

**FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 2, 2001**

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

(Tape 1-40) Commissioner Sanders made a **motion to pay the County bills.** Commissioner Williams seconded the motion. All for. **MOTION CARRIED.**

(Tape 1-44) Commissioner Putnal made a **motion approving the minutes of the meeting held on December 19, 2000.** Commissioner Williams seconded the motion. All for. **MOTION CARRIED.**

THE KEITH FAMILY

(Tape 1-53) Chairman Creamer said he was going to acknowledge the Keith Family this morning. He stated they wanted to speak this morning regarding their missing family member, Bruce Keith. Tim Turner, Emergency Management Director, said he would like to present a letter to the Board reflecting his requests; a letter from the Board asking for cooperation from the agencies involved in the search or future searches to cooperate with him as EOC Director and requesting the board authorize the use of Emergency Management funds to create a search and rescue team as a part of his department. He said forming this team would give him the ability to respond within minutes of a distress call, not hours. He stated he did not feel it was appropriate to go into the details today, but he wanted the support of the Board on these two requests he is making today. Commissioner Putnal asked Mr. Turner if the funds were available. Mr. Turner replied they were available through the Emergency Management Grant. He said he was also going to request the assistance of other government agencies. Commissioner Putnal said he would like to make a **motion for the Board to work with Mr. Turner to work this matter out.** Commissioner Putnal said he thought it was real important when somebody is in trouble that somebody gets to them as soon as possible. Mr. Turner said he, through Emergency Management, is to address the issue, the time factor. He stated right now the system currently used causes a big delay between the actual call and a response. He said he wants to cut a lot of that out and if the Board will work with him through Emergency Management he felt this could be done. He stated he is going to try to revive the local Coast Guard Auxiliary to use for a quick response unit. Commissioner Sanders said she would second Commissioner Putnal's motion. All for. **MOTION CARRIED.** Commissioner Mosconis asked if the Coast Guard was notified when Mr. Keith went missing. Mr. Turner replied they were, but because of emotions he would really rather not get into a whole lot of details. He said he felt it was something, with the Board's assistance, and other agencies in the County participating that they needed to sit down and talk about. He said he knew the family was upset and he understood their position so out of respect for them he didn't want to discuss this problem any further. He stated the response should have been better. Commissioner Mosconis suggested this was a good idea, but the way he saw it was that all of the agencies have to be involved since the

money was already there. He said there is a great presence of Marine Patrol in this County and the Coast Guard has always been responsive to him. Mr. Turner asked if he could address that issue. He said he has made repeated requests, had two workshops with the Coast Guard, called the Marine Patrol about working with him on these issues, but he didn't want to get into this discussion too much this morning. He said he found it very difficult to get cooperation from the agencies. He stated if there are four or five hours to respond to an emergency there is no problem, but when you have someone lost out there and you don't know the situation you don't have four or five hours. He said he understood everybody is concerned, Emergency Management as an agency should not be involved in going out and rescuing people. He stated they are supposed to supply the resources and set up the teams in the County and under Florida Statutes they are supposed to coordinate efforts between other agencies. He said this is where he is having the problem and he is asking for cooperation from the Board with that. Commissioner Mosconis said Mr. Turner knew he had that. He said the Board needed to go a step further and endorse this concept and that is for the Board to write and contact these agencies on the County's Emergency Management programs available expressing the County's wishes and what is trying to be done. He said if there is not a positive response from the mid-level management then he would go higher. He said you could be assured that these people have bosses and this is one of their highest priorities, public safety and rescue. Mr. Turner replied it is his as well. He said he has had a difficult time coordinating. He stated he wanted the agencies to understand his role, as Emergency Management Director in the County is not to usurp their authority, but to support them. He said his role is a supporting role. He stated if someone needs something he is going to get it. He stated he has run into this wall it seems that people don't want to cooperate because they feel he is trying to take over their job. He said he has no intentions of doing that. Commissioner Mosconis said he wanted to make a **motion to write letters, to both State and Federal agencies, that the Emergency Management Director deems necessary to solicit help in organizing a search and rescue team.** Commissioner Mosconis said the letters needed to be done for the Board's signature. Mr. Turner stated in this particular case, he didn't want to cause problems, but Emergency Management was not even contacted. He said he was in his office until 10:30 p.m. the night of the incident. He stated he was not even contacted by any of the agencies. He said he stayed in his office, and he was back in his office the next morning. He stated he took the call from a local police officer that asked him what was going on. He said this shouldn't happen. He stated he checked into and found out what kind of incident it was and it was fourteen hours after the incident was first reported before Emergency Management even knew about it. He stated the Sheriff didn't know about it as well. He said this type of thing shouldn't happen especially when you talking about peoples life. He stated it's much more important than that. He said it needed to be realized that sometimes, especially this time of year when there are cold-water conditions, there is usually one hour to respond and rescue a person from the Bay. He said hypothermia sets in within forty-five minutes to an hour. He stated he would prefer to rescue live people than a body, with no disrespect to the family. Commissioner Mosconis said he thought Mr. Turner was trying to say is that when there is an emergency situation you have to have a system set up where the word goes out to everybody involved. Mr. Turner said that was Emergency Management's function according to Florida Statute. He stated the reason a

trillion dollars was spent in the United States last year for Emergency Management was simply because there was no coordination between agencies in the past. He said they have realized the importance of the agencies communicating. He stated right now there is a system where nobody communicates with him, the Marine Patrol doesn't coordinate with anybody, he and the Sheriff's Department coordinate pretty good, but the Marine Patrol and Coast Guard do not communicate at all in a lot of cases. Mr. Turner said they don't even return his telephone calls in a lot of cases. He stated he sat in his office until 10:30 p.m. on Thursday night and was back in his office at 8:00 a.m. the next morning and they didn't call. He said he called them and notified them he was at the EOC Office the entire weekend and still has not received a call from them. Commissioner Mosconis asked him if he meant the Coast Guard. He replied he meant the Marine Patrol. Commissioner Mosconis said he has always gotten a quick response from the Coast Guard. Mr. Turner said he has problems with them as well. Commissioner Sanders seconded Commissioner Mosconis' motion. All for. **MOTION CARRIED.** Commissioner Mosconis said there obviously needs to be some more coordination between the agencies so they can spring into action once there is a crisis. Mr. Turner stated he wanted to clarify something. He asked if he had the authority, from the Board, to create this team from the Board. Commissioner Putnal replied that was what his motion was. Mr. Turner stated he wanted to make sure where he stood. Alan Pierce, Director of Administrative Services, said he wanted to make sure the Board knew there were other individuals in other response agencies already within the County. He stated he wanted to make sure services were not duplicated and not have an effective team. Commissioner Putnal said all Mr. Turner was going to do was get all these people working together. Commissioner Sanders agreed saying that if all these agencies are not communicating with the local people then there is a problem. Sandra Allen appeared before the Board at this time. She reported it took five hours and forty minutes to get the Coast Guard here after the Sheriff's Department was called. She stated when they came they brought a little rubber raft with four men on it. She said they were out there three and one-half hours when they came in because they had to thaw out. She stated she felt the Coast Guard wasn't here when they needed them. She said it took three hours and fifteen minutes for the FWC to get in the water. She stated this needs to be addressed. She said there needs to be an immediate response because these men might have been saved if there had been people out there then. She said this was senseless. Commissioner Creamer said he agreed and that is why they are doing what they are doing this morning. Commissioner Mosconis said the Board would do their part and if any mid level management held things up then the Board would go higher. He stated the Board had a lot more political clout than Mr. Turner had that's why the Board was taking this action. Mr. Turner said well evidently he didn't have any. Commissioner Mosconis said this is the first time this has happened. Mr. Turner said it happened to his father in 1960. Commissioner Mosconis said every time we have a severe winter this happens. Chairman Creamer asked if that was all from the floor about this matter. Ms. Allen said she had said everything she wanted to. Chairman Creamer said he wanted the family to know he was praying for both the Hatfield and Keith families. He stated he would continue to pray for them. Matt Hatfield said he would like to say he felt like his brother was alive for about an hour or hour and a half with hypothermia. He stated he felt like if there had been a quicker response he would have been found alive. Commissioner

Mosconis asked where this happened. Ms. Allen replied the boat was on Hagen's Flat, which is a mile and a half from shore. Anna Keith said she would like to say she called the Marine Patrol and they told her they did not have a boat in this County to put in the water. She stated that was their very words. She said they called them as well as the Coast Guard all night long. She stated she told them it was a bunch of bull this County is surrounded by water and if there is not a boat to put in the water then there is something wrong with the system here. She said that if they can't communicate together, something is wrong. She stated they hung up on her daughter. She said they called the 800 number in the front of the phone book. She stated if one system cannot communicate with the other system, Franklin County should be a family, and should work together. She said it shouldn't be since her name is "Keith" and your name is Mosconis or Putnal or Williams or Sanders or Creamer or Kendall Wade or what. She stated if it had been someone else's son out there, if it would have been Bruce Varnes' son out there, then everything in this County would have been mobilized to find them. She said if it had been anybody else's son, but because it was Anna Keith's son, and Anna Keith's son has been in trouble it's different. She stated this same child that was drowning or that everyone is looking for, was not allowed to vote on Election Day. She said he went down to vote and was told he was a convicted felon. She stated he has never been a convicted felon and served on jury duty two weeks ago in Franklin County. She said he was not allowed to vote though. She said he was refused his privilege to vote, but he could serve on a jury. She stated there is no justice in this County; justice is spelled just-us, just us, that is the way justice is in this County. She stated she has dealt with this law all of her life and they mobilized everything the next day, but the gate has been opened and it has been closed too late. She said it makes her nauseated to realize that everything was mobilized the next morning while those kids were out there freezing, drowning and trying to protect each other. She stated no one else was protecting them, but she was on the phone. She said they have everything documented and they kept telling them they had this helicopter in the air and that helicopter in the air. She said you would have to have air-traffic control out there to have that many helicopters. She stated they didn't like the lies, all they wanted was the truth. She said she was very outspoken she didn't know how to "beat around the bush" and none of the Keiths do. She stated they are very straightforward because they never learned to "beat around the bush". She said she taught her kids to tell the truth and that's why they have had so much trouble with this County because they don't know how to play their games. She stated they will never forget this. She said she is not bitter, but said she will never let this die. She said this County has got to pull together, it has got to be united, and the same thing that goes for one should go for all. She stated it shouldn't matter whose son is lost out there everything should be mobilized. She said it shouldn't matter how cold it is and she then asked how cold did people think her son or Ray Hatfield was. She asked the Board what they thought those boys went through. She said she knows they called out to their God because they were Godly men. She asked the Board to think about what they went through and asked them if they could just imagine it. She said she would like to throw the newspaper reporter, referring to Palmer Hasty-Apalachicola Times, in that harbor down there and let him then ask her the stupid questions he asked her. She stated he stayed on her cell phone for an hour. She said if he ever gets near the water and she is there he would be able to ask her, from the water, what his next question is. She stated he

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could answer her from the cold water how he feels. Ms. Keith said they would never let them forget this because she will never let it die. She stated they have walked on the Keiths enough. She said they will be like Richard Nixon, you won't have them to kick around anymore because they are not going to rollover and play dead ever again. She said they would know they were here because they are going to push every button that she can push. She said she will call everybody, ever lawyer she can, and they would be hearing from them. She stated she really didn't know who to call, but she was going to start somewhere. Mark Frazier said he wanted to ask one question. Mr. Frazier used profane language at this time and basically asked if that had been a gill net fisherman out there fishing illegally how many Marine Patrol Officers would have been there. He answered his own question and stated about twenty of them would be there to arrest him. He said they only sent one boat out there to look for these men. Sandra Allen said she had one more statement to make. She stated the Coast Guard informed them they couldn't send a plane or helicopter because of the dense fog. She said she had weather reports from every city they told them they would send planes or helicopters from and they all state the visibility was from seven to ten miles at that time as well as the rest of the night. She said there was no dense fog and she asked why didn't they have people here searching for these men immediately. She stated two months ago there was a seafood truck that was stopped in Gulf County and surrounded by twelve FWC Officers within minutes. She stated several officers from other County's were there using their sirens, lights, etc. and were there in minutes to check for undersized oysters. She asked why weren't these men treated with at least half the urgency of stopping this seafood truck. She asked does these men's life mean that little and she felt this should certainly be addressed. She said had it been anybody else, had they been of more importance, other than a seafood worker, would they have been treated differently. Chairman Creamer agreed. Ms. Allen said these things should be addressed since they want to know why. She stated she didn't know whose job it was to find out why, but these things need to be tended to. She said it shouldn't take three hours for one boat to get in the water; there should be many boats here in minutes. She stated there are a lot of Marine Patrol Officers in Franklin County and all of them have boats. She said they should have all been brought in immediately. Commissioner Mosconis said he was with them 100%. Ms. Allen asked him why he wasn't with her that night when she was out spot lighting for the men. He answered if he had known it he would have been. She asked why he wasn't called. He replied he was out of town. She asked why weren't any of the Commissioners called. He said he didn't know about it until two days after it happened. Commissioner Mosconis admitted it was not foggy on the night it happened. Ms. Allen was adamant about it not being foggy. She said this was all-wrong and should have never gotten like this. She stated when emergency response is discussed everyone better remember it could be anyone of us out there or any of our family. She said when something like this happens there needs to be an immediate response. She stated not the next day when all the media is present. She said there was plenty of assistance that morning, but not when they needed it. She stated there were a lot of local shrimpers and oystermen who went out to look for the men. She said a fund needs to be established to compensate these shrimpers and oystermen for their gas and expenses when they are voluntarily helping look for someone. She stated she knew many of them did not have

the money to buy gas and supplies to help. She said they should be commended. Chairman Creamer thanked Ms. Allen.

BILL MAHAN-COUNTY EXTENSION DIRECTOR

(Tape 1-800) Mr. Mahan reported he had included the results of the Franklin County Extension Customer Survey, March through April, are finally in. He said his office did well above average in the survey.

(Tape 1-961) He said the ISSC's Vibrio Vulnificus Subcommittee is scheduled to meet on January 9-10, 2001 in Biloxi, MS at the Imperial Palace. He informed the Board the meeting is tentatively scheduled to begin the meeting at 12:00 p.m. on January 9th, and adjourn 3:00 p.m. on January 10th. He explained some of the items to be discussed include; establishing the core states, the methodology for calculating an illness rate, how reductions in Vv. Illnesses will be measured and achieved, consequences of not achieving the 40/60% illness goals, post harvest treatment incentives, labeling incentives, irradiation, post harvest treatment (PHT) workshop throughout the Gulf-region, PHT demonstration projects, PHT market studies, and conducting self-life studies on PHT products. He asked the Board if they wanted to send him or another representative to this meeting. Commissioner Williams said he wanted Mr. Mahan to go to this meeting. Commissioner Mosconis agreed and said the Board had appointed Mr. Mahan to represent them regarding these matters. Commissioner Williams made a **motion authorizing Mr. Mahan to attend the ISSC's Vv. Subcommittee meeting January 9-10, 2001 in Biloxi, MS at the Imperial Palace and approving the payment of his travel expenses.** Commissioner Putnal seconded the motion. All for. **MOTION CARRIED.**

(Tape 1-1084) Mr. Pierce said he would like to present the Board a copy of the letter from DACS regarding the Alligator Harbor Aquaculture Project. He stated the information included the Review of Aquaculture Lease Memorandum and the Lease Site Inspection and Resource Survey Report. He said it was basically a feasibility study. He said it appears to be a feasible projects however, there are some limitations such as the access problem. He stated he and Commissioner Sanders went to look over the boat ramps in the Alligator Harbor area. He explained they met with Tom Vaughn, FWC, and toured the eastern end of Franklin County looking for boat ramp sites. He said Mr. Vaughn's department has money available to build boat ramps at no cost to the County, but there are some requirements. He stated there has to be at least three feet of water at low tide, the site should contain at least two acres, and the County has to agree to maintain the facility. He said they happened to be over there during a low tide, and only one place appeared to meet the criteria, but it is not owned by the County. He said the best site for a boat ramp, at least for access to Alligator Harbor and the proposed aquaculture project, is the original FSU Marine Lab on Alligator Point. He reported the buildings at the lab site are in terrible shape, but it meets all the other criteria. He asked the Board if they wanted him to make contact with FSU to see if they would give their permission to use the site. Commissioner Sanders said she would make a **motion authorizing Mr. Pierce to contact FSU to request the use of the property at the old**

FSU Marine Lab to access the Alligator Harbor Aquaculture Project. Commissioner Williams seconded the motion. All for. **MOTION CARRIED.**

HUBERT CHIPMAN-SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

(Tape 1-1211) Mr. Chipman said he wanted the Board to know he hired Rusty Putnal to fill one of the vacant positions. He informed the Board he will be hiring another person today for the other position. He said he interviewed for this position last week.

VAN JOHNSON-SOLID WASTE DIRECTOR

(Tape 1-1233) Mr. Johnson said he was glad to be back to work. He stated he enjoyed his vacation, but was glad to be back at work.

(Tape 1-1240) Commissioner Sanders asked him to call her so they could discuss the Lanark Village situation. Mr. Johnson replied he would.

(Tape 1-1248) Commissioner Putnal said he had reports of stray dogs being a problem around the Wilderness and Ridge Road areas in Eastpoint. Mr. Johnson replied he would check into the problem.

(Tape 1-1262) Commissioner Putnal asked Mr. Johnson if he could put a sign around or near the recycling bin informing people the bin was for recycling only. He stated people have been dumping Christmas garbage out there. He said the dogs are scattering the garbage all over the area. Mr. Johnson replied he had a sign on the bin. He said someone must have removed it. He stated he would go check on the site today. He said people dump garbage in all of the recycling bins. He stated he has been thinking of another approach to this problem and he may want to inform the Board of his proposal at the next Board meeting.

MARILYN WALKER-EMS DIRECTOR-WEEMS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

(Tape 1-1308) Ms. Walker said she was here to inform the Board, with great sadness, that Franklin County Emergency Medical Services must downgrade its service status to the people of Franklin County. She explained due to the inability of Centennial HealthCare Investment Corporation to compensate Paramedics in line with surrounding rural counties, one ambulance station must be downgraded from Advanced Life Support (ALS) to Basic Life Support (BLS) beginning January 12th. She reported this reduction in service capability will result in: 1 ALS ambulance staffed with Paramedics and EMT's and 1 BLS ambulance staffed with EMT's. She stated she and Dr. Stephen J. Miniati, M.D., Franklin County EMS Medical Director, have had several in depth discussions regarding this downgrade. She said it was their considered recommendation the West end of Franklin County (Apalachicola, Eastpoint and SGI) is serviced by the BLS ambulance due to the shorter transport times to ALS at Weems Memorial Hospital. She said she was notifying Mr. Shuler the Bureau of Emergency Medical Services in Tallahassee would have to be notified as to the status of the Certificate of need. Ms. Walker stated she simply did not have the paramedics needed to staff the ambulances full time. She said she can't compete with the salaries the other counties are paying. Chairman Creamer asked Ms. Walker what the starting salary for a paramedic was. Ms. Walker replied \$7.50 an hour in Franklin County and surrounding counties are paying

approximately \$9.35 an hour. Chairman Creamer asked Ms. Walker if she had asked Centennial about raising these salaries. She replied she addressed this problem to the corporation in April of last year. Chairman Creamer said he thought so since Ms. Walker discussed it with him at about that same time. She stated she informed the entire Board around April as well about this problem. She said the corporation informed her they had initiated some cost containment policies and they would revisit the issue, but they have been unable to do so as of yet. Commissioner Sanders said she was very concerned since Franklin County has so many outlying areas. Commissioner Mosconis questioned Susan Ficklen, Administrator of Weems Memorial Hospital, and Ms. Walker about the corporation's billing problems. He stated he received complaints from citizens who have used the hospital or it's facilities and never even been billed for them. Ms. Walker said she didn't have anything to do with the billing procedures. Commissioner Mosconis replied it people don't get billed then they can't send any money in to run the hospital. He stated you cannot run a business like that and said it has been a problem before. Ms. Walker replied she could not address this problem, but she was here to inform the Board of this important matter. Commissioner Sanders said she was going to be adamant about having a workshop with the "higher-ups" of Centennial, Mike Lake, David Paris, etc. She stated the safety and welfare of the people of Franklin County was in the Board's hands through the ambulance services. Commissioner Creamer asked if the contract didn't specify or require Centennial to provide two ALS ambulances for the County. Ms. Ficklen said the Lease Agreement does not require this. Commissioner Creamer said he knew the agreement specified two ALS ambulances. Ms. Ficklen said that is why there is a Mutual Aid Agreement with the surrounding Counties so when the ALS ambulances are out of town with patients they agree to assist with the calls in Franklin County. Dr. Stephen J. Miniati, M. D., Franklin County EMS Medical Director, said he would like to remind the Board of the fact that when the ALS ambulance is out of County on a run then the County is left with only a BLS ambulance. He said this is a big County and sometimes it just not practical to have only one ambulance left in the County. He encouraged the Board to work to keep the ALS ambulances if possible. He stated they would greatly be decreasing their services during the time the ALS ambulance was out of County. He said he didn't have the exact statistics on how often this occurs, but he knew a lot of people had to be transferred to Panama City or Tallahassee. Commissioner Creamer asked Ms. Ficklen where she thought Centennial's responsibility stands. Ms. Ficklen replied this problem developed in the last four or five days when she was out of town. She said she has been unable to discuss this with either Mr. Lake or Mr. Paris. She stated she would tell the Board she thought they should provide ALS ambulance service throughout the County. The Commission agreed. Commissioner Sanders said she was going to make a **motion to schedule a workshop with the "higher-ups" of Centennial HealthCare as soon as possible, before January 12th**. Ms. Ficklen said she would call them and when she reached them she would notify the Board Secretary, Ms. Varnes, so she could notify the Commissioners. Commissioner Sanders encouraged Ms. Ficklen to call them and schedule something immediately since this was such an important matter. Commissioner Williams seconded the motion. All for. **MOTION CARRIED.** Commissioner Sanders said she wanted to meet with Centennial as a Board and not just one Commissioner one-on-one. She stated she did not want anybody's life at stake in Franklin County. Ms. Walker said she needed to tell Mr. Shuler that the State of

Florida EMS Division needed to be informed, in writing, the County was going from ALS Transport to ALS and BLS Transport. She said the Florida Statutes and Florida's Administrative Code require this. She stated they are waiting in Tallahassee for this notification. Ms. Walker said the County has had two ALS ambulance certifications for many, many years. Commissioner Putnal said a while back he asked the people from Blue Cross and Blue Shield to come up with a Family Plan that the citizens could afford, for our employees to add their families to the coverage. He said what do they do but double the premiums. He stated he has been working with these folks trying to upgrade the ambulance service. He said the County gave them \$28,000.00 to upgrade the ambulance service because it involved people's lives. He stated the problem needed to be solved and he thought a workshop needed to be held. He said if it takes more money then the County had to find the money. Commissioner Mosconis said he was not going to have the County blackmailed for more money. He stated the County has already given them a lot of money for the air-conditioning units. Chairman Creamer said the responsibility is Centennial's and if they can't handle the ambulance service and the expenses of the hospital then they need to get out so the County can find somebody else. Commissioner Mosconis and Commissioner Sanders agreed. Chairman Creamer said he also wanted the hospital to put the opening of the Diagnostic Center on hold until some of these matters were settled. He said they shouldn't be spending money on something new when they can't even run the hospital. Ms. Ficklen told the Board they had already put the new Diagnostic Center on hold. Commissioner Sanders asked how the Lab Department was working at the hospital. Ms. Ficklen replied everything was going smoothly with the Lab at this time. Ms. Walker said she was going to do everything possible to keep the ambulances up and running. She stated she wanted to come to the Board early so everyone would be apprised of what is going on. Mr. Shuler said the County has a contract with Centennial HealthCare. He stated the local employees about this problem are informing the Board. He suggested, while having a meeting is good, the Board should authorize him to send a letter informing them the Board will take whatever steps are necessary to see the services are not degraded or lessened. Commissioner Mosconis made a **motion directing Mr. Shuler to send a letter to Centennial HealthCare informing them Franklin County does not consent or intend to allow any reduction in service under the contract and demand they continue to provide not less than two ALS ambulances as specified in the contract.** Commissioner Sanders seconded the motion. All for. **MOTION CARRIED.** Mr. Shuler said he would also recommend the Board request a workshop as soon as possible with Centennial. Ms. Ficklen assured the Board she would contact the Centennial corporate office and inform them of this request. She said she would notify Ms. Varnes as soon as she found out what date they could come to a workshop. Ms. Ficklen said she knew Mr. Lake was out of town until January 8th.

HANK GARRETT-SGI WATER MANAGEMENT SERVICES

(Tape 1-2540 Continued Tape 2) Mr. Garrett said he attended the last Commission Meeting where there was a discussion about scheduling a workshop with SGI Water Management Services. He stated he told the Board he would ask Mr. Gene Brown, owner, SGI Water Management Services, to come to a meeting. He informed the Board Mr. Brown, Mr. Les Thomas, Engineer for Mr. Brown, and Mr. Nick Yonclas, attorney

for Mr. Brown were present this morning to answer any questions the Board had for them. Mr. Brown thanked the Board for allowing him to speak this morning. He said Mr. Garrett asked him to come down to talk to the Board. He stated it was his understanding some of his customers had been to the Board meeting expressing some concerns about the water company, the new bridge and the destruction of the old bridge, which necessitates them removing their water lines. He explained he wanted to address the Board about two items; one is concerns about getting the work done and the other is if the work is done the cost passed on to the customers. He said first it is going to cost a lot of money to put the new water line across the new bridge. He stated he has fought the whole process especially the tearing down of the water line on the old bridge. He said he felt he certainly should be compensated for the lines through the Federal Grant. He informed the Board this is about a \$70 or \$80 million dollar project and another \$5 million dollars added to the grant would not have made that much difference. He said now the costs will be spread among 1,400 water customers on SGI. He stated this is not a problem of his making, but he has been dealing responsibly with the problem. He said the first thing he did was to file suit against FDOT for inverse condemnation. He said they also filed suit to stop them from tearing the old bridge down. He stated they lost the suit and it is a done deal about the bridge being torn down. He said they lost everything except the condemnation suit. He stated Mr. Yonclas is handling the litigation for him, which has started about a year ago. He said he fully expects this matter to go to trial within the next six months. He stated if his group is successful then the cost won't be a big problem since most of the costs will be passed on to the entire State of Florida or the Federal Government. He said he still had to work with FDOT and the PSC to build the new line on the bridge. He stated they have spent, in the last six months, \$300 thousand dollars on the approaches. Mr. Brown explained FDOT has finally agreed to allow them to place the line to the outside of the new bridge. He said it is still going to have to be a twelve-inch, iron line; triple coated with special designed stainless steel hangars, which cost over \$100 each. He informed the Board it is an expense proposition and somebody is going to have to pay for it. He said his company is PSC regulated and they get a return on their investment. He stated the law allows them to get 11% on the actual money invested plus the reimbursement of the company's actual costs. He explained there is not a lot of money to be made in this business. He informed the Board he was sort of forced, as one of the first developers on the Island, to put a water system in. He said he started the company in 1972 about 25 or 30 years ago. He stated the company is not for sale and there is absolutely no justification for the Board to be discussing hiring the County Attorney to research how the company can be taken from him. He said some people may feel like a public entity can do a better job than a private entity, but he does not. He stated they could get the job done as well or better than any public entity. He assured the Board they are moving forward with this project and there is going to be a rate increase for the Island residents. He said they have already received about an 11% rate increase from the PSC to pay for the initial approach work. He stated they have already spent about \$300,000.00 and the next few months he will have to spend another \$500,000.00 for reworking all of the lines around Eastpoint as well as tying in a fourth well. He informed the Board his company would be seeking bids within the next 30 to 60 days for the final work. He said the initial increase caused water bills to go from an average of \$33.00 per month to \$36.00 per month beginning in December. He stated he has a loan

Mr. Thomas has been working on for about a year, which he is confident they will get to complete the rest of the work. He said assuming the loan does come through, with the cost estimated at \$5 million dollars that will also result in a rate increase from \$36.00 per month to \$57.00 per month for an average water bill on SGI. He said he knew this was high, but a fact of life for living on SGI. Commissioner Mosconis asked when he anticipated the bills being reduced. Mr. Brown replied in about twenty to thirty years. Commissioner Mosconis asked Mr. Brown what he was going to do about adequate fire protection on SGI. Mr. Brown replied he heard that same concern. He said he has employed Mr. Thomas to design a fire protection plan to provide a thousand gallons of water per minute for a two-hour duration in the commercial areas of SGI and five hundred gallons per minute for two hours in all of the residential areas. He said this is a good standard fire protection level. He stated Mr. Thomas has designed some new in line pumps and replacement of lines where needed. He said the overall cost of that would be about \$300,000.00 range. He stated this is not a direct responsibility of the water company although they are trying to address it. He said they feel the costs or some of the costs should be born by the Island residents as a whole. He stated he asked Mr. Garrett to talk to the SGIVFD to see if some of the MSBU funds could be directed to this infrastructure. He said the work has been divided into several phases: Phase I-the approach work or initial phase and Phase II-running the lines across the new bridge for about \$5 million dollars. After further discussion Commissioner Mosconis asked Mr. Brown what they needed to do to help. Mr. Brown asked the Board to consider sending a letter to DEP, the entity they are trying to get the low interest loan from, informing them the County supports them providing the loan to Mr. Brown. He asked the Board to direct any calls or concerns from citizens to either him or Mr. Garrett. He said if they get this low interest loan then the costs passed on to the customers would be less. Commissioner Putnal made a **motion authorizing a letter of support be sent to DEP offering County support for the loan application submitted by SGI Water Management for a low interest rate loan.** Commissioner Williams seconded the motion. All for. **MOTION CARRIED.** Tom Hoffer, Franklin County Chronicle, asked Mr. Brown about sewer service on the Island. Mr. Brown said he had he felt there was going to be an environmental disaster on the Island since everyone keeps building commercially on septic tanks. He stated he is not interested in providing sewer system on the Island. Mr. Brown said if anyone had any legal matters or questions they would need to direct them to his attorney, Nick Yonclas, who has an office on SGI.

ALAN PIERCE-DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

(Tape 2-280) Mr. Pierce said he didn't have a lot to report this morning. He said he did need Board action to approve a contract with ARPC to perform the small quantity hazardous waste analysis for the County. He explained the contact is for \$2,200.00. He said ARPC has previously completed this report for the County. He recommended the County continue approving this contract. Commissioner Sanders made a **motion authorizing the Chairman's signature on the FY 00/01 ARPC contract to complete the Franklin County Small Quantity Hazardous Waste Report for a cost of \$2,200.00.** Commissioner Williams seconded the motion. All for. **MOTION CARRIED.**

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(Tape 2-305) He reminded the Board there are several rezoning and land use change hearings scheduled for the next meeting.

(Tape 2-318) He informed the Board the Chairman has been receiving a lot of correspondence regarding some property on SGI in the Plantation. He said the parties involved are the McCartney's and the McClouds. He stated it is basically a neighborhood problem, with a lot of letter writing going on. He said he contact Mr. Shuler regarding the matter. He explained the County has not taken a position in the matter or request by Ms. McCloud.

(Tape 2-392) Mr. Pierce said he wanted to discuss the Hollenbeck trailer issue. He reminded the Board the Board decided there were two lots to Mr. Hollenbeck's trailer park in Eastpoint. He said the Board decided one lot was the trailer park and the other lot, where his mother lives, was homesteaded. He explained Mr. Hollenbeck's new trailer was not in the boundary of the park. He said he, as the Board instructed, sent a letter to the Health Department so they would have a representative at this meeting. He introduced Mr. Brent Mabrey, FCPHU Environmental Health, to the Board and asked the Board to direct their questions to him. Mr. Mabrey informed the Board since 1991 his record has shown that the property in question was never split into two parcels. He said that is why when Mr. Hollenbeck called about putting the trailer on the property he never questioned it. He stated he allowed the trailer to be placed there because he thought it was all a trailer park. He said he would strongly suggest, again, to the Board they consider hiring a code enforcement officer. He stated the way the County is growing there is no way the Health Department or anybody else can keep up with all these changes. Mr. Pierce said he agreed with Mr. Mabrey about not being able to catch this problem either. Commissioner Creamer said it takes foot work for something like this and somebody should have gone over to look at the site and checked the property records. He stated, as the County grows, these questions are going to have to be researched instead of just doing them. Commissioner Putnal asked how many trailers were allowed in the trailer park. Mr. Pierce replied eight. Discussion continued and Mr. Hollenbeck said all he was asking was that he be allowed to leave the trailer there until something happens to his mother. He stated he wanted a hardship variance to allow this. Commissioner Mosconis said he thought the piece of property allowed eight trailers and Mr. Hollenbeck doesn't have that many on the parcel then he should be allowed to stay where he is. He stated he thought Mr. Hollenbeck should be granted a lifetime estate. Commissioner Williams said he too thought Mr. Hollenbeck should be allowed to leave his trailer where it was for the lifetime of his mother. Mr. Shuler informed the Board the problem was the County allowing two trailers on one lot, which is not the approved trailer park. He explained the Board would be violating the one-acre rule and therefore it is a violation. He said it was unfortunate, but he didn't see any happy outcome. He stated other people closely scrutinize variances and he cautioned the Board that what they do today might be quoted to them the next time similar issue comes before the Board. He stated things then get looser and looser and soon there is no rule. Commissioner Mosconis said he thought this was a hardship case and the Board was compassionate. Mr. Hollenbeck said he would reduce the number of trailers in his park to allow him to leave his trailer on the parcel it has been placed on. Commissioner Mosconis said he felt

this was a costly mistake caused by the Health Department. Commissioner Williams said he was going to make a **motion granting Mr. Hollenbeck a hardship variance for the lifetime of his mother, acknowledging the Health Departments boundaries for the trailer park, and reducing the total number of trailers in the park to seven for the "L" shaped piece of property.** Commissioner Mosconis seconded the motion. All for. Commissioners Williams, Mosconis, Putnal, and Sanders for. Chairman Creamer against. 4-1 **MOTION CARRIED.** Commissioner Mosconis said he wanted to be sure Mr. Hollenbeck knew this was a temporary fix and he would only be granted a lifetime estate to leave the trailer in it's present spot. Mr. Hollenbeck said he knew this and thanked the Board for their motion.

KENDALL WADE-CLERK

(Tape 2-1032) Mr. Wade informed the Board the Franklin County Website is up and running. He said the address is franklincountyflorida.com. all lower case letters and totally spelled out.

(Tape 2-1051) He said he had placed in each Commissioners mailbox a copy of a letter from Bayside Realty Inc. offering to sell the County Lots 2, 3 and 4, Block 221 in the City of Carrabelle for \$36,000.00. He stated the lots are located on Highway 67 between Avenue I and Avenue J and have water and sewer available. He reminded the Board they had mentioned locating some land in Carrabelle for the Courthouse Annex.

(Tape 2-1091) He told the Board he is going to the old Annawakee location to met with Hubert Chipman and Raymond Williams, the realtor for the property, and schedule a pick-up for the shelving. He said the shelving would be brought to the Landfill so they can be cleaned. He stated he is hoping to use the shelving at the Old Jail behind the Courthouse.

(Tape 2-1116) Commissioner Putnal said Robert and Ima Millender contacted him. He stated they are going to build a house on their property in Carrabelle and during the title work found out a lien was on the property. He said the lien was placed against them by the Hospital years ago. Mr. Wade informed Commissioner Putnal there was a policy the County had implemented whereby the individuals have to pay one-half of the face amounts of the judgment to the County and then Mr. Shuler will satisfy the judgment. Commissioner Putnal said he would inform the Millender's of this and tell them they need to contact Mr. Shuler.

(Tape 2-1176) Mr. Wade said he talked to the new Clerk, Doug Birmingham, in Gulf County about the ambulance service there. He stated Mr. Birmingham informed him Gulf County operates the ambulance service. Commissioner Mosconis said he didn't want the County operating the ambulance service. Mr. Wade continued by saying all of their ambulances are ALS ambulances. He said Mr. Birmingham was going to furnish him some financial information as to the costs Gulf County incurs operating their ambulance services.

(Tape 2-1211) Mr. Pierce said he would like to revisit the discussion about buying land in Carrabelle for the Courthouse Annex. He stated he would like to make sure the Board decides the size of the building, etc. before anyone looks at purchasing land for the project. Mr. Wade said the Board sometime ago wanted to check into the prices of land in Carrabelle for these types of projects. Commissioner Mosconis said he thought it sounded like a good deal to him. Mr. Wade reminded the Board the County is paying \$600.00 to \$700.00 a month rent on a building in Carrabelle to house Courthouse offices.

(Tape 2-1253) Mr. Pierce stated he wanted the Board to know he is going to meet with David Kennedy, the County Engineer, and Hubert Chipman about the Alligator Point Revetment. He said the revetment is working well with the new concrete cap in place. He stated there is a dip in the concrete that needs to be repaired. Commissioner Sanders said she would like for the Road Department to put some signs on the revetment reflecting the problems with an individual walking on the rocks there. She said they were doing that at their own risk and she wanted to make sure they knew this when someone tried to walk on the revetment. Mr. Pierce assured Commissioner Sanders he would take care of this problem.

ALFRED SHULER-COUNTY ATTORNEY

(Tape 2-1285) Mr. Shuler reported the lawsuit Brownell versus the Sheriff had been settled. He said Franklin County was dismissed from the lawsuit and therefore will not incur any of the settlement expenses.

(Tape 2-1305) He said the lawsuit Franklin County versus the Old Panacea Fishing Lodge concerning the Old Officers Club in Lanark Village was scheduled for hearing on January 4, 2001. He stated the owners were supposedly coming down with the money to pay for demolishing and clear the property. He said if the owners prove to him they have deposited the money then he would dismiss the case.

BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

(Tape 2-1342) Chairman Creamer stated he was called about the property next to the ball field in Carrabelle. He said it is the old Lowery residence. He stated there are some people who would voluntarily clean off the property since it was a hazardous area near where children play. He asked Mr. Pierce to schedule, with the Road Department and Landfill, the hauling of the debris to the Landfill. He said Major Mock of the Sheriff's Department informed him this morning he would assist the County with this matter. Commissioner Mosconis said he thought they would be glad to haul off the debris.

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

Eddie Creamer EDDIE CREAMER, CHAIRMAN

Kendall Wade KENDALL WADE, CLERK