

CHAPTER 2022-235

Committee Substitute for House Bill No. 651

An act relating to Navarre Beach Fire Rescue District, Santa Rosa County; providing a short title; creating an independent special district to provide fire control, fire prevention, emergency medical, rescue response, and public safety services; providing for district boundaries, a governing board and the election, organization, and operation of such board; authorizing the district to levy non-ad valorem assessments; providing requirements for such assessments; providing for amendment only by special act; providing severability; requiring a referendum; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Short title.—This act may be cited as the “Navarre Beach Fire Rescue District Act,” hereinafter referred to as the “charter.”

Section 2. Formation; boundaries.—For the purpose of providing fire control, fire prevention, emergency medical, rescue response, and public safety services pursuant to chapter 191, Florida Statutes, an independent special district is created, incorporated, and established pursuant to chapters 189 and 191, Florida Statutes, to be known as the Navarre Beach Fire Rescue District, hereinafter referred to as the “district,” in Santa Rosa County and shall embrace and include the territory described as follows:

That portion of Santa Rosa County including all of sections 36-2S-27, 31-2S-26, 32-2S-26, 33-2S-26 and 28-2S-26, and also including the southern half of the Navarre Beach Causeway.

Section 3. Intent.—The purposes of this act are to provide the following:

(1) Standards, direction, and procedures concerning the operation and governance of the district.

(2) A financing authority of the district without hampering the efficiency and effectiveness of currently authorized and implemented methods and procedures of raising revenues.

(3) Improved communication and coordination between the district and other local governments with respect to short-range and long-range planning to meet the demands for service delivery while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

(4) Uniform procedures for electing members of the Board of Commissioners of the Navarre Beach Fire Rescue District to ensure greater accountability to the public.

Section 4. Board of commissioners; membership, officers, and meetings. The business affairs of the district shall be conducted and administered, under chapter 191, Florida Statutes, by the Board of Commissioners of the Navarre Beach Fire Rescue District, which is established as a board of five commissioners, elected, organized, and operating under chapter 191, Florida Statutes.

Section 5. Boundaries.—The boundaries of the district may be modified, extended, or enlarged upon approval or ratification by the Legislature.

Section 6. Procedures for the levy and collection of non-ad valorem assessments.—

(1) The district may provide for the levy of non-ad valorem assessments under this act on the lands and real estate benefited by the exercise of the powers authorized by this act, or any part thereof, for all or any part of the cost thereof. In addition to the provisions set forth under this act, the district shall also be entitled to exercise all other rights and powers regarding the levy and collection of additional non-ad valorem assessments as provided for under chapter 191, Florida Statutes.

(2) The initial non-ad valorem assessments may be levied up to the following maximum amounts:

(a) \$500 for residential properties.

(b) \$63 for vacant land.

(c) \$0.41 per square foot for commercial properties.

(3) Future assessment increases shall be limited by chapter 191.009, Florida Statutes.

Section 7. Amendment of charter.—This charter may be amended only by special act of the Legislature.

Section 8. Severability.—If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held to be invalid, the invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of this act which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this act are severable.

Section 9. Referendum.—On or before December 31, 2022, the Supervisor of Elections of Santa Rosa County shall conduct a referendum of the qualified electors of the district on the question of whether the district shall be created by special act of the Legislature under chapter 191, Florida Statutes. The referendum question shall be posed as follows:

Shall an independent special district be created to provide fire, rescue, and emergency medical services to the Navarre Beach community, to operate pursuant to chapter 191, Florida Statutes, including an initial

non-ad valorem assessment not to exceed \$500 for residential properties, \$63 for vacant land, and \$0.41 per square foot for commercial properties. Future assessment increases shall be limited by chapter 191.009, Florida Statutes.

Section 10. This act shall take effect only upon its approval by a majority vote of those qualified electors residing within the district voting in a referendum no later than December 31, 2022, except that this section and section 9 shall take effect upon becoming a law.

Approved by the Governor June 24, 2022.

Filed in Office Secretary of State June 24, 2022.