

# MINUTES BAY COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS WORKSHOP MEETING WITH PANAMA CITY BEACH CITY COUNCIL

#### APRIL 2, 2015 1:00 P.M. – COMMISSION MEETING ROOM, BAY COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER

## I. Chairman Tunnell called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M.

The Deputy Clerk called the roll for the Board of County Commissioners and all members were present as follows: Mike Nelson, District I; George B. Gainer, District II; William T. Dozier, District III; Guy Tunnell, District IV; and Mike Thomas, District V.

The Deputy Clerk called the roll for the Panama City Beach City Council and all members were present as follows: Mayor Gayle Oberst; Councilman John Reichard, Ward 1; Councilman Rick Russell, Ward 2; Councilwoman Josie Strange, Ward 3; and, Councilman Keith Curry, Ward 4.

The Invocation was given by Mayor Oberst.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Nelson.

## II. Spring Break Strategic Planning Session

Chairman Tunnell welcomed the audience and members of the City of Panama City Beach Council. He stated that he had been asked if there would be public input, and because it was a workshop for the two bodies, it had been decided not to have public input on the agenda.

Mayor Oberst stated that they were pleased to be there; that in her 15 years at City Hall it was the third joint meeting, and she thought they might do it more often; and, that they were willing to work with the County to find solutions to concerns.

Mayor Oberst spoke regarding the prior year Spring Break by stating that it wasn't the best experience; that they had formed 17 different recommendations after meeting seven times with anyone who wanted to express an opinion; that it was not strong enough and did not cover as many areas; that the County, in expressing concern and holding a special meeting, spurred them to do the same; that they had been developing a policy of working with the County to have the same or very similar ordinances; that there were a number of things the Chief, City Manager, and legal staff had been working on, and copies had been provided;

and, that they were broken down into A) Special Events, B) Loitering, C) Nuisances, and D) Beach Behavior. Mayor Oberst began with:

#### A. Special Events (March through Easter Sunday)

Food Vendors/Special Vendors on Streets and in Parking Lots

Board and Council members commented and discussed the issues as follows: that they were stopped in the County due to problems; that in Panama City Beach they had to apply for special event permits, and could only be in one area for seven days; that at one time in Bay County, Pineapple Willy's had food vendors between Joan Avenue and the Circle K and was not paying sales taxes; that the County ruled they could not have food vendors; and, that in Panama City Beach they tightened the ordinance by requiring they be on private property, have permission from the business owner, and, have access to restrooms for patrons and staff.

City Manager Mario Gisbert pointed out the specificity of that portion of the talking points as March through Easter; stated that a vendor without security, bathrooms, or other items related to brick and mortar businesses had become problematic because they attracted thugs; that the City had a parking lot vendor permit and a special event permit that allowed vendors within their premises and, that they were considering options to alleviate issues with vendors.

In response to inquiry by Chairman Tunnell, City Manager Gisbert stated that a panamaniac card was a marketing card used to enter clubs and parties, and also provided free beverages and food; that they were one of the parking lot businesses that created congregating and issues; that businesses were harder to manage outside of four walls; and, that it was a three tiered line item to be considered.

Council members and staff commented on and discussed that Bay County did not have food vendors and they were a problem in Panama City Beach; that if someone had to pay for a building, taxes, and upkeep, someone else should not be allowed to just drive up; that the focus needed to be deterring thugs; that marketing cards could be sold for use at concrete businesses; that police looked at congregations occurring around those establishments; and, that few problems were seen from food vendors who needed land owner permission, a permit, and were short-term.

Commissioner Thomas stated that food trucks were in several places; that certain places had locked their parking lots; and, that most of the food trucks that year had been in front of La Vela.

Mayor Oberst stated that if Bay County did not have them, the City needed to review what they had and what could be done, and to inform Bay County.

#### 2. Special Events with Additional Municipal Resources

City Manager Gisbert stated that County Manager Majka had rewritten the Cocoa Beach special event ordinance; that Panama City Beach's activation of a special event was over 500 people on the street at one time; that Cocoa Beach activated as soon as extra police/fire resources were needed, with other activations such as advertising distances and genres; that the City could work with the County to incorporate both ordinances to mutual benefit; and, that the City's modification to add extra security, fencing to the water's edge, and no coolers had been of benefit at current year events.

In response to inquiry by Mayor Oberst regarding a County special event ordinance, Commissioner Thomas stated that Bay County followed the City; that the Cocoa Beach ordinance activated event permit approval for any advertising outside of Brevard County; that an approved event provided law enforcement advance knowledge; and, that an unpermitted event could be shut down.

In response to inquiries by Commission and Council members, County Manager Majka stated that Cocoa Beach had an advance application requirement for review and approval by law enforcement, fire, building inspection, traffic, parking management, etc., and gave the Sheriff authority to require corrective action and/or event shut down due to permit violations; that the permit covered commercial and public properties; that permits were also activated by advertising that was determined would attract larger numbers than promotors stated; that parking/use agreements were required of adjacent property owners, and were event specific; that they were responsible for providing a marketing plan, and staff performed internet searches for the event; that there were several tiers of permits scaled to events; that they were primarily monitored by law enforcement, as well as a city marketing and economic development director; that for Panama City Beach, if it was on the internet in any form, it would be outside their jurisdiction; that Cocoa Beach looked at it from the perspective of 1) being informed that it was going to occur, 2) resource management needs, and then 3) scaled based on the event; that what drove the requirement for a permit was the fact that advertisement occurred outside; that there were small events by civic groups; that permit fees were stacked; and, that the purpose was not to generate revenue, but to be informed of events in order to insure proper assets were assigned so public interest could be protected and provide an instrument to end events if needed.

Mayor Oberst and Chairman Tunnell discussed directing staff to review those types of rules and regulations.

## 3. Special Events with Extension of Premises

In response to inquiry by Mayor Oberst, City Manager Gisbert stated that their special events started four or five years ago, and the net for the special event was 500 people; that they were talking about an advertising and/or municipal requirement net; and, that they were just making the net tighter and catching more.

City Manager Gisbert further stated that, within the special event ordinance, they had created a perimeter fence requirement exemption for the Corporate Village. In the past year, law enforcement felt that the exemption allowed events to escalate into problems.

In response to a request by Mayor Oberst, City Manager Gisbert explained that a Corporate Village was where an advertiser would setup an area as simple as a tent or as large as a stage; that the promoter would try to involve a group in their activity, which had the ability to excite people; that outside the fence it could get out of hand; and, that the consideration was whether to continue that type of event inside or outside a fenced area, or not at all.

Chairman Tunnell stated that it made sense for containment to keep problems from developing.

Unknown individual, stated that an incident as simple as handing out colas, with amplified music, caused the growth of a large crowd.

#### 4. Corporate Villages

Mayor Oberst stated that while staff was considering the special events ordinance, they needed to look at fencing Corporate Villages, with property owner responsibility, and with the understanding of that responsibility.

In response to inquiries by Council and Commission members, City Manager Gisbert stated that the existing ordinance required fence type, height, and placement, and that special events fence containment was working fairly well; that in 2013 there were no restrictions on Corporate Villages; that 2014 required the limit of a 20x20 foot stage with fencing around the audience; that escalation occurred outside the four foot fence; that fencing to the water helped containment; that Corporate Village could also mean three or more tents, with the idea that it would diffuse attention; that the openness might need to be more contained; that traversing from the water's edge was allowed; that if the event took the fence to the water's edge, people were allowed to traverse; that they could not preclude anyone from going through; that if the fence was not to the water's edge, an east/west path was created for emergency vehicles and pedestrians; that outside perimeters were the problem; that Corporate Villages could be kept contained as a whole; and, that with Council direction, there would be more discussion outside of that meeting.

Mayor Oberst requested that staff review of the ordinance include Corporate Villages, perimeter requirements, and, behavior conducive to the atmosphere.

County Manager Majka stated that the Cocoa Beach permit required the special event to provide the entertainment; that law enforcement reviewed previous acts in other communities; and, that if behavior associated with those events was felt to be not conducive, the permit with that entertainment could be denied.

Chairman Tunnell stated that he would like to see that factored into any proposed ordinance.

In response to inquiries and comments by Council members, City Manager Gisbert responded by stating that, typically, parent properties would hire promotors who would pull permits for the parent property; that written acknowledgement from the parent property was required; that the permit would list all activities slated for that Corporate Village; that the property owner remained the responsible party; that there was a wish to curtail some banner plane advertising; and, that City/County Managers would need direction on considerations of acceptable/unacceptable advertising.

County Manager Majka stated that it was important to point out the fine line between free speech and advertising, and that they could not control everything.

Panama City Beach Council members continued by commenting that if other issues were resolved, some things would take care of themselves, and that NCAA advertising guidelines might provide some assistance.

## 5. Club/Licensed Bar Age Limits

In response to inquiries and comments by Council members regarding age limits, City Manager Gisbert responded by stating that it would take more research before action could be taken; requested the Council and the Commission give them more time; and, stated that it was a tough line to define.

Commission members, Council members, and staff commented and spoke on the issue by stating that there was concern that 18-21 year olds in clubs were secure, and in the street they were another law enforcement problem; that it needed to be explored with law enforcement to see what was practical; that wherever they were they would be at risk; that the idea was to allow bar access, and restrict access to alcohol and other things in that premises; that there were no restrictions outside clubs, and very little deterrent to obtaining and consuming alcohol; that it needed law enforcement review; that research took about 15 minutes; that Ft. Lauderdale did it by defining a bar, a restaurant, and different things; that it was a law that needed to be year round; that the job would be to ensure they were not in a place where they could be preyed on; that if you rented to them, you policed them; that to not make a rule because it required policing elsewhere was not something that should be done; that they knew what was happening, and it was unacceptable; that it might cause other problems, and hopefully they would fix them; that some current rules were wrong; that neither entity had an ordinance in place at that time; that one club had set rules for no one under 21 to enter; that the County took emergency action on that item recently; that a parent would not tell a child coming to Spring Break to get into a bar and stay there to be safe; that 21 year olds were buying alcohol for 18 year olds; that alcohol was not sold to minors in one of the Commissioner's restaurants, but stopping it being provided to a minor had happened; that if under 21's were in the facility, they had more access and

opportunity to alcohol; inquired if 18 to enter and 21 to drink was originally designed for viewing the entertainment, and requested additional review on that issue; stated that the cover charge was the same and might have played a part; that it was easier for a 15 year old to pass for an 18 year old, and an even younger group was getting in with access to alcohol; and, that clubs were seeing fake IDs.

#### B. <u>Loitering</u>

#### 1. Parking at Closed Businesses

In response to inquiries by Council members, City Manager Gisbert stated that they had some cooperation, but would have to work with counsel on legalities; that they needed to preclude parking at closed businesses; that if owners were unaware and a situation escalated, they did not know who to call to clear private property; that if they could say there was no parking at closed businesses, then they could remove them; that if a business was operational, they could contact the owner for approval for that activity; and, that it would help with abandoned businesses, businesses that closed early, and others.

In response to inquiry by Chairman Tunnell, Assistant County Manager Dan Shaw stated that their focus was on occupancy and parking regulations, and fire code enforcement; that they had nothing right then on parking in vacant lots; and, that they had contacted adjacent property owners to post no trespassing signs so that the Sheriff could have them towed.

In response to inquiries by Council members, City Manager Gisbert stated that they had received cooperation from Walmart, Edgewater, Burger King, and Wendy's; that there were many unnamed parking lots that closed for business and needed to be captured; cautioned that staff had to be careful in some areas with ownership issues; stated that most business owners favored the proposed action; that towing had taken place at the Walmart parking lot, resulting in a crowd difference the next night; and, that use of no parking/tow away signs had helped.

# 2. Parking in the Right-of-Way and the Tourist Corridor

In response to Mayor Oberst's request, City Manager Gisbert explained that they had restricted parking to a degree in the triangle by posting signs; that the triangle was the area from Joan Avenue to Front Beach Road, Middle Beach Road, and South Thomas Drive, and was the biggest concentration of people driving from the super clubs to condominiums; that no parking signs removed cars from sides of streets, and allowed room for emergency vehicles and pedestrian walkways; that they needed to keep vehicles from parking anywhere in the right-of-way during that time period specifically, which could preclude unintended guests from having places to hang out; that if private and public could work together to exclude places for hanging out, it would help; that they were not talking about striped parking; that some businesses had striped parking within the right-of-way and it would be awkward to take that away; that it would allow towing from any unstructured

parking or closed business; that sidewalks helped move pedestrians from roadways; that right-of-way parking should be prohibited year round; that those items listed under B. Loitering and C. Nuisances were intended to be year round; and, that there were older establishments with striped parking in the right-of-way.

Bay County Sheriff Frank McKeithen stated that there wasn't ample parking, so they parked where they shouldn't; that bars did check IDs and marked the hands of those entering; that they kept a close watch on underage people, and if caught drinking they were put outside; that they then became the Sheriff's problem; and, there need to be non-alcoholic venues for those under 21 years of age.

#### C. <u>Nuisances</u>

#### 1. Grandfathering

Mayor Oberst stated that they were struggling with grandfathering; that under present ordinances, they fell under grandfather clauses; and, that more was now required of businesses.

Assistant County Manager Shaw stated that new rules adopted in the last year made it difficult for structures to reopen unless they met current standards for parking, landscaping, stormwater, etc.; and, that they were mostly caught on parking.

Commissioner Dozier confirmed that the new regulations came into effect once a business had closed and then reopened, and that if an ongoing business remained open they remained grandfathered. Mayor Oberst suggested the verbiage of closed or changed business, and City Manager Gisbert confirmed that current grandfathering was 120 days; that if grandfathering was reduced to 30 days, it would still allow businesses to retrofit/remodel; and, under any code occupancy and parking were issues.

Council members and County staff spoke regarding businesses that were eating establishments during the day and bars at night, and did not comply with parking requirements; that those businesses were then shut down at 9:00 due to parking requirements; that it also depended on the kind of liquor license; that a special event provision would allow shut down due to additional law enforcement needs; that work was being done on land use/parking requirements; and, that use changes and occupancy could be addressed under building codes (fire protection, egress, etc.).

#### 2. Fire Codes and Room Limits

Council members and staff discussed the need for continued education on occupancy and evictions; that there were businesses working through those issues and making things better; that everyone needed to take ownership in managing their properties; that they found that many of the resort condominium

associations were protected; that one resort had five different management companies handling rentals, and that private owners could also rent their condominiums; that owner permission was required when law enforcement was called to evict; that it had become a state-wide problem; that it might take a legislative rule update to create unified management of unified property; and, that condominium owners were asking for assistance, but they were not able to assist.

#### 3. Nuisance Law

Commission members, Council members, and staffs commented on and discussed nuisances that would tie into special events; that if dwellings created frequent calls, a mechanism was needed to curtail calls to reduce the burden on law enforcement; that nuisance control had been used on beach services with issuance of a citation, an increased citation, a one day shut down, a one week shut down, and then permanent shut down; that they had created a review system with a judge of their peers; that Walton County found that putting everyone breaking the law in jail a few times had reduced the problem; that owner permission was needed to evict renters who were a nuisance to surrounding neighbors, but were not breaking the law; that if laws were being broken, the situation was easier to correct; that curbing underage drinking would be difficult; that we could not bring in adult entertainment and not expect them to attend; that underage entertainment was needed; that Bay County was reviewing the nuisance calls issue; that a common response around the country was to bill for the law enforcement time to respond; that the strength of evicting people would be in fire codes; and, that the ability of fire codes in enforcement was not to be underestimated.

Mayor Oberst stated that they should direct their staff to meet with County staff.

Further discussion took place on condominium management and owners; that some owners were required to sign an agreement to allow eviction for misbehavior; that within the nuisance ordinance, evictions needed to be able to take place when condominium and residential property managers/owners were unable to be found; that it would be a useful tool for condominium security and law enforcement; that the billing approach could also be included; and, that a condominium association was looking at issuing fines.

#### 4. House Parties

Council members, Commission members, and staff spoke on comments received regarding a recent shooting at a house that wasn't on the sand, and yet drinking was banned on the sand; that Panama City Beach had an ordinance that addressed residential rental limits to six months and not short-term; that on the tourist corridor, rentals had no restrictions; that action taken by the County to ban drinking on the sand was not directly related to the shooting incident; that there were house party problems in Panama City Beach neighborhoods; that landowners needed to be held accountable for rental issues; that most house

parties were promoted through social media; and, that Panama City Beach law enforcement did cover social media.

Sheriff McKeithen stated that at the house party shooting, a number of people interviewed were guests at motels on Panama City Beach, and not staying at the rented house; that the Sheriff's Office actively looked at social media; that a team of officers drove the unincorporated area looking for numbers of cars in driveways that would indicate a house party; that there was State law on open house parties that referred to parties attended by those under the age of 18; that they addressed and arrested people having open house parties; that interviews of people at the house party revealed they could not afford the clubs and went to house parties; that they looked for issues in homes, motels, and condominiums, and they arrested people; that they addressed State law controlling disturbances, nuisances, loud noises, etc.; and, that they would like to present, along with the Chief, ideas for house parties.

Sheriff McKeithen was asked by Chairman Tunnell to coordinate with the respective staffs; responded to an inquiry by Commissioner Nelson by stating that State law did not address those aged 21 and open house parties; that they addressed it if they 1) were drinking and had alcohol, 2) were under the age of 21, and 3) had loud noises, and they arrested the people they could arrest; that sometimes loud noises did not constitute an open house party, but numerous cars could indicate a bar-b-que; and, that in condominiums, evictions could not take place, but arrests could if someone was violating the law.

Further comments and discussion by Commission members, Council members, and staff took place regarding residential parking off the tourist corridor; that in the City, a house had been built that would sleep 50+ people and met the paper parking requirements, but parking occurred in the street; that they had authorized two more similar dwellings to be built; that staff was reviewing residential parking requirements for houses that held large numbers of people; that Bay County had no requirements for the number of residential occupants; that staff work was taking place on house parties; that State law took care of underage house parties; that occupancy and fire code regulations could be used; that staff was looking at house party permits in order to set occupancy and parking limits, and allow the Sheriff to shut down unpermitted parties; that County staff was unaware of any residential properties of the size discussed; that there were some big occupancy dwellings on the west end; that Bay County currently did not permit residential parking based on dwelling size, but should look at it; that the City was seeing eight bedroom dwelling units built to accommodate eight couples with children; that only three parking spaces were required, and they needed 12 spaces for eight families; that parking was required for other multiple occupancy dwellings, such as condominiums and hotels; and, that some homes were becoming hotel-homes, as opposed to homes.

#### 5. March through Easter Sunday 2:00 AM Closings

Commission members and Council members commented on and discussed carrying the 2:00 A.M. closings past Easter Sunday; that calls had been received by shift work residents regarding the time change; that the Panama City Police Chief had said there was virtually no problem with the 4:00 A.M. closure after Easter; that Bay County and the City had both approved the 2:00 A.M. closure through April 18; that the City was considering the rest of the year; and, that there was consideration being given to a 2:00 A.M closure from March 1 through Easter.

#### 6. Scooters/Mopeds

Commission members, Council members, and staffs commented on and discussed mopeds and scooters by stating that Panama City Beach was reviewing regulations to require vests, and to follow rules and regulations; that mopeds did not follow road rules and regulations; that they passed right, left, and in between cars, with many near vehicle and pedestrian accidents; that they were hard for police officers to catch; that they were a serious problem; and, staff asked for direction from the Council and Commission.

Further discussion took place on scooter identification; requiring vests with rental company names; requiring riders to sign documents stating they knew the vehicle rules and regulations; that owners said riders would not follow the rules; that they were a nuisance; that Bay County had talked to their legislative delegation regarding the issue; that there were 1,300 licensed scooters in Panama City Beach; that there were inexperienced and unlicensed drivers on that type of vehicle; that the Motor Vehicle and Highway Safety Department was protective of their rules; that they had asked to be allowed to permit rentals in the counties, and had tried to legally legislate the issue; that they had exhausted every avenue other than asking to remove the businesses; suggested requiring increased cc's to 75 or above in order to move safely through traffic and require a motorcycle endorsement; that it was year round issue; noted that the items listed under C. Nuisances were year round issues; that the State considered them motor vehicles; that they were an amusement; suggested a moratorium until scooter serial numbers had been collected, and scooters phased out through attrition and the inability to purchase replacements; to then allow a transition to three and four wheel vehicles; that they put a burden on law enforcement; that training needed to be upgraded, with business owners taking responsibility, or requiring a license and experience; suggested limiting hours of operation because nighttime was dangerous with no vests and dim lights; stated that Panama City Beach had most of the scooters and Bay County had one rental business; that scooters traveled all over and into Panama City; confirmed that their discussion had no bearing on current lawsuits; and, that there was a desire to take action.

## D. March through Easter Sunday Beach Behavior

 No Beach Alcohol at Key Places Per Track Record/No Coolers or Funnels

Commission members, Council members, and staffs commented on and discussed no alcohol on the beach for 18 miles from State park to State park; that there had been calls regarding the shut down; inquired if there was a way to deal with Spring Break by addressing hot spot areas or the full 18 miles; stated that the special event permit could deal with hot spot areas; that additional restrictions to consider were no coolers and/or funnels on the beach; spoke on possible cooler size restrictions and that coolers didn't matter because they drank hot alcoholic beverages; stated that citizens wanted to walk down the beach with an alcoholic drink to watch the sunset; that the Sheriff had already addressed that issue; that guests in motels, condominiums, or beach residents walking down the beach with a beer were not a problem; that the Sheriff and Police Chief had to be trusted to be very discretionary; that 90% of problems were behind clubs and establishments serving alcohol, and those places needed to bear the responsibility; that Bay County enacted an ordinance that affected one property with very few disturbance calls; that drinking needed to be stopped behind places causing problems, rather than everywhere; that party animals drew law enforcement focus and were the issue, and that alcohol in the wrong hands caused issues; questioned what the public wanted, and what they were willing to give up to get it; stated that 90% of the problem was on the asphalt and not on the beach; that many residents did not feel they were giving anything up and wanted it stopped; that a visiting family brought three or four people with them that went out to eat and purchased items vs. one Spring Breaker; that more money was derived in a family environment, unless they were just calculating beer; that businesses would rather a group of families visited, multiplied by three or four people, than just one person; that those things were affected by when schools were out in Atlanta and Birmingham, and families were available to visit; that tossing Spring Break the first three weeks of March would not bring families because children were still in school; that no one was talking about tossing Spring Break, but they agreed that limits were needed in some places; that residents were concerned about negatively impacted property values; that future residents were looking elsewhere due to Spring Break; that whatever was done or not done would be painful and difficult; that whatever steps were taken, Spring Break had to be curtailed and controlled; that tweaking issues had not been enough; that issues had now been hammered; that the Tourist Development Council had only advertised rule changes that year; that Spring Break would be cut back with the new rules; that Spring Break had out grown what could be locally controlled; that eliminating problems with Spring Break could bring family visitors, and, potential new residents and businesses; and, that the Chief and Sheriff had people gathering intelligence and coordinating with other agencies.

Sheriff's Office Major Ford stated that they worked with partners in other states; that they had reached out to the Phoenix City, Alabama Sheriff and the Dothan, Alabama Police Department to conduct operations; that operations were conducted on U.S. Highway 231; that they were bringing resources from Jackson, Walton, Gulf, and Franklin Counties, and all surrounding areas; that the Chief brought resources from other counties; that resources would have to be addressed; that no alcohol on the beach provided a tool for law enforcement to control an out of control and dangerous environment; that it tamed the perception that "anything goes" in Panama City Beach; that they would dedicate resources to enforcement in the areas needed; that it was not necessarily a permanent solution; that something had to be done to bring the situation under control, because it was chaotic and dangerous.

In response to inquiries and comments by Commission and Council members, Major Ford stated that with no alcohol on the beach they would continue proactive enforcement, but he believed it sent the message that they were not going to tolerate the chaos and dangerous environment; that if it meant fewer of the bad element came to Panama City Beach, then that was what they hoped to achieve; stated, on behalf of the Sheriff's Office, they appreciated them working together and taking needed action; that as it currently stood, it was a dangerous situation for them; that the Sheriff had mentioned before that the resources they brought in were typical of something they would bring in during a natural disaster; that ambulance and EMS personnel were also out there; that there was worry about problems extending beyond Spring Break into weekends and holidays; that they wished there were things that could be instituted quickly for emergencies; that some of the entertainment being brought in was not helping our community, and brought the same trashy behavior; that they needed to be prepared to make certain people uncomfortable all the time; and, that some heroes were working in fire, EMS, and law enforcement.

Mayor Oberst expressed appreciation to the Board for hosting them that day.

#### III. Board Discussion

County Manager Majka requested that direction be given to him and the City Manager to work together, and to create a meeting schedule for formal adoption.

Councilman Reichard inquired as to the attitude of the County Commission to the suggestion of not going forward with year round 2:00 A.M. bar closings. He stated that it was getting more interest on the beach, and would like the Board's input prior to it being placed on an agenda for their meetings.

Chairman Tunnell stated that Bay County adopted a temporary closure time through April 18, and that it would come back before the Board.

Commissioner Gainer stated that a lot depended on how much the other items discussed would solve problems.

Commissioner Thomas stated that they needed good input from the business community, or it would get worse; that many discussions had taken place on what would happen the current year, and things they did not do made an impact; that some members of the Board felt hoodwinked because actions stated by certain businesses did not take place; that it did not do any good to be circumvented; that it created a noose that would be continually tightened until it worked; that political pressure counted; that the majority of that pressure did not live on the beach, but in the County; and, that the Board was ready to tighten.

Chairman Tunnell stated that their Public Information Office had provided them a lengthy article on the Ft. Lauderdale Spring Break situation; that in the conclusion, they talked about the carrying capacity of a community; that there was only so much they could carry, so many visitors, so much demand on public safety, code enforcement, etc.; that their capacity had reached its maximum; and, that they had to look at long term solutions, and work at them every day.

There was no further business discussed in the workshop.

IV. Adjournment (3:25 P.M.)



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City Manager Mario Gisbert pointed out the specificity of that portion of the talking points as March through Easter; stated that a vendor without security, bathrooms, or other items related to brick and mortar businesses had become problematic because they attracted thugs; that the City had a parking lot vendor permit and a special event permit that allowed vendors within their premises and, that they were considering options to alleviate issues with vendors.

In response to inquiry by Chairman Tunnell, City Manager Gisbert stated that a panamaniac card was a marketing card used to enter clubs and parties, and also provided free beverages and food; that they were one of the parking lot businesses that created congregating and issues; that businesses were harder to manage outside of four walls; and, that it was a three tiered line item to be considered.

Council members and staff commented on and discussed that Bay County did not have food vendors and they were a problem in Panama City Beach; that if someone had to pay for a building, taxes, and upkeep, someone else should not be allowed to just drive up; that the focus needed to be deterring thugs; that marketing cards could be sold for use at concrete businesses; that police looked at congregations occurring around those establishments; and, that few problems were seen from food vendors who needed land owner permission, a permit, and were short-term.

Commissioner Thomas stated that food trucks were in several places; that certain places had locked their parking lots; and, that most of the food trucks that year had been in front of La Vela.

Mayor Oberst stated that if Bay County did not have them, the City needed to review what they had and what could be done, and to inform Bay County.

## 2. Special Events with Additional Municipal Resources

City Manager Gisbert stated that County Manager Majka had rewritten the Cocoa Beach special event ordinance; that Panama City Beach's activation of a special event was over 500 people on the street at one time; that Cocoa Beach activated as soon as extra police/fire resources were needed, with other activations such as advertising distances and genres; that the City could work with the County to incorporate both ordinances to mutual benefit; and, that the City's modification to add extra security, fencing to the water's edge, and no coolers had been of benefit at current year events.

In response to inquiry by Mayor Oberst regarding a County special event ordinance, Commissioner Thomas stated that Bay County followed the City; that the Cocoa Beach ordinance activated event permit approval for any advertising outside of Brevard County; that an approved event provided law enforcement advance knowledge; and, that an unpermitted event could be shut down.

In response to inquiries by Commission and Council members, County Manager Majka stated that Cocoa Beach had an advance application requirement for review and approval by law enforcement, fire, building inspection, traffic, parking management, etc., and gave the Sheriff authority to require corrective action and/or event shut down due to permit violations; that the permit covered commercial and public properties; that permits were also activated by advertising that was determined would attract larger numbers than promotors stated; that parking/use agreements were required of adjacent property owners, and were event specific; that they were responsible for providing a marketing plan, and staff performed internet searches for the event; that there were several tiers of permits scaled to events; that they were primarily monitored by law enforcement, as well as a city marketing and economic development director; that for Panama City Beach, if it was on the internet in any form, it would be outside their jurisdiction; that Cocoa Beach looked at it from the perspective of 1) being informed that it was going to occur, 2) resource management needs, and then 3) scaled based on the event; that what drove the requirement for a permit was the fact that advertisement occurred outside; that there were small events by civic groups; that permit fees were stacked; and, that the purpose was not to generate revenue, but to be informed of events in order to insure proper assets were assigned so public interest could be protected and provide an instrument to end events if needed.

Mayor Oberst and Chairman Tunnell discussed directing staff to review those types of rules and regulations.

# Special Events with Extension of Premises

In response to inquiry by Mayor Oberst, City Manager Gisbert stated that their special events started four or five years ago, and the net for the special event was 500 people; that they were talking about an advertising and/or municipal requirement net; and, that they were just making the net tighter and catching more.

City Manager Gisbert further stated that, within the special event ordinance, they had created a perimeter fence requirement exemption for the Corporate Village. In the past year, law enforcement felt that the exemption allowed events to escalate into problems.

In response to a request by Mayor Oberst, City Manager Gisbert explained that a Corporate Village was where an advertiser would setup an area as simple as a tent or as large as a stage; that the promoter would try to involve a group in their activity, which had the ability to excite people; that outside the fence it could get out of hand; and, that the consideration was whether to continue that type of event inside or outside a fenced area, or not at all.

Chairman Tunnell stated that it made sense for containment to keep problems from developing.

Unknown individual, stated that an incident as simple as handing out colas, with amplified music, caused the growth of a large crowd.

#### 4. Corporate Villages

Mayor Oberst stated that while staff was considering the special events ordinance, they needed to look at fencing Corporate Villages, with property owner responsibility, and with the understanding of that responsibility.

In response to inquiries by Council and Commission members, City Manager Gisbert stated that the existing ordinance required fence type, height, and placement, and that special events fence containment was working fairly well; that in 2013 there were no restrictions on Corporate Villages; that 2014 required the limit of a 20x20 foot stage with fencing around the audience; that escalation occurred outside the four foot fence; that fencing to the water helped containment; that Corporate Village could also mean three or more tents, with the idea that it would diffuse attention; that the openness might need to be more contained; that traversing from the water's edge was allowed; that if the event took the fence to the water's edge, people were allowed to traverse; that they could not preclude anyone from going through; that if the fence was not to the water's edge, an east/west path was created for emergency vehicles and pedestrians; that outside perimeters were the problem; that Corporate Villages could be kept contained as a whole; and, that with Council direction, there would be more discussion outside of that meeting.

Mayor Oberst requested that staff review of the ordinance include Corporate Villages, perimeter requirements, and, behavior conducive to the atmosphere.

County Manager Majka stated that the Cocoa Beach permit required the special event to provide the entertainment; that law enforcement reviewed previous acts in other communities; and, that if behavior associated with those events was felt to be not conducive, the permit with that entertainment could be denied.

Chairman Tunnell stated that he would like to see that factored into any proposed ordinance.

In response to inquiries and comments by Council members, City Manager Gisbert responded by stating that, typically, parent properties would hire promotors who would pull permits for the parent property; that written acknowledgement from the parent property was required; that the permit would list all activities slated for that Corporate Village; that the property owner remained the responsible party; that there was a wish to curtail some banner plane advertising; and, that City/County Managers would need direction on considerations of acceptable/unacceptable advertising.

County Manager Majka stated that it was important to point out the fine line between free speech and advertising, and that they could not control everything.

Panama City Beach Council members continued by commenting that if other issues were resolved, some things would take care of themselves, and that NCAA advertising guidelines might provide some assistance.

#### 5. Club/Licensed Bar Age Limits

In response to inquiries and comments by Council members regarding age limits, City Manager Gisbert responded by stating that it would take more research before action could be taken; requested the Council and the Commission give them more time; and, stated that it was a tough line to define.

Commission members, Council members, and staff commented and spoke on the issue by stating that there was concern that 18-21 year olds in clubs were secure, and in the street they were another law enforcement problem; that it needed to be explored with law enforcement to see what was practical; that wherever they were they would be at risk; that the idea was to allow bar access, and restrict access to alcohol and other things in that premises; that there were no restrictions outside clubs, and very little deterrent to obtaining and consuming alcohol; that it needed law enforcement review; that research took about 15 minutes; that Ft. Lauderdale did it by defining a bar, a restaurant, and different things; that it was a law that needed to be year round; that the job would be to ensure they were not in a place where they could be preyed on; that if you rented to them, you policed them; that to not make a rule because it required policing elsewhere was not something that should be done; that they knew what was happening, and it was unacceptable; that it might cause other problems, and hopefully they would fix them; that some current rules were wrong; that neither entity had an ordinance in place at that time; that one club had set rules for no one under 21 to enter; that the County took emergency action on that item recently; that a parent would not tell a child coming to Spring Break to get into a bar and stay there to be safe; that 21 year olds were buying alcohol for 18 year olds; that alcohol was not sold to minors in one of the Commissioner's restaurants, but stopping it being provided to a minor had happened; that if under 21's were in the facility, they had more access and

opportunity to alcohol; inquired if 18 to enter and 21 to drink was originally designed for viewing the entertainment, and requested additional review on that issue; stated that the cover charge was the same and might have played a part; that it was easier for a 15 year old to pass for an 18 year old, and an even younger group was getting in with access to alcohol; and, that clubs were seeing fake IDs.

#### B. Loitering

#### 1. Parking at Closed Businesses

In response to inquiries by Council members, City Manager Gisbert stated that they had some cooperation, but would have to work with counsel on legalities; that they needed to preclude parking at closed businesses; that if owners were unaware and a situation escalated, they did not know who to call to clear private property; that if they could say there was no parking at closed businesses, then they could remove them; that if a business was operational, they could contact the owner for approval for that activity; and, that it would help with abandoned businesses, businesses that closed early, and others.

In response to inquiry by Chairman Tunnell, Assistant County Manager Dan Shaw stated that their focus was on occupancy and parking regulations, and fire code enforcement; that they had nothing right then on parking in vacant lots; and, that they had contacted adjacent property owners to post no trespassing signs so that the Sheriff could have them towed.

In response to inquiries by Council members, City Manager Gisbert stated that they had received cooperation from Walmart, Edgewater, Burger King, and Wendy's; that there were many unnamed parking lots that closed for business and needed to be captured; cautioned that staff had to be careful in some areas with ownership issues; stated that most business owners favored the proposed action; that towing had taken place at the Walmart parking lot, resulting in a crowd difference the next night; and, that use of no parking/tow away signs had helped.

## 2. Parking in the Right-of-Way and the Tourist Corridor

In response to Mayor Oberst's request, City Manager Gisbert explained that they had restricted parking to a degree in the triangle by posting signs; that the triangle was the area from Joan Avenue to Front Beach Road, Middle Beach Road, and South Thomas Drive, and was the biggest concentration of people driving from the super clubs to condominiums; that no parking signs removed cars from sides of streets, and allowed room for emergency vehicles and pedestrian walkways; that they needed to keep vehicles from parking anywhere in the right-of-way during that time period specifically, which could preclude unintended guests from having places to hang out; that if private and public could work together to exclude places for hanging out, it would help; that they were not talking about striped parking; that some businesses had striped parking within the right-of-way and it would be awkward to take that away; that it would allow towing from any unstructured

parking or closed business; that sidewalks helped move pedestrians from roadways; that right-of-way parking should be prohibited year round; that those items listed under B. Loitering and C. Nuisances were intended to be year round; and, that there were older establishments with striped parking in the right-of-way.

Bay County Sheriff Frank McKeithen stated that there wasn't ample parking, so they parked where they shouldn't; that bars did check IDs and marked the hands of those entering; that they kept a close watch on underage people, and if caught drinking they were put outside; that they then became the Sheriff's problem; and, there need to be non-alcoholic venues for those under 21 years of age.

#### C. <u>Nuisances</u>

#### 1. Grandfathering

Mayor Oberst stated that they were struggling with grandfathering; that under present ordinances, they fell under grandfather clauses; and, that more was now required of businesses.

Assistant County Manager Shaw stated that new rules adopted in the last year made it difficult for structures to reopen unless they met current standards for parking, landscaping, stormwater, etc.; and, that they were mostly caught on parking.

Commissioner Dozier confirmed that the new regulations came into effect once a business had closed and then reopened, and that if an ongoing business remained open they remained grandfathered. Mayor Oberst suggested the verbiage of closed or changed business, and City Manager Gisbert confirmed that current grandfathering was 120 days; that if grandfathering was reduced to 30 days, it would still allow businesses to retrofit/remodel; and, under any code occupancy and parking were issues.

Council members and County staff spoke regarding businesses that were eating establishments during the day and bars at night, and did not comply with parking requirements; that those businesses were then shut down at 9:00 due to parking requirements; that it also depended on the kind of liquor license; that a special event provision would allow shut down due to additional law enforcement needs; that work was being done on land use/parking requirements; and, that use changes and occupancy could be addressed under building codes (fire protection, egress, etc.).

#### 2. Fire Codes and Room Limits

Council members and staff discussed the need for continued education on occupancy and evictions; that there were businesses working through those issues and making things better; that everyone needed to take ownership in managing their properties; that they found that many of the resort condominium

associations were protected; that one resort had five different management companies handling rentals, and that private owners could also rent their condominiums; that owner permission was required when law enforcement was called to evict; that it had become a state-wide problem; that it might take a legislative rule update to create unified management of unified property; and, that condominium owners were asking for assistance, but they were not able to assist.

#### 3. Nuisance Law

Commission members, Council members, and staffs commented on and discussed nuisances that would tie into special events; that if dwellings created frequent calls, a mechanism was needed to curtail calls to reduce the burden on law enforcement; that nuisance control had been used on beach services with issuance of a citation, an increased citation, a one day shut down, a one week shut down, and then permanent shut down; that they had created a review system with a judge of their peers; that Walton County found that putting everyone breaking the law in jail a few times had reduced the problem; that owner permission was needed to evict renters who were a nuisance to surrounding neighbors, but were not breaking the law; that if laws were being broken, the situation was easier to correct; that curbing underage drinking would be difficult; that we could not bring in adult entertainment and not expect them to attend; that underage entertainment was needed; that Bay County was reviewing the nuisance calls issue; that a common response around the country was to bill for the law enforcement time to respond; that the strength of evicting people would be in fire codes; and, that the ability of fire codes in enforcement was not to be underestimated.

Mayor Oberst stated that they should direct their staff to meet with County staff.

Further discussion took place on condominium management and owners; that some owners were required to sign an agreement to allow eviction for misbehavior; that within the nuisance ordinance, evictions needed to be able to take place when condominium and residential property managers/owners were unable to be found; that it would be a useful tool for condominium security and law enforcement; that the billing approach could also be included; and, that a condominium association was looking at issuing fines.

#### 4. House Parties

Council members, Commission members, and staff spoke on comments received regarding a recent shooting at a house that wasn't on the sand, and yet drinking was banned on the sand; that Panama City Beach had an ordinance that addressed residential rental limits to six months and not short-term; that on the tourist corridor, rentals had no restrictions; that action taken by the County to ban drinking on the sand was not directly related to the shooting incident; that there were house party problems in Panama City Beach neighborhoods; that landowners needed to be held accountable for rental issues; that most house

parties were promoted through social media; and, that Panama City Beach law enforcement did cover social media.

Sheriff McKeithen stated that at the house party shooting, a number of people interviewed were guests at motels on Panama City Beach, and not staying at the rented house; that the Sheriff's Office actively looked at social media; that a team of officers drove the unincorporated area looking for numbers of cars in driveways that would indicate a house party; that there was State law on open house parties that referred to parties attended by those under the age of 18; that they addressed and arrested people having open house parties; that interviews of people at the house party revealed they could not afford the clubs and went to house parties; that they looked for issues in homes, motels, and condominiums, and they arrested people; that they addressed State law controlling disturbances, nuisances, loud noises, etc.; and, that they would like to present, along with the Chief, ideas for house parties.

Sheriff McKeithen was asked by Chairman Tunnell to coordinate with the respective staffs; responded to an inquiry by Commissioner Nelson by stating that State law did not address those aged 21 and open house parties; that they addressed it if they 1) were drinking and had alcohol, 2) were under the age of 21, and 3) had loud noises, and they arrested the people they could arrest; that sometimes loud noises did not constitute an open house party, but numerous cars could indicate a bar-b-que; and, that in condominiums, evictions could not take place, but arrests could if someone was violating the law.

Further comments and discussion by Commission members, Council members, and staff took place regarding residential parking off the tourist corridor; that in the City, a house had been built that would sleep 50+ people and met the paper parking requirements, but parking occurred in the street; that they had authorized two more similar dwellings to be built; that staff was reviewing residential parking requirements for houses that held large numbers of people; that Bay County had no requirements for the number of residential occupants; that staff work was taking place on house parties; that State law took care of underage house parties; that occupancy and fire code regulations could be used; that staff was looking at house party permits in order to set occupancy and parking limits, and allow the Sheriff to shut down unpermitted parties; that County staff was unaware of any residential properties of the size discussed; that there were some big occupancy dwellings on the west end; that Bay County currently did not permit residential parking based on dwelling size, but should look at it; that the City was seeing eight bedroom dwelling units built to accommodate eight couples with children; that only three parking spaces were required, and they needed 12 spaces for eight families; that parking was required for other multiple occupancy dwellings, such as condominiums and hotels; and, that some homes were becoming hotel-homes, as opposed to homes.

#### 5. March through Easter Sunday 2:00 AM Closings

Commission members and Council members commented on and discussed carrying the 2:00 A.M. closings past Easter Sunday; that calls had been received by shift work residents regarding the time change; that the Panama City Police Chief had said there was virtually no problem with the 4:00 A.M. closure after Easter; that Bay County and the City had both approved the 2:00 A.M. closure through April 18; that the City was considering the rest of the year; and, that there was consideration being given to a 2:00 A.M closure from March 1 through Easter.

#### 6. Scooters/Mopeds

Commission members, Council members, and staffs commented on and discussed mopeds and scooters by stating that Panama City Beach was reviewing regulations to require vests, and to follow rules and regulations; that mopeds did not follow road rules and regulations; that they passed right, left, and in between cars, with many near vehicle and pedestrian accidents; that they were hard for police officers to catch; that they were a serious problem; and, staff asked for direction from the Council and Commission.

Further discussion took place on scooter identification; requiring vests with rental company names; requiring riders to sign documents stating they knew the vehicle rules and regulations; that owners said riders would not follow the rules; that they were a nuisance; that Bay County had talked to their legislative delegation regarding the issue; that there were 1,300 licensed scooters in Panama City Beach; that there were inexperienced and unlicensed drivers on that type of vehicle: that the Motor Vehicle and Highway Safety Department was protective of their rules; that they had asked to be allowed to permit rentals in the counties, and had tried to legally legislate the issue; that they had exhausted every avenue other than asking to remove the businesses; suggested requiring increased cc's to 75 or above in order to move safely through traffic and require a motorcycle endorsement; that it was year round issue; noted that the items listed under C. Nuisances were year round issues; that the State considered them motor vehicles; that they were an amusement; suggested a moratorium until scooter serial numbers had been collected, and scooters phased out through attrition and the inability to purchase replacements; to then allow a transition to three and four wheel vehicles; that they put a burden on law enforcement; that training needed to be upgraded, with business owners taking responsibility, or requiring a license and experience; suggested limiting hours of operation because nighttime was dangerous with no vests and dim lights; stated that Panama City Beach had most of the scooters and Bay County had one rental business; that scooters traveled all over and into Panama City; confirmed that their discussion had no bearing on current lawsuits; and, that there was a desire to take action.

## D. March through Easter Sunday Beach Behavior

 No Beach Alcohol at Key Places Per Track Record/No Coolers or Funnels

Commission members, Council members, and staffs commented on and discussed no alcohol on the beach for 18 miles from State park to State park; that there had been calls regarding the shut down; inquired if there was a way to deal with Spring Break by addressing hot spot areas or the full 18 miles; stated that the special event permit could deal with hot spot areas; that additional restrictions to consider were no coolers and/or funnels on the beach; spoke on possible cooler size restrictions and that coolers didn't matter because they drank hot alcoholic beverages; stated that citizens wanted to walk down the beach with an alcoholic drink to watch the sunset; that the Sheriff had already addressed that issue; that guests in motels, condominiums, or beach residents walking down the beach with a beer were not a problem; that the Sheriff and Police Chief had to be trusted to be very discretionary; that 90% of problems were behind clubs and establishments serving alcohol, and those places needed to bear the responsibility; that Bay County enacted an ordinance that affected one property with very few disturbance calls; that drinking needed to be stopped behind places causing problems, rather than everywhere; that party animals drew law enforcement focus and were the issue, and that alcohol in the wrong hands caused issues; questioned what the public wanted, and what they were willing to give up to get it; stated that 90% of the problem was on the asphalt and not on the beach; that many residents did not feel they were giving anything up and wanted it stopped; that a visiting family brought three or four people with them that went out to eat and purchased items vs. one Spring Breaker; that more money was derived in a family environment, unless they were just calculating beer; that businesses would rather a group of families visited, multiplied by three or four people, than just one person; that those things were affected by when schools were out in Atlanta and Birmingham, and families were available to visit; that tossing Spring Break the first three weeks of March would not bring families because children were still in school; that no one was talking about tossing Spring Break, but they agreed that limits were needed in some places; that residents were concerned about negatively impacted property values; that future residents were looking elsewhere due to Spring Break; that whatever was done or not done would be painful and difficult; that whatever steps were taken, Spring Break had to be curtailed and controlled; that tweaking issues had not been enough; that issues had now been hammered; that the Tourist Development Council had only advertised rule changes that year; that Spring Break would be cut back with the new rules; that Spring Break had out grown what could be locally controlled; that eliminating problems with Spring Break could bring family visitors, and, potential new residents and businesses; and, that the Chief and Sheriff had people gathering intelligence and coordinating with other agencies.

Sheriff's Office Major Ford stated that they worked with partners in other states; that they had reached out to the Phoenix City, Alabama Sheriff and the Dothan, Alabama Police Department to conduct operations; that operations were conducted on U.S. Highway 231; that they were bringing resources from Jackson, Walton, Gulf, and Franklin Counties, and all surrounding areas; that the Chief brought resources from other counties; that resources would have to be addressed; that no alcohol on the beach provided a tool for law enforcement to control an out of control and dangerous environment; that it tamed the perception that "anything goes" in Panama City Beach; that they would dedicate resources to enforcement in the areas needed; that it was not necessarily a permanent solution; that something had to be done to bring the situation under control, because it was chaotic and dangerous.

In response to inquiries and comments by Commission and Council members, Major Ford stated that with no alcohol on the beach they would continue proactive enforcement, but he believed it sent the message that they were not going to tolerate the chaos and dangerous environment; that if it meant fewer of the bad element came to Panama City Beach, then that was what they hoped to achieve; stated, on behalf of the Sheriff's Office, they appreciated them working together and taking needed action; that as it currently stood, it was a dangerous situation for them; that the Sheriff had mentioned before that the resources they brought in were typical of something they would bring in during a natural disaster; that ambulance and EMS personnel were also out there; that there was worry about problems extending beyond Spring Break into weekends and holidays; that they wished there were things that could be instituted quickly for emergencies; that some of the entertainment being brought in was not helping our community, and brought the same trashy behavior; that they needed to be prepared to make certain people uncomfortable all the time; and, that some heroes were working in fire, EMS, and law enforcement.

Mayor Oberst expressed appreciation to the Board for hosting them that day.

#### III. Board Discussion

County Manager Majka requested that direction be given to him and the City Manager to work together, and to create a meeting schedule for formal adoption.

Councilman Reichard inquired as to the attitude of the County Commission to the suggestion of not going forward with year round 2:00 A.M. bar closings. He stated that it was getting more interest on the beach, and would like the Board's input prior to it being placed on an agenda for their meetings.

Chairman Tunnell stated that Bay County adopted a temporary closure time through April 18, and that it would come back before the Board.

Commissioner Gainer stated that a lot depended on how much the other items discussed would solve problems.

Commissioner Thomas stated that they needed good input from the business community, or it would get worse; that many discussions had taken place on what would happen the current year, and things they did not do made an impact; that some members of the Board felt hoodwinked because actions stated by certain businesses did not take place; that it did not do any good to be circumvented; that it created a noose that would be continually tightened until it worked; that political pressure counted; that the majority of that pressure did not live on the beach, but in the County; and, that the Board was ready to tighten.

Chairman Tunnell stated that their Public Information Office had provided them a lengthy article on the Ft. Lauderdale Spring Break situation; that in the conclusion, they talked about the carrying capacity of a community; that there was only so much they could carry, so many visitors, so much demand on public safety, code enforcement, etc.; that their capacity had reached its maximum; and, that they had to look at long term solutions, and work at them every day.

There was no further business discussed in the workshop.

IV. Adjournment (3:25 P.M.)