



Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

March 20, 2024, at 1:30 p.m. CT
Orange Beach Council Chambers
4099 Orange Beach Blvd, Orange Beach, AL 36561

Members Present

Mike Kohler, Chair	Escambia County
Colten Wright, Vice Chair	Santa Rosa County
Vernon Compton	City of Milton
Cherry Fitch	City of Gulf Breeze
Mike Norberg	Okaloosa County
Woody Speed	City of Orange Beach

Members Absent

Jared Moore	City of Pensacola
Kerry Smith	Santa Rosa County

Interested Parties Present

Matt Posner	PPBEP
Whitney Scheffel	PPBEP
Logan McDonald	PPBEP
Haley Gancel	PPBEP
Bailey Walkinshaw	PPBEP
Kyna Finley	PPBEP
Mary Jane Bass	Beggs & Lane
Darryl Boudreau	Northwest Florida Water Management District (NFWWMD)
Kiersten Cavender	Dewberry
Naisy Dolar	Santa Rosa County
Paul Looney	Water Resource Association (WRA)
Elizabeth Major	League of Women Voters Pensacola Bay Area (LWVPBA)
Paula Montgomery	Community Member
Phillip West	City of Orange Beach

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call (*Matt Posner, Executive Director*)
Staff called the roll. A quorum was present.

3. Approval of Board Agenda

Mayor Cherry Fitch (City of Gulf Breeze) made a motion to approve the agenda. Mike Norberg (Okaloosa County) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.



4. Approval of January 31, 2024, Board Minutes

Commissioner Colten Wright (Santa Rosa County) made a motion to approve the minutes. Mayor Cherry Fitch (City of Gulf Breeze) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Staff Updates

a. Executive Director's Update (*Matt Posner, Executive Director*)

i. Introduction of Kyna Finley

Logan McDonald (Community Outreach Coordinator) introduced the newest PPBEP team member, Kyna Finley, as the 2024 Panhandle Manatee Intern. Kyna will be responsible for coordinating and implementing the Panhandle Manatee outreach program for this year.

ii. National Estuary Program (NEP) Designation Update

The U.S. Senate unanimously passed U.S. Senator Marco Rubio's *Pensacola and Perdido Bays Estuary of National Significance Act* to direct the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to formally enroll PPBEP into the NEP as an "Estuary of National Significance." The bill now heads to the U.S. House of Representatives.

iii. Florida Legislative Appropriation

Staff reported the Program will receive \$750,000 in state appropriations this year and acknowledged Senator Broxson's support in helping the Program secure the appropriations for the 5th year in a row. The Program is also expected to receive a \$500,000/year recurring appropriation from the University of West Florida.

iv. 501c3

The application for 501c3 status has been submitted by Beggs & Lane on behalf of the Program and is pending.

v. NRDA Restoration Plan

The NRDA Restoration Plan was released and a total of \$50M worth of projects are in the Pensacola watershed, of which PPBEP is expected to receive a direct award of \$3M for microbial source tracking. The Restoration Plan is now open for public comment.

vi. 2024 Gulf of Mexico Conference

All PPBEP staff attended the 2024 Gulf of Mexico Conference in Tampa, Florida for a week-long event of networking and learning on pertinent topics such as oyster shell recycling and seagrass.

vii. 2024 Management Conference Meeting

The 3rd Annual Management Conference Meeting will be held on April 3rd from



10:00am to 3:30pm CT at Sanders Beach-Corinne Jones Resource Center.

viii. Rebudget and Proposed Budget

Staff will bring forward the re-budget for fiscal year 2023-2024 and the proposed initial budget for fiscal year 2024-2025 at the next board meeting in May.

b. Technical Update (*Whitney Scheffel, Senior Scientist*)

i. Comprehensive Monitoring Workshop

Staff hosted a Comprehensive Monitoring Workshop at the end of February at the Bayview Community Center. Over 50 partners were in attendance from over 30 diverse organizations. The objective of the workshop was to inform discussion on existing monitoring efforts and identifying areas of opportunity and barriers, prioritizing monitoring parameters, and discussing roles and responsibilities for participating in the comprehensive monitoring program. Staff will be working on synthesizing the feedback from the workshop in the coming weeks.

ii. FLRACEP Living Shorelines

Staff joined project team members Ryann Rossi and Liz Farmer from St. Andrew and St. Joseph Bays Estuary Program (SASJBEP) to complete the first quarterly sampling for the Living Shoreline Effectiveness project. A total of 10 sites were visited including Project Greenshores, Deadman's Island, Floridatown Park, Bayview Park, and several private property living shorelines in Bayou Grande and Blackwater Bay. The sites are in varying stages of development, including some sites that have not been constructed yet. This will allow staff to evaluate the success of these projects over time and determine their effectiveness at creating habitat and stabilizing shorelines. Staff will be conducting quarterly monitoring through 2025 across our estuary and the SASJBEP team will be assisting partners with monitoring living shoreline projects in Choctawhatchee Bay and St. Andrew Bay. Staff thanked the City of Gulf Breeze Fire Department and DEP for vessel support, and NAS for their coordination for site access.

c. Outreach Update (*Logan McDonald, Community Outreach Coordinator*)

i. Gulf of Mexico Conference

Staff presented The Humble Oyster short film as part of the Communicating, Messaging, and Storytelling session at the 2024 Gulf of Mexico Conference.

ii. Mardi Gras Bead Cleanup

A total of 19 teams and over 600lbs of beads were collected during the 3rd Annual Mardi Gras Bead Cleanup in downtown Pensacola. The collected beads were taken to Arc Gateway, where the beads will be sanitized, sorted, and repackaged for future use.



iii. The Watershed Game Practice Play

Staff are hosting a practice play of The Watershed Game this Friday, March 22nd, at the PPBEP office. The purpose of this practice play is to give the outreach staff practice in acting as facilitators before bringing the game into the classroom. Staff invited board members attend, if available.

iv. 2024 Outreach Programs

Staff reported on the last and upcoming Restoration Rambles and Trivia Night programs.

v. Volunteer Trainings

Staff recently held a Critter Catchers and Observation Tank Ambassador Volunteer Training at Shoreline Park in Gulf Breeze on Saturday, March 16th. Volunteers came out to learn how to seine, identify juvenile fish species and other animals, and basic communication for the general public. Staff have also held trainings in Perdido Key, at the Program's office in downtown Pensacola, and at the University of West Florida in the past couple of months for the Manatee Ambassador and Bay Ambassador volunteer programs. WEAR covered the Manatee Ambassadors volunteer program on air.

vi. Other Events

Staff attended another "The World is Your Oyster: A Collaboration Dinner" at Atlas Oyster House on March 12th with Grayson Bay Oyster Company. Staff were invited to speak about the importance of oysters, the Program, and our oyster restoration goals.

6. Action Items

a. Approval of Submitting a Letter of Support to Governor DeSantis Regarding PPBEP's Legislative Appropriations

Commissioner Colten Wright (Santa Rosa County) made a motion to approve submitting a letter of support to Governor DeSantis requesting he maintain funding levels for the Pensacola and Perdido Bays Estuary Program and University of West Florida Water Quality Center as adopted by the Legislature in the FY25 budget. Mayor Cherry Fitch (City of Gulf Breeze) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

b. Approval of Submitting a Letter of Appreciation to Senator Rubio and Senator Scott Regarding National Estuary Program Designation

Woody Speed (City of Orange Beach) made a motion to approve submitting a letter of appreciation to Senator Rubio and Senator Scott regarding their leadership in co-sponsoring legislation to designate PPBEP as a National Estuary Program. Mayor Cherry Fitch (City of Gulf Breeze) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.



- c. **Ratifying Approval of Florida State University Subcontract No. R000003338 with the St. Andrew & St. Joseph Bays Estuary Program, in the amount of \$324,321, for the Florida RESTORE Act Centers of Excellence Living Shorelines Effectiveness Monitoring Project**

Commissioner Colten Wright (Santa Rosa County) made a motion to ratify approval of the Executive Director's action approving Florida State University Subcontract No. R000003338 with St. Andrew & St. Joseph Bays Estuary Program, in the amount of \$324,321, for the Florida RESTORE Act Centers of Excellence Living Shorelines Effectiveness Monitoring Project. Mayor Cherry Fitch (City of Gulf Breeze) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. At the November 8, 2023 Board meeting, the Board approved the scope of work, and authorized entering into the subaward agreement.

- d. **Ratifying Approval of a Revised Purchase Order with Step One Automotive Ford Crestview, in the Amount of \$48,248, for a Ford F-150 4X4 Super Crew Cab**

Commissioner Colten Wright (Santa Rosa County) made a motion to ratify approval of the Executive Director's action to revise and replace the Purchase Order to Step One Automotive Ford Crestview approved at the November 8, 2023 Board meeting with a corrected Purchase Order, in the amount of \$48,248, for a Ford F-150 4x4 Super Crew Cab. Mayor Cherry Fitch (City of Gulf Breeze) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- e. **Approval of University of West Florida Subaward No. 221276, in the Amount of \$349,999.39, for the Northwest Florida Estuary Water Quality Protection and Restoration Project Sponsored by Senator Broxson**

Woody Speed (City of Orange Beach) made a motion to approve and authorize the Executive Director to sign University of West Florida Subaward No. 221276 in the Amount of \$349,999.39 for the Northwest Florida Estuary Water Quality Protection and Restoration Project Sponsored by Senator Broxson. Commissioner Colten Wright (Santa Rosa County) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- f. **Approval of Entering into an Agreement with Santa Rosa County for GIS Software**

Vernon Compton (City of Milton) made a motion to approve and authorize the Executive Director to sign an agreement with Santa Rosa County providing up to \$12,000 per year for an ESRI GIS Software License. Mayor Cherry Fitch (City of Gulf Breeze) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- g. **Approval of Entering into a Memorandum of Understanding with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Center for Environmental Measurement and Modeling**

Commissioner Colten Wright (Santa Rosa County) made a motion to approve and authorize



the Executive Director to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Center for Environmental Measurement and Modeling to foster collaboration and partnership between PPBEP and EPA. Vernon Compton (City of Milton) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

h. Approval of Resolution No. 24-01 Florida Municipal Pension Trust Fund Resolution to Participate in Defined Contribution and Deferred Compensation Plans

Woody Speed (City of Orange Beach) made a motion to approve and authorize the Chairman to sign Resolution No. 24-01 Florida Municipal Pension Trust Fund Resolution to Participate in Defined Contribution and Deferred Compensation Plans and establish defined contribution rate of 9%. Mayor Cherry Fitch (City of Gulf Breeze) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

i. Approval of Entering Trust Joinder Agreements for Defined Contribution and Deferred Compensation Plans under Florida Municipal Pension Trust Fund Master Trust Agreement

Commissioner Colten Wright (Santa Rosa County) made a motion to approve, and authorize the Chairman to sign, Trust Joinder Agreements for Defined Contribution and Deferred Compensation Plans under Florida Municipal Pension Trust Fund Master Trust Agreement. Mike Norberg (Okaloosa County) seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

7. Committee Updates

a. Technical Committee (Paul Looney, WRA / Technical Committee Chairman)

The Comprehensive Monitoring Workshop held on February 29th by staff had a diverse mix of attendees and provided opportunities to network and collaborate with people through engaging activities, such as interactive mapping activities. The 2024 Management Conference Meeting will be held on April 3rd.

b. Education and Outreach Committee (Logan McDonald, Community Outreach Coordinator)

During the last committee meeting held on February 1st, attendees came up with and voted on primary, secondary, and tertiary messaging for the Living Shorelines Cost Share Program break-out session that will take place at the 2024 Management Conference Meeting on April 3rd.

8. Board/Agency Updates

a. Vernon Compton (City of Milton) shared that the City of Milton was selected for a \$23,000 grant for riparian tree planting along Blackwater River, and recognized the work that Land Trusts are doing across whole landscapes, along with the importance for road crossing for wildlife and pedestrians along Florida's Wildlife Corridor and the potential to work with Florida Department of Transportation.

b. Mike Norberg (Okaloosa County) shared that the Choctawhatchee Bay Estuary Program's Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan is out for review.



9. Public Comment

Phillip West (City of Orange Beach) inquired where the Program ages and stores oyster shells. Staff responded by explaining that it is a joint effort between Florida DEP and Escambia County. No other public comments were made.

10. Adjourned