

**HENDRY COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
HENDRY-GLADES JOINT MEETING
THURSDAY, JANUARY 11, 2018, 5:01 p.m.
CD 2018-07**

A joint meeting of the Hendry and Glades County Commissioners was held on Thursday, January 11, 2018, at 5:01 p.m. at the Glades County Regional Training Center in Moore Haven, Florida, to discuss regional operations at the Center. Prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance were followed by roll call. In attendance:

Hendry County

Chairman Mitchell Wills
Commissioner Darrell Harris
Commissioner Michael Swindle
Commissioner Karson Turner
County Administrator Charles Chapman
County Attorney Mark Lapp
Clerk Barbara Butler

Glades County

Chairman John Ahern
Vice-Chair Tim Stanley
Commissioner Weston Pryor
Commissioner Donald Strenth
County Administrator Paul Carlisle
Administrative Secretary Julie Braddock

I. Regional Operations

A. Background of Training Center

Mr. Carlisle said he and Mr. Chapman served on the steering committee for this facility along with others from both counties. He reported that several years ago Lykes Brothers and America's Gateway approached him to seek legislative appropriations to build a training facility in support of the economic development of the areas surrounding the lake. They received backing from Florida Southwestern and Palm Beach County to supply courses and curriculum. Others, such as U.S. Sugar, Scott's Miracle Grow, and Wedgeworth, agreed to back the project. Mr. Carlisle said they took this information to the state legislators and explained the need for jobs in this area. The legislators agreed with them and said if they could provide regional training for manufacturing, logistics and existing manufacturers then they would help fund the building of it. The state funded \$3.5 million the first year and the Glades County Commissioners funded \$0.5 million to complete the building and the parking area along with \$1 million for infrastructure for the roadway, electric and water. Mr. Carlisle said they developed a steering committee to ask businesses what employees and what curriculum those

Businesses needed. They developed a premise of what they wanted to provide such as welders, diesel mechanics, manufacturing, logistics, and information technologists.

Mr. Carlisle reported that after a while the team members in the steering committee lost interest and pulled out. He said they needed businesses to invest in training and to build a curriculum to make their workforces sustainable for the kids that were in the high schools so they would not have to leave the county to get training and to find jobs. In order to provide workforce training that was amenable to the business community they could offer it in shifts with day and night classes. Mr. Carlisle said they received the grant to provide training but the partners decided to provide training elsewhere. He said if Glades County School Board had not funded courses at this facility then they would be running in the red. They offer CDL training, citizenship training and adult education.

Mr. Carlisle said they need to know what courses to offer since the local businesses aren't asking for more labor, and what the funding source would be for those courses. He spoke with a man from Immokalee who wants to expand his diesel mechanic business in Glades County. Mr. Carlisle said they went to the legislature and received another \$1 million to build a room for diesel mechanic training. He added that they built a facility to expand a welding program but none of those originally interested in providing materials for training were still willing to do so. On a positive note he said they were able to get language in Senate Bill 10, which pertains to the reservoir south of Lake Okeechobee, to provide for training for the Everglades agricultural area. He said he and Mr. Chapman are trying to get them to fund it.

B. Discussion

Commissioner Turner asked if they would be able to hire a director if Hendry County was able to provide some funds toward the position. He suggested going to partners that previously pledged support and asking them to help fund a director. Mr. Carlisle said the state funds the colleges with only a low percentage of their graduates working at jobs that correspond to their degree. The success rate for vocational training is 40%- 50%. When asked what the #1 pitfall is Mr. Carlisle said they don't have a person who is able to get grants and funding. They need a director who has the time to do this and knows the avenues to go down. Mr. Chapman asked what the salary would be for this position. Mr. Carlisle guessed that a similar position in another county is paid about \$60,000 per year. Commissioner Swindle wanted to hear from Glades County School Board. Mike Presley from the Glades County School Board said they need to know what jobs they are going to provide training for and added that it would be hard for the School Board to contribute financially. He asked if they would have enough students to sustain the program. Another representative from Glades County said they have committed workforce dollars to pay \$2,800 per month to rent space in the building. He said they could get some high school seniors into programs but it would be a small number that would want to go into the fields that are offered. He feels they need to get a commitment from Florida Southwestern and suggested they talk to Jeff Albritton.

Commissioner Swindle said the Center has to be a Glades/Hendry regional action that will also pull in people from Palm Beach and Lee Counties. He also said Glades County

School Board must be involved or it will not work. He said in two weeks they will be starting the first Certified Nursing Program for adults in Hendry County. He had to fund this up front and will not get funding from the State of Florida Department of Education until the end of two years. He said they are missing some connections because I-Tech and Fort Myers Technical College are closing their doors because they can't take in any more students. He knows they are highly interested in being here. He believes a director would be able to make the connection and present the facility in order to bring in other education agencies. Commissioner Swindle also thinks it is crucial to grow the local programs. They need to use the target occupation lists developed by the State of Florida for this area. This is data driven research which is what the program in this building needs.

Commissioner Harris asked who was going to run this project when it was first begun. Mr. Ahern said it started with Lykes Brothers and their involvement with America's Gateway. Mr. Carlisle said originally Glades County had an agreement with a company that was going to build the building and bring in the curriculum. When the recession hit the company wanted the County to go into debt but Mr. Carlisle said he cancelled that agreement with them. The County then asked and received funding from the state. They still had partnerships with the colleges who were going to supply the curriculum. When they pulled out the project lost its momentum. Commissioner Swindle cautioned against private institutions being brought in because the cost would be too high.

Commissioner Turner said he represents an education improvement task force. They raise a lot of money every year to help create a conversation about education in our region. He asked Brent Kettler, former EDC Director for Hendry County, to help facilitate a report for knowing the data sets that will tell how many people need to be trained, in what curriculum, and by what date. Mr. Kettler said rural counties have the same need: the alignment of business need and training skills. In order to make this happen he said a facility is needed. He commented that the administration of education is a business.

Commissioner Turner said he would like Hendry County to give \$20,000 toward this process and hopes that Glades County will add to that amount in order to get a director. Commissioner Pryor said they need to know what they are asking for when they approach the legislators.

Mr. Chapman informed everyone they could go on the Florida Senate website and search for: 2018 Legislation for both House and Senate bills (Economic Development); they will find 44 bills that recognize economic development. There are no less than 7 bills that directly reference rural and regional economic development in this current session. Mr. Chapman plans to call the County's lobbyist to find out what he knows about the legislation that is going through subcommittee and also about what Ben Albritton, Chair of Ag and Natural Resources, said about Hendry and Glades Counties recently in a subcommittee meeting. He said there may be an opportunity for the Counties to take action in this session. He would like to get a general consensus from the Hendry County BOCC to put a proposal on the next agenda, based on identifiable funding, to show the County is serious about this. He would also like consensus from the Hendry County BOCC to work with Mr. Carlisle to ask Mr. Albritton of Florida

Southwestern and Sarah Owen of the Community Foundation to see if they would be willing to match Hendry County dollar for dollar to put a director in at the Center.

Commissioner Swindle asked if it was too late to get a special project from a senator. Mr. Chapman does not believe it is too late. Commissioner Swindle said Senator Grimsley is a great friend of Hendry and Glades Counties and believes it would be possible to ask her for \$200,000 for a two-year start up project.

Mr. Carlisle said they have an avenue and they were instrumental in getting language in Senate Bill 10 to fund training. He said it doesn't require a new bill; it requires funding in the current statute. He said they have the opportunity to tell the legislators they need to fund what they previously agreed to fund. He said they could work out any problems with transportation; what they need is a director to make all of these dynamics come together.

Commissioner Turner thinks they should ask for \$500,000 on a recurring basis every year for this facility. Commissioner Swindle believes someone from the Glades County Schools should be the one filling the position. He said if it is not run by the schools then LEA cannot be tied to it.

Commissioner Ahern said they all need to pull together to make this successful.

Commissioner Stanley said this building was supposed to be built so people could come in and train their potential employees.

Mr. Kettler said adjoining counties will be encouraged to participate. He said there is a cost issue with every student. He asked what programs have to be offered, which ones are funded by the state, what portion of this business has to be essentially aligned with the School Board in order to get state funding and what the rules are.

Commissioner Swindle said every layer must be explored and agreed that surrounding counties such as Highlands and Okeechobee must be invited to participate.

Commissioner Turner asked if they thought the LEA component could be met through the Memorandum of Understanding. Commissioner Swindle said yes and added that the education part could come from grants.

For clarification Mr. Chapman said he understood the Hendry County BOCC was directing him to research his budget and identify \$20,000 and then to work with the County Attorney to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). He believes that Glades County and the Glades County School Board need to enter into an MOU about the director's position and the responsibilities that go with it. With those two MOU's in place they can go to Florida Southwestern, the Community Foundation, and other funding entities and show them that they have committed funds to this project and ask these entities to help with the remainder of the money needed to pay a legitimate salary for the director's position. Mr. Chapman said with the Board's direction he can speak to Senator Passidomo, Representative Donalds and Representative Pigman about Senate Bill 10 to put in language to fund training and to do it in this year's budget. He asked

for someone who knows Senator Grimsley to speak with her about this. Commissioner Ahern said he could speak with Senator Grimsley and feels that she will be receptive to it.

Commissioner Harris asked who pays for the upkeep of the building now. Mr. Carlisle said the County is taking care of the upkeep. He said the School Board is renting two classrooms and the CDL training is renting space which funds the maintenance of the building.

Commissioner Stanley said they may be able to ask for funding from South Florida Water Management. They are building a lot of infrastructure for the reservoirs and will need electricians, electronic techs, etc.

Commissioner Swindle said they should present a business plan rather than great ideas when they ask for funding.

Mr. Chapman said he would like for each one to work on their action items and meet back in March to discuss them.

II Agenda Additions

A. Airglades Airport update

Mr. Chapman said Hendry County was successful on October 17, 2017 with getting the initial FONS! and then the FONS! ROD (Record of Decision). With these in place they are now in the process of finishing the airport privatization pilot program application. A working draft was given to FAA in October and the County has received many comments on it. An independent consulting firm is finishing up its data to be able to prove to South American Growers that Airglades Airport as a perishable cargo facility will save them money over time. He said they will be using a different model of financing for the airport - a per pound rate to land the cargo rather than the flat landing fee. South American Growers want to see the numbers on how this will affect them over time. Logica is the company that is working on that study and says it plans to be able to do customized studies for each of the growers. Mr. Chapman said they have a good indication from the Miami-Dade market that it will not continue to pursue perishable cargo as an expansion aspect of Miami International. They redirected \$50 billion over ten years from a study that would have expanded perishable cargo into passenger and they made a statement that if anyone is interested in perishable activities they should pursue public/private partnerships. Mr. Chapman said he has been told by the consultants that more news on the privatization will be coming forth within the next 60 days. He added that, hopefully, the closing will occur by the end of the summer and the airport will be sold to **AIA**. He said he will be asking the Board at a future meeting to authorize staff to move forward with a consultant to do a land use and comprehensive plan study around the airport. He said some of Hendry County's data may complement information Glades County has for its land holdings around the airport.

B. Glades County Jail

Commissioner Turner asked if the Glades County jail was full. Commissioner Ahern said they were at 85% capacity.

ADJOURN

Commissioner Ahern adjourned the meeting at 6:40 p.m.

., ATTEST:



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mitchell Wills", written over a horizontal line.

Mitchell Wills, Hendry County Chairman

/s/ Barbara S. Butler

Barbara S. Butler, Hendry County Clerk

John Ahern, Glades County Chairman

ATTEST:

Sandra H. Brown, Glades County Court

Approved: May 8, 2018

THESE MINUTES ARE NOT A VERBATIM RECORD. TAPES ARE AVAILABLE FOR ANYONE INTERESTED IN LISTENING TO THE ENTIRE MEETING.