

Pinellas County



Minutes - Final

Thursday, August 20, 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 - Chair Pat Gerard, Vice-Chair Dave Eggers, Janet C. Long, Kathleen Peters, Karen Williams Seel, and Kenneth T. Welch

Absent: 1 - Charlie Justice

Others Present: Barry A. Burton, County Administrator; Jewel White, County Attorney; Katherine Carpenter, Manager, Board Records Department; 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

Sharman Cree, Clearwater

David Waddell, Clearwater

Mona Kelly, Largo

Rick Watson, Palm Harbor

Dawn Bohler, St. Petersburg

Lenny Grissom, St. Petersburg

Jennifer Frazier, Pinellas Park

Rob Posavec, Palm Harbor

David Katsaros, Palm Harbor

Adnan Campara, Largo

Karen Mullins, Dunedin

Diane Lebedeff, Safety Harbor

Valerie Andrus, Clearwater (spelling uncertain)

Hilary Wahlbeck, Belleair

David Happe, Tarpon Springs

Commissioner Eggers referred to concerns expressed by Messrs. Watson and Posavec as to changes in the anticipated funding of certain north county projects with the next round of Penny for Pinellas infrastructure surtax and requested that the matter be discussed at the next meeting. Mr. Burton invited Palm Harbor Community Services Agency representatives to have a dialogue with County staff on the matter, indicating that there may be a misunderstanding with regard to project funding and programming.

2. Local State of Emergency

Mr. Burton indicated that the proposed resolution would extend the Local State of Emergency (LSE) from August 21 through August 28. He explained the purpose of the LSE and noted that there is a consistent improvement in the COVID-19 data trends; and that it is

important to continue the current measures implemented to combat the spread of the virus; whereupon, discussion ensued regarding the following topics:

- Potential impact of schools reopening on the virus spread
- Accuracy of COVID-19 testing data
- Plans for hurricane sheltering during the pandemic
- 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares customer service issues
- Plans for lifting the LSE order and the mask mandate

During discussion and responding to query by Chair Gerard, Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County Director Dr. Ulyee Choe indicated that spikes in COVID-19 cases are expected to continue regardless of schools reopening; that the approaching cold season is one of the factors; and that various health organizations recommend maintaining social distancing and mask wearing practices, and Commissioners Long and Welch agreed and provided comments regarding the latter.

Responding to concerns of Commissioner Peters relating to delays in 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares call response, Mr. Burton provided information regarding staffing and indicated that the matter will be discussed in-depth at the next meeting.

In response to queries by Commissioner Eggers, Emergency Medical Services Medical Director Dr. Angus Jameson emphasized that a lot of conflicting information exists concerning COVID-19-related matters; that scientific data continues to evolve, but there are no exhaustive studies; and that doctors have to make decisions and recommendations based on the available data; whereupon, Mr. Burton and Attorney White confirmed that private businesses and the School Board can impose their own mask wearing measures, separate from the County's mask ordinance.

Responding to query by Commissioner Welch, Attorney White indicated that should there be a need to enact an LSE relating to a hurricane, it would be by a resolution separate from the resolution regarding COVID-19 that is currently in place.

In response to the Chair's call for public comment, the following individuals expressed their concerns:

David Waddell, Clearwater
Barbara Walker, Palm Harbor
David Katsaros, Palm Harbor
Jennifer Frazier, Pinellas Park
Dawn Bohler, St. Petersburg

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: 6 - Chair Gerard, Vice-Chair Eggers, Commissioner Long, Commissioner Peters, Commissioner Seel, and Commissioner Welch

Absent: 1 - Commissioner Justice

Resolution No. 20-75 adopted extending the Local State of Emergency established in Resolution No. 20-16 until 3:00 P.M. on August 28, 2020.

3. Budget Information Session

Safety and Emergency Services Director Jim Fogarty referred to a spreadsheet titled *Data Driven Decisions* and provided background information regarding the basis and process for making operational decisions pertaining to Emergency Medical Services (EMS), noting that the system has performed well over the last five years and discussing the following topics:

- Operational analysis: Data Driven Focus Group, type of data reviewed, and relevant requirements and standards
- Review requests: provider meetings (understanding needs and exploring alternatives)
- Fund analysis: basic criteria, principles, and 2020 fund reviews
- Budget recommendations

Mr. Fogarty indicated that based on numerous improvements to the system made over the last five years, an anticipated seven-percent decline in EMS calls for 2020, and other reasons, no additions to the system are recommended for the next fiscal year.

Discussion ensued regarding the causes for the call decline in the recent and current years, the data analysis process, priority dispatch and growth management, EMS funding recommendations, and related topics, and Commissioners Long and Eggers and Mr. Fogarty commended Fire Chiefs for their efforts in collaboration, community outreach, efficiency, and assisting long-term care facilities.

Responding to queries by Commissioner Eggers, Mr. Fogarty explained that he does not recommend funding the new positions in Fiscal Year 2021 requested by Palm Harbor Fire District Station 65, City of Largo Fire Rescue Station 38, and the Pinellas Park Fire Department, even at fifty percent, based on reasons relating to financial impact on the fund and operational uncertainty; whereupon, Commissioners Eggers and Gerard expressed their concerns, indicating that the aforementioned entities meet the criteria for the additional positions. Mr. Burton provided input, and discussion continued.

Mr. Burton indicated that additional budget discussions will take place at the next meeting.


ADJOURNMENT - 11:57 A.M.

ATTEST: KEN BURKE, CLERK

By


Deputy Clerk




Chair