

**FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL MEETING
COURTHOUSE ANNEX, COMMISSION MEETING ROOM
SEPTEMBER 27, 2022
5:00 PM
MINUTES**

Commissioners Present: Ricky Jones-Chairman, Bert Boldt, II-Vice-Chairman, Noah Lockley, Joseph Parrish, Jessica V. Ward
Others Present: Michele Maxwell-Clerk of Court, Michael Shuler-County Attorney, and Michael Moron—County Coordinator

1. Call To Order – Special Emergency Meeting

Chairman Jones called the meeting to order.

2. Prayer and Pledge

Chairman Jones led the Board in prayer followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

4. Emergency Management – Update on Hurricane Ian

Mrs. Jennifer Daniels from the Emergency Management gave an update on Hurricane Ian noting the potential for wind conditions on Thursday and Friday. Noting they have issued a tropical storm warning for Franklin County. Chairman Jones noted that we have to monitor for any change of track. Mrs. Daniels noted the potential for surge of 4-6 feet on high tide. The tide charts for the next four to six days has our high tides during the nighttime hours. Commissioner Lockley inquired about the timeline for land fall. Mrs. Daniels said they are predicting later in the afternoon at Port Charlotte. They are expecting slow down so they do not have an exact time at this moment. The Board and Mrs. Daniels discussed the predictions of the storm’s movement and intensity. Commissioner Boldt asked if law enforcement officers would be at the base of the bridges twenty-four hours a day in the event emergency vehicles need to cross. Mr. Moron said that would be a question for the sheriff. He will get in touch with his administrative staff to see if he can log in to the meeting.

5. Local State of Emergency Declaration

STATE OF EMERGENCY PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS emergency conditions exist or are anticipated due to the effects of Hurricane Ian and,

WHEREAS the Franklin County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan is hereby activated and the Franklin County Board of County Commissioners (the Board”) and their

representatives shall have the power, authorities, and duties to take any and all action under the plan necessary for the preservation of the health, welfare and safety of the people and property of Franklin County; and,

WHEREAS Florida Statutes 252.38 provides authority and responsibility for safeguarding the life and property of the citizens of Franklin County; and

WHEREAS Florida Statutes 252.38 provides authority for the waiver by the Board of procedures and formalities otherwise required of Franklin County under the circumstance of a Local State of Emergency; and,

WHEREAS there is necessity for a prompt and efficient response and recovery in order to safeguard lives and property affected by the emergency and/or disaster.

NOW, THEREFORE, pursuant to Florida Statutes, Section 252.38, the Franklin County Board of County Commissioners issues a State of Local Emergency for Franklin County, Florida, beginning this 27th day of September 2022 at 5:00 PM ET. Any person not abiding by this Order is guilty of a misdemeanor of the second degree and subject to penalties established under Section 252.50, F.S. and/or any other portion(s) of Florida Statutes.

DONE this 27th day of September 2022 at 5:00 PM ET.

On a motion by Commissioner Parrish, seconded by Commissioner Lockley and Commissioner Boldt, to ratify the Chairman's signature on the Local State of Emergency Proclamation. Motion carried 5-0.

6. Traci Buzbee – Update on new FEMA reimbursement rules

Ms. Buzbee gave an update on the new FEMA reimbursement rules noting they have changed the threshold for a large project from \$120,000 to \$1,000,000. The \$1 million threshold applies to all projects under major disasters and emergencies declared on or after Aug. 3, 2022. The \$1 million threshold also applies to all unobligated PA projects in major disasters and emergencies declared between March 13, 2020, and Aug. 3, 2022.

7. Closing of County Offices due to weather conditions

The Board discussed the possibility of storm surge and sustained wind gust which may cause bridge closures. Clerk Maxwell let the Board know there is no court or jury scheduled. The main concern was the flooding roads. **Commissioner Ward made a motion to close the County offices on Thursday and Friday (September 29 and 30).** There was additional discussion about the school district and what their plans are. Chairman Jones noted that the school district is taking it day by day and have not decided to close schools at this time. **Commissioner Lockley seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.**

Sheriff Smith attended the meeting via Zoom to answer Commissioner Boldt's question regarding the plan to have officers to sit at the end of the bridges in the event that they are closed for emergency vehicles. Sheriff Smith said if the bridges are closed due to winds, they would not be transporting for emergency services. Mr. Moron noted that ambulances are not rated to travel at even less than 40 mph. We are not going to put deputies lives in danger either. It would be a case-by-case decision. Mrs. Daniels said she believes the ambulances are parked at 35 mph.

Commissioner Parrish inquired about a voluntary evacuation for St. George Island. He said we should notify those on the island, not as mandatory but as voluntary. Sheriff Smith said he agrees with Commissioner Parrish that it should be voluntary. Clerk Maxwell said that she would have an answer from the Chief Judge this afternoon and will most likely follow suit with what is done today. Chairman Jones agreed that we should put out information for a voluntary evacuation. Commissioner Parrish said he would like to include all of our barrier islands as well as Alligator Point. Mrs. Daniels noted sometimes issuing an evacuation at night can cause panic. She would not recommend issuing it tonight. Chairman Jones noted that 8 am in the morning should be fine. Commissioner Lockley said he is okay with that; we are just issuing a warning.

Commissioner Parrish made a motion to issue a voluntary evacuation beginning on September 28, 2022, at 8:00 am, for all of our barrier islands, and low-lying areas of Franklin County.

Commissioner Boldt commented on how susceptible Alligator Drive is to the high winds and tide. Commissioner Lockley said they need some sand pumped in to make a beach. However, Commissioner Lockley does not agree that the entire county pay for the project. **Motion carried 5-0.**

8. Cancellation of September 30, 2022, Special Meeting

On a motion by Commissioner Parrish, seconded by Commissioner Ward, and by unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the cancellation of the September 30, 2022, Special Meeting and authorize the Chairman to sign the documents to be ratified at the regular meeting on October 4th. Motion carried 5-0.

9. Renee Brannan – SO Dispatch – 911 Grant

Mr. Moron noted that Mrs. Brannan no longer needed to address the Board at this time and will present at the next regular meeting.

10. Commissioners' Comments

Clerk Maxwell said her office will make sure to get payroll out ahead of any office closures.

Commissioner Parrish made the Board aware he will not be able to participate in the meeting with the Corps. If any Commissioner has a comment for the Corps, please get those to the Chairman to present at the meeting. Commissioner Ward extended her thoughts and prayers for those that will be directly affected by Hurricane Ian. Chairman Jones noted there were no guarantees as to where the storm will go and that is the reason for today's meeting.

11. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned.

Ricky Jones – Chairman

Attest:

Michele Maxwell – Clerk of Courts

The audio is available upon request. Please e-mail jgay@franklinclerk.com, call 850-653-8861 to speak with the Administrative Assistant, or submit a request in writing to obtain audio of this meeting.