

**MINUTES OF MEETING  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA  
JANUARY 16, 2007  
(9:00 A.M.)**

Proceedings of a special meeting of the Board of County Commissioners of St. Johns County, Florida, held in the auditorium at the County Administration Building, 4020 Lewis Speedway (County Road 16-A) and U.S. 1 North, St. Augustine, Florida.

Present were: Ben Rich, District 3, Chairman  
Thomas G. Manuel, District 4, Vice Chair  
Cyndi Stevenson, District 1  
Ron Sanchez, District 2  
James Bryant, District 5  
Waldemar Kropacek, Interim County Administrator  
Patrick McCormack, County Attorney  
Pam Halterman, Minutes and Records Department

Also present: Cheryl Strickland, Clerk of Court

(01/16/07 - 1 - 9:04 a.m.)  
CALL TO ORDER

Rich called the meeting to order.

(01/16/07 - 1 - 9:04 a.m.)  
ROLL CALL

Rich stated that all five commissioners were present.

(01/16/07 - 1 - 9:04 a.m.)  
Bryant gave the Invocation and Manuel led the Pledge of Allegiance.

(01/16/07 - 1 - 9:04 a.m.)  
PUBLIC COMMENT

Dwight Hines, 150 Nesmith Street, spoke on regulations involved with bonds. Manuel assured that the board was well aware of and supported Chapter 119 of the Florida Statutes regarding the Freedom of Information Act. He advised Mr. Hines to document instances of non-compliance and forward it to him.

(01/16/07 - 1 - 9:07 a.m.)  
ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO SPECIAL AGENDA

Sanchez requested that Item 1.a., presentation by Phil McDaniel concerning the Cultural Arts Center, be added to the agenda.

(01/16/07 - 1 - 9:08 a.m.)  
APPROVAL OF SPECIAL AGENDA

**Motion by Manuel, seconded by Sanchez, carried 5/0, to place Item 1a. on the agenda following Item 1.**

(01/16/07 - 2 - 9:08 a.m.)

1. PRESENTATION ON PROPOSED COMMUNITY CENTER

Cathy Brown, Council on Aging, made a presentation regarding the agency's future plans. She advised that they would hold a public meeting on January 25, 2007, regarding bond funding for the construction of the new senior center.

(9:16 a.m.) Brown stated that Social Services, Alzheimer Services and the community gathering hall would be under one roof, and they had requested \$490,000.00 from The Mary Peck Estate which would accompany their current funding of \$200,000.00. She said the 14,000 square foot building could be completed for \$3.0 million dollars. Rich said he had reviewed the facility layout and noted that the new building would have elevator access to the second story. He pointed out that the northwest sector had much growth and would continue to feel additional growth in the future. He questioned whether Ms. Brown had considered placing the Senior Center closer to that area.

(9:23 a.m.) Brown advised that Alpine Grove should be able to handle citizens in the northwest area. Rich noted that a senior center could be located elsewhere in order to utilize the waterfront land for a possible county boat ramp. Brown expressed that older citizens just wanted a place to seat, visit and enjoy life. Rich pointed out that approximately 1,600 seniors were close to poverty in St. Johns County and any change to their tax burden would have a large impact. Brown thanked the board for listening and for their support of senior citizens. Stevenson voiced that Brown was a great advocate for senior citizens. She agreed with Rich that the northwest sector lacked a senior citizen facility. Rich added that his comments regarding the northwest sector was based on facts and numbers.

(01/16/07 - 2 - 9:34 a.m.)

1a. PRESENTATION CONCERNING THE CULTURAL ARTS CENTER

Phil McDaniel introduced Mary Marks, Executive Director of the Cultural Center at Ponte Vedra Beach, and Mayor Edward George, St. Augustine Beach, who assisted with the presentation.

McDaniel gave a brief presentation regarding a new Cultural Arts Center at St. Augustine Beach. He advised that the mission of the Center was to provide a place for seniors, as well as children, of the county.

Marks offered a list of community needs for the arts with an emphasis on children.

Mayor George advised that although the City of St. Augustine Beach owned the property, the Cultural Arts Council had obtained a lease on the building.

McDaniel pointed out the many activities currently being held at the facility. He noted that children throughout the county would be served by the center. He said they were asking for \$700,000.00 of matching funds from the board in order to finish the building. In response to an inquiry from Rich, McDaniel affirmed that the funds already received involved grant money as well as private donations. Mayor George said St. Augustine Beach had dedicated \$50,000.00 to the project for improvements to the splash park land which the county owned. Rich advised that bond funding could not be used for a building not owned by the county. McDaniel expressed that the Cultural Arts Council would be flexible regarding the lease and long term commitment if necessary.

Stevenson stated that she supported the arts; however, she questioned ownership of the building, insurability and services. Sanchez commented that cultural arts were needed

in the county and he supported the plan and appreciated the dedication of the people involved with the project. Manuel suggested that the execution of strategy should be handled at a later time but attempt to build consensus on what to do first.

(9:55 a.m.) Pam Kessler, 1136 Salt Creek Drive, Ponte Vedra Beach, spoke on the matter, and asked that the Commission consider the entire population of the county.

(01/16/07 - 3 - 9:57 a.m.)

## 2. FY 2006 BOND PROJECTS WORKSHOP

Doug Timms, Management and Budget Director, advised that six projects had been previously approved by the Board. He pointed out that the Sales Tax and Transportation Bond projects list had been included for further board discussion.

Barbara Hendee, 480 Diosa Court, asked that the commission allow construction of at least one community pool. Rich pointed out that a community pool was currently under construction located off SR207.

### NEW ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

(10:03 a.m.) Manuel made comments regarding the time and money already spent on the new administration building. Stevenson stated that the administration needed to be located close to the core services of the county in order to function effectively.

Mike Rubin, Construction Manager, Construction Services, explained that construction documents were ninety-nine percent complete and the project would go to bid in mid February with construction beginning at the end of March 2007. Sanchez said he wanted to review the Commissioners' and legal departments' quarters to offer a proposal to the board for more discussion. Rich advised that the building design was created with much consideration of the Sunshine Laws.

(10:10 a.m.) **Motion by Manuel, seconded by Rich, carried 5/0, to approve the new administration building.**

### NEW PURCHASING BUILDING

(10:10 a.m.) Manuel suggested that the Purchasing Department be placed in the new administration building.

Joe Burch, Purchasing Manager, stated that a separate building on Dobbs Road was not necessary; however, a need existed for a warehouse building for surplus and temporary storage which needed to be in close proximity to the Purchasing Department. Kropacek said a short-term building lease could be one option. Joe Vonasek, Assistant County Administrator, concurred with Burch regarding surplus storage. In response to an inquiry, Burch said heavy equipment and vehicles were secured in a warehouse until sold as surplus. Bryant questioned whether the department had outgrown their current facility. Burch noted that he had approximately 2,000 square feet of inside storage and one acre of fenced land for rolling stock; however, no room existed to expand the facility. Rubin stated that the proposed building could support a second story in order to allow expansion in the future. Burch explained that some surplus involved a computer recycling program which avoided double handling, otherwise, the surplus was held at a temporary holding facility. He affirmed that the Public Works building on SR 16 was at maximum capacity. Manuel stated that he saw no need to spend the money due to the available space on the third floor of the new permitting building, and he could not support the current proposal. Rubin explained that the use of the third

floor in the new permitting building was for Building Services because it had been funded through fees. Burch said surplus needed to remain on the first floor of a building due to handling and labor cost. Bryant commented that the funds needed for the new building was minor, and he suggested that the funds could be utilized on another project. In response to an inquiry from Bryant, Burch said the need had existed for several years and the new building was an essential part of the solution. He noted that numerous options had been reviewed over the past five years. Bryant asked for comments from Timms. Timms stated that the board had funds to address the problem and impact fees had already been committed to the new administration building. Bryant stated that he would support the current proposal.

**(10:31 a.m.) Motion by Stevenson, seconded by Bryant, carried 3/2 with Manuel and Sanchez dissenting, to allow the new purchasing building to remain as one of the capital improvement projects for the 2006 Sales Tax Bonding.**

The meeting recessed at 10:34 a.m. and reconvened at 10:45 a.m.

#### REMOTE SITE PRISON FARM

(10:45 a.m.) Manuel said bond regulations needed to be followed concerning redirection of funds. He stated that he supported the Cultural Arts Center and would do everything he could to help support the Council on Aging plans, and he liked the idea that ongoing maintenance and staffing would be handled without county assistance. Stevenson said she was in favor of "challenge grants" and "match" funds for projects; however, she did not want people coming to the board to obtain funding to complete on-going projects. Manuel pointed out that the COA was asking for \$700,000.00 and had already obtained \$1.3 million for the project. Bryant said it was incumbent upon the board to provide a quality of life for all segments of the community. Rich asked staff to clarify reassignment of funds.

(10:55 a.m.) Jean Mangu, Bond Counsel, spoke on the matter and offered details regarding the procedures for bonds. Rich stated that, as a future safety issue for the county, the land off SR 207 formerly known as the Café Erotica property could be used for a cloverleaf ramp system to I-95. Mangu noted that all facts would be reviewed as to whether an item would qualify as a sales tax bond project. Rich questioned whether bond funds for the purchase of right-of-way land would be appropriate. Mangu suggested that the transportation bond would be more appropriate for such projects.

(11:00 a.m.) Manuel suggested that the board move forward to the list of gasoline tax transportation projects. Sanchez noted that he and Mary Ann Blount, Real Estate, had been working on lowering the sales cost of several parcels located near the St. Johns County pier to be utilized for parking. He said he planned to bring several new proposals to the board which involved the pool issue and other property in the county. He stated that a parcel located north of the fire station might be used for the proposed Supervisor of Elections building. Stevenson suggested that several projects could be exchanged for high priority projects in the 30-year bond funding. She noted that the State had remarked that counties needed to be careful in their spending. Bryant suggested that the State wanted the counties to be frugal in order to force more financial responsibility on the local governments. Bryant pointed out that the millage rate had been reduced when he was first elected; however, it had adversely impacted the infrastructure needs a few years later.

(11:14 a.m.) Rich recommended that the Commissioners make comments on each item and set another workshop within thirty days to review requested information.

**(11:14 a.m.) Consensus of the Board was to follow Rich's recommendation.**

## REMOTE SITE PRISON FARM (continued)

(11:14 a.m.) Timms advised that he did not ask for a representative from the Sheriff's Department to attend the meeting; however, he was told that the item was a high priority for the Sheriff's office. Kropacek noted that it had been suggested that a forty acre parcel located close to the Fairgrounds be used for the site which would lessen the cost of the project. Bryant said the intent of the prison farm involved a work-release program and the inmates would maintain the site and handle other county maintenance tasks. Stevenson said the site near the fairgrounds had also been considered as an emergency response staging area for the county. Rich noted that adjacent land near the subject site would be a good location for the proposed prison farm. He suggested that each Commissioner visit the site prior to the next workshop meeting. Sanchez said he would like to hear a presentation by the Sheriff. Rich directed staff to notify Sheriff Shoar of the boards' request for a presentation.

## SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS BUILDING

(11:21 a.m.) Vickie Oakes, Administrative Assistant to the Supervisor of Elections, noted that it was apparent that they had outgrown their space. She explained that a new building would cost in excess of \$4.0 million dollars. She said they would be willing to expand their current facility prior to the 2008 elections. Sanchez agreed that more space was needed. In response to an inquiry from Sanchez, Rubin advised that no study had been completed on the expansion cost but the proposed cost was accurate. Sanchez suggested that the project was time sensitive due to the 2008 elections.

**(11:25 a.m.) Motion by Sanchez, seconded by Manuel, carried 5/0, to move forward with the Supervisor of Elections building proposal.**

## NORTHWEST PARKLAND DEVELOPMENT (ABERDEEN)

(11:26 a.m.) Timms pointed out that Northwest Parkland Development and Vilano Beach CRA Improvements had already been approved. Sanchez noted that the pool in the community center was paid for by CRA funds and was currently under construction. Stevenson asked for clarification regarding CRA funding which Vonasek explained. Manuel asked staff to provide the outstanding CRA debt and expected payback period at the next meeting.

## WEST AUGUSTINE DISTRICT PARK

(11:33 a.m.) Troy Blevins, Recreation and Parks Department, stated that the funds would pay for the infrastructure of the road and parking lot. He noted that additional funds would be needed in the future for the park development element of the project. Manuel asked that he be furnished the population data. Bryant advised that Fred Halback had completed data for all community centers in the entire county.

**(11:35 a.m.) Consensus of the Board was to place the item on the next workshop agenda.**

## HASTINGS GYMNASIUM IMPROVEMENTS/POOL

(11:35 a.m.) Blevins explained that \$500,000 was earmarked for the renovations of the gymnasium. He said \$1.5 million would be spent on the pool. Bryant questioned whether the facility was located within the Hastings town limits because many grants were available if the building was located within town limits. Blevins said the area was just outside the town boundary lines. Stevenson noted that the property had been

given to the county from the St. Johns County School Board. She said the Hastings area could benefit from recreational opportunities.

**(11:39 a.m.) Motion by Sanchez, seconded by Manuel, carried 5/0, to move forward with \$500,000 for renovations to the gymnasium building but delay funding the pool.**

(11:40 a.m.) Bryant asked that the Cornerstone Pool item be heard after the Northwest District Community Center and pool item. The Board agreed to Bryant's request.

#### NORTHWEST DISTRICT COMMUNITY CENTER AND POOL

(11:40 a.m.) Blevins said the building would measure approximately 17,000 square feet and was identical in design to the West Augustine community center. He added that the cost included the tennis court area and infrastructure to access the site. He reiterated that \$1.5 million was earmarked for the pool. Stevenson said she supported the community center; however, she would like to defer the pool facility. In response to an inquiry, Blevins said Mills Field had four public tennis courts which would be retained but the eight tennis court proposal would allow the county to host events. Bryant asked for clarification on wetland impacts. Blevins affirmed that the county had finalized the delineation regarding the wetlands. Bryant said he would support the community center portion of the project. Manuel asked for the proposed cost of the tennis courts. Blevins affirmed that the funding only involved the front section of the infrastructure and community center with a total cost of approximately \$11.0 million for project completion. Manuel stated that the Creeks Athletic Association had mentioned concerns about green space. He asked that Blevins review the concern prior to the next meeting. Blevins said the community center would be located at the front of the park. Manuel said he would yield to the District's Commissioner and the CAA regarding whether the parks or the building should come first. Blevins said a fee for service element would be involved with the tennis courts. Manuel pointed out that, a few years earlier, associations handled much of the ball field maintenance; however, the county had taken on more of the burden. He asked Blevins to question whether the associations would consider taking back more of the maintenance. Stevenson pointed out that the county currently lacked approximately twenty acres of ball fields to serve the existing community.

(11:51 a.m.) Sanchez said he would like more information on the ball parks, and he asked that the item be moved to the next meeting. Blevins asked the board to move forward on the proposed \$3.5 million for infrastructure. He stated that the tennis courts would cost approximately \$300,000.00; however, he would agree to delay the construction of the tennis courts. In response to an inquiry from Stevenson, Blevins noted that no other activities besides tennis would be held on the courts due to the delicate surface. Manuel noted that Ponte Vedra needed public tennis courts and ball fields but it was difficult to find available land. He suggested that the Ponte Vedra community was not being well served. (11:59 a.m.) Pam Kessler, 1136 Salt Creek Drive, President, Ponte Vedra Athletic Association, stated that two tennis courts existed at Cornerstone; however, they were not playable due to surface condition and would be eliminated if the community center was constructed. Blevins said he was in close communications with the Ponte Vedra Athletic Association and Creeks Athletic Association regarding their needs.

**(12:02 p.m.) Consensus of the Board was to move forward with \$3.5 million but delay the construction of the pool and tennis courts.**

#### CORNERSTONE POOL / COMMUNITY CENTER

(12:02 p.m.) Blevins noted that \$1.5 million was earmarked for the gymnasium and \$500,000.00 to upgrade the kitchen and provide the old church with ADA upgrades. Bryant said his support for the pools started from the support of the pool in Ponte Vedra. He asked that the board support funding the community center and pool in Ponte Vedra because of the lack of land to expand other recreational opportunities in that area. Manuel said he shared Bryant's views and stated that he supported the pool project for Ponte Vedra; however, the pool element should be delayed until the next workshop meeting. Rich concurred with Manuel.

(12:07 p.m.) **Consensus of the Board was to move forward with the project without the pool element.**

The meeting recessed at 12:08 p.m. and reconvened at 1:33 p.m. with Rich, Manuel and Sanchez present, and with Bryant and Stevenson absent. Kropacek, Vonasek, and McCormack were also present.

#### LANDFILL SOCCER FIELDS

(1:33 p.m.) Blevins noted that the project was straight forward and would fulfill a need for Ancient City Soccer. He said the field would need to be raised, sprinklers installed, concessions created along with parking and the area would be fenced. He noted that 10 soccer fields with 360 parking spaces would be constructed. He pointed out that between 800 and 1,000 citizens would utilize the facility. Stevenson entered the meeting at 1:36 p.m. Manuel said he would like more information on all county athletic associations by the next workshop meeting. Blevins advised that PVAA was the only association currently paying user fees. Manuel voiced that all associations should be required to pay user fees. Rich concurred with Manuel. Blevins affirmed that he had a conceptual design he would provide the board prior to the next workshop meeting. He said the northwest lacked space similar to Ponte Vedra.

(1:43 p.m.) **Consensus of the Board was to continue the item to the next workshop meeting.**

Sanchez suggested that a user fee be implemented. Manuel clarified his information requests with Mr. Blevins.

(1:49 p.m.) Rich noted that he would be reviewing the Usina boat ramp funds and project at the next workshop meeting. He also asked that the board consider, for safety reasons, the purchase of the old Café Erotica property for a new I-95 ramp. Stevenson suggested that the board consider pool activity as a recreation to deter criminal activity by county youth. Rich spoke on capital improvement amenities as a referendum as a way to offer a choice to county citizens. Manuel said he would support the Usina boat ramp and he shared Rich's concern with a ramp at I-95 by SR 207. He stated that his expanded definition of recreation involving the art community and Council on Aging which involved quality of life issues.

#### CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS FOR 2006 TRANSPORTATION BONDING

(1:54 p.m.) Sanchez suggested that remaining funds would determine whether the board changes any element or move to a higher priority on the transportation capital improvement list; therefore, he questioned whether the board should continue. Rich voiced that he had no intention of commenting on any of the projects. Manuel said the gas bonds needed to be used for transportation projects. He pointed out that Race Track Road, Russell Sampson and the CR2209 north segment had already been approved. He asked staff to provide detailed information regarding the Mickler Rd/SR

A1A improvements at the next workshop meeting. (1:56 p.m.) In response to an inquiry from Stevenson, Darrel Locklear, Assistant Administrator of Operations, spoke on the 9B Phase I project. He suggested that the SR312 project be added to the list as well as the interchanges at both ends of SR210 at US 1 and I-95 which were bond eligible projects.

(1:59 p.m.) Joe Stephenson, Public Works Director, affirmed that the project list had been reviewed and prioritized by Staff after consultation and approval by the board. He offered a brief description on each project listed. He noted that the Mickler Road/A1A intersection project was currently on the Florida's Department of Transportation 2008 work program for signalization which would start July 1, 2007. He suggested that they allow FDOT to follow through with the project. In response to an inquiry, Mangu noted that the transportation bond had a no call period of ten years; therefore, if funds came back to the county the money would be used for another project on the list. She stated that an amending resolution was necessary in order to add a new project to the list which also required a bond counsel opinion. Stevenson pointed out that to be reimbursed, the project needed to be included in the agency's five year plan. Stephenson continued with the W. King Street Corridor Plan and noted that the City of St. Augustine would be constructing new lanes at the intersection of Palmer and King Streets; therefore, he said it would be prudent for the county to complete the improvements from Palmer Street to US 1. He noted that the CR305 extension project would connect SR206 to CR204 (aka CR13) to provide a shorter route for the Flagler Estates residents. Stephenson reiterated that an attempt was made to prioritize the projects for the board. Stephenson touched on the Mariposa DRI project. Manuel said the Mariposa DRI had been reviewed by the Northeast Regional Planning Council which he had voted against due to the impact to county roads regarding concurrency. Stevenson pointed out that the vote involved a State transmittal; therefore, more input opportunities would be available in the future. Sanchez suggested that infrastructure needed to be in place, and he did not want to see SR207 turn into CR2210. Stephenson noted that the board had previously offered their support for the Russell Sampson / CR 210 at St. Johns Forest. He reviewed the CR205 to South Terminus, CR 2209 Corridor Central Segment, CR2209 North Segment, SR 16 Heritage Landing Intersection improvement projects.

(2:15 p.m.) Stevenson spoke about a large oak tree at the intersection of SR 16 and SR 13. He advised that the tree would increase the improvement cost at that intersection. He voiced concern for pedestrians and children in the area of Volusia Street and King Street due to the narrow road and lack of lighting and sidewalks. He commented that the projects offered by Mr. Locklear should be added to the current list of transportation projects. Rich asked Stephenson to meet with each commissioner to review projects prior to the next workshop meeting. Manuel requested a power point presentation at the next workshop.

Kropacek noted that February 7th, 2007, at 1:30 p.m., would be the next workshop meeting.

(01/16/07 - 8 - 2:22 p.m.)  
COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Commissioner Manuel:

Manuel asked the administrator to offer a proposal regarding the Governors' tree located on SR 13. He requested information regarding duplication of services between the State and County.

Rich voiced that he shared Manuel's suggestion regarding fines for tree removal.

Stevenson concurred with Rich regarding trees. In response to an inquiry, Manuel said his goal was to shrink the size of government by eliminating duplication. Stevenson said the county was known for its extensive rules involving development. She asked for a shortened version regarding the St. Johns River flow for educational purposes.

(2:34 p.m.)

Commissioner Sanchez:

Sanchez spoke regarding the St. Gerard facility and a \$4,000.00 impact fee. Rich explained that the St. Gerard agency had an expansion of their facility in order to help more young unwed mothers, and he said he would support a refund of the impact fee. Manuel asked for a workshop meeting on commercial and other impact fees.

(2:38 p.m.) **Motion by Manuel, seconded by Sanchez, to reimburse through the County's general fund, any impact fees that were paid by the St. Gerard agency.**

(2:39 p.m.)

Commissioner Stevenson:

Stevenson suggested that the board might receive numerous refund requests on impact fees if they allow one; thereby, opening the door for other requests from non-profit organizations.

(2:44 p.m.) **Motion carried 4/0 with Bryant absent.**

(2:45 p.m.)

Commissioner Rich:

Rich asked Kropacek to investigate the cost of the old Café Erotica property on SR 207.

(01/16/07 - 9 - 2:46 p.m.)

COUNTY ATTORNEY'S REPORT

McCormack spoke about a request for relief from a resident on Collins Road regarding the Westgate Plaza access to Collins Road. He advised that a special magistrate would meet with the involved parties. He asked the board to allow his office to identify a special magistrate to hear the issue. He affirmed that a special magistrate would attempt to mediate the issue and then advise the board of his recommendation.

(2:50 p.m.) **Consensus of the Board was to allow McCormack to proceed with identifying a special magistrate for the issue.**

(01/16/07 - 9 - 2:51 p.m.)

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Kropacek spoke on the Governor's oak tree and the developer's willingness to correct the issue. Sanchez reminded the Board of his suggestion to issue a stop work order. Rich agreed that larger developers needed to be fined with severe penalties.

(01/16/07 - 9 - 2:53 p.m.)

CLERK OF COURT'S REPORT

No report.

(2:54 p.m.) **Motion by Stevenson, seconded by Manuel, carried 4/0 with Bryant absent, to adjourn.** With there being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 2:54 p.m.

Approved February 6, 2007

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA

By: Ben Rich  
Ben Rich, Chairman

ATTEST: CHERYL STRICKLAND, CLERK

By: Cheryl Strickland  
Deputy Clerk

