

# ***Emergency Meeting***

***Tropical Storm Fred and Flooding***

***Dixie County EOC Building***

***August 11, 2021 – 1:00 PM***

*While adhering to the CDC Guidelines and 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 the Dixie County Emergency Declaration 2020-27. The Board will meet and limit access by staff and the public to the meeting room. 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  
W. C. Mills, District 2, Vice Chairman  
Mark Hatch, District 3  
Jamie Storey, District 4, Chairman  
James Valentine, District 5

## **STAFF**

Duane Cannon, County Manager  
Michael Osteen, County Attorney  
Barbie Higginbotham, Clerk of Court  
Verna Wilson, Chief Deputy Clerk  
Della Rhymes, Asst. Chief Deputy Clerk

## **CALL TO ORDER**

The Board meeting was called to order 1:07 PM by Commissioner Storey.

## **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.

County Manager Duane Cannon spoke to the Board and informed everyone the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the current state of flooding throughout the county and the possible impact to the county caused by Tropical Storm Fred which is approaching our area.

He said there are some FDOT representatives here today from Lake City and Chiefland to talk about drainage.

Director of Emergency Management Services Darian Brown informed the Board that Tropical Storm Fred is approaching the Apalachicola area and that Dixie County is in the cone. He requested the Board approve Resolution 2021-120 in support of the Local State of Emergency for Tropical Storm Fred.

***Commissioner Hatch made the motion to approve Resolution 2021-120 in support of the Local State of Emergency for Tropical Storm Fred. Commissioner Mills seconded. Board approved.***

Division Chief of Emergency Operations Scott Garner spoke to the Board about Tropical Storm Fred and another storm that could be forming off the coast of Cuba. He said if the storm off the Cuban coast continues to form, they will only have 24 hours to prepare for it.

He said it is estimated that we will receive four to eight more inches of rainfall through next Tuesday. He said the rainfall measured 1 and ½ inches from last night.

Chief Garner also requested that everyone direct their requests for assistance through the Emergency Operations Center to streamline the process and avoid conflicting information and confusion.

Manager Cannon introduced Mr. Pat Upshaw from the FDOT in Chiefland.

Mr. Pat Upshaw introduced his staff and told the Board that their first notice of this issue was last week while helping address the flooding in the Steinhatchee area and near the Taylor County line.

He said their Perry, FL office has been working on these areas.

He said they have been sending signs and message board for use to affected areas. He said they have sent in pumps to help with drainage along Hwy 19. He said they have requested four more pumps from Gainesville and two more from Lake City and they will be staged as needed. He said he and his staff are available for support. He said they have been cleaning out the ditches maintained by the state and they have checked the city manholes. He said they will be proactive and work with the county and the city.

Commissioner Stephenson said the county is flooded in areas that have not flooded before and more water is coming this way. He said the Lucky Charm RV Park and areas along Old Cooper Road and Chavous Road will be getting more water.

Mr. Upshaw said they have removed some pipes from areas to allow better flow of the water.

He said their drainage people were out yesterday assessing the issues. He informed the Board that 38 inches of water has fallen within the last 60 days.

Commissioner Stephenson said that Hwy 349 is underwater South of Hwy 351.

Manager Cannon asked Mr. Upshaw how they would like to coordinate communications between the county and his FDOT staff.

Mr. Upshaw replied for Emergency Management to work up the FDOT chain of command through the lower levels first. However, he and his staff are available 24/7.

Director Brown complimented and thanked FDOT for the immediate help and assistance they have provided.

Mr. Doug Dycus, with FDOT, reminded the Board that if the Governor of Florida were to declare a State of Emergency that the flow of information will have to go through web EOC. He said because the county is currently in a Local State of Emergency, they can easily work directly with each other.

Mr. Upshaw informed the Board that they have sub-contractors who will be cleaning out the ditches in the future, but their local staff is addressing the issue at this time.

Mr. Mark Hanna, with FDOT said they cannot reach some ditches due to the level of water and or private property owners may have fences or other structures in the way.

Manager Cannon asked for a status update from the Town of Cross City representatives.

Mr. Joseph Henderson replied they are just waiting.

Manager Cannon asked for a status update from the Road Department.

Road Superintendent Stevie Hutchison said they are just maintaining and answering phone calls. He said sandbags are available at the county yard and he thanked Dixie County Sheriff Darby Butler for his assistance with that.

Manager Cannon asked for a status update from the Solid Waste Department.

Solid Waste Director Michael Latson informed the Board that they are hauling the garbage directly to Greenville in the packer trucks. He said they are parking their trucks at the county yard and if there is more room, they will park the roll off trucks there as well. He said they may start to burn soon if they can.

Mr. Latson said they need to send Waster Pro somewhere else to dump their garbage.

Manager Cannon said they have a contract with the Town of Cross City to dump twice a week at the Transfer Station.

County Attorney Michael Osteen offered to look over their contract.

Commissioner Hatch asked when does Waste Pro dump.

Mr. Latson replied on Monday and Thursday.

Mr. Latson informed the Board they are trying to haul two loads per day.

Attorney Osteen informed the Board that neighboring counties were closing their river boat ramps due to hazardous conditions, flooding and erosion. He recommended the Board consider this as well.

***Commissioner Hatch made the motion to close the boat ramps on the Suwannee River. Commissioner Mills seconded. Board approved.***

Commissioner Hatch instructed Mr. Hutchison to contact FWC about the Board's decision to close the Suwannee River boat ramps.

Sheriff Butler suggested barricades and signs be posted at the boat ramps. He said if they were to receive a phone call about someone using the ramps, the officer will ask for identification and assess if the person is trying to access their home by boat versus recreational usage.

Manager Cannon asked for a status update from the Mosquito Control Department.

Mosquito Control Director Dwayne Chauncey said he had been in communication with someone from Gainesville and was advised to not spray until after the storm and after the water goes down due to chemical contamination of water wells and streams and rivers. He was informed that the violations fall under Federal Law. He said he will get something in writing for documentation.

Commissioner Hatch said to post this on the EOC webpage for the public.

Manager Cannon asked for a status update from the Building and Zoning Department.

Building Official Mr. Leon Wright said there is a procedure and process to follow to shut off power for flooded homes. He requested that everyone send a photo and an address, and his staff will follow up.

Manager Cannon asked for a status update from the School District representative.

Mr. Jerry Wayne Evans said they have plans to start school tomorrow. He said the school buses will not drive down a flooded road so it will be up to the parents to get the children to the bus or to the school. He said the students will not be punished if they miss school.

Commissioner Hatch said he has been calling Governor and Representatives in Tallahassee, so they don't overlook Dixie County. He said the county measures 450,000 acres. He asked Chief Garner if there is anything the county needs during this time.

Director Brown replied they are good and have everything that is needed. He said they have retrieved their truck from Mingo Acres, fixed a broken water pump and an electronic sign.

Commissioner Hatch introduced Mr. Greg Evans with FDOT.

Mr. Greg Evans spoke to the Board and said that people of Dixie County are very resilient. He said that Tropical Storm Fred is coming; and they need to prepare for more rainfall. Storm Fred is coming. Need to prepare for more rainfall. He said they have been moving debris and sediment from pipes and are working with adjoining counties to provide barricades and signs.

Commissioner Mills said the Board has talked about this for years, cleaning ditches and cleaning pipes and replacing pipes. He said the county needs the money to do this. He said the ground water is high and must be regulated better. He said that Dixie County can't take any more rain. He said he has water at his house on a high hill and has never had water there before. He said the Steinahtchee River and the Suwannee River is overflowing.

Commissioner Valentine had nothing to discuss at this time.

Commissioner Stephenson said they need to prepare for the water that is flowing to the lower areas. He said the water table needs to be regulated better. He said he doesn't understand why the Suwannee River Water Management District can use tax payer dollars to put pipes on private property with gates and then the county must get permission to remove the gates from the pipes and allow the water to flow.

Manager Cannon reminded the Board that they have been trying to address this issue on Hwy 55A since 2018. He said there are structures in the area; but they cannot access them on private property without permission.

Manager Cannon informed the Board that Deputy Director, Hugh Thomas, of the Suwannee River Water Management District will be here to meet with them on Thursday, August 19 at 10:00 AM at the EOC Building.

Director Brown said there may be a conflict with the location if the EOC is in a state of activation.

Manager Cannon informed the Board that the Regular Board Meeting of Thursday, August 19 will need to be held at the Courthouse at 6:00 PM due to public hearing advertisements. He said they can meet at the School Board Meeting Room in September and has reserved those dates.

Manager Cannon requested that when the Board does speak with their representatives in Tallahassee that they communicate the need for resources, administration, and funding for Dixie County.

***Commissioner Mills made the motion to hold a Special Meeting with SRWMD on Thursday, August 19 at 10:00 AM at the EOC Building. Commissioner Hatch seconded. Board approved.***

Commissioner Hatch added that the EOC will be the first choice for the Special Meeting if not in a state of activation. He said the secondary location will be at the Courthouse if needed.

Commissioner Hatch requested everyone make a list of needs for the EOC staff and let them handle that.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS AND CONCERNS**

There were no comments or concerns expressed at this time.


**ADJOURN**


Commissioner Mills made the motion to adjourn at 1:52 PM. Commissioner Hatch seconded. Board approved.



ATTEST:

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
DIXIE COUNTY, FLORIDA

  
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Jamie Storey, Chairman

  
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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.***