EXCLUSIVE: Investigation into the timelin of the potential JEA sale

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. -- In interviews with First Coast News, Mayor Curry has made his message clear when it comes to the potential sale of JEA.

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – In interviews with First Coast News, Jacksonville mayor Lenny Curry has mad message clear when it comes to the potential sale of JEA: "There is no deal to sell the JEA right now said.

"Certainly not out of my office" Curry said. "I do not have an opinion on the sale of JEA. I think it's imp we know the value, I mean the taxpayers, know the value of their assets."

So why are City Council members so upset?

They've been so concerned with transparency that the Special Committee on JEA passed a motion Thursday to require everyone to be under oath.

Sam Mousa, the Chief Administrative Officer for the mayor, and Paul McElroy, the CEO of JEA, refuse put under oath. The council will now be serving McElroy with a subpoena to appear before the on M 29.

First Coast News obtained exclusive documents to investigate the timeline surrounding JEA to see it Mayor's Office is involved, contrary to what they've stated.

According to those records:

On December 20, the city finance department, headed by the Mayor's CFO Mike Weinstein, asked s financial companies to essentially send in their resumes for a job; that process is called a request for proposal or RFP.

That request went out without the knowledge of the council, which isn't the way it's historically been

The goal of the RFP was to find out who would be the best at researching the potential for "the lease and/or disposition of city assets."

JEA is not specifically mentioned. It's also not excluded. Although JEA is mentioned in some of the responses to the RFP by the financial companies.

The Mayor's Office says these RFP bids were for Jacksonville's infrastructure, like bridges, roadways seaport and airport. However, the mayor's office says no public records exist to support these claims

The mayor's office does emphasize that the RFP was not meant for JEA; something council auditor K Billy contradicts in this email to City Council staff:

"The RFP appears to request Financial Advisory Services that would be needed to solicit bids to pur JEA, evaluate those bids, assist City staff in negotiations, and assist in bringing the transaction to fir and commercial close."

He then makes the RFP bids public.

The Mayor's Chief Financial Officer, Mike Weinstein, responds to Billy:

"Your premise and opinions are totally incorrect and I am extremely disappointed in you."

But Billy found other aspects odd too, writing in that original email:

"I thought it was unusual because it appears to be a City of Jacksonville RFP, but the responses wer coming to the City."

That's because those bids were sent to PFM, a consulting firm in Orlando.

The same firm JEA hired to tell them how much it is worth.

Now for a closer look at the timeline of events.

NOVEMBER:

- On November 11, two lobbyists, who formerly worked for the mayor's office, visit JEA.
- On November 28, Tom Petway announces he's leaving his post as JEA board chair and recomm JEA be sold.

DECEMBER:

- On December 20, those RFP bids for city assets are requested by the city, again, unbeknowns council members.
- One day later Michael Mace visits JEA. Mace is a major player in the JEA timeline because he's managing director for PFM, the company JEA hired for a valuation.

JANUARY:

- Mace returns to JEA on the 23, of January and then again on the 24, but this time he's joined b Weinstein, the CFO for Mayor Curry, and a senior leadership team from a banking investment f called Moelis.
- Immediately after their meeting the Moelis team heads over to City Hall for a meeting with May Curry, according to Curry's calendar.

- Leading up to that meeting First Coast News uncovered emails between JEA, Moelis and PFM discussing conference calls.
- In response to our questions over their interactions with JEA, Moelis tells us "no comment."
- Two days after the Moelis meeting, the Mayor's Chief of Staff, Brian Hughes, meets with Greg E government affairs consultant lobbyist. His firm specializes in regulated industries like utility companies.
- After their meeting, Hughes and Weinstein visit JEA together. They meet with JEA's Chief Finar Officer. One hour later they meet with JEA's board Chair Alan Howard.

FEBRUARY:

- It isn't until February when council members start to learn about the potential sale of JEA.
- February 14, is when Michael Mace presents the PFM valuation report to City Council.
- But, before the meeting Mace visits JEA, and so does the Mayor's CFO, Weinstein, clocking in times that morning.
- This time Weinstein uses an issued JEA access badge so he doesn't have to sign in.
- First Coast News requested his badge details and they show he clocked into JEA 13 times in February.
- First Coast News has made multiple requests for information and for interviews with the city's f department and the mayor's office. The mayor's office says they are still processing our reques provided this statement: *"Members of this administration meet with agencies throughout this c myriad of topics and citizen needs. The mayor, Mr. Hughes, Mr. Weinstein and Mr. Mousa are n exception and manage their calendars to fulfill the responsibilities held in their respective roles*

Editor's Note: This story has been updated to remove a line that stated Jax Chamber members visite since Jax Chamber has since notified First Coast News that their November meeting was in no way to the potential sale of JEA.

LIVE BLOG: Re-Open Florida Task Force

LIVE BLOG: Re-Open Florida Task Force launches public comment submission por

For the latest updates on the virus on the First Coast, follow this live blog a join our Facebook group, Facts Not Fear: Your Coronavirus Questions Answered.

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — As of Saturday, there have been 2,058 confirmed positive cases of the coror and 58 deaths reported across the First Coast, according to numbers combined from both Georgia a Florida's departments of health.

In Northeast Florida, here are the latest numbers according to the Florida Department of Health:

- **Baker County** -- 20 cases, three deaths
- **Bradford County** -- 42 cases, two deaths
- **Clay County** – 267 cases, 14 deaths
- **Columbia County** -- 47 cases
- **Duval County** – 965 cases, 18 deaths
- **Flagler County** – 116 cases, two deaths
- **Nassau County** – 50 cases
- **Putnam County** -- 83 cases, one death
- **St. Johns County** -- 203 cases, four deaths
- **Union County** -- four cases

There are a total of 30,839 cases reported in the state of Florida. In total, there have been 1,055 Flor deaths.

RELATED: How to track Florida coronavirus cases by ZIP code

In Southeast Georgia, here are the latest numbers according to the Georgia Department of Health:

- **Brantley County** -- 20 cases, two deaths
- **Camden County** -- 28 cases, one death
- **Charlton County** – seven cases
- **Glynn County** – 51 cases, one death
- **Pierce County** – 52 cases, two deaths
- **Ware** – 103 cases, eight deaths

There are a total of 22,695 cases in the state of Georgia and 904 deaths.

For the latest updates on the virus and its impact on the First Coast, follow this live blog and join our Facebook group, Facts Not Fear: Your Coronavirus Questions Answered.

Major updates regarding the coronavirus from April 21 to April 4

Links to bookmark:

- List | Schools, events closed or canceled due to coronavirus concerns
- List | Florida universities, colleges move classes online due to coronavirus concerns
- List | First Coast nursing homes with positive COVID-19 cases
- This interactive map shows all reported coronavirus cases in the world

Saturday, April 25

9 a.m.: The Re-Open Florida Task Force today launched a public comment submission portal open t Floridians.

Floridians may submit feedback on any topic related to the re-opening of Florida's economy. This inc the impacts to small businesses, healthcare, education, tourism, agriculture, retail, recreation and sp and construction.

Click here to access the online Task Force to Re-Open Florida Public Comment Submission Form

RELATED: Taskforce asks Floridians for feedback about reopening state

Friday, April 24

4:45 p.m. During a press conference, Friday Gov. Ron DeSantis announced he has directed state Su General Scott Rivkees to allow licensed pharmacists to order and administer COVID-19 tests. This ch comes in an effort to expand testing across the state

"We've got to figure out ways to make it as simple and accessible as possible," DeSantis said.

RELATED: Gov. DeSantis directs state surgeon general to allow pharmacists to administer COVID tests

12:52 p.m.: President Donald Trump signed a $484 billion bill Friday to aid employers and hospitals stress from the coronavirus pandemic. The bill is the latest effort by the federal government to help l afloat businesses that have had to close or dramatically alter their operations as states try to slow th spread of the virus.

9:30 a.m.: The state unemployment website shuts down Friday with a message stating it will reopen Monday. The website has been a highly publicized disaster since newly unemployed Floridians bega flooding the filing portal in March.

RELATED: Florida's unemployment claims website down until Monday morning

7:50 a.m.: President Donald Trump will be holding a signing ceremony Friday for a bill providing a n $500 billion infusion of coronavirus spending, rushing new relief to employers and hospitals bucklin under the strain of a pandemic that has claimed almost 50,000 American lives and one in six U.S. jol

7 a.m.: There were more than 869,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the United States around 1 a Friday.

Thursday, April 23

12:33 p.m.: Glynn and Camden County reporting first coronavirus related deaths. The individuals we years old and 45 years old.

12:10 p.m.: Mayor Lenny Curry held a news conference to provide information about a new, local stir package that will provide financial assistance to Jacksonville residents.

7 a.m.: There were more than 842,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the United States around 7 a Thursday, according to Johns Hopkins University.

Wednesday, April 22

4:45 p.m.: Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis praised Jacksonville for its handling of the pandemic. DeSantis specifically mentioned Lenny Curry and addressed the #FloridaMoron trend that has swept through media in light of the beaches reopening.

"My hat's off to Mayor Curry," the governor said. "My hat's off to the people of Jacksonville in Northea Florida for doing a great job. And for those who say you're morons, I would take you over the folks w criticizing you any day of the week and twice on Sunday."

RELATED: **Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis responds to #FloridaMoron social media trend, praises Jacksonville's handling of COVID-19**

1 p.m. On Wednesday, Clay County officials announced that they will be postponing graduation for h school seniors from May to July, but a specific date hasn't been set.

"We believe it is important to have a traditional graduation ceremony," one official said. He added tha ceremony will have to follow CDC guidelines and regulations that are in place at that time.

RELATED: **Clay officials push back graduation to July**

9:20 a.m.: Flagler County will allow for reopening its beaches Wednesday on a limited basis for phys and mental health activities. The Nassau County Board of County Commissioners will decide Wedne morning whether to reopen county beaches.

RELATED: **Flagler County partially open beaches, Nassau County to make a decision Wednesday**

8:17 a.m.: During a radio interview, Attorney General William Barr discussed the state's "stay-at-home restrictions amid the coronavirus pandemic. He claimed some orders were "disturbingly close to hou arrest." Barr said he will consider legal action if governors start to civil liberty restrictions "too far."

Tuesday, April 21

4:30 p.m.: Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis says Florida has flattened the curve in the fight against COVID- also announced 4 million more N95 masks are coming to Florida health care workers in long-term he care facilities.

RELATED: **'We have flattened the curve': Gov. Ron DeSantis says Florida's efforts against COVID- have been successful**

9:15 a.m.: Starting Tuesday, all Florida SNAP customers can use their EBT cards to purchase online groceries through Walmart and Amazon.

8:40 a.m.: One insulin maker is offering diabetic patients free insulin for 90 days if they no longer ha health insurance coverage because they lost their jobs during the COVID-19 economic crisis.

RELATED: **Insulin maker offering free 90-day supply to patients financially impacted by pandemic**

8:34 a.m.: According to a newly released report, total crop losses across Florida through mid-April 2 may exceed $522.5 million as large-scale buyers including restaurants, school districts, food proces facilities, and others order less product.

6:30 a.m.: There were more than confirmed 787,000 cases of COVID-19 in the United States by 4 a.m Tuesday, according to Johns Hopkins University.

Monday, April 20

4:53 p.m.: Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp announced gyms, fitness centers, bowling alleys, body art studi barbers, cosmetologists, hair designers, nail care artists, estheticians and more can reopen Friday, A

RELATED: Kemp announces plans to incrementally reopen Georgia | Here's what that includes

> **Governor Brian P. Kemp**
> @GovKemp
>
> Due to favorable data & more testing, gyms, fitness centers, bowling alleys, body art studios, barbers, cosmetologists, hair designers, nail care artists, estheticians, their respective schools & massage therapists can reopen Friday, April 24 with Minimum Basic Operations. #gapol
>
> 20.8K 4:53 PM - Apr 20, 2020
>
> 18.5K people are talking about this

2 p.m.: Gov. Ron DeSantis, on a conference call with his new state coronavirus task force, said he ex Florida to be a model for how to jump-start the economy once Florida reopens.

RELATED: Gov. DeSantis looks into reopening state, jump-starting economy

12:10 p.m.: A new COVID-19 testing site is in the works for Jacksonville, Mayor Lenny Curry announ during a news conference on Monday. Curry said this new testing site will be located on the Northsi within the next week and that more details will follow.

RELATED: Curry talks reopening of Duval beaches, new COVID-19 testing site

11:07 a.m.: The COVID-19 testing site at Lot J will be closed Monday due to high wind speeds.

> **Florida Association of Public Information Officers**
> @FloridaPIOs
>
> The @FLSERT @TIAABankField #COVID19 Test Collection Site in Lot J will be closed today due to high wind speeds. @WJCTJax @WOKVNews @AllThingsCBS47 @staugrecord @x1065jax @951wape @979KISSFM @969TheEagleJax @991wqik @999gatorcountry
>
> 3 10:56 AM - Apr 20, 2020
>
> See Florida Association of Public Information Officers's other Tweets

9:32 a.m.: A bill introduced by Rep. Ilhan Omar looks to cancel rent and home mortgage payments nationwide for the duration of the coronavirus pandemic.

RELATED: Rep. Ilhan Omar proposes canceling rent, mortgage payments during coronavirus pan

6:15 a.m.: There were more than 759,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the United States around a.m. on Monday, according to Johns Hopkins University.

Sunday, April 19

2:30 p.m.: Kroger's Atlanta Division, which includes Georgia, eastern Alabama and South Carolina, is adding new safety measures, including facial mask requirements for associates.

The grocery chain said they have a supply of surgical masks in stock for associates to use.

Additionally, the chain will pilot test mandatory temperature checks at the start of each shift at certai stores. These tests will commence once the infrared thermometers arrive in the stores.

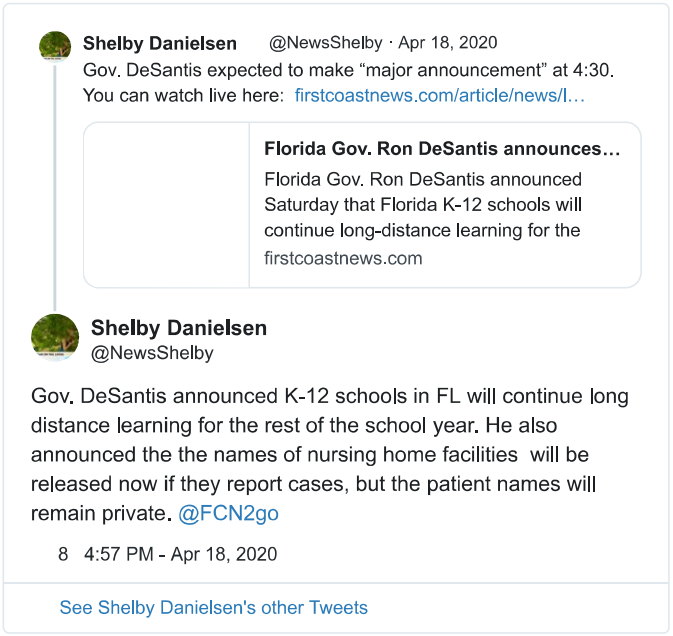
Saturday, April 18

6 p.m.: The names of Florida nursing homes with COVID-19 cases are released. Baker, Bradford, Cla Duval, Nassau, Putnam and St. Johns County nursing homes are mentioned in the list. The names of Georgia nursing homes with COVID-19 cases were also released. Brantley, Camden, Charlton, Pierce Ware are among the counties listed.

RELATED: List: First Coast nursing homes with positive COVID-19 cases

4:30 p.m.: Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis announced Florida K-12 schools will continue long-distance lea for the rest of the school year.

RELATED: Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis announces Florida K-12 schools will continue long-distance learning for the rest of the school year



Friday, April 17

5 p.m.: Duval County's beaches and parks reopened after being closed for a month because of COV

RELATED: Jacksonville beaches, parks reopen Friday

12:05 p.m.: St. Johns County beaches will open from 6 a.m. to noon starting Saturday morning. Cour leaders say this is for exercise only and not for lounging or sunbathing.

RELATED: St. Johns County beaches partially reopen

10 a.m.: Florida Governor Ron DeSantis held a press conference in Fort Lauderdale less than 24-hou President Trump released a three-phase outline for recovering from the economic pain of the corona pandemic.

When asked about how Florida will respond to Trump's three-phase plan, DeSantis said that the stat use it as a baseline but that doesn't mean Florida will follow it exactly or do everything. The governo they need to look at several different things and more information is needed.

RELATED: President Trump unveils 'Guidelines for opening up America again'

6:15 a.m.: New York residents will be required to wear face coverings anytime they come into close with other people outside their homes starting Friday..

5:45 a.m.: There have been 671,331 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the United States as of 12:30 a. Friday, according to Johns Hopkins University.

Thursday, April 16

5 p.m.: President Trump announced a three-phase plan to reopen the country that will be based on and left up to each state to roll out.

Phase 1 would reopen restaurant dining areas, movie theaters, sports venues, gyms, and places of w with strict social distancing guidelines. Schools that are already closed should remain closed, and w than can work from home should still do so.

Phase 2 would allow schools and youth summer camps to operate, reopen parks and shopping mall allow bars to reopen with capacity restrictions.

Phase 3 would allow employers to resume unrestricted staffing of workplaces. Large public venues operate under limited social distancing rules. Visits to senior care facilities and hospitals can resume

4 p.m.: Jacksonville Mayor Lenny Curry announced Thursday that Duval County's beaches and park reopen Friday at 5 p.m. after being closed for a month because of COVID-19.

9 a.m.: The Lot J COVID-19 testing site, now run by the Florida National Guard, is set to re-open at 9 after being closed for weather concerns. The number of tests that can be administered has increase 250 to 400 per day.

8 a.m.: President Donald Trump said he's prepared to announce new guidelines Thursday allowing s states to quickly ease up on social distancing.

RELATED: **New Trump guidelines Thursday aim to ease some social distancing restrictions**

Wednesday, April 15

4:50 p.m.: Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis said he was disappointed in the initial response by the state's unemployment website, but said they just added over 100 new servers to receive applications online said more than 1,000 people in total are currently taking calls for unemployment claims. He expects increase that number to 2,000 soon.

He announced that he has now stripped Florida Department of Economic Opportunity's Executive D Ken Lawson of all COVID-19 responsibilities after Lawson had been overseeing the unemployment w

DeSantis expressed frustration over not being able to obtain basic information from Lawson, such as number of claims that had been processed on a daily basis and called the situation "unacceptable."

He appointed Secretary of the Department of Management Services Jonathan Satter to take over th of leading the unemployment claims efforts.

RELATED: **Gov. Ron DeSantis says handling of unemployment website was 'unacceptable,' appoi new leadership**

8:40 a.m.: The United States has more than 600,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19, according to sta from Johns Hopkins University.

8 a.m.: House Democrats Tim Ryan and Ro Khanna have introduced legislation to give millions of Americans $2,000 per month during the coronavirus pandemic. The congressmen say the one-time $1,200 stimulus going out to many Americans isn't good enough given skyrocketing unemployment.

RELATED: **You could get a $2,000 per month stimulus check under proposed bill**

Tuesday, April 14

4:15 p.m. Florida Gov. DeSantis announced 1 million masks are coming to health care workers acros state along with the following equipment:

- 1.2 million procedure masks
- 100,000 face shields
- 500,000 gloves
- 60,000 containers of hand sanitizer
- 35,000 gowns

RELATED: **Florida to receive 1 million N95 masks for health care workers**

Noon: Mayor Lenny Curry announced a plan to let retired first responders return to work as a stopga

Noon: Mayor Lenny Curry announced a plan to let retired first responders return to work as a stopgap measure during the COVID-19 crisis. The re-hires will allow former Jacksonville Sheriff's Officers and correctional officers as well as retired Jacksonville Fire and Rescue Department employees to work city without jeopardizing their retirement or pension plans.

RELATED: **Curry to hire retired first responders to bolster local emergency crews**

11 a.m.: Due to inclement weather, the Prime Osborn COVID-19 drive-thru testing site will not be ope 11 a.m.

All patients with approved orders for testing will automatically be seen Wednesday, April 15, at the sa appointment time. For patient questions, please call the Telescope Health care coordination team at 373-5304.

9 a.m.: The worldwide number of coronavirus cases is likely to reach 2 million Tuesday. The U.S. tota reach 600,000 with a death toll of more than 25,000 Tuesday.

8:16 a.m.: Tokyo organizers say they have no "B Plan" if the Olympics need to be postponed again.

They say they are proceeding under the assumption the Olympics will open on July 23, 2021. That d was set last month by the IOC and Japanese officials after the spreading coronavirus pandemic mac clear the Olympics could not be held as scheduled.

Monday, April 13

4:40 p.m. Due to severe weather, UF Health Jacksonville is moving its testing facility to Twin Towers 44th St. on April 16 and April 17 from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

3:27 p.m.: Lot J testing closed due to weather.

> **Jax Sheriff's Office**
> @JSOPIO
>
> #COVID19 testing at Lot J has been suspended again due to weather conditions. Be sure to monitor @CityofJax for additional updates. twitter.com/CityofJax/stat…
>
> > **City of Jacksonville (COJ)** @CityofJax
> > We apologize for the inconvenience but due to sporadic rain showers, Lot J is closing again for COVID-19 testing. It's unlikely to reopen today but testing will resume tomorrow at 9 a.m., weather permitting. We appreciate your patience.
>
> 12 3:39 PM - Apr 13, 2020
>
> See Jax Sheriff's Office's other Tweets

2:30 p.m. Gov. Ron DeSantis held a news conference to provide updates on the state's ongoing res to the coronavirus pandemic.

DeSantis said Florida has worked to protect seniors, with three main areas of coverage: Long-term c assessment, emergency support for a facility if someone tests positive and increased testing.

During the conference, health officials said elderly people currently account for 30% of COVID-19 hospitalizations but 60% of deaths. Regarding overall hospitalizations, Florida is currently at a platea slight increases over the past few weeks, officials said. Hospitalizations in the state have been stable about 2,000 hospitalizations a day. Duval is among a few Florida counties that have seen flat or dec hospitalizations.

Despite the reported stability in numbers, Florida health officials still urge the public to continue soci distancing and wearing masks in public spaces.

Noon: Jacksonville Mayor Lenny Curry is extending the city's state of emergency for another 30 day

Curry added that the site has also upped the number of tests given per day from 250 to 400 and tha results should be coming back faster than before.

RELATED: **Jacksonville mayor extends local state of emergency for another 30 days**

10:40 a.m.: The #COVID19 testing site at Lot J is temporarily closed due to severe weather.

RELATED: **First Coast Forecast: Tornado Watch in effect for parts of First Coast until 11 a.m.**

9:35 a.m.: Fresh Market stores announced it would require customers to wear masks starting April 1

8:48 a.m.: An extra $1,200 in the bank was a welcome surprise for many Americans over the weeke
weren't expecting stimulus checks until this week.

The first payments were deposited several days ahead of schedule on Friday night. By Wednesday,
15, tens of millions of Americans will have received their checks.

6:53 a.m.: The United States has 557,300 confirmed cases of COVID-19 as of midnight Monday mor
according to Johns Hopkins University. There have been 22,079 deaths. There have been more tha
million tests for COVID-19 in the U.S.

6 a.m.: A model by the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington pr
that Sunday would be the peak day for deaths from COVID-19 in the United States.

The model predicts that the number of daily fatalities will begin to drop, but won't reach zero until Ju
The model is based on social distancing measures continuing. It also indicates that there are uncerta
that could lead to much higher daily death tolls.

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