



OCEAN HIGHWAY & PORT AUTHORITY

Miriam R. Hill – Secretary/Treasurer - Commissioner, District 1

Danny Fullwood – Chairman, District 2

Scott Hanna – District 3

Carrol Franklin – Commissioner, District 4

Mike Cole – Vice Chairman, District 5

Monthly Meeting Minutes

December 9, 2020

The Ocean Highway and Port Authority of Nassau County held its Monthly Meeting on Wednesday, December 9, 2020 at the County Commissioners Chambers at the James S. Page Government Complex, 96153 Nassau Place, Yulee, Florida 32097.

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 PM by Chairman Fullwood.

The invocation was given and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner **Cole**. Roll call was conducted by Mrs. Barbara Amergian. All Commissioners were present with Commissioner Scott Hanna attending via video conference. Also in attendance were Jeb Branham, Port Attorney; Pierre LaPorte, Port Accountant; and Chris Ragucci, Port Director/Operator.

Chairman Fullwood recognized Mr. Jimmy Dubberly of 95239 Amelia National Parkway, Fernandina Beach, FL. Mr. Dubberly offered his services as a Port Director for a \$1.00 month salary for the duration of 6-9 months. Commissioner Hill asked Mr. Dubberly to submit his resume and credentials to the Board for further review.

The minutes of November 12, 2020 were approved with two corrections.

Chairman Fullwood recognized Pierre LaPorte, Port Accountant to give his monthly report. Mr. LaPorte presented the November 2020 financials with nothing out of the ordinary to comment on. The 4th Quarter 2020 financials were also presented. Commissioner Hill questioned the comment to electing to omit all disclosures. Mr. LaPorte explained that the notes were included in the audit financials for the year and can be found there. Mr. LaPorte informed the Board that the Mauldin & Jenkins would be present at the January 13, 2021 meeting. A letter from the Chief Inspector General was received, releasing the Ocean Highway & Port Authority from financial emergency status. This is a result of the bond debt being retired.

Commissioner Miriam Hill made the motion to request financial documents from Worldwide Terminals.

Mr. Ragucci, Port Operator stated that Worldwide Terminals is a private company so no copies can be given out; however, the financials can be inspected. Audited financials are done annually according to the bond documents and is scheduled for Spring, 2021. Mr. Ragucci suggested a meeting between himself, Mr. LaPorte, and Ms. Hill.

Motion withdrawn.

Chairman Fullwood recognized Port Attorney Jeb Branham to present his monthly report to the Board. Mr. Branham informed the Board that a public hearing with the City of Fernandina Beach regarding the PILOT payment to be dismissed has been scheduled for Thursday, February 25, 2021 and will be conducted via video conferencing. The Channel Re-Alignment issue remains on the back-burner. Mr. Branham reported that he has submitted changes the settlement agreement with TranSystems to Worldwide Terminals' attorney and the Ocean Highway & Port Authority has been released from any liability in the case. Terms will be made available when the settlement is complete. Regarding the Legislative Charter Amendment Changes, Mr. Branham informed the Board that the City of Fernandina Beach withdrew the request for amend the Charter and the City of Fernandina Beach suggested that the changes be discussed with the Board. Chairman Fullwood has asked Mr. Branham to draft an interlocal agreement to address the fees to be paid to the City of Fernandina Beach.

Chairman Fullwood recognized Port Operator Chris Ragucci to give his monthly report to the Board. The November tonnage figures were down dramatically from the prior month. Mr. Ragucci attributed this to the calendar and bad weather.

Mr. Ragucci presented his Port Director report to the Board. He informed the Board that the Port Security plan has been approved by the Coast Guard for the next five years. He reported that FDOT had given an extension on Grant# GOL06 through December 31, 2021. Mr. Ragucci reported to the Board that Port employee Ray Nelson and Robbie Long, Port Manager at Somers Isle, have partnered with Seafarers Ministry to offer care packages for the crews of incoming vessels.

Chairman Fullwood asked Mr. Ragucci about areas of concerns with grants from FDOT that have not been utilized. Mr. Ragucci stated that the security lighting grant (GOL06) has been extended through 12/31/2021; additional funds from G1943 will be moved to \$2-2.5 million to refurbish older cranes.

Unfinished Business:

Regarding the tugboat acquisition, the seller has agreed to escrow the maintenance funds in the amount of \$200,000. Worldwide Terminals will advance \$1,000,000 to the Ocean Highway & Port Authority to purchase the tugboat and the tugboat will be the property of OHPA; once

the funding from the MARAD grant is received, OHPA will reimburse the \$800,000 (matched portion) to Worldwide Terminals for cost of the tugboat. A special meeting will be held on Monday, December 28, 2020 to finalize the purchase and sale agreement and the loan documents.

A recess was called at 7:55 PM. The meeting resumed at 8:00 PM.

Commissioner Miriam Hill made the motion to reduce the monthly commissioner salaries to \$1,500 per month, consistent to what is funded under the current operating agreement.

Commissioner Cole stated that the salaries have been discussed and will be reviewed at the next budget cycle. He also stated that the public perception is that the “raise” was given during a COVID crisis which is not true.

Commissioner Franklin responded that the Charter states \$2,000 for the salaries and that the Board has only taken up to \$1,000 a month for years. Worldwide Terminals is funding the budget and the Board is earning what is allowed by the Charter.

Chairman Fullwood stated that reserve funds were used to fund the salaries and this could change next year and will be addressed at that time.

The Board was polled for their vote:

Cole – No

Hanna - No

Hill – Yes

Franklin - No

Fullwood- No

Motion failed by majority vote.

New Business:

Chairman Fullwood addressed the following issues:

- An RFP for the Port Master Plan needs to be drafted in order to move forward with hiring a company. The current Master Plan expires in 2024. Port Attorney Jeb Branham and Mr. Ragucci will work on putting together the RFP for January 2021.
- Mr. Ragucci will do the scope of work necessary for the RFP for the lighting grant and have Port Attorney Branham review.
- A new tariff rate schedule needs to be done and approved by the Board in accordance with Sec. 3.1 of the Operating Agreement.
- Maintenance Reports need to be submitted to the Board on a regular basis.

Committee Reports:

Port Security – Chairman Fullwood – Port employee Ray Nelson receives security reports and moving forward, these reports will be used to report security issues to the Board.

Customs House – Commissioner Franklin – He attended a telephone conference with the Customs House representative. There is a list of expectations for future office space in anticipation of a new Customs House facility.

Army Corp of Engineers – Chairman Fullwood had nothing new to report.

Economic Development – Commissioner Cole has nothing new to report.

Emergency Management – Commissioner Franklin reported that COVID infections are rising in Nassau County.

TCC – Commissioner Hanna attended the last meeting via video conference. Discussions at the meeting continued on the Electric Car Fleet program.

TPO – Commissioner Cole will be attending the December meeting via video conference. He has been nominated as the Treasurer for the NFTPO.

Nassau Chamber – East Side – Commissioner Hill – no meetings currently scheduled.

Nassau Chamber – West Side – Commissioner Hanna – nothing new to report.

City of Fernandina Beach – Commissioner Hill attended two public meetings. Commissioner Hill meet with City Attorney Tammi Bach and City Manager Dale Manager to share concerns about the Port. The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) for the City of Fernandina Beach has changed the zoning on Escambia from Industrial Waterfront to Conservation. Port Attorney Jeb Branham will look into the effect this has on the Port of Fernandina.

FDOT – Chairman Fullwood stated that the concerns have been discussed earlier in the meeting.

The Administrative Manager Report was included in the meeting packet. Mrs. Amergian reminded the Board that agenda items were due to her a week prior (the first Wednesday of the month) to the monthly meeting date (the second Wednesday of the month.) The agenda and the meeting packet are posted by 5 PM on that date. The Port of Fernandina sign should be installed before the end of the month.

In other Business to be brought by the Commissioners:

Chairman Fullwood requested that monthly meetings be held in other towns within the county throughout the year of 2021.

Commissioner Cole asked for clarification on wearing face masks at the meetings and if it is appropriate to remove the masks when seated between the plexiglass. The County requires masks in and out of the building.

With no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:48 PM.



Danny Fullwood, Chairman