

**MANATEE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER
1112 Manatee Avenue West
Bradenton, Florida
APRIL 28, 2020**

Meeting video link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUlgjuGhS-qV966RU2Z7AtA>

Present were:

Betsy Benac, Chairman
Carol Whitmore, First Vice-Chairman
Misty Servia, Second Vice-Chairman
Reggie Bellamy, Third Vice-Chairman
Vanessa Baugh
Stephen R. Jonsson
Priscilla Whisenant Trace

Also present were:

Cheri Coryea, County Administrator
Mitchell O. Palmer, County Attorney
Vicki Tessmer, Board Records Supervisor, Clerk of the Circuit Court

This meeting was conducted via Zoom Communications Media Technology as allowed under Executive Order 20-69 issued by the Office of Governor Ron DeSantis on March 20, 2020. Provisions were made for any member of the public desiring to offer public comments to have access to the meeting in the Honorable Patricia M. Glass Chambers.



Chairman Benac called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

INVOCATION

The invocation was led by Commissioner Baugh.

John Osborne, Deputy County Administrator, Zoom Host, explained the process for a Zoom meeting and confirmed all participants were in attendance.

AGENDA

5. **Agenda Update:**

Item 1 - Coronavirus (COVID-19) Emergency - The following documents were added to the agenda: On going issues PowerPoint; Reopening Strategies PowerPoint; State of Florida Executive Order Quick Guide; Manatee County Board of County Commissioners Resolutions Quick Guide; Guidelines for Opening Up America Again; State of Florida COVID-19 Updates; Manatee County Government COVID-19 updates; Additional public comments

Item 2 - Modification to CARES Act - Letter from Congressman Buchanan to Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader McConnell was added

Item 3 - Board Meeting Schedule - The last bullet point in background discussed was updated to read: Dates to be considered for additional land use meetings include: Tuesday June 23 (Overflow Wednesday June 24); July 22 (Overflow July 24); and August 20

1. **CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) EMERGENCY**



Cheri Coryea, County Administrator, provided an update of the agenda items.

 Jacob Saur, Public Safety Director, used a slide presentation to provide an overview of statistics in Manatee County and Florida. As of the last update, Manatee County has 563 positive cases with 46 deaths. Emergency Management Services (EMS) calls are continuing to decrease, although there has been an increase in calls to long-term care facilities. The positive test rate in Manatee County is 15.2 percent. Test kits have been delivered, and 240 test kits will be used at the drive-thru test site, beginning April 29. There is a potential for another testing operation the week of May 4. A State drive-thru site may also be established, which could result in 1,740 tests conducted in Manatee County. He continued to review IEM projections, and noted Manatee County is projected to see an increase in positive cases.

 Mr. Saur recommended lifting the local burn ban, but continuing the State of Local Emergency for COVID-19.

 Discussion ensued regarding Manatee County numbers continue to rise and Governor DeSantis has not acknowledged this, 15.7 percent positive is higher than the State goal, there are no positive cases within the jail, one Sheriff's deputy tested positive, and a firefighter tested positive, EMS numbers of quarantined employees have dropped, and test results are reported to the State.

 Ms. Coryea announced, with the current tests, Manatee County will be at .85 percent for testing, but these numbers do not include the 1,000 test kits brought into the community. Numbers will continue to rise if the State brings in their testing site.

 Discussion continued regarding long-term care facilities are one of the causes for the numbers being so high, demographics of positive cases and deaths, continue to focus on the long-term care facilities, overall, Florida is on a downward trend, even in the Tampa Bay region, Manatee County is different, 181 of the positive cases as of Sunday were at long-term care facilities, once the National Guard comes in, approximately 700 people will be tested in the facilities, how many of the positive cases have been treated and released, now many are still sick today, what is the plan for the long-term care facilities, and employees play a role in bringing the virus into the long-term care facilities.

 Mr. Saur confirmed the Department of Health Manatee and the State are performing assessments and conducting testing at the effected facilities.

 Discussion continued that the State has control over the long-term care facilities, Manatee County is not at the top of the list for outbreaks in long-term care facilities, local government cannot bring in the National Guard, what resources would the County provide to the long-term care facilities, educate employees at the facilities on social distancing, how many active cases are there today, are there other hot spots, and quarantine hot spots so the rest of the County is not effected.

 Ms. Coryea clarified the Department of Health assessment teams have an infectious disease check list to use in the facilities for disease control, and they train employees and residents on how to be safe. There are approximately 60 patients in County hospitals. Hot spots are monitored, and the 34208 and 34221 zip codes have the highest numbers.

 Discussion continued that the numbers could go down with testing being done without a prescription, nine long term care facilities are effected, the National Guard is supposed to be arriving this week, and will test everyone at the long-term care facilities, Incident and

Management Teams cannot regulate transporting patients in or out of the long-term care facilities, Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) is in charge of the long-term care facilities, there is an infection control problem, how are people contracting COVID-19 at this point, other counties have shut down facilities, long-term care facilities are not the only problem, use technology with smart watches and track where positive cases have been, the State has brought in epidemiologists, to track where the patients have been, National Guard will test at the long-term care facilities, and will develop infectious disease plans and COVID-19 units for the facilities.

Public Comment

 Kevin Wright requested the Board reopen the beaches.

 Sharon Hillstrum, President of Bradenton Area Economic Development Corporation, speaking on behalf of the Sarasota/Manatee Project Resurrection Task Force, referenced a letter to Commissioners with a safe, slow approach to reopen businesses in Manatee and Sarasota Counties. The best way to reopen is with a local approach and process to address the health and safety needs of customers.

 Sean Roberts urged the Board to reopen the skate parks.

RECESS/RECONVENE: 3:22p.m. – 328 p.m. All Commissioners present.

 Ms. Coryea used a slide presentation to discuss potential strategies for reopening Manatee County. She addressed the Governor's Executive Orders and referenced a quick guides to those Orders and Manatee County's Resolutions, continued testing, educational materials for testing, testing enhancements with 1,600 additional test kits, regional testing, and rapid tests for antibodies, federal guidelines with a phased approach, Core State Preparedness Responsibilities, the President's guidelines, and general points of information and State guidelines. County guidelines are contingent to State guidance.

 Ms. Coryea presented Reopening Strategy Concepts, including phased planning for the next two weeks. Public beach areas could open next week with parking limitations, and County facilities can be prepared for social distancing. Technical assistance to develop protocols for businesses reopening will be also be provided to ensure businesses are meeting all guidelines. She continued the slides to discuss potential rebound strategies for June, July and August.

Mr. Saur continued the slide presentation to address hurricane season, and urged residents to know their evacuation level, when their home was built, and wind load. Homes built after 1996 meet requirements to shelter-in-place. The State Division of Emergency Management urged the counties to make modifications related to COVID-19, specifically evacuation plans public shelters, shelter in place, and accommodations for the special needs population. The Emergency Operations Center is prepared and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) training continues. The County disaster fund has \$6.4 million available which will help to continue operations after a hurricane, prior to receiving FEMA funding.

 Discussion ensued regarding citizens need to make an appointment to receive a test, residents can call the Health Department at 941-242-6649, or MCR at 941-776-4000, libraries have virtual systems that include applying for a card online, physical changes will need to be made at library facilities depending on any Executive Orders, are 60 kits enough for tracing for the Health Department, elective procedures are not being performed; therefore, hospitals

have furloughed employees, City of Anna Maria and Holmes Beach have no street parking, future meeting schedules, May 12 work session could be scheduled as a land use meeting, parking restrictions would be imposed at the beaches, such as time limitations and limited parking spaces, the County will work with Health Department regarding contact tracing testing, Skate parks are being reviewed once the guidelines by the State and/or CDC are released, guidelines being used by neighboring counties regarding beaches, , two negative tests are required to release patients back to long-term care facilities, hospitals have their own test kits to test after symptoms have subsided, and what role will the Island cities play when beaches reopen.

Mitchell O. Palmer, County Attorney clarified the County is in control of the beaches that are part of the County park system.

 Ms. Coryea stated she spoke with the Island Mayors, and the only beaches being discussed are the County owned beaches which could open May 4, with some parking restrictions.

Motion

 A motion was made by Commissioner Trace and seconded by Chairman Benac to take the plan the County Administrator gave today (regarding reopening County beaches) with a two-hour limit on parking.

 Discussion continued regarding residents need a place to park at the beach, limit the number of people in gatherings and continue to promote social distancing, Bayfront Park is also County owned, need to have someone monitoring the parking lots, and need to have a plan regarding what will be allowed on the beaches.

 Ms. Coryea explained public beach areas can be open Monday, May 4, and Code Enforcement can assist with parking. The Island cities have their own parking limitations in place, and they can make the decision as to whether or not they want to change those policies. A plan will be developed to ease the citizens into the reopening. The concessions would remain closed based on the Governor's Orders, but restrooms at the beaches would be open.

 Discussion ensued regarding limits on parking are manageable, there are one million positive cases in the U.S., and slowly and responsibly reopen the County.

Suggested Amendment

 Commissioner Servia requested an amendment to the motion to not allow any games or sports on the beach at this time.

 Discussion continued regarding giving people the benefit of the doubt, two hour maximum for parking, close beaches after sunset, Longboat Key beaches have had certain guidelines with controlled parking, and the County has a responsibility to the residents to emphasize social distancing.

Motion - Amended

Commissioner Trace agreed to amend the motion to include solo activities, and to close the beaches at dusk once the sun goes down, and no coolers or umbrellas will be allowed.

 Ms. Coryea clarified the original recommendation did not have the extra restrictions regarding activities, coolers and umbrellas. Limiting the time at the beach is manageable, and keeping the beaches open until 9:00 p.m. could be an option.

Motion - Amended

Chairman Benac as the seconder, agreed to the original motion, with the only amendment being to close the beaches at 9:00 p.m. Commissioner Trace as motioner agreed to the amendment.

Motion - Call the Question

A motion was made by Commissioner Jonsson and seconded by Commissioner Trace to call the question. The motion carried 5-2, with Chairman Benac and Commissioner Servia voting nay.

There being no public comment, Chairman Benac closed public comment.

Motion - Carried

The amended motion to reopen the beaches with a two-hour limit for parking and to close at 9:00 p.m., carried 7-0.

Discussion continued to cautiously open things until the State Task Force makes their recommendations, is there a penalty for parking longer than two-hours, have staff monitor beachgoers to ensure social distancing, Project Resurrection Task Force recommendations based on statistics, willing to defer to the Governor, need more accurate information to make decisions, need to have a land use meeting in May, Commissioners have no issues holding meetings at the Convention Center, need a starting point for discussion, domestic violence and child abuse numbers are increasing, and need to reach 14 days with numbers declining.

3. **ADMINISTRATOR/MEETING SCHEDULE**

 A motion was made by Commissioner Trace, and seconded by Commissioner Baugh to have a land use meeting on May 12 at the Convention Center.

Cheri Coryea, County Administrator, reviewed proposed changes to the meeting schedule for land use hearings as follows:

- June 23 (Overflow June 24);
- July 22 (Overflow July 24); and
- August 20

Meetings would be held using social distancing guidelines.

 John Barnott, Building and Development Services Director, stated an ad has been prepared to have a land use meeting on May 12, and the May 7 meeting agenda will be corrected.

 Ms. Coryea noted the work session scheduled for May 12 will be rescheduled.

Discussion ensued to not overload the agenda with hearings that cannot be accomplished in one day.

The motion carried 7-0.

There being no public comment, Chairman Benac closed public comment.

2. CORONAVIRUS AID, RELIEF, AND ECONOMIC SECURITY (CARES) ACT

 Cheri Coryea, County Administrator, stated this request is due to an additional element to the CARES act that if a County has a population over 500,000, they would be eligible for funds. There has been follow up with federal liaisons, and a letter was added to the agenda from Representative Vern Buchanan to the Speaker of the House and the Senate Majority Leader. Administration would like to monitor the situation and have the ability to draft the letter if there is a need for action. It is also possible there are funds within the State that would be under the Governor's ability to distribute. It is uncertain what direction this is going to take and staff wants to be ready to react.

Discussion ensued to send letter to all parties.

Motion

 A motion was made by Commissioner Jonsson and seconded by Commissioner Trace to authorize the Chairman to draft and send a letter to our Federal Legislative Delegation supporting a modification to the CARES Act to include counties of 400,000 in population and above for federal assistance.

Motion - Amended

 Ms. Coryea questioned if the Board would also like to consider sending a letter to Governor DeSantis' office in case there are funds left over from his office. Commissioner Jonsson as motioner and Commissioner Trace as seconder agreed to amend the motion as suggested by Ms. Coryea.

There being no public comments, Chairman Benac closed public comment.

The amended motion carried 7-0.

4. COUNTY ATTORNEY/RESOLUTION

 Mitchell O. Palmer, County Attorney, stated rules of procedure required the physical presence of four Commissioners to have a quorum, The proposed modifications include a quorum can now be achieved when a majority of Commissioners are physically or electronically present, and the requirement that no more than two Commissioners may appear electronically has been removed. Mr. Palmer added the motion should also include working with Clerk to correct the following typographical errors: Page 1, first line of text, "Statutes" not "Statues"; Page 3, next to last line of text, change the semicolon to a colon in "9;00 a.m." and Page 14, second line of text "on" not "one".

 A motion was made by Commissioner Servia and seconded by Commissioner Baugh to adopt Resolution R-20-065, restating and modifying the Procedures for meetings of the Board of County Commissioners and for the County Attorney to work with the clerk to correct the following: Page 1, first line of text, "Statutes" not "Statues"; Page 3, next to last line of text, change the semicolon to a colon in "9;00 a.m." and Page 14, second line of text "on" not "one".

There being no public comment, Chairman Benac closed public comment.

 The motion carried 7-0.

Ms. Coryea responded to questions that an arrangement has been made for Center Hall, at the Convention Center for the Land Use meeting, and if attendance exceeds the limit, the issue will be addressed.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Whitmore

- Questioned what the restrictions are on the Beach



Discussion ensued regarding the goal is to allow as many people to enjoy the beaches as possible, there will be parking restrictions with violations, consider having the fines high enough to deter people from gathering at the beach, social distancing is still in effect, and citizens need to take responsibility for their actions.

Commissioner Trace

- Commented on efforts by Parrish United Methodist Church's food pantry helping the community and serving over 800 people

Commissioner Jonsson

- Suggested this may a good time to consider paid parking at the beaches

Chairman Benac

- Addressed the number of people at Robinson Preserve and that preserve patrons need to give the right-of-way to others enjoying the preserves

Commissioner Baugh

-  Requested consideration to reopen skate parks,
- Expressed it has been an honor serving with Chairman Benac



Cheri Coryea, County Administrator stated she received a follow-up from Senate President Galvano regarding the following:

- A regional test center is planned for Manatee/Sarasota;
- 1,000 collection will be delivered to Manatee County tomorrow (April 29); and
- Senator Galvano's office has put in a separate request for test kits for the homeless in the community.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, Chairman Benac adjourned the meeting at 5:29 p.m.

Minutes Approved: _____