

# OCEAN HIGHWAY & PORT AUTHORITY



Miriam R. Hill – Chairwoman, District 1  
Danny Fullwood – Commissioner, District 2  
Justin Taylor – Vice Chairman, District 3  
Ray Nelson – Secretary/Treasurer, District 4  
Mike Cole – Commissioner, District 5

Board Meeting Minutes

May 22, 2024

The Ocean Highway and Port Authority, Nassau County, held its Board meeting on Wednesday, May 22, 2024 at the Peck Center, Willie Mae Ashley Auditorium, 516 S 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Fernandina Beach, FL 32034.

**1. Public meeting (Call to Order) - Chair**

Chair Hill called the public meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

**2. Invocation**

The invocation was given by Commissioner Cole.

**3. Pledge of Allegiance**

The pledge was led by Chair Hill.

**4. Roll Call:** Miriam Hill, District 1; Danny Fullwood, District 2, Justin Taylor, District 3; Ray Nelson, District 4; Mike Cole, District 5.

Roll call was conducted by Rossana Hebron, Administrative Office Manager. All Commissioners were present. Also in attendance were Patrick Krechowski, Port Attorney; Pierre LaPorte, Port Accountant; and Greg Haehl, Port Operator.

**5. Recognition of elected Officials, Honored guests, Industry and Professional representatives, and others in attendance (Chair)**

Chair Hill acknowledged the meeting attendees including: Scott Moore (OHPA candidate District 2), Phil Griffin (Amelia Coastal Realty), Mike Lednovich (FB Observer), Juia Roberts (Newsleader), Bob Virtue (FB resident), Davis Bean (Nassau Terminals), and Port team members and their families, among other attendees in the audience.

**6. Public Comments** on agenda items (Comments submitted prior to the meeting)

- **Bob Virtue;** Fernandina Beach resident

Mr. Virtue spoke in lieu of Tammi Kosack and inquired about the sale of OHPA property matter.

**7. Presentation:**

**a. National Maritime Day (May 22<sup>nd</sup>)**

A copy of the proclamation was included in the meeting packet. The names, Port team members with many years of service at the Port, mentioned in the document were: **Phil Wojnaroski, Greg Wood, Patrick Eldridge, Stanley Herrington, Chris Black, Stanley Harvey, Kenny Tyler, Michael Davis, Brandon Pike, Lawrence Davis, Charles Clinch, Darrin Chandler, Chad Jones, Brian Nelums, Christopher Bailey, Matthew Rollins, Michelle Wilder, Debbie Brown, Gene Hook, Justin Rosenwald, Michael McIntosh, and Diane Petty, Gene Horne.** Honorable mention to **Ray Nelson**, OHPA Commissioner and former Terminal Manager.

Chair Hill explained that the National Maritime Day have not been celebrated by OHPA as far as she knows. She continued by stating the Port's contribution to both the local and federal economies. She read the proclamation and invited the Port team members to introduced themselves and the years of service, including: Charles Clinch (29 years), Michael McIntosh (27

years), Diane Petty (28 years), Chad Jones (10+ years), Greg Wood (20+years), and Mike McIntosh (5 years).

Chair Hill thanked the team for their years of service and for attending the meeting.

**b. Allied Universal Security (District Manager, Q&A)**

James Creech, Allied/District Manager, spoke before the Board to explain Allied's wage markup. He advocated the services Allied Universal offers and the training its employees are required to take for employment in the company.

Both Commissioner Fullwood and Cole stated a golf cart is not needed for rental at the Port.

Commissioner Nelson encouraged for a wage increase for the security team at the Port. They are a critical part of the Port operations. He also stated that the Customs and Border Protection agency at the Port endorsed the effectiveness of the security team.

Mr. LaPorte explained there is no budget for security, and no grant implicated. The security contract is between OHPA and Allied. However, the Port Operator pays the security costs, and that is passed on to the Port customers. OHPA is the pass through for the security invoices.

Chair Hill acknowledged there is due diligence needed on OHPA's end to re-evaluate the contract and the process of payment. Mrs. Hebron reminded the Board there is a required 30-day written notice if OHPA wishes to terminate the contract with Allied. A Board decision will be given at the June 12<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Commissioner Nelson urged the Board to mitigate the issue before the contract auto-renews in August and avoid making any rushed decisions.

Mr. Krechowski will review the current contract.

The Board indicated Mr. Creech attend the next meeting at his discretion.

**8. Old Business:**

**a. OHPA Property Sale (Amelia Coastal Realty)**

At the last meeting, Commissioner Fullwood requested to add this item and invite Mr. Griffin to provide updates.

Chair Hill reiterated she requested "use of funds" for the sale of OHPA property and have yet to receive one. Commissioner Fullwood disagreed that the Board needs to list every planned expense. He gave an example to renovate the Customs House for OHPA office.

Chair Hill explained OHPA, under the Operating agreement, is obligated to contribute towards Port operations if it has the ability to pay. Once OHPA enters into a listing agreement, it is responsible to pay for the marketing cost of \$1,000. That will set a precedence of spending. In addition, deed restrictions, nuisance report, and preservation of buffers have to be added, among other things.

Vice Chair Taylor echoed the Chair's reasoning. He reiterated he is against selling the OHPA properties, because there is no plan in place for spending the funds. He reminded even the Congressman urged not to sell OHPA's assets.

Mr. Griffin suggested one way to "monetize" the property without selling is to lease it and focus on residential use rather than commercial. He offered to compose a list of suggestions.

Chair Hill explained if OHPA sells public assets, it is required to account to the public for why, when, where, what, and how. It needs to validate its decisions. Public safety and good stewardship of public assets are the main concerns in this matter. She apologized for wasting Mr. Griffin's valuable time. He replied that he enjoys the challenge.

Mr. Griebel, Keller Williams, participated in the RFP process for real estate representatives. He asked to be heard in response to the matter. He was denied time on the floor until the end of the meeting when the Chair opens the floor for public comments again.

**b. OHPA document request to the Port Operator (update)**

This item was kept on the agenda at the Chair's request. Mr. Krechowski is diligently reviewing the documents sent to him. He did not have any updates to present, he is focused on other pressing matters.

Chair Hill requested to keep the item as on-going. She encouraged the Board to review the emails and assist in identifying the gaps in the documents received.

**c. MARAD (Disposition of Fort Clinch tugboat, six trucks, update)**

Commissioner Nelson reported he met with McCallister last Monday. However, the Port Operator did not provide access to the tugboat even though proper advance notice was sent. He and the interested party proceeded to inspect the external of the vessel.

McCallister was impressed with the condition of the tugboat. The Vice President of the company assured the tugboat will remain at the Port of Fernandina. In the event the vessel has to be pulled out of the Port, McCallister will replace it with a 3,000-horsepower vessel immediately in its place. Commissioner Nelson provided photos of the internal portion of the tugboat to McCallister. More information was requested by McCallister. Commissioner Nelson will forward to Savage. An offer may be forthcoming.

Mr. Krechowski reported he and the Chair met with MARAD team today. He conveyed the Port Operators plans to purchase the Fort Clinch tugboat. Although no confirmed decisions yet, the preferred concept from the Operator is to refund the amount of \$1M and terminate the grant; albeit the grant expired. In turn, OHPA and the Operator will decide what happens to the vessel. Chair Hill added if there was a disposition of the vessel, OHPA needs to validate the price. Mr. Krechowski also corrected that MARAD will get 77% instead of the 85% of the disposition funds. The percentage will be confirmed by MARAD at a later date.

Commissioner Nelson suggested to send the six trucks, as a group, to auction instead of selling individually. Mr. Krechowski suggested to wait for MARAD's direction before any Board action takes place.

**d. Resiliency Plan (update)**

Chair Hill and Mrs. Hebron met via phone call with Jim McDonald, HNTB, to discuss the Resiliency Plan.

There was also conversation with Mr. Haehl regarding grant applications to fund the identified projects in the Plan. Mr. Haehl plans to engage a grant writer for the applications.

Chair Hill requested a Board consensus to seek funding and start taking actions on the identified projects. No action was taken.

Commissioner Nelson requested Commissioner Fullwood to attend the FDOT meeting tomorrow in his stead. Commissioner Fullwood is well informed about the US CBP project and would be able to convey the needs for the building of the structure.

A "Notice of Gathering" will be posted upon FDOT's recommendation for having two Commissioners participate in the meeting and open the meeting for the public.

**e. EPA Clean Ports Grant (Board to approve application)**

A copy of the application was emailed to the full Board and was not included in the meeting packet. The application was received from the Operator after the deadline to submit documents for the meeting. Mr. Krechowski provided redlines of the draft for Board review.

Mr. Haehl explained Savage was able to apply as a private entity with a Statutory Partnership agreement attached.

Mr. Krechowski explained further that OHPA is not a pass through, rather Nassau Marine Terminals (NMT), as the Port Operator, is the applicant/grantee, and OHPA will serve as its partner. NMT will be responsible for administering the grant (if awarded), maintaining regulations and requirements, and respond to the EPA. The partnership agreement is required to be attached to the application. Subsequently, per Mr. Krechowski's understanding, OHPA would have to consider a separate agreement or structure based on EPA guidelines, if/when a grant is awarded.

Additionally, Mr. Krechowski stated his trepidation regarding sections 6 (Ownership of Improvements) and 13 (Replacement of Statutory Partner) on the Statutory Partnership agreement. However, he explained, after further research, the language on section 13 is required by the EPA. He recommended to leave that section as is. For section 6, it was decided to stipulate that OHPA would own all permanent fixtures, and the Operator would own any mobile equipment. The Operator would control and maintain the equipment as long as Savage remains at the Port. Mr. Haehl suggested the language would need to include use of equipment outside the Port. Mr. Krechowski also applied some indemnity revisions for OHPA's protection. He will apply the amendments and forward a copy to the Operator for review.

Vice Chair Taylor stated it is a good opportunity for the Port and Fernandina. Chair Hill conveyed her concerns about the interpretation of the statutory partnership agreement; nevertheless, she wanted to support the Operator in this endeavor.

Vice Chair Taylor motioned to approve the agreement with the amendments discussed. Commissioner Cole second the motion.

**Discussion:** Commissioner Cole expressed his concern about the late delivery of the draft agreement. The Board did not have ample time to review and provide feedbacks. He also conveyed that there was confusion across the board. Chair Hill agreed the Board should have more time to review the documents; however, the funding opportunities come fast and furious. The legal fees for assessing and addressing the grant documents will be paid by the Operator. Ultimately, she supports the Operator to succeed and feels comfortable after reading the agreement.

**The Board voted 4 to 1 in favor of the motion with Commissioner Nelson dissenting.**

## **9. New Business**

### **a. FDOT Traffic study (Friendly Road)**

A copy of the FDOT study was included in the meeting packet.

A signal warrant analysis was prepared to determine if a traffic signal is warranted and needed at the SR A1A/Friendly Road intersection in Nassau County, Florida, at the request of the Port of Fernandina.

There was no feedback from the Operator, but Mr. Haehl hoped for a traffic light at the intersection. Chair Hill suggested the Operator communicate with FDOT and Nassau County engineers.

## **10. Other items to be brought by Commissioners**

### **a. Warehouse #2 (yard waste)**

It was discovered by a Port team member that yard waste/debris from the nearby neighbors were dumped behind warehouse #2. A City staff explained, via email, the area is on the North 3<sup>rd</sup> Street right-of-way, designated for residents within the block to leave their yard waste.

Chair Hill suggested to communicate to the neighbors to cease and desist leaving their yard waste on OHPA property. It is unsightly and not OHPA/Port waste. The Board consented. She will contact the City's Public Works.

The Chair re-opened the floor for public comments to Daniel Griebel, Keller Williams. He was one of the candidates for the RFB OHPA Property sale. He complained the Board's actions pertaining to the sale of OHPA property did suit what the RFP called for and that the matter had turned into an open listing. Chair Hill thanked Mr. Griebel for his comments.

Commissioner Fullwood corrected there are 15 deepwater ports in Florida instead of 16 that was stated on the Maritime Day resolution.

Mrs. Hebron reminded the Chair to discuss the matter of the Nassau Tradeplex signage. Mr. Krechowski reached out before to the new owner of the property, RecNation, and was told the company is not interested in leasing a portion on the OHPA sign. Yet, the RecNation sign/logo remains on said sign. Chair Hill suggested to communicate to RecNation to remove their sign or be billed for the usage. Mr. Krechowski will contact the company to remove the sign within 15 days. A rate of \$100 per month fee for use of the OHPA sign was established.

## 11. Adjournment

With no other items brought before the Board, the meeting was adjourned by Chair Hill at approximately 9:00 PM.



---

**Miriam Hill, Chairwoman**



---

**Date**