



Roundtable of Volusia County Elected Officials Meeting Minutes November 9, 2020

CALL TO ORDER - 12 p.m.

The Wayne G. Sanborn Activity Center, 815 S. Alabama Avenue, DeLand, Florida.

Those attending included the following Roundtable members: Roundtable Chair and DeLand Mayor Bob Apgar; Roundtable Vice Chair and Volusia County Council Chair Ed Kelley; Daytona Beach Shores Mayor Nancy Miller; Deltona Mayor Heidi Herzberg; Edgewater Mayor Michael Thomas; Holly Hill Mayor Chris Via; Lake Helen Mayor Daisy Raisler; New Smyrna Beach Mayor, Russ Owen; Orange City Mayor Gary Blair; Ormond Beach Mayor Bill Partington; Pierson Town Council Mayor Samuel Bennett; Ponce Inlet City Council Member Lois Paritsky; Port Orange Mayor Don Burnette; and Volusia County School Board Superintendent Carmen J. Balgobin.

Others attending included Michael Booker, City Manager, Daytona Beach Shores; Carmen Rosamonda, City Manager, DeBary; Michael Pleus, City Manager, DeLand; Glenn Irby, City Manager, Edgewater; Joe Forte, City Manager, Holly Hill; Becky Witte, Town Administrator, Lake Helen; Kohn Evans, City Administrator, Oak Hill; Martin Harper, Council Member, District 5, Orange City; Joyce Shanahan, City Manager, Ormond Beach; Jeaneen Witt, Town Manager, Ponce Inlet; Jake Johansson, City Manager, Port Orange; Les Gillis, City Manager, South Daytona; Carl Persis, Volusia County School Board; George Recktenwald, County Manager, Volusia County; Suzanne Konchan, Deputy County Manager, Volusia County; Ben Johnson, Volusia County Council Member, At-Large; Barb Girtman, Volusia County Council Member, District 1; Billie Wheeler, Volusia County Council Member, District 2; Fred Lowry, Volusia County Council Member, District 5; Danny Robins, Volusia County Council Member Elect, District 3; Jeff Brower, Volusia County Chair elect; John Booker, Volusia County, Government Affairs; Lisa Lewis, Supervisor of Elections, Volusia County; Will Roberts, Tax Collector Elect, Volusia County; Kevin Captain, Director, Volusia County Community Information Division; Anthony B. Shepard, Interim President, African American Association of Deltona; Bobbie King, Operations Manager, Volusia County Community Services; Stacy Cantu, Daytona Beach Commissioner Elect, Zone 4; Brian Rothwell, Activity Project Manager, Volusia County; Phyllis Butlien, DeBary City Council, Seat 4; Shari Simmans, Communications & Government Affairs Director, City of DeBary; Holly Smith, Communications Manager and Government Liaison, Volusia County Department of Health; Darrell Hill, Production Coordinator, Volusia County Community Information Division; Gary Daniels, Production Coordinator, Volusia County Community Information Division. Taking minutes was Laura DiGioia, Administrative Aide, Volusia County Manager's Office.

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Roundtable Chairman Bob Apgar welcomed those in attendance and after standing, lead all in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The announcement was made of Brian Rothwell's departure from his current role in the County Manager's Office, to the Tax Collector's office, as the Deputy Tax Collector for the newly elected Tax Collector, Will

Roberts. Thanks were extended to Mayor Don Burnette of Port Orange for all of his work with the Volusia League of Cities in having kept all of the cities informed during the COVID-19 crisis. And, congratulations were extended to those Mayors who were re-elected; Mayor Blair, Mayor Owen, Mayor Partington and Mayor Via.

Recognition and thanks were given to Volusia County Chair Elect Jeff Brower and Council Member elect Danny Robbins, as well as Volusia County Council Members Ben Johnson, Billie Wheeler, Fred Lowry and Barb Girtman, for their attendance. Also in attendance was newly elected Daytona Beach Commissioner, Stacy Cantu.

Thanks were also extended to Volusia County Chair Ed Kelley for his last four years of service, and congratulations on his appointment by the Governor to the local efficiency taskforce in our area, as is Terry Baker from Lake County. As Mr. Kelley's role unfolds in his new endeavor he was encouraged to ask anything of the Round Table, or its individual members.

2020 VOLUSIA COUNTY ELECTION UPDATE

Lisa Lewis, Volusia County Supervisor of Elections, provided an update on the 2020 election cycles which began with the Presidential Preference Primary in March, just as COVID was coming on, causing the closing of three election locations the weekend prior to the election. Those events necessitated the relocation into schools as alternate voting locations. The general election resulted in a record turnout of voters. Words of thanks and appreciation were extended to the Volusia County Manager, George Recktenwald; County employees who worked after their regular shifts late into the night; Judge Chris Kelly and Frank Bruno of the Volusia County Canvassing Board; Mike Dyer, Volusia County Attorney and Stacey Manning; poll workers who donated their time to assist, and last but not least, the great election staff who were committed to making the election process a success. Customer service is and always will be their goal.

It was stated that after 40 days of early election voting, and one day of election-day voting, that this election resulted in a record turnout of 77.70 percent out of 398,530 registered and active voters. It was calculated that 309,667 voted in this election, with 46.24 percent of those being mail-in ballots. The previous record for early voting was in 2016, with 97,000, but was shattered with the 2020 early voting this year, which resulted in 112,532 voters casting their votes within the 14-day early voting period. Additional sites were added this year, as they were desperately needed due to over 53,000 people who turned out to vote on Election Day. All in all, 82.57 percent of those who voted, cast their ballots ahead of Election Day. As usual, there was a higher percentage of women who voted than men.

Supervisor of Elections also expressed that the election went on without any major hiccups, and with nothing major having occurred in Volusia County, or for that matter, in the state of Florida. The State of Florida has now shown that we have become a model state with regard to elections. Comments from Mayor Apgar with regard to his having witnessed the voter turnout for early elections, having given an insight as to how tremendous the voter turnout was going to be.

A question was asked by Volusia County School Board Member, Carl Persis, with regard to how the schools were utilized as voting locations for the election; and if it was anticipated that they would be used for future elections? Mrs. Lewis explained that the schools were a perfect choice, as they are geographically located throughout the County; the parking they provided; room to social distance and spread the voters out was wonderful, and it would be wonderful to continue this partnership with the Department of Elections and the Volusia County School Board. Utilization of the schools had been a long time goal of the

Supervisor since beginning her career in elections. Mr. Persis then introduced Mrs. Lewis to Superintendent Balgobin, and suggested that they become acquainted.

MENTAL HEALTH ACCESSIBILITY – FIRST RESPONDERS

Anthony B. Shepard, African American Association of Deltona, presented an overhead PowerPoint presentation and discussion of the work that had been done in recent months to bring about additional and improved accessibility for first responders with regard to mental health services. It was stated that although a part of this type of job, pretty much requires this type of assistance, the accessibility to such assistance is not as easy to access. In a meeting with County representatives and staff, it was discovered that there were many existing programs throughout the county and state that provided different avenues regarding this type of assistance, and that there was a need to bring it all together for law enforcement officers, EMS, fire fighters, and alike.

Mr. Shepard stated that his purpose for being at the meeting was to put this topic in front of the elected officials for discussion at their level, and to then have them help bring it to the state level to obtain funding. It was stated that the suicide rates for these particular jobs was excessive, and that the antiquated thought process of stating that, “You’re a man, it’s your job; you can handle it,” is a mindset that needs to be eliminated. In order to assist those in these professions, it is imperative to provide them with adequate mental health accessibility. As well, it was stated that the importance of the people who were being sought for assistance have an understanding of those individuals’ job responsibilities, whereby making peer training and involvement in the process of the utmost importance.

The African American Association of Deltona, working with Trinity Holistic Counseling Group, have received positive responses through their virtual meetings with city council members and community activists. The need for such services in the first responder communities is evident, and in speaking with other agencies and the CISM, peer training programs are being created for staff. One of the challenges is getting more peers involved and providing the proper mental health responses to those seeking assistance. Due to the on the job pressure put onto first responders, it is often times difficult for them to return home to their families and act as if nothing is wrong. It is important for the community to be cognizant of their struggles as individuals. Often faced with the worst of situations in the field, it is imperative that they have the right mindset to perform their jobs to the best of their abilities, and this is the assistance that the organization wants to provide.

One of the challenges with the assistance currently being offered to the various first responder sectors, is the difference in EAP allowances. The goal is to provide adequate mental health accessibility for all first responders, without it being a red flag, or possibly instill fear in the individual of the risk of potential job loss in seeking assistance.

Mr. Shepard discussed that the end goal was to receive state funding for the programs and to take care of the first responders. The communities need to be made aware of the fact that the first responders are there for them at all times, and not just in times of emergency. This goal is one that the community and country needs to show involvement in making happen.

Mayor Apgar asking for questions and not getting any, thanked Mr. Shepard and introduced Bobbie King, with the Transportation Development Plan update.

VOTRAN TRANSPORTATION DEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATE

Bobbie King, Community Services Operations Manager for Volusia County, provided an update and overhead PowerPoint presentation on the Votran Transit Development Plan (TDP) and what the process entails. Emphasis was made on the success of the plan requiring public involvement, and where the members in attendance would play a pivotal role in this year-long endeavor. The presentation outlined the following:

- What is a TDP (Transportation Development Plan)?
- Votran TDP process
- Role of COA
- Public involvement
- Project schedule
- Next steps

It was discussed that there were many challenges to the program, and the full vision of the entire County, as it relates to Votran and how it affects each and every one of the cities. One of the challenges to this program was funding. Funding comes from the State, the Fed and then the General Fund picks up the rest of the costs. The TDP is a collaborative effort and many city planners have already been contacted in order to collect data about major developments coming up in the next 10 years.

Votran has enlisted consultation services from Tindale Oliver for assistance in developing the TDP by review existing processes; improvement of current processes; review industry standards throughout the United States, and perform extensive public outreach by utilizing surveys, interviews of current riders, and the public at large. A Survey Monkey survey was included in the handouts for this presentation to illustrate the types of data being collected for analysis.

One of the main components of the TDP is a Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA) which includes the analysis of every current route, times that they are run, number of people on those routes and the cost to run those routes. This analysis being performed will provide good data on how to improve upon what is currently being done. This component and a ten year TDP, will help Votran plan for the future.

Current challenges included reduced revenues due to reduced ridership due to COVID, although the need for Votran services still remains high. Ms. King was optimistic that once the TDP has been established, that the balancing of services and rider needs will become clearer. The next steps in the process will include many interviews, surveys and workshops, followed by analysis and draft plans for review and cooperation with the Florida Department of Transportation to ultimately finalize the plan.

Gary Blair, Mayor of Orange City, asked if routes had been cut due to COVID, as ridership had been stated to have declined. Ms. King replied that one route had been cut at the start of the pandemic, which had already been suffering from poor ridership to begin with. No other routes have had to be cut, and often times more buses were brought in to maintain social distancing. As a follow up question, Mr. Blair had asked that with the new Amazon Center in Deltona, if any additional routes would be added near it. Ms. King responded that it was being looked at and further planning and evaluation would be needed to decide what the best option for that area would be.

Prior to the commencement of the next topic, Mr. Apgar commented for the new Chair, on the fact that prior to the census results coming in, about 70 percent of Volusia County residents live in cities, and 30 percent live in the County, and the anticipation is that the population in cities is going to grow. He stated

that 75 percent of General Fund Revenue comes from the same tax payers that fund the cities in our County with only 25% of residents in unincorporated areas of Volusia County. As mentioned at the beginning of the meeting, Mr. Apgar stated that we are all in this together, and all have the same base of people to represent quite substantially.

CENSUS 2020 REPORT

Barb Girtman and **Billie Wheeler**, Co-Chairs, Volusia County Council Members, provided the meeting attendees with Census updates with regard to local counts. Mrs. Wheeler stated that it was a difficult year, which lead off with the debate on the citizenship question, and moved on to the disruptions caused by the pandemic, and numerous ensuing deadline changes. Volusia County was able to improve its self-response rate from 62.8 percent in 2010, to 66.7 percent in 2020. Council Member Wheeler commented that although this rate may appear low, Volusia County beat the State's response rate and almost equaled the national self-response rate. In August, the U.S. Census Bureau sent enumerators to knock on doors of households that did not respond, which was a challenge during COVID, but 99.9 percent of non-responding households were reached. Statistics were shared that last year Volusia County's population was 553,000, and it was anticipated that the final tally could reflect this number, if not more.

It was stated that 500,000 is the "magic number." If that number were to be met, the County would be put into a higher funding category where it would receive more money from the Federal and State government every year for the next ten years. Also, due to the fact that we were over that count, is a direct result on why the County received COVID funds so quickly. It was shared that when the numbers are greater, it has a direct impact on all of us. In 2010, the County had missed the mark by just 6,000 people. While introducing Council Member Girtman, Mrs. Wheeler thanked staff and all those who assisted in this endeavor, and enabled the County in getting this feat done.

Council Member Girtman commented that they had recruited over 100 committee members from throughout the County, and launched an ambitious marketing and communication campaign from the Count Committee. Billboards, newspaper ads, as well as numerous social media posts, and attendance at many events throughout the County, to advertise Census 2020 were accomplished. Concentration efforts were placed on the "hard to reach" populations, which included minorities, low-income families, migrant workers and college students. Although the campaign was off to a great start, COVID got in the way.

Mrs. Girtman shared information on the friendly competition that was created amongst the cities, to see which city would have the highest self-response rate. It was fun to follow the "horse race" and see who would win the eventual "run for the roses." The repeat winner of this award went to the City of DeBary for 2020, as they had also won in 2010. The City of DeBary won with an incredible 78.4 percent, three points ahead of Ormond Beach and Deltona, who finished in a dead heat for second place. Port Orange came in "to show" and Edgewater finished in fourth place. Officials for the City of DeBary were awarded the Loving Cup at the November 12th County Council meeting, to honor them for their outstanding performance. Every city performed well, and thanks were given to each and every one of them for their support and participation.

Lisa Lewis, Volusia County Supervisor of Elections, provided clarification that what follows the year after the Census is redistricting, which she will be requesting the Council and the School Board get their lines more in line together, in order to avoid splits, as is the current situation in Lake Helen. The issues in Lake Helen involves state, city, the senate, and unincorporated areas, but mostly the School Board and County Council lines. Mrs. Lewis explained that these splits are extremely difficult to explain to the citizens who

do not understand why their neighbor can vote for certain things, yet they cannot, and they are only perhaps one or two streets away from each other.

FUTURE MEETING TOPICS

Chairman Apgar discussed that at the end of last year, or perhaps the beginning of the current year, the group had come up with a list of potential topics of discussion, but due to the changing events and lack of meetings since March, perhaps those topics may have changed or are no longer relevant. Mr. Apgar asked the group for new ideas, topics or presentations that they would like to see discussed at future Roundtable meetings. The list of topics can be formulated between now and January, because of the importance of developing a list of topics for discussion. For example, Mr. Apgar stated that perhaps the implementation of the \$15 per hour mandate can be discussed, so that all of the different strategies and ideas can be reviewed. He asked to please submit any topics for discussion to Brian Rothwell's successors; Kevin Captain or Laura DiGioia. Suggestions were requested with none being brought forward at that time.

Chairman Apgar stated that over four years ago there were three members of the Roundtable running for the Chair position of the County Council, and as a result of that, four years ago Chairman Apgar stated that he became the Chair of the Roundtable. At the time he had thought that this would only be a one to two-year term, but has now turned into four years, and believes that it is time to have a new Chair take over. Should anyone be interested in the Chair position, they were asked to call Chairman Apgar with any questions on time constraints required and information about the position.

Initial Roundtables, where conversations about perhaps having an east, west, County Chair, or a three-year rotation, or a mayor and then a chair, and should Jeff Brower be interested, Chairman Apgar suggested to let him know. Mr. Kelley mentioned that the mayors have their meetings every other Thursday, and that possibly the mayors could suggest a person from the mayor's group, for anyone who would want to serve, so that in the future we could have a chair and a mayor, or chair appointee, which would eliminate a lot of the discussion. Mayor Apgar stated that in January there would be some transfer of authority of the microphone.

With Daytona Beach International Airport's McGee Room under renovation, and the Roundtable event at the Sanborn Center, from a logistical perspective, discussion was suggested that perhaps a semi-permanent home should be found for the meeting, as the airport construction was still ongoing and perhaps the room was going to be smaller. Mr. Recktenwald stated that he would get more information on the completion date and room configurations at the airport. Chairman Apgar stated that the location of the January meeting will be announced, and an attempt would be made to have the meeting centrally located.

CITY MANAGERS ORGANIZATION UPDATE

Michael Pleus, City Manager of DeLand, provided updates from the *City Manager's Organization*. The group had been predominantly meeting on gas taxes for the last year and a half, and have gone through numerous formulas, looking to allocate the gas tax going forward. This year they had agreed on one more delay on the current formula, which was based on a 2003 allocation design, before it was determined that they should look into something different. At present the group was currently looking at lane miles as the most logical way in which to distribute the gas tax with a five year phase-in. This was due to the fact that some cities would gain and some would lose, and that this would attempt to soften that blow. That recommendation would be looked to be finalized in January, and then presented to the elected officials and the County. This would allow a longer term agreement on putting a formula into place. It was shared that for most of the current year COVID meetings were occurring up to three times per week, down to

weekly and at present, every other week, in order to navigate all of the new challenges that we have been faced with because of the pandemic. The mayor mentioned some challenges, one of which would be Amendment Two, as most cities are similar to DeLand with 35% of their workforce earning below \$15 per hour. This alone would be a huge challenge to local government and the manager's group will be looking to try to work together to produce some recommendations on how to navigate this subject.

Mr. Pleus shared that County staff would be making a presentation on the possibility of universal licensing for pets, and basically those are some of the topics that are currently being worked on and addressed. It was suggested that if there were any other topics that the Elected Officials Roundtable would like them to look at, they would certainly be amendable to that.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

NEXT MEETING

Chairman Apgar stated that COVID permitting, there would be a meeting held in January, and every other month from then on, depending upon issues and other events. This schedule would be subject to the addition or subtraction of an occasional meeting as appropriate.

Chairman Apgar mentioned that since they sped through the meeting rather quickly, he offered the Chair elect the opportunity to make any brief comments to his new constituency.

Jeff Brower, Volusia County Council Chair elect, referenced the comment on the replacing of Mayor Apgar's Roundtable Chair seat, and how he would like to see that seat stay within the municipalities. A suggestion was also offered that perhaps the person who won their election by the largest margin, or who ran uncontested like Mayor Via, could fill the Chair's seat. Chair elect Brower stated that the Roundtable was a very important group that had accomplished respectful work that he looks forward to being a part of in the future. The group's forward thinking is exactly what Volusia County needs.

Mr. Brower suggested that he would like the group to consider and possibly come back to, and this was the need to bring, not just jobs, but careers back to Volusia County. Volusia County needs to attract business, and as he had stated throughout his campaign, this was not through the offering of "bribes" in order to attract businesses. A suggestion that was discussed was for the cities, municipalities and the County government, to work together to have a one-stop office. This would be where businesses could come in and talk to one person about all of the permitting, licensing, and different requirements that everyone is required to have for a business to come here. This was not brought up in order to take away any freedom or liberties from the cities because they all have different requirements in order to operate in those jurisdictions. If this could be achieved we could perhaps be known in the Southeast, or even the nation for that fact, as "the" county for businesses to come to because of how well businesses are treated. Rather than being difficult, we would be recognized as rolling out the red carpet for them to do business here. Although not an easy feat to undertake, the group has been challenged with big issues in past and this has been suggested for consideration.

Chairman Apgar asked for any closing comments from the members of the Round Table.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Martin Harper, Council Member from Orange City, commented that he was at a recent presentation about small business where a group called *SCORE* in DeLand was presented as working with small businesses. It was suggested that perhaps the group’s dedicated volunteers could coordinate assistance with the endeavor suggested by Mr. Brower.

Chris Via, Mayor of Holly Hill, stated to Mr. Brower, “Thanks but no thanks” to the Chair position, and expressed his pleasure for the group to be able to meet again in person. Thanks were extended to Mayor Don Burnette of Port Orange, for putting together the Mayors’ phone call that kept all of the mayors, and Volusia County Chair Kelley, in communication throughout this pandemic. There were good results that came out of these communications.

It was expressed that 2020 was a crazy year, but all of the hard work that came from the mayors coming together and standing up collectively was the purpose for this group’s inception. The group was thanked for coming together collectively, and bringing into existence symptomatic expedited lanes, and standing up to the Governor and requesting this and bringing it here to the County. Congratulations were extended to everyone who was re-elected and elected and that he is looking forward to working with everyone for many years into the future.

Ed Kelley, Volusia County Council Chair mentioned that Chairman Apgar had touched on this, but that the task force that he has been asked to serve on is trying to find ways to work collectively with cities, counties and state government. And, although this would probably not be received well, he stated his preference to not support unfunded mandates. He encouraged everyone to get along together, but that this was one issue that should be looked into. Suggestions were solicited for how to possibly look into how we are collectively affected by state, county and city government, and how to become more efficient. A part of this would be to not support unfunded mandates. This would assist the tax payers by not shifting costs, and that is in essence our goal. Chair Kelley stated that he would carry information received from the group to these meetings, of which one had been scheduled for that week, and encouraged the members to share their ideas with him.

ADJOURNMENT

Roundtable Chairman Apgar with finding no further comments, thanked those in attendance for coming and the meeting was adjourned at 12:57 pm.