

1:30 p.m.

The Suwannee County Board of County Commissioners met on the above date and time for an emergency session and the following were present: Chairman Jason Bashaw; Commissioner Ricky Gamble; and Commissioner Wesley Wainwright. Commissioners Clyde Fleming and Larry Sessions were not present. Clerk of Court Barry A. Baker; Eric Musgrove, Deputy Clerk; Randy Harris, County Administrator; and James W. Prevatt, Jr., County Attorney, were also present.

Chairman Bashaw called the meeting to order at 1:33 p.m. and stated that the purpose of the meeting was for the Board to discuss declaring a State of Emergency due to the imminent threat of Hurricane Matthew.

Sheriff Tony Cameron, in his capacity as Suwannee County Director of Emergency Management, discussed the State of Emergency approved so far by the State, the City of Live Oak, and Town of Branford. He stated that Suwannee County was not projected to be in the direct path of the hurricane unless its course changed, but added that tropical storm-force winds were expected. Sheriff Cameron stated that shelters may open due to outsiders evacuating from the coastline, and schools would not be open Friday. He stated that there had been problems with the theft of generator fuel at some of the schools that were also used as emergency shelters, and it was being looked into. Sheriff Cameron added that if Hurricane Matthew turned to the west, the situation in Suwannee County could become much worse. He stated that the City of Live Oak and Town of Branford had already signed emergency declarations, and recommended that the Board of County Commissioners do the same. Sheriff Cameron added that Suwannee County was already inundated with displaced people from other counties, including hundreds of patients at Camp Weed and the Advent Christian Village.

Chairman Bashaw stated that if Hurricane Matthew continued on its current track, there would be devastation to the east coast of Florida not seen since 1913. Suwannee County, even if it did not take a direct hit from the hurricane, would be impacted by evacuees and may need to open shelters.

Sheriff Cameron added that nearly 500 prisoners had been brought to Suwannee Correctional Institution from Putnam Correctional Institution, and there was also the possibility of the County Jail housing inmates from St. Johns County. Such acts necessitated the Board declaring a state of emergency.

Chairman Bashaw discussed hospital needs, and then discussed wind and rain projections, which could change based upon the track of the hurricane.

Sheriff Cameron stated that current projections had Hurricane Matthew breaking to the east after passing Florida, and if it looped around, Suwannee County could be heavily impacted.

Chairman Bashaw reiterated that the County could be dealing with Hurricane Matthew again the following week if it does in fact loop back around as projected. He then read the proposed resolution, adding that it had been reviewed by the County Attorney.

Commissioner Gamble moved to declare a state of emergency in Suwannee County due to the threat caused by Hurricane Matthew. Commissioner Wainwright seconded, and the motion carried unanimously (3-0). (Resolution No. 2017-07)

Sheriff Cameron mentioned that a conference call with the State Emergency Operations Center would be held at 5:15 p.m. for anyone who wished to participate.

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Chairman Bashaw stated that local varsity football games would be played later that evening, and County Offices would remain open on Friday unless the hurricane's track changed to the west.

County Administrator Harris stated that the Public Works Department had been put on notice to be available Saturday to clean up debris from the hurricane.

Chairman Bashaw thanked County staff for their work during emergencies such as the current one.

Commissioner Wainwright moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Gamble seconded, and the motion carried unanimously (3-0).

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 1:52 p.m.

ATTEST:

_____, DC
BARRY A. BAKER
CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT

JASON BASHAW, CHAIRMAN
SUWANNEE COUNTY BOARD OF
OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS