

MINUTES OF MEETING

SAINT JOHNS COUNTY CIVIC ROUNDTABLE

June 10, 2013

The meeting was called to order by President Rick Lofgren at 9:00 AM.

The minutes of the May 13, 2013 meeting were approved. The Treasurer reported a balance of \$ 2,538.42. There are ten paid members.

President Lofgren introduced the speaker, Jay Morris, Chairman of The Saint Johns County Commission.

Chairman Morris began by reading an e-mail he received from a citizen as an example of what a county commissioner faces.

He stated that the tax rate for 2013 will be the same as 2012 resulting in less revenue since property values have declined. We need to increase the commercial and industrial tax base to increase revenues. He said the County has hired a full time person for The Industrial Development Commission who has successfully brought in several significant corporations.

He stated that the unemployment rate in the County has decreased from 9.6% three years ago to 5.1% today.

The county budget for 2013 is 567 million which is virtually the same as the budget for 2005 even though we have had a 27% population increase in that same time.

He reported that the new emergency radio system has been operational since January 2013 and that they expect to gain significant revenue from the lease of tower space to Verizon, ATT, etc.

Savings achieved by the county include a wage decrease for the fire department, refinancing revenue bonds and deferring maintenance . He said that we need to catch up on this deferred maintenance.

He feels we will grow out of our financial problem as property values increase, however, he said there is a 18 month lag between property value increases and additional revenue.

He then took questions from the members:

1. 1. What about an increase in the sales tax?

Commissioner Morris said he is not in favor of a sales tax increase.

1. 2. Since state laws now provide for an incentive for converting to natural gas for trucks will the county take advantage of this?

Commissioner Morris said that the County is looking in to this in conjunction with the school board (for buses).

There was no other business.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 AM

Ed Olsen - Secretary

.