



## ***From the desk of Commissioner Robert S. Weinroth***

### **National Alliance on Mental Illness of Palm Beach County**

Mental illness has garnered increased attention and resources in recent years. The National Alliance on Mental Illness of Palm Beach County (NAMI) is one of the nonprofit mental health organizations in our county dedicated to improving the quality of life and protecting the rights and interests of people affected by mental illness. With one in five Floridians experiencing mental health disorders by age 25, the repercussions for a person afflicted, as well as those with whom they interact, are far-reaching.

Mental illness is a recognized medical condition that diminishes an individual's capacity to cope with the ordinary demands of life. People impacted consist of a broad group, not related to a specific gender, class, or ethnicity. Some serious forms of mental illness include depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), panic disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and personality disorders.

Most importantly, there are treatments available for people enduring these medical conditions. NAMI is striving to eliminate the stigma attached to mental illness to achieve the goals of empowerment, social inclusion and recovery.

NAMI has over 1,000 offices nationwide including 27 in Florida offering a full spectrum of services. In Palm Beach County, there are three Mobile Crisis Units available 24/7, ready to provide emergency intervention, de-escalation, screening and assessments.

NAMI also has a full array of nationally recognized, evidence-based programs available free of charge. For more information, visit [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org).

I am committed to continue to work with county staff and local mental health professionals and organizations to ensure that programs are available to our residents who are suffering from mental illness, removing the stigma of this serious medical disorder (often going undiagnosed as the patient suffers in silence).

## **School Zone Safety Tips**

School is open, so please stay vigilant when driving in school zones! In Palm Beach County, 20 mph is the maximum speed for all schools zones, and all are preceded by numerous warning signs and/or flashing lights. The county is currently in the process of installing flashers at all school zones as recently mandated by a change in state regulation.

In addition to the fines (with civil penalties up to \$1,000 possible) drivers are subject to remedial drivers education if cited for violation within a school zone.

Also, be aware, the recent “no texting while driving” law which went into effect on July 1<sup>st</sup> subjects a driver using *any mobile device* in a school zone to a ticket. Don’t be a distracted driver.

## **No Increase in County Taxes Projected**

The Palm Beach County Property Appraisers office recently mailed real estate owners, countywide, annual TRIM notices with preliminary estimates of property values and tax rates.

The Board of County Commissioners during its budget workshop in July, unanimously agreed to maintain the current 2018/19 tax rate of \$16.84 per \$1,000 of the property’s taxable value. While appraisals may increase a property’s value, the tax rate will remain constant. This will be the ninth year the county has maintained the tax millage rate. It is noteworthy that the county millage is the lowest among all the municipalities with Palm Beach County.

Some examples of local municipal rates are:

Boca Raton: \$18.58

Gulf Stream: 17.57

Highland Beach: \$17.76

West Palm Beach: \$22.18

Pahokee: \$24.30

Boca Raton, which covers 30 square miles, is the largest contributor toward the county's tax role at approximately \$25 billion – up 5 percent from last year. In comparison, Palm Beach, which covers 10.4 square miles contributed \$24.27 billion last year.

The Board of County Commissioners will be meeting again at 6:00 p.m. on September 3 and 16 to finalize the budget. Both meetings are open to the public.

## **Local County Inhabitants Date Back 2,000 Years**

Reportedly, people have been living in southern Palm Beach County for the last 2,500 years (and you thought we needed air conditioning to attract residents)!

Archaeologically, Palm Beach County has a rich history that includes some extraordinary prehistoric Native American sites. The oldest site is the Hungryland Slough in central western Palm Beach County and dates back 6,000 years which is approximately 2,000 years before the pyramids in Egypt.

Delray Beach, Highland Beach and Boca Raton have some interesting archaeological sites. Two complexes in these areas are the Boca Raton Inlet Complex and Spanish River Complex.

The Boca Raton Inlet Complex consists of three shell and black-earth middens and at least one or two sand burial mounds. A midden is a trash heap that ancient residents lived on or near. While such an idea may seem strange to us today, this was very common and practiced around the world. In the Near East (Turkey, Lebanon, and Israel), middens are called tels. The most famous of these is located under modern day Tel Aviv.

Also at the Boca Raton Inlet Complex, three different types of prehistoric pottery (St. John's Check Stamped, Belle Glade Plain and Sand Tempered Plain) were recovered and are believed to have been deposited between 1200 and 1763 A.D.

In 2002, an FAU student excavated the Gumbo Limbo site which was another black-earth midden site. The ceramics from that site confirmed the occupation of the Boca Inlet Complex occurred between 500 B.C. and 1200 A.D.

The Spanish River Complex (located in Highland Beach) was one of the largest aboriginal localities in South Florida. Experts believe it contained eight sites, four burial mounds, and four midden sites. Based on the types of ceramics

found at the sites, archeologists have inferred the sites date back to between 750 A.D. and 1763 A.D.

## **BCC Briefs**

At the August 20, 2019, Board of County Commissioners meeting, the board took the following action:

**Palm Springs CRA** – continued to September 3 at 3 p.m. a request by the village of Palm Springs to create a new community redevelopment agency with two sub-areas located on Lake Worth Road and Congress Avenue within the village’s municipal limits.

**E-cigarettes** – approved on first reading and to advertise for public hearing on October 8 establishment of the Vapor Free Public Park Playground Ordinance. The measure would prohibit the use of vapor generating electronic devices including e-cigarettes at county-operated public park playgrounds.

**Project Signal** – conceptually approved an economic development incentive of \$19,200 over six years for Project Signal which is considering relocating its international headquarters to Palm Beach County. The company will invest \$1.22 million to lease, renovate and equip a 7,500-square-foot facility, creating 32 new jobs over a three-year period at an annualized average wage of \$71,663. The estimated five-year local economic impact is \$59.6 million.

**Glades workforce housing** – agreed to draft a letter in support of a proposal by the city of Belle Glade to use the former Gove Elementary School property in Belle Glade for a workforce housing project.

**Amelia Gardens** – approved a loan agreement with Amelia Gardens, LLC, (borrower) that restructures \$598,448 in State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) funds owed in connection with a previous loan agreement made in May 6, 2003, for the construction of 22 affordable rental housing units located on SW 14th Street in Belle Glade. The loan agreement includes forgiveness of \$109,050 in deferred and accrued interest. These are SHIP grant funds that require no local match.

**SHIP** – approved the allocation of \$575,000 of program income from the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) program to be offered as the required local government contribution for the following FY 2019-2020 affordable housing strategies: purchase assistance \$500,000; owner occupied housing rehabilitation

\$500,000; emergency repairs \$151,022; foreclosure prevention \$45,000; project delivery \$149,400; administrative costs \$149,400. SHIP program income requires no local match.

**Property conveyance** – approved the conveyance of a .1263-acre residential property with a single-family home to the Riviera Beach Community Development Corporation, Inc. (RBCDC). The property located at 928 W. 7th Street in Riviera Beach reverted to the county in 2017 and has an appraised value of \$56,000. The home will be sold to a family earning no more than 80 percent of area median income at an anticipated sales price not to exceed \$245,000.

**Fire hydrants** – adopted a resolution establishing the rate for the non-ad valorem special assessment levied against parcels within the Palm Beach County Municipal Service Benefit Unit in Riviera Beach for fire hydrant maintenance and rental for FY-2020. There are now 782 parcels within the MSBU-Riviera Beach subject to the current non-ad valorem assessment rate of \$52.86 per parcel.

**Right of way permitting** – repealed and replaced two ordinances pertaining to the permitting and use of county-maintained rights of way. The ROW Permitting Ordinance was updated to address multiple revised practices over the past 11 years, as well as new state laws for communications companies. The requirement to register with the county prior to applying for approval to install facilities was expanded to all types of communication companies and incorporates changes pursuant to the Advanced Wireless Infrastructure Deployment Act, which relates to 5G wireless technology deployment.

**Human trafficking** – received an update on expansion of training to county staff and community partners in an effort to combat human trafficking.

**Racial equity** – directed staff to look into mandatory racial equity training for managers, supervisors, department heads, administrators and employees who work in direct contact with the public.