

# Minutes

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY TASK FORCE

February 22, 2021 – Meeting 03  
Zoom Webinar

- I. Call to order**
  - Meeting was called to order at 1:32 EST
- II. Roll Call**
  - A quorum of members was present.
- III. Task force member question on local government efficiency issues and recommended solutions provided to the task force**
  - Tiffany Henderson from the Florida Association of Counties (FAC) presented the materials and recommended solutions for efficiency issues submitted by the FAC to the task force.
  - Rebecca O’Hara from the Florida League of Cities, Inc. (FLC) presented the recommended solutions for efficiency issues submitted by the FLC to the task force.
  - Chris Lyons from the Florida Association of Special Districts (FASD) presented a brief history of special districts, efficiency issues related to special districts, and recommended solutions for efficiency issues submitted by the FASD.
  - Chair Whitmore opened the floor for task force member discussion of presentations.
    - Possible areas of interest based on meeting discussion were identified, including:
      - Sunsetting reports and standardizing report deadlines
      - Addressing differences between city and county meeting requirements and notifications
      - Special districts: consolidation, cumulative millage rates, public participation in their board meetings, migrating special districts (e.g. fire districts) to the Florida Retirement System (FRS)
      - Physical quorum requirements for public meetings/virtual meetings
      - Local election timing and efficiency
- IV. Presentation and consideration of potential task force initiatives**
  - Emily Leventhal from OPPAGA presented the full list of items of interest submitted by task force members
  - Members discussed examples of efficient government practices and ways to identify efficiencies
- V. Task force next steps**
  - Members discussed potential dates for upcoming meetings
- VI. Other business**
  - Chair Whitmore called for other business items from the task force
    - No other business was presented
- VII. Public comment**
  - Chair Whitmore opened the floor for public comment
    - Rebecca O’Hara from FLC provided comment regarding local elections
    - Chris Lyons from FASD provided comment regarding local elections
    - Michael Dreikorn provided comment regarding fire districts
    - David Cambareri provided comment regarding virtual meetings
    - Jennifer Kilinski provided comment regarding special districts
- VIII. Closing remarks**
  - Meeting adjourned at 3:58 EST

All Meeting Participants

| <b>Panelists</b>        |                  |                                  |                                    |
|-------------------------|------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
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Public Comment Report

**Topic**  
**Local Government Efficiency Task Force: Meeting 03**

| Question  | Asker Name                                    |
|---|---|
| <p>1 Number 2 Public meetings</p> <p>2 first bullet.. virtual meetings.. add special districts to language of allowing cities and counties to meet virtually during state of emergency.</p>   | <p>David Cambareri</p> <p>David Cambareri</p> |
| <p>3 Michael Dreikorn, Commissioner from the Matlacha Pine Island Fire Control District. The topic of consolidation of the 19 fire control districts of Lee County have been previously addressed at both the legislative and county levels of government. Notably, in 2017 a bill was submitted and failed that aimed to consolidate the 16 Lee County special fire districts, carving out the three municipal fire departments. In the same year, the proposal was submitted to the Lee County Board of Commissioners and rejected.</p> <p>In Lee County, a study has been conducted that showed the current structure of independent fire districts was both efficient and provided citizens with the most direct access to management of their fire and rescue services. In example, the Matlacha Pine Island Fire Control District, a district of approximately 10,000 island residents, has been actively engaged in an effort to improve its ISO ratings so that homeowner insurance premiums could be reduced accordingly.</p>  | <p>Michael Dreikorn</p>                       |
| <p>4 This effort has required specific funding focus and development of enhanced capabilities that has resulted in improved ISO ratings for the district, reductions in insurance premiums, and improvement in response times. To this end, the citizenry of the district have been directly involved in the decision-making processes.</p> <p>While we applaud the efforts of this task force to identify opportunities for greater efficiencies, our district is confident that it is well managed, fiscally responsible, and efficient. With the exception of 2 of our most senior employees, our district is fully incorporated with the FRS. In a quick survey of the other Lee County special fire districts, the majority are within FRS. With regards to areas we feel this task force can assist special district, we echo the comments of My Lyon.</p>  | <p>Michael Dreikorn</p>                       |
| <p>5 Our district is led by 5 local unpaid citizens and we utilize inter-local agreements. We feel our current structure provides the most efficient use of taxpayer money and is locally driven. We will point out that not one of our county or legislative elected leaders live in our fire district, and have not since Lee County was incorporated, 137 years ago. Our fire district commission is the only elected leadership our district citizens have that actually experience the issues our district is confronted with. While not all special districts are equal in performance, we respectfully request that this task force utilize actual data with regards to its efficiency discussions and decisions. The Matlacha Pine Island Fire Control District also extends an invitation to the members of this task force to visit our district and see for themselves how well business is conducted and much the community is involved in our district.</p>  | <p>Michael Dreikorn</p>                       |
| <p>6 Good afternoon, my name is Jennifer Kilinski from the firm of Hopping Green &amp; Sams and I represent the Association of Florida Community Developers. I am in the car, so my ability to appear by camera is limited but wanted to provide my contact information to the task force and also be available as a resource. We largely represent community development districts, improvement districts and stewardship districts created to deal with public infrastructure requirements, DRI and development order requirements and other public infrastructure required for development of residential and commercial projects throughout the state (which includes a number of interlocal agreements with various cities and counties throughout Florida). A recent report demonstrates the success of development in Florida in the context of special district public financing: <a href="https://www.rclco.com/publication/financing-mechanisms-top-selling-mpcs-of-2020/">https://www.rclco.com/publication/financing-mechanisms-top-selling-mpcs-of-2020/</a></p> | <p>Jennifer Kilinski</p>                      |

## **Task Force Members' Interests for Future Initiatives**

### **Local Government Administration and Operations**

#### 1. Elections

- Changing elections to same date statewide, cost savings
- Election Cycles: Off-cycle elections are expensive and usually have significantly less turnout therefore they are inherently inefficient. I am not referring to special elections that may occur due to vacancy. However, being a supporter of many elements of home rule; perhaps if a local government wishes to engage in the practice of off cycle elections then maybe it should affect their access to state funds. As much as possible of FSS Chapters 97-107 should be uniform throughout the state.
- Early Voting Sites: Due to the impacts on infrastructure from Hurricane Michael, counties in the panhandle region have been granted greater elasticity, by executive order, to select locations for early voting. Perhaps these standards should be statutorily expanded statewide, as early voting has proven to be both popular and efficient.

#### 2. Public Meetings

- Legal notices, one public hearing in city government
- Virtual meetings and let cities/counties implement in extraordinary circumstances, i.e. state of emergency or local emergency
- Waiver of physical quorum in meetings, regular , land-use etc.
- Interlocal agreements honored to eliminate duplicative services between local governments and possibly county, ie. Merge transit with incentives for both to do as a money loser.
- Printed Public Notification Requirements FSS Chapters 50, 166 etc.: Change statutory requirements to permit full migration to digital platforms to increase outreach and reduce costs. This should also provide greater transparency.
- Second Reading for Municipal Ordinances: Eliminate the requirement. Treat all local governments the same.

#### 3. Reporting

- Financial Reporting: Local Governments should not be compelled, by the state, to produce specific reports for research or reference. If needed components can be included in Annual Reports or CAFR's to fulfill specific requirements, that seems reasonable.
- Repetitive reporting and possible sunseting so these rules get examined maybe every 10 years. Statute reporting requirements and is it necessary, costs - vs- benefits

#### 4. Pension Plans (FSS Chapters 175 & 185): What specific barriers exist that impede migration into FRS?

#### 5. Unfunded mandates, state must provide funding if required

### **Business Requirements**

#### 6. Local Business Tax (LBT) Occupancy License

- LBT Redundancy: Without getting into the home rule aspects of this, at a minimum, I would just address this: Should a business located within a municipality also be required obtain a county LBT certificate?
- LBT required for Home Based Businesses: This seems odd. Why is this necessary?

#### 7. Mandate Electronic Permitting Capability (Submissions, Adjustments and Payments). Welcome to the 21st Century.

### **Facilities and Utilities**

8. Local Government Facilities: How can state government compel or perhaps incentivize, the collaboration of multiple government entities in the same community, when they are building new or expanding existing facilities? (Counties, County Constitutional Officer's Operations, Special Districts, School Districts, Municipalities) The fewer fully exempted parcels on a tax roll the better.
9. WMD's and Local Government (Water Management & Stormwater) Should review be required by both local authority and WMD district?

### **Special Purpose Local Governments**

10. Special Districts
  - Look at all special districts. Duplicative reporting, justifying continuing with that special district and is it still meeting the original guidelines when put in place
  - Special Districts: How can they be more efficient operationally, both in the normal course of business and within an emergency management framework?

### **Miscellaneous**

11. COVID -19 Related Local Government Efficiencies: Right now, I would just say we should leave some space for this one as events continue to unfold.
12. Occupational licenses – not interested in removing in chartered governments for public safety purposes only. It does have a public safety component due to, way to know what services/businesses your govt. has available in case of an emergency.
13. Minority reporting - not interested in removing until we see if there has been a cost savings versus benefits to the governments.