# ***Regular Meeting Dixie County Courthouse Commission Meeting Room June 6, 2019 – 10:00 AM***

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:**

Gene Higginbotham

Mark Hatch

W. C. Mills, Chairman

David Osteen, Vice Chairman

Jamie Storey

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Tim Alexander, County Manager

Michael Osteen, County Attorney

Dana D. Johnson, Clerk of Court

Della J. Petty, Deputy Clerk

**CALL TO ORDER:**

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

**INVOCATION AND PLEDGE:**

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

**APPROVAL OF COMMISSION MINUTES:**

The motion to approve the Commission Minutes from the Regular Meeting of May 16, 2019 was made by Commissioner Osteen and seconded by Commissioner Higginbotham. Board approved.

The motion to approve the Commission Minutes from the Horseshoe Canal Dredging Work Shop of May 16, 2019 was made by Commissioner Osteen and seconded by Commissioner Storey. Board approved.

**VOUCHER APPROVAL:**

The motion to approve the Vouchers was made by Commissioner Higginbotham and seconded by Commissioner Storey. The Board approved.

**HUGH THOMAS, BEN GLASS, KATIE KELLY, SRWMD:**

Mr. Hugh Thomas appeared before the Board and gave a presentation of the Suwannee River Water Management District. He informed the Board the District is made up of 15 counties and covers 7,640 square miles with 13 rivers and a population of 340,000. He said the District responsible for Water Supply and Quality, Flood Protection and Natural System Restoration. The major initiatives of the District are for the RIVER and Agricultural Cost-Share Programs, monitoring Minimum Flow and Levels of Rivers, Spring Grants Funding, Water Quality Initiatives, Western Region Water Supply Planning. Mr. Thomas said they have completed five Projects around the County and have four active projects currently. He discussed Ground Water Levels and the potential for flooding due to rainfall. He also discussed Water Use for Dixie County and noted in comparison of the Ground Water and Regular Water Usage Graphs, Agriculture has the largest consumption and use of water while Public Supply and Domestic Self Supply are equal in use of water. Mr. Thomas informed the Board the J. H. Anderson Jr. Park at Rock Bluff has been added to the District. He said there is a natural spring on the 170 acre property and the District will install trails on the property in the future. Mr. Thomas said he will be meeting with the City Manager for the Town of Cross City today to go over a planning tool to evaluate the next 20 years of growth and a clean water supply. Mr. Thomas presented a check to Dixie County for Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILT) for $20,965.17 and the Board thanked the District. Manager Alexander expressed his thanks to Mr. Thomas and his staff. Commissioner Hatch and Commissioner Higginbotham thanked everyone as well.

**VON EBERSTEIN, TAMMY BRYANT:**

Mrs. Tammy Bryant appeared before the Board on behalf of the VonEberstein Family in regards to vacating a road on their property. She said they are under contract to sell the property and have been trying to close on it since April. She said they have a legal description to advertise in the paper and would like the Board to approve their request. County Attorney Michael Osteen reminded the Board of their discussion to adopt the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) survey and also of the over 50 encroachments on the left side of the road from the Cattle Gap and down to the Point. Mrs. Cheyenne S. Hutchinson added the encroachments are on both sides of Highway 351. County Attorney Osteen suggested the Board not take any action today. He said they will need to start the advertisement for a public hearing of vacate the plat from the Cattle Gap down to the Point and then adopt the new survey from the FDOT. Mrs. Bryan asked when the request can be approved because the sellers and buyers have a deadline to meet and County Attorney Osteen said this request will be handled the same way. He added first they will need to advertise a Public Hearing and then have First and Second Readings of the Ordinance then the Final Vote could be on July 18, 2019. The motion to begin the advertising process for the Highway 351 in Horseshoe Beach was made by Commissioner Higginbotham and seconded by Commissioner Osteen. Board approved.

**STEVE FREMEN, VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER:**

Manager Alexander informed the Board that Mr. Fremen has completed his training and is now a Certified Code Enforcement Official.

**KEITH SEGAR, SUWANNEE WATER AND SEWER:**

Mr. Keith Segar appeared before the Board and expressed his thanks to Mr. Leon Wright for his help with an issue. He said things are going well in Suwannee and asked if anyone had any questions. The Board thanked Mr. Segar for all his help.

**GREG BAILEY, NORTH FLORIDA PROFESSIONAL SERVICES:**

Mr. Greg Bailey appeared before the Board to inform them the Highway 351 Project should be completed in July. He said the High School turn lane contract should be finished this week. Mr. Bailey said they are still working on the Old Town Upholstery Road with putting down lime rock and moving a tree. He said they will be paving next week and finish by July.

Mr. Bailey informed the Board he attended the FDOT conference and the Sun Coast Connector Legislation did pass. He said the road will span 150 miles from Citrus County to Jefferson County connecting with Interstate 10 and the Turnpike to Tampa. He said they are discussing where to route the road and they do expect opposition but are encouraging folks to comment. Mr. Bailey said construction will begin in 2023 and by 2033 the public will be able to drive on it. Commissioner Hatch commented there are several pros and cons. He said it may help Dixie County by diverting traffic through here to refuel. Commissioner Mills asked Mr. Bailey when they will know something more definite about the route and Mr. Bailey replied by next year.

**STEVE HUTCHINSON, COUNTY ROAD SUPERINTENDENT:**

Mr. Steve Hutchinson appeared before the Board to request a temporary road closure between the Dollar General Store and the Church in Old Town for the Suwannee River Baptist Church to have a Church Carnival on Saturday, June 8, 2019. The motion to temporarily close the road between Dollar General and the Suwannee River Baptist Church in Old Town on Saturday June 8, 2019 was made by Commissioner Hatch and seconded by Commissioner Osteen. Board approved. Road Superintendent Hutchinson said he needs to fill a vacant position at the County Yard.

**JOE RUTH, SOLID WASTE & MOSQUITO CONTROL DIRECTOR:**

Mr. Joe Ruth appeared before the Board to apologize for turning over the tractor. He said the motor is damaged but he was not injured.

Mr. Ruth asked for clarification about buying eight new dumpsters. The motion to purchase eight new dumpsters was made by Commissioner Higginbotham and seconded by Commissioner Osteen. Board approved. Manager Alexander said they will need to look at the Budget first. Commissioner Higginbotham said the packer trucks need to be working Monday through Friday to keep the roll-off sites maintained. He said Memorial Day weekend the sites were filled over capacity and a mess. Mr. Ruth informed the Board one packer truck has not been working for two weeks and he has had a packer truck ordered for six months and it should be here by July 1, 2019. Commissioner Hatch stated he has a issue with the packer trucks. He commented on how can the Board demand and enforce Dixie County residents to clean up their yards when the County garbage sites look terrible. The motion to put Assistant County Manager Duane Cannon in charge of helping Mr. Ruth get all the roll-off sites cleaned up was made by Commissioner Hatch and seconded by Commissioner Higginbotham. Board approved. Manager Alexander informed the Board it is Budget review time and Mr. Cannon will not be available all the time as he has other things to do and Commissioner Hatch said he understands but to make it happen.

**LEON WRIGHT, BUILDING AND ZONING:**

Mr. Leon Wright appeared before the Board to discuss a stop work order he had issued to a property owner on the river. Mr. Wright also wanted to speak with the Board about the current LDR height restrictions of 35 feet. He said they may need to change this because any new construction may exceed this limit. Commissioner Hatch said they will need to check flood plain and fire restrictions and get a recommendation. Mr. Bailey added the current 35 feet height restriction was based on fire codes and technology at the time it was first established. Emergency Services Director Darian Brown added a ladder fire truck only reaches up to 35 feet only. Manager Alexander suggested the Board should decide to change the LDR as a whole or on a as needed basis per building variance. Commissioner Higginbotham recommended doing it on a as needed basis only. Mr. Wright commented it is important for folks to have their property surveyed to avoid issues like those currently in the Town of Horseshoe.

Mr. Wright informed the Board Mr. Steve Fremen is not riding around the County enforcing random code violations. He said there must be a complaint filed with the department first.

**DARIAN BROWN, DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY SERVICES:**

Emergency Medical Services Director Darian Brown appeared before the Board and informed them they will be having a Hurricane Awareness Meeting on June 11, 2019 at 7:00 PM at the EOC for the public to attend. He said they held one in Suwannee for a small crowd and they have plans to hold one in Horseshoe. He said they are promoting a weather alert system the public can sign up for and use on their home phone, cell phone and computer.

EMS Director Brown informed the Board the KDBI index for fire is high due to dry conditions. He said there is a concern for lightning igniting fires and there are currently no burn restrictions for normal yard trash piles.

EMS Director Brown informed the Board construction height restrictions limit the capabilities of the emergency staff to rescue people from burning structures. He said there is a five story building in Jena now and they would need a ladder fire truck to rescue people from the upper levels. He said a ladder fire truck cost $1,500,000.00 and he wouldn't have the man power to run one anyway as it would take three to six staff to operate it. EMS Director Brown said his department needs more funds for staff and equipment.

**TIM ALEXANDER, COUNTY MANAGER:**

County Manager Tim Alexander appeared before the Board and requested them to approve Hinton Landing Park be closed for a memorial service. The motion to close Hinton Landing Park was made by Commissioner Hatch and seconded by Commissioner Storey. Board approved.

Manager Alexander requested the Board to allow the Tourist Development Council to meet every two months instead of on a monthly basis. The motion to change the meeting times to every other month for the TDC was made by Commissioner Osteen and seconded by Commissioner Storey. Board approved.

Manager Alexander requested the Board make a decision to continue the current county insurance with renewal letter and the Board agreed.

Manager Alexander requested the Board approve a quote in the amount of $17, 683.00 from Beard Equipment for the 644 Loader motor. He said the other motor they had been looking at purchasing would not work for the 644 Loader and they can have it installed tomorrow. The motion to purchase the motor for the 644 Loader from Beard Equipment was made by Commissioner Osteen and seconded by Commissioner Higginbotham. Board approved.

Manager Alexander recommended the Board look into contracting with the Fish and Wildlife Commission on maintaining the County’s thirteen1boat ramps. He said they would not be allowed to charge a fee to launch a vessel but may be able to charge for parking. The Board agreed.

Manager Alexander recommended the Board address employees who quit their job for medical reasons instead of taking sick leave and then want to return to work at their same pay scale. He said in the past the County has made the employee hire on at the starting pay scale. Commissioner Higginbotham said he thought the rule was if you come back within six months after leaving you can keep the same pay scale and Manager Alexander said must be put into policy. The motion to add to the County Policy if an employee returns to work within six months of leaving they keep the same pay scale was made by Commissioner Higginbotham and seconded by Commissioner Hatch. Board approved.

Manager Alexander requested the Board approve the JA Grant for the Sheriff Department of $27,063.00. The motion to approve the JAG grant was made by Commissioner Hatch and seconded by Commissioner Osteen. Board approved.

Manager Alexander requested the Board close the Steinhatchee Bridge for the July 4, 2019 fireworks display. The motion to close the Steinhatchee Bridge for July Fourth Fireworks was made by Commissioner Osteen and seconded by Commissioner Higginbotham. Board approved.

Manager Alexander requested the Board approve budget amendments for the Sheriff’s Department in the amount $1,007.58, $3,608.00, $667.20 and $551.70 all for law enforcement education. The motion to approve all four Sheriff budget amendments was made by Commissioner Higginbotham and seconded by Commissioner Osteen. Board approved.

Manager Alexander informed the Board they had four contractors present for the pre bid on the Cross City Airport Apron Project.

Manager Alexander informed the Board he had received a letter from FDOT and it stated a turn lane will not be added in front of Gooding Funeral Home down towards the EOC building. Commissioner Hatch said he didn't understand why restriping this area to create a turn lane is not possible.

Manager Alexander informed the Board that the County Probation Report is in their packet for review.

Manager Alexander informed everyone the Commissioners will be attending the FACT Conference next week on June 11, 2019 through June 14, 2019.

Mr. Dane Gilbert appeared before the Board about citizens purchasing milling to go on his road (SE 989th Street) down to the boat ramp. Commissioner Mills wanted to clarify he is against putting down a small section of the road for one individual and he is not opposed to doing the whole road. Mr. Gilbert said he will be operating a business at the end of this road. He said he has spoke to all the residents that live on this 1,360 feet of road and they will need $22,000.00 to buy the milling. He said they have half of the money now. Manager Alexander suggested the County can spread the milling and Anderson Columbia Company, Inc. can pack and roll the milling. Mr. Gilbert said a drain near Highway 19 will need to be installed because the rain cuts into the road and Manager Alexander said FDOT may be willing to take care of the drain issue. Commissioner Mills said as a guideline for the future if the residents can come up with 50 percent of the money up front to purchase the milling that the County can help with the rest. The motion to accept $11,000.00 as down payment for milling to put on the SE 989th Street was made by Commissioner Higginbotham and seconded by Commissioner Osteen. Board approved. Manager Alexander added they will need to look at the Budget first.

Manager Alexander informed the Board the Interlocal Agreement with the Town of Horseshoe is ready to move forward. He said after the initial dredging work is done then the canals will be maintained by Horseshoe. Mayor Talmadge Bennett added the Town of Horseshoe will own the canals. County Attorney Michael Osteen said the canals will be titled to Horseshoe and any future clean up will be their responsibility. The motion to approve the Interlocal Agreement between the Town of Horseshoe and the County was made by Commissioner Hatch and seconded by Commissioner Osteen. Board approved.

**MICHAEL OSTEEN, COUNTY ATTORNEY:**

County Attorney Michael Osteen informed the Board of the issue with the Shingle Creek Bridge. He said the County does not have an easement to this bridge and is not responsible for the bridge. He said this is a private issue between the two neighboring property owners.

County Attorney Osteen said Attorney Leenette McMillan will prepare the advertisement for the VonEberstein Road to be vacated.

**DANA D. JOHNSON, CLERK OF COURT:**

Clerk Dana Johnson appeared before the Board and apologized for the issue with the county payroll this week. She thanked Mrs. Melissa Long and Mrs. Brittany Fowler for all their help getting payroll completed. She noted the Audit is on track for completion on time as well. Manager Alexander said they will be having a meeting on Monday, June 10, 2019 to go over staff roles and responsibilities. He added he is only responsible to sign supervisor time sheets.

**COUNTY COMMISSION ITEMS:**

Commissioner David Osteen and Commissioner Jamie Storey both expressed their thanks to Mr. Steve Hutchinson for his help.

Commissioner Mills expressed his thanks to Clerk Johnson, Manager Alexander, all the Department Supervisors and their staff for helping him as Commissioner over the last three years. He said he has seen some positive changes within the County. He said that Department Supervisors are making efforts to improving issues and customer service has also improved.

**ADJOURN:**

The motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Higginbotham and seconded by Commissioner Osteen. The Board approved and the meeting adjourned at 12:00 P.M.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

DIXIE COUNTY, FLORIDA

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

W.C. Mills, Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Dana D. Johnson, Clerk-Auditor