

**MINUTES OF THE  
SOUTHWEST FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL  
MAY 16, 2019 MEETING**

The meeting of the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council was held on May 16, 2019 at the offices of the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council—1400 Colonial Boulevard, Suite #1 in Fort Myers, Florida. Chair Perry called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM. Commissioner Shaw then gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Ms. Margaret Wuerstle conducted the roll call and announced that a quorum was present.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

**Charlotte County:** Commissioner Joe Tiseo, Councilman Gary Wein, Mr. Don McCormick, Commissioner Ken Doherty

**Collier County:** Commissioner Bill McDaniel

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

**Hendry County:** Commissioner Julie Wilkins

**Lee County:** Commissioner Frank Mann, Councilman Fred Burson, Vice-Mayor Ray Murphy

**Sarasota County:** Commissioner Willie Shaw,

**Ex-Officio:** Mr. Dennis Ragosta– SWFWMD

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

**Charlotte County:** Ms. Suzanne Graham

**Collier County:** Councilman Reg Buxton, Commissioner Penny Taylor

**Glades County:** None.

**Hendry County:** Vice-Mayor Michael Atkinson, Commissioner Emma Byrd, Mr. Mel Karau, Commissioner Mitchell Wills

**Lee County:** Commissioner Cecil Pendergrass, Councilman Greg DeWitt

**Sarasota County:** Commissioner Charles Hines, Commissioner Michael Moran,  
Councilmember Mitzie Fielder

**Ex-Officio:** Mr. Wayne Gaither, FDOT, Mr. Jon Iglehart–FDEP,  
Mr. Phil Flood–SFWMD

**AGENDA ITEM #4  
PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

**AGENDA ITEM #5  
AGENDA**

There were no changes made to the agenda.

**AGENDA ITEM #6  
MINUTES OF THE APRIL 18, 2019 MEETING**

**A motion was made by Commissioner Storter-Long to approve the minutes as presented. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Shaw and passed unanimously.**

**AGENDA ITEM #7  
CONSENT AGENDA**

**AGENDA ITEM #7(a)  
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION AND REVIEW**

Mr. Perry explained that the request was for Lee County Transit and the replacement of three busses that have met the use of their life.

**A motion was made by Mr. Perry and seconded by Commissioner Shaw to accept the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion passed unanimously.**

**AGENDA ITEM #8  
PRESENTATIONS**

**AGENDA ITEM #8(a)  
SEPTIC TO SEWER PRESENTATION: PENDING**

There were no presentations at this meeting. Mr. James Beever stated that a speaker from the City of Cape Coral will be available to put together a presentation for a future meeting date. Commissioner McDaniel asked for clarification on what the presentation will be discussing, if it will be septic to sewer or water quality circumstances like red tide/blue green algae. Chair Perry

specified that we will be looking at the septic conversion. Commissioner McDaniel shared that at the most recent Collier County Commissioner Meeting, Commissioner Taylor had invited two scientists, one from the Seminole Tribe and one from the Miccosukee Tribe to talk about water flows and what has happened historically from the tribes' perspective and it was quite informational. There was also a scientist from the University of Florida that talked specifically about the origin of red tide and blue green algae, also a very informational discussion. Commissioner McDaniel suggested that when looking at septic to sewer we should consider the origin of the issues and relate it to what we are doing as an RPC, because the information is so wide and varied and that could have led to why there was trouble securing a speaker for the meeting. Mr. Beever clarified that there was trouble securing a speaker because of the short notice and scheduling conflicts.

Commissioner Wein stated that the discussions should be segregated because septic to sewer is one level that has potential contribution, but it also depends on geography. Commissioner Wilkins agreed. Mr. Beever stated that he is capable of doing a presentation on blue green algae & red tide.

**AGENDA ITEM #9  
DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**AGENDA ITEM #9(a)  
2019-20 RPC MEETING SCHEDULE**

Ms. Wuerstle presented a revised meeting schedule. She explained that there will be a meeting next month in June to discuss the audit and budget, but there will not be a July or August meeting. Meetings will resume in September with transportation as the proposed topic. The September meeting will occur one week earlier than normal (Sept 12). There will be no meeting in October, but there will be one in November and January. Topics of each meeting to be determined.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Wilkins and seconded by Commissioner Mann to approve the new meeting schedule. The motion passed unanimously.**

**AGENDA ITEM #9(b)  
BIOSOLIDS RESOLUTION**

Mr. Beever gave a recap on the biosolids resolution, he stated that the resolution focuses on the reduction of land application of human waste biosolids, meaning that the biosolids would be used in different ways, as useful nutrients or alternative fuel for example. The resolution also says that the State of Florida will establish a public projects program for funding local entities such as local governments, to implement new state of the art wastewater treatment technologies to improve recovery and afford more efficient use of human wastewater biosolids resources. Mr. Beever informed the Council that Collier County supports the aspirational goals of the resolution. Commissioner Storter-Long mentioned a resolution from Glades County

about 15 years ago known as the “sludge ordinance,” that ships out the wastewater from Glades with restrictions on what can be done with wastewater. Mr. Beever said that there are state and local government rules on how these things should be done.

Commissioner Doherty brought up that this issue is a point of considerable discussion with the Florida Association of Counties (FAC) at its policy conference last November. The FAC decided to set up a water policy committee, and the biosolids issue is something that will be looked at by the FAC with representation from all the counties. He also shared that there will be the FAC annual conference June 12-14<sup>th</sup>, and they will be looking at this issue so that it is better understood before actions are made, and he recommended that the RPC does the same. Mr. McCormick asked Commissioner Doherty if he feels that actions will be able to be taken following the FAC’s meeting and Commissioner Doherty said no, this will be an ongoing discussion because the policy committee has a lot on their plate so it will take some time.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Doherty and seconded by Commissioner Wilkins to table this topic until June, following the water policy committee meeting. The motion passed unanimously.**

**AGENDA ITEM #9(c)  
SALE OF COMPANY VEHICLE**

Ms. Wuerstle requested approval to sell the company vehicle, as it is not being used and has not been used in a long time. It is valued somewhere between two and five thousand dollars and the insurance on it is astronomical. Considering the budget situation for this year, it would be a good idea to save money where possible and sell the 2010 Chevrolet Malibu Hybrid.

**A motion was made by Commissioner McDaniel and seconded by Commissioner Shaw to sell the company vehicle. The motion passed unanimously.**

**AGENDA ITEM #9(d)  
FRCA APRIL 2019 REPORT**

This item was for informational purposes only.

**AGENDA ITEM #9(e)  
PROMISE ZONE UPDATE**

Ms. Wuerstle shared that the RPC submitted a Rural Economic Development Innovation (REDI) application for technical support to develop an actionable plan for the Promise Zone. She stated that the RPC will be informed sometime in July on whether we will be granted that technical assistance. Ms. Wuerstle explained that bonus points are no longer being given for Promise Zone applications. The nation’s Promise Zones are working together to get those points restored.

**AGENDA ITEM #9(f)**  
**GRANT ACTIVITY SHEET (INFORMATION ONLY)**

This item was for informational purposes only. Currently, the RPC has about \$1.5 million out in pending grants.

**AGENDA ITEM #10**  
**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

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

Ms. Wuerstle stated that approval is needed for the January 2019 through April 2019 Financials. The budget and workplan was approved with a \$369,000 hole. Currently, the RPC April report shows that there still is a \$125,000 hole. She does not feel optimistic about closing that hole, but there was a legislative appropriation for \$1.2 million for the RPC's to obtain funding for the evacuation study update and the SWFRPC will get about \$25,000 although there is not a definite date of when it will be received. Ms. Wuerstle discussed the cutbacks the RPC has made including cutting a position and no longer paying dues to FRCA. The lease for the office space isn't up until November 2020, so we cannot move to a smaller office space until then, also Mr. Beever has agreed to go down to a four-day work week for the rest of this fiscal year to help conserve funds.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Shaw and seconded Mr. McCormick to accept the financial reports. The motion passed unanimously.**

**AGENDA ITEM #10(b)**  
**ESTERO BAY AGENCY ON BAY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

Mr. James Beever summarized the events of the May 13, 2019 ABM meeting, there was a presentation by a developer building a community on a commercial fishing area on Estero Bay. This will be a community where people are going into assisted living gradually, there will be a building for each stage that individuals may be in. These will be high rises on Estero Bay and in order to meet their flood requirements they will have to significantly elevate the land surface into podiums (platforms) and all utilities will be on top of the buildings rather than on the ground. Commissioner Mann questioned what the ABM Committee does, Mr. Beever clarified that the ABM is an advisory group that is a committee of the RPC where ideas are exchanged, and advice is given.

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

Commissioner Shaw brought attention to the VISTA Volunteers, Michael Bennett and Tia Herman, and their supervisor Katelyn Kubasik. Mr. Bennett announced that they have created a regional taskforce on opioid prevention, with Commissioner Shaw as the Chair and their first meeting will be on Thursday, May 30, 2019 at 2:00pm at the SWFRPC. The meeting will include county officials and organizations from all six of the counties in the SWFL region. Commissioner Shaw went on to discuss a meeting that took place that involved grandparents who are now raising their grandchildren because the parents are battling addiction. These grandparents were seeking funding because they are now the caregivers for these children with opioid addicted parents, they are also seeking support groups. Mr. Bennett shared that later today himself, Ms. Herman, and Ms. Kubasik will be attending a taskforce meeting that concerns babies who are born addicted to opiates because their mothers used during pregnancy.

Commissioner Burson asked what the opioid epidemic and opioid studies have to do with the RPC. Commissioner Shaw stated that the opioid epidemic is most definitely a quality of life issue when it is impacting everyone in our counties, their families, their property values and so on. Commissioner Burson said that from his perspective that may be one of the reasons that the RPC is struggling with funding, because the focus is on projects that he feels don't concern planning and are irrelevant to the mission of the RPC. Commissioner Shaw again stated that the RPC focuses on quality of life and the issue is most certainly not irrelevant to our six counties that seem to be focusing on how to stop the epidemic.

**AGENDA ITEM #10(d)**  
**REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

Ms. Wuerstle stated that they are still trying to schedule a meeting for the regional transportation committee.

**AGENDA ITEM #10(e)**  
**COUNCIL RELEVANCY & RESTRUCTURING COMMITTEE**

Chair Perry announced that there is a meeting for the Council Relevancy & Restructuring Committee following this council meeting and he would like the county commissioners who are present to stay and attend that meeting. Vice-Mayor Ray Murphy, who is attending his first RPC meeting, asked what will be discussed at the meeting. Chair Perry specified that the meeting will discuss what the RPC's primary focus is according to state statutes. Commissioner McDaniel asked who is invited to the relevancy meeting and Chair Perry specified that everyone is invited, however, he would like all the commissioners to attend.

**AGENDA ITEM #10(f)**  
**WATER QUALITY & WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT**

There were no updates on this agenda item.

**AGENDA ITEM #11**  
**NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Ragosta shared a legislative update that the governor of Florida has given a total of \$680 million allocated to environmental and water quality issues. To help mitigate issues of red tide and water quality in the future for our district.

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

There were no comments at this time.

**AGENDA ITEM #13**  
**COUNCIL LEGAL CONSULTANT'S COMMENTS**

There were no comments at this time.

**AGENDA ITEM #14**  
**COUNCIL MEMBERS' COMMENTS**

**AGENDA ITEM #15**  
**ADJOURN**

The next meeting will be on June 20, 2019. The meeting adjourned at 9:59 a.m.

  
Commissioner Donna Storter-Long, Secretary

The meeting was duly advertised in the April 4, 2019 issue of the FLORIDA ADMINISTRATIVE REGISTER, Volume 45, Number 66.

