



JOINT BROWARD COUNTY WATER ADVISORY BOARD  
and  
PALM BEACH COUNTY WATER RESOURCES TASK FORCE  
MEETING  
June 2, 2021  
DRAFT Minutes

A joint meeting of the Broward County Water Advisory Board and Palm Beach County Water Resources Task Force was held hybrid with in-person attendance at Palm Beach County's Vista Center Building (2300 North Jog Road, West Palm Beach, FL 33411 in the VC-1W-47 Hearing Room and virtually on WebEx on June 2, 2021 at 1:00 P.M.

*The meeting minutes were summarized by Gregory Mount ([gmount@broward.org](mailto:gmount@broward.org) / 954-519-0356 and Jeremy McBryan ([jmcbryan@pbcgov.org](mailto:jmcbryan@pbcgov.org) / 561-355-4600). Copies of the presentations are available online at [www.pbcgov.org/wrtf](http://www.pbcgov.org/wrtf) and/or filed with the supplemental papers of the meeting.*

Notes: Meeting and recording was delayed due to technical difficulties. The meeting was called to order at approximately 1:30 P.M. and recording begins with Agenda Item IV. Chairpersons Opening Comments with Mayor Geller. Audio failures occurred throughout the recording.

- I. Roll Call Palm Beach County Water Resource Task Force (WRTF) [Not recorded on WebEx video]  
**WRTF Members / Alternates Present:** Monica Mayotte; Chip Block (Chair); Rachelle Litt (Vice Chair); Gregg Weiss; Melissa McKinlay; Mark Elsner  
**WRTF Members / Alternates Absent:** Jason Haselkorn; Tommy Strowd; Jay Steinle; Michael Johnson; Greg Shafer
  
- II. Roll Call Broward Water Advisory Board (WAB) [Not recorded on WebEx video]  
**WAB Members Present:** Mayor Steve Geller, Chair; Commissioner Sandy Welch, Vice-chair; Commissioner Mary Molina-Macfie; Eugen Bold for Commissioner Tim Ryan; Commissioner Anthony Caggiano; Kevin Hart, TAC Chair; Pete Kwiatkowski for Governing Board Member Ron Bergeron; Mark Peterson; Commissioner Ben Sorensen; Councilmember Jim Allbritton; Commissioner Tom Good; Councilmember Susan Starkey.  
**WAB Members Absent:** Commissioner Aisha Gordon; Commissioner Kevin Biederman; Commissioner Nancy Metayer; Commissioner Rhonda Eaton; Commissioner Doug Bell; Gene Goldman; Mayor Greg Ross; Mayor Michelle Gomez, Vice Mayor Denise Grant.
  
- III. Public Comments (Limit of 3 minutes per person) [Not recorded on WebEx video]  
Public comments were made by the following: Jeff Koons, but was not captured on WebEx.
  
- IV. Chairperson Opening Comments [Partially recorded on WebEx video]
  - a. Mayor Steve Geller, *Broward County WAB Chair (3 minutes)*  
Mayor Geller provided an overview of the ongoing efforts he and the board have been making to advocate for and ensure the C&SF restudy has been funded in the federal budget. He noted that after funding the project is expected to take 10-15 years to completion. He extended his appreciation to all involved in the meeting today and the resilience efforts at the county, state, and federal level.

**b. Vice Mayor Chip Block, *Palm Beach County WRTF Chair (3 minutes)***

WebEx recoding lost audio after Mayor Geller. Vice Mayor Block stated that more investment and actions are needed by local and state governments to preserve and protect the region's water resources, including investing in water quality improvement, resilience, and ecosystem restoration projects and programs.

Mayor Geller introduces Dr. Jurado.

Dr. Jurado provides an introduction to Mr. Ernie Cox and shared that it was over a decade ago when the Broward and Palm Beach County WRTFs convened to give consideration to working together, not only on the C-51 but also on other regional projects of shared interest. It was the impetus for sustained collaboration that came from that meeting that was a game changer. In terms of how the c-51 project would move forward. Prior to that, years had been spent working on a technical level unable to make the types of advancements that would come only with the engagement of our political leadership and through sustained efforts and your making that project such a priority and the public/private partnership that was absolutely requisite for having the staying power when we saw so many transitions happening in the administrations, we arrived at the point that we did today. Dr. Jurado acknowledged that Mr. Cox has been an incredible partner through that time and staff has garnered much benefit from the diverse leadership that has come from every level of government in working to see that to fruition. As Mayor Geller indicated, the agenda today highlights projects that are perfect to continue working in the collaborative manner as we identify project partners.

**V. C-51 Reservoir Project Update and Opportunities**

*Mr. Ernie Cox, Family Lands Remembered, LLC (10p 10d)*

Mr. Cox provided thanks to those that had been involved in this project from the beginning. Mr. Cox provided a timeline of the project history beginning with 2006. In 2011 he notes a great deal of technical work was undertaken to determine if water could be moved south. In 2015 the Governance and Finance Work Group Final Report recommended a Phase 1 focus, and revisit future phases. From 2018 to 2020 other users were granted permits and in 2021 ground was finally broken. Participants and partners in the project were identified. Mr. Cox provided a series of photos to document the construction progress and noted key construction steps. Mr. Cox provided a slide that outlines the two phases of construction. Phase 1 has ERP and water use permit. Phase 2, cell 12 has a construction permit, cells 13 and 14 have a conceptual permit and working towards construction approval. North conveyance improvements for direct connection to the L-8 canal are slated for later this year. Mr. Cox then presented some opportunities; deliveries of additional storage can be done in sub-phases to support incremental improvements and multiple benefits. This can be done to reduce discharges to tide through the Lake Worth Lagoon, support Loxahatchee River restoration, and saltwater intrusion mitigation. Mr. Cox closed with an update to funding and announced that an additional 48 million dollars were set aside by the state for phase 2/cell 12. Eventually 105,000 acre feet of storage would be available at a key intersection of regional water management canals as a result of partnership efforts and regional collaboration.

Questions:

Follow up statement from Vice Mayor Block was inaudible.

Mayor Geller opened the floor to questions.

Sam May asked a question about the next phase of the C-51 construction.

Mr. Cox responded that he expected to begin construction in cell 12 and then cell 13 for consumptive use 90 days from construction.

VI. C&SF System, Flood Risk Study, and Resiliency Needs:

*Eva B. Velez, P.E., Strategic Program Manager, Ecosystems Branch, and Jason A. Engle, P.E., Chief, Water Resources Engineering Branch, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Jacksonville District.*

*Mr. Drew Bartlett, Executive Director, South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) (30p 20d)*

Eva Velez began the presentation with an overview of the approach necessary to build community resilience. Underlying the process is the need for collaboration of people and projects. In south Florida we are uniquely connected as the C&SF, it is referred to as the connector. Ms. Velez stressed the operations of the system are the context for other actions and how all of the systems are linked. However, additional improvements to infrastructure and resilience is required. Mr. Engle took over the presentation and showed the link between conditions, operations and watershed-based and coastal projects. Mr. Engle provided an over of the C&SF project including the updating of the operation manuals that provide a system wide framework for the operation of the C&SF and CERP projects. The Everglades serve as a nature-based system that helps to protect the C&SF system that provides flood protection and water supply to millions of Floridians. A cross section was provided to show adaptations to climate change and community resilience. Mr. Engle wrapped up his part with an overview of current conditions and operations of water movement. Ms. Velez continued with a structured overview of how the C&SF project fits into the bigger picture approach and with related projects. She also noted the C&SF Section 216 FRM Infrastructure Resiliency Plan. Next she provided an overview of the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration budget and noted that last year was a historic high but this year was even higher. The next step is the appropriations bill from Congress so that the USACE can get the funds to begin. Ms. Velez highlighted the Section 216 C&SF Flood Risk Management Infrastructure Resiliency Study and explained the current status and next steps. She expressed thanks to the SFWMD as the non-federal sponsor, the advisory boards, and Drs. Jurado and Maran for their continued support. The new project will focus on the features that can reduce the most immediate risk to changing conditions, and the resilience aspect of such infrastructure. The New Start in FY22 Presidential Budget (\$500,000.00) provides for investigations as a flood risk management business line. The next step requires the FY22 Appropriations Bill by the US Congress. The target execution of a new feasibility cost sharing agreement with the SFWMD is June 2022. There is a need for an additional comprehensive plan that covers the entire system, but additional authority is needed from Congress.

Questions:

Statement by Mayor Geller is inaudible from 47:59-48:20 and goes in and out 48:45. Context is missing. 48:55 Mayor Geller recounts a conversation with Col. Kelly that including the restudy and construction, if everything goes correctly and there are no delays, it's remotely possible to have it complete in about 10 years.

Ms. Velez responded that yes, I will agree with Col. Kelly in the time frame.

Mayor Geller: the concern that I have here is that when it is phrased that way, I am afraid it is 15 years until things are complete. In conversations with Dr. Jurado, the increase in SLR speed, we are realistically looking at 8-12 years until the system is not functioning according to design parameters. This leaves with about 5 years of time where we will not have effective drainage in the western communities.

Mayor Geller's next question asks to the cost of each replacement structure. In the past the 18 structures were estimated to cost 900 million dollars. Ms. Velez supported the scale of those costs as did Mr. Engle.

Mayor Geller extends his thanks to the USACE and stated how good of a job they have been doing.

Mr. Bartlett begins his presentation with an introduction to the water management districts, with SFWMD being the largest of the 5. Unique to the SFWMD is the C&SF project and the 2,000 miles of canals and levees that provide flood management to the region. In addition to the increase in population by over 6 million people, the system is also now dealing with SLR, higher groundwater and more extreme rainfall. The system is old and it is time for an update, Mr. Bartlett provides a video of a structure being overtopped by seawater. He continues with a graphical comparison of forward pumping structures during TS Isaias, during which the structures could operate by gravity only 50% of the time. During Eta, high tide rendered the gates inoperable, however, the canals were high enough to still release water. The recovery period however was longer with high water in streets for a few days. At S25B, which has both gravity drainage and a forward pump, water is able to be moved out of the canals despite water levels at the tidal side. In the c-9 and c-7 basins where the evaluation has already been complete, projects have been identified to improve the flood protection. In the c-7 and c-9 canal the build phase of projects have begun and have applied for funding to retrofit those two structures to improve flood control. Mr. Bartlett then went on to talk about the SB 1954, the Resilient Florida Program which was signed by the Governor. He also stated that each of the structures could cost as much as 100 million for each structure and talked about the total potential cost for the system if each replacement required that level of investment. This study is critically important as it will address the highest priority structures first. He also noted that the investment is not unfounded when it is compared to CERP. Mr. Bartlett concluded with stating that we know we are in a critical position and that the problem is recognized by the highest leaders in the state. There is momentum and if they continue to press and move the project forward it should get done. The governor is also behind resiliency planning and has signed multiple actions in his leadership and funding from the legislation, including 500 million in Resiliency Florida.

Questions:

Mayor Geller acknowledged the higher cost of 60 to 100 million per structure. He also acknowledged that the money would only cover the structures and not the additional construction, such as banks east of the structures being raised and the difficulties associated with that type of work. The second question was about sea level rise, at 2.4 millimeters per year, that is a linear increase. Mayor Geller believes the rate of SLR over the last 10 years has increased and now there is less time to adapt.

Ms. Velez said there isn't one answer to the construction question. When combined the mission areas work together to help to solve the issue. The issue of compound flooding remains unanswered and increasing groundwater levels will complicate the issue. Storage of excess water is something that will have to be evaluated in the future. Mr. Engle then added how to adapt the system but suggested that additional structures to the east of the salinity structures to prevent storm surge may be necessary. Adding new infrastructure may be a key factor in the future.

Mr. Bartlett repeated the question about how long will the structures be functional after the retrofit. Most investments have a service life of about 50 years, just in terms of durability. With accelerated conditions the structures will still function.

Unknown: On the pump stations, are there ability to provide power in case of an outage? Mr. Bartlett: Yes, each structure has a generator package with backup power.

Unknown: With SLR and saltwater coming up, we may be able to raise structures but the roads and ground itself are still going to be at the same level. Is there a plan to deal with road inundation? Ms. Velez responded that new infrastructure will be required but will be part of the resilience plan. Mr. Engle stated the same and that they would be considerations as part of the resilience study.

Due to time constraints, Mayor Geller skipped Agenda Items VII and VIII. Mayor Geller expressed his thanks to the USACE and SFWMD for the presentations and the continued support and collaborations.

VII. Resiliency, Water Resources Planning, and Advancements at the County Level

**a. Broward County Resilience Initiatives (10p)**

*Dr. Jennifer Jurado, Deputy Director and Chief Resilience Officer, Broward County Environmental Protection and Growth Management Department.*

**b. Palm Beach County Water Resource Initiatives (10p)**

*Mr. Jeremy McBryan, PE, CFM, County Water Resources Manager, Palm Beach County.*

VIII. Joint WRTF/WAB Discussion (20d)

No questions were asked. Dr. Jurado asked if the boards would like to consider to direct staff to arrange a yearly meeting of the two boards moving forward. Response was favorable and that staff should be directed to plan for future meetings.

IX. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 by Vice Mayor Block.