

**Nassau County Board of County Commissioners  
Special Session, April 29, 2020, 6:00 P.M.  
Commission Chambers, 96135 Nassau Place, Yulee, Florida**

Call to Order

**Commissioners:**

**Present: Chairman Daniel B. Leeper.**

**Present via speakerphone: Commissioners Justin Taylor, Aaron C. Bell, Pat Edwards, and Thomas R. Ford.**

**Other Officials Present:** Michael S. Mullin, County Manager/County Attorney, and Taco Pope, Assistant County Manager. Also present via speakerphone were Dr. Eugenia Ngo-Seidel, Nassau County Health Department Director; and Greg Foster, Emergency Management Director.

**Staff Present:** Megan Diehl, Office of Management and Budget Director, and Peggy Snyder and Melissa Lucey, Deputy Clerks.

**Official Agenda Summary:**

**SS200429 - 6:04:41** Chairman Leeper thanked the County's emergency personnel, law enforcement, Fire/Rescue, and healthcare workers serving on the front lines of this COVID-19 pandemic and requested that everyone keep them in thoughts and prayers as they continue to keep the community safe.

**SS200429 - 6:09:46** Mr. Mullin advised that if anyone watching this meeting online wish to have their comments read into the record, they can do so by e-mailing their comments to [comments@nassaucountyfl.com](mailto:comments@nassaucountyfl.com). If a person wishes to be telephoned during this meeting, they can e-mail their contact information and topic for discussion to the same e-mail address. Voicemails may also be left at 904-530-6009 and the call will be returned during this meeting. To watch this meeting remotely, a person can log onto the Clerk of Court's website [www.nassauclerk.com](http://www.nassauclerk.com).

**SS200429 - 6:11:04** Chairman Leeper commented that the Board members and County staff have received numerous e-mails and telephone calls with varying viewpoints regarding reopening the beach. A gentleman had requested that the Board call him tonight. The Board has made several attempts to reach him to no avail; however, his questions will likely be addressed during the meeting.

**Audience Input:**

**SS200429 - 6:05:24**

None.

**CONSENT ITEM(S) :**

**SS200429 - (Tab A)** Approve a Resolution extending the State of Emergency in Nassau County, Florida, due to COVID-19.

**Discussion:** Mr. Mullin reviewed the request.

**Motion:** Approve Tab A as stated above and authorize the Chairman to sign Resolution 2020-91 regarding same.

**Maker:** Commissioner Edwards

**Second:** Commissioner Ford

**Action:** Aye: Commissioners Leeper, Bell, Edwards, Ford, and Taylor

**Follow Up:** County Manager

**SS200429 - 6:05:48 (Tab B)** Approve a Resolution of the Board of County Commissioners of Nassau County honoring the life of Joan D. Bean.

**Discussion:** Mr. Mullin reviewed the resolution.

**Motion:** Approve Tab B as stated above and authorize the Chairman to sign Resolution 2020-90 regarding same.

**Maker:** Commissioner Bell

**Second:** Commissioner Taylor

**Action:** Aye: Commissioners Leeper, Bell, Edwards, Ford, and Taylor

**Follow Up:** County Manager

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**SS200429 - 6:16:33 (Tab C)** Discussion of County beaches.

**Discussion:** Mr. Mullin provided the names and a brief overview of comments received by e-mails and telephone messages from the following people related to the reopening of the beaches: Glen Merkitch, Debi Zipkin, Robbie Hallowell, Stan Potter, Perry and Christine Rominger, Joe and Deb McFarland, Glen Merkitch, Kim Oreste, Neal Campbell, Kim Conner, Carla Poe, Stacy Hanna, Jacalyn Slemmer, Anthony and Malinda Watts, Ben Graff, Cliff Van Wyck, Joanne Veth, Pam Junak, Susan Fortney, Karen Houtz, Pam Hodges, Susan McNeal, Fred McNeal, Penny Tallism, Barbara Bower, Aimee Tarum, Brenda McAllister, Sandy Rogers, Carl Winner, Sherry Crutchfield, Lorel McClellan Bennett, Jennifer Crowder, Christina Riddell, Michele Holley, Kristen Nichols, Betzy Mitchell, Mary Quinlan, Suzanne Batchelor, Steven M. Sherman, Markim 1, Brad Hicks, Scott Moore, Amanda Seidel, Troy May, Gary Rogers, Steven M. Sherman, Tammy Brandl, Matthew Leen, Ben Spivey, Kristen Campbell, Cindy Rogers, Mike Linynsky, Julie Perrine, Brenda Platt, Arthur Gunn, Glen Merkitch, Glen Jimenez, Michelle Bedecarre, Ivan Salis, Sandy Merkitch, Kim Conner, Liz Jimenez, Stan Potter, Michelle Holley, Wayne Munson, Sherry Crutchfield, Gordon Kirkman, Tina Fisher, skp151, Milt Yle, Pam Seaben, Cheryl Muit, Catherine Martin, Susan Allen, Patty Parker, Evelyn and Mickey McNamara, and Julien Vassal. He advised that the Board has tried numerous times to call Glen Mirkitch who requested a callback during the meeting.

Public input: Debra Manser, Cheers Horse Ranch and Amelia Island Horseback Riding, came forward to request that when the beaches reopen, that her horseback riding business have the ability to reopen and have access to the beach. Discussion followed.

**Motion:** **Authorize County Manager to sign an executive order reopening the County beaches with the following regulations:**

1. **Effective 6:00 a.m. on May 1, 2020, the beaches within the unincorporated areas of Nassau County will be open.**
2. **Vehicular traffic or vehicular parking on the wet and dry sand areas of the beach is not prohibited except for police and emergency vehicles, turtle**

- patrol and other vehicles permitted by the County Manager.
3. Beaches will be open daily from 6:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. The parking areas will be closed daily from 9:01 p.m. until 6:00 a.m.
  4. The beach parking areas of Peters Point, Burney Park, Scott Road and the South End Walkover will be open daily from 6:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. The aforementioned parking areas will be closed daily from 9:01 p.m. until 6:00 a.m.
  5. All individuals allowed on the beach areas are subject to the restrictions and must adhere to the Center for Disease Control guidelines which include maintaining a six-foot distance between individuals and no gather of more than ten people.
  6. No commercial or group sports activities shall be allowed on the beach.
  7. No horses are allowed on the beach.
  8. No horse trailers or truck larger than pick-up trucks are permitted in the parking areas set forth in Section 4 herein.
  9. "Beach" is considered to mean the wet and dry sandy portions of the Atlantic Ocean beach in the unincorporated areas of Nassau County.
  10. A violation of any provision will subject the violator to a second degree misdemeanor with a penalty of sixty days in jail and/or a \$500.00 fine.
  11. Any vehicle that remains in the parking areas set forth herein after the hours established will subject the owner/operator to a second degree misdemeanor with a penalty of sixty days in jail and/or a \$500.00 fine.
  12. This executive order shall expire at the expiration of the declaration of the Local State of Emergency.
  13. In addition, Board to revisit allowing commercial horseback riding and other commercial activities at the beach at each seven-day renewal of the Local State of Emergency. Reinstating beach camping and driving will be addressed at a later date. Regarding American Beach, it was requested to install "local Access Only" signage for Julia and Lewis Streets and direct beach traffic down Burney Road.

Maker: Commissioner Edwards

Second: Commissioner Bell

Action: Aye: Commissioners Leeper, Bell, Edwards,  
Ford, and Taylor

Follow Up: County Manager, Sheriff, Facilities Maintenance

**SS200429 - 6:45:17** Dr. Seidel provided an update regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. Currently, there is a case count of 54 residents. Of the 1,417 tests administered, 1,361 have tested negative. The hospital capacity has never been exceeded and the County has never had to go into Crisis Care mode. There are three patients currently in the hospital and 31 of the 54 residents have been released from isolation.

**SS200429 - 6:46:31** Director Foster provided his report noting that the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) continues to work hand in hand with the Health Department in assisting with the processes. His department continues with messaging for the public. As businesses begin to open, people still must remain vigilant in their attempts to minimize their risk of being infected or spreading the COVID-19 disease. Director Foster had no concerns about reopening the beach providing the public focuses on remaining safe.

**SS200429 - 6:48:58** Mr. Mullin thanked the City of Fernandina Beach for their input regarding the beach reopening. He advised that other beach communities only allow passive exercise on their beaches with no chairs, umbrellas, tents or towels permitted. He explained that Nassau County has a significant elderly population unable to walk the beach and could not comply with that requirement.

**SS200429 - 6:09:37 (Tab D)** Approve and authorize the Chairman to sign a budget transfer totaling \$41,600.00 to be donated to the Council on Aging to assist feeding senior residents during the COVID-19.

**Motion:** Approve Tab D as stated above.

**Maker:** Commissioner Bell

**Second:** Commissioner Taylor

**Action:** Aye: Commissioners Leeper, Bell, Edwards, Ford, and Taylor

**Follow Up:** County Manager, Finance, OMB

**SS200429 - 6:12:14 (Tab E)** Discuss recommendation regarding acquisition of property adjacent to the Holly Point Boat Ramp.

**Discussion:** Mr. Mullin reviewed the request.

**Motion:** Bring back for consideration a contract for the Chairman to sign in the amount of \$52,000.00 for the acquisition of the property adjacent to the Holly Point Board Ramp located on Winterberry Avenue, Fernandina Beach, Florida. The County would receive a warranty deed and the closing would be within thirty days with closing agent to be determined by the Board of County Commissioners. The seller would pay up to \$500.00 in closing costs and the real estate commissions and the buyer would pay the balance.

**Maker:** Commissioner Bell

**Second:** Commissioner Ford

**Action:** Aye: Commissioners Leeper, Bell, Edwards, Ford, and Taylor

**Follow Up:** County Manager

**SS200429 - 6:14:15 (Tab F)** Approve and authorize the Chairman to sign a Financial Action Form justifying use of Regional Impact Fees for purchase of 36 acres of property near Kings Ferry.

**Discussion:** Mr. Pope reviewed the request.

**Motion:** Approve Tab F as stated above.

**Maker:** Commissioner Ford

**Second:** Commissioner Edwards

**Action:** Aye: Commissioners Leeper, Bell, Edwards, Ford, and Taylor

**Follow Up:** County Manager, Finance, OMB, Planning Department

**SS200429 - 6:15:39 (Tab G)** Approve and authorize the Chairman to sign a Financial Action Form justifying use of District 503 Community Park Impact Fees for a hydrographic and topographic survey at Goffinsville Park for future improvements to the boat ramp to improve capacity and abilities.

**Discussion:** Mr. Pope reviewed the request.

**Motion:** Approve Tab G as stated above.

**Maker:** Commissioner Bell

**Second:** Commissioner Ford

**Action:** Aye: Commissioners Leeper, Bell, Edwards,  
Ford, and Taylor

**Follow Up:** Finance, OMB, Planning Department, Parks and  
Recreation Department

**EXPANSION ITEMS:**

**SS200429 - 6:05:12**

None.

**SS200429 - 6:58:14** Mr. Mullin requested two additional Board meetings in the month of June 2020.

**Discussion:** Mr. Mullin advised that the number of meetings need to be increased due to the backlog of public hearings.

**Motion:** Approve to expand the agenda to consider adding two additional Board meetings on June 15<sup>th</sup> and June 29, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.

**Maker:** Commissioner Ford

**Second:** Commissioner Taylor

**Action:** Aye: Commissioners Leeper, Bell, Edwards,  
Ford, and Taylor

**Follow Up:** County Manager

**Noted:** There was Board consensus to add two additional night meetings on June 15<sup>th</sup> and June 29, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.

**SS200429 - 7:03:44** Mr. Pope advised that the planning staff was directed to continue working on the Conservation Land Acquisition Management Program. He advised that there will be an interactive webinar held on May 5, 2020 at 1:00 p.m. that is open to the public for online polling and surveys. This webinar is available through logging onto the County's website to *County Insider*, and click onto *Public Input Sought for County's First Conservation Land Acquisition and Management Plan* to register.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

**SS200429 - 7:05:06** Commissioner Edwards's Business:

- Thanked fellow County Commissioners and staff for putting this beach reopening plan into place. His hope was that the beachgoers maintain proper distancing and be civil.
- Provided his condolences to the Bean family for the loss of Ms. Bean.

**SS200429 - 7:05:45** Commissioner Taylor's Business:

- Echoed Commissioner Edward's comments and felt that the COVID-19 case numbers were lower than anticipated due to the tough actions of the State and local leaders and he looks forward to heading to the beach on Friday.

**SS200429 - 7:06:20** Commissioner Ford's Business:

- Thanked everyone for the reopening of the beaches so the public can get out and enjoy it.

**SS200429 - 7:06:53** Commissioner Bell's Business:

- Stressed the importance for beachgoers to maintain the six-foot separation because no one wants to have to close the beach again.

**SS200429 - 7:07:19** Commissioner Leeper's Business:

- Thanked each Commissioner and County staff for their support in this effort to reopen the beach. He felt that the plan is in the best interest of the citizens of Nassau County.

There being no further business, the special session of the Nassau County Board of County Commissioners adjourned at 7:09 p.m.

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Daniel B. Leeper, Chairman



Attest:

John A. Crawford, Ex-Officio Clerk

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