

## **Emerald Coast Regional Council**

Meeting Minutes

GoToMeeting, 1:30 pm

May 20, 2020



### **Members Present:**

Karen "Kasey" Cuchens, Chairwoman  
Councilmember Elizabeth Brannon, City of Freeport  
Councilmember Roger Brooks, City of Bonifay  
Commissioner Danny Glidewell, Walton County  
Commissioner Tray Hawkins, Washington County  
Councilmember Michael Jarman, Panama City Beach  
Councilmember Sal Nodjomian, City of Niceville  
Councilmember Skip Overdier, City of Destin  
JD Smith, Governor Appointee  
Mayor JB Whitten, City of Crestview

### **Others Present:**

Austin Mount, ECRC Staff  
Dawn Schwartz, ECRC Staff  
Renee Quick, ECRC Staff  
Mary Beth Washnock, ECRC Staff  
Mary Jo Gustave, ECRC Staff  
Kathy Wetmore, ECRC Staff  
Tammy Neal, ECRC Staff  
Brittany Ellers, ECRC Staff  
Daryl Boudreaux, NWFLWMD  
David Lister, Saltmarsh, Cleaveland & Gund  
Fen Shi, Saltmarsh, Cleaveland & Gund

### **Members Not Present:**

Mayor Margo Anderson, City of Lynn Haven  
Mayor Tracy Andrews, City of Chipley  
Commissioner Steven Barry, Escambia County  
Commissioner Robert Carroll, Bay County  
Commissioner Robert Cole, Santa Rosa County  
Brett Cyphers, Executive Director NWFL Water Mgmt. District  
Commissioner William T. Dozier, Bay County  
Shawn Hamilton District Director, FL Dept. of Environmental Protection  
Mayor Pam Henderson, City of Callaway  
Commissioner Carolyn Ketchell, Okaloosa County  
Councilmember Charlotte McKamy, City of Mary Esther  
Councilmember Robert McKnight, City of DeFuniak Springs  
Commissioner Sam Parker, Santa Rosa County

Olen Pettis, FDOT  
Kurvin Qualls, Governor Appointee  
Commissioner Billy Radar, City of Panama City  
Councilmember George Robertson, Town of Ponce De Leon  
Mayor Dick Ryneason, Vice-Chair, City of Fort Walton Beach  
Commissioner Earl Stafford, Holmes County  
Councilmember Andy Terhaar, City of Pensacola  
Mayor Hayward Thomas, City of Paxton  
Commissioner Doug Underhill, Escambia County  
Commissioner Charles K. Windes, Jr., Okaloosa County

### **Call to Order**

Chairwoman Cuchens called the meeting to order.

### **Call for Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance**

The prayer was led by Commissioner Tray Hawkins and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

### **Roll Call and Recognition of Call-In Members**

Chairwoman Cuchens welcomed those in attendance and asked all in attendance to introduce themselves.

### **Action Item 1: Approval of the April 23, 2020 Meeting Minutes**

Chairwoman Cuchens asked for approval of the April 23, 2020 meeting minutes as written.

*Councilmember Nodjomian moved to approve the April 23, 2020 meeting minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hawkins and was unanimously approved.*

### **Action Item 2: Approval of March 2020 Financial Statements**

Chairwoman Cuchens asked for approval of the March 2020 financial statements as included in the agenda.

*Mr. Smith moved to approve the March 2020 financial statements as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilman Nodjomian and was unanimously approved.*

### **Action Item 3: Presentation and Approval of the Independent Financial Audit – David Lister, Saltmarsh, Cleaveland & Gund**

Chairwoman Cuchens introduced Mr. David Lister of Saltmarsh, Cleaveland & Gund. Mr. Lister said his firm conducted the most recent ECRC financial audit. Mr. Lister said the audit was of the internal accounting process and policies. The main opinion was of a clean and qualified audit. Mr. Lister stated that Management is responsible for the financial statements as well as the Council, and an independent auditor is responsible for providing an audit according to the Florida Audit Standards. Mr. Lister stated there were no deficiencies and the result was a good, clean audit. There was a brief discussion.

*Councilmember Overdier moved to approve the ECRC Independent Audit as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Smith and was unanimously approved.*

**Action Item 4: ADD-ON Annual Membership Dues and Invoices– Austin Mount, ECRC Chief Executive Officer**

Chairwoman Cuchens asked Mr. Mount to present. Mr. Mount stated that many of ECRC's city and county partners are in the process of approving their upcoming fiscal year budgets. This is the timeframe ECRC prepares and sends out annual membership invoices. Due to the unknown impact from the effects of COVID-19 to the local government budgets, Mr. Mount stated ECRC would like to extend the opportunity to delay the current one-cent (.01) increase as per the five year plan to the cities and counties. There was a brief discussion to table the delay of the one-cent increase and to continue with the current rates according to the five-year plan.

*Councilman Overdier moved to table discussion of delaying the one-cent increase in annual membership dues and continue with current rates according to the five-year plan. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hawkins and was unanimously approved.*

**Information Item 5: Board Member/Local Government/Regional Updates – Kasey Cuchens, ECRC Chairwoman**

Chairwoman Cuchens asked those in attendance to share any local or regional updates with the group. Councilman Overdier opened the discussion by expressing gratitude for the recent Executive Order from Governor DeSantis allowing short-term rentals to open. This decision will help Destin and the surrounding areas with much needed income and employment to continue in the recovery efforts from COVID-19. Councilman Overdier also praised Mr. Mount and the ECRC staff for this year's audit and continued work for the region.

Mr. Mount stated ECRC was contacted by the Federal Economic Development Administration with an invitation-only offer, to apply for a \$400,000 non-competitive grant through the CARES Act. Mr. Mount added the grant is a 100% grant, with no match associated, and will be used to assist communities within the region. Mr. Mount added that ECRC will be meeting internally to discuss the approach of aiding the communities within the region. He reiterated this opportunity was by invitation only and not all RPCs around the state received this honor.

Chairwoman Cuchens thanked Mr. Mount and the ECRC staff. Chairwoman Cuchens added that through the relationships built by Mr. Mount and the ECRC staff with local, state, and federal leadership, the region continues to benefit.

**Adjournment**

*With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:12 p.m.*