

Pinellas County

*950 Lake Carillon Drive
St. Petersburg, FL 33716*



Minutes - Final

Thursday, October 28, 2021

9:30 A.M.

Joint BCC/State Delegation Meeting

Hilton St. Petersburg Carillon Park

Board of County Commissioners - Work Session

*Dave Eggers, Chair
Charlie Justice, Vice-Chair
Rene Flowers
Pat Gerard
Janet C. Long
Kathleen Peters
Karen Williams Seel*

ROLL CALL - 9:33 A.M.

Board of County Commissioners (BCC) – Chair Dave Eggers, René Flowers, Pat Gerard, Janet C. Long, and Kathleen Peters

Pinellas County Legislative Delegation – Senator Jeff Brandes, Representative Linda Chaney, Representative Nick DiCeglie, Senator Ed Hooper, Representative Chris Latvala, Representative Michele Rayner, and Senator Darryl Rouson

Not Present – Vice-Chair Charlie Justice, Commissioner Karen Williams Seel, Representative Christopher Sprowls, Representative Ben Diamond, and Representative Traci Koster

Others Present – County Administrator Barry A. Burton, Chief Assistant County Attorney Don Crowell, Intergovernmental Liaison Brian Lowack, Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller Ken Burke, Property Appraiser Mike Twitty, Public Defender Sara Mollo, Board Reporter/Deputy Clerk Shirley Westfall, and other interested individuals

1. Welcome
 - Commissioner Dave Eggers, Chairman, Board of County Commissioners
 - Representative Nick DiCeglie, Chairman, Legislative Delegation

Chair Eggers called the meeting to order and welcomed the Delegation members and visitors. He requested that Representative DiCeglie lead the Pledge of Allegiance; whereupon, he thanked the Delegation members for their continued support, especially with the transportation project for State Road 60 and I-275.

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

Representative DiCeglie thanked Pinellas County for hosting the meeting and expressed the importance of communication during challenging times and noted that the priority is to improve the quality of life for Pinellas County citizens.

2. 2022 Legislative Program
 - 2021 Session Highlights
 - 2022 Priorities
 - East Lake Tarpon Community Local Bill

2021 Session Highlights

Mr. Lowack thanked the Delegation for their continued support and reviewed the following 2021 highlights:

- Funding of beach nourishment on a recurring basis
- Resiliency and sea level rise; eight projects totaling approximately \$40 million

- Florida Communities Trust Grant
- Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons
- Small Business Enterprise Program

2022 Priorities

Mr. Lowack encouraged continued support for the flashing beacons; whereupon, Representative Chaney provided an update that the bill's sponsor will bring it forward again, but this time it will allow locals to have preemption authority.

At the direction of legislation, local governments are to create a program to address defective sanitary sewer laterals. In response to concerns by Mr. Lowack, Senator Brandes clarified the process and that defects would be detected with a smoke test; if the current homeowner does not make the repair, the defect would be recorded for the new homeowner and possibly be negotiated in the sale of the property. Mr. Burton noted that options and programs will be presented to the Commission next year.

Later in the meeting and responding to Mr. Twitty, Senator Brandes indicated that he will determine if the information will be recorded with the property appraiser or with building records.

Mr. Lowack, with input from Mr. Burton, related that a Florida Waste-to-Energy Coalition has been created with the City of Tampa and ten counties. He expressed the need for future legislative assistance between the waste-to-energy facilities and Duke Energy that could save taxpayers money.

Mr. Lowack related that the funding for the Highland Community Park was vetoed in 2019 due to COVID-19; and with the help of residents, business owners, the County, and the school district, the outdoor recreation project is moving forward with hope that the State will consider partnering to provide programming in the community. He further stated that this is a perfect example of a partnership as the school district owns the land and the County will construct the project.

Mr. Lowack encouraged support for the Dunedin Causeway bridge replacement with the federal infrastructure bill signed into law in November. The bridge is the only way to access Honeymoon Island, a crown jewel in the Florida Park system, at a cost of approximately \$80 million.

East Lake Tarpon Community Local Bill

Mr. Lowack thanked Representative Latvala for sponsoring this bill to protect the annexation for this unincorporated area.

3. Open Discussion

Chair Eggers recognized Mr. Lowack for his efforts in handling legislative matters for the County; whereupon, he invited the Clerk to address the members.

Mr. Burke - Guardianship Improvement Task Force

Mr. Burke enlightened those present on concerns regarding the guardianship process in the State of Florida and the vulnerable citizens and families being affected. Currently, the only requirements to become a guardian is a high-school diploma and a 40-hour course. Malfeasance and criminal activity continue to happen due to a lack of measures; whereupon, the Clerk's Association has created a Guardianship Task Force and are making several recommendations including the following:

- Create a statewide database on guardianships
- Use forms and paperwork to allow better collection of data
- Request Legislature to create a committee or task force to continue to study the process and recommend improvements
- Court monitored program
- Improve education and training
- Revise F.S. 744 which governs guardianships
- Involve hospitals, nursing homes, and assisted living facilities

Responding to Commissioner Flowers query, Mr. Burke stated that he does not believe that background checks are required for the examining committee members or the guardians; and that there currently is no licensing process.

Property Appraiser, Mike Twitty

Mr. Twitty thanked Senator Brandis and Representative Cheney for supporting legislation related to elevation of residential properties, which effectively allows homeowners to keep their assessed value, and for currently working with FEMA regarding risk rating methodology.

Public Defender, Sara Mollo

Ms. Mollo thanked Mr. Burke for his report on guardianships and indicated that she shares his concerns. She noted that public defenders across the state are in need of money and qualified attorneys, noting the serious attrition rate and the dangers it presents without a balanced justice system. Senator Brandes concurred, stating that there is a large disparity in salary across Florida which needs to be addressed.

The delegation and members reported on the following activities and concerns, and discussed various issues:

- Roof insurance requirements and costs
- Piney Point incident and other similar situations in the Bay area
- Regional Transportation

Commissioner Long

Representative Raynor informed that Statute is currently being reviewed regarding gypsum stacks; whereupon Representative Cheney related that Piney Point was not being managed because the owners were bankrupt and that the other stacks are active, being managed, and have significant bonds in place.

Commissioner Peters

- Access models for mental health
- Opiate deaths continue to climb

Commissioner Flowers

- Affordable housing
- Displaced tenants due to sale of properties
- Tampa Bay Innovation Center
- Regional transportation

Commissioner Gerard

- Encouraged support of electric vehicles with Volkswagen settlement funds

Commissioner Eggers

- Tampa Bay Water
- Affordable housing
- Inspections for older multi-story buildings

Senator Rouson

- Retention of employees and correction officers
- Piney Point and the effects on farmland
- Senate Bill 96, which created a 19-member mental health task force
- Overdose deaths in the black community in Tampa Bay increased by 130% in 2021
- Working with Commissioner Flowers on affordable housing and the Innovation Center

Senator Hooper

- Emergency radio signal booster antenna issues
- Allowing the return of Canadian, European, and South America visitors

Senator Brandes

- Affordable housing
- Flood and homeowners insurance
- Criminal justice system

4. Public Comment

Chair Eggers opened the meeting for public comment; whereupon the following individuals stated their concerns:

David Ballard Geddis, Jr., Palm Harbor
Angela (last name not provided/inaudible)
David Happe, Tarpon Springs

ADJOURNMENT - 11:16 A.M.