

**MINUTES OF THE  
SOUTHWEST FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL  
EXECUTIVE BOARD  
NOVEMBER 18, 2021, MEETING**

The meeting of the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council Executive Board was held on November 18, 2021, in-person at the Estero Recreation Center. Governor Appointee and Council Chair, Mr. Don McCormick called the meeting to order at 9:13AM. There was a quorum of the Executive Committee present.

**EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

Councilman Jaha Cummings- Treasurer  
Mr. Don McCormick- Chair  
Mr. Tommy Perry- Governor Appointee

**OTHERS BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

Commissioner Rick LoCastro- Collier BCC  
Commissioner Frank Mann- Lee BCC  
Commissioner Cecil Pendergrass- Lee BCC

**EX-OFFICIO MEMBER PRESENT**

Phil Flood, SFWMD  
Jon Iglehart, FDEP

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Ms. Susan Buchans- Glades County Community Development Director  
Ms. Cheryl Cook  
Ms. Rebekah Harp- SWFRPC  
Ms. Katelyn Kubasik- SWFRPC  
Ms. Tracy Whirls- SWFRPC  
Ms. Margaret Wuerstle- Executive Director, SWFRPC

**AGENDA ITEM #6(b)  
MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 24, 2021, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Councilman Cummings offered a motion to accept the minutes of the September 24, 2021, Executive Committee meeting as presented. Mr. Tommy Perry seconded the motion to accept the minutes. The action was approved unanimously.**

**AGENDA ITEM #7  
FINANCIALS**

**AGENDA ITEM #7(a)  
AUGUST- SEPTEMBER 2021 FINANCIALS**

Ms. Wuerstle explained that the financials show that the RPC was down \$84,000 in August and then back up in September and ended the Fiscal Year with a \$25,000 surplus. Since the new budget was approved additional revenues have come in and there is still over \$200,000 in the RPC's reserves.

**Councilman Cummings offered a motion to approve the August- September 2021 financials. Mr. Tommy Perry seconded the motion for approval of the August- September 2021 financials. The action was approved unanimously.**

**AGENDA ITEM #7(b)  
FY 20-21 FISCAL YEAR END BUDGET AMENDMENT**

Ms. Wuerstle shared that Glades County is the only county that still pays their assessment fees to the RPC. All other funding and expenses are paid by grants that have been written by the RPC and awarded. The 20-21 Fiscal Year ended with a \$25,000 net profit.

**Councilman Cummings offered a motion to approve the FY 20-21 Year End Budget Amendment. Mr. Tommy Perry seconded the motion for approval of the FY 20-21 Year End Budget Amendment. The action was approved unanimously.**

**AGENDA ITEM #4  
PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Ms. Cheryl Cook gave an update on the City of Sarasota cases that are taking place: Dobrin vs. Deborah McDowell.

**AGENDA ITEM #8  
DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**AGENDA ITEM #8(a)  
NEW REVENUES**

Ms. Wuerstle shared that there have been new revenues since the FY 21-22 Budget was adopted. USDA Regional Food System Partnership Program awarded \$643,500. Collier Blue Zone matched the grant with \$108,926.25 for a project total of \$752,426.25 for launching the Southwest Florida Fresh: Choose Local Chose Fresh Brand.

**AGENDA ITEM #8(b)**  
**EDA CARES ACT ECONOMIC RECOVERY**

Ms. Tracy Whirls discussed The Build Back Better grant application to EDA. She stated that this was different than your typical EDA grant application. It had to be a coalition application. It couldn't just be one or two counties and it had to be for a project that is expected to have a transformative impact on a region. Having spent 16 years as the EDC Director in Glades County, Ms. Whirls was very familiar with the inland port concept, which was worked on for about 10 years. She noted that Glades County's Americas Gateway project is a truck to train or train to truck facility, although it is also zoned for manufacturing, including heavy industrial manufacturing. AirGlades is a plane to truck setup. Because the proposed inland port in the Glades area of Western Palm Beach County already has an existing relationship with the Port of Palm Beach, they supply the ports connectivity.

Ms. Whirls went on to discuss that the Build Back Better (BBB) grant is a technical assistance grant which, if awarded, will give the ability to conduct feasibility studies to determine if some of the proposed projects—like expanding the sewer treatment plant in Clewiston. She understood that Hendry County just got funds to build the wastewater sewer line from Clewiston to AirGlades. The RPC will be able to decide which actual infrastructure projects are to be completed, assuming the RPC is selected to apply for the Phase II funds, which can be from \$35m to \$75m. Because Ms. Whirls also had a working relationship with the other EDOs, she was able to work with them to create a coalition.

Mr. Tommy Perry suggested that Charlotte County was included in this project. There is enough synergy between Glades, Hendry, Lee and Charlotte County, that Charlotte County can be included afterwards as the work goes forward. Tracy went on to mention that since the supply chain snafu has been on everyone's mind, it occurred to her that even if the RPC isn't funded, they should continue the conversation on the state level, as for the first time, supporting Florida's ports is top of mind for Governor DeSantis.

Ms. Whirls added that as an alumnus of two failed regional economic development initiatives, she felt like there needed to be an emphasis on collaboration on a regional level, rather than viewing one another as competitors, to build on initiatives like John Talmadge's work with Florida Trend on the regional marketing piece. When it comes to larger issues, we have to think regionally while we act locally. Ultimately a company's site location decision will be market-driven as there are no walls between counties.

Chair Don McCormick added that actually the RPC is the only entity that can really do that. Ms. Whirls added that if perhaps we start producing tangible results for the counties, they'll be more willing to invest in the RPC.

**AGENDA ITEM #8(c)**  
**RESILIENCY STRATEGY FOR LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS**

Ms. Wuerstle mentioned when the New Revenues were discussed, a new grant has been awarded to the SWFRPC. USDA Regional Food System Partnership Program has awarded the RPC \$643,500. Collier Blue Zone matched the grant with \$108,926.25 totaling \$752,426.25 for launching the Southwest Florida Fresh: Choose Local Choose Fresh Brand. There was “swag” made for the marketing of the brand including tote bags, t-shirts, car decals and magnets, posters and banners.

**AGENDA ITEM #8(d)**  
**NEW BROWNFIELD GRANT TO BE SUBMITTED**

Ms. Tracy Whirls discussed a new \$500,000 grant application to EPA that the RPC is working on, which if approved, will allow the RPC to continue Phase I and Phase II environmental reviews of properties in Glades County and the City of Moore Haven. Unlike the previous \$600,000 EPA coalition grant application, this is a communitywide grant specifically for work in Glades County, focusing on those properties with the most potential to be redeveloped. Unlike the first grant, where the RPC targeted properties owned by the city or the county (the low-lying fruit as it were) this one may be a bit more challenging in terms of getting property owners to agree to participate. The RPC is hoping to encourage property owners to participate because it has been found that by providing the phase I and phase II assessments at no cost to either the property owner or developer it reduces the cost associated with redeveloping the property which encourages redevelopment.

Ms. Whirls went on to say that in some cases, EPA authorized additional activities, like the wetland delineation for Heron Bay, which has moved the project forward. The developer has a conceptual site plan and hopes to have architectural renderings for 84 units this week. So, he’ll be submitting those to his civil engineer and hopefully soon after will be submitting them to the county for permitting. The reason Moore Haven was a perfect candidate for the brownfields program is because the main thoroughfare through the city has been rerouted three times since its founding, causing gas stations and other industrial uses to move with it.

**AGENDA ITEM #8(e)**  
**PROMISE ZONE GRANTS**

Document in packet for informational purposes.

**AGENDA ITEM #8(f)**  
**ISSUES OF FOCUS FOR 2022 SWFRPC QUARTERLY MEETINGS**

Ms. Wuerstle asked the Council if they had any input or ideas that they would like to be discussed at future RPC meetings. Councilman Cummings stated that he would like to discuss and look more into the inland ports in the area and bring everyone together. He went on to mention that the logistics in the SWFL region is a strength and there is a need for infrastructure to support this effort.

Mr. Tommy Perry added that he would like there to be a discussion on the newest Census report with the growth data and trends throughout the region and state.

**AGENDA ITEM #8(g)**  
**LOCATION OF SWFRPC QUARTERLY MEETINGS**

Ms. Wuerstle asked for input on where the in-person RPC meetings can be held moving forward. The Estero Recreation Center is an option as it is cost effective, but she asked if any members had ideas or knew of a location that would donate space for meeting purposes each quarterly to please let her know.

**AGENDA ITEM #8(h)**  
**FRCA OCTOBER 2021 REPORT**

This item was in the packet for informational purposes only.

**AGENDA ITEM #9**  
**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

No Committee Reports were given

**AGENDA ITEM #9(a)**  
**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

There was no update given.

**AGENDA ITEM #9(b)**  
**QUALITY OF LIFE & SAFETY COMMITTEE**

There was no update given.

**AGENDA ITEM #10**  
**NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business.

**AGENDA ITEM #11**  
**STATE AGENCIES COMMENTS/REPORTS**

Mr. Phil Flood mentioned the Governor's recommendation of \$9.6 million in funding for Everglades Restoration projects and another \$60 million in funding for Water Quality.

Mr. Jon Iglehart discussed the Babcock Ranch project.

Commissioner Pendergrass stated that he was recently appointed to County Commission Chair.

Councilman Cummings requested a copy of the Build Back Better Grant application.

**AGENDA ITEM #12  
COUNCIL MEMBERS' COMMENTS**

There were no comments.

**AGENDA ITEM #13  
ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at 10:10 a.m.

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Don McCormick, Chairman

**The meeting was duly advertised in the November 5, 2021, issue of the FLORIDA ADMINISTRATIVE REGISTER, Volume 47, Number 216.**