Together
- Collaboration, respect, and patience in working to improve the system

**Meeting Recessed: 12:02 P.M.**

**Meeting Reconvened: 12:30 P.M.**

**6. Budget Information Session - Board of County Commissioners Budget**

Countywide Budget Division Director Cecilia McCorkell referred to PowerPoint presentation titled *FY21 BCC District Budgets* and provided information regarding the proposed Commission budget, including the following:


- Total budget, its components, and changes from last year
- New cost center for Fiscal Year 2021 for shared expenses
- Individual district cost centers for discretionary expenditures
- Current approach versus new approach, which includes the shared cost center

In response to query by Vice-Chair Eggers, Ms. McCorkell explained the budget associated with travel, and Commissioner Justice provided feedback regarding the new cost center.

**ADJOURNMENT - 12:41 P.M.**

  
Chair

ATTEST: KEN BURKE, CLERK

By   
Deputy Clerk

