

**OFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES
OF THE
LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION
PUBLIC HEARING
PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA**

DECEMBER 7, 2022

**WEDNESDAY
10:00 A.M.**

**CLAYTON E. HUTCHESON
AGRICULTURAL SERVICES CENTER
WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA**

DELEGATION MEMBERS:

State Senator Tina Polsky, Chair
State Senator Gayle Harrell, Vice Chair
State Senator Lori Berman
State Representative Joseph Casello
State Representative Jervonte Edmonds
State Representative Peggy Gossett-Seidman
State Senator Bobby Powell Jr.
State Representative Rick Roth
State Representative David Silvers
State Representative Kelly Skidmore
State Representative Emily Slosberg
State Representative John Snyder
State Representative Katherine Waldron

I. Call to Order

The chair called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Sen. Berman led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Roll Call

Present: Sen. Polsky, Sen. Harrell, Sen. Berman, Rep. Caruso, Rep. Roth, Rep. Skidmore, and Rep. Waldron

Absent: Sen. Powell, Rep. Casello, Rep. Edmonds, Rep. Gossett-Seidman, Rep. Silvers, and Rep. Snyder

COUNTY STAFF PRESENT:

Genaya Mercado, Delegation Aide, Palm Beach County Legislative Delegation

Victoria Nowlan, Executive Director, Palm Beach County Legislative Delegation

CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT & COMPTROLLER'S OFFICE STAFF PRESENT:
Danielle Freeman, Deputy Clerk

IV. Welcome Remarks By:

1. Sen. Tina Polsky, Chairwoman

Sen. Polsky introduced Ron Rice, Director I of the County Cooperative Extension Service.

Mr. Rice spoke about the Cooperative Extension Service's mission and activities.

Sen. Polsky acknowledged Legislative Affairs Director Kasey Denny.

(CLERK'S NOTE: Member self-introductions took place at this time.)

V. Constitutional Officers

1. Joseph Abruzzo, Clerk & Comptroller

Clerk Abruzzo discussed the following:

- an upcoming bill relating to the Clerk's budget;
- concerns regarding inflation; and
- the Jeffrey Epstein grand jury records.

2. Carey Haughwout, Public Defender

Ms. Haughwout was not present.

3. Dave Aronberg/Al Johnson, State Attorney, 15th Judicial Circuit

See later in minutes.

VI. Presenters

1. Dr. Debra A. Schwinn, President, Palm Beach Atlantic University

The speaker was not present.

2. Linda Smithe, Sierra Club, Loxahatchee Group

Ms. Smithe discussed sugarcane burning in the Glades and proposed steps that could

be taken to facilitate a transition to green harvesting. She also spoke briefly about single-use plastics and a proposed balloon-release ban.

(CLERK'S NOTE: Item V.3 was taken up at this time.)

3. Dave Aronberg/Al Johnson, State Attorney, 15th Judicial Circuit

State Attorney Dave Aronberg discussed Palm Beach County's successful efforts to address the opiate epidemic. He requested that the Delegation support a proposed 8 percent cost-of-living increase for his office.

Mr. Aronberg spoke about proposed bills that would accomplish the following goals:

- eliminate "gain time" for attempted sex offenses;
- clarify the legal definition of "domestic battery";
- allow judges to prohibit individuals arrested for domestic violence from possessing guns during the pretrial release period;
- include extortion and written threats to kill someone among the list of crimes for which an individual would be required to see a judge before posting bond; and
- permit self-authentication of surveillance videos.

Chief Assistant State Attorney Al Johnson discussed the following:

- a proposed bill that would allow individuals to utilize strips to test for the presence of fentanyl;
- proposed language in the licensing terms for recovery housing that would prohibit alcohol, marijuana, illegal drugs, and usage of another person's prescription; and
- legislation that would require the regulating entities to implement a process for imposing fines.

Mr. Aronberg and Mr. Johnson responded to questions from the Delegation.

(CLERK'S NOTE: Rep. Silvers and Rep. Edmonds, who had joined the meeting, introduced themselves.)

(CLERK'S NOTE: Item VI continued at this time.)

3. Claudia Kirk Barto, President & CEO, Junior Achievement of the Palm Beaches & Treasure Coast, Inc.

Ms. Barto discussed her organization's mission and a new initiative to facilitate equitable access to high-quality education and economic opportunity. She also spoke about an appropriations request that would allow expansion of the 3DE interdisciplinary education model.

4. Dwight D. Chenette, CEO, Area Agency on Aging Palm Beach & Treasure Coast, Inc.

Mr. Chenette discussed the agency's goal of supporting seniors through cost-effective home- and community-based programs and by operating an aging and disability resource center. He stated that the agency sought increased funding to accomplish the following: support the workload associated with resource center operations; continue to provide home- and community-based services; and provide affordable housing and homeless assistance programs for seniors.

5. Catherine Cabanzon, Florida Dental Hygienist's Association

Ms. Cabanzon requested that the Delegation support legislation that would make changes to the 2011 health access law allowing dental hygienists to perform specific preventive services in health access settings. She explained that the legislation would permit dental hygienists to provide temporary fillings. Ms. Cabanzon also requested expansion of the locations served by mobile units and the removal of unnecessary barriers within the existing law.

6. Kat Holland, Sierra Club, Climate Reality, River of Grass UU Congregation

Ms. Holland discussed the need to protect sandhill cranes. She explained that the cranes fed on oak trees and requested legislation that would require developers to avoid planting such trees along busy roadways. She also asked that developers and homeowner associations be held accountable for vehicle-related deaths of cranes.

7. Gil Smart, Policy Director, Friends of the Everglades

Mr. Smart said that his organization supported legislation that would accomplish the following goals: implement additional recommendations from the Blue-Green Algae Task Force; find ways to send more clean water south and reduce harmful discharge from Lake Okeechobee; oppose seagrass mitigation banking; and stop the burning of sugarcane.

8. Melody Sandberg-McDonald, Florida Medical Rights Association

Ms. Sandberg-McDonald discussed the "Free Kill" law.

9. Donna Colabella, Chair of PBC Floridians for the National Popular Vote

Ms. Colabella requested that the Delegation support legislation implementing a popular vote and discussed details of the proposed bill.

VII. Public Comments

Marc Hopin of Alpert Jewish Family Service discussed his organization's appropriations request to support a mental health first aid initiative and additional programs. He also spoke about rising antisemitism in Palm Beach County.

Danielle Hartman of Ruth & Norman Rales Jewish Family Services discussed her organization's accomplishments and priorities regarding behavior health.

Samuel Cintron discussed climate change, conservation, and the need to reduce the use of single-use plastics and polyester.

Mary Jane Range spoke about rising property insurance costs.

Dominic Phillips discussed the "Free Kill" law.

Sen. Powell suggested taking action to show support for female protesters in Iran.

VIII. Adjournment

At 11:58 a.m., the chair declared the meeting adjourned.

APPROVED:

Chair/Vice Chair