

**MINUTES OF THE
SOUTHWEST FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL
JUNE 18, 2020 MEETING**

The meeting of the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council was held on June 18, 2020 at the offices of the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council–1400 Colonial Boulevard, Suite #1 in Fort Myers, Florida. Vice-Chair McCormick called the meeting to order at 9:08 AM. Ms. Margaret Wuerstle conducted the roll call and announced that a quorum was present.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Charlotte County: Commissioner Ken Doherty, Mr. Don McCormick, Councilman Jaha Cummings

Collier County: None

Glades County: Commissioner Donna Storter-Long, Commissioner Donald Strenth, Mr. Thomas Perry

Hendry County: Mr. Mel Karau

Lee County: Commissioner Cecil Pendergrass, Councilman Fred Burson, Vice- Mayor Ray Murphy

Sarasota County: Commissioner Willie Shaw, Alternate Dr. Joseph Nuender

Ex-Officio: Mr. Jon Iglehart–FDEP

MEMBERS ABSENT

Charlotte County: Ms. Suzanne Graham, Commissioner Joe Tiseo

City of Naples: Commissioner Bill McDaniel, Commissioner Penny Taylor

Glades County: None

Hendry County: Commissioner Mitchell Wills, Commissioner Emma Byrd, Commissioner Julie Wilkins, Vice-Mayor Michael Atkinson

Lee County: Commissioner Frank Mann

Sarasota County: Commissioner Charles Hines, Commissioner Michael Moran

Ex-Officio:
SWFWMD

Mr. Wayne Gaither, FDOT, Mr. Phil Flood–SWFMD, Mr. Dennis Ragosta-

**AGENDA ITEM #4
PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

**AGENDA ITEM #5
AGENDA**

Vice-Chair, Mr. McCormick announced that there was a slight change to the agenda, item 8i: FY 2020-2021 Budget will be presented before item 8h: FY 2019-2020 Audit.

A motion was made by Mr. McCormick to approve the agenda change. This motion was seconded by Councilmember Cummings and passed unanimously.

**AGENDA ITEM #6
MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 16, 2020 MEETING**

There were no corrections or additions needed.

A motion was made by Mr. Tommy Perry to approve the minutes as presented. This motion was seconded by Councilman Jaha Cummings and passed unanimously.

**AGENDA ITEM #7
DISPOSAL OF FIXED ASSETS**

Ms. Wuerstle explained that the items to be disposed of are out of date computers and office items that are no longer needed as the SWFRPC moves the office location.

A motion was made by Commissioner Storter-Long to approve the disposal of fixed assets. This motion was seconded by Councilmember Burson and passed unanimously.

**AGENDA ITEM #8
FINANCIALS**

Ms. Wuerstle stated that since there had not been a meeting in several months, there are several financial statements from last year that need approval. The September financials were discussed first as that was the end of the last fiscal year and numbers that the audit was based on. The financials for the end of the fiscal year that were unaudited at the time show that there was a loss of \$180,000. There were several issues that impacted this, including the loss of assessments from counties that the SWFRPC was unable to collect as well as a lawsuit that occurred. The other financials of importance were for the month of January 2020, which shows

the RPC is down about \$119,000 as the year begins due to Collier County pulling their funding without giving the 12-month notice. The RPC is taking a loss, but the reserves cover the losses. Ms. Wuerstle explained that all staff is working frantically to submit grants and secure funding. Currently about \$3 million are pending in grant requests. For approval, the financials for August 2019 through January 2020 were packaged together to be approved all at the same time.

A motion was made by Councilmember Burson to approve the financials for August 2019 through January 2020. This motion was seconded by Councilmember Cummings and passed unanimously.

**AGENDA ITEM #8(g)
BUDGET AMENDMENT**

Ms. Wuerstle explained that this budget amendment was to go back and adjust the budget so that everything zeros out accordingly. The other important aspect of this budget amendment is there was a finding in the audit that showed the need to carry forward the fund balance, which was not previously shown on the budget. This amendment took care of the issue and zeroed everything out.

A motion was made by Commissioner Storter-Long to accept the budget amendment as presented. This motion was seconded by Councilmember Cummings and was adopted unanimously.

**AGENDA ITEM #8(i)
FY 2020-2021 BUDGET**

Ms. Wuerstle explained that the Executive Committee had a meeting in early May to discuss a number of issues. One of the first things that needed to happen was not renewing the lease for the current offices of the SWFRPC, and notice was given to the building owner in May of this decision. This brings a substantial savings of about \$50,000 per year to the RPC. In addition the RPC has been working with the United Way who will be providing the RPC with free space at Bell Towers to set up a work station and store all necessary supplies. The staff of the RPC will continue to work remotely, which has been very productive thus far. Based on everything that is currently known at this time, the budget that Ms. Wuerstle put together for the next fiscal year includes only the items that are in hand. It does not include any program development or grants that are still pending that could potentially bring in more money. She explained that the proposed budget consists of the grants and service contracts that we have secured as well as money from the reserves. The RPC can make it through another whole year, ending the year with \$22,000. Since the time that the budget was created, a grant for the Healthy Cities & Healthy Counties program was received for \$100,000. Ms. Wuerstle went on to explain that there is currently almost \$3 million in pending grants and the RPC is working on close to \$2 million in grants for submission within the next few months. Ms. Wuerstle stated that she is confident that based on the funding that is currently secured and working remotely the RPC can make it through another year and if more funding comes in it will only improve the bottom line.

A motion was made by Councilmember Cummings to accept the FY 2020-2021 budget as presented. This motion was seconded by Tommy Perry was adopted unanimously.

Ms. Wuerstle went on to explain that there has been difficulty getting a full board meeting and there are decisions that need to be made and approved. She requested that the board consider that in the absence of a quorum the Executive Committee be empowered to make decisions so that the RPC can continue to operate efficiently. Mr. McCormick clarified that this is proper procedure under the RPC bylaws.

A motion was made by Councilmember Cummings to grant the power to the Executive Board to make decisions under the afore mentioned conditions. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Storter-Long and passed unanimously.

**AGENDA ITEM #8(h)
FY 2019-2020 AUDIT**

Jeff Tuscan presented on the September 30, 2019 audit and brought to attention that the opinion is unmodified in the audit. It was noted that there were no issues, and the RPC has complied with statutes. Cash at the RPC this year went down about \$181,000. Essentially, there was a \$223,000 operating loss for the year, funded partly through cash. Asset balance went down as well about \$60,000 due to disposal of assets. Unearned revenue went down about \$21,000 due to money that the RPC was holding for things like DRI's. Fund balance went down at the end of September, and going into Fiscal Year 2020, \$630,000 was carried in. Based on the financials that were just approved, about \$250,000 was earned so far this year. The losses shown are due to local grant reductions but mostly due to the assessment fees that counties and cities stopped paying to the RPC.

A motion was made by Councilmember Burson to approve the 2019-2020 audit. This motion was seconded by Councilmember Cummings and passed unanimously.

Vice-Chair McCormick brought to attention that this year ends a 3-year engagement letter with Tuscan Company and in order for the RPC to go into the 2020-2021 fiscal year, approval is needed to extend the engagement letter another 3 years. There is no obligation to the engagement letter if the RPC ceases to exist in that time.

A motion was made by Councilmember Cummings to extend the engagement letter with Tuscan. This motion was seconded by Mr. Perry and passed unanimously.

**AGENDA ITEM #9
CONSENT AGENDA**

**AGENDA ITEM #9(a)
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION AND REVIEW**

Ms. Wuerstle stated that the only item for review was the purchase of replacement vans by Lee County Transit and this project was found to be regionally significant and consistent.

A motion was made by Councilmember Cummings to approve the consent agenda. This motion was seconded by Mr. Perry and passed unanimously.

**AGENDA ITEM #10
REGIONAL IMPACT**

**AGENDA ITEM #10(a)
PALMER RANCH NOPC**

Mr. Dan Trescott explained that in December 2019 a change was proposed to eliminate 85,000 square feet of commercial use and to add 232 multifamily units. The development plan was submitted as well as a comprehensive plan amendment for this NOPC, a rezone application proposing this land to go from commercial neighborhood to a residential multifamily. The requested motion to approve these changes is the staff assessment of Palmer Ranch.

A motion was made by Councilmember Burson to approve the staff assessment of Palmer Ranch. This motion was seconded by Councilmember Cummings and passed unanimously.

**AGENDA ITEM #10(b)
BABCOCK RANCH NOPC**

Mr. Trescott stated that the county had already approved the development order for Babcock Ranch, so this item is to review the development order that has already been adopted. Babcock Ranch changes include: increasing from 2,000 units to 5,000 units; the addition of 600 hotel rooms; the retail space will be increased from 50,000 square feet to 870,000 square feet; the office space will increase from 110,000 square feet to 300,000 square feet and the community support use facilities will increase from 30,000 square feet to 50,000 square feet. Clarifications will be made on a number of other things including revisions of build out dates. Babcock Ranch sits not only in Charlotte County but also a portion of Lee County so its impacts will be on two counties. The developments that are on the Lee county portion are being analyzed for its transportation impacts. Mr. Trescott went on to state that the majority of issues on this change are all associated with transportation and DOT has been very much involved in reviewing the traffic analysis. On May 26, 2020 the Babcock Ranch NOPC was adopted by the county.

A motion was made by Commissioner Pendergrass to approve the review of the development order of Babcock Ranch NOPC. This motion was seconded by Councilmember Cummings and passed unanimously.

**AGENDA ITEM #11
UPDATES**

**AGENDA ITEM #11(a)
LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE (LEPC)**

Ms. Katelyn Kubasik announced that she has taken over as LEPC Coordinator. This is the end of Quarter 4, so she explained that she is preparing the quarterly report. The LEPC documents in the packet are for informational purposes only. There was not a quarterly SERC meeting due to COVID-19.

**AGENDA ITEM #12
DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**AGENDA ITEM #12(a)
SEPTEMBER RPC MEETING**

Ms. Wuerstle brought to attention that the RPC was planning a big conference style meeting for the September meeting focusing on quality of life, with a variety of different speakers. Due to the COVID-19 situation, cancellation of the September workshop would be best for the safety of everyone and to avoid spending money on presenters for minimal attendance. Ms. Wuerstle proposed a virtual meeting or conference call for the September meeting.

A motion was made by Tommy Perry to approve the cancellation of the September workshop. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Donna Sorter-Long and passed unanimously.

**AGENDA ITEM #12(b)
PROMISE ZONE**

This item was for informational purposes only. Ms. Wuerstle discussed the grant sheet for the promise zone with a listing of all grants that have been submitted.

**AGENDA ITEM #12(c)
FRCA DECEMBER 2019/JANUARY 2020 REPORT**

This item was for informational purposes only.

**AGENDA ITEM #12(d)
GRANT ACTIVITY SHEET**

This item was for informational purposes only.

**AGENDA ITEM #13
COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**AGENDA ITEM #13(a)
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Mr. Perry explained that the budget was discussed at the Executive Board meeting in May and Ms. Wuerstle had a strategic plan to keep the RPC active through the next year that proved solid by the auditors today.

**AGENDA ITEM #13(b)
ESTERO BAY AGENCY ON BAY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

Ms. Mackenzie Moorhouse gave an update on the ABM. The new officers include Chair, Dr. Nora Demers, Vice-Chair, Ms. Patty Whitehead and Secretary, Laura Miller. New members include Louise Kowitch who is an environmental educator and Benjamin Marics an FGCU student representing all FGCU students. In April 2020, the 2019 State of the Bay Report was released, it can be found online on the SWFRPC website.

**AGENDA ITEM #13(c)
QUALITY OF LIFE & SAFETY COMMITTEE**

Chair Shaw cautioned all to stay safe and healthy in this pandemic.

**AGENDA ITEM #14
NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business.

**AGENDA ITEM #15
STATE AGENCIES COMMENTS/REPORTS**

Jon Iglehart of FDEP shared that in the last two months the application receive rate had drastically increased. So far for this fiscal year 7,400 applications have been processed through their offices. The COVID stay at home order has resulted in more applications for FDEP.

**AGENDA ITEM #16
COUNCIL MEMBERS' COMMENTS**

Vice-Chair McCormick thanked Ms. Wuerstle for her continued efforts through thick and thin to keep the organization running and serving the needs of the counties. Commissioner Doherty wished everyone good health and safety during this time.

AGENDA ITEM #17

ADJOURN

The next meeting will be on September 17, 2020. The meeting adjourned at 9:58 a.m.

Vice-Mayor Michael Atkinson, Secretary

The meeting was duly advertised in the June 8, 2020 issue of the FLORIDA ADMINISTRATIVE REGISTER, Volume 46, Number 111.