

**ST. JOHNS COUNTY CIVIC ASSOCIATION  
ROUNDTABLE  
NOVEMBER 10, 2008 MEETING  
MINUTES**

**ATTENDANCE: 29**

**SPECIAL GUEST: COMMISSIONER ELECT KEN BRYAN**

**PRESS: CHRISTINA ABEL – TIMES UNION SHORELINES**

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

The Roundtable has 44 members, 20 of whom have contributed dues for 2008. The 11/01/08 bank balance, \$2,135.40.

**EDUCATION REPORT**

From Superintendent Joe Joyner's communication report: Alexander Metrakos, an Advanced International Certificate of Education student at St. Augustine High School has won the top award in the United States for having the highest score on the AS Level Thinking Skills Examination. Twelve other area students achieved the Cambridge Scholar Award for outstanding performance on three or more examinations.

The St. Augustine High School Aviation and Aerospace Academy report is attached. Fifteen such academies exist in the County with a big assist from Vystar. More to come on these at a future meeting.

Dr. Joyner added that 1200 additional students are in the program this semester, which combined with decreased revenues presents a considerable problem. Apparently this increase is unique among adjoining counties.

Dropouts: The number of dropouts has apparently been under reported and is a critical problem state wide. Dr. Joyner is on a committee attempting to get their arms around this important problem. The Wall Street Journal estimates the cost to society to be \$45 billion nationally.

October Minutes: approved as presented.

New Business: The PZA decision to permit Hydro-Aluminum to virtually double their size could not be commented upon at this time by either Ken Bryan or Darrell Locklear as the development is very new.

Nominating Committee: Dan MacDonald reported the following slate of nominees for consideration:

Chairman – Jim McLane  
Treasurer - Mary Saunders  
Vice President – Tony Bosco  
Secretary – No Nomination

It was suggested that the secretarial functions be handled by a monthly volunteer or a stenographer. Without agreement on this, the balance on the slate was approved after Mary Kohnke moved to approve and Walt Rohrer seconded. There were no nominations from the floor.

Later, the current secretary agreed to stay in that role until a solution is found.

### **FEATURED SPEAKER**

Darrell Locklear, Assistant County Administrator for Operational Services presented the new County government organization adopted earlier this year.

Darrell described the driving forces behind the reorganization to be the revenue shortfall being experienced over the last two years and the new County Administrator, Mike Wanchick, who has brought his extensive experience and new ideas to St. Johns County.

The revenue shortfalls are well documented and effect every level of government with reduced property tax levels, reduced impact and other fees, a \$7 million catch-up in post employment benefit funding, and increases in fuel and energy expenses as well as health care costs. The County's finances must be in balance and these revenue losses have, therefore, reduced the size and scope of government services.

The previous organization of 46 operating sectors needed streamlining to present the greatest efficiency in the use of available funds.

The County Administrator's office and the County Attorney were left to separately report directly to the Board of County Commissioners. Reporting to the County Administrator are two assistant County Administrators, one in charge of Community Services (Jerry Cameron) and the other in charge of Operational Services (Darrell Locklear), as well as 3 operating departments; Management and Budget, Personnel Services and Tourist Development all reporting directly to the County Administrator.

The office of Community Services (Cameron) controls 4 leading departments and under them 12 operating divisions. The Operational Services office (Locklear) oversees 6 departments, which, in turn, oversee 16 divisions.

With 10 departments and 33 operating divisions reporting to the two Assistant County Administrators, their hands are full but the compatibility of function in each departmental

reporting line makes the plan appear workable. With 1,200 to 1,300 full time equivalent employees involved, the management team is lean but supported by 13 departmental support managements. As always, the proof rests in the quality of the people, which is quite high.

To date, the plan has affected outsourcing and a reduction in personnel largely through attrition of 7 to 8 percent. The County is operating under a hiring “chill” not a “freeze” under which all new employees must have the Administrator’s approval.

While the organizational chart (attached) shows these changes, mission statements and job descriptions related to each were requested. They exist partially at this time but will be forthcoming.

The importance of the Environmental Division was stressed as was the related description of the mitigation process.

Looking ahead to fiscal ’09, the revenue conditions persist with a foreseen \$12 million property tax loss, all but \$1 million of which has been covered.

In a period of constricted revenues, the importance of volunteers is heightened. Melissa Lundquist, Administrative Coordinator for the County’s Administrative office describes the application process for potential volunteers and the current opportunities.

Roger Van Ghent suggested an ombudsman approach that could greatly facilitate interchange between the public and its government by de-mystifying the government structure and facilitating problem resolution.