

Workshop

Discussion with finance for Animal Control expenditures and
for the School Board invoice.

Commission Board Room

Dixie County Courthouse

214 NE Hwy 351, Cross City, FL 32628

November 15, 2024 – 5:00 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, Vice Chairman

Daniel Wood, District 2

Mark Hatch, District 3

Jamie Storey, District 4, Chairman

David Osteen, District 5

STAFF

John Jenkins, County Manager

Chana Watson, County Attorney

Barbie Higginbotham, Clerk of Court

Verna Wilson, Chief Deputy Clerk

Brenda Royal, Chief Financial Officer

Victoria Darkow, Deputy Clerk

CALL TO ORDER

The Board Meeting/Workshop was called to order at 5:00 PM by Commissioner Storey.

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.

SHERIFF DARBY BUTLER

Sheriff Darby Butler readdressed the animal control position that was previously discussed at the last Board of County Commissioners meeting.

He gave a breakdown of all the costs which included:

Training – \$1,350.

Fuel- \$2,500.

Operating expense for veterinary services- \$8,000.

Equipment & uniforms - \$2,000.

He stated that the total increase is \$57,366.80 without insurance.

Chief Financial Officer Brenda Royal stated that insurance was around \$11,000.

Sheriff Butler stated that when he came into office, he took the secondary animal control position out and used the money for a drug interdiction unit.

Attorney Chana Watson asked if adding another officer would mean an additional veterinary cost.

Sheriff Butler stated that yes, that their max capacity for the kennel is 20 dogs, and that it will have to increase.

He stated that they give as many animals as they can to the Humane Society, but that normally in a rural County, in his opinion, the dogs are aggressive and unadoptable.

Commissioner Osteen stated that he had spoken to Mrs. Barbie Higginbotham and the Finance Department and that they do not have the money in the budget to add another officer.

County Manager, John Jenkins stated that he found some monies from the two park attendants that the County is not utilizing and some money from the Freeman Track House that the County gave back to Florida Fish and Wildlife after maintenance.

Mr. Jenkins stated that he came up with 18,260 dollars between the Horseshoe and Shired park employees and Freeman track

He said there are four (4) positions that aren't filled at the road department.

Mrs. Royal stated that there are three (3) positions, that they changed at the last minute.

Attorney Watson stated that the positions at Horseshoe Beach and Shired Island are already filled, and the Board has to address that issue.

Mrs. Royal stated that they had been paying those employees for over a year since Idalia hit. She presented a packet to the Board on monthly cost to run every department.

Commissioner Stephenson requested a breakdown of all the taxes that were lost from the coastal communities because of the hurricanes.

Commissioner Storey stated that the County isn't collecting all of the RV Special Exception taxes. He recommended putting the Special Exception / RV permit annual fees on the individual's tax bill.

Sheriff Butler stated that if the County can't find the funding, that he can't manage the animal control division, and that it does not fall under his duties as a sheriff. He stated that he would have to relinquish control back to the Board of County Commissioners.

Sheriff Butler stated that the animal control budget is \$68,031.35.

He stated that there is \$43,740 from the 2022-2023 and 2024 budget from a close out on audits and that it is not reoccurring.

Commissioner Stephenson recommended using the line of credit and Mrs. Royal stated that the line of credit was closed out months ago.

Sheriff Butler stated that the County will be looking for \$43,000 next budget year to support the animal control position.

Mrs. Higginbotham asked about the two (2) employees that have received a check for over a year and how to go about stopping it.

The Board discussed about not paying those employees until the parks got rebuilt.

Mrs. Royal stated that she gave the Board a recap of 2024 and that the ending balance was supposed to be around \$200,000 for cash carry forward and that the County ended up only having \$17,000 cash carry forward.

Mrs. Royal stated that if you do take money from the Solid Waste Department from the two available positions, the County wouldn't be able to hire anybody else for Solid Waste.

Sheriff Butler stated that he does not agree with cutting positions or downsizing and that it's not good for the County.

He stated that he would rather look at money that's already on the table.

Commissioner Storey stated that they will review everything at the Board meeting on Tuesday November 19th and have everything ready for the Sheriff to add on another animal control position.

SCHOOL BOARD INVOICE

Attorney Watson stated that Mr. Jenkins found a fund and that the County may be able to use it, but that she needs to look at it first.

She stated that it is a one-time grant called Local Assistance and Tribal Consistency Fund and that she will review it for the next meeting.

Commissioner Storey stated that he sat down with Mrs. Ganus with a FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) representative who stated that FEMA is working on getting more money back for the County.

He stated that he would check back with Mrs. Ganus to see if they had to pay the whole School Board invoice back at one time, or if they could break it down between storms.

He stated that the FEMA representative asked for the burn permit and that she has to have the number.

Commissioner Stephenson stated that he talked to Dwight about purchasing a woodchipper, and that they would not have to burn it, they could chip it and move it.

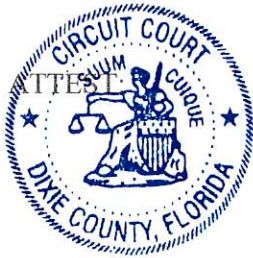
PUBLIC COMMENTS AND CONCERNS


There were none.

ADJOURN

Commissioner Hatch made the motion to adjourn at 5:48. Commissioner Stephenson seconded. Board approved.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
DIXIE COUNTY, FLORIDA





Jody Stephenson, Chairman
Mark Hatch, Vice 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.