

**FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL MEETING
JANUARY 29, 2001**

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE: Eddie Creamer, Chairman; Cheryl Sanders, Clarence Williams, and Jimmy Mosconis, Commissioners; Kendall Wade, Clerk; Amelia Varnes, Deputy Clerk; Alfred Shuler, County Attorney.

9:00 A.M. Chairman Creamer called the meeting to order.

ABSENT: Commissioner Putnal

(Tape 1-1) Discussion between Mr. Pierce and Board about the space at the Old Franklin County Health Department. He presented the Commissioners with a diagram of the building and the layout of the building. Chairman Creamer said this meeting was called to discuss renting some of the office space at the old FCPHU on 12th Street to Dr. Stephen Miniati. He asked Dr. Miniati to make an opening statement. Dr. Miniati thanked the Board for their time this morning. Dr. Miniati stated he had worked for the company leasing both the Hospital and Dr. Nichol's Office, Centennial HealthCare, for the past two and one-half years. He informed the Board he has worked hard to establish himself as a physician in the community and build a practice. He said both he and his family have come to love the people in Franklin County. He said he had previously asked the Board for approval to lease some of the office space at the old FCPHU and his request had been approved. He explained he asked the Board to do this only after his negotiations with Centennial fell through. He informed the Board representatives from Centennial unexpectedly showed up at this office last Thursday and expelled him from Nichols Clinic. He said specifically he was directed to not provide services at Nichols Walk-In Clinic and he was given two days to remove his possessions from the Clinic. He said he asked them questions about this matter especially since he thought both he and/or Centennial had to give thirty days notice. He stated they informed him they did not have to give him thirty days and asked him to leave the clinic. He said he is here today to ask the Board to allow him to use the old FCPHU sooner than anticipated. Commissioner Mosconis said this had already been decided and approved by the Board at their last meeting. He stated it was just a matter of making it legal by having the County Attorney prepare a lease agreement for both parties to sign. Chairman Creamer said he had already spoke to Mr. Shuler and the Clerk, Mr. Wade. He stated a month-to-month rental was what Mr. Shuler recommended since Dr. Miniati was probably going to build or rent his own office building. Commissioner Mosconis said he knew the monthly rental payment of \$1,200.00 had already been discussed as well. Mr. Wade stated this also included utilities. He said the utilities were going to be pro-rated since the hospital was using a portion of it for EMS and another portion was being used for the CAP Office. Mr. Pierce said Susan Ficklen, Administrator, Weems Memorial Hospital, informed him the hospital was going to pay the electric bill for December. He stated, after speaking with Janice Hicks, Business Manager, FCPHU, they determined the average electric bill was \$600.00. Commissioner Mosconis said then Dr. Miniati's share should be approximately \$400.00 to be taken out of his monthly rental, \$200.00 for the EMS Department of the

Hospital, and \$200.00 for the CAP Office. Chairman Creamer said the bathrooms would have to be shared by all three offices so this could be a problem. Commissioner Mosconis asked Ms. Ficklen if she didn't think the hospital should be responsible for keeping the bathrooms clean since they were using the space at the old FCPHU rent-free. Ms. Ficklen replied if the Board directed her to do so. She explained the EMS employees are responsible for keeping their area clean anyway so they could keep the bathrooms clean too. Dr. Miniati said there some minor details to be worked out, but he felt they could be. Commissioner Mosconis said he would go ahead and make a **motion approving and authorizing the Chairman's signature on a Lease Agreement between Franklin County and Dr. Stephen Miniati for office space at the Old Franklin County Public Health Unit on 12th Street in Apalachicola on a month-to-month basis and charging \$1,200.00 per month, including utilities, for renting the space effective today, also charging the EMS Department of the Hospital \$200.00 per month for utilities, and \$200.00 per month for the CAP Office utilities.**

Commissioner Sanders seconded the motion. All for. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Chairman Creamer asked Dr. Miniati if any of this would affect his hospital privileges. Dr. Miniati replied it did not or not that he was aware of. Ms. Ficklen agreed and stated he was Chief of Staff at the Hospital. Mr. Wade said he would make sure the locks to Dr. Miniati's area were changed.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS REGARDING THIS MATTER TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED.

(Tape 1-489) Chairman Creamer said there was another matter that needed to be addressed this morning since some concerned citizens were here to voice their opinion about a matter that happened to them regarding the ambulance service. Allison Brown appeared before the Board to state she had a problem with the EMS at Weems Memorial Hospital. She stated on January 25, 2001 her sister had a heart attack and was taken to Weems. She said the doctors, because her sister was so seriously ill, wanted her taken to Panama City. She stated the EMS employees informed them they did not have the fuel they needed to make a run to Panama City. She said they told her everything was closed and the issue was there was no fuel in the ambulance to carry her sister to Bay Medical Center. She presented the Board with a Gulf County EMS Worksheet showing where the Gulf County EMS had to come to Franklin County and pick her sister up to carry her to Bay County. She adamantly stated she felt this was totally ridiculous. She said her family offered to buy the fuel necessary to take her sister to Panama City, but they refused. Ms. Brown also presented a copy of a ticket from Ard's Fina in Eastpoint where the ambulances were buying their gas. She stated the hospital owes Mr. Ard approximately \$1,500.00 and will not allow the hospital to charge anything at his station. Ms. Ficklen said the check to pay Mr. Ard should be here today. She stated they were using Westside Service Station, but they did not pay them either so the hospital can no longer charge gas there either. Ms. Brown said she wanted to take exception to the statistics Mike Lake, CEO, Centennial HealthCare, presented the Board with at the last meeting. She said Mr. Lake doesn't have a clue about what goes on in Franklin County. Several relatives of the lady who was ill, Ms. Betty Shiver, was present to express their disappointment and anger at the hospital. They all agreed that if something had happened

to their daughter, sister, mother, they would have sued the County. One lady said Ms. Lee was seriously ill at the same time Ms. Shiver was and neither of the sick ladies could be moved at the same time. They stated Ms. Lee is still in serious condition at Bay Medical. Ms. Ficklen said the hospital has a process for buying fuel for the ambulances and the ambulances have never been without a source to purchase fuel. She stated she was told about this on Thursday morning. She said the process in place is that if they are out of fuel or running low they are supposed to notify Marilyn Walker, EMS Director, of this so she can then notify her. She emphatically stated there has never, ever been a time when the ambulance service has been without fuel or had no money for fuel on the trucks. Chairman Creamer asked what happened to the credit line for them to purchase fuel. Ms. Ficklen again stated the credit line at Westside was cut off due to the hospital not paying them. She said she is telling the Board this morning the process was not followed. Commissioner Mosconis asked her if money was available for fuel. Ms. Ficklen replied yes. Ms. Brown then presented the Board with a copy of a memo sent to all Employees of Weems Memorial Hospital-Centennial HealthCare from Mike Lake informing the employees they were not allowed, no exceptions, to represent or voice their opinions at the Franklin County Board of County Commissioners meetings. She stated the memo was dated January 16, 2001. Ms. Brown disagreed with Ms. Ficklen and said they did not have the money they needed for the ambulances. Ms. Ficklen stated anytime there was a request made for cash for the trucks it was given to EMS employees. She said they requested money last Saturday for the week after the banks had closed. She stated she made arrangements with Red's BP in Apalachicola to allow them to charge their fuel on Saturday and Sunday. She said she paid for it with a personal check. Discussion continued. Chairman Creamer said this matter was going to have to be addressed at a regular board meeting. He stated it would be discussed on Tuesday, February 6, 2001. Commissioner Mosconis said the hospital is aware of the problem since obviously there is one. He stated Ms. Ficklen would handle the matter. Commissioner Sanders said she too would like to address this matter at the next board meeting. Ms. Ficklen asked if she should invite Mr. Lake. Commissioner Mosconis told her no, he felt she could represent the hospital. Commissioner Sanders said she had to say this matter almost cost a life and she asked Ms. Ficklen how do you factor human life over dollars and cents.

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD
THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED.**

Eddie Creamer

EDDIE CREAMER, CHAIRMAN

Kendall Wade

KENDALL WADE, CLERK