

**MANATEE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL MEETING
COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, HONORABLE PATRICIA M. GLASS CHAMBERS
1112 Manatee Avenue West
Bradenton, Florida
April 16, 2024**

Meeting video link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCULgjuGhS-qV966RU2Z7AtA>

Present were:

Mike Rahn, Chairman
Amanda Ballard, First Vice-Chairman
Ray Turner, Second Vice-Chairman (entered early in meeting)
Jason Bearden
George Kruse
Kevin Van Ostenbridge

District 1 seat is vacant.

Also present were:

Charlie Bishop, County Administrator
Christopher De Carlo, Interim County Attorney
Denise Nelson, Deputy Clerk, Clerk of the Circuit Court



Chairman Rahn called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

INVOCATION



The Invocation was led by Missy Parmenter, Community Impact Pastor, Oasis Church.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Bearden.

AGENDA

BC20240416DOC001

1. **IMPACTS OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION IN MANATEE COUNTY**

Andy Butterfield, Chief of Staff, introduced the matter relating to the federal government, the open borders and the illegal immigration. He gave a status report on the numbers of illegal immigrants, status of the border, status of the border, illegal drug cartel, fentanyl overdose, term of the illegal immigrant is now migrant and newcomers, costs, for taxpayers, schools, experts on what they are dealing with currently.




James Satcher, Supervisor of Elections, reflected on what his office is doing regarding illegal immigration, mail-in ballots, technology needs, and thanked all for their support.

(Enter Commissioner Turner)





Tom McDougal, CEO, Manatee Memorial Hospital, stated the illegal immigration crisis is growing rapidly. He utilized a slide presentation providing some data including actual costs of care; funding from the County, Indigent Care, over \$20 million short on the care hospital is providing, those reporting as illegal aliens are \$12.43 million per year for Manatee County, there are those who admit they live here, this data does not include all immigrants, percentage of Emergency Room visits for a six month period, dialysis care, Good County 2023, oncology care, cannot afford to do oncology care continually, and cost of care summary.


Discussion ensued thanking Mr. McDougal for being here to address the impacts, Obstetrics and Gynecology (OB) floor impacts, what is the percentage of the uninsured, Medicaid insured and expenses, challenges, and federal programs.

 Chad Choate, Chairman, Manatee County School Board, reviewed impacts regarding the influx of illegal immigrants. The government does not allow the School Board to collect data from as to who is a citizen of the United States. He commented on social security numbers, percentages of English Language Learners (ELL), teachers need to be ELL trained, difficulty finding paraprofessionals that are bilingual, funding per student, revenue from the State, and approximately 8000 students in Manatee County.

Discussion ensued regarding separate classrooms, and ways to measure the impacts on learning.

 Mr. Choate reported on those students that are English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), accommodate students, ESOL students test like every other student, no data breakage, require immunization shots, can't turn a student away, and students do not have to show proof regarding whether or not they live with a parent or guardian.


 Discussion followed relating to compassion shown from providers regardless of challenges, numbers of students, how many teachers employed in the high schools, costs of building a high school, what are the costs per student, and ESOL students.

 Sheriff Wells, Manatee County Sheriff, noted a historical background on criminally illegal aliens in our jail prior to 2020. The Sheriff or Administrator has no authority to hold a criminally illegal alien in their jail, if they had the ability to bond out. They devised a program called the 287G and have trained deputies that work under supervision of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and have access to programs to check the immigration status. If an illegal alien is detained, ICE must pick them up within 48 hours, or they will be released, and the Sheriff has no authority. He also addressed that the Spanish community is being victimized, therefore, they do not use banks and their money is kept at home.


Discussion ensued relating to victims and domestic violence, assaults within family units, goal is to take care of the victim, and process from start to finish.


Sheriff Wells explained they have no authority to arrest someone for being in the U.S. illegally, ICE has to pick detainees up unless there is a crime, and ICE will deport them.

Discussion ensued regarding an increase in human trafficking, drug sales, same as always been, consistent as before, put a hold on arrests, and how many illegal immigrants were deported.


 Ed Brodsky, State Attorney, relayed their mission is to protect the public and to serve the community. The State Attorney holds criminals accountable regardless of the status, victims, because of their status, are fearful of being involved in the process, which makes them vulnerable. Florida possesses strong policies, strong leaders, strong law enforcement, and rather dealing with just crime, they are dealing with one or more things such as language barriers, and there is a procedure for protecting witnesses.

Discussion ensued regarding sex trafficking, witnesses coming forward to speak, and process for illegals regarding DUIs.

 Jodie Fiske, Director, Public Safety, referred to the slide presentation showing potential impacts to EMS, County Healthcare Infrastructure; overdose deaths, numbers among all ages; fentanyl fatalities, treating overdoses, and statistics.

 Courtney DePol, Deputy County Administrator, explained the County received some funds from the opioid settlement, but these funds do not help to relieve the debt.

Discussion followed regarding fentanyl fatalities, overdose cases, Narcan is available in drug stores, why is testing not being done on overdoses, collecting that data, and no way of knowing what people have overdosed on.


 Lee dePalo, Director, Community and Veteran's Services, reported there is not much data to present. Reportedly, Turning Point and Salvation Army were asked if there is a significant increase with number of undocumented aliens within the last year and a half. There has been an increase in numbers, and the most significant was the need for Spanish and Creole interpreters. He will report back with numbers relating to the correlation between homelessness and opioid drug use, and the status question regarding place of residency will be included in the homeless survey.


PUBLIC COMMENT

Timothy Walter, Manatee County resident, reported that he was a victim of a crime, and described his experience by an undocumented immigrant, whom he married.

There being no further public comments, Chairman Rahn closed public comments.

AGENDA (Continued)

 Discussion ensued that today's discussion can be a future agenda item, issues are at a higher level than the County, and what are the County's options.

 Chairman Rahn directed the County Administrator to contact the State Attorney and the Sheriff with a public service announcement in order to let victims know they are able to seek protection.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

There were no Commissioner Comments.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, Chairman Rahn adjourned the meeting at 10:47 a.m.

Minutes Approved: May 14, 2024