

Tuesday, August 31, 2021 – 1:30 P.M.
John R. "Jack" Durrance Auditorium
County Administration Building
12 Southeast First Street
Gainesville, Florida

The Alachua County Board of County Commissioners met for the Special Meeting.

PRESENT: Chair Ken Cornell; Vice Chair Marihelen Wheeler, Commissioner Charles S. Chestnut IV, and Commissioner Anna Prizzia

ABSENT: Commissioner Mary Alford

ALSO PRESENT: County Manager Michele Lieberman, County Attorney Sylvia Torres, and Deputy Clerk Steve Donahey

Approval of Agenda

Items for Discussion

1. Discussion of Local State of Emergency and Short Term Emergency Order 21-0813

Fiscal Consideration: N/A

Recommended Action: Have a discussion.

Commissioner Wheeler moved adoption of the agenda as printed.

Commissioner Chestnut 2nd

The motion carried 4-0.

Vaccine Incentive/ARPA Programs

Assistant County Manager Crosby requested the following amendments to the vaccine incentive. The change would be to make each shoot \$25 regardless of manufacturer. He further advised that in the end of September staff will return to the Board with a recommendation on if the program should be continued. He further requested to delegate to the County Manager the authority to sign the necessary agreements for all the ARPA and fiscal recovery funds.

Mr. Crosby stated that having to go the Board for signatures is causing significant delays. The authority would only to be implement plans approved by the Board.

Commissioner Prizzia presented comments.

COVID STATISTICS UPDATE

Health Department Director Paul Myers presented the above item.

Mr. Myers advised the public that Monday thru Friday no appointment is needed from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. for a vaccination and you can receive a \$25 gift card for each shot. He also stated that the permission forms for the FLU Mist program for school students are going out now. The FLU Mist will be administered in school at no cost.

Mr. Myer stated that hospitalization numbers are trending down. Also the positivity rate is declining but testing is up which could affect that number. He is not yet ready to say that the peak of the delta variant wave has occurred.

Commissioner Prizzia inquired if the County has any information on precautions the University of Florida will be taking with the upcoming UF home game. She stated that it would be great if public information regarding precautions for the game and encouraging proper behavior is disseminated.

Commissioner Wheeler inquired how many people are taking advantage of the monoclonal antibody treatment.

Mr. Myers stated that over a 130 treatments a day are being provided and he believes it is having a positive effect on hospitalizations.

Employee Vaccination Statistics

County Manager Lieberman reported the statistics for County Employees reporting in vaccination status. Ms. Lieberman stated that management is serious with the programs in place and disciplinary action will be taken when appropriate.

Commissioner Prizzia presented comments.

Signage for Mask Requirement

Deputy County Manager Smart presented the above item.

Mr. Smart stated that Code Enforcement and Fire Rescue staff are working on distributing signage and speaking with business owners about the requirements. He stated that conversations with the City of Gainesville have taken place and signage provided. Their staff will handle the distribution within the City limits.

Commissioner Prizzia stated that her observations have been that there has not been enforcement with customers entering stores without a mask.

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Chair Cornell stated the first mandate was more of an educational effort. He stated that he would like to see the signage effort for another week and then decide if there will be enforcement or not.

Commissioner Wheeler stated that this effort is needed to protect both the customers and the employees.

Commissioner Chestnut stated that the stores he has visited most people were wearing a mask. He is for maintaining the Emergency Order until the numbers start to fall.

Commissioner Prizzia moved the following:

1. To renew the Emergency Order with the addition of a signage requirement at businesses. (The signage is required at indoor places other than homes such as churches and non-profits.
2. Approve the modification to the plan to award a \$25 gift card per COVID 19 shot regardless of manufacturer and approve the budget amendment.
3. Authorize the County Manager enter into agreements, memorandum of understanding, letters, grant documents, purchase orders and similar documents to implement Board adopted ARPA and SLFRF projects.
4. Continue the Emergency Action.

(Public Schools and Charter Schools are exempt from the order.)

Commissioner Chestnut 2nd

Commissioner Wheeler, Chair Cornell, and Commissioner Chestnut presented comments.

Public Comment

Chair Cornell recognized Armando Grundy Gomez, Debbie Martinez, a citizen, and County Attorney Torres who presented comments.

The motion carried 4-0.

Closing Comments

Public Comment

Chair Cornell recognized Nathan Skop and Tamara Robins who presented comments to the Board.

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Commission Comment

Communications Coordinator Sexton stated that the County has noticed an increase in comments being removed from the County Facebook Posts. The County is not removing comments but Facebook is removing comments.

County Attorney Torres stated that the County site is set up as a public forum. The County cannot participate in view point discrimination.

Commissioner Prizzia stated that it is her job to raise questions about concerns she has with County processes. She did that in the case of the hiring for the Economic Opportunity Manager because she had concerns about the process and she raised those concerns at the meeting.

Commissioner Prizzia stated that the Supreme Court has ruled that the CDC does not have the authority to issue an eviction mandate. She believes this will lead to a rash of evictions and wanted to receive an update on the County rental assistance program.

County Manager Lieberman stated that she will provide an update. She also advised that at the football game mask are required in the indoor suites. Public Service Announcements will be present as well as free vaccines will be offered at two of the gates.

Commissioner Wheeler stated that with the current trauma of the Afghanistan withdrawal the County needs to make sure that the services Veterans need are available.

Communications Coordinator Sexton stated that he did appear at a City of Gainesville meeting to express the County support for a Tom Petty Festival. However, the organizers stated that depending on the COVID situation the event may be delayed and it has been delayed. But the County and the Tourism Department are in support of the event and intend to support the event which is now scheduled for next year.

There being no further business before the Board the meeting was adjourned at 2:55 P.M.