

**MINUTES OF MEETING**  
**JOINT SCHOOL BOARD/BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MEETING**  
**REDISTRICTING**  
**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2011**  
**6:00 P.M.**

Proceedings of a joint meeting of the Board of County Commissioners of St. Johns County, Florida, and the St. Johns County School Board held in the auditorium at the County Administration Building, 500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine, Florida.

Present: J. Ken Bryan, District 5, Chair  
Mark Miner, District 3, Vice Chair  
Cyndi Stevenson, District 1  
Ron Sanchez, District 2  
Jay Morris, District 4  
Michael Wanchick, County Administrator  
Patrick McCormack, County Attorney  
Erika Moore, Assistant County Attorney  
Lenora Newsome, Deputy Clerk

Bill Fehling, District 4, Chair  
Beverly Slough, District 1, Vice Chair  
Tommy Allen, District 2  
Bill Mignon, District 3  
Carla Wright, District 5  
Joseph Joyner, Superintendent of Schools  
Frank D. Upchurch, School Board Attorney

(11/01/11 - 1 - 6:00 p.m.)

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Bryan.

(11/01/11 - 1 - 6:00 p.m.)

2. ROLL CALL

The roll was called by the clerk, and all members were present.

(11/01/11 - 1 - 6:00 p.m.)

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

No motion was made.

(11/01/11 - 1 - 6:00 p.m.)

4. INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS BY OFFICE OF THE COUNTY ATTORNEY

McCormack welcomed everyone to the second joint meeting of the St. Johns County School Board and the Board of County Commissioners to discuss redistricting of the County. He gave a brief overview of the process. He introduced Jon Libby, from American Public Dialogue, Inc., who would give the Boards and the public, an overview of what insights were gained from the five townhall meetings, since the last joint School Board/Board of County Commissioners meeting in September, 2011. He stated that there would not be a final adoption of any district with the Board of County Commissioner or School Board this night, however, what they were hoping to do was get a clear direction from both boards on which of the proposed plans would be a candidate plan to bring to the Board of County Commissioners on November 15, 2011, for a final adoption at that time, and later to the School Board in December. He

mentioned that there was no law that required the School Board and the County Commission adopt the same districts, but there would a number of advantages in doing so. He announced that the Supervisor of Elections, Vicky Oakes, was present, and that she had hosted each of the townhall meetings. He stated that this was not a school rezoning matter.

(11/01/11 - 2 - 6:03 p.m.)

5. PRESENTATION BY AMERICAN PUBLIC DIALOGUE, INC. (JOHN LIBBY AND JOE SCHMIDT)

- REDISTRICTING PLAN REVISIONS
- ADDITIONAL MAPS (PROVIDED BY SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS OFFICE)

John Libby, professional consultant, stated there had been five public meetings, at which he took the public comments, and came up with the plans for redistricting. He reviewed the revised plans in the different districts, utilizing the redistricting maps, *Exhibit A*. He spoke on deviations and covered revised Plan E and revised Plan C.

(11/01/11 - 2 - 6:13 p.m.)

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

Rev. Ron Rawls, Saint Paul AME Church, said that his strongest interest was District 2, and that he supported revised Plan E. Bryan thanked Rawls for his hard work. Rawls replied Allen asked Rawls to explain in detail how it might disenfranchise the African American vote. Rawls spoke on minority populations when setting up boundaries, with discussion following. Sanchez said he could not support Plan D, and that he did not have a problem with Plan E. Discussion followed on percentages after redistricting. Wright asked Rawls if he lived and paid taxes in St. Johns County. Rawls replied that he did not.

(6:28 p.m.) Willie Cooper, 455 Southwest Volusia Street, said there was talk about going back to district commissioners, and if it changed there would not be the same level of representation and it would hurt them in the future. He said it was not all about getting someone elected, it was about having a voice.

(6:29 p.m.) Pastor Rick Torrance, 456 Sebastian Square, voiced concern about social justice and equal representation. He said that Plan D or E would not affect the City of St. Augustine.

(6:31 p.m.) Dwala Willis, 895 South Orange Street, said that the decision made this night, would affect everyone.

(6:33 p.m.) Carl Blessing, 12 La Vista Drive, congratulated Mr. Libby and his staff for the amount of work they had done, and said that they gave them the working tools to arrive at an equitable division of districts in the coming years. He spoke on the meetings not being publicized very well. Bryan said they had advertised the meetings very well. Blessing said the issues under the Neighborhood Bill of Rights had better coverage in the northeast part of the county, than anything else.

(11/01/11 - 2 - 6:35 p.m.)

7. JOINT DISCUSSION BY THE BOARDS; DIRECTION TO CONSULTANT AND STAFF

Miner said that the revised Plan E addressed a lot of the concerns presented by the public.

(6:36 p.m.) Stevenson said that she liked the way the districts looked; compacted and like the old districts.

(6:38 p.m.) Morris stated that District 4 had one of the bigger changes, and that he was in favor of revised Plan E.

(6:39 p.m.) Sanchez commented on eliminating the plans that they were not interested in. He said that he supported revised Plan E or revised Plan C.

(6:39 p.m.) Mignon said that he supported revised Plan E. He mentioned that he would like to have seen an overlay that would position the schools within the various districts.

(6:40 p.m.) Wright mentioned that she did not like Plan E, because it tore up her district. She liked revised Plan C only.

(6:41 p.m.) Bryan said that he would go with revised Plan E. He stated that his district pretty much stayed the same. He mentioned that it did not affect the BCC, as much as the School Board.

(6:42 p.m.) Fehling said he fully supported the revised Plan C. He mentioned that the motivation would be for the County to move forward as a whole.

(6:43 p.m.) Mignon spoke on having a board member working within the individual districts who people could go to on a regular basis.

(6:46 p.m.) Bryan commented on putting an equal amount of schools in the respective districts.

(6:47 p.m.) Wright spoke on the area of Lincolnville being rezoned.

(6:47 p.m.) Allen spoke about the affect the changes would have on his district. He said that revised Plan C was a better solution and that he would like to keep the discussion on revised Plan E and revised Plan C.

(6:50 p.m.) McCormack recommended that Libby come back up to answer questions about revised Plan C and revised Plan E.

(6:51 p.m.) Sanchez said that revised Plan C and revised Plan E got a lot of votes. He mentioned that the School Board had a lot more to consider and think about because they were district, all the way around. Stevenson mentioned having a discussion on the advantages of the School Board and the County Commission having the same districts.

(6:52 p.m.) Stevenson asked Libby to discuss the history of the County and the School Board having the same districts and the advantages of that. Libby spoke on having the same district lines, and said having the same set of lines for the School Board and the County Commission would make it easier. He displayed the layout of the current districts, and explained the changes in revised Plan C and revised Plan E.

(7:03 p.m.) Discussion followed on District 5 and deviations. Bryan asked what determined one area having something in common more than the other, with discussion following. Stevenson observed the districts having things in common like community issues. Sanchez said it was really important for both boards to have the same districts.

(7:10 p.m.) Morris said it was down to District 5, and deciding which one to go with. Sanchez said they needed to work on it, and do whatever they needed to do to work it

out. Wright stated she was the one who would be affected the worst. Allen said he agreed with Sanchez regarding the districts being the same. Stevenson agreed with Sanchez and Allen on matching the districts. Discussion followed on county-wide advertising, the number of people who attended the meetings and provided input. Sanchez said it looked like they were looking at revised Plan C and revised Plan E. Libby gave one last observation regarding the changes. He reviewed the different districts and what surrounded them.

(7:27 p.m.) Bryan mentioned that Wright was concerned about being spread out too much. Miner did not understand why Wright did not like revised Plan E. He said that he would only support revised Plan E. McCormack said the hope was to try to narrow the plans down, to a couple of plans, which had been done. He said that the consultant and staff were looking for some kind of direction on what to bring back and emphasize. He mentioned that the next BCC hearing would be on November 15, 2011. The School Board's would be in December. He said that he would have some discussion with Upchurch about how to get the School Board's input to the BCC on November 15, 2011. He mentioned that they were hoping there would be some kind of consensus on a primary or secondary plan. Slough asked what Libby's response was to melding the two plans.

(7:32 p.m.) Libby said that they looked at a number of configurations and the area of contention was going to be the same area. He stated that District 4 was pretty set, and that District 3 was pretty much the same as District 4. He said the population was very dense in that area of St. Augustine, so that was why they kept trading back and forth between District 2 and District 5. He said under the current plan they were unable to keep all of St. Augustine in one district. He suggested that revised Plan C and revised Plan E were probably the two best plans they could come up with. He said each plan they looked at was defensible in court, and that there were no neutral lines in redistricting. He said where they stood this night, they were looking at two plans, even though they had somewhat different geography, they were both legal, defensible and had a deviation of less than 5 percent. Sanchez said that he would like to know how the School Board felt. He stated that the districts were far more important to the School Board members than they were to the County Commission members. Allen said his first choice was revised Plan C, but he could live with revised Plan E. Sanchez said that Wright was for revised Plan C, Mignon was for revised Plan E, Slough was not sure, Fehling was for revised Plan C, Miner was for revised Plan E, Bryan was for revised Plan E, Morris was for revised Plan E, Stevenson was for revised Plan C or E and Sanchez was for revised Plan C or E. Discussion followed on using a small segment of the current plan, swapping land, not subdividing, and census blocks.

The meeting recessed at 7:51 p.m. and reconvened at 8:02 p.m.

(8:03 p.m.) *Bryan said that they did not have to come to a conclusion tonight. He suggested that the School Board to go back to their respective board, come to a consensus and the BCC Board would do the same. Slough stated that they had done a lot of work going from eight plans down to two plans. McCormack stated that the School Board would meet next week and may have a recommendation to the BCC prior to November 15. He said they went from eight down to two plans, and planned to present the two plans on November 15<sup>th</sup>. He said if Libby was able to tweak either revised Plan E or C, based on this night's comments, it could be an additional inclusion for November 15<sup>th</sup>. There was direction from both boards to do so. Stevenson thanked Libby for doing a great job, and all the residents present at the meeting. Bryan echoed Stevenson, and stated that this was not an easy decision.*

(11/01/11 - 4 - 8:06 p.m.)

8. OTHER ITEMS AS MAY LEGALLY COME BEFORE THE JOINT BOARDS

There were none.

(11/01/11 - 5 - 8:06 p.m.)  
9. ADJOURN

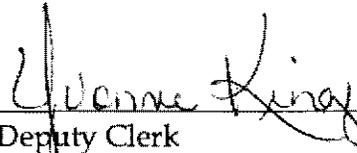
**Motion by Miner, seconded by Sanchez, carried 10/0, to adjourn the meeting. With there being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 8:06 p.m.**

Approved November 15, 2011

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA

By:   
Mark Miner, Chair

ATTEST: CHERYL STRICKLAND, CLERK

By:   
Deputy Clerk

