

PORT ST. JOE, FLORIDA

FEBRUARY 2, 2011

SPECIAL MEETING

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

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, Human Resource Director Denise Manuel, Planner David Richardson, Public Works Director Joe Danford, Sheriff Joe Nugent, T.D.C. Director Tim Kerigan, and T.D.C. Secretary Kellie Novak.

Chairman Yeager called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m., E.T.

LANDFILL

Chief Administrator Butler discussed projects within the City limits of Port St. Joe, stating that there are approximately 5 or 6 houses (burned, condemned) that are a health and safety issue, and there are approximately 150 to 160 volunteer workers from Auburn coming in over the next few weeks to work and help tear down these houses. He reported that the City of Port St. Joe has made a request to waive the landfill tipping fees to haul this debris to the landfill in a project to help clean-up the City. Commissioner Smiley motioned to waive the tipping fees for the City of Port St. Joe on this project. Commissioner Williams seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously 4-0.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Chief Administrator Butler reported that he had a meeting on January 18th with the five agencies (T.D.C., E.D.C., Chamber of Commerce, D.R.A., and The Port Authority), stating that each representative had to discuss the issues with their Boards before they would commit to being a part of a committee. He reported that they were trying to figure out how it would work for a possible consolidation of the E.D.C. and Chamber, stating that this committee would be made up of a representative from each of the five agencies, a representative from each City and, a County representative, with a hired

Director. He stated that everyone agreed to the desire to communicate. Chairman Yeager discussed that this Board has ask for them to move forward and come up with a model that works accomplishing accountability, efficiency, and coordination. Chairman Yeager thanked everyone for their efforts on this issue.

Bobby Pickels from the Chamber of Commerce appeared before the Board to present a couple of thoughts. As one, Mr. Pickels addressed a handout provided to the Board entitled "Proposed Coordination Effort" that identified the members that would meet as an executive committee, having a representative from that group that would update the Board on the status of their combined efforts. Mr. Pickels stated that the Chamber Board has authorized him to come before this Board today and offer an alternative model to the status quo and presented two slides that address it. He stated that there are a lot of details that needs to be fleshed out, with a lot more work to be done, should the Board pursue this alternative model. Mr. Pickels discussed the first slide entitled "Proposed Employee Organizational Chart", stating that this proposal would bring the Economic Development function back into the organization of the Chamber of Commerce; consolidating the EDC function into the existing Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Pickels went on to explain that a slight organizational change would have to be done in the Chamber stating that the Executive Director would have two Co-Assistant Directors, one for the traditional Chamber activities and the other for the Economic Development activities. Mr. Pickels presented and discussed the second slide entitled "Proposed Gulf County Chamber of Commerce Governance Structure", stating that this will bring it (E.D.C.) under the Chamber Membership and Chamber Board of Directors, creating a Standing Committee for Economic Development. To accomplish this Mr. Pickels explained that an amendment or modification would have to be made to the Chamber By-Laws. Upon inquiry by Commissioner McDaniel, Mr. Pickels stated that this consolidation would not directly involve the T.D.C.; they would continue to exist as they currently do, but the T.D.C. would have a representative on the Coordinated Executive Committee for purposes of communication and coordination only, not for governance. Commissioner Williams discussed Governor Scott's consolidation efforts at the State level, stating that this model appears to be similar. Upon inquiry by Chairman Yeager, Mr. Pickels stated that the Proposed Coordination Efforts would be proposed regardless of whether the Board wanted to continue with the status quo or adopt a consolidation model stating, not knowing the pleasure of the Board that is why it was addressed separately. Upon inquiry by Chairman Yeager, Mr. Pickels stated that this committee would make recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners and other Boards. Upon inquiry by Commissioner Williams, Mr. Pickels stated that the By-Laws would have to be amended to accommodate the changes in the structure to protect the Chamber of Commerce and the autonomy of the E.D.C.

Chairman Yeager called for public comment. There was no public comment.

Tom Graney, Economic Development appeared before the Board and presented the Greater Gulf County Regional Enterprise Council model, stating that the E.D.C. approached this on how the County integrates the economic development activity using all the agencies involved, with the goal of looking at how we can work together, integrate, prioritize activities, and focus resources (internally & externally). He discussed (1) the members, (2) the mission, (3) the forum, and (4) the protocols of the E.D.C. model. Mr. Graney stated that E.D.C. partners have agreed to this model, but have not addressed or approved a Chamber of Commerce/E.D.C. consolidated model. Further discussion followed. Upon inquiry by Commissioner Williams about why he didn't feel the Chamber model will work, Mr. Graney stated that the E.D.C. and Chamber models are very similar. Chairman Yeager discussed that the model presented by E.D.C. is similar to the model presented by the Chamber of Commerce.

David Warner appeared before the Board and stated that he represents himself and commended the Board for bringing this issue to the public for discussion. He stated that we need to be smart and make good decisions, stating that private business is different from public business, and this Board is a major partner in economic development in this County. Mr. Warner stated that the Board needs to be careful not to step on the toes of private citizens, because these private partners that have been driving the economic development effort. Chairman Yeager stated that he hopes the public does not see this effort of consolidation as a problem. Mr. Warner stated that he disagrees with the Chamber of Commerce becoming the economic development activity. Commissioner Williams stated that everyone has to be on Board to make this successful. Commissioner McDaniel thanked Mr. Warner and stated that the Board will take this under consideration, stating that we have to work together and get something going for this County.

Jim Garth Vice Chairman of E.D.C. appeared before the Board and thanked the Board for bringing this to their attention. He reported that everything Mr. Graney presented is the same as Mr. Pickels, as far as communication and coordination. Mr. Garth stated that it will not work for the Chamber of Commerce to manage E.D.C. Chairman Yeager stated that separating the Chamber of Commerce and the E.D.C. will not fix the problem, stating that the two entities need to be working together.

City of Port St. Joe Mayor Mel Magidson appeared before the Board and stated that the goal is to try to make things work better at less money, reporting that the County and City have been putting money into the Chamber of Commerce and E.D.C. for years and it has not worked. Mayor Magidson stated that we should consolidate with the Bay County Chamber of Commerce and E.D.C. Chairman Yeager stated that consolidation has to start happening.

Gary Ross Chair of Gulf Coast Work Force Board appeared before the Board and stated that he is excited about this issue, acknowledging there is a communication issue. He reported that Bay County has talked to him concerning working with Gulf County on Economic Development. Mr. Ross stated that pulling the Chamber of Commerce and E.D.C. together may work but what Mr. Graney with E.D.C. has proposed in his structure goes way beyond that and pulls together all these groups, having a spokesman who can keep the Board and Cities informed.

Tom Graney appeared before the Board and stated that the purpose of this regional council is to solve this communication problem. Commissioner Williams discussed the idea of one Executive Director, stating the structure in the Chambers model makes sense. Mr. Graney discussed as a closing point that the problem is having 5 organizations functioning and no one knows what the other is doing, who knows about it, or what the direction is from the Government.

Tim Kerigan, T.D.C. Director appeared before the Board and discussed that the best thing coming out of this is the communication. He stated that reporting to this Board every three months is not enough. He reported that the two plans presented tonight are similar, stating that the T.D.C. will have a seat on this Board, but their financing is self funded by the bed tax revenue. T.D.C. Director Kerigan reported that T.D.C. is governed by Florida Statute, which dictates how the funds are spent. He discussed that the E.D.C.'s job is to bring new business to this area, the Chamber of Commerce's responsibility is to cultivate the new business and bring them together, and the T.D.C. is responsible for bringing people from outside our County into our area so that they can spend within this County.

Matt Fleck Executive Director of Port St. Joe Redevelopment Agency appeared before the Board and discussed that there is need for better communications and coordination, stating that the D.R.A. is ready for change and supports this change. Mr. Fleck stated that as a citizen, change needs to happen, and inquired as to how to break the barrier of distrust. Commissioner Williams stated that this Board is very committed. Chairman Yeager stated that trust is earned and that is one of the things everyone has to do in government.

Planner Richardson discussed the proposed draft for economic development in the Comprehensive Plan, stating that everyone has to be on the same page. Chairman Yeager discussed the reporting requirements for economic development. Commissioner Williams discussed that he would like to see a budget and a plan for consolidation. Commissioner Williams motioned to proceed with the Chamber of Commerce models. Commissioner Smiley seconded the motion, and it passed

unanimously 4-0. Chairman Yeager requested for the entities to meet with in depth conversation. Commissioner Williams requested for the entities to come back before this Board with a budget.

Upon inquiry by Barbara Radcliff concerning hiring the Executive Director, Chairman Yeager stated that the E.D.C. and Chamber of Commerce will meet and report back to this Board. She reported that there has always been an underlying distrust with the City and County government. Commissioner Williams discussed that the trust factor comes in with not having a suspension, and the citizens play a critical role in trust and need to hold this person accountable.

Chairman Yeager thanked everyone for attending the meeting, and expressed his hopes that everyone earns trust from each other so this County can move forward.

Chief Administrator Butler discussed the possibility of a consultant to help hire the Executive Director for this committee. Commissioner Williams suggested that Florida's Great Northwest, Opportunity Florida, and O.T.E.D. could be of help on this process.

Upon inquiry by Tom Graney, Commissioner Williams stated that he made the motion and intended to adopt all three models from the Chamber of Commerce.

There being no further business, and upon motion by Commissioner Williams, the meeting did then adjourn at 6:52 p.m., E.T.

WARREN J. YEAGER, JR.
CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:
REBECCA L. NORRIS
CLERK