

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS - SPECIAL MEETING**

**NOVEMBER 30, 2007**

A meeting of the Board of County Commissioners was held at the Murdock Administration Complex in Room 119, Port Charlotte, Florida. The following members were present: Chairman D'Aprile, Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Loftus, Commissioner Duffy, and Commissioner Moore. Also in attendance were County Administrator Loucks, County Attorney Knowlton, Deputy Clerk Manley, Minutes Secretary Joanne Lansing, City Manager Howard Kunik, and Councilmember Albers. The following members were absent: None. The meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM.

Opening Comments

Chairman D'Aprile welcomed Congressman Mahoney; briefly summarized the reasons for the meeting; thanked the Congressman for his support in securing funding for Fiscal Year 2008; stated he was pleased that four out of five of the projects received funding; and noted that the projects not completed would be on the list next year. Chairman D'Aprile extended an invitation to the Congressman to attend the groundbreaking associated with these projects.

Chairman D'Aprile mentioned the draft list of new and recurring projects as being central to County priorities and indicated the Board looks forward to working together.

Congressman Mahoney thanked the Chairman; outlined his commitment to Charlotte County; and promised to continue to represent and lobby for Charlotte County in Washington DC.

Congressman Mahoney stated he was unable to receive all of the money requested; pointed out that the United States Government is broke and in debt; to avoid incurring additional debt, the Congressman helped Congress institute the Pay As You Go Program; and expressed concerns that vetoed Bills will probably need to be dealt with on continuing resolutions. Congressman Mahoney also mentioned a disagreement between Congress and the President on overspending; advised that as a result of Pay As You Go, funding was found by closing tax loop holes and moving money and

priorities from one project to another. Congressman Mahoney opined not one of the appropriations incurred an additional dollar of debt.

Congressman Mahoney recognized that Florida's economy is in trouble due to the costs of housing and homeowners insurance; working middle class average annual income in Florida has decreased by as much as \$4,000; and people are struggling to afford to stay in their homes. Congressman Mahoney noted efforts to reduce taxes during this recession will put additional pressure on counties and government; and in order to help alleviate this problem, he and Congressman Ron Klein introduced landmark legislation to significantly reduce homeowners insurance that passed on a bi-partisan basis with the support of Governor Crist and every member of the Florida Delegation; and the Bill is now before the Senate with the support of Senator Clinton and Senator Nelson with a priority to get it on the President's desk before 2008 hurricane season.

Congressman Mahoney mentioned working on meaningful tax cuts for property taxes to provide an average savings of \$175 to \$250 per homeowner and two Bills he sponsored that would allow residents to deduct property taxes off their Federal Income Tax and allow AMT filers to deduct all property taxes for all their homes off their Federal Income Tax with an estimated savings of \$3,000.

Congressman Mahoney closed by stating that he and his staff enjoyed working with County staff; he looks forward to continuing a good working relationship; and he will continue to work positively for the tax payers of Charlotte County.

**Chairman D'Aprile** thanked the Congressman for his insight and stated he will be looking forward to the tax cuts, insurance reductions, and deductions off Federal Income Taxes; introduced attendees; and advised he would announce each staff member prior to their presentations.

#### **1. Water Utility - Jeff Pearson**

Water Interconnects  
East Port Water Reclamation Facility

Assistant Utilities Director Terry Kessler provided an update on the two projects; requested assistance in funding; and described interconnects, irrigation, and Water Reclamation Facilities.

## 2. Health and Human Services - Vikki Carpenter

### Family Service Center 2-1-1 Services

Mrs. Carpenter introduced Emily Lewis, Manager of the Family Services Center and provided an overview of the "one stop" Center including current programs and current and future funding allocations.

Congressman Mahoney asked if there was any historical data available to track the needs of the County. Ms. Lewis advised the Center opened in January 2007, the demand for services continues to increase, some of the programs have waiting lists; and more data should be available toward the end of the year. The Congressman opined family services will continue to see a rise in visitors to the center.

The Congressman advised he sponsored a Bill called Section 202 Housing to provide housing for seniors and it should be on the President's desk early next year.

Ms. Carpenter provided a brief overview on the importance of 2-1-1, a Local and National Emergency Call Center Service, which provides information and referrals and requested the Congressman's continued support.

## 3. Parks and Recreation - Laura Kleiss Hoeft

### County Archiving Old Railroad Bunk House Blue-way Trail System Myakka River Regional Park

Ms. Kleiss Hoeft provided an overview of the four projects and asked for continued funding and support.

Congressman Mahoney indicated historically they have secured funding through continuing Resolutions which provide basic funding without adding new programs.

#### 4. Public Works - Tom O'Kane

##### US 41 Enhancements

##### Burnt Store Road Widening

Mr. O'Kane thanked Congressman Mahoney for past funding and indicated the need for future funding; provided an overview of the projects; and reported feeling the impact of cut funds.

**Commissioner Cummings** added his appreciation of the assistance received on transportation projects since transportation taxes help offset the increase of gas taxes leaving the County and asked for the Congressman's continued support.

#### 5. General or Future Pending Issues

##### EPA Pesticide with health issues, Endangered Species - Jim Thomson

##### Murdock Village - Federal Funds for endangered Species mitigation and protection - Jim Thomson

##### FEMA Closeout and reconciliation issues - Ray Sandrock

Mr. Thomson provided an overview of pending issues that need funding including mitigation of Scrub Jays and advised there are over 10,000 Scrub Jay lots in Charlotte County.

Congressman Mahoney opined the moral issue is protecting the environment; how it impacts the economy; voiced concerns that food is a National Security issue; pointed out Florida lost over 1,000 farmers last year; and commented on water conservation; and the need for everyone to work together.

**Commissioner Cummings** added comments on fresh water issues in Charlotte Harbor related to algae.

Congressman Mahoney announced he will try to schedule the Chairman of the Transportation Committee to visit Charlotte County to discuss some of the problems; expressed the belief that it is important to have Committee members meet staff working on

these projects; stated he has had success in the past by having Education Committee Chairman Miller visit; and by sending a Charlotte County Principal to Washington to discuss FCAT issues.

County Administrator Bruce Loucks provided clarification on last year's legislative packet which included policies on phosphate mining; advised the current agreement between Sarasota, Lee and Charlotte Counties has already been passed by our Board; the other two counties are still going through the process; progress is being made to move forward.

Budget Director Ray Sandrock provided an overview of FEMA Closeout; stated it has been three long difficult years since Hurricane Charley; reported even though progress has been made, staff is still addressing final debris projects weekly; and hopefully the Congressman will be in a position to lend support in the final stages

Congressman Mahoney commented that he assisted Martin County by personally collecting \$3.4 Million and stated if the County does the right thing, FEMA will as well.

**Commissioner Cummings** pointed out that a check was usually received from FEMA after each visit to the Congressional Delegation and added that the Congressman's involvement had a positive impact on Charlotte County.

Punta Gorda City Manager Howard Kunik outlined funding requests in the upcoming year for water expansion, flooding in Punta Gorda, construction and hardening of a CRA funded parking garage in late 2008.

Congressman Mahoney stated he will have his staff gather details, get the requests into the budget cycle and set up meetings to discuss all of these projects.

**Chairman D'Aprile** thanked Congressman Mahoney for his past and future support and indicated he looks forward to welcoming him back for completion of the projects.

Congressman Mahoney congratulated **Chairman D'Aprile** on his appointment; commended **Commissioner Loftus** on his past job;

stated he has enjoyed working with Charlotte County; and was proud of the spirit of the community that came together after Hurricane Charley. Congressman Mahoney expressed concern for the tough economic times ahead; advised he will work in Washington to make sure no more taxes are added; and he will work to reduce taxes and homeowners insurance costs.

**Chairman D'Aprile** thanked Congressman Mahoney for his comments and opened the floor to the public.

Carol DunKirchen commented on the increasing cost of gas and expressed concern that our aging population is becoming more and more transit dependent. Ms. DunKirchen asked Congressman Mahoney if Congress would be willing to reconsider the funding formula for allocation of fuel tax revenues exclusively designated for transit operations.

Congressman Mahoney stated transportation is a huge issue in Florida due to the senior and disabled population; a change in the formula has been made so communities can use a part of the transportation dollar to cover overhead; and indicated a willingness to further discuss this subject in detail.

**ADJOURNED: 11:00 AM**

Signature on file in Commission Minutes  
Chairman

**ATTEST:**

**BARBARA T. SCOTT, CLERK  
OF THE CIRCUIT COURT AND  
EX-OFFICIO TO THE BOARD  
OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

**By: Signature on file in Commission Minutes \_  
Deputy Clerk**