

# Regular Meeting

## *Dixie County School Board Meeting Room*

***January 07, 2021 – 10:00 AM***

*The Dixie County Board of County Commissioners will meet on Thursday, January 07, 2021 at 10:00 AM in a Regular Meeting in the School Board Meeting Room located in Old Town, Florida.*

*While adhering to the following State of Florida Executive Orders: 20-51 Establishing Response Protocol, 20-52 declaring a Public Health Emergency, 20-69 regarding Local Government Public Meetings and also Dixie County Emergency Declaration 2020-27. The Board met and had limited access by staff to the meeting room while broadcasting the meeting via audio to the public who were provided other accommodations outside of the meeting room. The public could also participate via conference call at 1(917)900-1022 and enter code 32628.*

### **COMMISSIONERS**

Jody Stephenson  
Mark Hatch, Chairman (via telephone)  
W. C. Mills  
James Valentine  
Jamie Storey, Vice Chairman

### **STAFF**

Duane Cannon, County Manager  
Barbie Higginbotham, Clerk of Court  
Della Rhymes, Asst. Chief Deputy Clerk

### **CALL TO ORDER**

The Board meeting was called to order at 10:00 AM by Vice Chairman Storey.

### **INVOCATION AND PLEDGE**

The Invocation was led by Commissioner Valentine and the Pledge to the American Flag was led by Commissioner Mills.

### **APPROVAL OF COMMISSION MINUTES**

Deputy Clerk Della Rhymes asked for clarification from the Board in regards to the approval or tabling of the Board Minutes from the previous meeting.

Commissioner Stephenson said the Board members have not seen any Meeting Minutes since Clerk Johnson left office in June 2020. He said they would like to get these from the Clerk as soon as possible.

Deputy Clerk Della Rhymes informed the Board that those Board Minutes, Resolutions and Ordinances should have been produced by the Interim Clerk for their review and approval prior to this meeting. She informed the Board the proper procedure would be to table the minutes when they have not been reviewed.

***The motion to table the Commission Minutes from the Regular Meeting of December 17, 2020 was made by Commissioner Mills and seconded by Commissioner Stephenson. The Board approved.***

**VOUCHER APPROVAL**

***The motion to approve the vouchers was made by Commissioner Mills and seconded by Commissioner Stephenson. The Board approved.***

***The motion to go into the Public Hearing was made by Commissioner Mills and seconded by Commissioner Stephenson.***

***PUBLIC HEARING: THE PUBLIC HEARING MAY BE CONTINUED TO ONE OR MORE FUTURE DATES. ANY INTERESTED PARTY IS ADVISED THAT THE DATE, TIME, AND PLACE OF ANY CONTINUATION OF THE PUBLIC HEARING SHALL BE ANNOUNCED DURING THE PUBLIC HEARING AND THAT NO FURTHER NOTICE CONCERNING THE MATTERS WILL BE PUBLISHED.***

A petition by ***Joshua and Laura Williams*** requesting a Special Exception to be granted, as provided in Section 4.3.5 subparagraph (4) of the Dixie County Land Development Regulations to permit one recreational vehicle in an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA-4) zoning district, in accordance with the petition dated December 01, 2020 to be located on the property as described as follows: Dixie County Parcel # 16-13-12-2927-0000-0940 (55 S. E. 340 Street, Old Town; Suwannee Palms S/D; Lot 94; .545 acres). (Commission District 3)

Mr. Richard Chavous appeared before the Board to discuss the Special Exception for Joshua and Laura Williams.

***Commissioner Hatch made the motion to approve the Special Exception for Joshua and Laura Williams. Commissioner Stephenson seconded. Board approved.***

A petition by ***Stephen and Wendy Nichols*** requesting a Special Exception to be granted, as provided in Section 4.3.5 subparagraph (4) of the Dixie County Land Development Regulations to permit one recreational vehicle in an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA-4) zoning district, in accordance with the petition dated November 20, 2020 to be located on the property as

described as follows: Dixie County Parcel # 24-09-13-0000-4407-0200 ( 519 N. E. 424 Avenue, Old Town; 10 acres). (Commission District 1)

Mr. Richard Chavous appeared before the Board to discuss the Special Exception for Wendy Nichols.

***Commissioner Stephenson made the motion to approve the Special Exception for Wendy Nichols. Commissioner Mills seconded. Board approved.***

A petition by ***Brian and Liliana Rochowicz*** requesting a Special Exception to be granted, as provided in Section 4.3.5 subparagraph (4) of the Dixie County Land Development Regulations to permit one recreational vehicle in an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA-4) zoning district, in accordance with the petition dated November 23, 2020 to be located on the property as described as follows: Dixie County Parcel # 17-08-14-6888-0003-0040 (1551 NE 930 Street, Old Town; 4.22 acres). (Commission District 1)

Mr. Richard Chavous appeared before the Board to discuss the Special Exception for Brian and Liliana Rochowicz.

***Commissioner Stephenson made the motion to approve the Special Exception for Brian and Liliana Rochowicz. Commissioner Mills seconded. Board approved.***

A petition by ***Ben and Rebecca Seahorne*** to request a variance for the placement of a 60x40 pole barn to be used as RV maintenance as provided by the petition dated November 23, 2020 which is located within an Agricultural (A-4) zoning district to be located on the property as described as follows: Dixie County Parcel # 03-10-13-4514-0000-0220 (290 N. E. 211 Avenue, Old Town; Deer Woods S/D; Lot 22; 4.89 acres). (Commission District 2)

Mr. Richard Chavous appeared before the Board to discuss the Variance for Ben and Rebecca Seahorne.

***Commissioner Mills made the motion to approve the Variance for Ben and Rebecca Seahorne. Commissioner Stephenson seconded. Board approved.***

A petition by ***James Johnston with Shutts & Bowen LLP*** requesting a Special Exception to be granted, as provided in Section 4.4.5 subparagraph (45) of the Dixie County Land Development Regulations to permit the construction of a 250' tall self-support communication tower in an Agricultural (A-4) zoning district, in accordance with the petition dated December 04, 2020, to

be located on the property as described as follows: Dixie County Parcel # 26-08-13-0000-3802-0206 (350 N. E. 708 Avenue, Old Town; 20 acres) (Commission District 1)

Mr. Richard Chavous appeared before the Board to discuss the Special Exception for James Johnston with Stutts & Bowen, LLP.

***Commissioner Stephenson made the motion to approve the Special Exception James Johnston with Stutts & Bowen, LLP. Commissioner Mills seconded. Board approved.***

***The motion to go back into the Commission Items was made by Commissioner Stephenson and seconded by Commissioner Mills. The Board approved.***

#### **RESOLUTION 2021-01**

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF DIXIE COUNTY, FLORIDA, TO APPROVE A SPECIAL EXCEPTION TO BE GRANTED, AS PROVIDED IN SECTION 4.3.5 SUBPARAGRAPH (4) OF THE DIXIE COUNTY LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS TO PERMIT ONE RECREATIONAL VEHICLE IN AN ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREA (ESA-4) ZONING DISTRICT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PETITION DATED DECEMBER 1, 2020. ***Joshua and Laura Williams***

Mr. Richard Chavous appeared before the Board and read the Resolution supporting the Special exception for Joshua and Laura Williams.

***Commissioner Mills made the motion to approve Resolution #2021-01. Commissioner Stephenson seconded. Board approved.***

#### **RESOLUTION 2021-02**

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF DIXIE COUNTY, FLORIDA, TO APPROVE A SPECIAL EXCEPTION TO BE GRANTED, AS PROVIDED IN SECTION 4.3.5 SUBPARAGRAPH (4) OF THE DIXIE COUNTY LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS TO PERMIT ONE RECREATIONAL VEHICLE IN AN ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREA (ESA-4) ZONING DISTRICT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PETITION DATED NOVEMBER 20, 2020. ***Stephen and Wendy Nichols***

Mr. Richard Chavous appeared before the Board and read the Resolution supporting the Special exception for Stephen and Wendy Nichols.

*Commissioner Stephenson made the motion to approve Resolution #2021-02. Commissioner Mills seconded. Board approved.*

**RESOLUTION 2021-03**

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF DIXIE COUNTY, FLORIDA, TO APPROVE A SPECIAL EXCEPTION TO BE GRANTED, AS PROVIDED IN SECTION 4.3.5 SUBPARAGRAPH (4) OF THE DIXIE COUNTY LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS TO PERMIT ONE RECREATIONAL VEHICLE IN AN ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREA (ESA-4) ZONING DISTRICT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PETITION DATED NOVEMBER 23, 2020. *Brian and Liliana Rochowicz*

Mr. Richard Chavous appeared before the Board and read the Resolution supporting the Special exception for *Brian* and Liliana Rochowicz.

*Commissioner Stephenson made the motion to approve Resolution #2021-03. Commissioner Mills seconded. Board approved.*

**RESOLUTION 2021-04**

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF DIXIE COUNTY, FLORIDA, TO APPROVE A VARIANCE TO BE GRANTED, AS PROVIDED IN SECTION 12.3.1 OF THE DIXIE COUNTY LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS TO GRANT A VARIANCE FOR THE PLACEMENT OF A 60' X 40' POLE BARN TO BE USED AS RV MAINTENANCE, LOCATED WITHIN AN AGRICULTURAL (A-4) ZONING DISTRICT, AS PROVIDED IN THE PETITION DATED NOVEMBER 23, 2020. *Ben and Rebecca Sehorne*

Mr. Richard Chavous appeared before the Board and read the Resolution supporting the Special exception for *Ben* and Rebecca Sehorne.

*Commissioner Hatch made the motion to approve Resolution #2021-04. Commissioner Stephenson seconded. Board approved.*

**RESOLUTION 2021-05**

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF DIXIE COUNTY, FLORIDA, TO APPROVE A SPECIAL EXCEPTION TO BE GRANTED, AS PROVIDED IN SECTION 4.4.5 SUBPARAGRAPH (45) OF THE DIXIE COUNTY LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS TO PERMIT THE CONSTRUCTION OF A 250' TALL SELF-SUPPORT COMMUNICATIONS TOWER IN AN AGRICULTURAL (A-4) ZONING DISTRICT, IN

ACCORDANCE WITH THE PETITION DATED DECEMBER 4, 2020. *James Johnston with Shutts & Bowen, Llp*

Mr. Richard Chavous appeared before the Board and read the Resolution supporting the Special exception for *James Johnston with Shutts & Bowen, LLP*.

*Commissioner Mills made the motion to approve Resolution #2021-05. Commissioner Stephenson seconded. Board approved.*

**KEITH SEGAR, SUWANNEE WATER AND SEWER**

Mr. Keith Segar appeared before the Board to inform them that Mr. Vern Hodsdon will fill the position that Mr. Jimmy Lamb previously held.

**GREG BAILEY, NORTH FLORIDA PROFESSIONAL SERVICES**

Mr. Greg Bailey appeared before the Board to discuss the status of current projects throughout the county. He said the DEO program will open this month for the GDBG so the Board needs to be prepared for that. He said they need to be working on the SCRAP and SCOP list.

**JERED LIZOTTE, LOCKLEAR AND ASSOCIATES**

Mr. John Locklear appeared before the Board to discuss the status of current projects throughout the county.

He said the paving is completed on the Punk Clark Loop. He said they will soon be striping and fixing the shoulders and then laying sod.

He said they are in the permitting stages for the Lower Suwannee. He discussed the Aquifer Recharge Ponds and cleaning up the Airport Canals and fixing damaged culverts.

Commissioner Hatch requested that they make sure the driveway turn offs and the shoulder drop off are a smooth transition for the public.

Commissioner Storey said they are working on this today.

Mr. Locklear said he will call today and relay the information.

**CINDY BELLOT, LIBRARY DIRECTOR**

Ms. Cindy Bellot was not present for this meeting.

**STEVE FREMEN, VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER**

Mr. Fremem was not present for this meeting.

**STEVE HUTCHISON, COUNTY ROAD SUPERINTENDENT**

County Manager Duane Cannon informed the Board that Mr. Hutchison was on location at the Suwannee Refuge Project.

**DWAYNE CHAUNCEY, SOLID WASTE & MOSQUITO CONTROL DIRECTOR**

Mr. Dwayne Chauncey was not present for this meeting.

**MICHAEL LATSON, SOLID WASTE**

Mr. Michael Latson appeared before the Board to inform them that the 20 yard dumpsters are here and they will be working on the 40 and 80 yard thru the end of the week.

Commissioner Stephenson discussed the flat fee for the dumpster rentals. He said that he would like to charge for each time the dumpster is emptied.

**LEON WRIGHT, BUILDING AND ZONING**

Mr. Leon Wright had nothing to discuss with the board at this time.

**DARIAN BROWN, DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY SERVICES**

Director Brown requested the Board approve a renewal of the Local State of Emergency for COVID 19.

***Commissioner Mills made the motion to approve Emergency Declaration 2021-06 for the Local State of Emergency for COVID 19. Commissioner Stephenson seconded the motion. Board approved.***

Division Chief Scott Garner appeared before the Board to discuss the COVID 19 vaccines that are available to the public ages 65 and older. He said the public can make appointments with the Local Health Department Tuesday thru Friday. He said that testing is only conducted on Tuesday starting at 9:00 AM. He said that appointments with the Health Department are currently booked thru January 14, 2021.

Commissioner Mills inquired about the protocol to follow for vaccinations.

Chief Garner replied it is by appointment only and it takes about 30 minutes for the vaccination process.

Chief Garner said the Nursing Home Vaccinations are handled thru CVS and Walgreens.

Commissioner Stephenson inquired if there have been any side effects reported locally.

Chief Garner replied none locally; however, some of the Northern states have reported side effects.

Director Brown reminded the Board of conversations from 2014 when the SAFER (Staffing For Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grant) was received and sent to the Citizens for vote to raise the assessment to maintain the grant and it failed to pass, resulting in the layoff of 50% of the Career Firefighters paid for, for a 3 year period by the Grant. During this time (2014) Chief Brown advised the Board that this situation, the layoffs and failure to maintain or change the funding for Fire and EMS, would eventually result in the degradation of department and loss of moral, as the Department would not be a forward moving Department. Chief Brown advised the Board that currently the Department is down 5 positions after just hiring 2 last week. He also advised that there were another 3 to 6 staff planning to or possibly leaving within the next 6 months. Chief Brown advised the board of the latest employment advertisement from Levy County that offers \$43,068.00 for a Firefighter Paramedic with a \$4000.00 signing bonus, \$1000.00 increase in October and a 3% increase upon completion of probationary status for a total starting pay of \$45,390.00 without the signing bonus. He also advised them that the current Firefighter Paramedic start pay for Dixie County is \$38,276.00 which is a difference of \$7,114.00 in pay, not including the \$4000.00 signing bonus given by Levy County. Chief Brown advised the Board that if the County and Department did not find a solution to hire and retain more staff there was a great likelihood of station closures due to lack of staffing resulting in an inability to provide Fire and EMS response capabilities.

#### **GAIL CARTER, INDIGENT CARE**

Ms. Gail Carter was not present for the meeting.

#### **HOLLY HOUGHTON, COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT**

Ms. Holly Houghton was not present for the meeting.

#### **DUANE CANNON, COUNTY MANAGER**

County Manager Duane Cannon appeared before the Board to discuss the COVID Response Agreement. He said that last year the Board decided to require a negative test before an employee could return to work. He said the Department of Health is sending letters to positive case people giving a date they can come off of Quarantine.

He inquired if the Board wanted to follow the Department of Health Guidelines or the CDC guidelines.

Commissioner Mills recommended they follow the Department of Health Guidelines and the CDC guidelines.

***Commissioner Mills made the motion to follow the Department of Health Guidelines and the CDC guidelines. Commissioner Hatch seconded. Board approved.***

Manager Cannon informed the Board that they will need to pick some roads to be addressed by FDOT. He said that the 2 applications that weren't selected were McCrabb Landing Rd and Hal



Chairs Rd. He recommended that the Board pick a 3<sup>rd</sup> choice to submit to FDOT. The list of choices is Rudolph Parrott Rd, NE 95 Street and NE 97 Street, Jena Hwy.

He said that there are about 20 homes on Ne 95 St and NE 97 St and the other street goes in to the Timber Apartments. He said the Jena Hwy needs to be widened and resurfaced.

Commissioner Storey said that NE 95 St and NE 97 St were dropped because there was not enough money. He said that Hwy 351 to Jena needs to be safer and wider.

Manager Cannon clarified for everyone that this is a 3 year process.

Commissioner Mills inquired if we could do a cost analysis for milling versus paving on some roads. He said maybe we can mill some roads now and pave them later. He clarified that milling is not maintenance free.

Manager Cannon asked for the Board to make a third choice for the list.

Commissioner Hatch chose the Rudolph Parrot Rd.

Commissioner Storey chose NE 95 St and NE 97 St as his third choice.

Commissioner Mills clarified that the choices the Board makes will be reviewed and FDOT will make the final choice.

Manager Cannon confirmed that is correct.

***Commissioner Stephenson made the motion to choose McCrabb Landing Rd as the first choice. Commissioner Hatch seconded. Board approved.***

***Commissioner Stephenson made the motion to choose the Hal Chairs Rd as the second choice. Commissioner Hatch seconded. Board approved.***

***Commissioner Hatch made the motion to choose the Rudolph Parrot Rd as the third choice. Commissioner Mills seconded. Board approved.***

Manager Cannon reminded the Board that the Legislative Meeting with Representative Chuck Clemons is today in the Commission Board Room at 1:30 PM.

Manager Cannon informed the Board that the Dixie Mainline will be closed January 08 thru January 22, 2021 for trees to be trimmed.

Manager Cannon informed the Board that the Forestry Department will be hosting the annual event for Wounded Warriors next week. The event will run Tuesday thru Thursday this coming week.

Manager Cannon informed the Board that at the Airport Advisory Meeting this week a Lease Term was discussed. He said that Red Roof Aviation is in negotiation to sell their business. He said the Attorney will review the lease and if the business sells, the Attorney will handle the lease agreement change from one owner to the next.

Commissioner Mills inquired if a Commissioner can build a hanger at the airport without any ethical conflict.

Commissioner Hatch answered yes you can in the private sector.

Commissioner Valentine inquired about the EMS and Fire issue. Commissioner Storey replied that staffs are leaving because they can get better pay in another county.

Manager Cannon said he is meeting with the County Attorney this month to discuss the Solid Waste and Fire Assessment.

Director Brown said there is a timeline to follow for Budget availability. He also informed the Board that the EMS Bank Account is 1.8 million dollars short. He said he has been asking for copies of the bank statements for the past 6 months and have not got anything as of yet.

Commissioner Mills stated that as the cost of living has increased services must increase as well. He said the county is still operating on a Tax base from 1992. He said that have proper Fire Protection for the citizens is a must. He said that he has lost family to a house fire.

Commissioner Hatch recommended they get the assessment put together and submit it by the deadline which is August or September on the TRIM Notice.

#### **MICHAEL OSTEEN, COUNTY ATTORNEY**

County Attorney Michael Osteen was not present for the meeting and Attorney Pierce Kelley who appeared before the Board on his behalf had nothing to discuss with the Board at this time.

#### **BARBIE HIGGINBOTHAM, CLERK OF COURT**

Clerk Higginbotham introduced herself to the Board members and informed them that she was sworn in on January 05, 2021. She informed the Board that she and her staff were working hard to get the office in order and were looking forward to working closely with the Board.

#### **COUNTY COMMISSION ITEMS**

Commissioner Valentine had nothing further to discuss at this time.

Commissioner Mills had nothing further to discuss at this time.

Commissioner Stephenson expressed his appreciation to Clerk Barbie Higginbotham. He inquired as to how long it would take to resolve the issues within the Clerk's Office. He said the Board members want to see and review the Board Minutes from June 2020 through December 2020. He said the Board needs the Clerk to help with this matter and others.

Commissioner Hatch said that Central Florida Electric is still doing work along the roadways to clear tree limbs from the power lines.

Commissioner Storey welcomed Clerk Barbie Higginbotham to the meeting and to her newly elected position. He also welcomed Deputy Clerk Della Rhymes and said it was good to have her back.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS AND CONCERNS**

Ms. Jenny Welsh appeared before the Board to talk about the native plants on and around the Dollar General property on Hwy 349 and Spillers Road. She said she has asked that the site not be clear cut so that the native plants are saved. She said everything dies back in Winter but will sprout and bloom again in Spring. She asked that construction be delayed to account for this cycle. She said they have been picking up the trash on the site and there is still trouble with the ATV traffic.

Commissioner Stephenson said that the trash was a concern and he thanked her for her cleanup efforts. He said there are other native plants that can be used as well to improve the area. He thanked Ms. Welsh for addressing the issue.

**ADJOURN**

The motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Mills and seconded by Commissioner Stephenson. The Board approved and the meeting adjourned at 11:22 A.M.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
DIXIE COUNTY, FLORIDA

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mark Hatch, Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Barbie Higginbotham, Clerk-Auditor

***PLEASE BE ADVISED that if a person decided to appeal any decision made by the Board with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearings, he/ she will need a record of the proceedings, and for such purpose, he/ she will need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.***

***“Persons with disabilities requesting reasonable accommodations to participate in this proceeding should contact (352) 486-4931 (Voice & TDD) or via Florida Relay Service at (800) 955-8771.”***

***The Board meets the first Thursday of each month at 10:00 AM and the third Thursday of each month at 6:00 PM. Individuals that would like to be placed on the agenda should call Barbie Higginbotham, Clerk of Court, by 4:00 PM on the Friday Preceding the Board meeting, at (352) 498-1200.***