

Regular Meeting
Commission Board Room
Dixie County Courthouse
214 NE Hwy 351, Cross City, FL 32628
December 19, 2024 – 6:00 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
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
Victoria Darkow, Deputy Clerk

CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Jody Stephenson called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE TO THE AMERICAN FLAG

The Invocation and Pledge to the American Flag was led by Commissioner Mark Hatch.

APPROVAL OF COMMISSION MINUTES

12/05/2024 Regular BOCC Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve 12/05/2024 Regular BOCC Meeting Minutes was made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Storey. Board approved.

VOUCHER APPROVAL

Motion to approve the vouchers was made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Storey. Board approved.

CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS

None present.

KATRINA VANAERNAM AND SHEILA FRIERSON, DIXIE COUNTY ANTI-DRUG COALITION

Mrs. Katrina VanAernam was not present for this meeting.

KAY MCCALLISTER, TOURISM DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Mrs. Kay McCallister stated that Christmas in Dixie went well and was great for the kids. She also stated that there were over 50 vendors at the Cracker House Winery event and that all but 18 of them were from Dixie County. Mrs. VanAernam stated that the tree lighting in the coastal communities went well and that there were at least 75 people that attended in Jena alone.

GREG BAILEY, NORTH FLORIDA PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Mr. Greg Bailey was not present for this meeting.

JOHN LOCKLEAR, LOCKLEAR AND ASSOCIATES

Mr. John Locklear had nothing to bring to the Board.

CINDY BELLOT, LIBRARY DIRECTOR

Mrs. Cindy Bellot informed the Board of a new E resource that the Dixie County Library is utilizing called Mometrix E Library. She stated that it is a test prep site for all ages and also offers employment services. Mrs. Bellot stated that they delivered around 200 library cards to the Dixie County Highschool that will give students access to the site. She updated the Board about the ongoing progress of restoring the Suwannee Tech Center and stated that she acquired around 60,000 dollars' worth of shelving at no cost to the County. Mrs. Bellot stated that unfortunately the contents were not previously insured and that there were some irreplaceable books that were destroyed. She reminded the Board that the library has a subscription to Ancestry.com and that there is a lot of information available on there for the public to use. She thanked the Board for supporting the library.

STEVE FREMEN, CODE ENFORCEMENT & VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER

Mr. Steve Fremen was not present for this meeting.

STEVE HUTCHISON, COUNTY ROAD SUPERINTENDENT

Mr. Steve Hutchison had nothing to bring to the Board.

TIM JOHNSON, SOLID WASTE DIRECTOR

Mr. Tim Johnson asked if the Board would cut the hours back on some of the County sites and stated that he thinks it would be a good idea to save money in the Solid Waste department.

Commissioner Hatch asked Mr. Tim Johnson to put something together and bring it back to the next Board meeting for discussion.

County Manager John Jenkins asked if the Board were going to close the dump sites on Christmas day and Commissioner Hatch stated that he would like to keep them open.

LEON WRIGHT, BUILDING AND ZONING OFFICIAL

Scott Johnson- Regarding a boat house in Suwannee.

Mr. Leon Wright stated that Mr. Scott Johnson had withdrawn the request to speak and sought legal representation. He stated that he anticipates it to be a code enforcement case.

“Table application 240001 for the Future Land Use Map Amendment to the Comprehensive Plan for Isle at Water’s Edge and application 240002 for the Site-Specific Amendment to the Official Zoning Atlas for the Isle at Water’s Edge to the January 16th, 2025, Board of County Commission meeting”.

Mr. Wright stated that this application wasn’t advertised correctly for the Local Planning Agency Meeting and that no action was taken on it.

Commissioner Hatch made the motion to table application 24001 until January 16th, 2025, Board of County Commissioner Meeting. Seconded by Osteen. Board approved.

RESOLUTION 2024-119

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF DIXIE COUNTY, FLORIDA, TO APPROVE A SPECIAL EXCEPTION TO BE GRANTED, AS PROVIDED IN SECTION 4.7.5 SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS OF THE DIXIE COUNTY LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS TO PERMIT ONE RECREATIONAL VEHICLE IN AN RESIDENTIAL SINGLE FAMILY/MOBILE HOME AREA (RSF/MH) ZONING DISTRICT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PETITION DATED NOVEMBER 15, 2024. WHEREAS, DAVID and VICKI BARBER have filed a Petition requesting Dixie County Board of County Commissioners to grant a Special Exception as provided in Section 4.7.5 special exceptions of the Dixie County Land Development Regulations to permit one recreational vehicle in an Residential Single Family/Mobile Home Area (RSF/MH), Zoning District, by Petition dated 11/15/2024; and WHEREAS, the recreational vehicle is to be located on Dixie County Parcel No.: 19-13-12-2952-000H-0040 (189 SE 867th AVE, Old Town, FL 32680).

(Commission District 3 Mark Hatch).

Commissioner Hatch made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-119. Seconded by Commissioner Storey. Board approved.

RESOLUTION 2024-120

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF DIXIE COUNTY, FLORIDA, TO APPROVE A VARIANCE TO BE GRANTED, AS PROVIDED IN SECTION 12.3 OF THE DIXIE COUNTY LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS, TO GRANT A VARIANCE WITHIN SECTION 4.3.7 ESA SUBPARAGRAPH (1) OF THE DIXIE COUNTY LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS FOR A VARIANCE FOR A REDUCTION OF SETBACKS ON NORTH SIDE OF PROPERTY FROM 25 FOOT TO 5 FOOT FOR CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW POLE BARN WHICH IS LOCATED

WITHIN SECTION 4.3.7. An ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREA (ESA) ZONING DISTRICT, AS PROVIDED IN THE PETITION DATED NOVEMBER 19, 2024. WHEREAS, by Petition dated November 19, 2024, FLYNN JOSEPH, has requested the Dixie County Board of County Commissioners to grant a variance as provided in Section 4.3.7 ESA Subparagraph (1) of the Dixie County Land Development Regulations for a variance for a reduction of setbacks on north side of property from 25 foot to 5 foot for construction of a new pole barn which is located within an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA), Zoning District at the following: Dixie County Parcel ID No.: 24-10-13-0000-4878-3600 (823 NE 824 STREET, Old Town, FL 32680). (Commission District 2 Daniel Wood).

Commissioner Wood made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-120. Seconded by Commissioner Storey. Board approved.

Ordinance 2024-09

ROBERT JUDD-Application #20240134

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF DIXIE COUNTY, FLORIDA, SERVING AS THE PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD OF DIXIE COUNTY, FLORIDA, TO AMEND THE OFFICIAL ZONING ATLAS OF THE LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS, BY AMENDING THE FUTURE LAND USE PLAN MAP CLASSIFICATION FROM RESIDENTIAL, MODERATE DENSITY TO COMMERCIAL GENERAL ZONING DISTRICT ON CERTAIN LANDS WITHIN THE UNINCORPORATED AREA OF DIXIE COUNTY, FLORIDA; REPEALING ALL RESOLUTIONS IN CONFLICT; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Mr. Wright stated that Ordinance 2024-09 had a 4-1 vote at the LPA Board Meeting.

Commissioner Osteen stated that he opposed and made a motion to deny the Ordinance.

Mr. Robert Judd explained his situation to the Board and stated that his intentions for the property is to use it as a boat storage. He stated that he is one of the biggest businesses in Commissioner Osteen's district and that when he reopens, he is going to employ 60 full time people to work.

Mrs. Martha McCaskill presented a map of the property for the Board to review.

Mr. Judd stated that he is asking to go commercial because he's not allowed to get insurance or anything else because the special exemption is for boat storage, so that it nullifies it for permits because it is a special exemption on a residential lot.

Mr. Paul Greenwell stated that he has nothing against the boat storage but that he does not want anything for commercial use in that area or any RV parks.

Mr. Wright explained that if they do change the zoning it does open up possibilities that someone could put RVs eventually.

Mr. Howard Hart stated that he has lived in Jena since 1974 and that if someone owns a piece of property that it is their land to do what they want with.

LPA Board member Sarah Ross stated that she buys land and has never asked for a zoning change.

She stated that you should do your due diligence when purchasing land and look at the zoning.

Mr. Wright stated that Mr. Judd's property has operated as a commercial site since 2015.

The Board had discussed and stated that the previous motion had died. The Board voted to approve the ordinance for Mr. Judd.

Motion to approve Ordinance 2024-09 made by Commissioner Hatch. Seconded by Commissioner Storey. Board approved.

Commissioner Osteen opposed the motion.

Mr. Wright informed the public about the LPA meeting on January 9th at 6:00 PM.

Ordinance 2024-10

ROBERT JUDD-Application #20240135

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF DIXIE COUNTY, FLORIDA, SERVING AS THE PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD OF DIXIE COUNTY, FLORIDA, TO AMEND THE OFFICIAL ZONING ATLAS OF THE LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS, BY AMENDING THE OFFICIAL ZONING ATLAS MAP CLASSIFICATIONS FROM RESIDENTIAL, SINGLE FAMILY/MOBILE HOME AND COMMERCIAL, GENERAL ZONING DISTRICT ON CERTAIN LANDS WITHIN THE UNINCORPORATED AREA OF DIXIE COUNTY, FLORIDA; REPEALING ALL RESOLUTIONS IN CONFLICT; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Motion to approve Ordinance 2024-10 made by Commissioner Hatch. Seconded by Commissioner Storey. Board approved.

Commissioner Osteen opposed the motion.

**SCOTT PNDARVIS, 911 COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR
& I.T. ADMINISTRATOR**

Mr. Scott Pendarvis was not present for this meeting.

DARIAN BROWN, DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

Chief Scott Garner stated that back when Dwayne Cannon was the County Manager, they had spoken to the State of Florida about acquiring a generator for the High School to run at 100% power.

He stated that the School Board applied for it, but that the State wants it to come through the County. He presented a 1.5-million-dollar grant and asked the Board to provide a generator for backup power for shelter at the Dixie County High School.

He stated that the Board would have to sign the contract and move forward with bidding in partnership with the School Board.

Chief Garner asked for permission from the Board to go in with Mr. John Jenkins and sign electronically. He stated that it is a reimbursement style grant.

Commissioner Hatch made a motion to move forward with Mr. John Jenkins and sign the grant electronically. Commissioner Osteen seconded. Board approved.

Chief Matt Ferguson presented a thank you letter from Chief Darian Brown for the Christmas in Dixie event.

Chief Ferguson informed the Board that their equipment vendor stated that the life packs the ambulances have installed are now obsolete and that they cannot make parts for repairs anymore. He stated that they are 69,000 dollars each and that they need seven (7) of them. Chief Ferguson presented a resolution for a match type of grant. He stated that the grant covers \$51,931.45 and that the County would have to pay \$17,310.49 making the grand total \$69,241.94.

Motion to approve and sign Resolution 2024-115 made by Commissioner Hatch. Seconded by Commissioner Osteen. Board approved.

GAIL CARTER, INDIGENT CARE

Mrs. Gail Carter had nothing to bring to the Board.

HOLLY HOUGHTON, COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT

Mrs. Holly Houghton had nothing to bring to the Board.

ANGIE CROWLEY, HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATOR

Mrs. Angie Crowley had nothing to bring to the Board.

JOHN JENKINS, COUNTY MANAGER

Action Items:

1. Request Board approval of a Goal Day for County Employees on Tuesday, Dec 31, 2024. There have been no long-term worker compensation claims for the period of July 1, 2024, to present.

Motion to approve a Goal Day for County Employees on Tuesday, Dec 31, 2024. There have been no long-term worker compensation claims for the period of July 1, 2024, to present made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Storey. Board approved.

2. Request Board approval of the SHIP Rehab Reimbursement for Ellis Chavous Jr in the amount of \$23,601.00.
3. ***Motion to approve the SHIP Rehab Reimbursement for Ellis Chavous Jr in the amount of \$23,601.00 made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Board approved.***

4. Request Board approval to allocate ARPA Grant funds in the amount of \$172,738.00 for the purchase of a 2024 John Deere 524 P-Tier Wheel Loader from Beard Equipment based on SWTF recommendation.

Motion to approve to allocate ARPA Grant funds in the amount of \$172,738.00 for the purchase of a 2024 John Deere 524 P-Tier Wheel Loader from Beard Equipment based on SWTF recommendation made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Storey. Board approved.

5. Request Board approval to allocate ARPA Grant funds in the amount of \$130,500.00 for the purchase of a 2024 John Deere 310 P-Tier Backhoe Loader from Beard Equipment based on SWTF recommendation.

Motion to approve to allocate ARPA Grant funds in the amount of \$130,500.00 for the purchase of a 2024 John Deere 310 P-Tier Backhoe Loader from Beard Equipment based on SWTF recommendation made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Storey. Board approved.

6. Request Board approval to allocate ARPA Grant funds in the amount of \$53,000.00 for canal maintenance spraying contract based on SWTF recommendation.

Motion to approve to allocate ARPA Grant funds in the amount of \$53,000.00 for canal maintenance spraying contract based on SWTF recommendation made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Storey. Board approved.

7. Request Board approval of the NFPS TWO for the ERI (Electrical Resistivity Image) Survey in the amount of \$7,720.00 for the Sheriff Evidence Building.

Motion to approve the NFPS TWO for the ERI (Electrical Resistivity Image) Survey in the amount of \$7,720.00 for the Sheriff Evidence Building made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Storey. Board approved.

County Manager John Jenkins stated that they had a proposal from the insurance company on the turnkey operations to restore some of the County properties due to damage from the hurricane.

Assistant County Manager Roy Bass stated that the insurance company had the ability to do a “turnkey”. He stated that there were five (5) properties on there that put the County around \$143,344.00 in deductibles, but that two (2) of them have been completed. He stated they will go in and repair the other three (3) facilities and have a turnkey ready to go. He explained that all it would cost is the deductible on the insurance and then when it is finished turn it over to Chief Scott Garner and get reimbursement from FEMA (Federal Management Agency).

Motion to approve payment in the amount of \$143,344.00 for insurance deductibles for the repair of the County facilities from damages due to the hurricane made by Commissioner Hatch. Seconded by Commissioner Storey. Board approved.

Information Items:

1. Reminder County offices will be closed Tuesday, Dec 24 and Wednesday, Dec 25, 2024, for the Christmas holidays.
2. Reminder County offices will be closed Tuesday, Dec 31, 2024, and Wednesday, Jan 1, 2025, for the New Year holiday.

County Manager John Jenkins stated that the County needed to make a move on getting the old fire station in Suwannee moved or torn down because it is the School Board property.

Commissioner Hatch stated that they can schedule to get the blocks moved out and will let Mr. Jenkins know more at the next Board meeting.

County Manager John Jenkins stated that he received an email from Mrs. Karen Ganus from the School District and that she signed a contract with a FEMA representative and FEMA will be staying in the building in Old Town until January 7, 2025.

Commissioner Hatch asked Chief Garner about the building in Old Town where they used to store the ambulance, how much longer they would be utilizing that building?

Chief Garner stated that they are in the process of moving the logistics building over and then they will be moving out of that facility to the building by the helipad.

County Manager John Jenkins asked the Board for authorization for him to contact the chairman on Monday mornings to extend the local State of Emergencies as needed.

Motion to give County Manager John Jenkins authority to contact the chairman to extend the Local State of Emergencies every seven (7) days made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Storey. Board approved.

Mr. Wright stated that the building department was contacted by a cellphone company to put in a tower at Waldo Park and needed direction on putting Mr. Jenkins in charge of working with the company to get the lease secured.

Commissioner Hatch made a motion to approve of County Manager John Jenkins working with the cellphone company to get the lease secured. Commissioner Storey seconded. Board approved.

County Manager John Jenkins stated that the money from the lease will go back into parks and recreation.

CHANA WATSON, COUNTY ATTORNEY

Attorney Chana Watson stated that they have had 180 applications for the trailers and have given out 93 so far. She stated that there is five (5) left and that one is pending approval.

At this point in time, Attorney Watson requested to stop accepting applications per the Boards decision. Attorney Watson stated that she has 58 titles she is waiting to get recorded and that the total cost to record the 58 titles is \$6,500.00.

Commissioner Hatch made a motion to close the program down and stop accepting applications. Commissioner Storey seconded. Board approved.

BARBIE HIGGINBOTHAM, CLERK OF COURT

Mrs. Barbie Higginbotham stated that Mrs. Jacki Johnson's last day is tomorrow and that the Clerk's office will be holding a reception for her from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM for anyone that would like to stop in and say goodbye.

COUNTY COMMISSION ITEMS

Commissioner David Osteen asked everybody to keep a local family in their prayers and wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

He also stated that Governor DeSantis gave the State of Florida employees an extra day off and would like to make a motion to give the County employees December 23rd off as well.

Commissioner Osteen made a motion to give the County employees December 23, 2024, off. Commissioner Storey seconded. Board approved.

Commissioner Jamie Storey wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Commissioner Mark Hatch wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Commissioner Daniel Wood wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Commissioner Jody Stephenson wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Mr. Jim Zuberich from Steinhatchee Boating Advisory Commission asked for a Dixie County Commissioner to get a representative to attend the Boating Advisory Commission meeting and spoke about all of the derelict vessels.

Mr. Jenkins stated that an agent with FWC (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation) is handling all of the removals of the vessels from the Steinhatchee River.

Mrs. Karen VanAernam from Cross City Restore and Renew held a Christmas decorating competition for the County and presented two (2) trophies.

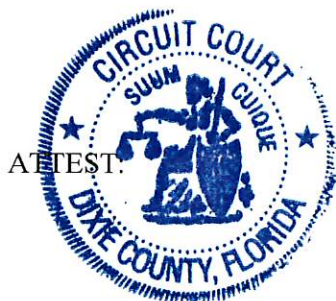
She stated that the Clerk's Office was the winner for the door decorating competition and awarded the trophy to Mrs. Barbie Higginbotham.

The businesses also took part in decorating for Christmas and Mrs. VanAernam presented the winning trophy to Mrs. Cindy Bellot for the Dixie County Library.

ADJOURN


Commissioner Wood 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.