

MAY 1, 2014 – SPECIAL MEETING

The Board of County Commissioners, Walton County, Florida, held a Special Meeting on May 1, 2014 at 9:00 a.m. at the Walton County Courthouse in DeFuniak Springs, Florida.

The following Board members were present: Commissioner W. N. (Bill) Chapman, Chairman; Commissioner Sara Comander, Commissioner Bill Imfeld; and Commissioner Kenneth Pridgen. Mr. Larry Jones, County Administrator; and Attorney Mark Davis, County Attorney; were also present.

Mr. Jones stated that due to three Commissioners meeting with Legislature in Washington, D.C. yesterday, he and Attorney Davis made an administrative decision to declare a Local State of Emergency on their behalf. He requested that a resolution be adopted to ratify those actions and requested the resolution be made retroactive to April 30, 2014. Attorney Davis stated that under the County's organizational structure the County Administrator can delegate actions to staff. He commended the staff for their hard work and reported that two Emergency Management meetings were held. Attorney Davis reiterated the request to ratify the action taken and to extend the Local State of Emergency for at least seven days.

Motion by Commissioner Imfeld, second by Commissioner Comander, to adopt **Resolution 2014-46** ratifying the actions taken by Attorney Mark Davis, County Attorney, and Mr. Larry Jones, County Administrator, on April 30, 2014 in declaring a Local State of Emergency for all of Walton County, making the date of the enactment retroactive to April 30, 2014, and extending said declaration for seven (7) days. Ayes 4, Nays 0. Chapman Aye, Comander Aye, Imfeld Aye, Pridgen Aye.

The Commissioners voiced their appreciation to all staff and emergency workers for the hard work they have been doing.

Mr. Russell Beaty, Emergency Management Director, briefly updated the Commissioners on the courses of action that have been taken to secure the affected areas. He also announced that the Florida National Guard has been deployed to the worst areas of the county and would be utilized in other areas as well. He reported that approximately 12 individuals sought shelter at the South Walton High School during the storm. Mr. Beaty stated that he had requested joint damage assessment from the State and FEMA for individual and public assistance. The assessment teams should arrive sometime Monday. He applauded all departments which have been working to ensure the safety and well-being of the county's citizens. Mr. Beaty stated that the impact of this storm is greater than the July, 2013 flood event. There have been more homes and businesses impacted and the total amount of road and infrastructure damage is still unknown. He reported that approximately 14.5 inches of rain fell in Santa Rosa Beach in a short amount of time yesterday. He explained that the weight of the water in the ground caused the severe erosion and discussed two reports of collapsed buildings in which no one was injured.

Mr. Rick Wilson, Technology Support Coordinator, and Mr. Wilmer Stafford, Public Works Director, briefly discussed the damages shown in the pictures and videos being shown to the Commissioners and attendees. Mr. Wilson stated that there are more storms predicted for today. Mr. Stafford reported that 67 county roads are currently closed and briefly discussed which roads would be opened.

Chairman Chapman asked if there was any damage at the new Oyster Lake Bridge. Mr. Stafford said that a lot of sand has been lost. Mr. Jones asked if the biggest loss of sand was through the outfalls. Mr. Stafford stated yes.

Commissioner Comander asked about the status of the new construction of U.S. 331. Mr. Stafford stated that the conditions have improved greatly since yesterday morning.

Commissioner Imfeld asked if any equipment was lost. Mr. Stafford stated no.

Chairman Chapman asked if additional manpower would be requested from the State. Mr. Stafford stated not at this time. He said he wanted to get better estimates on the amount of road damage. Chairman Chapman urged Mr. Stafford to seek additional assistance to lessen the impact on the county staff.

Commissioner Comander commended Mr. Stafford on the work he has been doing. He has gone above what was required of him. Mr. Stafford stated that he has a great staff.

Chairman Chapman asked what the future plans would be. Mr. Stafford said that in-house damage assessments would be done to determine the next course of action.

Chairman Chapman stated that during last year's storms staff was allowed to perform temporary fixes to private roads to allow access for emergency equipment. He questioned if a motion would be required to allow staff to take needed action. Attorney Davis stated that the Local State of Emergency would give staff the authority to make temporary repairs.

Mr. Jones encouraged Mr. Stafford to utilize every asset available in the county to insure that the work is done. He also urged staff to accommodate Mr. Stafford to the best of their ability.

Commissioner Comander questioned if the schools would be open on Friday, May 2, 2014. Attorney Davis stated that it would depend upon the damages to the road.

Chairman Chapman requested that Mr. Beatty give an update on future weather conditions. Mr. Beatty stated that there is more thunderstorm activity coming to this area today and Friday. He reported that there may be another 2 – 3 inches before the end of the week.

Mr. Brian Kellenberger, TDC Beach Operations, stated that the initial assessment of all public beach accesses revealed no damage. He reported that the biggest problem is storm debris

in the parking lots. He discussed damages to the bike paths and parking areas. He briefly discussed the Dune Lake Outfalls and reported that Code Enforcement is patrolling the beach to warn and protect sightseers. He reported minor storm debris on the beaches. Mr. Kellenberger stated that the plan was to repair the bike paths and beach accesses where needed. He offered TDC resources to be used for clean-up and repairs. Commissioner Comander questioned how many Coastal Dune Lakes broke through the outfalls. Mr. Kellenberger stated all lakes have broken through and that Code Enforcement is monitoring the areas.

Chief Brian Coley, South Walton Fire Department, reported that no fatalities have occurred and briefly discussed some of the calls they have responded to.

Mr. Bruce Smith, Forestry Division, reported that Point Washington and Pine Forrest State Parks are closed due to impassable roads.

Ms. Sara Bowers, DeFuniak Springs City Manager, stated that the city has been fortunate. Commissioner Imfeld questioned the report about seven inches of water in City Hall. Ms. Bowers said that there had been no water breach in City Hall.

Mr. Jim Hicks, School Board Transportation Director, stated that a decision would be made soon regarding whether the schools would be in session tomorrow.

Chairman Chapman announced that there had been an explosion at the Escambia County Jail with two killed and several injured. He said that Escambia County may reach out to the surrounding counties for help with housing of their inmates. He recommended that Mr. Stan Sunday, Deputy County Administrator, meet with Sheriff Michael Adkinson to determine if the extra pod could be made available for use by Escambia County if needed.

Mr. Jones requested that action be taken to empower County Administration to work with Sheriff Adkinson in order to take necessary action regarding the use of the jail facilities by Escambia County without reconvening the Board.

Motion by Commissioner Comander, second by Commissioner Pridgen, to permit County Administration to work with Sheriff Adkinson to take necessary action regarding the use of the jail facilities by Escambia County without reconvening the Board. Ayes 4, Nays 0. Chapman Aye, Comander Aye, Imfeld Aye, Pridgen Aye.

Chief Mark Weeks, City of DeFuniak Springs City Marshal, discussed the areas affected in DeFuniak Springs.

Mr. Jones announced that the Courthouse Annex in Santa Rosa Beach will re-open on May 2, 2014. All employees are to report if they can safely arrive.

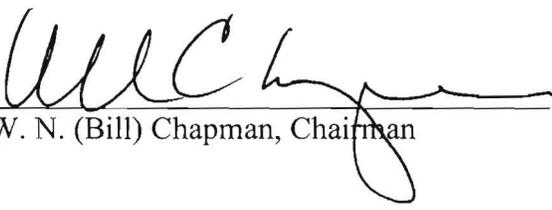
Mr. Stafford questioned if local contractors needed to be contacted for extra man power. Chairman Chapman suggested getting the assessment done to determine how much help will be needed.

Motion by Commissioner Comander, second by Commissioner Imfeld, to authorize Public Works to hire outside help on a temporary, emergency basis during the Local State of Emergency. Ayes 4, Nays 0. Chapman Aye, Comander Aye, Imfeld Aye, Pridgen Aye.

Mr. Jones stated that another meeting may be called early next week. He reiterated the exemplary communicative actions taken by staff.

Chairman Chapman announced that Governor Rick Scott is supposed to be coming to tour the areas affected in Walton County and requested that staff be available to answer any questions.

There being no further items to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 9:32 a.m.

Approved: 
W. N. (Bill) Chapman, Chairman

Attest: 
Alex Alford, Clerk of Court and County Comptroller