

WORKSHOP AGENDA

Acquisition of the Suwannee Community Center and the School Board Meeting Room for the county

Dixie County School Board Meeting Room

328 SE Hwy 349, Old Town, FL 32680

Tuesday, April 12, 2022 – 5:00 PM

While adhering to the CDC Guidelines and following State of Florida Executive Orders: 20-51 Establishing Response Protocol, 20-52 declaring a Public Health Emergency, 20-69 regarding Local Government Public Meetings and the Dixie County Emergency Declaration 2020-29. The Board will meet and limit access by staff and the public to the meeting room. 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

Mark Hatch, District 3

Jamie Storey, District 4, Chairman

James Valentine, District 5

STAFF

Martha McCaskill, Administrative Asst/Grant Coordinator

Michael Osteen, County Attorney

Barbie Higginbotham, Clerk of Court

Della Rhymes, Asst. Chief Deputy Clerk

CALL TO ORDER

The Board 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 Valentine and the Pledge to the American Flag was led by Commissioner Hatch.

The following School Board Members were in attendance:

Tim Alexander, Paul Gainey, Cheryl Pridgeon, and Chuck Farmer along with School Board Attorney Chana Watson.

School Board Vice-Chairman, Paul Gainey informed the public of the reason for this workshop. He said the members of both Boards have been discussing, through the years, the possibility of exchanging the Suwannee Community Center Property and the School Board Meeting Room in Old Town for help with the construction of an access road connecting the high school and middle school. He said the access road would help eliminate some of the school bus traffic from Hwy 19. He said the county would be requested to help with the construction of the base of the road. He said the School Board does have some appropriated funds for the project. He said this money may not cover the total cost of the project and so they will need some help from the county.

Commissioner Storey requested clarification that the construction of the base of the school access road by the county will be in exchange for the property in Suwannee.

Mr. Gainey replied yes. He added that there has also been discussion on the School Board Meeting Room being obtained by the county.

County Attorney Michael Osteen requested clarification that both properties will be exchanged for the county constructing the base of the school access road.

Ms. Cheryl Pridgeon said that is what the School Board would like.

Commissioner Hatch said the Commissioners would like to have both properties deeded to the county. He said the county has always helped the School Board in the past and will continue to do so. He said the county has a purpose in mind for the building in Suwannee which would help the community. He said the county owns the building and the School Board owns the land. He said the county has maintained the property through the years. He said the county already deeded the property needed for the school access road to the School Board.

Commissioner Storey said he would like to help the School system.

Mr. Gainey said he agrees that both Boards have worked together well. He said they need to protect both sides of this agreement in writing.

Attorney Osteen said this is a valuable piece of property in Suwannee, and they can include a reversionary clause in the deed which would give the property back to the School District in the event the county no longer has a need for the property. He said this will eliminate the fear of the county selling the property for profit.

Mr. Gainey said the School Board has owned this property in Suwannee since 1944. He said the School Board does not intend to sell the property; however, they could use the property as an asset for loans if needed.

Mr. Chuck Farmer said if the state were to deem the School District worthy of building another school, he doesn't feel like it would be in Suwannee. He said both properties need to be used for the community. He said they have been discussing this matter for years.

Mr. Gainey said they need to get the specifics of the agreement on paper.

Commissioner Hatch said the county would like to put a new business in Suwannee for the people. He said a gentleman wants to lease the building for a Gym and Rehab Center.

Attorney Osteen said the county is liable because they own the building and it is used for events.

Mr. farmer said he is supportive of the exchange.

Mr. Gainey said it sounds like both Boards agree with deeding the property to the county and in turn the county will help with constructing the access road.

Commissioner Stephenson asked if the School Board has applied for a grant to pave the access road.

Ms. Pridgeon replied yes.

Mr. Gainey said they have been through the legislative process for a certain amount of money. He said he does not know if the total cost of construction will be covered by these funds.

Mr. Gainey suggested the two Boards have their Attorneys work out the legalities of the agreements and present them to each Board.

Attorney Osteen said they will put this on each Board's Agenda to be approved. He said they will then draft the deeds. He said the county will approve a Resolution supporting this.

Commissioner Hatch requested to see the cost associated with the upkeep. He asked how soon they would like to close on this.

Attorney Chana Watson presented the documentation requested and explained the information.

Attorney Osteen said that both Boards will present the ideas from this workshop and he and Attorney Watson will work on the legal documents.

Mr. Gainey asked if the county wants the School Board Meeting Room also. He said there has been discussion of the expense. He said that information is included in the documents presented.

Commissioner Stephenson said this would make a good Community Center for Old Town.

Attorney Osteen asked about the chiller for this building and was told the unit was about four years old.

Mr. Gainey said there are more rooms available for use within this building.

Commissioner Stephenson asked about the septic system for the building. He said he thinks it services the whole complex.

Commissioner Storey said the water services the whole complex.

Everyone agreed that will need to be verified.

Attorney Osteen said they will need to have a survey and legal description for both properties. He suggested both Boards split the expenses of surveying the properties and drafting the deeds.

Commissioner Hatch said the county will handle the survey and deed expenses for the Suwannee property.

Attorney Watson said the local surveyors are back logged for three months.

Attorney Osteen suggested using Delta for the survey.

Mr. Gainey said both Boards will let their Attorneys work out the legal details.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Ms. Carol West said she has been keeping up with the Community Center in Suwannee since 1995 and the county has been maintaining the grounds for the School Board. She said someone will need to be in charge and oversee this building.

Ms. Lisa with the Chamber of Commerce can help oversee the Suwannee property.

Attorney Osteen said the county has been discussing re-vamping all their Community Centers.

Commissioner Storey said the county will help the School Board with anything. He said the children are citizens too.

Commissioner Hatch thanked everyone for meeting today.

Mr. Tim Alexander agreed that the county and the school system have always worked together.

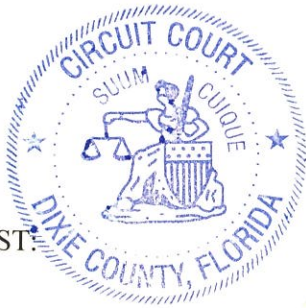
Ms. Pridgeon asked if the county wanted to take over the Park at Horseshoe or should it go to the Town of Horseshoe. She said the county is maintaining the property.

Attorney Osteen said this is a different situation. He said that would better serve the Town of Horseshoe.

Commissioner Stephenson said he thinks there is a reversion clause in that deed back to the Butler family.

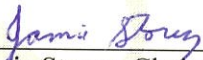
ADJOURN

Commissioner Stephenson made the motion to adjourn at 5:32 PM. Commissioner Hatch seconded. Board approved.



ATTEST:

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
DIXIE COUNTY, FLORIDA



Jamie Storey, Chairman


Barbie Higginbotham, Clerk-Auditor

PLEASE BE ADVISED that if a person decided 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.