

The Emergency Meeting of the City Council of
the City of Panama City Beach, Florida, related
to Hurricane Michael, held on October 11, 2018.

ROLL

MAYOR MIKE THOMAS

COUNCILORS:

PHIL CHESTER

GEOFF MCCONNELL

HECTOR SOLIS

CITY MANAGER:

MARIO GISBERT

CITY ATTORNEY:

AMY MYERS

Mayor Thomas opened an Emergency Meeting to discuss Hurricane Michael's impact and response immediately following the previously advertised 10/11/18 Special Meeting, with Councilman Solis, Councilman McConnell and Councilman Chester in attendance. The Council was joined by the City Manager, City Attorney and City Department Heads.

Mr. Gisbert indicated that most visitors and maybe 50% of residents had evacuated. He said the City was lucky and spared but damage done to the entire community affected us. Communications systems were down, physically and technically. The Police Department had set up a hotspot at the station and the EOC so they hoped to communicate with them soon. The Street Department, Police and Fire were going through the City to survey damage. Gulf Power Company has 2000 people staged at Frank Brown Park with hospitality at Arnold High School to take care of them. Mr. Gisbert said we've asked everyone to call the City's main number and the calls would be relayed to the necessary parties. Water has run out. The Bay County pumps were not running, and the filtration systems were not working. He said it could be 2-6 days before the County had their system restored and boil water would be for the foreseeable future. Mr. Gisbert said the City was at the mercy of Bay County as purchaser of their water. Most damage involved trees and powerlines with minimal structural damage in the City. No fires and no looting. We asked folks to stay away for a few more days. The City Manager asked the City Attorney to read verbatim the latest message from the EOC regarding recovery efforts and reentry. The City Manager said City Hall was open, and non-essential personnel who were able to report to work on Friday had been asked to do so.

Councilman Solis asked if a Master Call List had been developed to get a handle on the situation and status of City Employees. The City Manager said that would be coordinated through Department Heads. Councilman McConnell indicated that if non-essential employees reported to work, that they have a clear and defined role to perform, since this was not business as usual.

Mr. Gisbert indicated several employees had lost their homes on the other side of the bridge. If those employees were able to get to City Hall, Gisbert would like to find a way to keep them on the island. He indicated a local hotelier had offered to house City employees at a government rate. The damage to the island was not physical, but we were in recovery mode, to house and feed folks.

Ms. Myers explained that she had drafted a Resolution finding that an emergency existed in the City, authorizing some extraordinary procurement procedures contemplated in our Charter with regard to non-budgeted expenditures that could be made by the City Manager, and the use of competitive quotes instead of competitive bids. She read the body of the Resolution verbatim. Discussion followed regarding the City Manager's purchasing cap and duration of the Resolution.

The City Manager said that since water was about to run out, the buildings would be without working sprinklers. Tanker trucks were available, and Walton County was

buying some too. He invited Deputy Fire Chief Ray Morgan to discuss the life safety issue arising from the lack of water to protect occupied buildings. Deputy Chief Morgan said they did not want to compound one situation with another having a fire in closed quarters with no sprinklers. Concrete structures were ok to the fifth floor—tankers and ladder trucks could reach that high. Councilman Solis asked if a building had power, if people would be kicked out. Councilman McConnell recommended that the City at least put them on notice that we could not protect them over a certain height. Councilman Solis said most condos do not have CAMs on site and communication were troublesome. Councilman McConnell suggested that the City coordinate with Mr. Dan Rowe, TDC President, to get the word out to the lodging accommodations.

Deputy Fire Chief Morgan updated the Council on his Department's efforts. He indicated that he was rotating crews to check on families and that everyone had been accounted for at this time. All City zones had been cleared. Both City stations fully up and running with engines, and ambulances coming. Communication was sketchy and this was the first time Bay County had offered to transport. D.C. Morgan said they had been bringing folks to the station for medical attention. He indicated that the City had requested prior to the storm that the Beach ER stay open but the request was denied. Councilman Solis said he had contacted two ER doctors who were also attempting to get the Beach ER back open. Mr. Gisbert indicated that there still may not be power there. D.C. Morgan indicated he had food and water for staff. Mr. Gisbert said the Fire Department had already sent officers and supplies to Lynn Haven and Callaway, and all staff had been recalled with all but two activated.

The Council stated to all the Department Heads that when an employee needs were identified to be sure to make that information known so that assistance could be provided.

Chief Whitman advised that several of his employees had been affected and a few had lost their homes. Councilman Solis indicated a food trailer was on way to feed the Department. Discussion followed regarding the use of front parking lot and moving of City trucks. Chief Whitman said he had recalled all but four non-essential personnel. He indicated his teams were out non-stop until the eye hit and then they were back out on twelve to sixteen hour shifts. He said he would dial those hours back. The communication systems were terrible, using runners back and forth to the EOC to get messages in and out. Towers were down. Some people were allowed on the island today and may change tomorrow. Some stores were open to accommodate those here, such as Publix and Home Depot which opened today with limited staff and hours. He said his Officers were cutting trees using their personal chain saws. The National Guard was here. The City Street and Stormwater crews had been a big help. The Chief continued that he was looking for places off-site for his officers to get some sleep. One special needs child needed a place to go. Lost officer last night when he lost his oxygen. We had a non-responsive individual that Bay County refused to transport, so officers put him in car and carried him to the Walton County line for transport to Sacred Heart. That was three hours ago and the EOC making all calls right now.

Councilman McConnell said that was another reason the City did not need people on this beach. He thanked the Police Department for their professionalism and tireless work despite tears and worry.

Mr. Gisbert said this was the time for our City to help the folks on the other side of the bridge. He's asked Mr. Leonard to canvass facilities so can make accommodations known. He said the City was going to become a bedroom community for the foreseeable future. Councilman Solis said we had places but water was the issue.

Mr. Gisbert indicated there were so many leaks now in the system, all made worse by the damage. Councilman Chester asked about the West Bay and Hathaway waterlines. Mr. Gisbert said the lines were fine but the lines that fed them were not. The County system was completely down. Once the pumps were up and the filtration working, then pipes would need to function to carry the water. Councilman McConnell said the

County was trying to access their pump stations with a Blackhawk helicopter and to expect to be without water for days. The Reclaimed Water was already shut down.

Mr. Gisbert said the Street and Stormwater Departments were picking up the debris. Ms. Jenkins said her guys had stayed overnight to be ready and had started clearing yesterday after the eye passed, first on the collector roads then in the neighborhoods. They opened outfalls the today. Mr. Gisbert reported not much rainwater or storm surge. Councilman Chester said there was flooding on Moonlight Bay Drive. Ms. Jenkins said the City had weathered worse rainfall events.

Mr. Gisbert said Ms. Debbie Ward, PIO, had ridden out the storm at EOC and had pumped information out on social media the best she could. Ms. Ward requested direction and clarification. Mr. Gisbert indicated we should stick with the EOC message for now. Ms. Ward said the communication with the EOC was not good.

Councilman McConnell questioned if the Council members should rotate shifts at the EOC. Discussion ensued. Mr. Gisbert indicated the original plan was to rotate two police and two fire personnel who would be in direct and frequent contact with him but when the phones did not work, that plan did not work either. Councilman McConnell said he was not trying to step on Mr. Gisbert's authority, but he felt the City needed a constant voice at the EOC. Mr. Gisbert said he would love an advocate for the hospitals. Councilman Solis said the City could be the staging area for the whole County. Councilman McConnell said they could communicate their needs to us as well. Mayor Thomas said if the County was refusing medical calls then we have a serious problem.

Councilman McConnell asked if the City had any interlocal agreements with Walton County. Chief Whitman replied negatively. Councilman Solis said all the FEMA representatives were at the EOC but their generators were sitting at the City's Commerce Park. They needed to communicate.

Mr. Gisbert confirmed there was no damage to any City buildings and Staff was sleeping in the new Police and Public Works buildings. Diesel had been restocked for the generators. Regarding the EOC's reentry plan, it would be essential personnel only. Then grocery stores and others, then service industry, then residents. Councilman Solis said the CVS, Publix, Winn Dixie and Tom Thumb at Phillips Inlet were open 7 A.M. to 5 P.M., and that they ought to be allowed through bridges to re-stock.

Mr. Mark Shaeffer reported on behalf of the Utilities Department that the McElvey water was offline. The Navy Base had been evacuated so the City shut their water down to help the rest of the system. He said that Staff was chasing down leaks on the East end of the island and thought most had been located. The West Bay Tanks had 1/3 of their water left. The station was running on generators with limited radio communication. Wastewater had one train operating, all that was needed right now with two to four generators running. Governments west had offered their utility supplies and people. The Apalachicola river was unpassable, so the only options were west of us. Mr. Shaeffer continued that fuel was good, transferring from unusable radiators. Councilman Solis said it would be worthwhile to have liaison with Gulf Power and to know their plan. Mr. Gisbert said they had a representative at the EOC, and their plan was to power hospitals first, then water plants, as those were the hearts that beat the rest of the City.

Mayor Thomas asked if anyone had anything further. Ms. Myers said the procurement resolution had been read, but limits still needed to be confirmed. After discussion, the Council agreed that the City Manager's cap would be Seventy-Five Thousand Dollars (\$75,000) the aggregate, and for a period of fourteen (14) days that could be readdressed at the next Council meeting.

Councilman Solis made a motion to approve the Resolution with those limits. Councilman McConnell seconded. Ms. Myers called the roll, which passed unanimously by those present recorded as follows:

Councilman Solis	Aye
Councilman Casto	Absent
Councilman Chester	Aye
Councilman McConnell	Aye
Mayor Thomas	Aye

With nothing further, the meeting was adjourned at 5:41 P.M.


READ AND APPROVED this 25th of October, 2018.

**IN THE EVENT OF A CONFLICT BETWEEN THE FOREGOING MINUTES AND A
VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT OF THESE MINUTES, THE FOREGOING MINUTES
SHALL CONTROL.**



Mayor

ATTEST:



City Clerk