

# Regular Meeting

Commission Board Room

Dixie County Courthouse

214 NE Hwy 351, Cross City, FL 32628

July 3, 2024 – 10:00 AM

*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

Jamey Storey, District 4, Chairman

David Osteen, District 5

## **STAFF**

Paul Gainey, County Manager

Martha McCaskill, Administrative Asst/Grant Coordinator

Chana Watson, County Attorney

Barbie Higginbotham, Clerk of Court

Verna Wilson, Chief Deputy Clerk

Joannie Morse, Deputy Clerk

Victoria Darkow, Deputy Clerk

### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Stephenson.

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

The invocation was led by Commissioner Hatch and pledge was led by Commissioner Hatch.

### **3. APPROVAL OF COMMISSION MINUTES**

Budget/Planning Workshop Minutes June 20, 2024

Regular BOCC Minutes June 20, 2024

***The Motion to approve the Budget/Planning Workshop Minutes June 20, 2024, Minutes made by Commissioner Stephenson. Seconded by Commissioner Osteen. Board approved.***

***The Motion to approve the Regular BOCC Minutes June 20, 2024 Minutes made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Stephenson. Board approved.***

**4. VOUCHER APPROVAL**

***The Motion to approve the vouchers made by Commissioner Hatch. Seconded by Commissioner Stephenson. Board approved.***

**5. CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS**

None present at this meeting.

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

No Public Hearing items presented at this meeting.

**6. DARIAN BROWN, DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY SERVICES**

Chief Darian Brown spoke to the Board about ongoing projects and stated he received the task work orders from Mr. Greg Bailey for Station 3 and Station 6. He mentioned they are getting close to securing a parcel of land in Horseshoe Beach for Station 6 and that the EOC (Emergency Operations Center) has a meeting with Horseshoe Beach scheduled for July 30, 2024.

Chief Brown introduced Mrs. Natalie McKellips, the administrator for DOH (Department of Health) who updated the Board on some changes that are coming to the County regarding sustainable health care in Dixie County. She mentioned that they have some grant funding and would like to bring on an OPS (Other Personal Services) position for three (3) days a week as well as Marinda Norton their APRN (Advanced practice registered nurse) who already has clinic one (1) day a week. She stated the DOH has been working with the Dixie County Emergency Management and the Community Paramedics to develop a program for the County in hopes of reducing trips to the emergency room. She stated that DOH has a new pediatric dentist on Board two (2) days a week and are also in the process of getting a schedule for their mobile clinic for specific areas within the County. She mentioned that they have a CDC (Center for Disease Control) infrastructure grant for two (2) years which is for the expansion of the Public Health Workforce. She said they are actively looking and recruiting people for the programs.

Mrs. Elizabeth Powers, Nursing Director for Dixie, Gilchrist and Levy Counties mentioned to the Board that she is happy they are finally getting primary care back in Dixie County. She also defined public health and the programs implemented by the Health Department. Mrs. Powers stated she appreciates the support of the County and wanted to get the word out about what the DOH is doing.

Mrs. Cheryl Turner, DOH Nursing Director explained core public health and provided a brochure explaining the programs that the Department of Health offers, these include:

- Environmental Health including animal bite investigations and septic permitting.
- Preparedness and Response
- Epidemiology Investigation including:  
Infectious disease investigations and potential disease outbreaks.
- Communicable Disease Testing including:
  - Sexually Transmitted Diseases
  - HIV/AIDS
  - Hepatitis
  - Tuberculosis
- Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
- Child Immunizations
- Clinical Programs
- Community Programs

Mrs. Turner added that patients with no insurance who come to the DOH will still have availability for labs, medication and assessment or diagnosis. She stated they also provide WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) in the office and offer birth control and pregnancy tests.

Commissioner Hatch thanked the DOH for their hard work and stated this was a much-needed addition to Dixie County.

Chief Darian Brown stated with the joint MOU they have with the Department of Health with and Mrs. Allison and the Community Paramedicine; they will be sending Mrs. Allison Stephens out monthly with the Health Department's Mobile Clinic to set up in places within the community. He said they are scheduled to start in August 2024.

## **7. STEVE COPELAND, SUWANNEE WATER AND SEWER MANAGER**

Mr. Steve Copeland stated that they currently have 931 active accounts.

He stated they had an emergency meeting last Monday, July 1, and that a lot of information was given out to the public about the grinder pump installation. He stated he had to correct the last manager report where he said the audit was 2023-2024 when it was really 2022-2023.

He updated the Board regarding several ongoing projects which include:

1. FEMA (Federal Emergency Management)-He stated they received their first check for reimbursement last Tuesday, July 25.
2. He stated that they are in the final stage of replacement for the grinder pumps with about 120 left to install.

Commissioner Stephenson asked Mr. Copeland about the issues with getting the pumps sealed properly.

Mr. Copeland stated he made corrections and resealed them.

#### **8. GREG BAILEY, NORTH FLORIDA PROFESSIONAL SERVICES**

Mr. Greg Bailey asked the Board to officially vote on awarding the EOC contract to Gray Construction as the lowest bidder.

***The Motion to approve to award the EOC (Emergency Operations Center) Expansion Construction Contract to Gray Construction was made by Commissioner Hatch. Seconded by Commissioner Osteen. Board approved.***

Mr. Bailey updated the Board on several ongoing projects which include:

1. He stated the CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) project is at Tallahassee under review and should be advertised by the end of July 2024.
2. He stated that the Hal Chaires Road is out for bid right now and the bid opening is July 16, 2024.

Mr. Paul Gainey commented that N.E 592 Chavous Road is also advertised in conjunction with Hal Chaires Road in hopes of getting a responsive bid.

#### **9. JOHN LOCKLEAR, LOCKLEAR AND ASSOCIATES**

Mr. John Locklear gave an update about the three (3) projects under the Hazard Mitigation Program (HMP) program that include:

The Town of Horseshoe dredging, the Town of Suwannee dredging and Shired Island Beach renourishment: He stated that they went to all three sites and got the samples they needed and its off to the lab awaiting testing. Mr. Locklear mentioned that at the last Board meeting Commissioner Osteen asked for a status update on the Ritter’s Entertainment Group Park and he stated Locklear and Associates are laying out conceptional designs that should help with the grant process.

Commissioner Hatch asked for clarification if they were dredging the inner canals and not the McGriff Pass.

Mr. Locklear said yes, just the inner canals.

Mr. Steve Hutchison stated that it was just the Salt Creek side, not the riverside.

**10. CINDY BELLOT, LIBRARY DIRECTOR**

Mrs. Cindy Bellot was not present at the meeting.

**11. STEVE FREEMEN, CODE ENFORCEMENT & VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER**

Mr. Steve Freeman was not present at the meeting.

**12. STEVE HUTCHISON, COUNTY ROAD SUPERINTENDENT**

Commissioner Hatch thanked Mr. Hutchison for what he has done in Suwannee.

Commissioner Stephenson stated that he and Mr. Hutchison went out to Gronto Springs, and they will have 14 sites numbered.

Commissioner Stephenson stated that the rock pit dump site needed a fence but asked Mr. Hutchinson if they can build a dirt berm instead in order to detour people from coming in and out. He also mentioned looking into who is taking all the signs from the dump sites. Mr. Hutchinson said they have cameras and will be addressing that next week.

Mr. Locklear stated that regarding the septic issue at Gronto Springs, the DEP (Department of Environmental Protection) extended the Spring Grant deadline until the 17th of July 2024 and that he would get with the manager to get that done.

Commissioner Hatch asked Chief Scott Garner if he could look at adding a few projects for the dredging.

Chief Scott Garner stated that the Lap Funding has already been paid for and there is no extra funding right now, but that he would look into it.

**13. TIM JOHNSON, SOLID WASTE DIRECTOR**

Mr. Tim Johnson requested direction from the Board about when demo permits will stop and end.

Commissioner Hatch stated that they need to look at a sunset date on the demo permits and asked Mr. Leon Wright how his demo permits were going.

Mr. Wright explained that they still have substantially storm damaged houses and they are trying to get grant funding to elevate the structures but right now they are in limbo.

Commissioner Hatch recommended getting a list of the Hurricane Idalia damaged properties from Building and Zoning and requiring the individual to have proof of a Hurricane Idalia Demo Permit through Building and Zoning for the disposal fees to be waived.

The Motion to waive the disposal fees if individuals can provide proof from Building and Zoning of a Hurricane Demo Permit made by Commissioner Hatch. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Board approved.

Exactly the hurricane demo only,

**14. LEON WRIGHT, BUILDING AND ZONING OFFICIAL**

Mr. Leon Wright spoke to the Board about House bill 1049 that was passed. He stated that in the past people who were trying to apply for assistance were getting turned down because it was already previously applied for at the location they applied. He stated that right now, if you buy a piece of land, you're only told that it's in a flood zone and not given any history on it. He stated that with this bill that was passed, they are forced to disclose whether it has flooded before or not. Mr. Wright stated he attended the Suwannee Water Board meeting in Suwannee and said the Building and Zoning Department has zero involvement with the utility company. Mr. Wright stated that the LDR'S (Land Development Regulations) are in the final process of code enforcement procedure. Mr. Wright stated that he has a phone conference on July 10, 2024, with the State of Florida and Building Commission regarding the code for flood related items. Mr. Wright presented a graph to the Board to show the need to add another staff member to building and zoning.

Commissioner Hatch recognized Mr. Wright for his hard work and stated he is in full support of adding someone to their staff.

***The motion was made to add a staff member to Building and Zoning Staff as of the opening of the new Fiscal Year on October 1, 2024.***

Mr. Wright stated that in the previous years they were doing 200 applications per person and in 2023 they were about 500 per person. He thanked the commissioners for their support and stated that they would start on October 1, 2024, for the new budget year.

Commissioner Hatch asked for clarity on LDR's and asked if they had an attorney.

Attorney Chana Watson stated that yes, they do, and she has been in communication with an attorney and has done some networking with the Attorney. Attorney Watson stated they must publish the advertisement and bring it back to the Board; she said at the very latest it would be September.

Mr. Wright stated he had reviewed items sent over from the attorney and there are some text amendment changes he would have to write in and then have the Board review it.

Commissioner Stephenson asked about the new costs for the new permit fees affecting the citizens.

Mr. Wright stated that the LDR's are different from Code enforcement and explained the difference.

Commissioner Hatch asked how long we have before this is implemented.

Attorney Watson stated that is something the Attorney is trying to work out through her chain of command. Attorney Watson stated she didn't anticipate much cost.

Mr. Wright stated that he is waiting on the legal for the LDR's and would like to have them adopted by the beginning of October 2024.

Attorney Watson stated she thinks this is an achievable goal.

Mr. Wright asked to be able to bring a plan of action to the next Board meeting.

Commissioner Hatch also told Mr. Tim Johnson to honor all demo permits up to noon today, but anything after is required to contain a stamp from the Building and Zoning Office for waiving fees.

Commissioner Stephenson asked Mr. Johnson about where the compactor is going. Mr. Tim said he would like to put it at the Rock pit.

***The motion to put the compactor at the Rockpit made by Commissioner Hatch. Seconded by Commissioner Osteen. Board approved.***

**15. KATRINA VANAERNAM AND SHIELA FRIERSON, DIXIE COUNTY ANTI-DRUG COALITION**

Mrs. Katrina VanAernam was not present at the meeting.

**16. SCOTT PENDARVIS, 911 COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR  
& I.T. ADMINISTRATOR**

Mr. Scott Pendarvis had nothing to bring to the Board at this time.

**17. GAIL CARTER, INDIGENT CARE**

Mrs. Gail Carter was not present at the meeting.

**18. HOLLY HOUGHTON, COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT**

Mrs. Holly Houghton was not present at the meeting.

**19. ANGIE CROWLEY, HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATOR**

Mrs. Angie Crowley recognized Insurance Manager for FACT, Mrs. Denise Verbalsang.

**20. KAY MCCALLISTER, TOURISM DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL**

Mrs. Kay McCallister stated that the Tourism Development Council allocates part of their tourism tax to be used for improvements to the recreational facilities in Dixie County. She stated they used some of the funds to buy pavilions for the pickleball courts here in Dixie. Mrs. McCallister mentioned there are several firework programs set up and listed these:

- Jody Stephenson 07/04/24 at 4:00pm
- Steinhatchee Community Center 07/04/2024
- Horseshoe Beach 07/06/2024
- Horseshoe Beach Parade 07/04/2024 and 07/06/2024 at 7:00 pm
- Suwannee 07/06/2024 Parade at 5:00 pm, band at 8:00 pm, Fireworks at 9:30 pm

Chief Garner mentioned that in the new Florida Building Code, the largest pavilion allowed in a flood zone is a 10x10.

Mrs. Kay McCallister stated that they are getting bids for a 15x30 Pole Barn instead of bleachers. She stated that she needs the bids in by next week.

**21. PAUL GAINEY, ACTING ASSIGNMENT COUNTY MANAGER**

Action Items:

1. Request Board approval to accept the quote from Tyler Technologies in the amount of \$11,496.00 for Purchase Order software initial setup, then \$5,196.00 for recurring fees yearly.



***The Motion to approve to accept the quote from Tyler Technologies in the amount of \$11,496.00 for Purchase Order software initial setup, then \$5,196.00 for recurring fees yearly made by Commissioner Stephenson. Seconded by Commissioner Osteen. Board approved.***

2. Request Board approval to execute the Passero Associates, LLC Work Order 24-11R for the Runway 4-22 Pavement Rehabilitation at the Airport in the amount of 189,370.00.

***The Motion to approve to execute the Passero Associates, LLC Work Order 24-11R for the Runway 4-22 Pavement Rehabilitation at the Airport in the amount of 189,370.00 made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Board approved.***

3. Request Board approval of the NFPS Task Order for the District 1 Fire Station 3 for Engineering and CEI in the amount of \$223,250.00.

***The Motion to approve the NFPS Task Order for the District 1 Fire Station 3 for Engineering and CEI in the amount of \$223,250.00 made by Commissioner Stephenson. Seconded by Commissioner Osteen. Board approved.***

4. Request Board approval of the NFPS Task Order for the HSB Fire Station 6 for Engineering and CEI in the amount of \$287,700.00.

***The Motion to approve the NFPS Task Order for the HSB Fire Station 6 for Engineering and CEI in the amount of \$287,700.00 made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Stephenson. Board approved.***

5. Request Board approval of the Meridian Behavioral Healthcare Contract for FY 2024-2025 in the amount of \$56,361.00. As well as donate the use of the land for the Center located at Veteran's Road and US Hwy 19 Cross City. The value of this space is estimated at \$1,800.00 per year.

***The Motion to approve the Meridian Behavioral Healthcare Contract for FY 2024-2025 in the amount of \$56,361.00. As well as donate the use of the land for the Center located at Veteran's Road and US Hwy 19 Cross City. The value of this space is estimated at \$1,800.00 per year. made by Commissioner Stephenson. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Board approved.***

6. Request Board approval to use NFPS as consultant for the Restore Act grant. We will bring the contract back to the Board for approval.

***The Motion to approve to use NFPS as consultant for the Restore Act grant made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Stephenson. Board approved.***

7. Request Board approval for the SHIP Rehab Reimbursement for Jennifer King in the amount of \$24,604.95.

***The Motion to approve the SHIP Rehab Reimbursement for Jennifer King in the amount of \$24,604.95 made by Commissioner Stephenson. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Board approved.***

8. Request Board approval to allow Richard Vizcaino to hold a community celebration event at Purvis Landing on Wednesday, July 3, 2024, 8:00 pm – 10:00 pm. The local residents agree to clean up any refuse after the event. This event is open to the public.

***The Motion to approve to allow Richard Vizcaino to hold a community celebration event at Purvis Landing, open to the public, on Wednesday, July 3, 2024, 8:00 PM – 10:00 PM made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Hatch. Board approved. The local residents agree to clean up after the event.***

Attorney Watson stated that the only issue she had was the fact that you cannot shoot off fireworks in a County Park. She also stated that no alcohol is allowed but that it is a police enforcement issue if they don't abide by that.

Mr. Paul Gainey said they would not be having the fireworks in the park, but would do the fireworks from the private property next to the park.

Information Items:

1. The SWTF will hold a public meeting at the BOCC meeting room on Thursday, July 18, 2024, at 5:00 pm to inform the public of the past projects completed and future projects for the flooding issues.
2. The Mayor and Council of the Town of HSB has requested a public workshop with the County to discuss options for future collaborations between the County and the Town of HSB and Emergency Response Services on Tuesday, July 30, 2024, at 6:00 pm.
3. Reminder that County offices will be closed Thursday, July 4, 2024, Friday, July 5, 2024, in observance of Independence Day and Monday, July 8, 2024, for a Goal Day.

## **22. CHANA WATSON, COUNTY ATTORNEY**

Attorney Chana Watson stated there was a settlement agreement reached in the Nessmith Case. She stated that the Melton Case is still ongoing, and she is anticipating a much smaller settlement of \$135,000.

## **23. BARBIE HIGGINBOTHAM, CLERK OF COURT**

Mrs. Barbie Higginbotham gave her condolences to Attorney Watson's for her Aunt Kathryn McGinnis' passing.

Attorney Watson stated the viewing will be at the new gym at the Dixie County High School on Saturday, July 6, 2024. She stated the viewing will be at 10:00 AM and the service will be at 11:00 AM.

Mrs. Brenda Royal reminded the Board that the TRIM started July 1, 2024. She stated that they received their information from the property appraisers and that the Finance Department is working on numbers now with different millage rates that they will bring back to the Board to vote on. She stated they are still working with the County Managers Office on budgets and reminded the Board of the budget meeting in September.

#### **24. COUNTY COMMISSION ITEMS**

Commissioner Wood gave his condolences to Attorney Watson's family. He asked Mr. Gainey to get the sidewalks at the school cleaned up before school starts and to keep on with the crosswalk at Ruth Rains.

Mr. Gainey stated he has reached out to Mr. Paddock Shaw with DOT (Department of Transportation) in Chiefland, and he responded with some options and possible funding for that project.

Commissioner Hatch gave his condolences to Attorney Watsons family. Commissioner Hatch presented Mr. Bill Palmer to the Board.

Mr. Palmer stated he would like to propose extending his lease at the Cross City Airport for an additional ten years to make it financially feasible to put up some more shade hangers.

Commissioner Hatch asked Mr. Gainey to review the numbers and bring it back to the Board at the next Board meeting.

Mr. Gainey stated they could do that and possibly get an execution of that at the next Board meeting.

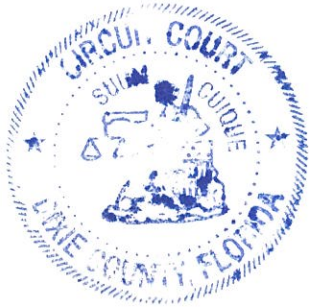
Mr. Palmer added that he could go ahead and start making the double payment on the lease which is scheduled to take effect after the existing lease expires in five years, but he is willing to go ahead and start paying the double payment.

#### **25. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND CONCERNS**

No public comments or concerns at this time.

26. ADJOURN

*Commissioner Wood made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Hatch seconded. Board approved.*



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
DIXIE COUNTY, FLORIDA

*Jamie Storey*

Jamie Storey, Chairman

*Barbie Higginbotham*

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.***