

**FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
WORKSHOP
FRANKLIN COUNTY COURTHOUSE ANNEX
FEBRUARY 16, 2016
1:30 P.M.
MINUTES**

Commissioners Present: Joseph Parrish – Vice-Chairman, Noah Lockley, Cheryl Sanders, Rick Watson

Others Present: Alan Pierce – Director of Administrative Services, Michael Morón – County Coordinator, Michael Shuler – County Attorney, Lori P. Hines-Deputy Clerk to the Board.

Workshop – Dewberry – RESTORE Consultants

Vice-Chairman Parrish called the workshop to Order.

Mr. Pierce stated Ms. Stella Wilson, Dewberry Consultants, is present and this is the first step in developing priorities and a scaling system for when projects will be received. He said this meeting is for the Commissioners and the public. He reported the Restore Advisory Council (RAC) was informed of the meeting and the results of the meeting will be presented to them but they were not required to attend. Mr. Pierce reported there is not another RAC meeting scheduled as the U.S. Treasury has been slow in approving the planning grant. He said he will have a conference call with U.S. Treasury tomorrow to try and resolve any issues. He stated Gulf County's planning grant has been awarded but no money has been released so Mr. Warren Yeager, Gulf County Restore Coordinator, is going to Washington tomorrow to meet with Senator Nelson's aide and U.S. Treasury. Mr. Pierce said no county has received any Restore money in the State of Florida or the Gulf Coast. He explained other money BP has funded is available but not Restore funds. He reported Restore has zero appropriations in every county at this time. Mr. Pierce stated it may take an effort by the U.S. Senators to find out why the U.S. Treasury is being so difficult. Vice-Chairman Parrish expressed his opinion that U.S. Treasury is delaying the process as they get to keep the interest. Mr. Pierce reminded the Board there will be \$23 million in the direct component pot based on the proposed order but the judge has yet to rule on the amount. Mr. Pierce said the money will be distributed to Franklin County over a 15 year period. Mr. Pierce stated it is possible a rule may change to allow the County to bond the money or have some way of utilizing the money. He reported right now U.S. Treasury says the County will receive \$1.5 million for 15 years. Commissioner Lockley asked if there are guidelines about what the money can be spent on. Mr. Pierce answered yes and said they will discuss the guidelines today. He said projects that have matching funds should get priority as they will do more for the community. He reported the money is considered non federal and can act as local tax dollars to match state and federal funds. Ms. Stella Wilson, Dewberry Consultants, appeared before the Board. She explained

Mr. Bryon Griffith was scheduled to be here but had weather delays and will not be able to attend. She reported the County has about \$7-\$7.5 million in the Transocean settlement and \$23 million throughout the 15 years. She said other counties are going through the process now and Gulf County is through the new step of getting ready to select projects. She stated RAC met once in December and their first step is to provide feedback on the priorities for the county. She said Dewberry has gone through the feedback and reviewed a lot of the documents and some historic meeting notes. Ms. Wilson reported what they want to hear today is what the priorities are. She reported even though the U.S. Treasury wants the MYIP to only address one year the first time it is submitted, they are encouraging the County to develop a comprehensive approach to the Restore funding. She explained if the County submits only one year then they will have to complete the same process again next year. She encouraged the Board when they go through the first year process to make it a true multi-year implementation plan. Ms. Wilson said after they get some input and priorities from the Board and RAC, they will gather all the information and come up with the selection criteria. She explained any of the projects turned in for consideration will then be scored by the criteria on a point system. She went on to say a point system will be based on the needs submitted to them and the priorities. She said the County needs to determine what the problems and big issues are. She stated when the project submittals are received; they should answer the solutions to the problems. Ms. Wilson reported at first these will be project concepts or ideas. She explained they will need to review the ideas and ask the appropriate questions in the application process. She explained the County should set a high goal for leveraging. She reported every \$1.00 of direct component money spent should turn into \$3.00. She presented a handout for the Board and members of the public. She explained the MYIP is the business plan and she encouraged the Board to make a long term and comprehensive plan. She stated the Board can use this money as a match to secure additional funds. She discussed prior environmental assessments and key SWOT resources. She said this is the base of the needs assessment and will get a lot more detailed after today's meeting. She went on to discuss the prior economic assessments. She explained as part of the needs assessment they will complete a community market analysis. She introduced Mr. Zach Jenkins, University of West Florida Hass Center, and Mr. Paul Johnson, Ecology & Environment, Inc., who are also part of their Restore team and will be helping them with the process. She stated a market analysis will be presented once it is complete and will give an economic picture of what the community looks like now. Mr. Pierce questioned if Mr. Johnson's firm is also doing some consulting work with the Consortium. Mr. Johnson said not with the Consortium but with some other entities. Mr. Pierce stated the Hass Center is also working with the Triumph fund. Mr. Jenkins said yes in some ways. Ms. Wilson discussed separating the money into four categories: economy, environment, infrastructure and community. She questioned if the Board would like to set a percentage for each category. She said none of the counties they have worked with have set percentages. She said if they would like to set percentages, it would be done later in the process. Ms. Wilson explained how each project is scored on each criteria. She stated the Board can prepare a 5 or 10 year comprehensive plan in the MYIP. Commissioner Watson inquired about the community category. Ms. Wilson reported in the Restore Act there are no

specific community needs mentioned as far as eligible criteria. She explained in working with other counties they have found there are social issues that can be addressed by coupling them with other categories. Commissioner Lockley said he represents District 3 and some of the citizens work on the water but questioned if there is something for people who do not work on the water. He stated they need long term land jobs. Ms. Wilson stated the Dewberry team has looked at what industry transformation would look like in Franklin County. She explained there have been many discussions with the Great Northwest in anticipation of the Triumph funding. She reported the process of preparing the direct component MYIP will also help the County prepare for the Triumph funding as the projects that qualify for the MYIP may also qualify for Triumph funding. Mr. Pierce explained, if approved, the Triumph fund will have \$300 million and Senator Gaetz was adamant that no Triumph project would be approved that consists only of Triumph money. He reported if Franklin County looks at economic development projects then it is possible the direct component money could be used to leverage Triumph dollars. Vice-Chairman Parrish said in relation to the environmental category, there are several projects already being funded by NRDA or state agencies. He expressed concern about spending the direct component money for projects that are already being addressed by federal and state agencies. He reported there may be a few small projects the County might want to do but a lot of these projects are already being funded by NRDA. Vice-Chairman Parrish said the County may waste time in planning for multiple years when things can change in a community. He said the County should not plan far out and not spend all of the direct component money unless it is needed. Vice-Chairman Parrish stated some of the money should be saved to address issues or use in an emergency situation. He reported if the County implements a 10 year plan and spends all the money then there will be no money to help later because all the funds will be obligated. Vice-Chairman Parrish said he agrees with using some of the money to leverage other funds. Commissioner Watson questioned how long a term is being suggested by Dewberry. Ms. Wilson answered a 5 year plan. She explained the County cannot commit any funds until they fill out the applications from the U.S. Treasury and that process is taking 6 months or longer. She stated if the County wanted to set aside emergency funds for future years then the County can plan now and the funds would be accessible; but if they wait to plan then the process of applying for the funds would be 6 months or longer. Commissioner Lockley questioned what will happen if the Board makes a plan and then sees it will not work. He reported the bay is owned by the State of Florida and questioned how the County can tell them what to do with the bay. Mr. Pierce reported the State is in charge of operation of the bay and they do not tell the County what their plans are for the bay. He said suggestions can be made to the State but he is not sure how much input the County would have. Commissioner Lockley said the state controls the bay but are they sitting back and waiting for the County to address the issues. Mr. Pierce reported the State has not done close to what needs to be done in the bay. Commissioner Lockley reported if the State addresses the issues in the bay then the County could spend their money somewhere else. Commissioner Sanders said the County is going through a public process and everyone will be allowed to give their opinion but she questioned if the state will do the same thing. She asked if the County will have the same scrutiny at the State level as they have at the local level. Mr. Pierce answered no and said

when the State decides to do a project then it will just be done and the County will read about it in the newspaper. Commissioner Sanders reported there needs to be a process that is inclusive on all levels so the County does not have to spend the local leveraging money on issues the State should address. She said the County should be allowed to have an opinion on these projects. Commissioner Sanders agreed with the other Commissioners that some of this money should be saved. She reported the County will not know what issues to address when they do not know what is being done by the federal and state government. She expressed her opinion that the County will not see this money in our lifetime. She reported the Consortium has many conflicts about how the money needs to be divided and spent. Vice-Chairman Parrish reported the County needs a list of ongoing projects being funded by NRDA so the Board does not spend the money in the same place. Ms. Wilson said she has the list for Franklin County but not with her. Vice-Chairman Parrish stated RAC and the public also need to be aware of these projects. Commissioner Lockley agreed the public needs to know as they will wonder what is being done with the money. He also expressed concern that the State is not doing work on the bay now. He explained they have done some work but they should have done more. Ms. Wilson agreed she has attended the Consortium meetings also and the money is flowing very slowly. Mr. Pierce stated the only money being spent is in early restoration. Ms. Wilson reported she can bring a list of all the projects to the next RAC meeting. She explained they can also provide a breakdown on how much money is coming from the individual pots of money. Vice-Chairman Parrish reported there are ongoing projects such as the St. George Island bathrooms, fishing piers, Lombardi's and Indian Creek. He explained the public needs to be aware of all the projects going on in the County. He stated some of the projects are already being done through NRDA and once the County reviews the list then they can determine where the funds should be spent. He said it will also help the people trying to submit projects to make sure they do a good project for the County so it meets the criteria and they can get the money. Ms. Wilson agreed looking at the geographic areas where projects are going on will help the County determine where the funds need to be spent. Commissioner Watson stated it will also help if the master list includes the amount being spent on these projects. Ms. Wilson reported they can provide the amounts. Commissioner Lockley stated there are a lot of areas in Apalachicola and the County where the houses look bad and the areas need to be addressed. Mr. Pierce stated this could be addressed as part of the County needs. Mr. Pierce suggested the County may be able to leverage additional SHIP funds with some of these funds. Commissioner Sanders stated the CDBG may be increased if the County has access to more funds. Mr. Pierce agreed the County can get more points with CDBG if they have some matching money. Commissioner Sanders reported the County can set aside a certain amount of money for CDBG. Commissioner Lockley explained in looking over the whole County there are some houses and communities that look bad. Commissioner Sanders said when the Restore Act first came up; the Board said the first priority was restoration of the bay and to provide an economic boost for the County with jobs. She stated they may be able to use this money to leverage regional projects like they are trying to do at the airport. Ms. Wilson said the goal of the plan is to maximize the dollars. She stated they will review all the projects, determine which ones are best for each pot of money, and break all the projects out in a list for the Board.

Commissioner Lockley said if they get work in here then they will need housing. Ms. Wilson reported the County may not know how many houses need to be rehabilitated but a plan could be developed. She explained once the cost is known then the CDBG funds could be requested to implement the plan. Commissioner Lockley stated that will provide housing and also jobs during the construction. Commissioner Lockley reported a company could be brought in and then people would need to be trained to do the work. Mr. Pierce explained in relation to training, U.S. Treasury will only be satisfied if the training is for a specific job that is already available. Ms. Wilson agreed the training has to be industry specific training. She said they will need to know what the industry is, what the work force gaps are, and how they can be filled. Ms. Wilson reported workforce development and workforce training are eligible activities with Restore. Vice-Chairman Parrish reported this is the same discussion they had with Gulf Coast Community College years ago about training. He explained another obstacle is knowing what jobs will be available and having individuals trained in advance for the jobs. He said it is cumbersome to try and provide jobs in an environmentally sensitive area. Ms. Wilson agreed the planning has to be done of what you know now and how Restore can help. She stated if the County has a solid plan then Restore can bring the funding. Vice-Chairman Parrish said Triumph is looking for an economic development presentation from each of the counties on where they want to be in 8 or 10 years and how are you going to get there. He explained this same situation is being reviewed by Triumph which is primarily for economic development of the counties that are trying to diversify. Ms. Wilson reported the Board can use the direct component money to provide the data to support whatever plan the County is proposing. She explained the State does not know what Franklin County wants so there needs to be a plan so the County can rally state and federal funds. Commissioner Lockley asked how hard it will be to get these groups together and find out what projects are being done. Mr. Pierce said the project list is out on the internet but they do not know what is being planned on the State level. He explained there are so many state agencies involved that they do not know who is handling which pot of money. Commissioner Sanders reported the Board needs to be in communication with the State agencies so they know what projects are being funded. Ms. Wilson said when the County approaches the state they need to have a message about what they want. Ms. Wilson stated these are the things they will work on with RAC over the next 3-6 months. She reported Dewberry will do a comprehensive needs assessment and then develop search criteria. Ms. Wilson stated they will submit a list the Board can review. She explained once projects start coming in then the County can develop their message of what they want and need. Commissioner Lockley stated the public needs to be involved. He questioned who can submit a project. Ms. Wilson said there is a list of different categories: non-government organization (ngo's), non-profits, institutions of higher education, municipalities and quasi governments (utility authorities). She explained Escambia County opened their project portal to individuals but may be going back as they received 130 projects. She reported the projects submitted by individuals do not always have all the information needed to take the next step to Treasury. She stated in other counties if individuals are attending the RAC meetings, they are being placed in work groups. Mr. Pierce said they are hoping the applicant will also manage the project. He informed the Board U.S. Treasury is not going to give the money to individuals

so you want a group that already has standing. Vice-Chairman Parrish stated municipalities or ngo's can also get matching funds. Ms. Wilson said the ultimate responsibility for these funds will fall on the County Commission so they need to make sure they are choosing projects and project implementers that are going to follow the U.S. Treasury guidelines for spending the money. Commissioner Lockley asked who has final approval for picking the projects. Mr. Pierce answered the Board of County Commissioners. Mr. Pierce said the U.S. Treasury will monitor to make sure the funds are spent in accordance with the rules set out by Congress but will not turn down projects on the County's list as the County is responsible. Ms. Wilson agreed and said according to the Restore Act everything has to be based on the best available science and Treasury is going to make sure every project matches the criteria and that the project is feasible. Ms. Wilson reported throughout this portion of the process Treasury will also be looking to make sure the public was involved to the fullest extent possible in the decision making process. Vice-Chairman Parrish said the reason this process is taking so long and why it will be hard to get projects approved is because the U.S. Treasury will also be held accountable. He explained if money is allowed to be taken then it must be utilized properly. Ms. Wilson said the County should view this as a mini-grant process as everything has to meet the guidelines just like a federal grant. Commissioner Lockley asked if Dewberry will have someone locally every day. Ms. Wilson said they have staff in Tallahassee, Pensacola and Jacksonville. She reported they will have someone locally when the projects start. Commissioner Lockley said they will rely heavily on the consultants on a daily basis. Mr. Pierce reported Dewberry is under contract to help develop the MYIP. He stated once the MYIP is submitted and approved then their contract is over. Ms. Wilson explained when the MYIP is written they are describing where the funding will be spent and the County is allowed to include funding for a consultant to manage the rest of the process. Mr. Pierce reported that would have to be a separate negotiation. He stated their scope of work now is to get the MYIP approved. Vice-Chairman Parrish said all of this work falls under the planning grant. Mr. Pierce agreed this is correct. Vice-Chairman Parrish explained the County will have to hire a consultant as they do not have enough staff and will need additional help. Ms. Wilson said they would love to take the County all the way through implementation. Commissioner Lockley reported they do not want to spend all the money on consultants. Mr. Pierce said the next step will be a RAC meeting but at this time the County is waiting for the U.S. Treasury to approve the planning grant.

Vice-Chairman Parrish called for public comment.

Mr. Henry Hunter, a resident of Tallahassee, informed the Board he was raised at 136 9th Street in Apalachicola and left in 1969 but comes back periodically. He said he travels around the state doing a lot of eminent domain work for the government and property owners. He informed the Board he represents a substantial amount of BP clients individually who had the chemicals sprayed directly on them and some of them received the economic money. He said he has been asked how these projects will help the area know as "The Hill". He said this area is going down and is a very important part of Apalachicola. He questioned what agencies or non-

profits could coordinate with SHIP or create a public trust to identify the borders of the “The Hill” area. He explained the common boundaries of “The Hill” are still there and this would be a great contribution because he is asked about what is being done for “The Hill” not only with BP money but also CDBG and other public money. He stated this is a narrow district represented by Commissioner Lockley. He said he would like to be instrumental in creating an agency to supplement preserving this area. Mr. Creighton Brown, a resident of “The Hill” thanked the Board for doing a good job. He said they have been working with the City of Apalachicola to establish a revolving fund to restore the historic houses on “The Hill” and to possibly build some new housing for low and moderate income people. He explained SHIP is taking applications but they are one year behind with the money they have. He reported they do a good job but need to be funded better. He thanked Commissioner Lockley for bringing up the need for jobs and housing. He said housing may provide long term jobs if it is done in a controlled and careful way. He discussed disaster preparedness and said this is a problem especially on “The Hill” where titles are not clear to properties. He explained in New Orleans no federal money went to anyone that did not have a clear title. Mr. Brown said if we have a hurricane and houses need to be repaired, they must have clear title. He reported even if SHIP has more money the individuals will still need clear titles. He stated this issue needs to be addressed. He said housing on “The Hill” is currently being surveyed and the information is being provided to the City. He suggested putting money in a revolving fund to restore housing as the fund will renew itself.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the workshop was adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

Joseph Parrish- Vice Chairman

Attest:

Marcia M. Johnson - Clerk of Courts