

**FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD
OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
EMERGENCY MEETING
TUESDAY JULY 12, 2005
1:00 P.M.**

MINUTES

Members Present: Cheryl Sanders – Chairman, Bevin Putnal – Vice Chairman, Russell Crofton – Commissioner, Noah Lockley Jr. – Commissioner, Jimmy Mosconis – Commissioner

Also Present: Alan Pierce – Director of Administrative Services, Marcia Johnson – County Clerk, Michael Shuler – County Administrator, Michael Morón – Board Secretary, Van Johnson – Solid Waste Director, Hubert Chipman – Road Department Superintendent, Sheriff Mike Mock, Butch Baker – EOC Director

Chairman Sanders called the Emergency Meeting to order at 1:12 P.M.

Mr. Pierce reviewed the current status of the County, after Hurricane Dennis, with the Board. The amount of damage done by the storm surge, the Lt. Governor's visit, and her reaction to the amount of shoreline damage was discussed. Mr. Pierce informed the Board that FEMA should be in town today and residents of the County should start registering with FEMA by calling the toll free number.

Mr. Pierce then discussed DOT's plan to repair Highway 98, which included dividing the total repairs into three separate contracts and possibly selecting the contractors by the end of the business day today but it would take at least 30 days before the highway was opened to 2 way traffic. The Board asked Mr. Pierce about the use of local labor for the repair of Highway 98 to which Mr. Pierce informed the Board that DOT had already assured him of such, and there would be some sort of advertisement for employment.

The Board and Mr. Pierce then discussed the road on Alligator Point. Mr. Pierce informed the Board that the County could no longer maintain the road at Alligator Point. Mr. Pierce stated that Preble Rish has already designed a plan to make a path for access in Alligator Point but Progress Energy had to inspect all the power lines to make sure they were not energized. At this point, Mr. Pierce invited Mr. Larry Watson, of Progress Energy, to address the Board.

Mr. Larry Watson updated the Board on Progress Energy's status including the activation of the Gulf/Franklin Progress Energy Center and that power was restored to 3682 customers but 429 customers were without power which

included customers who were not able to get power because of damage to their house. He also stated that Progress Energy was ready to assist with providing access for the residents of Alligator Point.

Mr. Hubert Chipman, Superintendent of Roads, offered some additional info regarding the Alligator Point road.

The Board inquired as to Progress Energy's intention to restore power to Alligator Point. Mr. Watson informed the Board that Progress Energy intended to reset the poles and restore the power as soon as an access was provided.

The Board informed Mr. Chipman that DOT has debris disposal sites and St. Joe Company would provide a sand pit at Alligator Point.

Sean Fin, of the St. Joe Company, commented.

Mr. Chipman informed the Board that the County not VMS was cleaning debris dump sites on Highway 98. The Board discussed this and other county road matters with Mr. Chipman.

The Board, Mr. Chipman, and Mr. Pierce discussed septic tank water leaking on to the streets on St. George Island.

Mr. Pierce informed the Board that the Secretary of Agriculture was in Franklin County yesterday and was aware of all the damaged and closed oyster houses and restaurants which would create an unemployment problem in the county. The Board discussed this matter.

The Board discussed an alternate route in Lanark Village for evacuation during a storm, and commented on the excellent job done by Butch Baker thus far.

Mr. Pierce asked the Board to consider waiving fees related to the storm.

Motion

Commissioner Mosconis motioned to waive all tipping fees for storm related debris at the landfill and building permit fees for storm repair damage, Commissioner Putnal seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

Mr. Pierce and the Board discussed access to St. George Island including health issues due to leaking septic tanks.

Mr. Jay Abbott, St. George Island Fire Chief, expressed his safety and health concerns with the Board. Mr. Abbott suggested restricting access to St. George Island until the safety and health concerns are addressed.

Ms. Alice Collins expressed her concerns about the health and safety issues on St. George Island.

Attorney Michael Shuler, Mr. Pierce, Butch Baker, and the Board discussed this matter further.

Motion

Commissioner Lockley motioned to support Mr. Butch Baker's recommendation to restrict access to St. George Island to property owners, realtors, and other essential personnel until the health and safety issues discussed are addressed, Commissioner Crofton seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

The Board asked all Department Heads and Constitutional Officers to report any problems. Jimmy Harris, the County Tax Collector, commented on the leaks in the Court House.

Mr. Pierce stated that due to the damage on Highway 98, the County was essentially divided in half and Emergystat was requesting 2 additional ambulances, for a total of 4, to provide adequate service to the County.

Skip Chormicle, an Emergystat manager, explained to the Board the need for 2 additional ambulances and that Emergystat was willing to supply one of the needed ambulances at no charge to the County for two weeks at a time until Highway 98 is re-opened. Mr. Chormicle also stated that it was a possibility that any funds that the County spent on the second additional ambulance would be refunded by FEMA since the County was declared a disaster area.

Mr. Pierce informed the Board that he was not sure that FEMA would refund the County for any funds spent on the additional ambulance.

The Board asked for a status report on the availability of ambulance service during and immediately after the storm.

Ms. Hilda Pippin, Emergystat's local manager, informed the Board that during the Hurricane there was only one available ambulance, staffed with 2 paramedics, and it was located in Eastpoint. She also advised the Board that the station was unmanned for at least 3 hours during the storm.

The Board and Mr. Butch Baker discussed other counties assisting with ambulance service and Franklin County paying for the service provided. It was stated by Ms Pippin that Emergystat did request assistance from Pinellas County for the Carrabelle area and Jefferson County in the Lanark Village area during the night of the hurricane.

Mr. Pierce stated that if the ambulance service was County managed then FEMA would likely refund the cost of additional ambulance but because it is privately managed there might be some difficulty in getting FEMA to refund the cost of the additional ambulance to the County.

The Board discussed this issue further.

The Board inquired as to a death caused by the lack of ambulance service during the storm.

Ms. Pippin stated that “first responders” responded to a cardiac arrest call and went to the hospital but the person refused to return to the hospital later on that day and as a result died. Ms. Pippin also stated that Emergystat was previously told that during a storm, the ambulances should service Eastpoint, St. George Island, Carrabelle, and Alligator Point, and deputies and “first responders” would service the City of Apalachicola. Mr. Pierce and the Board were not comfortable with that policy and discussed this issue further.

Motion

Commissioner Mosconis motioned to fund an additional ambulance, for \$7500.00 from the Reserve Contingency Fund for the County for 30 days, and Emergystat will provide an additional ambulance, at no cost to the County, for 30 days, for a total of 4 ambulances for the next 30 days in Franklin County, Commissioner Crofton seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

Mr. Butch Baker, Emergystat, and the Board discussed housing the additional staff.

Mr. Pierce discussed Lake Morality road, C-30A and a beach nourishment project with the Board.

Motion

Commissioner Mosconis motioned to fund, through State emergency funding, the paving of Lake Morality Road and C-30A going toward Gulf County, and a beach re-nourishment project, Commissioner Lockley seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

Anita Grove, Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce, discussed the Board sending letters of support requesting loans for the business community such as Bridge Loans and assistance from Enterprise Florida.

Motion

Commissioner Lockley motioned to have the Board send support letters to the Legislature to aid in requesting assistance and loans for the business community, Commissioner Crofton seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

The Board requested that VMS be encouraged to use local labor to help with clean up of Highway 98.

Mr. Van Johnson discussed the mix debris that is presently being received at the Landfill and that some "encouragement" is needed from the Board to help expedite the processing of the 5 year Renewal Operating Permit for the Landfill.

Mrs. Marcia Johnson, County Clerk, asked that a list of emergency and support telephone numbers, such as Red Cross, FEMA, etc., be formulated and distributed.

Mr. Bob Lansford, of SBA, introduced himself to the Board.

Michael Allen, of WOYS, inquired as to the availability of Red Cross and FEMA in the county. Mr. Pierce and Mr. Baker responded to the inquiry.

There being no further business Chairman Sanders adjourned the meeting at 2:10 P.M.

Cheryl Sanders, Chairman

Attest:

Marcia Johnson, Clerk