



OCEAN HIGHWAY & PORT AUTHORITY

Miriam R. Hill – Secretary/Treasurer - Commissioner, District 1
Danny Fullwood – Chairman, District 2
Scott Hanna – District 3
Carrol Franklin – Commissioner, District 4
Mike Cole – Vice Chairman, District 5

Amended Monthly Meeting Minutes

February 10, 2021

The Ocean Highway and Port Authority of Nassau County held its Monthly Meeting on Wednesday, February 10, 2021 at the County Commissioners Chambers at the James S. Page Government Complex, 96153 Nassau Place, Yulee, Florida 32097.

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 PM by Chairman Fullwood.

The invocation was given by Commissioner Hill and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairman Fullwood. Roll call was conducted by Mrs. Barbara Amergian. All Commissioners were present. Also in attendance were Robert Sturgess, Interim Port Attorney; Pierre LaPorte, Port Accountant; and Chris Ragucci, Port Director/Operator.

Chairman Fullwood recognized Jimmy Dubberly of 95239 Amelia National Parkway, Fernandina Beach, Florida for public comment. Mr. Dubberly re-expressed his interest to the Board and his willingness to fill the Port Director role for a period of six months at \$1.00 a month.

Commissioner Franklin made the motion to accept the minutes of the January 13, 2021 monthly meeting with no changes. Unanimously approved.

Chairman Fullwood recognized Pierre LaPorte, Port Accountant. Mr. LaPorte presented the monthly Treasurer's Report and commented that the Florida Ports Council dues had been paid in the budgeted amount of \$15,500. Mr. LaPorte also reviewed the Quarter One statements and noted that there was nothing unusual on the statements. There were no questions for Mr. LaPorte.

Chairman Fullwood recognized Robert Sturgess, interim Port Attorney for his monthly report. Mr. Sturgess asked Mr. Ragucci, Port Operator, respond to the Issue #1 on his attorney report, pertaining to the feasibility study for the navigation of the Fernandina Harbor that has been requested by Beau Corbett of the US Corps of Engineers. Mr. Ragucci is gathering the information and indicated a draft should be ready for review by Monday, February 15, 2021. In regards to the TranSystems mediation agreement, it is ready to be executed as it was approved for signature at the January 13, 2021 meeting.

Commissioner Cole made the motion to execute the agreement with the Army Corp of Engineers regarding the navigation study to examine improvements to the Port, navigation, and the straightening of the channel. Unanimously approved.

Chairman Fullwood recognized Port Operator Chris Ragucci for his monthly tonnage report. Chairman Fullwood asked that December 2020 be included in future reports for comparison. Commissioner Hill asked the lumber tonnage, Mr. Ragucci stated that it has been sporadic. Commissioner Hill commented that it would be helpful to have a goal stated for the year.

Mr. Ragucci presented his Port Director report to the Board. He commented that he would provide Mrs. Amergian with updated channel features for updating the website.

Unfinished Business:

RFP for the Port Master Plan – Mr. Ragucci is committed to get the RFP out by the end of February. He indicated that the language is being drafted and identify the criteria for the RFP, he was hoping to have a special meeting to review in February. Chairman Fullwood did not think it would be feasible to review in February and hold for the March meeting. Mr. Ragucci will circulate the draft prior to the March meeting for the Board to review.

The draft of the City of Fernandina Beach Interlocal Agreement was circulated to the Board prior to the meeting. Chairman Fullwood asked for feedback.

Commissioner Hill reported that the meeting Chairman Fullwood requested in January 2021 with Buddy Jacobs will be tabled until the Port Director issue has been solidified as directed by Senator Aaron Bean. Commissioner Hill also stated that City Attorney Tami Bach's perspective that the issue of the City making changes to the Ocean Highway & Port Authority's charter is no longer the City's focus.

The hiring of the new Port Attorney will be discussed at the Special Meeting on March 2, 2021 at 3:30 pm. Commissioner Hill shared that the draft attorney advertisement with the Jax Bar Association and Judge Fahlgren with the Nassau County Bar Association to spread the word.

Commissioner Hill made the motion to the publish an advertisement for the Port Attorney in the newspaper. Commissioner Hanna seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Hill shared that it would be helpful to have a list of objective criteria related to the Port Attorney for the interview process. Commissioner Hill will send to Mrs. Amergian to share with the Board.

Attorney Sturgess suggested using the RFP process as an option to advertise for the Port Attorney position. Commissioner Hill pointed out that she felt that this was a conflict for the interim Port Attorney to advise the Board of a bid process that Mr. Sturgess would be bidding on. Interim Port Attorney Sturgess' response to Commissioner Hill was that if she thought it was a conflict, she should make a complaint to the Florida Bar Association. Chairman Fullwood appreciated the advice provided on the options available to advertise for the Port Attorney position.

Chairman Fullwood called a 10-minute recess at 7:11 PM

Chairman Fullwood informed the Board that he had a discussion with Doug Wheeler of the Florida Ports Council and was advised by Mr. Wheeler to appoint another Port Director to represent the Ocean Highway & Port Authority at the Florida Ports Council.

Chairman Fullwood made the motion to appoint Commissioner Mike Cole as the representative to the Florida Ports Council until a permanent Port Director is hired and publish an RFP for the Port Director position. The motion passed four to one with Commissioner Hill voting no.

Discussion followed the motion. Commissioner Hill pointed out the technical piece in regards to the Florida Ports Council website and the Ocean Highway & Port Authority needs representation. Commissioner Hanna pointed out that Mr. Dubberly was willing to represent the Ocean Highway & Port Authority and he is concerned that there are opportunities that are being missed as far as grant funding through the Florida Ports Council. Chairman Fullwood stated that he is not willing to move forward with a new Port Director at this time. Port Accountant LaPorte advised the Board that none of the potential revenue that may be brought into the port by a Port Director's efforts to bring in business is available to pay the Port Director. Commissioner Franklin recommended that Mr. Ragucci should be removed at the Port Director. Commissioner Hill reiterated that the Florida Ports Council wants to see action taken on the Port Director issue. Interim Port Attorney Sturgess will gather the necessary information from resources available to draft the RFP by March 2, 2021.

Mr. Ragucci gave an updated on the FDOT grants. FDOT G1938 is allocating funding of \$100,000 for concrete paving. This is a 50/50 match. \$550,000 allocation from 2020 cycle for the acquisition of property which is table – the funds will be reallocated and notification needs to be done by March 2021. There is a PTGA for miscellaneous improvements to the docks. GL06 has been extended to December 31, 2021 - \$195,000 in total. Invoicing will be done in the amount of \$157,000 next week.

Commissioner Cole made the motion to accept the FDOT Amendment G1938 and the Resolution 2021-R02. Commission Franklin seconded. No discussion followed. Motion carried unanimously. A RESOLUTION OF THE OCEAN HIGHWAY & PORT AUTHORITY OF NASSAU COUNTY, FLORIDA AUTHORIZING THE ENTRY INTO AN AMENDMENT TO THE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION GRANT AGREEMENT, CONTRACT NUMBER G 1938 WITH THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Chairman Fullwood discussed with the Board that Mrs. Amergian has given her notice and will be leaving at the end of May, 2021. Advertising has been started on the employment website Indeed and Mrs. Amergian will advertise the opening in the newspaper as well. Mrs. Amergian will forward all applications that have been received. Interviews will take place the first week of March and will be done in person utilizing the individual office spaces available at Courson & Stam.

Committee Reports:

Port Security – Commissioner Fullwood – Nothing new to report.

Customs House – Commissioner Franklin – Nothing new to report.

Army Corp of Engineers – Commissioner Fullwood – Issues have already been discussed earlier in this meeting.

Economic Development – Commissioner Cole – Nothing new to report.

Emergency Management – Commissioner Franklin – Nothing new to report.

Technical Coordinating Committee – Commissioner Hanna – A survey for Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety is available on the OHPA website for citizens to partake in.

TPO – Commissioner Cole – Meeting scheduled for February 11, 2021.

Nassau Chamber East Side – Commissioner Hill – Regina Duncan of the Chamber has been following progress at the Port and finds it encouraging.

Nassau Chamber West Side – Commissioner Cole – Nothing new to report.

City of Fernandina Beach – Commissioner Hill – continues to attend regular meetings and the new workshop format. OHPA continually appears on the City Commissioners' agenda. Her meeting with Tammi Bach, City Attorney. Discussion regarding the Port Element of the PAB. Proposing language now will help facilitate the process. The interlocal agreement regarding administrative fees for the port was also part of their meeting. Commissioner Hill questioned as to why OHPA was not proposing to settle the PILOT payment situation as well. Chairman Fullwood stated that this is not part of the Interlocal Agreement. Commissioner Hill questioned the language in Item #2 of the Interlocal Agreement with the City of Fernandina. – each party agrees not to seek amendment to the OHPA charter. Commissioner Hill's concern is that OHPA is not able to seek an unrelated amendment to OHPA charter. Interim Port Attorney Sturgess pointed out that OHPA is making some serious concessions with the Interlocal Agreement and there were changes to the Charter in 2015. Chairman Fullwood stated that language pertains to the City not being able to change the Charter. Port Operator Ragucci expressed his concern with Item #2 in the draft of the Interlocal Agreement regarding the expansion of the Port footprint. The draft will continue to be worked on by Interim Port Attorney Sturgess. Commissioner Hill advised the Board of the PAB Workshop on February 24, 2021 at 5 PM. She encouraged the Commissioners to attend.

There were no questions for the Administrative Office Manager and her report that was included in the meeting packet.

In other items to be brought before the Board:

Commissioner Franklin asked if the City of Fernandina had issued a Certificate of Occupancy for the new fabric warehouse. Port Director Ragucci informed the Board that the Certificate had been received.

Commissioner Cole commented on the negativity in social media regarding the Port and wanted to pointed out the positive direction that the Port is heading in.

Commissioner Hill commented that she copied on two issues from City Commissioner Ross – oats spillage and a noise complaint. Mr. Ragucci responded promptly and dealt with the issues.

With no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:18 PM.



Danny Fullwood, Chairman