

**Commission Board Room
Dixie County Courthouse
214 NE Hwy 351, Cross City, FL 32628
Emergency Meeting
January 21, 2025 – 4:00 PM**

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

Commissioner Stephenson called the meeting to order at 4:05 PM

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE TO THE AMERICAN FLAG

Commissioner Storey led the Invocation and the Pledge to the American Flag.

Chief Scott Garner provided a printout to the Board with information on the 2025 winter storm. He stated that the temperature will be in the low 30s starting tonight until Thursday at noon with wind plus the wind chill.

He stated that Assistant County Manager Roy Bass asked to hold the emergency meeting to go into a Local State of Emergency for the weather coming in.

Chief Garner stated that a shelter will be open at the Trail Riders Club and that the Sheriff's Office will have dedicated security there.

Motion to go into a Local State of Emergency in Dixie County for extreme cold weather was made by Commissioner Hatch. Seconded by Commissioner Storey. Board approved.

Chief Garner stated that the biggest concern at the moment is the ice accumulation on the roads and bridges. He informed the Board that Department of Transportation (DOT) is monitoring the Suwannee River Bridge, Eight-Mile Creek Bridge and Tennille Bridge for ice.

He stated that it will be up to a quarter inch of ice or possibly higher for Dixie County and the roads leading up to Gainesville.

Chief Garner stated that if in the event they needed to use an ambulance that the crews are advised to use extreme caution.

He said that all of the rain should end by 8:00 AM Wednesday morning with some snowfall coming behind it.

Mr. Bass stated that the County Offices, Circuit Courts and Schools are closed on Wednesday January 22, 2025, due to the impending weather.

Commissioner Mark Hatch asked if the ambulances would be shutting down if the weather got too bad.

Chief Darian Brown stated that the County can't afford to be without ambulances and that he understands what Commissioner Hatch is saying but they will need to continue to run.

He stated that it hasn't even gotten bad yet and there have already been fires, wrecks and medical calls, so he doesn't think it would be advisable to shut them down.

He informed the Board that they met with the battalion chiefs and told them to reiterate the situation to the crews and to use extreme caution.

Building Official Leon Wright stated that his office is closed tomorrow as well.

Mr. Bass stated that County Road Superintendent Steve Hutchison has taken care of the equipment trucks and made sure that they have anti-freeze in them and that he will call Solid Waste Director Tim Johnson as soon as the meeting is over.

Chief Brown stated that he does not expect the County to get a tremendous amount of snow and stated that he is more concerned about the ice and rain.

Chief Garner stated that they are not predicting anymore falling precipitation, but that it will melt and freeze and continue to do so until midday Thursday.

Commissioner Hatch recommended extending the time at the shelter through Thursday night.

Mr. Bass stated that he would check the headcount at the shelter and let the Board and the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) know.

Chief Garner informed Mr. Bass that the blankets that Red Cross provided would not need to be returned, that they are disposable.

Attorney Chana Watson wanted to inform the Board that she spoke to the National Opioid Representative today and she is in the process of filling out paperwork to find out how much they will be getting from the Mackenzie settlement.

She stated that it will have stipulations since it is opioid money and will be a onetime drop.

She spoke about the Lutheran Services Opioid money and stated that she is working on getting more information on it. She stated that it is \$825,000.00 in the first year and \$425,000.00 the second year and will receive around \$200,000.00 or more every year for the next 15 years.

Mr. Wright informed the Board that the meeting with the consultant group "Savinaucious" will be on Thursday 01-23-2025 at the Suwannee Marina from 3:00 PM to 6:00 PM.

Commissioner Hatch stated that the postmaster in Suwannee lost their lease at the post office and would like to know if the County has any property that they can lease in Suwannee for a 400 square foot building for a post office.

Mr. Wright suggested taking a portable from the Sheriff's Office to Glen Dyals Park, elevate it and frame it out.

Commissioner Hatch stated that that could be a revenue source and asked Mr. Wright to look into it.

Mr. Bass wanted to inform the Board that there was vandalism at the last soccer game and that it was captured on video. He stated that the police found the kids that did it and that they will be going back out to the area to clean up the mess.


ADJOURN

Commissioner Hatch made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Storey seconded. Board approved.


BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

DIXIE COUNTY, FLORIDA





Jody Stephenson, Chairman


Barbie Higginbotham, Clerk-Auditor

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.