

**MINUTES
HARBOUR HEIGHTS WATERWAY
MUNICIPAL SERVICE BENEFIT UNIT (MSBU)**

**ADVISORY BOARD REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2025**

2:01 p.m. – 3:22 p.m.
Punta Gorda Library
401 Shreve St, Punta Gorda, Florida

Members Present: Patrick Bautz
Eric Frohn
Tom Mettner

Members Absent: David Stone

County Staff: Erica Hayes, Community Liaison
Michael Benjamin, Projects Manager

Guests: None

Call to Order / Roll Call:

The meeting was called to order at 2:01 p.m. A roll call was taken, and a quorum was established.

Changes to the Agenda / Motion to Approve Changes:

Elections of Officers was tabled until the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Citizen Input on Agenda Items (3 Minute Limit):

None

Approval of the Minutes:

The October 29, 2025, minutes were unanimously approved as written.

Unfinished Business:

- a. Dredge Project: Significant discussion addressed the lack of public support for dredging. Staff explained that without documented citizen backing, Commissioners are hesitant to advance dredging projects or authorize loans. Members expressed concern that property owners were inadequately informed during the previous public hearing, particularly regarding tax impacts. Emphasis was placed on education, early outreach, email communications, and possibly informal community meetings to explain dredging needs, sediment buildup, and long-term cost implications. Staff reported that sediment buildup in the system is estimated at over 20,000 cubic yards. Budget limitations currently prevent moving forward with engineering services before FY2028. FEMA reimbursement prospects were discussed but remain uncertain.
- b. Update: Navigational Trimming – DeSoto Waterway: Discussion ensued regarding the County's limited authority over vegetation on private property. While the County can perform navigational and line-of-sight trimming from the water and charge it to the MSBU, it cannot compel private property owners to maintain vegetation on the rear of their lots. Any change to this authority would require an ordinance amendment applicable to all waterway MSBU's countywide. Staff committed to initiating a Legal Service Request (LSR) to explore potential options. Board members emphasized frustration that rear-lot vegetation issues are only addressed when requested, despite front-lot maintenance occurring regularly. Suggestions included voluntary neighborhood cleanups, reviving canal association style efforts, or partnering with Keep Charlotte Beautiful to coordinate volunteers, dumpsters, and outreach.

New Business:

- a. Financial Reports: The fiscal year (FY) 2025 quarter four actual expenditure and activity maintenance reports were provided for review. The FY26 Adopted Budget was provided. There were no questions at this time.

Citizen Input on MSBU items (3 Minute Limit):
None

Advisory Board Open Discussion:

- Stormwater and construction impacts were addressed. County National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) inspectors are increasing oversight to ensure compliance and reduce erosion and sediment discharge from new construction sites, with the authority to shut down non-compliant projects immediately.
- An update was provided regarding Peace River Drive stating Public Works plans to replace a failed culvert with a 24-inch Reinforced Concrete Pipe (RCP), remove damaged seawall materials, and restore the area using riprap. Legal action is underway with the County Attorney preparing litigation, while also exploring potential property acquisition. Staff cautioned that legal proceedings may take significant time.
- Sunshine Law requirements were reviewed to ensure advisory board members avoid violations during community outreach. Guidance was provided on permissible information sharing versus opinion-based discussions.

Schedule Meetings / Items for Next Agenda:

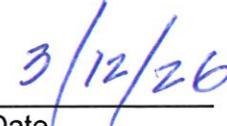
Future meetings are tentatively scheduled at 2:00 p.m. as follows:

- March 12, 2026
- May 13, 2026
- September 2, 2026
- November 18, 2026

The meeting adjourned at 3:22 p.m.

Submitted by Erica Hayes
Public Works Department


Chair Signature


Date

