

ST. JOHNS COUNTY CIVIC ROUNDTABLE

1/13/20 Meeting Minutes

Submitted by Maureen Long, Secretary

The meeting was opened at 9:00am by Chairman Jim McLane

Treasurer's Report: Mrs. McGlynn thanked those who have already paid their membership for 2020. She reported that \$175.00 has been collected. There is currently \$100 in the SunTrust account and a balance of \$370.00 in our BBVA account.

The minutes of the December 9, 2019 meeting were accepted as written.

Janet Patten introduced Jennifer Pyle, Partnership Specialist North Florida, US Census Bureau.

Ms. Pyle began by explaining how and why the US Census is so vital to our communities. The Constitution: Article 1, Section 2, mandates that the country conduct a count of its population once every 10 years. The 2020 Census will begin on April 1st, 2020. Everyone needs to be included and counted wherever they are residing on that day. The census can be completed by mail, computer, by phone, using phone prompts and door to door, if needed.

The census provides important data that lawmakers, business owners, teachers, and others use to provide services, products, and support for our community. Every year, billions of dollars in federal funding go to hospitals, fire departments, schools, roads, and other resources based on our census data. The money the Federal Government provides is based on the count of our county's population not the need.

The results of the census also determine the number of seats each state will have in the U.S. House of Representatives, and will be used to draw congressional and state legislative districts.

Mrs. Pyle answered questions from roundtable members.

Our next speaker was Bill Young, Director of St. Johns County Utilities.

Mr. Young noted that the Utility serves over 46,000 water customers and more than 37,000 ware water customers delivering 7 billion gallons of water per year, and water sales totaling 70 million dollars. The 181 full time employees provide the water service along with the Utility Customer Service dept. that handles over 70,000 calls a year.

SJC Utility's mission is to serve their customers by providing safe, reliable drinking water and environmentally responsible wastewater treatment at affordable rates with emphasis on customer service and protection of our environment.

The Utility maintained its excellent AA+ and Aa2 credit ratings with these strong financial credit ratings the utility can afford to reinvest in its infrastructure. A system that has grown over 25 years, including the acquisition of multiple Utility systems. Intracoastal Utilities, Hastings Utilities and St. Johns Service Company, now known as the Ponte Vedra Utility. The St Johns county utility is investing in state of the art water production and reclamation facilities. The Smart Meter technology helps with water conservation & leak detections, while removing the expense and liabilities involved in manual meter reading. The St. Johns County Utility Department's rates continue to be both affordable and competitive.

Bill is extremely proud that he and the St. Johns County Utility employees are fully committed as environmental stewards, along with multiple programs and services they provide to the residents and visitors of our County.

Mr. Young answered questions from roundtable members.

General Roundtable Business:

Our Chair of Government Affairs, Janet Patten listed several items of interest-

Our state Rep. Cyndi Stevenson filed HB 1073 which would create a statewide Office of Resiliency in the Governor's office and a statewide Sea Level Rise Task Force. It's identical to a Senate bill that is already moving in the Senate. I have circulated a draft of a letter to our legislative delegation listing three Civic Roundtable Legislative issues as I presented to the delegation on Nov. 22, 2019. We can discuss the draft.

Regarding the Kings Grant lawsuit against the county, the developer/plaintiff has withdrawn Its suit. However, the Kings Grant property has been sold to new owners. SACA will continue to oppose any new unsatisfactory development plans City of St. Augustine Beach has a new Mayor, Margaret England, beginning January 1st.

Beach officials approved a forty-two room addition to Embassy Suites which does not include a water park.

The County Commission in December decided to not add any new parking spaces to Mickler's Beach based on new staff input.

Commissioners also voted to have staff draft an ordinance creating new and higher fines for cutting down trees illegally.

In December the County Commission approved a contract for Hunter Conrad as interim County Administrator.

Gov. DeSantis appointed Brandon Patty as St. Johns County Clerk to replace Conrad. Conrad has indicated he plans to run for re-election to County Clerk in November.

At the Jan. 21 County Commissioners will determine the process to hire a new County Administrator. A draft resolution for the Civic Roundtable to consider, urging Commissioners to hire an executive recruitment firm to conduct a nationwide search for a new County Administrator was distributed and discussion ensued .

Discussion and questions about the search process for the new County Administrator. Would a national search be used, what would be the cost and what timelines are there? The Resolution was not pursued.

The filing deadline is June 2020 for county wide candidates to file for election.

Chairman Jim McLane asked for volunteers to head a committee that will setup speakers for our monthly meetings -- Doug Worth and Joe McAnarney volunteered. Joe was appointed Chairman.

Representative Rutherford will be speaking at Nocatee, Jan. 23.; Donna Deegan is up and coming to speak here in St. Johns County

The Fish Island Clean Up on Jan. 11th went off beautifully with over 200 extremely enthusiastic volunteers.

SABCA starting in June will begin their concert performances at The St Johns County Pier Park. The City of St .Augustine Beach has a job opening for a Communication & Events Coordinator.

Jen Lomberg will be presenting to the SJC BOCC sometime early in February 2020 with the results from the 2070 SJC Workshops.

The meeting adjourned at 11:00am Respectfully Submitted,
Maureen Long. Secretary