

**MINUTES OF THE  
SOUTHWEST FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL  
JULY 21, 2022, MEETING**

The in-person and zoom meeting of the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council and Executive Board was held on July 21, 2022, at the South Florida Water Management District Office with a conference call option. Governor Appointee and Council Chair, Mr. Don McCormick called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. There was a quorum of the Executive Committee present.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

**Charlotte County:** Mr. Don McCormick – Chair, Commissioner Jaha Cummings (*Zoom*)

**Collier County:** Commissioner Bill McDaniel, Commissioner Rick LoCastro (*Zoom*)

**Glades County:** Chairman Tim Stanley (*Zoom*)

**Hendry County:** Commissioner Mitchell Wills (*Zoom*), Mr. Mel Karau (*Zoom*)

**Lee County:** Councilman Jesse Purdon

**Sarasota County:** Mayor Erik Arroyo (*Zoom*)

**Ex-Officio Members:** Phil Flood SFWMD

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Ms. Margaret Wuerstle - Executive Director, SWFRPC

Ms. Rebekah Harp - SWFRPC

Ms. Tracy Whirls - SWFRPC

Ms. Amelia Williams – SWFRPC

Mr. Jim Burch – SWFRPC (*Zoom*)

Ms. Asmaa Odeh – SWFRPC (*Zoom*)

**AGENDA ITEM #6(a)**  
**MINUTES OF THE JUNE 16, 2022, MEETING**

**Commissioner Bill McDaniel offered a motion to accept the minutes of the June 16, 2022, Council/Executive Committee Meeting. Mr. Don McCormick seconded the motion to accept the minutes of the June 16, 2022, Council/Executive Committee Meeting. The action was approved unanimously.**

**AGENDA ITEM #7(a)**  
**FINANCIALS GOVERNMENT FUND ACTIVITY – PER AUDIT (INFORMATIONAL ITEM)**

Ms. Wuerstle explained that this item was requested by Commissioner McDaniel, which is strictly for informational purposes.

**AGENDA ITEM #8(a)**  
**ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE DISCUSSION**

Commissioner McDaniel stated that he would like to hear from Margaret what the plan is as an organization. Commissioner McDaniel stated that there is a disconnect between this organization and its members. Commissioner McDaniel continued that he would like to know what we, as this organization, are going to do to remedy the situation. Commissioner McDaniel continues that he believes that without proper leadership, we will not be able to do anything with this organization. Commissioner McDaniel posed the question asking if we can force the reorganization with a letter to the Governor to allow us to update the constitution, bylaws and interlocal agreement? The hopes of voluntary reorganization with sufficient support is dwindling and the uphill battle is getting steeper. Commissioner McDaniel asked if we have heard anything from Sarasota? Ms. Wuerstle responded that we have not heard back from Sarasota and explained that the mayor is currently on the phone, however we do not have an invitation to come speak to them. Ms. Wuerstle continued that in response to Commissioner McDaniel's first question we don't need the governor's approval to redo the interlocal agreement or bylaws. Ms. Wuerstle explained that both can be redone, however all the counties will need to sign and approve them.

General discussion continued regarding the reorganization and background of the organization.

**AGENDA ITEM #8(b)**  
**SWFL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CONSORTIUM ILA DISCUSSION**

Commissioner McDaniel didn't know what this item is and did not feel that a discussion was needed.

**AGENDA ITEM #9  
DIRECTORS REPORT**

**AGENDA ITEM #9  
COMP PLAN AMENDMENTS 9(a)**

Ms. Wuerstle explained that the comp plan amendments are going out to the economic development and planning directors for each county and city as requested by the Council members.

**AGENDA ITEM #9  
JOHN HOPKINS FOOD POLICY COUNCIL ACTION GUIDE 9(b)**

Ms. Asmaa Odeh explained that John Hopkins University highlighted the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council's Project for the Collier County Food Policy Council in their publication entitled "From Partnerships to Policy: Promising Practices for New Food Policy Councils".

**AGENDA ITEM #9  
INLAND PORT UPDATE 9(c)**

Ms. Tracy Whirls explained that Port Miami is doing due diligence to create and build an inland port. They are looking at US 27 corridor. Ms. Whirls explained the background on the Port Miami project and funding.

**AGENDA ITEM #9  
SWFRPC BACKGROUND PRESENTATION 9(d)**

Ms. Wuerstle explained that in response to the ongoing question, "What does the RPC do"? this presentation outlines the statutory requirements along with the programs that are funded by federal and state governments. Ms. Wuerstle continued to explain that this presentation provides detailed information on what we do, what we have done and our funding. Ms. Wuerstle went on to explain that she is the primary grant writer for this organization and is responsible for progress reports, deliverables, and closeouts for the grants she works on. Ms. Wuerstle explains that most of her time is spent trying to keep this organization operational because the reserves are going down quickly, and we wouldn't survive without grants. Ms. Wuerstle explained that even when the RPC was funded by the assessments, we always needed grants to supplement revenue. However, we have downsized tremendously and now if the counties were paying their assessments, we would not need grants to cover deficits in revenue. Ms. Wuerstle explained that the SWFRPC could use an environmental planner and a grant writer or a transportation planner, but right now we cannot afford those positions.

**AGENDA ITEM #9  
GRANT ACTIVITY SHEET 9(e)**

Ms. Wuerstle explained that this grant activity sheet is always included in the packet. She stated that the sheet shows what we have submitted, what was denied and what was approved. Ms. Wuerstle highlighted that in the promise zone, there has been \$4.7 million dollars awarded in grants, \$16.4 million dollars pending in grants, and we were denied \$9.9 million. Ms. Wuerstle explained that she hopes that this shows the amount of work it takes to submit these applications and administer them.

Councilman Purdon expressed that once the organization gets all its ducks in a row, he recommends that the first position that needs to be hired is a grant writer. The ROI on a grant writer position can pay for itself. That way the Executive Director can focus on other important issues.

**AGENDA ITEM #10  
COMMITTEE REPORTS**

No Committee Reports were given.

**AGENDA ITEM #10(a)  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

There was no update given.

**AGENDA ITEM #10(b)  
QUALITY OF LIFE & SAFETY COMMITTEE**

There was no update given.

**AGENDA ITEM #11  
NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business.

**AGENDA ITEM #12  
STATE AGENCIES COMMENTS/REPORTS**

Phil flood provided an update and explained that they are working on the Lower West Coast Water Supply Plan 5-year update, which is a 20-year plan to make sure we have enough water. It is currently out for public comment. He went on to state that the annual python 10-day challenge is coming up from the 5<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup>. There are online training and awards as well.

**AGENDA ITEM #13  
COUNCIL MEMBERS' COMMENTS**

No comments were provided.

**AGENDA ITEM #14  
ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at 10:46 a.m.

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Don McCormick, Chairman

**The meeting was duly advertised in the July 11, 2022, issue of the FLORIDA ADMINISTRATIVE REGISTER, Volume 48, Number 135.**