

RESOLUTION NO. R-26-105

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MANATEE COUNTY, FLORIDA, ESTABLISHING THE RURAL COMMUNITIES ADVISORY BOARD; MAKING CERTAIN FINDINGS; PROVIDING FOR PURPOSE, COMPOSITION, APPOINTMENTS, DUTIES, AND OPERATIONS; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners of Manatee County, Florida, ("Board") recognizes the value of technical expertise and stakeholder collaboration in supporting the preservation of agricultural lands, natural resources, water resources, and providing a forum on matters affecting rural communities; and,

WHEREAS the Board desires to establish a rural communities advisory board to provide technical, operational, and subject-matter expertise, guidance, and assistance in support of the preservation of agricultural lands, natural resources, water resources, and a forum for matters affecting rural communities; and,

WHEREAS the Board finds that it is in the best interests of the public and Manatee County ("County") to establish a rural communities advisory board whose membership is determined by the Board to ensure continuity, expertise, and accountability in advisory participation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of Manatee County, Florida, as follows:

Section 1. Findings. The recitals set forth above are hereby adopted as findings of the Board and incorporated herein by reference.

Section 2. Establishment. There is hereby established the Rural Communities Advisory Board ("RCAB"), which shall serve as a working, non-binding advisory body to provide technical, professional, operational, and subject-matter expertise, guidance, and assistance to the Board.

Section 3. Purpose and Role. The RCAB shall:

A. Provide technical, professional, operational, and subject-matter expertise, guidance, and assistance to the Board in review and evaluation of rural and agricultural matters, soil and water conservation, environmental programs, policies, and practices including, but not limited to:

- Provide community-based insight to inform rural and agricultural policy.
- Support informed decision-making through research, analysis and recommendation.
- Support the County in addressing issues impacting rural communities, agriculture, natural resources and water resources.
- Promote communication with rural communities.
- Promote community partnerships with rural communities and agricultural uses.

B. Operate strictly in an advisory capacity and shall have no regulatory, enforcement, or decision-making authority.

C. Perform such other duties or tasks at the direction of the Board.

Section 4. Composition. To the extent possible, the membership of RCAB shall consist of individuals with the following backgrounds, experience or education: a broad range of rural and resource-related expertise, including, but not limited to agriculture, soil and water conservation, environmental, wildlife resource management, natural resources sciences, and rural land use.

The Board shall appoint seven (7) members, from among the above categories. In the event no applications are received for any position, the Board shall have the authority to nominate and fill same, in its sole discretion.

Section 5. Appointment Terms and Representation.

- A. Appointments shall be for terms established by the Board or by administrative policy.
- B. All members of the RCAB shall be permanent residents of Manatee County.
- C. Any member of the RCAB may be removed from office, with or without cause, by majority plus one (1) vote of the full membership of the Board.

Section 6. Meetings and Operations.

- A. Meetings and RCAB business shall be conducted in compliance with Florida's Sunshine Law and all other applicable laws regarding public business, meetings, and records.
- B. The RCAB may form technical working groups or subcommittees as necessary, the membership of which shall be limited to current RCAB members.
- C. Recommendations of the RCAB shall be forwarded to the Board for consideration.
- D. Each RCAB member is personally responsible for ensuring their compliance with Florida's laws relating to Government-in-the-Sunshine, the Public Records Act, and the Code of Ethics, including, but not limited to, refraining from discussing RCAB business with other RCAB members, verbally or via electronic means, outside of publicly noticed meetings. Prior to embarking upon his/her duties, each RCAB member is required to familiarize himself/herself with the aforementioned laws and read the written guidance prepared by the County Attorney's Office on these topics for advisory board members.
- E. RCAB meetings must be open to members of the public, its meeting dates, times and locations must be reasonably noticed to the public, and minutes of its meetings must be made and maintained. In addition, pursuant to Section 286.0114, members of the public shall be given a reasonable opportunity to be heard on a proposition before the RCAB. The Board hereby directs that the RCAB shall not take any vote on any matter (other than administrative matters such as adoption of minutes or procedural motions) prior to allowing for citizen comments on the agenda item.
- F. The RCAB acts via a majority vote, if a quorum is present. A quorum of the RCAB shall be no less than four (4) members. Absent a quorum, the RCAB may not conduct business other than adjourn. While physical attendance is preferred, RCAB members are permitted to appear electronically so long as all applicable Florida laws regarding open and noticed public meetings are followed, however physical presence is required to count toward being "present" for a quorum.

Section 7. Staff Support. To the extent such resources are available, as determined by the County Administrator or his/her designee, the Development Services Department, and in collaboration with the other departments as deemed necessary, shall provide staff coordination and administrative support necessary for the effective operation of the RCAB, subject to budget limitations as determined by the County's Chief Financial Officer

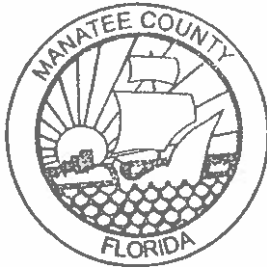
or his/her designee. The Development Services Department shall be responsible for posting/publishing the proper notices of meetings and selecting meeting locations that are accessible to the public.

Section 8. Severability. If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, provision, or word of this Resolution is held invalid or unconstitutional by a court of competent jurisdiction, such invalidity or unconstitutionality shall not be construed as to render invalid or unconstitutional the remaining sections, sentences, clauses, or provisions of this Resolution.

Section 9. Effective Date. This Resolution shall take effect immediately upon adoption by the Board.

25th PASSED AND DULY ADOPTED with a quorum present and voting on this day of August, 2026.

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF MANATEE COUNTY, FLORIDA**



By: Tul
Chairperson

ATTEST: ANGELINA COLONNESO
Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller

By: Ruth Dethoe
Deputy Clerk