

**Gulf County RESTORE Advisory Committee (RAC) Meeting Minutes  
Gulf County Emergency Operations Center (EOC), Port St. Joe, Florida  
August 19, 2015, 3:00 p.m. (rescheduled from August 11, 2015 3:00 p.m.)**

**Attendees:**

Ward McDaniel – Gulf County BOCC (Chair) – District 2  
Joanna Bryan – Gulf County BOCC – District 3  
Don Butler – County Administrator  
Jeremy Novak – Gulf County BOCC Attorney  
Sherry Herring - Gulf County Clerk of the Court Office  
Rhonda Woodward – Gulf County Clerk of the Court Office  
Chris Holley – Gulf County Economic Development Council, Director  
Christie McCleroy – Gulf County EDC member  
Warren Yeager – Gulf County RESTORE Coordinator  
Jim Anderson- City Port St. Joe Commissioner\*  
Bo Patterson – Mayor, City of Port St. Joe  
Jean Treadaway – Gulf County property owner  
Pat Hardman – Coastal Community Association (CCA), President\*  
Penny Easton – CCA member  
Joanna White – CareerSource Gulf Coast\*  
Dan Van Tresse – Friends St. Joseph Bay Golf Club  
Barb Van Treese – St. Joseph Bay Humane Society  
Dewey Blaylock - Gulf County Businessman/ Environmental Issue Interest\*  
Bryon Griffith – Dewberry  
Stella Wilson – Dewberry  
Paul Johnson – Ecology & Environment, Inc.  
Jade Marks – Ecology & Environment, Inc.  
\* Denotes official RAC Member

**Minutes:**

- W. Yeager opened the meeting with introductions of those present and a brief summary of the Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. (TGC) meeting in Destin the previous day, as well as the potential for leveraging Pot 1 County Multi-Year Implementation Plan (MYIP) funds to secure TGC funds for economic development.
- As 4 out of the 9 RAC members were in attendance, there was no quorum for this meeting and therefore no official action can be taken.
- Dewberry provided a PowerPoint presentation (see [www.gulfcountyrestore.com](http://www.gulfcountyrestore.com) website) covering the following items:
  - Today's agenda
  - A summary of the MYIP process and schedule and where we're at in the overall process

- A final draft of the Needs Assessment document
  - Introduction to the Draft Project Selection Criteria document
- S. Wilson highlighted major changes in the most recent Needs Assessment draft, including the RESTORE Act Preamble and the revised matrix format recommended at the last meeting.
- S. Wilson stressed the importance of officially approving the Needs Assessment as a ‘milestone’ in the MYIP process and asked for any additional comments/proposed changes before the next meeting, where it will be voted on.
- Moving on to the topic of the selection criteria, Dewberry described the selection criteria as being based on the same broad categories found in the Needs Assessment, with approximately five criteria in each category.
- Dewberry suggested that the RAC review the selection criteria for wording, assignment of criteria within different categories, and any other considerations.
- P. Hardman suggested that “beach restoration” should be in the category of Infrastructure, because beach restoration efforts are rarely a one-time effort. Similar to roads and other infrastructure, beaches frequently require upkeep and maintenance.
- B. Griffin stressed the point that most capital projects require operation and maintenance costs and these need to be considered in the selection criteria and process for review of project proposals.
- W. Yeager encouraged a discussion on this point, stressing the importance of settling on a selection criteria that everyone on the RAC is comfortable with, because it will ultimately affect project scoring.
- W. Yeager suggested moving “beach stabilization and nourishment” from Criteria #3 under the category of Infrastructure to a separate Criteria #5 in the document, as a solution to P. Hardman’s concern.
- Building on P. Hardman’s point, B. Griffith pointed out that “virtually no project goes without maintenance,” but that different projects may have different cost structures associated with them.
- S. Wilson clarified that many background resources were consulted to develop the project selection criteria, including a contrast/comparison of several counties that have already developed priority selection criteria.
- W. Yeager stressed that at “the end of the day” the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) has to approve the project selection criteria and that the BOCC needs to be as involved as possible in the process so they know what to expect.
- D. Blaylock inquired about including “public education and outreach” as a criterion in the Environmental category, as it is closely linked to ecotourism, but is not currently included. All tended to agree.
- S. Wilson pulled up the RESTORE Act Eligible Activities document to point out what Pot 1 funds could be used for.
- In response to this, P. Johnson noted that it is important to establish the difference between “needs” and “criteria” because a project could score highly in a given criterion, but not address an actual need of the community.

- B. Griffith pointed out that the committee can collectively determine the value/structure of the project selection criteria, but that some public outreach aspect is usually embedded (required) in all federal grants.
- S. Wilson made an announcement about adding the project selection criteria to the website soon and reminded members to let her or W. Yeager know about any missing or inaccurate information.
- P. Hardman brought up the fact that it might be wise to reschedule the next RAC meeting, because it is currently scheduled for the day after Labor Day, September 8, and may be poorly attended.
- A few potential dates were discussed, but a consensus was not reached.
- Returning to the topic of the project selection criteria, P. Hardman inquired whether the criteria will be weighted, as some criteria may occur in certain areas (categories) but not others. P. Hardman also suggested that it would be beneficial to get the BOCC's input on priorities before moving further along in the process of developing criteria.
- W. Yeager remarked that it might be beneficial to hold a workshop with the BOCC and Gulf County municipalities, in which everyone could "hash out" what will work best for the project selection criteria and the process used for its development. Although no decisions would be made at the workshop, it could potentially give the public and elected officials of Gulf County more information up front, and allow the RAC committee to get their documents as close to a final draft as possible before the next public meeting.
- P. Hardman suggested that the project selection criteria may not be the same depending on which Pot of money the funding is coming from.
- B. Griffith remarked that the project selection criteria needs to "take on some form of its own," as the committee begins to weigh and balance project selection criteria against one another and as the criteria are assigned scores/numbers. He asked the leading question: "For example, are jobs in one area [category] more important than jobs in another?"
- P. Hardman commented that although two projects may be scored equally, one project may actually do more for the county than another.
- B. Griffith agreed that we still have to look at the county as a whole and that although some projects will be selected over others, "the important thing is for the county to feel like nothing was lost."
- P. Hardman also brought up the point that some projects may require more funding up front, while others could be more easily funded over the timeframe in which money will actually become available. In this regard, some projects could be weighted based on their financial timeframe.
- The discussion returned to the topic of a public workshop to further discuss these ideas.
- Some consideration was given to scheduling the workshop, and many agreed that the workshop should be held sooner rather than later. However, a date was not decided.
- Referring to W. Yeager's opening comments, C. McCleroy provided a brief overview of Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. Pot funds (\$1.5 B) and explained that in order to secure TGC ("Pot 6") money, Gulf County would need to leverage Pot 1 funds along with private funds. C. McCleroy argued that it was important for Gulf County to tap into Pot 6, as it offered a "huge opportunity" for the

St. Joe Port project. Furthermore, if the port were to bring in \$1 million in customers, the USACE must dredge and maintain the port, thus minimizing the amount of funds the Port of St. Joe would be responsible for.

- W. Yeager followed up by explaining that the TGC Pot cannot fund 100 percent of any project and must be leveraged with external (private or state) funds. He further remarked that a 50/50 split of funding sources had been previously proposed; that is, 50 percent of funds would be pursued from external sources (other pots) and 50 percent would be sought from the TGC Fund. According to Yeager, the Governor already has \$25 million in the state budget for port improvements.
- C. Holley then asked how the RAC or Gulf County RESTORE Coordinator would submit priority projects or topics to the Gulf Consortium to spend Pot 3 funds at their meeting next week in St. Petersburg.
- B. Griffith replied with a recommendation that the RAC not dwell on the “Pots” but instead focus on establishing the county’s “needs and justification for those needs”. Dewberry will help develop documentation to help allocate funds.
- B. Griffith stressed that funding will ultimately go to those who demonstrate conviction and “hold tight” to their scope of needs while providing evidence for those needs.
- W. Yeager will be responsible for transmitting Gulf County’s needs and interests to the Gulf Consortium and updating the RAC meeting schedule on the [www//gulfcountyrestore.com](http://www/gulfcountyrestore.com) website and for determining potential dates for a workshop during the week of August 30.
- Notable items of general consensus included:
  - A final draft of the Needs Assessment will be presented for approval at the next regular RAC meeting.
  - A tentative workshop with RAC, the Gulf County BOCC, and other elected officials to discuss details of the selection criteria and other matters needs to be scheduled.
  - The next meeting of RAC will be held at the same location, but may be rescheduled due to the Labor Day holiday.
- The meeting adjourned at 4:02 p.m.