

# Workshop

## BOCC and Town of Cross City Council

### City Hall

99 SE 210 Ave, Cross City, FL 32628  
October 25, 2023 – 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  
Daniel Wood, District 2  
Mark Hatch, District 3  
David Osteen, District 5

#### **STAFF**

Duane Cannon, County Manager  
Paul Gainey, Asst. County Manager  
Chana Watson, County Attorney  
Barbie Higginbotham, Clerk of Court  
Della J. Rhymes, Asst. Chief Deputy Clerk

#### **TOWN COUNCIL**

City Manager John Driggers Jr.  
Town Council Member, Seat 3, Ryan Fulford

Kay McCallister, Tourist Development Council  
Karen VanAernam, Cross City Restore and Renew  
Carol West

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

The Board Meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM by Town Council Member Ryan Fulford.

#### **INVOCATION AND PLEDGE TO THE AMERICAN FLAG**

The Invocation was led by County Manager Duane Cannon and the Pledge to the American Flag was led by Town Council Member Ryan Fulford.

Town Council Member Ryan Fulford welcomed everyone to the workshop. He informed everyone they had met with Retail Strategies in person earlier today.

Ms. Karen VanAernam gave an overview of the meeting. She said they identified some areas for retail growth: Medical Urgent Care, Grocery Store, Fast Food, and Retail Clothing. She said they will identify available properties and pitch them to new businesses. She said it may be possible to get grant funding as well.

Commissioner Stephenson said a retail clothing business is needed.

Commissioner Hatch said the taxpayer's money is being spent outside of the county. He said we need to retain this within the county.

Commissioner Stephenson said that retail will bring more money for other things.

Council Member Fulford said they want to enhance the small businesses.

Ms. Carol West said offering good customer service is a big incentive for people.

Council Member Fulford said a lot of folks, on fixed incomes, must plan a road trip to stock up on essentials.

City Manager John Driggers Jr. said they need something to bring the people in and then they will stay and continue to shop at the other stores within the county.

Commissioner Stephenson said a Department Store is needed.

Commissioner Osteen said he is happy that everyone is working together. He said he has solicited several businesses during his first term as Commissioner without any success.

Commissioner Stephenson said the Census statistics for the county are not correct.

Council Member Fulford said they will meet with Retail Strategies again on November 15, 2023, at 3:00 PM by zoom.

County Attorney Chana Watson said we need a business that focuses on recreational water activities.

Ms. Kay McCallister said the building by the Suwannee River Bridge would be a good location for Kayak rentals.

Commissioner Hatch said they need to educate the established business owners about this process.

City Manager Driggers said that Walmart impacted his family's mechanic business when they first came to Chiefland years ago. However, a lot of those customers came back because they got better service from the small-town mechanic versus the large chain store. He said customer service is very important.

Council Member Fulford said there is also the opportunity for a Franchise Workshop so people can learn how to be a Franchise Owner.

Clerk of Court Barbie Higginbotham said other restaurant owners have approached her in the past regarding business competition. She said there are plenty of customers and business for all.

Ms. Carol West said people can also get higher paying jobs through education. She said people can apply for Hurricane Relief through the Dixie County Education Foundation. She said Volunteer Florida awarded \$90,000.00 to this cause.

Commissioner Hatch recommended they meet again for a Workshop on November 15, 2023, at 5:00 PM.

Ms. Carol West informed everyone of the Delegation Meeting on October 30, 2023, at 11:00 AM in the County Commission Meeting Room at the Courthouse. She said Senator Corey Simon is on the Volunteer Florida Board, and Representative Jason Shoaf is on the Hurricane Relief and Recovery and Workforce Subcommittee.

County Manager Duane Cannon inquired about appropriation projects for the Town of Cross City.

City Manager Driggers replied they have requested appropriations for:

- Sewer expansion, within the city limits, from the nursing home to Jack Roberts curve
- Fire station

He said there are plans being drawn for a larger Sewer Plant

City Manager Driggers said infrastructure is needed. He said sewer and Broad band is key for the city. County Attorney Chana Watson said satellite is also available for broadband.

Commissioner Hatch said the county and the Town of Cross City need to talk together on appropriations projects.

County Manager Duane Cannon said they have requested appropriations for:

- Courthouse/Tax Collector office expansion
- Sheriff Evidence Building
- Flood and Storm Water
- Library
- Maintenance Facility for Sheriff and Emergency Services
- Back up Generators for Courthouse and Jail

Commissioner Hatch asked about Storm Water Task Force Projects.

City Manager Driggers said FDOT will replace the culverts within the city limits.

Ms. West thanked everyone for helping after the storm.

Council Member Fulford thanked the City Manager and County Manager and expressed his appreciation to both for their service to the community after Hurricane Idalia. He said they are preparing the Town of Cross City Emergency Preparedness Plan for future events.

City Manager Driggers thanked the Town Council for their support of him and allowing him to do his job efficiently.

Clerk Higginbotham said the staff from other county agencies that came in to assist after the storm were amazed at how well this community and its officials worked together.

Ms. McCallister informed everyone they are working on long term grants for hurricane recovery projects:

- Dredging McGriff Pass
- Rebuild Reefs
- Dredge Horseshoe
- Rebuild Shired Island

City Manager Driggers said the Town of Cross City is looking into the possibility of serving water to other places in the county. He said people should test their wells for arsenic. He said that DEP will help pay for the cost to get better water. He said eventually they may need another water tower or pump station for water pressure.

Ms. McCallister said they need to work on the Freeman House in Jena.

Ms. VanAernam said they need a meeting room that several people could utilize.

City Manager Driggers said he would like to remodel the Train Depot and use it for a meeting room and a historical building.

County Attorney Chana Watson asked about parking.

City Manager Driggers replied they could possibly extend the area behind the Train Depot for more parking.

Council Member Fulford thanked everyone for participating in the scare crows in the park and fall decorations. He said he would like to promote a Christmas Decorating Contest for the local businesses this year. He also said there will be a benefit concert in Newberry, FL to help raise money for Hurricane Idalia relief on December 14, 2023.

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

There were no comments or concerns expressed at this time.

**ADJOURN**

\_\_\_\_\_ *made the motion to adjourn at 5:20 PM. \_\_\_\_\_ seconded. Board approved.*

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
DIXIE COUNTY, FLORIDA

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jamie Storey, 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.*

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*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.*