

**Nassau County Board of County Commissioners
Special Session, January 13, 2021, 4:30 p.m.
Commission Chambers, 96135 Nassau Place, Yulee, Florida**

Call to Order

Commissioners:

Present: Chairman Thomas R. Ford, Commissioners John F. Martin, Aaron C. Bell, Jeff Gray, and Klynt A. Farmer.

Other Officials Present: Michael S. Mullin, County Attorney, and Taco Pope, County Manager.

Staff Present: Megan Diehl, Office of Management and Budget Director, and Brenda Linville and Peggy Snyder, Deputy Clerks.

Official Agenda Summary:

SS210113 - 4:46:54 The Honorable Florida State Senator Aaron Bean joined the meeting via speakerphone to provide an update regarding the COVID-19 vaccination. He advised that the vaccine shortage is country-wide and the demand for the vaccination is unprecedented. The Florida Department of Health (DOH) receives a shipment of vaccines from the Federal Government each week but the number of vaccines allocated is unknown. He has volunteered the Publix Grocery Stores in Nassau County to become administrative vaccine sites. In response to questions posed by the Board, Senator Bean assured the Board that Nassau County is receiving their fair share based upon population. Commissioner Martin suggested that the Governor push up the age restriction from 65 years or older to 75 years or older in order to provide the vaccine to the most vulnerable citizens. Senator Bean felt that needs will be met once the supply chains are able to catch up. He agreed that throughout the state, the frustration level is high.

Audience Input:

SS210113 - 4:47:35 Chairman Ford reviewed the procedures for attending the meeting in-person or remotely for **(Tab A)** Agenda Item and **(Tab B)** Non-Agenda Item.

EXPANSION ITEM(S)

None.

PRESENTATION(S)

SS210113 - 4:49:15 (Tab C) Presentation by Dr. Seidel and Director Foster regarding COVID-19 in Nassau County.

Dr. Eugenia Ngo-Seidel, Nassau County Health Department, came forward to provide a health update related to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. As of January 12, 2021, Nassau County had a case count of 5,875 of which 5,519 are residents and 356 are non-residents. There have been 640 cases since the previous week. The percent positivity for the past week increased to 19.05 percent. There have been five additional deaths since her last report for a total of 79. The next mobile testing event will be January 14, 2021 at Journey Church in Yulee from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and January 19, 2021 at the First Baptist Church of Callahan from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. She pointed out that with the high case count, there has been difficulty reaching contacts within the required time frame which is 24 to 48 hours. There have been 2,533 residents who have received their first dose of the vaccine and 311 who have completed the two dose series and will be protected within two weeks of their last vaccine dose. She agreed with Senator Bean that the vaccine shortage was widespread; however, Nassau County is fortunate because Baptist Nassau through the Baptist System was able to set aside doses to serve high risks residents. Dr. Seidel encouraged the public to follow the Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommendations. She responded to questions posed by the Board related to length of immunization effectiveness, the effectiveness of certain supplements to boost immunity, and the ability of the County to administer larger quantities of vaccines if received.

Director Foster explained that Nassau County Emergency Management continues to support the DOH with logistics and support in the vaccine program and public health announcements. He encouraged everyone to follow the CDC guidelines while awaiting the vaccine. Regarding the Citizens Information Center, the phones have been manned thanks to the Board of County Commissioners employees that came to assist.

NEW BUSINESS

SS210113 - 5:19:26 (Tab D) Consider a Resolution extending the local State of Emergency in Nassau County, Florida due to COVID-19 from January 13, 2021 through January 20, 2021.

Motion: Approve Tab D as stated above and authorize the Chairman to sign Resolution 2021-104 regarding same.

Maker: Commissioner Bell

Second: Commissioner Farmer

Action: Aye: Commissioners Martin, Bell, Gray, Ford, and Farmer

Follow Up: County Manager, County Attorney

SS210113 - 5:01:34 (Tab E) Review and consider for adoption the jointly prepared and recommended Nassau County, Florida, COVID-19 Vaccination Plan.

Discussion: Mr. Pope explained that at the January 7, 2021 Board meeting, the Board directed Mr. Pope and Director Foster to work with Dr. Seidel to bring back an alternative plan to distribute the COVID-19 vaccine in Nassau County. The directive had three primary objects, (1) find an alternative to the "first come, first served" system and implement a waitlist alternative; (2) have an equitable distribution of the vaccine; and (3) prioritize the County's most vulnerable and essential community members. Before the Board is a copy of the "Nassau County, Florida COVID-19 Vaccination Plan". Following much collaboration and work, staff received some late-breaking information from the Florida Department of Emergency Management (FDEM) that adds uncertainty whether the State is going to step in at this point and mandate certain policies and procedures. Mr. Mullin advised that the State Legislative Affairs Director, Stephanie Kopelousos, would be speaking with Florida Governor DeSantis regarding these policies and would call back once she gets more information. Mr. Pope stated that page 14 of the vaccination plan is the County's capacity to inoculate individuals. He advised that the vaccination plan is subject to change continually; therefore, hampering the ability to have a set plan.

Director Foster commented that Emergency Management has an 11:15 a.m. telephone with the FDEM every day in reference to COVID-19 vaccinations. During today's call, he was told that Nassau County would be receiving a preset number of vaccines available on a guaranteed basis which will remain at the discretion of the Federal Government. He was also advised that the primary vaccination center will be classified as the "flagship vaccination center" and will be

supported by the FDEM. He also understood that the State Registration System for the COVID-19 vaccine would be mandatory to use for the flagship vaccination center. If additional vaccines are made available over the guaranteed amount, other options may be used. Director Foster responded to questions posed by the Board regarding whether "snowbird" can be vaccinated or whether people can cross counties. He has been advised that there should be attempts to limit people coming into the State of Florida just for the vaccination. He also advised that the guaranteed number of vaccinations coming into Nassau County is 674 doses weekly. Mr. Pope addressed the lack of clarity coming from the State regarding registration which makes it difficult to provide updated information. The group discussed the vaccines being made available for veterans at the Veterans Administration hospitals and partnerships with churches and other organizations. Dr. Seidel pointed out that the State guidelines will dictate how the County can proceed. Commissioner Martin suggested veterans call the VA in Gainesville and Lake City for specifics for receiving the vaccine if they are 75 years old or older. Director Foster stated that when the Publix Grocery Stores are available for vaccinations, they are expected to do 400 per day.

Mr. Mullin advised that Mr. Pope, Dr. Seidel and Director Foster have the authority to change the vaccination plan under their emergency authority. As this plan is fluid and could change every 24 hours, Mr. Pope could change the draft when they get additional information. The Board would have the authority to override this plan once it is published.

Public Input: Charles Pimsner joined the meeting via Zoom. He expressed concerns regarding seniors unable to access the website or be able to set an appointment via the Citizen Call Center. Director Foster explained that the call center will be expanded.

SS210113 - 4:46:54

Motion: Direct County Manager to develop a vaccination plan for COVID-19 utilizing his authority based upon the emergency and to publish this plan as an emergency order.

Maker: Commissioner Martin

Second: Commissioner Gray

Action: Aye: Commissioners Martin, Bell, Gray, Ford, and

Farmer

Follow Up: County Manager

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

SS210113 - 5:28:28 Commissioner Bell's Business:

- Thanked State Senator Byrd, Representative Bean, and Congressman Rutherford for their efforts to get more vaccines to Nassau County.
- Thanked Mr. Pope, Director Foster, Dr. Seidel and their staff for their hard work in delivering a system to deliver the vaccine.

SS210113 - 5:29:43 Commissioner Farmer's Business:

- Echoed Commissioner Bell's sentiments.
- Thanked police, firemen, EMTs and healthcare people for their long hours.
- Encouraged people to volunteer at the Emergency Operation Center (EOC).
- Requested that everyone reach out to their neighbors and elderly to help, be respectful and be kind. Love always wins.

SS210113 - 5:30:44 Commissioner Martin's Business:

- Encouraged people to heed Commissioner Farmer's advice especially people sending him hateful, insulting emails with unwarranted criticism for the team working hard to handle the vaccinations.
- Thanked Senator Bean, Representative Byrd, Congressman Rutherford, Dr. Seidel, Director Foster, Mr. Pope, Mr. Mullin and their team for their hard work.

SS210113 - 5:31:56 Commissioner Gray's Business:

- Thanked County Manager, County Attorney, Dr. Seidel, and Director Foster and Nassau County staff for a

wonderful job. He was pleased to hear that the County is ready for the vaccines.

- Thanked the public for following the CDC guidelines.
- Praying for everyone here and the citizens of Nassau County.

SS210113 - 5:32:43 Commissioner Ford's Business:

- Echoed the sentiments of all the Commissioners.
- Heard that UF Health Family Practices in Nassau County and Jacksonville are offering the vaccine to their established patients.

There being no further business to attend to, the Nassau County Board of County Commissioners adjourned at 5:34 p.m.

Thomas F. Ford, Chairman

Attest:

John A. Crawford, Ex-Officio Clerk