

## **PORT ST. JOE, FLORIDA**

**AUGUST 16, 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 Carmen L. McLemore, Ward McDaniel, and Tan Smiley.

Others present were: Clerk of Court Rebecca L. Norris, Deputy Clerk Kari Summers, Clerk Finance Officer Carla Hand, Chief Administrator Don Butler, Gulf County E.M.S. Director Houston Whitfield, Public Works Director Joe Danford, Sheriff Joe Nugent, Sheriff Major Bobby Plair, Supervisor of Elections Linda Griffin, Assistant Public Works Director Bobby Knee, Maintenance Supervisor Steve Mork, Building Official Lee Collinsworth, GIS Coordinator Scott Warner, Assistant Administrator Michael Hammond, Veteran's Service Officer James Kennedy, Grant Writer Towan Kopinsky, and T.D.C. Director Tim Kerigan.

Chairman Yeager called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m., E.T.

#### **PERSONNEL**

John Ford appeared before the Board and stated on July 17 and 18 he made a judgment call and that judgment call was wrong. He stated that Dr. Pablo explained to him why it was wrong. He further stated that neither County Administration, nor the Commission made this call; he did. Mr. Ford discussed the need to work together, move forward, and rebuild everything. At Commissioner McLemore's inquiry, Mr. Ford stated he fully understands Mr. Houston Whitfield is his supervisor and he runs the ambulance service. Commissioner McLemore commended Mr. Ford as being a top-notch paramedic, but stated there were other issues that needed to be worked through. Mr. Ford stated he was willing to work through all the issues if given the opportunity to do so. Commissioner McLemore stated, as far as he is concerned, this is a matter for Chief Administrator Butler and E.M.S. Director Whitfield and he will support whatever decision they make concerning his re-employment. Commissioner Smiley commended Mr. Ford on being a good paramedic, stating people who work all the time make mistakes, and encouraged Mr. Ford to continue to do a good job. Commissioner McDaniel stated he agreed with Commissioner McLemore and according to county policy, the Chief Administrator would do the hiring and firing to keep the politics out of it. Commissioner McDaniel went on to say we need to get on the same page and work as a team instead of fighting each other. Commissioner Williams commended Mr. Ford on his obvious technical skills, but stated there were systemic operational problems and oversight issues in the E.M.S. department (North and South units) that have to be addressed. Commissioner Williams stated it is very important to support administrative staff and legal counsel and not change gears all the time, and for Mr. Ford to set an example among his peers through support of Mr. Whitfield and this County.

Commissioner Smiley addressed Mr. Whitfield and Chief Administrator Butler, intending no disrespect, stated the people put him in this chair (as Commissioner) therefore politics cannot be left out of it because politics is what put him here; they were elected to make the tough decisions. Chief Administrator Butler addressed the Board stating he and Mr. Ford met yesterday but should have met several weeks ago about this issue because what he knows now, the outcome could have very well been different. He discussed a letter from Medical Director Pablo that stated Mr. Ford could no longer operate under his license. Mr. Butler stated the Board could vote on this, or if they so desired, allow him, Mr. Whitfield, and Mr. Ford to meet to work out some details (pre and post termination issues), then E.M.S. Director Whitfield can put Mr. Ford back on the first available work schedule; suggesting they just move forward. Chairman Yeager agreed with Chief Administrator Butler's assessment that this started at the administrative level and would like to see them sit down and work this out at the administrative level. Chairman Yeager addressed the need to work together as a County and a Community but stated there were some systemic problems with the E.M.S. department that need to be worked out and asked the Board to allow him to work on these issues and bring recommendations back to the Board. The Board had no objection. Chairman Yeager recommended turning this matter over to Administration. Upon inquiry by Commissioner McLemore, E.M.S. Director Whitfield stated he was comfortable this matter could be cleaned up and they could move forward.

#### **INSURANCE(T.D.C. EVENTS)**

Commissioner Williams stated he had been working with the T.D.C. on the PoJo Fest in obtaining a special events alcohol permit and motioned for Chief Administrator Butler to work to obtain the required insurance (to be paid from T.D.C. funds). Commissioner McLemore seconded for discussion. Upon inquiry by Commissioner McLemore, T.D.C. Director Kerigan stated on any T.D.C. events they are looking at requiring a \$1,000,000.00 policy. Kerigan further stated that vendors that participate in these events must name the County as an additional insured. Upon inquiry by Commissioner McLemore, Commissioner Williams explained that additional vendors that want to serve alcohol at T.D.C. or Chamber sponsored events would have to name the County as an additional insured, but it would not affect all the other vendors. Mr. Kerigan discussed the Scallop Festival, stating that participants will not be required to pay a fee. Discussion continued about the process, policies of the City of Port St. Joe, fees and insurance coverage and Chairman Yeager directed T.D.C. Director Kerigan to research the matter further. Deputy Administrator Lanier stated that permission is needed from the Board to purchase the license for the liquor sales, and permission to apply for the license itself. The second and motion were amended to include the approval to apply for and purchase the license. The motion then carried 5-0.

#### **INSURANCE (HEALTH/VISION)**

Chief Administrator Butler distributed a list of carriers that the Board reached out to in trying to obtain quotes or RFP's for health insurance. He reported that only Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Florida (BCBS) and United Healthcare (UHC) responded. Mr. Butler reported the Insurance Committee is recommending the County stay with a fully-insured plan through BCBS, giving employees a choice of whether to go with a P.P.O.

or an H.S.A. plan. He further reported that the recommendation of the Insurance Committee is to incentivize the migration from P.P.O. to H.S.A. by adding an additional \$50.00 monthly to the employer paid base amount (represents about 88 people) and reducing the P.P.O. employer paid base amount by \$100.00 monthly (represents about 44 people); this being revenue neutral to the Board. Mr. Butler also discussed the committee felt it was too late to force all employees on the H.S.A. plan for this year, but the Board might consider this for the next year. Chief Administrator Butler also stated the Insurance Committee, by January 2012, would have another recommendation for the Board to consider that would incentivize non-tobacco users, gym use, and other lifestyle changes. Commissioner McLemore asked what would be the premium increase for this year. Chief Administrator Butler responded that there is a 5% increase this year to the employee; nothing to the Board. Sheriff Nugent appeared before the Board and stated he voted against this recommendation, stating he does not have a problem with staying where we are but is opposed to asking employees to pay an additional 5% increase in premiums and also reduce the county contribution by \$100.00 with very little time to adjust. Sheriff Nugent discussed a plan he received from Todd Torgenson that would increase Sheriff's employee's premiums by only \$11.00 a month, versus a \$114.00 increase if they stay on the County plan. Sheriff Nugent stated if his organization breaks off from the Board, the County will not be able to stay on the BCBS plan. Assistant County Administrator Hammond stated that the P.P.O. participants are using 200 plus percent of their premium, so the H.S.A. participants are subsidizing that. Discussion continued about the additional costs and the dates to begin deducting the increased premiums from the employees. Discussion ensued about starting the process earlier in the year to give the employees time to plan for the possible increases in premiums. Commissioner McLemore moved to adopt the Insurance Committee's recommendation. Commissioner McDaniel seconded the motion and it passed 4-1, with Commission Williams opposing. Chief Administrator Butler reported to the Board that he spoke with Todd Torgenson about the 5% BCBS put in front of them, he stated the Board would not get a reduction in the 5% whether they paid their agent or not. He noted BCBS would pay the 2% this year if the County wanted them to, or the County Commission could pay it, but would not get any money back from BCBS. Sheriff Nugent again stated he was not going to stay on the County plan. Todd Torgenson appeared before the Board and stated BCBS was not interested in breaking off the Sheriff's Department. He stated the quote the Sheriff has is a small group quote which is a guaranteed issue product, which means, if the Sheriff's group meets the requirements of a small group then they would get that plan. Mr. Torgenson noted BCBS has committed if the Sheriff were to break off and the census enrollment changed by more than 15% of the total population, then they (BCBS) would re-evaluate the case, and based on his discussions with them, the premiums would most likely go up. Chief Administrator Butler informed the Board if BCBS goes up, United Healthcare rates were provided and can be compared to BCBS. Chairman Yeager directed the Insurance Committee to make the determination of whether to stay with BCBS or go with UHC, based on the numbers that will be provided by BCBS, and not bring the matter back to the Board. Chief Administrator Butler informed the Board the committee also recommends the County stay with the Vision plan currently in place (Humana), stating this is the best one. Commissioner McLemore so moved to take the committee's

recommendation. Commissioner McDaniel seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

### **REDISTRICTING**

Chief Administrator Butler stated in consultation with County Attorney Novak, and until he learns differently District 4 cannot change in size, and limiting what can be done in other districts. Mr. Butler discussed maps provided by G.I.S. Coordinator Scott Warner showing how many people live in each particular block. He stated that Mr. Warner provided some maps in several areas (Highland View, White City, Howard Creek, Overstreet), with numbers, in the event the Board wanted to make some moves in any of those areas. Commissioner McLemore requested they look at District 1 and where the line is, and asked that his line extend up to West Arm Creek (instead of stopping at Jehu Road as it is now). Commissioner McDaniel stated that he was somewhat disturbed because the census should be done based on numbers, not race. He discussed the increases and decreases within each district. Commissioner McDaniel discussed the Overstreet area and possibly moving those to District 3; Commissioner Williams had no objection. Commissioner McDaniel so moved to add the Overstreet area (up to the Intercoastal Waterway) from District 2 to District 3. The second and motion were amended to include extending the District 1 boundary up to the West Arm Creek, as recommended by Commissioner McLemore (natural boundaries for both), and directed G.I.S. Coordinator Warner to draft the map with the new lines for presentation at the regular meeting on 8/23/2011. Rich Brenner appeared before the Board and noted that the purpose of redistricting is to even out the numbers in each district and stated that he didn't know if moving these borders would accomplish this because there is a discrepancy when you look at the numbers. Chairman Yeager stated that the Board is going by the numbers as best they can, while leaving District 4 intact. Commissioner Williams stated that the map will verify this by Mr. Warner's statistical modeling. Commissioner Smiley stated that District 4 is decreasing, but has also lost more jobs than any other district and that has a lot to do with the decrease in population. The motion then passed 5-0.

There being no further discussion, and upon motion by Commissioner McLemore, the meeting did then adjourn at 4:50 p.m., E.T.

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

**ATTEST:  
REBECCA L. NORRIS  
CLERK**