

**OFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES
OF THE
LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION
JOINT WORKSHOP WITH
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA**

JANUARY 30, 2023

**MONDAY
10:00 A.M.**

**PALM BEACH STATE COLLEGE
LAKE WORTH, FL**

DELEGATION MEMBERS:

State Senator Tina Polsky, Chair
State Senator Gayle Harrell, Vice Chair
State Senator Lori Berman
State Representative Joseph Casello
State Representative Jervonte Edmonds
State Representative Peggy Gossett-Seidman
State Senator Bobby Powell Jr.
State Representative Rick Roth
State Representative David Silvers
State Representative Kelly Skidmore
State Representative Emily Slosberg
State Representative John Snyder
State Representative Katherine Waldron

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Michael Barnett
Commissioner Sara Baxter
Commissioner Mack Bernard
Commissioner Maria Marino
Vice Mayor Maria Sachs
Mayor Gregg K. Weiss
Commissioner Marci Woodward

COUNTY STAFF PRESENT:

Genaya Mercado, Delegation Aide, Palm Beach County Legislative Delegation
Victoria Nowlan, Executive Director, Palm Beach County Legislative Delegation

CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT & COMPTROLLER'S OFFICE STAFF PRESENT:

Danielle Freeman, Deputy Clerk
Jillian Zalewska, Deputy Clerk

I. Call to Order

The mayor called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m.

II. Welcome Remarks

A. Mayor Gregg K. Weiss, Board of County Commissioners (BCC)

Mayor Weiss thanked Palm Beach State College (PBSC) for hosting the meeting and welcomed the Delegation members.

B. Sen. Tina Polsky, Chair, Palm Beach County Legislative Delegation

C. Legislative Delegation Member Introductions.

(CLERK'S NOTE: Delegation and BCC self-introductions took place at this time.)

D. County Commissioner Introductions

See Item II.C.

E. Palm Beach State College President Dr. Ava L. Parker

Dr. Parker discussed PBSC's legislative priority regarding creation of a world-class facility that would allow stakeholders to come together to train and plan for natural disasters. She spoke about the phased approach to the project and said that PBSC was seeking funding for Phase I, which would cost slightly more than \$3 million. Dr. Parker also noted that there would be a request from the Florida College System to increase the budget by \$100 million to cover the cost of insurance and utilities.

Discussion ensued regarding PBSC's efforts to collaborate with local stakeholders in their efforts to move forward with the public safety facility project.

Commissioner Bernard recommended that PBSC obtain letters of support from local agencies.

Sen. Berman asked about the proposed location of the facility, and Dr. Parker responded that it would be located between Loxahatchee Groves and Belle Glade.

Sen. Harrell inquired about efforts to expand the reach of the program statewide, and Dr. Parker explained that training would be offered to existing personnel and that PBSC would be able to partner with sister colleges offering public safety programs.

In response to a question from Rep. Casello, Fire Recruit Director David Hamel stated that standard firefighter training would continue to take place in Lake Worth, but advanced training would move to a different location. Mr. Hamel also explained the credentialing process for Fire Academy students.

Dr. Parker provided further information about PBSC's efforts to collaborate with stakeholders and legislators to facilitate development of the project.

Discussion continued, and Dr. Parker responded to additional questions.

III. Palm Beach County Legislative Priorities

- A. Palm Beach County 2022 Legislative Agenda
Todd Bonlarron, Assistant County Administrator
Ed Chase, Intergovernmental Affairs Director
Kasey Denny, Legislative Affairs Director

County Administrator Verdenia Baker shared welcoming remarks.

1. 2022 Session – County Highlights

Intergovernmental Affairs Director Ed Chase delivered a presentation to the Delegation and the BCC in which he discussed various appropriations items.

Assistant County Administrator Todd Bonlarron continued the presentation.

2. Economic Development, Infrastructure, and Local Government

Mr. Chase spoke about the following items:

- Glades regional initiatives;
- the rural jobs tax credit;
- qualified target industries reauthorization;
- Peanut Island restoration project; and
- several statewide programs.

Legislative Affairs Director Kasey Denny provided further information regarding appropriations requests to address infrastructure needs in the Glades region, the Peanut Island restoration project, the Everglades workforce training program, and renovations to the West Delray Regional Park to include a boundless playground.

Mr. Chase invited comments from the Delegation and BCC.

Commissioner Baxter spoke about the need for demucking and the availability of funds to facilitate that process.

Sen. Berman stated that discussion should take place in the future regarding how funds

from the \$200 million housing bond would be utilized in the Glades region.

Rep. Waldron inquired about a proposed bill that would limit the power of local governments to implement rent control measures.

Mr. Bonlarron replied that staff had begun to review Senate Bill 102 and more information would be forthcoming. Regarding rent control, he explained that Palm Beach County had implemented a requirement that tenants be given 60 days' notice prior to termination of a lease or a rent increase of 5 percent or greater.

Commissioner Marino expressed support for the 60 days' notice requirement because it allowed tenants sufficient time to obtain credit reports.

Rep. Casello mentioned proposed legislation that would preempt any form of rent control and asked if it would affect the measures in place in Palm Beach County.

Mr. Bonlarron explained that staff was reviewing the relevant components of the law and stated that rent control had not been initiated locally.

In response to a question posed by Rep. Casello, Mr. Bonlarron said that there were matching funds for the appropriations requests.

Ms. Baker provided additional details about the allocations of federal funds to address housing needs.

Mr. Chase discussed opposition to a mobility proposal initiated by the Florida League of Cities that would adversely affect the County's ability to collect impact fees.

Ms. Baker provided additional information about the necessity of collecting voter-approved impact fees.

Sen. Harrell encouraged the County and the Florida Association of Counties to work with the League of Cities to resolve the disagreement.

Mr. Chase continued the presentation and discussed the following items relating to transportation and infrastructure:

- opposition to caps on airport pick-up fees;
- support for granting the ability to approve certain airport contracts on the consent agenda while allowing an opportunity for public comment;
- support for full funding of FDOT grant-funding programs and the Small County Outreach Program; and
- support for increase in rural infrastructure funding levels.

Mr. Bonlarron briefly discussing matching funds for infrastructure programs and requests for additional State assistance for transportation items.

Rep. Casello stated that he was interested in sponsoring the bill that would increase the threshold at which airport contracts were required to be approved before the Board.

Mr. Bonlarron discussed the following items relating to local government:

- opposition to efforts to preempt local wage mandates;
- support for additional local control regarding vacation rentals;
- opposition to expansion of the Tourist Development Tax; and
- support for reasonable increases to sovereign immunity limits.

Sen. Powell inquired about the effects of sovereign immunity limit increases.

Mr. Bonlarron indicated that the current limit was \$200,000 for an individual incident and said that an increase in limits invited potential lawsuits and additional expenditures of tax dollars.

Rep. Roth posed a question about the Tourist Development Tax revenue in 2021, and Mr. Bonlarron said he would provide that information.

In response to an additional question from Rep. Roth, Ms. Baker responded that additional renters coming into compliance had helped the County return to its prior levels of tax revenue.

Mayor Weiss spoke about the need for a resource that would allow the public to obtain information about the locations of vacation rentals.

Rep. Roth stated that he would investigate that issue.

Rep. Casello said that he had spoken to Tax Collector Dorothy Jacks and reported that Ms. Jacks planned to discuss establishment of a statewide registry of vacation rentals.

3. Housing, Homelessness, Substance Use, and Mental Health

Ms. Denny said that the County supported efforts to increase affordable housing funding and to ensure that Sadowski Housing Trust funds were fully funded and appropriated only for affordable housing projects.

Ms. Baker commented on upcoming steps regarding housing bond funds. She also stated that \$25.5 million of sales tax revenue had been allocated for affordable housing and spoke about efforts to ensure that affordability metrics accurately reflected income

levels in the County.

Rep. Casello inquired how housing fund eligibility information would be disseminated and how the County would ensure that the Glades region received an equitable portion of the funds.

Mayor Weiss explained that the initial plan was to utilize the funds as gap financing for projects that would provide affordable and workforce housing.

Rep. Roth discussed the possibility of implementing a merit-based allocation process for State Housing Initiative Partnership program funds.

Ms. Denny continued the presentation with a discussion of the County's priorities regarding homelessness, landlord requirements, and substance use.

James Green, Director II of Community Services, responded to a question from Rep. Edmonds by explaining that the County partnered with multiple nonprofits and government institutions to provide services to homeless youth. He also stated that Community Services worked with several hotels to provide housing for families.

Rep. Caruso discussed continuing efforts to regulate the sober home and addiction recovery industry.

Ms. Denny proceeded to summarize the County's legislative priorities regarding mental health.

Sen. Polsky requested support for a bill that would decriminalize fentanyl testing strips and a bill being drafted that would assist with funding education for mental health counselors.

Rep. Edmonds mentioned House Bill 39, which would require school police at state colleges and universities to always carry at least two cans of Narcan.

Sen. Powell discussed an additional funding request to address the recidivist homeless population.

4. Water and Natural Resources

Mr. Bonlarron discussed the following items:

- support for beach and inlet management funding;
- acquisition of Pal-Mar lands;
- preservation initiatives regarding the Loxahatchee River and Lake Worth Lagoon; and

- appropriations requests for Lake Okeechobee shoreline restoration, Green Cay Phase II, Corbett Levee Phase II, and the Busch Wildlife Center.

Deborah Drum, Director II of Environmental Resources Management, provided additional details about the Loxahatchee River and Lake Worth Lagoon preservation initiatives.

Rep. Caruso requested support for a bill that would implement inspection and maintenance requirements for older septic tanks.

In response to a question from Rep. Caruso, Ms. Drum said that the County prioritized sensitive submerged lands for willing-seller acquisitions.

5. Public Safety and Criminal Justice

Mr. Chase discussed the following items:

- support for reentry resources for nonviolent offenders;
- opposition to legislation that would preempt the County's ability to grant certificates of public convenience and necessity for emergency transport services; and
- support for implementation of building inspection requirements for multifamily condominium facilities.

Ms. Denny stated that the County supported legislation regarding additional adult guardianship oversight measures.

Commissioner Woodward discussed the need for increased transparency in adult guardianships.

Rep. Caruso spoke about a bill he had filed that would restrict guardians' ability to limit family visitations to wards.

Sen. Berman stated that she was working with the Florida Bar to file a bill relating to guardianship and was interested in collaborating with Commissioner Woodward.

Ms. Denny proceeded to discuss an appropriations request for the Palm Beach County Juvenile Detention Center.

Rep. Skidmore requested support for legislation regarding human trafficking, pretrial release clarification, expansion of risk protection orders, and continued education for guardians.

Rep. Edmonds expressed interest in supporting the Criminal Justice Commission to provide funding for several of their initiatives.

IV. DISCUSSION AND CLOSING REMARKS

Rep. Caruso spoke about proposed House Bill 269, which would make it illegal to project an image onto a building without written permission from the owner. The bill included more severe consequences for illegally projected images consisting of antisemitic messaging or imagery. It also contained additional provisions to address the recent rise in antisemitic acts in Palm Beach County.

Rep. Roth discussed a bill he was submitting regarding food recovery.

Commissioner Marino spoke about the importance of nonprofits and asked the Delegation to consider their requests.

V. ADJOURNMENT

At 12:08 p.m., the mayor declared the meeting adjourned.

APPROVED:

Chair/Vice Chair