

May 30, 2007 Minutes

Call to Order. The meeting of the Barrier Islands Governmental Council was hosted by the City of Treasure Island at Treasure Island City Hall located at 120 108th Avenue, Treasure Island, FL 33706. The meeting was called to order by President Queen at 9 a.m.

1. Pledge of Allegiance. President Queen led the assemblage in the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. Roll Call. President Queen reminded everyone to turn off cell phones, and then asked everyone to please introduce themselves.

MEMBERS PRESENT: (Voting = V; Alternate 1= A; and Alternate = A2)

Belleair Shores	Mayor John Robertson
Indian Rocks Beach	Jose L. Coppen
Indian Shores	Mayor Jim Lawrence
Madeira Beach	Vice Mayor John Wolbert
North Redington Shores	Mayor Bill Queen
Redington Beach	Mayor Nick Simons
St. Pete Beach	Vice-Mayor Mike Finnerty
Treasure Island	Commissioner Phil Collins

GUEST SPEAKERS

Dick Fletcher-Channel 10 Chief Meteorologist

GUEST PRESENT

Marlene Clausen	Councilor, Indian Shores
Steve Cottrell	Int. Manager, Indian Rocks Beach
Linda Fisher	Program Planner, Pinellas Planning Council
Jim Frishe	State Representative
Fred Golliner	Fire Chief, St. Pete Beach
Marcia Grantham	Town Clerk, Indian Shores
Steven J. Hallock	Public Works Director, St. Pete Beach
Joan Herndon	Vice Mayor, Indian Shores
Dean Horianopoulos	Deputy Police Chief, St. Pete Beach
R.B. Johnson	Vice-Mayor, Indian Rocks Beach
Phyllis Johnson	Writer, Tampa Bay Sun
Dennis Jones	Senator
Jerry Knight	Vice-Mayor, North Redington Beach
Sandra Knoebel	Pinellas City Planning
Bob MacPherson	Reporter, Beach Beacon
Tom Malone	Deputy Fire Chief (Ops Commander), St. Pete Beach
Mary Maloof	Mayor, Treasure Island
Charlie Parker	Mayor, Madeira Beach
Missy Pike	Director of Sales, Florida Barter
David Romine	Police Chief, St. Pete Beach
Ed Ruttencutter	Commissioner, St. Pete Beach
Steve Sutch	Councilor, Indian Shores

3. Approval of Agenda for May 30, 2007. No opposition.
4. Approval of Minutes of April 25, 2007 Meeting. No opposition.
5. Approval of Treasurer's Report for April, 2007. The balance at hand as of May 30, 2007 was \$2,264.48
6. New Business
 - a. Dick Fletcher- According to the American Meteorological Society, it is the beginning of Hurricane Season. Although forecasting the weather is getting better the "Perfect Forecast" is never perfect. The best forecast is useless unless we get the perfect response from the citizens. Majority of the people aren't prepared, and people need to take action. Communication is key. It must be understood that hurricanes have happened in the past and they will happen in the future.

Politicians need to get organized. It would be important to look at California's earthquake lobbying history. California gets large sums of money from the government for earthquakes. Mr. Fletcher thought it would be in Florida's best interest to think about getting a Hurricane Lobbyist to work with Texas and other high risk coastal states to try and get money from the government for research, deployment, etc.

Mr. Fletcher wanted the audience to take away three valid points from his speech; organize and lobby, work for stronger building codes, and citizens need to do the right thing. He also believes it is imperative for cities to be sure that the Emergency Management information and knowledge should be understood by at least three people in the chain of command.

7. Miscellaneous:

a. Legislative Update

Senator Dennis Jones spoke about Insurance. He said the Jury is out. August 1992 Hurricane season left approximately \$39 billion in damages. Most of Florida was and are underinsured. The beaches act as a line of defense. \$500 million was appropriated and \$30 million recurring, \$6 million to the beach programs (including permits), \$17 million for project money, and \$47 million for beach projects.

He then spoke about the property taxes. The citizens have been giving their complaints but there seems to be no solutions. There has been a study given to the American Assembly to try and budget the money.

Representative Jim Frishe began speaking on taxes. He stated most people aren't going to like the solutions. It isn't cured on a local level, but instead comes out of Tallahassee, and it requires 60% of the voters to cancel a Constitutional Amendment.

Representative Frishe also discussed how most of the population of Florida is along the coasts and the Panhandle.

A question came in from the audience about the National Guard being in Iraq. The audience member wanted to know if we were protected locally due to the reduction in National Guard forces. Representative Frishe said the status is adequate enough to get residents to respond.

Another audience member questioned the appropriation of funds with regard to our schools. Frishe explained there used to be 45,000 new students per year in Florida, and this year there were only 477. Granted education is 30-40% of the tax bills, but there are recurring expenses with non-recurring funds.

Next someone wanted to discuss sales tax exemption and how the code has not changed since 1945. The Tax/Budget Commission meets every 20 years and by chance is meeting right now. They alone put tax issues directly on the ballot.

Another audience member pointed out that there were many other states in the union who previously had tax problems. Was the state of Florida looking at these states (ex. Colorado, California) tax problems for solutions? Representative Frishe explained that Florida has some limitations and is different from these states because Florida has no state income tax. Citizens need to know that nothing happens until people participate.

Next was a discussion about the school board and how they are spending the money. There is so much money being taxed (approx. \$300 million) and yet, where is it going? It was explained that many citizens go to the School Board Meetings requesting things, but never want to cut other programs, and again, public education has many expenses and no revenue.

Finally someone wanted to know how prepared Pinellas County was and if there were any weaknesses. The Representatives explained that we are prepared by way of; education, better inter-workings with Progress Energy and our coordination with other states is great.

8. Announced the BIG-C Meeting will be held at Clearwater, June 27th, 2007 at 9 a.m.

Adjournment at 10 a.m.

William Queen
President