

**OFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES
OF THE
LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION
PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA**

DECEMBER 3, 2019

**THURSDAY
9:40 A.M.**

**PALM BEACH STATE COLLEGE
WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA**

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND INVOCATION – Led by Representative Mike Caruso

III. WELCOME REMARKS

III.A. Rep. Rick Roth, Chair, Palm Beach County Legislative Delegation

Chair Roth welcomed everyone and stated that today's meeting would be the last meeting before the 2020 session. He thanked Ava Parker, Palm Beach State College (PBSC) President for hosting today's meeting.

Ms. Parker said that:

- PBSC was recently recognized by the Aspen Institute for being in the top 1% of all community colleges nationwide and by the Military Times as one of the top 3 "better friendly" community colleges nationwide.
- PBSC created the Cross-Cultural Equity Institute, which would research disparities and inequities in retention and graduation rates for all student ethnicities.
- The Center for Medical Innovation and Administration building was recently named after donor, Frank DiMino.
- The Legislative Delegation's (Delegation) support was requested in sponsoring legislation to secure funding for a second medical and technology building.
- PBSC would fund \$10 million for the project.
- Inadequate legislative funding led to the inability of developing new programs that met communitywide industry needs.

- PBSC has been unable to raise tuition in 8 years.
- The Delegation's support was requested in securing:
 - \$24 million for the Florida college system's base funding of its budget and \$65.8 million to support Public Education Capital Outlay funding; and
 - \$16.5 million to cover PBSC's required cost of offering free dual enrollment to private school students and \$550,000 for their instructional materials.

Village of Tequesta (Village) Mayor Abby Brennan said that 4 large construction projects were currently underway and that the Village was nearly built out.

Chair Roth read the following statement that was sent to the Delegation on November 26, 2019:

The Palm Beach County Delegation has received several requests for action at our 2019 public hearings without any prior notice.

At three public hearings, we were asked to provide a letter of support (Port of Palm Beach), a request for a Joint Legislative Audit (Belle Glade Housing Authority) and a call for action (Jerome Golden Center).

Chair Roth noted that the Delegation took action on all three requests at the meetings, and he continued reading the following statement:

I would like to implement a policy that will provide us with as much information as possible prior to the request for action.

When the hearings are publicly noticed, we will include a deadline for adding action items and for submittal of supporting documentation. This gives the members time to fully research and understand the nature of the request.

At the scheduled public meeting, the delegation can take up any matter, or postpone taking any action until the next publically noticed hearing or by poll of the members via email (which is public record) if no hearings are scheduled or if the issue is time sensitive. The delegation will post the action taken on the delegation website for public notice.

This policy will be posted on the delegation website so anyone who wishes to come before the delegation for action, will be aware.

(CLERK'S NOTE: The clerk added the language as printed in the November 26, 2019 statement.)

Representative Matt Willhite stated that:

- He supported Chair Roth's statement, and he agreed that there should be transparency.
- The Delegation only met a certain number of times each year, and he expressed concern that Delegation members could not take action during meetings on serious issues without having information in advance.

Chair Roth clarified that:

- The statement did not imply that someone who did not submit information in advance would not be able to provide it at a meeting.
- The statement did not imply that the Delegation could not take action on a request or information that was not made in advance.
- The Delegation could take action as it deemed appropriate.

(CLERK'S NOTE: Representative MaryLynn Magar joined the meeting.)

- It would be more advantageous if the Delegation received information or requests in advance.

IV. ROLL CALL

DELEGATION MEMBERS:

State Representative Rick Roth, Chair
State Representative David Silvers, Vice Chair
State Senator Lori Berman – Absent
State Representative Mike Caruso
State Representative Joseph Casello
State Senator Gayle Harrell – Absent
State Representative Al Jacquet – Absent
State Representative MaryLynn Magar
State Representative Tina Polsky
State Senator Bobby Powell Jr. – Absent
State Senator Kevin Rader – Absent
State Representative Emily Slosberg
State Representative Matt Willhite

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF:

Legislative Delegation Executive Director Victoria Nowlan
Legislative Delegation Aide Teresa Hadjipetrou
Deputy Clerk Julie Burns, Clerk & Comptroller's Office

Chair Roth stated that a quorum was not present.

V. DELEGATION BUSINESS

V.A. Recognition of Elected Officials

Chair Roth asked that the elected officials introduce themselves.

V.B. Approval of Minutes – None

V.B.1. September 11, 2019

V.B.2. October 3, 2019

V.C. Announcements

Chair Roth said that:

- Today's meeting would be the last Delegation meeting until the 2020 legislative session.
- Palm Beach County Days would be held in the City of Tallahassee on January 14-15, 2020. Fie added that more information was available at www.pbcgov.org
- Replays of today's meeting would be shown on PBCTV, which was available on Comcast Cable Channel 20, AT&T Channel 99, Hotwire Communications Digital Access Channel 20, Atlantic Broadband Cable TV Channel 76, and streamed 24/7 on the County's Website at www.pbcgov.com.
- Due to a subsequent meeting with the Palm Beach County League of Cities (League of Cities), each presenter would have 2 minutes to speak.

VI. COUNTY ELECTED OFFICIALS

Clerk & Comptroller (Clerk) Sharon Bock said that:

- She served as the 2018 president of the Florida Association of Court Clerks & Comptrollers.

- During her term, a legislative bill entitled Clerk Serve passed by an overwhelming majority vote of the Florida House of Representatives and the Senate.
- The bill provided that the Clerk's Office could keep \$10 million a year at the State level for the next 3 years.
- Representative Willhite should be recognized for being a proponent of his community.
- Passage of the legislative bill and the October 1 budget funding would allow full service at the mid-county branch starting January 1, 2020.
- She would discuss House Bill (HB) 591, sponsored by Representative Charles Clemons, and its companion bill, Senate Bill (SB) 790, by Senator Jeffrey Brandes with the Delegation when they met during the upcoming legislative session.
- Although HB 337 passed last year, technical and operational glitches should be corrected this year.
 - If not interpreted properly by the Department of Revenue, the glitches would diminish County funding.
 - The glitches involved how funds were distributed under their specific Florida statute.
- A second, non-numbered bill involved jury management.
 - Jury management, as set forth in Florida statutes, was unwieldy and inefficient.
 - Her office created language to remedy the issue, and she would send each Delegation member an email once the bill made its way through the legislative process.

VII. PRESENTERS

VILA. Margo McKnight, President and CEO, Palm Beach Zoo and Conservation Society

Ms. McKnight said that:

- The Palm Beach Zoo and Conservation Society (Zoo) expected about 400,000 visitors in 2020.

- The Zoo was 50 years old and needed water and security upgrades.
- Representative David Silvers was sponsoring a bill regarding the Zoo's needs.

VII.B. Mary M. Barnes, President and CEO, Alzheimer's Community Care

Karen Gilbert, Vice President of Education and Quality Assurance for Alzheimer's Community Care (ACC), speaking on behalf of Ms. Barnes, said that:

- The Florida Silver Alert Program had almost 2,200 silver alerts issued throughout the State since its creation 10 years ago.
- ACC operated 11 specialized adult day centers and 9 adult care centers in churches.
- \$0.92 of every \$1.00 received from private donations, collaborations with the churches, and State funding was directly applied to services.
- Every \$1.00 received from the State was matched with \$3.00 from private sources.
- 88% of ACC patients never needed nursing home care.
- The Delegation's support was requested in securing \$1.5 million to provide more than 131,000 additional patient care hours.

Representative Willhite said that he recently filed another bill to create a State director regarding dementia issues.

VII.C. John Kelly, President, Florida Atlantic University

Mr. Kelly said that:

- Florida Atlantic University (FAU) was ranked among the top universities nationwide.
- 3,280 students graduated from FAU campuses in 2019.
- FAU was consistently ranked nationwide as a top producer of minority degrees.
- FAU received \$11 million in funding for its life science building located in the Town of Jupiter.

- The Delegation's support was requested in securing funding to complete the life science building and the higher education facilities for Kindergarten through 12th grade, and for designating FAU as the State's artificial intelligence data analytic university.

Representative Magar asked about the incoming grade-point average for students and whether FAU continued to graduate students from its high school at the same time or before college graduations began.

Mr. Kelly replied that 36 students completed college at FAU before finishing high school.

VII.D. Clinton B. Forbes, Executive Director Palm Tran

Mr. Forbes said that:

- Palm Tran received over \$5 million in funding from the Florida Department of Transportation, which helped provide Palm Tran with equipment and needed capital.
- Senator Bobby Powell Jr. and Representative Willhite should be commended for sponsoring FIB 2385 that secured \$2 million for the transportation disadvantaged.
- Palm Tran restructured its transit system through the Route Performance Maximization Project, which focused on inefficiencies.
- He requested that the Delegation continue to help fund Palm Tran.

VII.E. Michelle Canaday, Circuit Director, Guardian ad Litem

Ms. Canaday said that:

- 1699 children were presently in the Guardian ad Litem Program, and staff was having difficulty placing them from group homes into foster homes.
- She requested the Delegation's support in promoting foster care and helping to acquire 300 volunteers.

VII.F. Thomas J. Miller, District Captain, LD89, Convention of State Action Florida

Mr. Miller said that:

- There was no solid legal foundation for a procedure to amend the United States (U.S.) Constitution.
- The Convention of State Action Florida could only propose amendments that could become part of the U.S. Constitution.

VII.G. David Lin, CEO Palm Beach Habilitation Center, Inc.

Mr. Lin said that:

- Palm Beach Habilitation Center Inc. worked with disabled adults to help them become as independent as possible.
- The Delegation's support was requested in securing appropriations to build a memory care group home.
- HB 2249 was sponsored by Representative Willhite, and a local funding initiative request was sponsored by Senator Kevin Rader.

VII.H. Dr. Lisa Williams-Taylor, CEO, Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County

Ms. Williams-Taylor said that:

- Mental health services should be extended for children, particularly those who experienced trauma.
- The Delegation should be commended for bolstering State funding since the 2018 shootings at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School.
- Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County (CSC) increased its funding for behavioral health services by more than 17% in the past 2 fiscal years.
- During the 2020 legislative session, the CSC supported:
 - increasing the funding and access for mental health services in public and private settings;
 - advocating for the expansion of tele-health access to mental health services; and

- o working with the Delegation to identify any funding for prevention opportunities that supported mental resiliency.

VII.I. Sue Kassoff-Correia, Floridians for Dental Access – Not Presented

VII.J. Alba Gaston – Not Presented

VII.K. Ezra Krieg, Director of Housing Initiatives, Gulfstream Goodwill Industries

Mr. Krieg said that:

- The Sadowski Trust Funds (Sadowski Funds) were specifically collected to provide housing for people in need.
- Last year, \$17 million would have been available for housing if all of the Sadowski Funds were provided.
- The Delegation’s support was requested in ensuring that the Sadowski Funds were fully funded in the 2020 State budget.

Representative Caruso suggested that the County allocated approximately \$26 million to the State for the Sadowski Funds.

Mr. Krieg replied that he was unsure of the amount.

VII.L. Charles Duval, Assistant V.P., Business Services, Career Source Palm Beach County

Mr. Duval said that:

- In the past 5 years, CareerSource Palm Beach County (CareerSource) helped secure employment for more than 8,200 Glades community residents.
- CareerSource invested over \$1 million in training to Glades’ businesses and job seekers.
- CareerSource worked with community partners to secure the \$1 million Everglades Restoration and Training Grant Program.
- CareerSource was awarded 2 significant pre-apprenticeship grants for aviation, aerospace, and marine industries.

Representative Magar asked what type of retraining CareerSource provided.

Mr. Duval replied that CareerSource partnered with institutions, such as PBSC, to provide scholarships for individuals seeking job training. He said that CareerSource also offered funds to businesses that provided additional employee training.

VII.M. Rich Bartholomew, Census Committee Chair, League of Women Voters

Mr. Bartholomew said that:

- Beginning March 12, 2020, every county address would receive a Census 2020 letter requesting an immediate response.
- County districts would be redrawn and statewide funding would increase or decrease by \$2,000 per person based upon the Census 2020 statistics.
- The League of Women Voters of Palm Beach County would work with the Delegation to inform people and provide information about Census 2020.

VII.N. Warren Eldridge, Early Learning Coalition of Palm Beach County

Mr. Eldridge said that:

- Last year, the Early Learning Coalition of Palm Beach County (ELC), along with CSC assistance, provided financial assistance to over 34,000 children and received over 110,000 calls from parents inquiring about childcare.
- ELC asked that the Delegation supported Governor Ron DeSantis' request for an increase in the Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program.
- Chair Roth should be commended for filing HB 193 to help offset the financial burden of parents that provided foster care and early learning.
- Senator Al Jacquet, Senator Powell, and Representative Silvers should be commended for supporting a City of Riviera Beach (Riviera Beach) project that was funded through legislative proviso language, which stated that Riviera Beach had the greatest gains in pre-kindergarten registration.

VII.O. Mary Ellen Pinsker

Ms. Pinsker said that:

- SB 46, SB 64, and SB 208 involved government overreach and parental decisions regarding medical care and consent.

- Multiple states were trying to mandate that the human papillomavirus vaccine known as Gardasil-9 be given to children, specifically elementary-aged children, with or without parental consent.

VII.P. Sari Vatske, Executive Vice President, Feeding South Florida

Ms. Vatske said that:

- The Feeding South Florida Program (Program) provided 21 million pounds of food to county residents
- Almost 189,000 were food-insecure individuals and 1 in 5 were children.
- The Delegation should be commended for securing \$1 million for a commercial kitchen, which would provide up to 10,000 meals per day, culinary training, incubator support for graduates of the Program, and family cooking classes.
- The Delegation was invited to tour the updated kitchen facility located in the City of Boynton Beach (Boynton Beach).

VII.Q. Yvette M. Avila

Ms. Avila said that:

- Mandates given to the pharmaceutical industry were putting constituents in danger.
- She would continue requesting legislation that supported religious and medical freedom, along with parental rights.
- Professional presentations regarding education on vaccines could be presented to the Delegation.

VII.R. Tequisha Myles, Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach County

Ms. Myles said that the Delegation's support was requested to:

- fully utilize the Sadowski Trust Funds for low-income housing, to rehab homes for seniors so they could age-in-place, and to help with down payment assistance for first-time homebuyers;
- amend the Florida Civil Rights statute regarding fair housing protection by including 4 additional protected classes;

- hold more landlords accountable for not making repairs under Chapter 83 of the Florida statutes, which was the Landlord Tenant Act;
- secure domestic violence protection for terminating leases so that when someone was fleeing violence, they were not subject to eviction judgments and derogatory credit reports; and
- protect tenants during hurricanes to ensure that landlords properly secured their properties.

VII.S. Pierrette Cazeau, Haiti Cholera Research Funding Foundation

Ms. Cazeau said that:

- During the next few months, the Haiti Cholera Research Funding Foundation (Foundation) would represent the State of Florida to discuss homelessness with the United Nations Society.
- The Foundation also advocated for beach cleaning, especially after a hurricane.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

VIII.A.

DISCUSSED: Public School Funding.

Kimberly Spire-Oh, representing the Education Committee of the League of Women Voters, said that:

- The Education Committee (Committee) researched issues about education and policies, provided information to policymakers and the public, and built coalitions with other organizations that shared similar concerns.
- The Committee's first legislative agenda was to adequately fund additional public schools and not privately-run entities that were not held to the same accountable standards as public schools.

VIII.B.

DISCUSSED: Florida Forever Program.

Drew Martin, on behalf of the Sierra Club, said that:

- The Florida Forever Program (Florida Forever) was passed by 78% of the voters, yet the legislature failed to significantly fund it.

- Florida Forever believed that it was important to fund the buying of conservation lands to protect the environment and to reduce climate change impacts.
- The Delegation's support was requested in asking the State to eliminate the pre-emptive ban on plastic bags and allow communities to decide how to eliminate single-use plastic bags and Styrofoam containers.

VIII.C.

DISCUSSED: SB 1088.

Justin Katz, Boynton Beach Vice Mayor and president of the Palm Beach County Classroom Teachers Association, said that:

- Governor DeSantis proposed to raise minimum teachers' salaries to \$47,500.
- He believed that it was illegal for the legislature to set teachers' salaries, because collective bargaining rights were contained in the State Constitution.
- SB 1088 was described as a teacher salary enhancement categorical fund.
 - The funds would be earmarked for teacher raises subject to criteria set by the legislature.
 - The bill would essentially remove any funding negotiation rights from the local bargaining units.
- If SB 1088 passed, he would request the Delegation's support in securing an equitable distribution of teachers' raises.

Representative Joseph Casello requested that the speakers' time be extended from 1 minute to 2 minutes.

Chair Roth stated that speakers with additional information should provide it to the Delegation.

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VIII.D.

DISCUSSED: Okeechobee Business District's 25-Story Tower.

Harriet Danachek said that:

- The City of West Palm Beach (WPB) was experiencing a “travesty” in its political system.
- The WPB Commission and various committees were “stacked” to approve a 25-story tower on a site zoned for a 5-story building.
- Approval of the Okeechobee Business District to build the tower was an example of spot zoning at its worst, and the County and the Town of Palm Beach did not support the development.

VIII.E.

DISCUSSED: Palm Beach County Partnership for Aging (Partnership for Aging).

Kelly Wilson, representing the Partnership for Aging, said that:

- The Partnership for Aging’s legislative priorities included a funding request for Aging and Disability Resource Centers.
- She provided the Delegation with information regarding recent changes to the Managed Care Program by the Agency for Health Care Administration.
- The Partnership for Aging supported the legislative dental therapy bill.

VIII.F.

DISCUSSED: Sadowski Funds.

Janet Crannock (phonetic) said that:

- She represented a collaboration of faith-based and community organizations dedicated to educating the public about the affordable housing crisis.
- She supported Representative Caruso’s legislative appropriation to release all of the Sadowski Funds for affordable housing.

VIII.G.

DISCUSSED: Holy Ground Shelter (Shelter).

Phyllis Jepson, Shelter Executive Director, said that:

- The Shelter offered sheltering and mentoring to homeless, pregnant women.
- The Shelter partnered with the Early Learning Coalition and CareerSource to provide the women with supportive services.
- Two women in the Shelter graduated from PBSC, and 2 more would be graduating soon.
- She supported releasing all of the Sadowski Funds for affordable housing.

VIII.H.

DISCUSSED: HB 2323.

Violet Gonzalez, Director of Community Relations for MACtown Inc., said that:

- MACtown was a City of Miami Achievement Center for the developmentally disabled.
- She requested that the Delegation support HB 2323, which involved the relocation of MACtown's Adult Day Training Life Skills Program.

VIII.I.

DISCUSSED:

Sherry Beerly (phonetic) said that the WPB Commission should ascertain what worked best for the long-term benefit of WPB and that the WPB Commission was being influenced by a downtown developer.

Representative Casello suggested that 15 minutes of time being afforded to the League of Cities could have been given to the public speakers. He reiterated that the public should be given at least 2 minutes to speak.

Chair Roth said that another Delegation meeting could be scheduled. He added that the Delegation remained on schedule due to 2 meetings being held today.

X. ADJOURNMENT

At 11:14 a.m., the chair declared the meeting adjourned.

APPROVED:


Representative Paul Roth
Chair/Vice Chair