



Roundtable of Volusia County Elected Officials Meeting Minutes March 8, 2021

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: Nancy Miller, Mayor – Roundtable Vice Chair, Mayor, Daytona Beach Shores; Karen Chasez, Mayor, DeBary; Bob Apgar, Mayor, DeLand; Heidi Herzberg, Roundtable Chair, Mayor, Deltona; Michael Thomas, Mayor, Edgewater; John Penny, Vice Mayor, Holly Hill; Daisy Raisler, Mayor, Lake Helen; Russ Owen, Mayor, New Smyrna Beach; Douglas Gibson, Mayor, Oak Hill; Gary Blair, Mayor, Orange City; Bill Partington, Mayor, Ormond Beach; Samuel Bennett, Mayor, Pierson; Lois Paritsky, Council Member, Ponce Inlet; Don Burnette, Mayor, Port Orange; Doug Quartier, Vice Mayor, South Daytona; Jeff Brower, County Council Chair, Volusia County and Dr. R. Scott Fritz, Superintendent, Volusia County School Board.

Others attending included: Linda Cuthbert, Chair, Volusia County School Board; Kurt Swartzlander, Asst. City Manager, Daytona Beach Shores; Carmen Rosamonda, City Manager, DeBary; Michael Pleus, City Manager, DeLand; John A. Peters, Acting City Manager, Deltona; Glenn Irby, City Manager, Edgewater; Joe Forte, City Manager, Holly Hill; Lee Evett, Acting City Administrator, Lake Helen; Khalid Resheidat, City Manager, New Smyrna Beach; Kohn Evans, City Administrator, Oak Hill; Dale Arrington, City Manager, Orange City; Joyce Shanahan, City Manager, Ormond Beach; Jeaneen Witt, Town Manager, Ponce Inlet; Jamie Miller, Interim City Manager, Port Orange; Les Gillis, City Manager, South Daytona; George Recktenwald, County Manager, Volusia County; Carl Persis, Board Member, Volusia County School Board; Barbara Girtman, Volusia County Council, District 1; Danny Robins, Volusia County Council, District 3; Heather Post, Volusia County Council, District 4; Ben Johnson, Volusia County Council, At-Large; Suzanne Konchan, Deputy County Manager, Volusia County; Kevin Captain, Community Information Director, Volusia County; Larry Bartlett, Property Appraiser; Lisa Lewis, Supervisor of Elections, Elections; Will Roberts, Tax Collector; Phyllis Butlien, Interim Vice Mayor/Council Member, City of DeBary; Patricia Boswell, Administrator, Florida Department of Health, Volusia County; Joe Pozzo, Public Protection Director, Volusia County; John Booker, Government Affairs, Volusia County; Jim Cameron, Vice President of Government Relations, Daytona Beach Regional Chamber of Commerce; Gary Daniels, Production Coordinator, Volusia County; Ashlyn Russell, Community Information, Volusia County; Brian Vandell, Production Coordinator, Volusia County; Chris Baley, Charter/Spectrum; Holly Smith, Tax Collector's Office; Nancy Vaughn, League of Women Voters of Volusia County; Mary Ann Connors, League of Women Voters of Volusia County; Jarleene Almenas, Observer. Taking minutes was Laura DiGioia, Administrative Aide, Volusia County Manager's Office.

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Roundtable Chair Heidi Herzberg welcomed those in attendance and following introductions of the attendees, lead all in the Pledge of Allegiance.

COUNTY INTRODUCTION

Jeff Brower, Chairman, Volusia County Council shared some insight for direction of the projects the Roundtable could be working on this year. He believed the community would be more receptive if they observed them working on something that they cared deeply about, and making government more efficient. Mr. Brower shared his philosophy of making Volusia a place where businesses could come and felt a red carpet was rolled out to greet them, instead of a being met with roadblocks. An example presented was to create an atmosphere where businesses could be fast-tracked, such as coming into their government office at 9:30 a.m., and walk out at noon with a permit to conduct business. The suggestion presented was to have the municipalities get together and discuss the potential of bringing this idea to fruition. Chair Brower stated that he had made this his key project for the County of Volusia.

Chair Brower informed the audience of the upcoming March 19th annual TEAM Volusia meeting, where the special guest speaker would be Quint Studer, author of the book, “Building a Vibrant Community,” about the transformation of Pensacola. Mr. Brower encouraged the continuation of discussion on how to make Volusia more efficient. Mayor Herzberg stated the meeting was being held at the Center in Deltona, where recording equipment was available to record the meeting to share with those not in attendance.

COVID-19 / VACCINE UPDATES

Joe Pozzo, Director, Volusia County Department of Public Protection presented vaccination statistics from all sites in Volusia County. Of the vaccinations performed, 54% were to those 65 years of age and older. One of the Governor’s goals was to have all counties vaccinate up to 50%, and once that threshold was reached, vaccination restrictions would be relaxed for more groups to become eligible. Another challenge continued to be the accuracy and consistency of information received by the State and Counties. The successes shared included the change from testing to vaccination administration at the Volusia County Fairground where over 25,529 vaccinations had been administered.

Mr. Pozzo plead for support from the cities to encourage the public to receive their second vaccine doses, as the current percentage was only 85% for those who had been scheduled to receive their second doses. An update was given for the mobile integrated health vaccinations that had begun four weeks prior, which was comprised of a nurse and EMT to go to homebound residents on Mondays and Wednesdays, for vaccine administration. The phone number was provided in the overhead PowerPoint presentation, (386)281-6654, for homebound individuals to schedule their vaccinations. Additional closed pod events had been performed in minority communities, with four already completed, for a total of 903 vaccinations administered. Future events were being planned for DeLeon Springs, Pierson and New Smyrna Beach. Of the weekly Moderna vaccines received, 300 are pulled per week for these missions.

Information was presented on the newly acquired Johnson & Johnson, one-dose vaccines, and received the previous week and earmarked for school employees throughout the County. Mr. Pozzo explained the interruption with receipt of vaccine for the prior weeks, was due to severe winter storms preventing the packing and shipping of vaccine. The deficit encountered had been successfully overcome with the doubling up of first and second vaccinations being performed once the vaccine was delivered. Current mission and direction received from the State for future mission implementation was shared. Consistent shipment of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine had not been guaranteed and no future shipments had been verified. The Moderna and Pfizer vaccine was still being allotted on a regular basis, with a tremendous amount of vaccine predicted for delivery in April. Status updates were provided on the success of the State’s Sharecare registration system that had replaced the Eventbrite system.

Mr. Pozzo explained that even after vaccination, prescribed safety guidelines of masking up, washing up and backing up, should still be followed and stressed to the public. Discussion ensued with questions on the Eventbrite second appointments and the window for receiving the second dose.

Patricia Boswell, Administrator, Florida Department of Health for Volusia County of Volusia responded that the window for receiving the second COVID vaccination dose was 42 days. Praise and appreciation was expressed to the County and cities for the COVID response, and working together toward making a difference. Ms. Boswell shared COVID statistics in Florida and Volusia County, and the rise in COVID UK variants now having arrived into Florida. A positive trend had emerged in the average age of people testing positive for COVID-19 having dropped, and the direct correlation with senior citizens and long term health care facility patients who had received their COVID vaccinations. At present, it appeared that following the holiday surge, Volusia County had begun to enter into a plateau with regard to the number of hospitalizations and deaths. The current 14-day positivity rate shared was down to 5.47%, with a goal below 5%. Test site statistics were shared of the New Smyrna Beach site currently performing approximately 600 tests per day.

Ms. Boswell explained that would most likely soon be an update to the Executive Order to add FDOH personnel and K-12 school staff, followed by the next priority group, as vaccine becomes more available. The current amount of vaccines being received in Volusia County by the FDOH was approximately 4,000 doses per week of the first dose, with second dose allocations determined by the number of first doses administered four weeks prior to that date. Anticipation was for more vaccine allotted to CVS, Publix, Walmart, and Winn-Dixie locations, for residents to have those additional options available. Another alternative discussed was the Federal immunization site in Orlando, which was opened 12 hours per day and 7-days per week.

Discussion ensued on how COVID deaths were calculated based on location of expiration; first responder vaccination opportunities, and number of ICU beds in Volusia County. Ms. Boswell explained that the mitigation measures instituted resulted in fewer documented flu and seasonal illnesses.

GAS TAX AGREEMENT

Michael Pleus, City Manager, City of DeLand, presented information regarding agreement being reached on the gas revenue tax that had been under development for a year and a half, and was now ready for presentation to elected officials. The collaboration illustrated what could be achieved with cities and the County working together to tackle difficult issues. Mr. Pleus explained the history of the gas tax; arterial road maintenance responsibilities of the County and cities, and an adjusted fuel tax revenue formula which now included a lane mile factor. There were 20 distribution options reviewed by city managers on what would formulas would be best. A correlation was found for gas tax collection between use and lane miles. County staff was commended for their work in compiling data received from the cities; entering it into GIS; mapping; verifying, and insuring every city's lane mileage counts were correct. The second decision made included holding the County harmless in the retention of the County's approximate 57% of the gas tax. Discussion ensued of alterations with the formula resulting in some cities losing tax revenue. The fact that some cities had planned for this revenue for projects, a one year delay in implementation was proposed, followed by a five-year phased in formula. The new gas tax agreement was met with an approval of 74% by the cities and the County, with the County Attorney's Office currently finalizing any remaining changes to the lane miles by jurisdiction, and agreement revisions for the five-year phased-in plan. The agreements would be presented to the cities first, and then to the County Council for final adoption.

Mr. Pleus stated that this was a difficult agreement to put together with resulting revenue loss due to the revision of formula calculations, and was a true testament to the professionalism and willingness to work together to come up with a formula that really did make sense. He stated that the gas tax formula was self-levelling and any lane mile changes that occurred within a particular jurisdiction would affect the amount of revenue received by that city.

MANAGER'S UPDATE

Michael Pleus, City Manager, City of DeLand presented an update on the universal licensing for pets project and the presentation created by Adam Leath, Director for Volusia County's Animal Services. Discussion ensued during the manager's meeting on implementation discussions with the \$15 per hour wage and it was decided to bring the topic back up at the April meeting to share implementation ideas. Daytona Beach was currently the only jurisdiction at \$15 per hour for all, with another city working toward a two-year implementation plan.

Mayor Herzberg inquired on whether a universal permitting situation had been done elsewhere that could assist Chair Brower's goal of assisting businesses in that endeavor. Mr. Pleus stated that with regard to construction permitting that goal would be possible due to universal fire and building codes, although land development issues would be more difficult due to the application of each jurisdiction's code of ordinances. The topic would be brought up at the next Manager's Meeting for discussion.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

John Booker, Government Affairs, Volusia County of Volusia presented information on current presentations made in the State Legislature and the \$1.9 trillion COVID bill that would be worked out by the House and Senate in the following days, with \$130 billion divided between counties and cities once the bill was signed by the President. The legislature so far had proposed 2,961 bills or resolutions, with 3,578 bills or resolutions having been proposed the prior year. He shared that this year one-third of the bills were appropriations, while the previous year most what was proposed were appropriations. Two-thirds of the bills proposed were designed to do something for or against: hospitals, counties, etc., with COVID being the only thing that mattered in the Legislature and how that would affect budgetary items that had nothing to do with COVID. Mr. Booker reiterated that the sole mandate of the legislature was to pass a balanced budget within the 60 days of the session.

Mr. Booker stated the date being monitored was the Revenue Estimating Conference where the accountants got together to research what had occurred in the prior months, what is predicted to occur in the future months, and although the estimates ebb, it was concerning billions of dollars with regard to the deficit that the State would have. The original reduction estimated was \$2.7 billion, making the pool of funds requested by the cities smaller. Results from the conference would determine the number of appropriations allowed for acceptance.

Current COVID protocols had greatly restricted access to the Capitol and offices located there, preventing a County and city presence. The League of Cities and FAC had been very cooperative in sharing information to facilitate the flow of information on legislative actions being processed. Mr. Booker compiled a list of 69 bills entitled *Priority Bills* for monitoring and attention, in addition to 160 *Monitor Bills* that would not be egregious to the County, with a minimal chance for passage. He shared that situations could drastically change to any bill as "horse trading" was more frequently performed nearer to the end of session.

A review of preemptions and unfunded mandates; local preference restrictions on any type of procurements that may be done to assist local companies; building design; public funds for lobbying by

local governments, would not be allowed under some of these bills. They were watching, opposing, and monitoring conversations for information. Bills proposed included: Sadowski Funds and the prevention of the State from sweeping those funds, and the on-line retailers' bill with a potential budget effect of \$700 million, that the Senate had said yes on, and the House was yet to hear. The \$15 min. wage implementation bill was being monitored, as well as the big issue of COVID liability.

Nancy Miller, Mayor, Daytona Beach Shores, and Vice Chair, inquired to the status of a smoking bill which would allow cities and counties to develop smoking regulations. Mr. Booker stated that the bill had passed within one committee, with a vote of 8 to 1, with the nay vote being from the chairman of the next committee to review the bill. It appeared that the bill did not have a strong chance for passage.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Jim Cameron, Senior Vice President of Government Relations, Daytona Regional Chamber, provided information on the upcoming Chamber's Virtual Volusia Days at the Capitol, March 16th and 17th. Registrants could sign up for 30 minute segments, and accessed by a mailed via provided link. Flyers were placed at the front table with registration instructions and sessions being offered. Mr. Cameron offered to answer any questions and could be reached via cell phone.

Nancy Vaughn, League of Women Voters, wanted to share the league's support of ECHO/Volusia Forever and the information programs the League scheduled in association with the County, with session goals to provide information on the programs' purposes, goals and how applicants would be evaluated. The sessions were intended to reach out to a wider community of potential grant seekers. Ms. Vaughn wanted the audience to share the information with their citizens, with press releases being sent out shortly to city PIO's.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting date was scheduled for Monday, May 10th, with venue to be determined based on construction and social distancing requirements at the Dennis McGee room, at the Daytona Beach International Airport, or possibly the Sanborn Center as an alternative.

CLOSING COMMENTS/ ADJOURN

Nancy Miller, Mayor and Vice Chair, thanked outgoing Chair Bob Apgar for his hard work throughout the years, and new Chair, Heidi Herzberg, Mayor of Deltona, for stepping up to take on the position. She stated how valuable the meetings were to the sharing of information throughout the cities and County, and to provide Ms. Herzberg with any agenda items they would want to see explored. Thanks and gratitude were extended to all who attended and participated in the meeting. Mayor Herzberg thanked Mayor Miller for stepping up to become the Vice Chair, and providing insightful comments and discussion.

Roundtable Chair Herzberg, having received no further comments or questions, thanked those in attendance for coming. The meeting was adjourned at 1:07 pm.