

# ST. JOHNS COUNTY CIVIC ASSOCIATION ROUNDTABLE

*Agenda  
for*

MONDAY – JULY 10, 2006

Issues of County Interest – 9:00 am

At Main County Library  
U&S. 1 and San Carlos Avenue

## PATIENT CENTERED TREATMENT NETWORK

Delivering Basic Health Care Services in St. Johns County

Presenters: Dr. Marathe and Reuben Carter

## EDUCATION REPORT

Presenter: Dr. David Wiles, Committee Chair

Depart from Library to Emergency Operations Center @10:00 am

## ON SITE VISIT TO EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER

Latest Innovations to Cope with a Disaster

Refer to: [www.sjcemergencymanagement.org](http://www.sjcemergencymanagement.org)

Presenter: Ray Ashton, County Emergency Operations Director

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Plus Ongoing Current Issues

Committee Reports

Issues of County Interest

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**ROUNDTABLE WEBSITE:** [www.sjcroundtable.org](http://www.sjcroundtable.org)

**Email:** [info@sjcroundtable.org](mailto:info@sjcroundtable.org)

**ST. JOHNS COUNTY:** [www.co.st-johns.fl.us](http://www.co.st-johns.fl.us)

**ST. JOHNS VISION:** [www.stjohnsvision.com](http://www.stjohnsvision.com)

**ROUNDTABLE INFORMATION:**

**Sacha Martin, Secretary, 501-5545: 133 Coastal Hollow Circle 32084**

[sachamartin@msn.com](mailto:sachamartin@msn.com)

**Chairman: Walter Rohrer (543-9809), Vice Chair: Henry Warner (461-3245)**

**Treasurer: Barrie Higgins (794-1599), Secretary: Sacha Martin (501-5545)**

**: Committee Chairs :**

**Membership: Walter Rohrer (543-9809) & Linda Oakley (471-7555)**

**Growth Management: Marcy Silkebaken (273-8047)**

**Government & Budget: Dan MacDonald (273-5855)**

**Education: David Wiles (471-1896)**

**ST. JOHNS COUNTY  
CIVIC ASSOCIATION ROUNDTABLE  
Minutes for June 12, 2006**

*Those present included State Rep. Bill Proctor, Commissioner Ben Rich, Candidates for BCC Tom Manuel and Ken Bryan, also Bill Mignon, School Board and Joe Ciriello, representatives from the Sheriff's Office and Department of Health, Reporter Kathy Cramer, Ponte Vedra Recorder . Treasurer's Report: \$3,044.50.*

**Program:** CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE – Progress & Preservation  
**Presented by:** George Gardner, Mayor [ [gardner@aug.com](mailto:gardner@aug.com) -- informative Newsletter ]

**PROGRESS:** The City of St. Augustine represents a County population of 13,000.

>>In part due to inspiration from The Roundtable, a **Neighborhood Association Program** was put into place to develop more citizen input to government and a forum where citizens could present issues and government representative could listen to their concerns. Consultant Prosser Hallock was hired last year to review city codes and recommend updates. The recommendation will include neighborhood zoning overlays defining each neighborhood's features, create guidelines to reinforce those features and will include a citizen-based participatory planning and design process to gain resident insight and identify wants and needs [similar to St. Johns Vision efforts]. Neighborhood grant awards are part of this program. There have been 13 distinctive neighborhoods identified. They will do a pilot evaluation using the Flagler Model Land neighborhood, assess existing land use and zoning codes, look at physical attributes, identify strengths and weaknesses. Public input will also be sought for alternatives on the Castillo de San Marcos long range plan. >>A new \$18 million, **1,200 car Parking Facility** will open on July 1<sup>st</sup>, with free parking and downtown shuttles for one month. This is the keystone for an overall traffic management plan which will also include improved directional signage and adjusted meter rates. >>A \$1.3 million contract for **wastewater treatment plant expansion** is being presented for approval. >>After 18 years of proposals, **Sebastian River Harbor** development is now under construction.

**PRESERVATION:**

>>The **Save Our Bridge** public effort is now being implemented and a temporary bridge across the river has opened. >>**The Visitor's Information Center** is being completely redesigned for a Sense of Arrival orientation. Consultants are looking at the Heritage Tourism Program and recommendations for an increased revenue stream to support this. >>Under Representative Proctor's leadership we are pursuing **state funding initiatives**. A \$300,000 Historic Preservation grant was awarded for restoration and maintenance of today's Lightner Museum and City Hall, the former Alcazar Hotel. We sent a proposal to the legislature/governor for \$1 million to maintain 35 state owned historic resources here. It was cut to a \$15,000 grant to develop a heritage program with the University of Florida. The governor vetoed it, but approved \$8 million for recreation at Mission San Luis. We will look for funding of the heritage education program through UFL.

**MAYOR'S JOB & THE PRESS:**

He moved to the Nation's Oldest City 18 years ago, with 16 years of newspaper reporting experience. Wrote stories on heritage preservation and planning for new development. He felt that the City Commission was not listening to the needs of residents and ran on an openly published 12 point platform in 2002 including items such as changing meeting times, the Consent Agenda and parking problems. Once in office, he set out to accomplish this. He believes candidates should put their platforms on the table. Then people can see if these are met. In an election, there is a problem of name recognition reflecting the amount of money spent on a campaign, when the voter enters the voting booth with no other basis for the vote.

>>The role of local press should be to provide the community with knowledge on which citizens can make the right decisions. He would like to see Wayne Hickock back on the air. Local news should toot the local horn for preservation of our heritage. To keep up to date and informed he sends out an email newsletter.

**Q: Ponce Resort?** A: Still going through permitting processes. The Water Management District may require further review. A 749 unit development was proposed to get it under the limit for a Development of Regional Impact requirements. There is nothing coming before the City at this point.

**Q: New Whetstone Chocolate factory? Traffic Problems?** A: There will be a parking deck with 100 public spaces and retail requirements at Sebastian Harbor. Whetstone will improve the King Street area, although we need to look at problems with traffic at the U.S. 1 intersection. The city traffic shuttle should go beyond the downtown and into other business districts to allow further distribution of parking out from the central core. City Design Regulations will control what new building architecture can look like (also includes San Marco Avenue). There will not be any box-looking or cookie-cutter stores.

There will be 900 new homes on the East side of S.R. 312 emptying out onto collector roads which will affect traffic flow. Changes to these roads have to go through the FDOT.

**Comment: The City and County should meet together** over issues of mutual interest on a regular basis, for instance regarding the Airport Authority, where the Authority is not responsible for noise complaints. The BCC and School Board now meet together.

## ROUNDTABLE BUSINESS

### Neighborhood Bill of Rights – Jerry Cameron

The BCC asked County Attorney Dan Bosanko to produce the draft of a NBR Ordinance. Bosanko came back saying it could be done by producing a Resolution instead of an Ordinance. Commissioner Rich sent back a response that a Resolution would not be acceptable. This needs to be in Ordinance Form.

### Caveats on Turnover of PUD from Developer to Homeowners Association – Henry Warner

The turnover is complicated and includes roads, drainage, utilities. It could cost \$20-30,000 per homeowner to connect into county utilities later if documents not worded correctly. Older communities are not exempt because of lack of documentation. It is a good idea to have an independent certified engineer as well as an attorney review the plans and documents. One association said they have hired an attorney to review documents and feel it is worth the \$400/hour fee. The responsibilities to homeowners will fall back on the Association and each has its own individual situations. Builders are supposed to turn over Build Out documents. State statutes (which were probably lobbied by developers) have no protection to offer and don't allow suing the developer. "As Built" documents go to the County for each subdivision, which is supposed to inspect that this is done. But if something is missed, it's the HOA problem.

### Budget Committee Report, Administrative Hearings – Dan MacDonald, Mary Kohnke, Walter Rohrer

The report will be given to the BCC tomorrow. We thank Doug Timms and his staff in the Office of Management and Budget for their assistance. Following is a summary of the Report which appears in full on our web page. We suggest, since it is your tax money, that you read it in its entirety.

The **Total Budget** for FY 07 is a remarkable increase of 31% over FY 06. From 2000, county population grew from 123,000 to an estimated 179,000 in 2007, a 45% increase.

County **Personnel** in full time equivalents has gone from 1,275 in 2000 to a proposed 2,067 for 2007, a 62% increase. Of that Board employees = +88%, constitutional offices +28%.

The total **County Budget** has gone from \$202.0 million in FY 2000 to a proposed \$700 million in FY2007, a 246% increase. In the same period, the Sheriff's Budget is \$23.2 to \$51.3mm (+121%, 7% of total budget), Fire/EMS \$11.4 to \$44.4mm (+290%, 6% of total budget) and Other from \$167.4 to \$604.3mm (+260%, 87% of total budget). Comparing Population, Personnel and Budget growth, that's +45% for population, +62% for personnel and +246% for budget.

County **Current Debt Usage for FY 2007**, status from Revenue Bonds Outstanding versus Debt Capacity is as follows: Total Debt \$264.6 million outstanding / \$124.1 capacity remaining with 68% utilized. It is broken down to: ½ cent Sales Tax \$56.5 / \$60, Transportation Improvement \$32.1 / \$34.4, Capital Improvement, \$21.7 / \$2.0, Water & Sewer \$137.4 / \$27.7, Convention Center \$15.9/na. Looking at Proposed Debt Usage Budgeted for FY2007, total debt would be \$396.6 million.

Looking at the **3 Principal Funds** (\$ million) for fiscal surplus or gap over the next 5 years—General Fund for FY2006 = \$0.3 surplus, FY2007 (\$21.7 gap), FY2011 (\$35.2 gap). Fire District \$4.9 surplus / \$1.8 surplus, (\$0.4 gap), Trans Trust Fund \$9.8 / \$5.1, \$0.5, all surplus. Total is \$15.0 surplus FY2006, (\$14.8) gap for FY2007, (\$35.1) gap for FY2011. The General Fund balance is commonly known as the Reserve.

With total **Remaining Debt Capacity** at \$124.1, budgeted use is proposed at \$132.2mm or a deficit residual capacity of minus \$8.1mm, or more than 100% of capacity. That breaks down to Sales Tax \$60mm capacity, \$60mm use, residual 0, Transportation \$34.4 / \$32.6 / \$1.8, Capital Improvement \$2.0 / 0 / \$2.0, Water & Sewer \$27.7 / \$39.6 / (\$11.9).

The County **Budget PER CAPITA** has grown +138% since 2000, averaging 6% per year through 2003. From 2004 to 2006, growth has been triple that, but 2007 is forecast to increase 25%!!!

The overall budget for FY2007 is a challenging picture for corrective action. Each project needs better analysis. A \$10mm reserve for a \$700mm budget is not sufficient.

In February 2006, consultants Public Financial Management (PFM) made recommendations to the BCC. *[Note fiscal year is from October 1 to September 30.]*

**For Revenues**, based on current status, PFM reported Ad Valorem Tax growth projected at +15.5% and Tax Delinquency at +15.5%. Local Option Taxes projected at +2.1%, Franchise Tax +0.3%, Tourist Development Tax +6.6%, for a combined +14.5% average annual growth in Taxes. All other revenues +3.3% annual growth. Total Revenue Growth at +9.7%. Charges for services +11% annually.

**Expenditure Assumptions** for current **Personnel Services** were +15.3% overall, basic on historical data. From FY2001 to FY2006, number of employees grew +37.6%, or average +6.5% per year. Average salary increased +6.9%. Total Salary Cost including benefits was +13.9% a year. A breakdown of personnel services = Salary +14%, FICA/Medicare +14%, Retirement +14.3%, Life&Health Insurance +18.5%, workman's comp +15%, unemployment comp +6%.

**PFM recommended** to the BBC that it has to reduce staff growth and reduce capital projects or they will have to increase ad valorem tax rates. An underlying strategy could be "because we need to meet infrastructure requirements of the county, raising taxes is unavoidable."

**Caveats to Projections:** When PFM made their recommendations they assumed the CIP (Capital Improvement Program) was at \$35mm and not the \$60mm currently asked for. They also did not take into consideration that costs of development have increased an order of magnitude above that budgeted due to both construction materials and labor costs. Also not interpreting any need for natural disaster, increased fuel or utilities, operating costs. Also the county is relying heavily on sales tax for revenues, which could decrease from bad weather or other tourist visit decrease.

There has been a suggestion by County Administration to take care of future capital improvements by floating another bond for \$60 million. This will cost \$3,964,208 per year in debt service, leaving only \$4.411,000 a year to be added to the general fund from sales taxes.

**Solutions to Revenue Shortfall ?** Raise sales tax, fees, and Ad Valorem Taxes.

**Roundtable Remedies & Recommendations**

**Budgeting Process** – Better preparation of department requests needed. Requests for personnel additions should have a needs test for appropriate levels of service. In the hearings, it was never discussed why more employees were needed. It was stated that this was done privately so as not to take up time in the hearings. Only Stevenson and Rich attended any of the hearings and there was no workshop immediately following.

**Expenses** -- Wage increases are at 6% vs. state levels of 3%. Should employee benefits be partially contributory? What are post retirement considerations? Staff time should be charged to projects to determine their actual costs. For example, hours spent reviewing DRIs and PUDs. The Roundtable had previously recommended that the time that County Attorneys and outside attorneys spend on projects be considered as part of the project cost, but we question were these hours actually charged to the projects?

**Enterprise Funds** – Services should be related to multiple years. The Utility Department reduced rates at a time when they had an outstanding \$37 million from 1991 bonds and deferred maintenance of \$4.5mm.

**General Fund** – There needs to be an increase in non-tax revenues and an increase in reserves.

**Borrowing Process** – A payback analysis should be done and high priority projects only considered. The capital improvement requests should consider priorities. Borrowing where the ability to pay back is limited to non ad valorem sources is not good in addition to spending that money on non-priority issues. The electorate should know what the borrowing is for, that the money will be spent appropriately for these uses, and there should be a drop dead date for the spending period.

***Commissioner Rich commented***– He has since met with Doug Timms and worked at striking \$35 mm off the \$60 mm requested for new bonding. He feels we should have a minimum of \$25-30mm for reserves. For Capital Improvement Requests, he would like to remove \$52mm. Transportation issues, primarily for the Northwest, have definite safety needs. We are suffering from more than 66,000 new homes approved without sufficient infrastructure. Two months ago he met with the Fire Chief. The emergency 800 megahertz communications system will cost \$15mm and a new emergency operations center moved to safer higher grounds \$4-5mm, plus a retrofitting schools for emergency evacuation of \$1.5mm. There is a need for a new Sheriff's annex in at least two places. He was told there is not enough time to get a bond approval referendum done for the November election; for example for a 1% increase in gas tax for 24 months.

**Q: How much of the \$675mm CIP is transportation?** A: About \$300-400mm or about 60%, but new construction costs are coming in at 30-40% over bid. Roads being built are not being paid for by the developer but by a pass-through to a Community Development District (CDD) paid for by new residents.

**Q: How did requests increase 180% since 2003?** A: Elections in 2002 and 2004 changed 4 of the 5 commissioners. The Office of Management and Budget was down graded, and Joe Vonasek, who managed the budget with a tight rein, resigned. The number of Comprehensive Plan changes tripled over the previous three years.

**MOTIONS Proposed, Seconded and Passed:** (1) The Budget Committee is authorized to present their Report to the Board of County Commissioners and the report posted to our web site. (2) A letter will be drafted to the Board of County Commissioners regarding creating a Neighborhood Bill of Rights Ordinance.