



Angelina “Angel” Colonnese

Clerk of the Circuit Court & Comptroller of Manatee County

1115 Manatee Avenue West, Bradenton, Florida 34205 • Phone (941) 749-1800 • Fax (941) 741-4082
Mailing Address P.O. Box 25400, Bradenton, Florida 34205 • Website www.ManateeClerk.com

MEMORANDUM

To: Charlie Bishop, County Administrator

From: Lori Stephens, Inspector General

Date: March 27, 2024

Subject: Coquina Beach Parking CIP Project

The Division of Inspector General has completed a project to research a complaint received regarding the capital improvement plan (CIP) parking lot project at Coquina Beach. The project was limited to determining whether the work performed for the Coquina Beach parking was properly approved and funded. The project was conducted in accordance with the Institute of Internal Auditor’s *International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing*.

Background

On February 5, 2023, a complaint was submitted to the Inspector General regarding County Administration not following procedures. It was alleged that recent work on an additional parking lot near the playground at Coquina Beach was not included in the CIP, and, therefore, the work had not been properly approved or funded.

Per Objective 10.1.6 of the Manatee County Comprehensive Plan, the County is required to develop an annual CIP for programming and funding capital projects. Each year, the five-year CIP is updated by resolution of the Board of County Commissioners (BCC); two public hearings are required prior to the BCC adopting the five-year CIP. Additions and/or changes to the CIP throughout the fiscal year are done through BCC-approved budget amendment resolutions. The FY23-27 CIP was adopted on September 13, 2022, through Resolution R-22-156. The approved CIP included two drainage improvement projects that involve parking for Coquina Beach: 6005719 and 6005723.

Objective

The project objective was to determine whether the work performed for the Coquina Beach parking lot near the playground was properly approved and funded.

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Scope and Methodology

The scope of the project included examining the work performed for the Coquina Beach parking lot. Test work included interviewing personnel and management, reviewing Coquina Beach Parking Lot project requirements and supporting documentation, and evaluating applicable policies and procedures.

Project Results

Objective 10.1.6 of the Manatee County Comprehensive Plan requires the County to develop an annual CIP for programming and funding capital projects. Resolution R-22-156 defines a capital improvement project as a “non-recurring expenditure of \$250,000 or more from county funds for the construction, installation, or acquisition of capital facilities.” Budget amendment resolutions are required to make changes to the approved CIP throughout the fiscal year. The FY23-27 adopted CIP had two projects that included parking for Coquina Beach. Both projects, detailed below, were for drainage improvements for the public parking areas; these improvements also included creating parking lots using pervious concrete.

- #6005719 – Stormwater project budgeted for \$3,280,618.00; funded with utility rates
- #6005723 – Parks & Natural Resources - Parks & Aquatics project budgeted for \$5,000,000.00; funded with tourist development taxes

Construction for the Coquina Beach parking improvements was divided into two phases:

- Phase I included the south end of the parking lot. It was awarded to Woodruff & Sons in January 2019 for \$1,937,025.90, with a change order of \$590,642.11 in May 2019. Phase I was completed in 2020.
- Phase II included the north and central parking areas. This was initially awarded to American Pipeline Construction for \$3,447,313.77 in October 2020. However, due to internal business issues, they were only able to perform work totaling \$1,173,729.20 through October 2021. As they were unable to complete the work, the County’s Procurement Division terminated the contract and the remaining Phase II work was awarded to Woodruff & Sons by the BCC on June 7, 2022, for \$3,139,350.83. They also adopted budget resolution B-22-098, which added \$1,392,618.00 to the funding for the CIP projects. Phase II was completed in 2023.

The table below provides details of the costs of the projects.

	CIP Project #6005719	CIP Project #6005723	Totals
Original Budget	\$1,888,000.00	\$5,000,000.00	\$6,888,000.00
Budget Amendment	\$1,392,618.00	\$0	\$1,392,618.00
	<i>\$3,280,618.00</i>	<i>\$5,000,000.00</i>	<i>\$8,280,618.00</i>
Construction:			
Phase I Contract	\$1,187,025.90	\$750,000.00	\$1,937,025.90
Phase I Change Order	\$0	\$590,642.11	\$590,642.11
Phase II Contract 1	\$0	\$3,447,313.77	\$3,447,313.77
Phase II Cancel Contract	\$0	(\$2,273,584.57)	(\$2,273,584.57)
Phase II Contract 2	\$1,139,350.83	\$2,000,000.00	\$3,139,350.83

In addition, the County obtained a Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) permit for the Coquina Beach drainage and parking lot improvements. The three-year permit was issued on February 12, 2021, and included the plans approved by the FDEP, which detailed where the parking lots would be constructed. Any modifications to the project size or location required authorization from FDEP.

Conclusion

The additional parking lots were properly approved and funded by the County.

Based on observation and information from County personnel, two overflow parking lots were added to the Phase II plans. These lots are in the greenspace next to the Coquina Beach playground. The lots only consist of shell material rather than pervious concrete.

The addition of these lots was included in Change Order #1 for \$333,106.59 for the Phase II contract with Woodruff & Sons. As previously noted, Phase II of the Coquina Beach parking project is under CIP projects 6005719 and 6005723. This change order was approved by County Administration on November 16, 2022, through a recess agenda, as authorized by Resolution R-20-124. The BCC ratified/accepted Change Order #1 on November 29, 2022, which was the next regular meeting after the recess. A budget amendment was not required for the change order, as there was sufficient funding in the CIP project budgets.

It was noted, however, that County personnel did not submit the plan changes for the additional shell lots to FDEP for approval prior to performing the work. Per the FDEP permit manager, these additional lots would be considered a plan modification that required FDEP authorization. We informed County personnel of the oversight, and the plan changes, which included the additional shell lots, were submitted to FDEP on September 14, 2023. FDEP approved the modified plans and issued an After-the-Fact Modification of Permit on September 28, 2023.

We would like to thank the Public Works management and staff for their cooperation and the courtesy afforded to the auditors throughout the project.

LJS/BJW/MEG

cc: Angelina "Angel" Colonnese, Clerk of the Circuit Court & Comptroller
Board of County Commissioners
Evan Pilachowski, Deputy County Administrator
Chad Butzow, Public Works Department Director