

PORT ST. JOE, FLORIDA

FEBRUARY 24, 2011

COMBINED SPECIAL MEETING

The Gulf County Board of County Commissioners and City of Port St. Joe Commissioners met this date in a combined special meeting with the following members present: Chairman Warren J. Yeager, Jr. Commissioners Ward McDaniel, Bill Williams, and Tan Smiley. < Commissioner Carmen L. McLemore was absent>. City Commissioners Charlie Stephens, Lorinda Gringell, Greg Johnson, Rex Buzzett, and Mayor Mel Magidson.

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 Collinworth, Emergency Management Director Marshall Nelson, E-9-1-1 Director Ben Guthrie, G.I.S. Coordinator Scott Warner, Grant Writer Towan Kopinsky, Planner David Richardson, Sheriff Joe Nugent, City Attorney Tom Gibson, City Clerk Jim Anderson, City Manager Charlie Weston, Preble-Rish, Inc. Engineer's Clay Smallwood and Phillip Jones, D.R.A. Director Matt Fleck, City Parks & Recreation Director Mike Lacour, and City Public Works Director John Grantland, Chief of Police David Barnes.

Chairman Yeager called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m., E.T.

COUNTY/CITY OF PORT ST. JOE ISSUES

Chairman Yeager thanked everyone for attending the meeting, stating that it is very important that all County and City officials work together. City of Port St. Joe Mayor Magidson thanked everyone for the opportunity to discuss issues of interest to the City and County, stating that it should be the first of many to come. Chairman Yeager expressed the need to continue these joint meetings, and possibly incorporating the School Board and City of Wewahitchka. Chief Administrator Butler discussed that he and City Manager Weston have been working together the last 2-3 years on all the County and City issues, stating that it is going great. Chief Administrator Butler discussed the Windmark Interlocal Agreement, reporting that the most important thing about that is that it is almost over. Chief Administrator Butler discussed a couple items that are still pending, stating they could be resolved, if agreed upon and put in writing. He reported on the Overstreet Water system and the County's new ISO Ratings (5-8B rating) in the Overstreet area and its benefits. Chief Administrator Butler gave a quick rundown on consolidation of the five County Departments and the money saved by consolidation. He stated that activity in the Planning and Building Departments are up, and discussed County accomplishments, as follows: (1) Salinas Park-Bay Side, (2) Honeyville Ball Park, (3) (inaudible), (4) Courthouse repairs/renovations, (5) new fire

stations at Cape San Blas and Highland View, (6) now have 3 County-owned latter trucks, (7) Stumphole projects, and (8) relocation of lift station around Avenue "A".

City Manager Weston discussed some of the significant accomplishments for the City of Port St. Joe, as follows: (1) the Highway 98 beautification, (2) parks and recreation opportunities (George Core Park, Port St. Joe Pathway for health and history multi-use path, Madison Street/Garrison Avenue multi-use path, Frank Pate Park improvements, Port St. Joe Waterfront Park, City Commons Parking Lot), (3) Code Enforcement, (4) North Florida Child Development Center, (5) Infrastructure (\$20 million water/sewer projects, \$41 million water plant, Cape sewer extension, headworks and sprayfield project and purchase of Mexico Beach water line) and, (6) Finances (Budget & Tax Reductions, refinancing of Regions Bank loan, & Grants). He stated that the City of Port St. Joe's number one priority at this time is to correct, fix, and provide high quality drinking water to all system users. City Manager Weston discussed the reason for the increase in utility rates, stating that a State Mandated study was performed in July 2007 by Florida Rural Water Association. He stated that (1) debt service, (2) loss of large industrial user, (3) infrastructure improvements (water & sewer), (4) insufficient operating revenues, (5) insufficient water and sewer operating reserves, and (6) economic downturn are all factors that affect the water/sewer rates. He reported that utility consultants, Burton and Associates, were retained in April, 2010 to perform a new utility rate study. City Manager Weston discussed the new recommended water and sewer rate schedules effective October 1, 2010 through October 1, 2014 resulting from this study.

City Engineer Phillip Jones, of Preble-Rish, Inc. appeared before the Board and discussed the water issues with the City of Port St. Joe, stating that the design engineers (Preble-Rish, Inc. and CDM) are evaluating the problems with red water in the distribution system in two ways. He reported that the City is currently under a Consent Order for bi-products. He stated that the process designers Camp, Dresser, and McKee (CDM) are evaluating current treatment methods, stating that the Water Management District is also involved, and Preble-Rish, Inc. is evaluating distribution system improvements through State Revolving Fund grants to improve water quality. Upon inquiry by Commissioner Williams concerning the 26 miles of pipe replacement, City Engineer Jones reported that they will start with the worst places involved, stating that the total replacement will cost approximately \$9 million. City Commissioner Johnson reported that basically the \$2.2 million is to get started with the proper flushing of the system.

CONSOLIDATION TOPICS

Chief Administrator Butler reported the several departments the County and City of Port St. Joe overlap in services are: (1) Law Enforcement, (2) Code Enforcement, (3) Planning & Building Department, (4) Household Garbage/Recycle, (5) Animal Control, and (6) Medical Insurance.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Chairman Yeager stated that the Sheriff, Chief Administrator Butler, and City Manager Weston have had conversation concerning the consolidation of law enforcement, and suggested everyone continue discussions to see if money can be saved. Sheriff Nugent

stated that no one has had any conversation with the Sheriff. City of Port St. Joe Mayor Magidson discussed that the City of Port St. Joe's Police Department budget has decreased by about 40%, and he believes that the Sheriff's Department budget has decreased as well, stating that the Sheriff's Department and the City Police Department have been working well together. He discussed that this is a public safety issue and we have to look at what it cost to protect the public, and recommended for Chief Administrator Butler, City of Port St. Joe Manager Weston, Sheriff Nugent, and City of Port St. Joe Police Chief Barnes meet to discuss this issue. Sheriff Nugent reported that he has no intentions of taking over the City of Port St. Joe Police Department, stating that they have a great working relationship and they just need to tell him what they want. Commissioner Smiley discussed the need to consider what is best for the citizens, stating that the senior citizens are having hard times on a fixed income. He further stated that he felt that one Agency could more than handle law enforcement in this County. City Commissioner Gringell discussed that the Sheriff's Department has an elected head, and the City Police Department has a hired head, stating that the Sheriff answers to the Board of County Commissioners and the Chief of Police answers to the City Commissioners, and this is two different structures. Commissioner Williams stated that we are here today because of the economic situation, acknowledging that there has been no communication between the Sheriff and Chief of Police. He stated that leadership starts here and we need to give the appropriate parties the power to do these studies so informative decisions can be made on what direction to go. He discussed the need to be open to consolidation and do what is best for the citizens. City of Port St. Joe Mayor Magidson reported that the City Charter requires that there be a Police force and to change that there would have to be a referendum. Chief of Police Barnes reported that he and Sheriff Nugent meet regularly, stating that they have to work together to be successful. Sheriff Nugent stated that he has reduced his budget and staff to the bare bones and that the Sheriff's Department and City Police Department work well together and he will continue to work with them. Chairman Yeager suggested the Sheriff and Chief of Police continue to work together to provide the best service to the citizens. Commissioner McDaniel discussed that the City of Wewahitchka has a Charter and that it does not specify a Police Department, but a Police Chief, stating that the City of Wewahitchka is directly under the Sheriff's Department. Chairman Yeager stated that there needs to be a formal meeting with Chief Administrator Butler, City Manager Weston, Sheriff Nugent, and Chief of Police Barnes. Discussion followed. Commissioner Smiley stated that we do not need two heads, two buildings, two water bills, two power bills, suggesting that we can get the same out of one that we are getting out of two now. Upon inquiry by City Commissioner Gringell concerning the City of Wewahitchka, Sheriff Nugent reported that he is the Chief of Police for Wewahitchka, stating that their Charter required for them to have one officer. City of Port St. Joe Mayor Magidson stated that we are putting the people first and with everyone cut to the bare bones, we are still providing the service.

CODE ENFORCEMENT

Chief Administrator Butler discussed this as another item that is duplicated by the County and City of Port St. Joe, stating that the County has a fulltime employee and the City has a part-time employee, and it would help if we had the same regulations. City of Port St. Joe Mayor Magidson discussed that Chief Administrator Butler and City Manager Weston needs to work together on the differences on the codes. City

Commissioner Johnson stated that there are always going to be differences in the County codes and the City codes. Discussion followed.

BUILDING DEPARTMENT

Chief Administrator Butler discussed that the County has a Building Department and the City of Wewahitchka uses the County Building Department, stating that the City of Port St. Joe has their own Building Department. City of Port St. Joe Mayor Magidson stated that the City of Port St. Joe contracted out their Building Department services and this is a revenue stream for the City. Discussion followed.

HOUSEHOLD GARBAGE / RECYCLE

Chief Administrator Butler discussed that Waste Management covers this service for the County, stating that having one vendor could possibly be a savings. City Commissioner Gringell discussed that there needs to be a recycle program. City of Port St. Joe Mayor Magidson reported that waste disposal is a large cost to the County, stating that this needs to be a County wide issue. Chairman Yeager discussed that the landfill does not accept the recycle materials, and it became a cost to the County when we tried to implement it in the past. City Commissioner Johnson stated that it needs to be voluntary recycle only. City Commissioner Gringell discussed that there needs to be recycle centers. City Manager Weston discussed that Emerald Waste Services will place free containers for recycling. Chairman Yeager stated that if the providers will provide free containers he will support it, reporting that he received a letter from a fifth grade class concerning recycle. Discussion followed.

ANIMAL CONTROL

Chief Administrator Butler discussed that there is only one man for the entire County for animal control. City of Port St. Joe Mayor Magidson stated that the City has been providing equipment and services to assist with animal control.

MEDICAL INSURANCE

Chief Administrator Butler stated that we need to review the opportunity to combine with the School Board, County and Cities to get a bigger pool, with the possibility of better coverage and rates for Health Insurance. Commissioner Williams suggested that the Gulf County Health Department to be involved with this issue. Upon inquiry by City Commissioner Gringell, City Commissioner Johnson stated that unless things have changed, a small business cannot combine with government entities on insurance.

WINDMARK FIRE TAX / WINDMARK D.R.I.

City Manager Weston discussed that the Windmark Fire Tax has to do with the Agreement between the City and County on Windmark annexation from November, 2005, stating that the City is to pay St. Joe Fire Control District ½ mill on all Windmark annexed properties until the City builds/mans a full time fire station. He stated that (1) the City has paid \$125,700.00 to date, and (2) the City of Port St. Joe Volunteer Fire Department responds to all structural fires at Highland View, Beaches, White City and Windmark. City Manager Weston stated that Windmark has approximately 1,700 building sites with approximately 30 existing structures, and suggested that the Windmark Fire Tax be placed in an escrow account for future construction of a fire station, based on agreed upon criteria. He proposed a 65% build-out at Windmark

(1,100 homes) to be the criteria for the City to build a fire station, (not fully manned) with manning the fire station fulltime based upon a build-out percentage, yet to be determined. Commissioner Williams agreed that the Windmark D.R.I. needs to be reviewed and modified, with input from various fire departments. Chairman Yeager agreed that they need to escrow this fire tax. City of Port St. Joe Mayor Magidson stated that they are receiving great coverage because the City of Port St. Joe, Highland View and the Beaches all respond to call-outs. Discussion followed. City Attorney Tom Gibson reported that the St. Joe Company has continuing obligations according to the D.R.I. for fire equipment. City Manager Weston asked that he and Chief Administrator Butler be allowed to get together to review the Interlocal Agreement, stating that only 2 issues still remain; the fire house and water rescue. Chairman Yeager, Commissioner Williams, and Mayor Magidson agreed, and there was no objection from the other Commissioners.

DEMOLITATION OF UNINHABITABLE STRUCTURES

City Manager Weston discussed that this is a joint venture between the City, County and a volunteer group, stating that the City Code Enforcement Officer has identified 12 uninhabitable structures throughout the City that will be taken down in March. He stated that the County has waived the tipping fees to make this possible.

DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Chairman Yeager discussed how the D.R.A. can actually help out on items that are budgeted for, stating that they (D.R.A.) have participated in the Economic Development, and they are going to help with the Washington Gym improvements. City of Port St. Joe Mayor Magidson stated that they are finding more ways that the D.R.A. can assist in the City and County budgets. He stated that there is a Youth Enrichment grant that is going to assist in re-opening the Washington Gym. City of Port St. Joe Mayor Magidson commended the D.R.A. for the great job on the Highway 98 reconstruction, stating that this is going to be a benefit for the City and the County. Chairman Yeager stated that this is a success story and recognized the D.R.A. for returning to the City and County the money that they did not spend. City Commissioner Buzzett stated that we need to be very cautious about what the D.R.A. can or cannot do with their dollars, stating that an Act by the Legislature defines what they can and cannot do. D.R.A. Director Matt Fleck thanked everyone for their words of encouragement. City Commissioner Gringell stated that the tourists are very excited about the looks of our town that it looks vibrant and prosperous; stating that it is an economic engine.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

City of Port St. Joe Mayor Magidson stated that cooperation is important because the County and the City pour money into these two organizations, stating that E.D.C. is critical for jobs in this County, and the Chamber to promote businesses.

WASHINGTON GYM

Commissioner Smiley thanked Matt Fleck for all his assistance with the re-opening of the Washington Gym. City of Port St. Joe Mayor Magidson stated that there are a couple of options concerning the Washington Gym (1) the D.R.A., and (2) the possibility of a long time lease to an organization that can operate the gym and administer the

grant. Commissioner Smiley stated that he will ask the Board of County Commissioner for assistance.

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

LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

Commissioner Williams discussed the legislative issues, stating that we (County & City) need to be on board with the leaders in Tallahassee, and requested for the City to lobby for the same efforts. Chairman Yeager reported that the Legislative Delegation will be here on March 1st from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. to discuss Legislative issues.

DEEPWATER HORIZON OIL SPILL

Commissioner Williams discussed that they have been working with the Seven County Coalition concerning the oil spill, stating that he attended a meeting last week with the Governor and requested (1) an assignment of a key person from his Office to assist, and (2) requested the \$25 million that the T.D.C.'s have put together from the seven Counties. Chairman Yeager stated that Commissioner Williams has been on top of the oil spill, stating that the Governor has appointed Commissioner Williams as the spokesperson for the Seven County Coalition.

Chairman Yeager stated that we need to schedule another joint meeting. City Commissioner Buzzett suggested meeting quarterly. Chairman Yeager suggested for Chief Administrator Butler and City Manger Weston to schedule next meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting did then adjourn at 12:21 p.m., E.T.

**WARREN J. YEAGER, JR.
CHAIRMAN**

**ATTEST:
REBECCA L. NORRIS
CLERK**