

CITY OF PALM BAY, FLORIDA
PALM BAY MUNICIPAL FOUNDATION, INC.
DISASTER RELIEF COMMITTEE
EXECUTIVE BOARD
SPECIAL MEETING 2021-03

Held on Monday, the 23rd day of August 2021, at the City Hall Council Chambers, 120 Malabar Road, SE, Palm Bay, Florida.

This meeting was properly noticed pursuant to law; the minutes are on file in the Office of the City Clerk, City Hall, Palm Bay, Florida. The minutes are not a verbatim transcript, but a brief summary of the discussions and actions taken at the meeting.

The meeting was called to order at the hour of 5:59 P.M.

ROLL CALL:

CHAIRMAN:	Donny Felix	Present
VICE-CHAIRPERSON:	Susan Walberg	Present
MEMBER:	Christopher Duncan	Present
MEMBER:	Keith Miller	Present
MEMBER:	Vanessa Scott	Present

CITY STAFF: Present was Rodney Edwards, Assistant City Attorney; Terri Lefler, Deputy City Clerk.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

There were no public comments.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES:

1. Regular Meeting 2021-02; June 21, 2021.

Motion by Vice-Chairperson Walberg, seconded by Mr. Duncan, to adopt the minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

**1. Discussion of assistance for the area(s) affected by the earthquakes in Haiti.
(Chairman Felix)**

Chairman Felix presented the item to the Committee. He advised that on August 14, 2021, Haiti was impacted by a 7.2 magnitude earthquake, causing over 2,200 deaths, leaving over 20,000 wounded and over 80,000 homeless. He mentioned that Haiti was impacted by an earthquake of the same magnitude in 2010 with over 300,000 registered deaths and stated that Haiti had still not fully recovered from that devastation. He expressed concern with how certain relief organizations handled the situation in 2010.

Mr. Miller referred to the article Chairman Felix had provided to the Committee regarding the American Red Cross' funding for Haiti relief in 2010. He expressed concern with the amount of administrative funding utilized by the American Red Cross and felt that funding provided may not reach individuals that were in need. Ms. Scott concurred with Mr. Miller.

Vice-Chairman Walberg mentioned that the American Red Cross and United Way had been in the news for heavy use of administrative fees. She felt that the Committee's guidelines should be modified to give the Committee more flexibility, while setting criteria to select legitimate organizations objectively. Mr. Edwards clarified that the by-laws allowed the Committee the opportunity to select any 501(c)(3) and that the only prohibition was that the Committee could not donate to an individual or individual business. Mrs. Lefler stated that the former Committee reviewed their suggested guidelines with the former City Manager and decided that a declaration of "state of emergency" would be used as the initiating factor for a special meeting. Mr. Miller inquired about organizations outside of the United States jurisdiction and asked if "501(c)(3)" was a national or international designation. Mr. Edwards confirmed it was a federal Internal Revenue Service (IRS) designation and that the designation was required in order to donate to an organization. Chairman Felix advised that most non-governmental organizations (NGO) were required to be vetted by the local government and a registered 501(c)(3) in the United States. Chairman Felix inquired as to the balance in the Committee's fund. Mrs. Lefler advised the balance as of July 31, 2021, was \$10,740.42.

Chairman Felix stated, for the record, that he was a City of Palm Bay Councilmember, member of the Palm Bay Municipal Foundation, Inc. (PBMF), President of the Haitian American Association of Brevard (HAAB), and a member of the National Haitian American Elected Officials Network (NHAEON). He explained that he utilized the Disaster Relief Committee as the only platform when seeking monetary donations.

Mr. Duncan advised he provided Chairman Felix's contact information to the United States Pentagon and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) humanitarian efforts. He also reached out to Brevard County Emergency Management

with his concerns about the spike in Covid-19 cases in the local community. He felt funding from the Committee would be necessary in the future for local disasters related to Covid-19 cases; however, he also felt that the Committee should donate towards the Haiti relief efforts. Mr. Duncan mentioned that the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds were waiting on full classification from Congressional Office District Eight (8). Mr. Duncan felt that the Committee could benefit from the available APRA funding. He mentioned the possibility of help by means of temporary housing. He suggested asking that the American Red Cross, United Way, and other organizations match the Committee's donation. He stated that another available resource to be considered was Good360 because for every dollar (\$1.00), the organization matched with seventy-seven dollars (\$77.00) in pallet goods for necessities needed. Mr. Duncan also suggested the possibility of employees donating pennies from their paychecks and the possibility of redirecting employee donations currently given to United Way to help build the Palm Bay Municipal Fund.

Chairman Felix stated that Mr. Duncan had many great suggestions but that time was of the essence for Haiti relief and that the Committee should consider a dollar amount for the donation. He stated that Haiti needed monies to put towards medical supplies and medications. He said that perishable items such as rice and water were not suggested donations due to items arriving expired, the cost to transport, and negative impacts to the local economy. He stated that the HAAB organization was working with the fire stations to collect specific items such as medical supplies and Covid prevention items. He reiterated that one hundred percent (100%) of all donations through the NAAB/NHAEON would be given Haiti.

Mrs. Lefler advised that the former Committee had implemented a minimum donation of \$250, with increments of \$250, at the discretion of the Committee based on the magnitude and the effects of the disaster. She also advised that a previous disaster had been publicly noticed for collection of the specific event which lasted a period of thirty (30) days. Mr. Miller questioned how the collection period was advertised. Mrs. Lefler responded that the Committee was ultimately responsible to get the word out; however, it was also advertised on the City's website. Mrs. Lefler mentioned the possibility of a press release which would be at the discretion of the City Manager. The Committee concurred with the suggestion of a press release to include asking organizations to match the Committee's donation. Mrs. Lefler said that she would relay the Committee's request to the City Manager. Ms. Scott requested that the press release be provided to the Committee when completed.

Mr. Duncan mentioned that there were evacuation efforts by the United States Pentagon and felt that Palm Bay could be a city to house evacuees. He felt the Committee could get a donation match of \$10,000. He also suggested that the City Attorney and City staff research ARPA funds to classify what the City considered disaster relief and in what capacity. Chairman Felix advised that the ARPA funds would be at the discretion of the City Council and was not within the Committee's power to determine use of ARPA funds.

Bill Battin, resident, stated that Mr. Duncan could individually address the City Council or, upon consensus of the Committee, the Committee's Chairman could address the City Council with ideas relating to the ARPA funds.

Mr. Duncan suggested the donation be set at \$9,500, with the Committee to promote both for-profit and non-profit organizations to match it. Vice-Chairperson Walberg expressed concern with not leaving any money in the account, especially in the middle of hurricane season and that priority was to be given to local disasters. She suggested splitting the difference and offsetting that amount with the designated donation period. Mr. Miller agreed that he did not want to donate the entire amount. Chairman Felix informed the Committee that any amount could be brought before the PBMF and that all members of the City Council had expressed their support of providing relief to Haiti. Mr. Duncan amended his suggested donation to \$5,500.

Mr. Miller stated that the Committee needed to consider a strategy on how to market to replenish the funds. Vice-Chairperson Walberg felt that it would be helpful when marketing funds to be able to present an effective strategy to replenish funds.

The Committee concurred to donate \$5,500, advertise for the collection of donations solely for Haiti relief for a 30-day period, and work towards getting other organizations to match up to \$5,500. Chairman Felix inquired if he should solicit funds in his capacity as City Councilman or Chairman of the Committee, in which Mr. Edwards stated that it could be in either capacity. Mrs. Lefler clarified that the recommendation would be going before the PBMF, not before City Council, for the vote.

Motion by Mr. Duncan, seconded by Ms. Scott, to recommend to the Palm Bay Municipal Foundation, Inc. (PBMF) a donation to the National Haitian American Elected Officials Network (NHAEN) in the amount of \$5,500 for relief efforts towards the earthquake in Haiti; to advertise and solicit donations for a period of thirty (30) days, allocating all funds received during that time towards Haiti relief; and for the Committee to solicit matching funds starting at \$250 up to \$5,500.

Chairman Felix provided information about NHAEON. He stated that sixty-seven (67) members were elected and asked by the Haitian government to be at the forefront as a watchdog over monies, donations and promises made. He said there were over 200 members that formed subcommittees within the organization. He stated that NHAEON had a portal accessible to the public where transactions could be seen in real-time. Chairman Felix offered to update the Committee on the donation(s). Motion carried unanimously. Mrs. Lefler asked that Chairman Felix provide a point of contact so that the Finance Department could coordinate payment with NHAEON.

OTHER BUSINESS:

1. Discussion of amending the by-laws to include language adopted by City Council and implemented by the former Committee.

Mrs. Lefler informed the Committee that she had drafted revisions to the Committee's by-laws. She stated that according to Article 7, written notice was required one month prior to any amendment to be considered. The revisions were for review and were to be brought back for discussion and approval at the regular meeting in September.

Mrs. Lefler advised that the draft amendments to:

- a. Section 6, under Article 4, was required as it was based on an ordinance adopted by City Council at their August 5, 2021, meeting. The amendment stated that a member must attend at least 50% of each meeting in order to be counted present;
- b. Section 3, under Article 5, removed a vote by the Committee members to change a meeting location. The date and time of regular meetings would still require a vote by the Committee; and
- c. Section 1, under Article 7, removed the requirement of one month notice prior to considering amendments to the by-laws. This would allow the Committee to consider basic or required amendments when presented. The Committee could still choose to review the presented amendments and vote at a future meeting.

Other than the general housekeeping-type of draft amendments, Mrs. Lefler advised that the remaining amendments were discussed by the former City Manager and former Vice-Chairman. These draft amendments were to have been brought forward for the former Committee's approval; however, the Committee members' terms had expired prior to that

occurring. Mrs. Lefler stated that these revisions were at the discretion of the Committee and could be approved or adjusted as the Committee deemed fit, as long as it did not conflict with the Code or the Resolution that established the Committee.

2. Next regular meeting – Monday, September 20, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. (Informational)

Chairman Felix announced that the next regular meeting would be held on Monday, September 20, 2021, at 6:00 P.M., in the Council Chambers.

Mr. Duncan provided a web address and email addresses to assist the Committee with the status of relief efforts. He stated that he requested a spokesperson be available for the September 2, 2021, PBMF meeting as well as the September 20, 2021, Disaster Relief Committee meeting. Mrs. Lefler advised that the PBMF meetings typically occurred after the regular Council meetings. Chairman Felix requested that this particular PBMF meeting occur prior to the regular Council meeting on September 2, 2021, so that the Committee could attend to show their support. Mr. Duncan asked if the press release would be released prior to the PBMF meeting. Mrs. Lefler advised it would be after the meeting as it would be considered by the PBMF at the September 2nd meeting. The Committee felt it would be helpful to include a draft press release with the agenda item for the PBMF to review. Mrs. Lefler advised she would provide the Committee with a friendly URL for the Committee's donation page in addition to the website/email address provided by Mr. Duncan. Mr. Duncan explained that the website was a channel for external support and the two emails gave access to releases relating to what was currently happening.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at the hour of 7:25 P.M.

ATTEST:

Donny Felix, CHAIRMAN

Terri J. Lefler, DEPUTY CITY CLERK