

PORT ST. JOE, FLORIDA

JANUARY 11, 2011

SPECIAL MEETING

The Gulf County Board of County Commissioners met this date in a special meeting with the following members present: Chairman Carmen L. McLemore, Vice Chairman Warren J. Yeager, Jr., and Commissioners Ward McDaniel, Bill Williams, and Tan Smiley

Others present were: County Attorney Jeremy Novak, Clerk Rebecca L. Norris, Deputy Clerk Kari Summers, Chief Administrator Don Butler, Assistant Administrator Michael Hammond, Deputy Administrator Lynn Lanier, Building Official Lee Collinsworth, Chamber of Commerce Director Sandra Chafin, Emergency Management Director Marshall Nelson, Gulf County E.M.S. Director Houston Whitfield, Human Resource Director Denise Manuel, Planner David Richardson, Sheriff Joe Nugent, Sheriff's Office Major Bobby Plair, and T.D.C. Secretary Kellie Novak.

Chairman McLemore called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m., E.T.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Commissioner Yeager discussed over the past several weeks he has had a conversation with a lot of people (E.D.C., Chamber of Commerce, Port St. Joe Downtown Re-development Agency, T.D.C., Port Authority, Etc.) involved with Economic Development in this community, and one of the ongoing themes is to figure out a consolidated effort to have everyone at the table to know what is going on, stating that there has been a lot of friction between one group to the next, which does not make a good efficient way to do business as economic development. He stated that things have to be handled different than in the past because funding is short. Commissioner Yeager discussed consolidating all agencies, form a committee and have the committee come back with a recommendation to this Board.

Tom Graney, of E.D.C. appeared before the Board and discussed that the E.D.C. works for the Board of County Commissioners, and presented a list of the E.D.C. members to the Board. He reported that they are open to discussion on consolidation, stating that E.D.C. has made a lot of strides in economic development as well as T.D.C., Chamber of Commerce, Port Authority, and the C.R.A.

Matt Fleck, Port St. Joe Downtown Redevelopment Agency, appeared before the Board and discussed that this Board is aware of the goals and objectives of the Redevelopment Agency, stating that it is to re-invest tax dollars from property owners within the C.R.A. boundary back into the same district. He stated that most of their economic development efforts have been in supporting the existing property owners and existing businesses in town through grants and infrastructure improvements. Mr. Fleck reported that Florida Statute controls and designates the way their money is to be spent. Upon inquiry by Mr. Fleck, Commissioner Yeager stated that the goals are to have all agencies at the same table, communications, and efficiency.

Bobby Pickels, Vice President of the Chamber of Commerce, appeared before the Board and reported that the Chamber has discussed this and they are open to conversation of some sort of consolidation.

Johanna White, of The Port Authority, appeared before the Board and reported that they would like to be a part of the consolidation, stating that they have a lot of resources, and if everyone is under one umbrella it would be more efficient for this County.

Chairman McLemore discussed that this looks like it is on the right path. Commissioner Yeager recommended forming a committee consisting of the Chairman from each council/agency (or their designee) along with Chief Administrator Butler, and to present an organizational chart that will work for E.D.C. back to this Board within two weeks.

City of Port St. Joe Mayor Mel Magidson appeared before the Board and discussed that he would like to have the City of Port St. Joe at the table because many of the Chamber of Commerce members are within the City limits of Port St. Joe, and also two of the prime resources of the E.D.C. are within the City limits of Port St. Joe. Chairman McLemore requested that the City Managers from Port St. Joe and Wewahitchka be placed on this committee. Chairman McLemore requested for Tom Graney to contact Don Minchew to serve on this committee.

Commissioner Williams discussed that this is a crisis, stating that all agencies need to be represented, and everyone needs to put their swords down and work together to help this County.

Commissioner Smiley discussed that he is glad to hear everyone wants to come together and work together to get the job done.

Commissioner Yeager motioned to institute a committee consisting of the Chairman from the five Institutions or their designee, the City Managers from Port St. Joe and

Wewahitchka, and Chief Administrator Butler. Commissioner Williams seconded the motion. Upon inquiry by Clerk Norris, Commissioner Yeager reported that the committee will be the Economic Development Initiative. The motion then passed unanimously.

Commissioner Williams thanked Johanna White for the involvement of The Port Authority. Commissioner Yeager discussed that there are a lot of people in our region that supports the economic development of The Port, stating that The Port is a critical piece of economic development for this region.

Tom Graney appeared before the Board and discussed two opportunities that are critical for the future of this County which are The Port and Green Energy. Mr. Graney discussed the funding sources for the E.D.C. beginning in 2009, through the present. He stated that they would like to get the balance of their \$30,000.00 appropriation as quickly as possible to continue with the program for this year. Mr. Graney reported that it is a cash flow issue, not a funding issue, and they are trying to figure out how to operate with the \$30,000.00. Commissioner Williams requested itemized bills from E.D.C., to be paid contingent upon review of Chief Administrator Butler; instead of handing over the balance. Commissioner Williams stated he would like to use the balance for the new committee's purpose. Commissioner Yeager stated that Mr. Graney needs to give it two weeks for the committee to bring back a recommendation. Mr. Graney discussed that he is not happy with submitting their bills to Mr. Butler to be paid; stating that it is not setting a good precedent. After further discussion by members of the Board, Chairman McLemore called for a motion to release the balance of the E.D.C. funds (\$12,127.75) and it failed due to a lack of motion.

There being no further business, and upon motion by Commissioner Yeager, the meeting did then adjourn at 5:42 p.m., E.T.

**CARMEN L. MCLEMORE
CHAIRMAN**

**ATTEST:
REBECCA L. NORRIS
CLERK**