

**WORKSHOP**  
**Drainage on CR 358**  
**Dixie County School Board Meeting Room**  
**February 18, 2021 – 3:00 PM**

*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  
W. C. Mills  
James Valentine  
Jamie Storey, Vice Chairman

**STAFF**

Duane Cannon, County Manager  
Cheyenne Hutchinson, Asst. to the County Manager/Grant Coordinator  
Michael Osteen, County Attorney  
Barbie Higginbotham, Clerk of Court  
Jacki Johnson, Chief Financial Officer  
Della Rhymes, Asst. Chief Deputy Clerk

**CALL TO ORDER**

The workshop was called to order at 3:29 PM by Chairman Hatch.

**INVOCATION AND PLEDGE TO THE AMERICAN FLAG**

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

Commissioner Hatch opened the floor for discussion.

County Manager Duane Cannon stated that he has heard from several residents in that area concerning the flood waters. He said that the county has had multiple engineering firms look at this area before. He and former County Manager Tim Alexander have looked at it along with County Road Department staff. He said they want to follow up and be proactive and help with the extreme water level changes. He then introduced Mr. Ryan Parker to speak.

Mr. Ryan Parker said he has been doing some research about the issue. He said there are 17 culverts along Old Hwy 19, and they are in bad shape and some are rotten and rusted. He presented the Board with some photos he had taken when the water level was low. He said the water level has risen since he took the photos. He said the roads have dips in the area where the culverts run underneath. This could create a collapse with the semi-trucks that travel the road. He said that they could increase a 48 to 60-inch culvert to an 80 inch. Some of them have concrete dumped in the area and maybe the person thought it may dissolve, but it hasn't. He said the water is trickling through the culverts and across the timber company land and then on to the 5 open bridges on Hwy 19.

Commissioner Hatch said he has witnessed the different water levels in comparison on Hwy 358 and Hwy 19. He said it would be high on one side and low on the other. He suggested that they rent the grade all from FDOT and clean the ditches and culverts.

Mr. Parker said that anything would help.

Commissioner Valentine said that some of these culverts are at an angle.

Mr. Parker said that some of the culverts in the canal are full of debris. He said there was a creek through that area originally in order to drain the woods. He said he thinks some bridges were removed and replaced with culverts due to saving money.

Commissioner Stephenson said that the bridges were replaced with 58-inch culverts and then replaced again with 48-inch pipe and it keeps getting smaller each time the road is worked on.

Commissioner Mills clarified that Sandhill Creek runs through that area not Anderson Canal.

Commissioner Stephenson said nether a bridge or culvert will help with 30 inches of rain.

Mr. Parker said this is an annual cycle for people living in this area. He said he leaves for work on Monday morning and everything is fine then by Monday evening his driveway is flooded.

Commissioner Stephenson said previously the timber company dug the canal to draw water to their land to grow timber. He said now they are trying to put water back where they took it from and it's causing the residents in that area to get flooded. He said that Water Management is trying to put everything back in a natural state.

Mr. Parker said he doesn't think Suwannee River Water Management is to blame.

Commissioner Stephenson said that water draining from Mallory Swamp causes him problems near his shop.

Mr. Parker said he don't mind rainfall, but he doesn't want to hold the water and that it must flow through the area. He said the trees on his property are dying due to the standing water.

Commissioner Valentine said the canal runs from Mayo and the water flows from there as well. He added that 1 inch of rain drops 52,800 gallons of water.

Commissioner Stephenson asked if Mr. Kevin St. Laurent had put in culverts on the timber property.

Mr. Kevin St. Laurent replied nothing was put in. He said the water level poses problems for them as well between Old Hwy 19 and New Hwy 19. He said they can only operate in that area 2 months out of the year.

Mr. Mike Cassidy said that rock has been added to the low water crossing.

Mr. Kevin St. Laurent said you can add culverts, but you must know where the water will flow.

Commissioner Stephenson suggested finding some funding for the culverts. He said perhaps Suwannee River Water Management can help with this water flow issue too. He said bigger pipes may help, but don't want to cause problems for folks downstream. He suggested having some studies done to help figure this out.

Mr. Mike Cassidy suggested they put the water flow back like it use to be.

Commissioner Stephenson asked who installed the culverts in the first place.

Mr. Mike Cassidy said it's nobody's fault. He said they were trying to rush on the paving job and the pilings where in the way.

Commissioner Stephenson asked who was doing the paving.

Mr. Mike Cassidy said the contractor was paving and the county did the culvert work.

Commissioner Stephenson asked if the culvert work was bid in the project.

Mr. Mike Cassidy said no.

Mr. Tim Alexander said when he was employed with the county, he had several engineers to give a reasonable quote to fix. He said that no one could address this problem. He said he doesn't know if any permits were ever done for the culverts. He introduced Mr. Leroy Marshall as the Chief Professional Engineer with Suwannee River Water Management. He said he has a cost estimate prepared for the Board.

Mr. Leroy Marshall said he wants to caution the Board that his office issues permits. He said he can't speak on the work in Mallory Swamp because it is not handled by his office and they should ask Mr. Patrick Webster.

Commissioner Valentine said originally there were wooden bridges on Hwy 358/Old Hwy 19. He said then they placed the culverts and that slowed the water flow.

Mr. Marshall asked when did this happen.

Mr. Mike Cassidy said this happened around 1970 when Mr. Wade Higginbotham was the Road Superintendent. He said it has been changed twice in 90 years.

Mr. Marshall said they can match the hydraulics of a bridge with culverts. He said he doesn't know if that is what happened in this case. He said the District didn't start permits until 1986. He said anything prior to that was without their knowledge. He said there were some exemptions to the rules of 1986 as long as the hydraulics were the same.

He said the problems occur when things are not equal. He said that sounds like what has happened. He said when you make changes you need to get permits so they can check to see if the hydraulics are equal. The changes must be equal or must know how this will affect the area later if it's not. He said they have no documentation on what was there prior. He said they did a study in 2016 for the flood maps and made a model with the current culverts.

He said this model can be used by any engineer and replace the culverts that are there now. They can make adjustments on the model and try different size culverts and see what works best.

He said they contacted Taylor Engineering and got a quote of \$17,763.00 to compare what was there historically to what is there currently. He said these are 100-year studies and with the FEMA models they come back every 5 years to update them.

Commissioner Mills asked if the \$17,000.00 was only for the study.

Mr. Marshall replied yes. They will take the information and compare it and tell you the difference as they make changes to the model.

Commissioner Stephenson asked wouldn't it be more realistic for the county to refer to the state since they made the highway and put in the bridges. They should have done a study back then on the bridges. He said they should be able to go back to this.

Commissioner Mills said you won't find a study on this and you can't even compare a bridge to a culvert.

Commissioner Stephenson said why spend money on a study that compares what we have when we already know these culverts aren't working. He said we need to put pipes the size of the bridge back.

Mr. Marshall said they had been asked prior about how much the study would be. He said there was some discussion on culverts rotated out of alignment and if this makes a difference. He said this is when we spoke to Taylor Engineering and got that quote. He said they would need this kind of study to move forward with permitting. He said the problem with changing things back to the historical origin is that there may not have been anyone living in the area back then to be affected. However, now you do have people in the area. He said the permitting process takes these changes in to consideration.

Commissioner Hatch asked about the 2016 data for the amount of water.

Mr. Marshall said the Taylor Engineering study was started in 2012 and took 5 years to make the maps so it should have been finished in 2016.

Commissioner Hatch asked if there are some flow charts. He asked if Mr. Marshall can compare the data and advise the county on what they need to do.

Mr. Marshall said he cannot do the study and tell you what you need and issue the permits ethically.

Commissioner Mills asked if the county must have a study to get the permits to replace what was there.

Mr. Marshall said yes, we would need reasonable assurance as to the changes.

Mr. Mike Cassidy asked if the county could make a correction under maintenance with good intentions like they could 10 years ago.

Mr. Marshall said if we have the documentation as to what was there and what was put in and when this happened.

Mr. Mike Cassidy said you can look at the FDOT plans in the Property Appraiser Office and the County Manager Office.

Mr. Marshall said we are talking about engineering documentation. He said he can't take someone's word for this. He said if presented with the correct documentation then the district will look at this.

Commissioner Hatch asked why a permit is needed.

Mr. Marshall replied because there have been rule changes. He said the culverts that are there now are grandfathered in. So now that you want to go back to the previous size culverts a permit is needed. He said the culvert should not have been installed under maintenance because they don't meet the criteria. He said that now the rule has changed, and they can enforce the new rule.

Commissioner Stephenson said can't you work with us on this because y'all have changed some things on the other side which has caused problems over here.

Mr. Marshall said you must separate the project work and the permits for the work. He said the work that you are talking about was not permitted by the district it was permitted by DEP for us to do. He said he is willing to help with the permitting process, but he needs reasonable assurance from the county so they will be in a better position and not worry about a lawsuit from landowners.

Commissioner Stephenson asked if the records can be found to document the changes through the years could they move forward without a study.

Mr. Marshall said that reasonable assurance does not have to be a study, but they need to take care of everyone up-stream and down-stream.

Commissioner Hatch asked if they could get the 2016 data from Mr. Marshall.

Mr. Marshall replied yes just let him know.

Commissioner Hatch said we can look at the flow and figure out the right size pipes and do this in house and do the work under maintenance.

Mr. Marshall if you change the culverts a permit is required.

Commissioner Mills asked what happens if they don't change the size but add more culverts.

Mr. Marshall said replacing culverts is exempt. He said you have a permit for the head wall so this would be a minor modification.

Commissioner Hatch asked for the model information from Mr. Marshall. He said they can download a program from the internet and save money on this study.

Manager Cannon asked what the time frame for a minor modification permit is and how much does it cost.

Mr. Marshall replied it cost \$100.00 for the permit.

Commissioner Mills asked if they could change the other culverts along that road.

Mr. Marshall said they will all fall under the \$100.00 permit.

Mr. Marshall said the time frame is to review for 25 days in house. He said they review for 2 weeks and then request other information if it's needed to get reasonable assurance. He said it could take months to get reasonable assurance.

Commissioner Mills asked what the reasonable assurance is for changing the same size pipes for same size pipes.

Mr. Marshall said there are federal and state grants for work like this.

Mr. Mike Cassidy said our family is not asking to harm anyone. He said we are looking for the best way to resolve the issue.

Mr. Parker added that no one is at fault.

Commissioner Mills suggested someone from district come over and help explain why the water flow changed by them has caused problems in Dixie County.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS AND CONCERNS**


There were no comments or questions from the public at this time.

**ADJOURN**

Commissioner Storey made the motion to adjourn the workshop at 4:21 PM. Commissioner Mills seconded. Board approved.



ATTEST:

  
Barbie Higginbotham, Clerk-Auditor

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
DIXIE COUNTY, FLORIDA

  
Mark Hatch, Chairman

**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.*