

**Official Minutes of
MARION COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

August 2, 2024

CALL TO ORDER:

The Marion County Board of County Commissioners met in special session in Commission Chambers at 10:36 a.m. on Friday, August 2, 2024 at the Marion County Governmental Complex located in Ocala, Florida.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

The meeting opened with invocation by Chairman Stone and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of our Country.

ROLL CALL:

Upon roll call the following members were present: Chairman Michelle Stone, District 5; Vice-Chairman Kathy Bryant, District 2; Commissioner Matthew McClain, District 3; and Commissioner Carl Zalak, III, District 4. Chairman Craig Curry, District 1 was absent due to a prior commitment. Also present were Clerk Gregory C. Harrell, County Attorney Matthew G. Minter, County Administrator Mounir Bouyounes, and Assistant County Administrator (ACA) Angel Roussel, ACA Tracy Straub, ACA Amanda Tart, and Director of Internal Services Mike McCain.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Chairman Stone advised that this meeting is being held to discuss the State of Emergency due to Invest 97L.

Deputy Clerk Mills-McAllister presented proof of publication entitled, "Sunshine Notice", published on the Marion County Florida website on August 1, 2024. The Notice states the Board will consider the necessity of a Resolution to declare a State of Emergency regarding Tropical Wave (Invest 97L).

In response to Chairman Stone, County Attorney Matthew G. Minter, Legal, advised that he has prepared the Resolution; however, it will be based on the information provided by Emergency Management Director Preston Bowlin, Marion County Sheriff's Office (MCSO).

2. COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR:

2.1. Updated from James Bowlin, Director of Emergency Management

County Administrator Mounir Bouyounes presented the following recommendation:

Description/Background: Staff will provide updates on various procedures for readiness and preparations for the days leading up to the storm and plans for after the storm.

Budget/Impact: None.

Recommended Action: For information and Board Discussion.

Emergency Management Director Preston Bowlin, MCSO, presented a 5 page handout to follow along with the PowerPoint presentation. He stated he is requesting the Board execute a local State of Emergency relating to Invest 97L. He advised that this is a very unorganized system, which makes it difficult to track. Mr. Bowlin referred to slide 2, noting

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the hatched area represents an area where development could occur. He commented on the timeframe and duration relating to local impacts from the storm. Mr. Bowlin advised that the County has roughly 24 to 30 hours to monitor development; however, there could be a rapid increase in preparations over the weekend. He referred to slide 3, which shows a comparison of the Global Forecast System (GFS) and the European Medium Range Forecast Model (EURO). Mr. Bowlin commented on the model of intensity represented on slide 4. He stated most of the models show wind speeds in the tropical storm range. Mr. Bowlin advised of concerns relating to rainfall, downed trees, power lines and other public works issues including roads. He addressed slide 5 relating to the heat advisories. Mr. Bowlin advised that both the City of Ocala and the County will be opening sandbag locations beginning at noon today, and the Public Information Offices (PIOs) are working together to get the messaging out via social media. He stated the MCSO will implement the citizen's information line later this morning.

In response to Commissioner Bryant, Mr. Bowlin stated the models included in his presentation were updated by the National Weather Service (NWS) at 5:30 a.m. this morning.

Chairman Stone advised that www.alertmarion.com is a way to stay connected on any sort of advisories relating to this and future storms.

Commissioner Zalak requested information relating to sandbag locations.

ACA Tracy Straub stated there will be sandbag sites at the Marion Oaks Community Center, the City of Dunnellon's Public Works Yard, Wrigley Field, Martel Recycling Center, John Van Fleet Sports Complex and the Belleview Sportsplex. Mr. Bowlin stated the 2 sites in the City of Ocala will be at Tuscawilla Park and the E.D. Croskey Recreation Center.

In response to Chairman Stone, Mr. Bowlin advised that the sandbag locations will be published on social media. He reiterated the sites will be opening at noon today, noting they will be self-serve.

Commissioner Bryant questioned what time the sites will close. Ms. Straub stated it was her understanding the City of Ocala sites are self-serve and those sites will remain open. County sites will be manned noon to 7:00 p.m. today and will open back up from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. tomorrow. Ms. Straub advised that staff will be assessing the situation tomorrow to determine what needs to be done on Sunday.

Mr. Bowlin commented on working with the public works departments regarding problematic areas, noting 200 feet of discharge hose for pumping operations has been ordered from the State.

In response to Commissioner Bryant, County Engineer Steven Cohoon, Office of the County Engineer (OCE), stated the pumping site is up relating to Shady Road, but not running. The area is currently dry. He advised that staff are prepared.

Mr. Bowlin stated the Department will have another call with the State at 5:15 p.m. this afternoon and will continue to disseminate information throughout the weekend based on additional updates.

In response to Chairman Stone, Mr. Bowlin advised that he received notification from the State there will likely be staging operations for assets throughout the State within the next 24 to 48 hours. He stated the local State of Emergency is a preparedness tool for the County, especially going into the weekend. Mr. Bowlin advised that the local State of Emergency activates the mutual aid agreements with other Counties and the State.

1. COUNTY ATTORNEY:

1.1. Request Approval of Resolution Declaring a State of Local Emergency
County Attorney Matthew G. Minter presented the following recommendation:

Description/Background: A well-defined tropical wave identified as 97L could develop into a tropical depression, or stronger storm system, and has the potential to produce severe weather in Marion County, including severe thunderstorms and strong winds. Advance preparation and planning are critical to an effective county-wide response in the event of severe weather, which justifies the adoption of this declaration of state of local emergency.

Budget/Impact: None.

Recommended Action: Motion to approve and authorize the Chair and Clerk to execute Resolution declaring a state of emergency regarding Invest 97L. County Administrator Mounir Bouyounes advised that the first action the Board should take is to adopt a Resolution declaring a Local State of Emergency.

Mr. Minter stated the Board has a Resolution before them that would declare a State of Local Emergency, noting yesterday Governor Ron DeSantis issued Executive Order Number 24-156 related to this storm system. He advised that Marion County was included in the list contained in Section 1, and this Resolution is consistent with the State of Emergency in that Executive Order.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bryant, seconded by Commissioner Zalak, to adopt resolution 24-R-264 declaring a State of Local Emergency relating to Invest 97L. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board (4-0).

Resolution 24-R-264 is entitled:

DECLARATION OF STATE OF LOCAL EMERGENCY

3. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS: NONE

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting thereupon adjourned at 10:51 a.m.

Michelle Stone, Chairman

Attest:

Gregory C. Harrell, Clerk

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