

Regular Meeting
Commission Board Room
Dixie County Courthouse
214 NE Hwy 351, Cross City, FL 32628
March 06, 2025 – 10:00 AM

The Board meetings are audio recorded. The public can hear and participate in the meeting via conference call by dialing 1(917)900-1022 and enter code 32628.

COMMISSIONERS

Jody Stephenson, District 1, Chairman
Daniel Wood, District 2
Mark Hatch, District 3, Vice Chairman
Jamie Storey, District 4,
David Osteen, District 5

STAFF

John Jenkins, County Manager
Roy Bass, Assistant County Manager
Martha McCaskill, Administrative Asst/Grant Coordinator
Chana Watson, County Attorney
Barbie Higginbotham, Clerk of Court
Verna Wilson, Chief Deputy Clerk
Brenda Royal, Chief Financial Officer
Joannie Morse, Deputy Clerk

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Stephenson

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE TO THE AMERICAN FLAG

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

APPROVAL OF COMMISSION MINUTES

02-20-2025 Regular Meeting Minutes

*Commissioner Osteen made the motion to approve the 02-20-2025 Regular Meeting Minutes.
Commissioner Storey seconded. Board approved.*

VOUCHER APPROVAL

*Motion to approve the vouchers made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Wood.
Board approved.*

CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS

None present.

KATRINA VANAERNAM AND SHEILA FRIERSON, DIXIE COUNTY ANTI-DRUG COALITION

Mrs. Katrina VanAernam was not present at the meeting.

KAY MCCALLISTER, TOURISM DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Mrs. Kay McCallister checked on the progress on Horseshoe Beach and Butler Island and stated that she had been receiving calls and asked for an update.

She reminded everyone of the lower Suwannee Art and Nature Festival from 10:00 AM until 3:00 PM at Dyals Park.

Mrs. McCallister stated that several restaurants have opened up in Suwannee and Jena as well.

GREG BAILEY, NORTH FLORIDA PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Mr. Greg Bailey informed the Board that 95th and 97th is advertised and that the pre-bid meeting is on March 18, 2025. He stated that the bid opening will be on April 10, 2025, and that he will bring it back to the Board at the evening meeting on April 17, 2025, for approval.

JOHN LOCKLEAR, LOCKLEAR AND ASSOCIATES

Mr. John Locklear stated that Locklear and Associates had submitted the permit applications for Shired Island and Horseshoe Beach for the dredging project and that he and the County Manager had a site visit last week and have no concerns.

CINDY BELLOT, LIBRARY DIRECTOR

Mrs. Cindy Bellot was not present for the meeting.

DIANN JONES, SUWANNEE WATER AND SEWER

Mrs. Diann Jones stated that there are 940 active accounts and that they are installing four (4) new accounts this week.

She stated that there have been management status changes and wanted to give the Board some information about herself.

Mrs. Jones stated that she has a history in project management from 1992 to 2008 and informed the Board that her new office manager is Mrs. Raelynn Raiel.

She stated that she is working with Matt Blainey to extend the deadline to August 1st to install the water meters that they were unable to install last year due to the Hurricanes.

She stated that there should be 502 water meters installed by the end of next week.

Mrs. Jones informed the Board that the potable water tank inspection will be done within the next 90 days by a certified diver and that the inspection was supposed to have been done last year.

STEVE FREMEN, CODE ENFORCEMENT & VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER

Mr. Steve Fremem had nothing to bring to the Board.

Attorney Chana Watson stated that one of the code enforcement cases has been resolved and will have it ready for Commissioner Stephenson to sign.

STEVE HUTCHISON, COUNTY ROAD SUPERINTENDENT

Mr. Steve Hutchison was not present at the meeting.

TIM JOHNSON, SOLID WASTE DIRECTOR

Mr. Tim Johnson had nothing to bring to the Board.

LEON WRIGHT, BUILDING AND ZONING OFFICIAL

Mr. Leon Wright stated that the State has reached out to do community outreach for the Elevate Florida Program.

Mr. Wright stated that the outreach meetings will start on March 12th in Suwannee, the 13th at D-Trac and the 14th at Horseshoe Beach from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM.

Commissioner Hatch asked about the funding mechanism of Elevate Florida.

Mr. Wright stated that the program is being pushed by the State of Florida and that they can talk more about it in the upcoming workshop at 1:00 PM.

**SCOTT PNDARVIS, 911 COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR
& I.T. ADMINISTRATOR**

Mr. Scott Pendarvis read aloud Resolution 2025-32 for the 2.0 Cyber Security Framework from the previous meeting.

Commissioner Storey made the motion to approve and accept Resolution 2025-32 2.0 Cyber Security Framework. Commissioner Osteen seconded the motion. Board approved.

DARIAN BROWN, DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

Chief Darian Brown gave updates on a few ongoing projects which included:

Fire Station Three (3) – He stated that they had advertised for land clearing and are receiving calls.

Fire Station Four (4) – He stated that they will be doing the final walk-through next Wednesday.

Fire Station Six (6) – He stated that they will be closing on the property on March 17, 2025, and it is moving along.

Fire Station Seven (7) – He stated that they had received insurance claim dollars and are in the process of replacing everything.

Shired Island – He stated that they have some funding for the repairs but that it will be a two-year minimum before they can start on the project. He stated that the bridges close in March and that they are moving along.

Horseshoe Beach – He stated that Mr. Locklear is working on that project and that the funds are there for repairs.

Butler Island – Chief Brown stated he had no information on Butler Island.

Chief Scott Garner stated that the only way to get to Butler Island is by boat and that they did not know anything about debris on the island until Mrs. McCallister mentioned it in an email.

Chief Brown stated that the ambulances they had ordered on loan are 680,000.00 will be ready June 1st. He said that the County Manager is securing a loan for the equipment for both the ambulances. He spoke about the opioid money that they talked about a few meetings ago and stated that they are working with the opioid group and are looking into mitigation. Chief Brown stated that he would like to advertise for help for Mrs. Alison in Community Paramedicine.

The Board agreed to advertising for help for Mrs. Alison.

Chief Brown asked for Board direction on an appropriation request to finish the Fire Station. He stated that there is a reappropriation process and that it was sent into Tallahassee. He stated that there is a lot left that they could not do because they did not have the funding. He stated that they need another \$179,438.97. He asked the Board if he needed to continue with the project or the reappropriation of those funds.

Commissioner Hatch stated that Sheriff Darby, Michelle Cannon and Darian Brown were on the project list and that the State of Florida said to cut it down to two (2) projects.

Chief Brown stated that if he doesn't ask for reappropriation they will lose about \$380,000.00.

Commissioner Storey made a motion to have the County Manager sign an attestation form and resubmit the reappropriation, however he later changed his motion, and the Board discussed it.

County Manager: John Jenkins stated that Senator Corey Simon stated to stay with two (2) projects.

Commissioner Hatch stated that the County needs to listen to what the Senator says and stick with it. He stated that they were told to stick with only two (2) projects.

Chief Brown stated that he understood that too many projects would jeopardize monies and that he spoke with the aids at the Senators office and that the Senator was not opposed to the project. He stated that he is asking for Board guidance on whether to ask for the reappropriation or to submit a full appropriation to retrieve the remaining \$179,00.00.

Mr. Bailey addressed the Board and reiterated what Chief Brown was speaking about.

Commissioner Storey made a motion for Chief Brown to try to reappropriate the funds that the County already has received but not to request more from the State of Florida. Commissioner Osteen seconded. Board approved.

GAIL CARTER, INDIGENT CARE

Mrs. Gail Carter had nothing to bring to the Board.

HOLLY HOUGHTON, COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT

Mrs. Holly Houghton reminded the Board the Suwannee Fair kicked off last weekend and that starting Friday they will have different animal shows as well as a BBQ Contest.

She stated that the Fair Board had an emergency meeting to discuss the unpaid balances from some of the buyers and that the balances are close to \$100,000.00.

She stated that the Fair Board met with Mrs. Shannon Smith and came up with new verbiage that will be posted at the Fair. She further explained that there will probably be a 60-day grace period, but that after that if any bills are not paid, they will be banned from purchasing from the fair until the debt is paid off.

Mrs. Barbie Higginbotham recommended publicly posting the names of the people that had not submitted payment.

Mrs. Houghton stated that the new rules will go into effect this fair year and that any person with a debt will not be on the buyers list.

ANGIE CROWLEY, HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATOR

Mrs. Angie Crowley had nothing to bring to the Board.

JOHN JENKINS, COUNTY MANAGER

Action Items:

1. Request Board approval to accept the proposal for legal services for the annual Fire and Solid Waste Assessment with NGN (Nabors, Giblin & Nickerson) FY 2025-2026 in the amount of \$8,000.00.

Motion to approve and accept the proposal for legal services for the annual Fire and Solid Waste Assessment with NGN (Nabors, Giblin & Nickerson) FY 2025-2026 in the amount of \$8,000.00 made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Board approved.

2. Request Board approval to accept the Dixie County Dixie Mainline Maintenance SUP (Special Use Permit) with Fish & Wildlife FY 2025.

Motion to approve and accept the Dixie County Dixie Mainline Maintenance SUP (Special Use Permit) with Fish & Wildlife FY 2025 made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Storey. Board approved.

3. Request Board approval to purchase 4 – 5’x40’ culverts for Hudson 19, and 1 – 24”X40’ and 1 – 36”x40 culverts for Jena Hwy based on SWTF recommendation.

Motion to approve and purchase 4 – 5’x40’ culverts for Hudson 19, and 1 – 24”X40’ and 1 – 36”x40 culverts for Jena Hwy based on SWTF recommendation made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Board approved.

4. Request Board approval of the CDBG 95th & 97th Time Extension from July 31, 2025, to July 31, 2026.

Motion to approve the CDBG 95th & 97th Time Extension from July 31, 2025, to July 31, 2026, made by Commissioner Storey. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Board approved.

5. Request Board approval of the SHIP Rehab Reimbursement for Janith Standridge in the amount of \$20, 590.60.

Motion to approve the SHIP Rehab Reimbursement for Janith Standridge in the amount of \$20, 590.60 made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Storey. Board approved.

6. Request Board approval of Resolution 2025-42 amending the SHIP LHAP agreement to increase the award amount from \$250,000.00 to \$350,000.00.

Motion to approve Resolution 2025-42 amending the SHIP LHAP agreement to increase the award amount from \$250,000.00 to \$350,000.00 made by Commissioner Hatch. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Board approved.

Mr. Jenkins stated that he received a quote for the trailer repair for the Solid Waste Department in the amount of \$13,630.49.

Commissioner Hatch made a motion to accept the quote of \$13,630.49 for the trailer repair for the Solid Waste Department. Commissioner Storey seconded. Board approved.

Mr. Jenkins stated that he has been contacted by a representative for the Suwannee Fair, and they would like to know what the Commissioners would like to contribute this year to the livestock fair.

Commissioner Hatch recommended \$750.00 be divided by the Board members as well as Mrs. Higginbotham and Attorney Watson.

Information Items:

1. There will be a Toxic Round-Up Event on March 15, 2025, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm at Dixie County Fire Rescue Station located at 71 NE 84th Ave., Old Town, Fl. and 10:00 am – 2:00 pm at Dixie County Courthouse Parking Lot locate at 214 NE Hwy 351 Cross City, FL.
2. Reminder of Rural County Days March 19 – 20, 2025.
3. Reminder of the LMS meeting to be held in April 2025, at the EOC, no date has been set yet.

Mrs. Martha McCaskill informed the Board that they have their packets for Rural County Days and that Commissioners Wood, Commissioner Osteen and Commissioner Storey will ride together.

CHANA WATSON, COUNTY ATTORNEY

Attorney Chana Watson received an email from Attorney Lindsey Lander in Cross City that states that the County is considering enacting an impact fee within the town with the purpose of addressing new growth as well as demand on water and sewer. She stated that the Town of Cross City is asking the Board to enter into an interlocal agreement.

Mr. Wright stated that they had never collected an impact fee from Cross City. Attorney Watson stated that it's due to the increase of water and sewage that it's not just an impact fee.

Commissioner Stephenson stated that the Board should not be involved in their situation.

The Board decided not to enter into the agreement but asked Attorney Watson not to respond to the email until they discuss with them.

BARBIE HIGGINBOTHAM, CLERK OF COURT

Mrs. Barbie Higginbotham had nothing to bring to the Board.

COUNTY COMMISSION ITEMS

Commissioner Wood stated that he will speak with Mr. Jenkins about the sinkhole situation to make sure it's filled and capped.

Mr. Jenkins stated that the sinkhole is filled and that they are monitoring it.

Attorney Watson reminded the Board about Cow Creek Road and stated that if the County were to close that road past Sink Creek, what impact would it have?

Commissioner Osteen stated that he spoke to Mr. Steve Hutchison and that he stated that he was going to mill it, do a chemical packing and fill it with lime rock. He also stated that he spoke with the FWC (Florida Wildlife Conservation) about working with a grant they may have to fix the road and the bridge.

Chief Garner stated that Cow Creek Road is on the damage inventory list.

Commissioner Osteen stated that Mr. Hutchison is pulling his resignation letter and Commissioner Osteen is asking if there is anyone that has a problem with the inmates that the next day it needs to be resolved as soon as possible.

He stated that he would like Mr. Hutchison to receive a plaque for helping Commissioner Hatch when he had heat exhaustion.

Commissioner Osteen made a motion for Mr. Steve Hutchison to receive a plaque for the life saving measures he took to help Commissioner Hatch during his heat exhaustion. Commissioner Wood seconded. Board approved.

Commissioner Hatch stated that the Road Department is tearing down the Community Center in Suwannee. He stated that it is School Board property and that they could not build another Community Center at that location.

He stated that at the next Board meeting they will submit a conceptual drawing for the Board to look at to start on another Community Building in Suwannee.

He stated that it was a \$308,000.00 insurance claim and that there should be money in the bank to rebuild it.

Commissioner Hatch stated that they need a facility for the Post Office in Suwannee and would like the County to build a facility for them and then lease it back from the Count to Suwannee.

He stated that if anyone has any ideas for land then to let him know, that Glen Dyals Park is getting full.

Commissioner Storey thanked Mr. Jenkins for everything he does.

Commissioner Stephenson thanked everybody for coming to the podium to speak.

He stated that the expenses for the County for one month were around \$1,800,000.00 just on bills and wanted everyone to be aware of how much money the County goes through just on finances.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Mr. Dan Patrick passed out a flyer for the Board to review and discussed the property tax bills.

He recommended adding fire, mosquito and solid waste onto the initial bill that way the public knew what they would have to pay up front.

He also asked if the Board would do a traffic study to add a turning lane or possibly a caution light going North on Highway 349 due to the high traffic.

Commissioner Stephenson stated that they would ask the State of Florida to see if they can do a traffic study as it is a State Highway.

Mr. JD Nobles spoke about Butler Island and stated that a group came and did a small debris clean up and that the debris was too large to bring over on kayak. He stated that they were going to organize another cleanup with larger boats.

He stated that he received an email asking about the LMS meeting becoming public.

Commissioner Hatch stated that the EOC (Emergency Operations Center) would email Mr. Nobles.

The Board stated that they were going into recess and then reconvened at 1:00 PM for the Funds Allocation Workshop.

RECESS

Commissioner Osteen made the motion to recess. Commissioner Storey seconded. Board approved.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
DIXIE COUNTY, FLORIDA

ATTEST:



~~Jody Stephenson, Chairman~~
Mark Hatch, Vice Chairman



~~Barbie Higginbotham, Clerk-Auditor~~
Kerna Wilson



PLEASE BE ADVISED that if a person decides 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.*