



A Message from Marci

Last November, I attended the Joint Annual Conference between the Treasure Coast and South Florida Regional Planning Councils at FAU, where the topic was “The Silver Tsunami.” One of the speakers, Angela Antonelli, executive director of the Center for Retirement Initiatives at Georgetown University, spoke on the work being done around the country for employees of small businesses to have access to retirement plans.

Although the conference focused on senior citizens' struggles, it was important to bring attention to the need to help current workers better prepare for retirement. It was a fascinating discussion I could not shake from my mind. I contacted Angela afterward, and we discussed ways to bring this initiative to Palm Beach County. She invited me to be a panelist at the 2025 Annual Conference of State-Facilitated Retirement Savings Program in Nashville at the end of January. The conference brought together state leaders from around the nation to discuss improving retirement readiness for small businesses and their employees.



February 21, 2025

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I was fortunate to have Sherry Howard, division director for Palm Beach County Housing & Economic Development, and Tammy Fields, assistant county administrator, join me to make sure we could absorb all the valuable information from this trip. Their expertise and participation were invaluable, not only in expanding our network but also in gathering data to support our county's business community.

The best way to move this process forward is to begin with the backing of local business and economic development stakeholders. The second takeaway is the need to have this taken up as legislation at the state level. There are more than 20 states that have either passed or are in the process of implementing legislation for state-facilitated plans. Much of the hard work has been done, and the conference in Nashville proffered several individuals and organizations ready to help us in Florida.

As a county commissioner, I do not make policy at the state level, but I recently hosted a meeting with many community stakeholders at the Canyon Branch Library to discuss an important idea for Florida. Angela Antonelli spoke on this issue, and Nathan Glassey, Director of Federal and State Legislative Affairs at the American Retirement Association, was also in attendance. During the meeting, they shared their findings and highlighted the urgent need to address the retirement savings gap within our workforce. An alarming 56 million U.S. workers, representing over 60% of the private sector, currently lack access to employer-sponsored retirement benefits.

During this discussion, representatives asked hard questions, rigorously dissecting the proposed program to understand how it could successfully work for our county. They dug into the details, showing they're serious about finding a solution that works.

Small businesses, which form the backbone of Florida's economy, face unique challenges in providing retirement options. Many find it cost-prohibitive or too burdensome to "shop" plans for themselves and their

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employees. Many business owners work as many if not more hours than their employees and simply do not have the time to tackle one more thing. In fact, 73% of employees in small businesses with fewer than 50 employees lack access to retirement savings plans through their jobs.

Here in Palm Beach County, we have a total of 72,146 businesses, with a staggering 97%, or 69,885 businesses employing fewer than 50 people. These small businesses are the lifeblood of our local economy, employing almost half the workforce. However, a significant portion of these employees, approximately 305,218 individuals, lack access to retirement plans.

The state-facilitated programs, often utilizing an Auto-IRA model, allow businesses to automatically enroll employees in retirement savings accounts, with minimal administrative burden and no direct cost to employers beyond payroll deductions. Employees retain the flexibility to opt-out at any time. The plan is also extremely portable in that it easily follows the employee if they change jobs within the state.

I am encouraging our business community to actively advocate for a state-facilitated retirement savings program in Tallahassee. The benefits are clear and compelling. By establishing such a program, we can significantly improve the financial security of our workforce, reduce reliance on public assistance, and alleviate pressure on programs like Social Security.

This is a strategic investment that will benefit employers, employees, and taxpayers alike. If you'd like to learn more about this or offer your help, please contact us. It's time to get some traction in Tallahassee on this important issue.



A big thank you to Angela Antonelli and Nathan Glassey for taking the time to speak with our business community. I'm excited to see where this conversation will take us and to get the ball rolling!



Milani Park Community Meeting



We're excited to invite the public to the Milani Park Community Meeting, where the design team, Brooks + Scarpa, and county staff will present their plans for the park. This meeting will be a chance to learn about the designs and ask any questions you may have.

Will you be in attendance?

LOCATION

We are here to help!

Office Telephone:
561-355-2204

Commissioner Woodward:
mwoodward@pbc.gov

Caitlin Joyce
cjoyce@pbc.gov

Christian Wright
cwright@pbc.gov

Kayla West
KWest@pbc.gov

Follow us on social media for updates:



South County Civic Center (16700 Jog Rd, Delray Beach, FL 33446)

DATE AND TIME

04/02/25 6:00pm - 04/02/25 8:00pm US/Eastern

RSVP below.

I'll Be There!

Maybe

I Can't Make It



Bonefish Cove Update



Nearly all the fill required to complete the north island has been delivered to the site. Over the next couple of months, crews will finalize the island's shape, compact the fill to achieve the correct intertidal elevations and then place limestone rocks along its outer rim.

Simultaneously, the oyster reefs to the north and south of the island will be constructed. Following the completion of the north island and its associated

Visit our website:



Upcoming Meetings:

****Notice: The March 25 BCC Workshop has been canceled. ****

BCC Zoning
February 27, 2025
9:30 a.m.

BCC Meeting
March 11, 2025
9:30 a.m.

BCC Workshop
March 18, 2025
9:30 a.m.

BCC Zoning
March 27, 2025
9:30 a.m.

oyster reefs, work will commence on the southern island, where the same process will be replicated.

Upon completion, these islands and oyster reefs will provide vital habitat for threatened shorebirds and protected native mangroves. Below the surface, seagrass and oysters will colonize, contributing to improved water quality.

[More information](#)



The Cognizant Classic in The Palm Beaches



Don't miss the Cognizant Classic in The Palm Beaches, formerly the Honda Classic, from February 26 to March 2, 2025.

Whether you're a seasoned golf fan or new to the sport, the event offers an exciting mix of competition, entertainment, and hospitality.

[More information](#)



Sneak Peak: Vanderbilt's Campus Plan

Vanderbilt University has recently unveiled renderings of its new West Palm Beach campus, featuring modern, sun-filled classrooms and expansive green spaces. In October, the Board of County Commissioners approved a contract with the renowned Nashville-based university to establish a graduate campus in West Palm Beach.

Residents may offer comments and/or concerns to the board by filling out a comment card (available in the chambers).

Constituent Services:

- Community Outreach
- Economic Development
- Environmental Protection
- Mental Health/ Substance Abuse Disorders
- Planning, Zoning & Building
- Infrastructure



The 300,000-square-foot graduate campus will focus on cutting-edge fields like computer science and artificial intelligence and will house an innovation hub aimed at fostering entrepreneurship.



I'm excited to have a campus in our county that emphasizes graduate degrees in finance, data and technology. This initiative will not only strengthen our current workforce but also prepare us for future growth.



Recently Approved Agenda Items

Each month, the Board of County Commissioners approves a wide range of important agenda items that impact areas such as engineering, facilities, housing, airports and more. Here are some key items approved this month:

- Public Safety
- Transportation
- Community & Veteran Services

50th Anniversary of the South County Mental Health Center



- Increase the Agricultural Enhancement Council (AEC) from 9 to 11 members and remove term limits. New members will include a representative from small farms (under 50 acres, outside the Everglades Agricultural Area and Agricultural Reserve) and one from agri-tourism, recommended by the Palm Beach County Farm Bureau.
- Clerk Joseph Abruzzo announced a record-breaking investment income of \$230 million, surpassing last year's previous high of \$173 million. He projects returning over \$1 billion to taxpayers during his eight-year term.
- The following companies by a 6-1 vote to provide EMS services in Palm Beach County from February 11, 2025, to June 30, 2027: MCT Express, Inc. (All County Ambulance), National Health Transport, Inc., Positive Mobility Inc. (Elite Medical Response), and E-Care Ambulance, Inc. Palms West Hospital (HCA Florida Palms West) is limited to transporting patients between the hospital and other facilities.
- A contract for the operation and maintenance of the baggage handling systems at Palm Beach International Airport (PBI) has been extended for an additional year. The amendment increases the contract amount and allocates funds for the replacement of two more baggage claim carousel units.
- The Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND) Project Agreement provides up to \$917,950 for the design, permitting, construction, and monitoring of the South Lake Worth Inlet Sand Trap and Boat Channel Dredging Project, effective upon signing and ending by September 30,

Since opening in 1974, the South County Mental Health Center has been a vital resource in Palm Beach County, providing essential mental health services such as inpatient and outpatient care, crisis intervention and residential programs.

With a dedicated team of over 300 professionals, they've had a lasting impact on individuals and families in our community.

As they mark 50 years of service, we extend our sincere appreciation for their ongoing commitment to improving lives. Here's to many more years of making a difference!

2026. Additionally, a transfer of \$2,191,391 will bring the total funding to \$3,109,341.

[More information](#)



Commish in the Community

~ Safe Street Summit ~



I was thrilled to be part of this year's Safe Street Summit, organized by the Palm Beach Transportation Planning Agency. The event kicked off with the New District & Urban

Connections Tour, where we got an inside look at Nora – downtown West Palm Beach's vibrant new adaptive reuse and development district.

The following day, we dove into discussions on best practices and infrastructure improvements that can make a real impact in our communities. It was also a proud moment for Palm Beach County, as we were honored with the Community Award. A big congratulations to Mayor Michael Napoleone on receiving the Complete Streets Champion Award!



~ Art in Motion ~

Celebrating 100 Years of Florida Power & Light



I had the privilege of joining the entire board for two important proclamations at the Board of County Commissioners meeting:

Mayor Maria Marino presented a proclamation recognizing Florida Power & Light (FPL) for 100 years of service to Palm Beach County and beyond.

For a century, FPL has provided reliable electricity, driven innovation and remained a steadfast partner, especially during times of crisis.

Congratulations to FPL on this remarkable milestone!



Michael Woodward and I had an amazing time attending a preview of the 2025 International Kinetic Art Experience with the City of Boynton Beach.

The event brought together creativity and engineering in a truly inspiring way. A huge thank you to Catering Solutions for generously providing a delicious breakfast to kick off the day and to everyone involved in bringing this incredible experience to life.

Over the weekend, more than 30 artists from around the globe displayed their innovative works, highlighting various styles and dynamic movements. The event also featured artist talks, family-friendly art activities, live music by the Valerie Tyson Band, food trucks, and much more.

~ BDB Luncheon ~



The entire board was in attendance at the BDB luncheon, where we had the privilege of hearing from Armando Pimentel, president and CEO of Florida Power & Light (FPL). He shared insights on how FPL has

been a driving force in building strong communities for nearly a century.

I had the opportunity to meet four amazing companies that have expanded or relocated to Palm Beach County, creating hundreds of jobs and contributing millions in capital investment. These companies include Bee Access, HOERBIGER, Celebree School, and BAC Fabrication LLC & BAC

Historic Eagle Scout Achievements



Commissioner Bobby Powell Jr. presented a proclamation recognizing Jayla Rollins, Khaiden Mansfield, Natassia Stubbs and Delvin Scott for making history as African American Eagle Scouts in the Gulf Stream Council.

These young leaders are paving the way for future generations, and we are incredibly proud of their accomplishments!

Consulting. Their growth is a major boost to our local economy.



Municipal Election Dates and Deadlines

Palm Beach County's municipal elections are fast approaching, and it's important for residents to know the key dates and details for participating in their local elections. Each municipality has its own set of rules, with some requiring a run-off election. Below are the key dates and information for the 2025 Uniform Municipal Elections:

- Election Day: March 11, 2025
- VBM ballot request deadline: February 27, 2025, by 5:00 p.m.
- VBM ballot return deadline: March 11, 2025, by 7:00 p.m.
- Run-Off Election Day (if needed): March 25, 2025

Only voters residing within the boundaries of a municipality are eligible to vote in that municipality's election. If you're unsure of your municipality, check your voter registration card or contact the office at (561) 656-6200.

Participating municipalities include: Boynton Beach, Golf, Highland Beach, Jupiter, Lake Park, Lake Worth Beach, Lantana, Loxahatchee Groves, Pahokee, Palm Beach Gardens, Riviera Beach and Royal Palm Beach.

[More information](#)



Nonprofit Spotlight



The Hands and Feet is a local nonprofit that serves as a vital resource for children and families navigating the complexities of the child welfare system.

Acting as a sort of "DoorDash for foster care,"

they swiftly deliver essential items, from clothing and diapers to car seats and comfort items, addressing immediate needs and offering crucial support.

More than just providing tangible goods, The Hands and Feet extends a lifeline of hope and community, ensuring that vulnerable children and families know they are not alone.

Their dedication to filling the gaps and providing for those in crisis makes a tangible difference in the lives of many within our community.

[More information](#)



Did You Know?

Palm Beach County has a Home Rule Charter?

As a resident of Palm Beach County, you might have heard the term "Home Rule Charter" but may not fully understand what it means or how it affects you. Let's break it down in a simple way!

The Home Rule Charter is like the "constitution" of our county. It sets the framework for how our local government operates. Essentially, it outlines how decisions are made, how elected officials do their jobs, and how we, the people, are represented.

This governing document gives Palm Beach County the authority to govern ourselves without needing approval from the state for many local matters. It

helps us tailor our government to fit the unique needs of our community. By establishing clear rules for governing, it ensures transparency, fairness and accountability.

Here are some key elements:

- Government Structure: The local constitution outlines how the county is governed, including the roles of the Board of County Commissioners and the county administrator. We elect commissioners to make decisions on our behalf, and the administrator is responsible for running day-to-day operations.
- Elected Officials' Responsibilities: It explains what each elected official, including the commissioners, can and cannot do, and the procedures for how we vote on county matters.
- County Services: The county's framework sets up how our county provides important services like public safety, parks and libraries, and how these services are funded and managed.
- Amendments and Changes: This foundational document isn't set in stone. If necessary, it can be amended through a vote by the public or county officials to better serve our community's evolving needs.

The Home Rule Charter directly impacts how your county government operates. It affects everything from how your tax dollars are spent to the services you receive. If you're ever wondering why certain decisions are made, or how you can get involved, it's often tied to the guidelines set by these established rules.

The legal structure also gives you the power to help shape it. Changes can be made through public

participation, and it's your right to stay informed and involved in the process. Whether you're attending Board of County Commissioners meetings or voting on proposed amendments, your voice matters!

In short, the Home Rule Charter is a vital document that empowers Palm Beach County to govern itself effectively, ensuring that the needs of the community are met. Stay informed, stay involved and remember—you play an important role in how our county is run!

[Read the Charter](#)



Palm Beach County Trivia Challenge

In what year did Palm Beach International Airport, originally known as Morrison Field, open?

1910

1932

1987

1993

We had some brilliant minds tackle our December trivia question: "Which architect is most closely associated with the distinctive Palm Beach style?"

A big round of applause to everyone who correctly guessed Addison Mizner!

We welcome your feedback on our District 4 newsletter. Please let us know if you found this information helpful and what else you would like to know.

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