

**FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
COURTHOUSE ANNEX – COMMISSION MEETING ROOM
JANUARY 2, 2019
9:00 AM
MINUTES**

Commissioners Present: William Massey-Vice-Chairman, Joseph Parrish, Ricky Jones, Bert B. Boldt, II

Others Present: Marcia M. Johnson-Clerk of Court, Michael Moron-County Coordinator, Alan Pierce-RESTORE Coordinator, Michael Shuler – County Attorney, Lori P. Hines-Deputy Clerk to the Board.

Call to Order

Vice-Chairman Massey called the meeting to Order.

Prayer and Pledge

There was a prayer followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes

On motion by Commissioner Jones, seconded by Commissioner Parrish, and by unanimous vote of the Board present, it was agreed to approve the minutes from the meeting held on November 19, 2018.

Payment of County Bills

On motion by Commissioner Parrish, seconded by Commissioner Jones, and by unanimous vote of the Board present, it was agreed to approve payment of the County's Bills.

Public Comments – *(This is an opportunity for the public to comment on agenda or non-agenda items. When you are recognized to be heard by the Chairman, please sign the speaker's log and adhere to the time limit. An individual will be allowed to speak for three minutes whereas a designated representative of a group or faction will be allowed to speak for five minutes.)*

Mr. Jim McCloy, a property owner at Alligator Point, said he wants to comment about an item on the Agenda today which is the annexation of Alligator Point and Bald Point to Wakulla County and the repair of Alligator Drive. He reported they are encouraged that between the county and state efforts they have assigned a consultant to coordinate the repair of the road. He explained some of their frustration in the last two years has been over the repair of the road. Mr. McCloy referenced an advertisement in The Tallahassee Democrat titled Franklin County's Forgotten Citizens a Tale of Broken Promises and Abandonment by Government. He explained he did not start this process of annexation solely because of the road but as a homeowner he is frustrated and has attended many meetings about Alligator Point and how they can solve these problems and how they can pay for it. He said the message they have received from Franklin County is that they have no more assets to give so the citizens have to figure it out. Mr. McCloy reported they had the Bald Point Trust Fund and the county did a good job of handling it over the last 20 years but it is now gone. He agreed the county has limited assets, very few deputies and only three ambulances. Mr. McCloy stated as a homeowner he approached the Florida Legislature to find out legally what it would take to move them to Wakulla County. He reported he found out it was just finding someone to file a bill and pass it through the Legislature. He explained he then contacted Wakulla County to see if they would entertain the idea. He reported Senator Bill Montford and Representative Halsey Brashears were then contacted to pursue the idea. Mr. McCloy said he believes this can be done and this is an opportunity for the Board to be able to better serve their constituents in Franklin County. He reported this is a change for the county so they can have someone else deliver services to Alligator Point and take the burden from the county so they can use their resources on the citizens they represent.

Department Directors Report

Howard Nabors – Superintendent of Public Works

Mr. Nabors reported his department is cleaning up garbage from the sides of the road and working to clean up roads. He said more rain is coming and there is already a lot of flooding.

Commissioner Boldt said they did a great job putting the culvert in place on Heffernan Drive. He stated the rains have eroded both ends and he asked if their crew could backfill those areas. Mr. Nabors said they may sandbag the area but they will address it.

Commissioner Boldt reported on the east end of Gulf Shore Blvd. the barricades have been dislodged and there are now large piles of sand and people are using this area as a beach. He asked from a safety standpoint if they could put some no parking signs in this area and give people the option of going to the public beach. He suggested some reflectors also be put there to stop people from hitting the sand. Mr. Nabors agreed to put some concrete bunkers in this area and mark them. Commissioner Boldt said they should be advised there is a public beach. He stated there was an accident this weekend on their dirt road at Alligator Point. Mr. Nabors asked if it was on the 1,100 ft. Commissioner Boldt answered now it is 2,000 ft. or more and

he was informed the turn area is a one lane road. He asked Mr. Nabors to evaluate this area to see if it could be widened to two lanes. Mr. Nabors stated they can widen it or close it off and have them make the loop until it is fixed.

Fonda Davis – Solid Waste Director

Mr. Davis reported they are getting ready to start work on the ball fields from the damage from the storm. He stated D.W. Wilson Park is more severe and they have quotes on lighting and fencing. He said weather permitting they will start resetting light poles but they are also waiting on the fence.

Mr. Davis stated the debris contractors are heading back to the county and will finish up by Friday. Commissioner Parrish asked if this is for Highway 98. Mr. Davis answered no, the county. He stated he talked with one of the contractors for the state and they said they were finished. Commissioner Boldt reported they are finished but there is a big footprint left everywhere. Mr. Davis said he has not talked with Ferrovial so maybe only one contractor is finished but not the state as a whole. Mr. Moron stated he contacted Ferrovial about the trash that would be remaining and they said they would return to pick up everything that is remaining on Highway 98. Commissioner Boldt reported they received a letter that said they are picking up the state roads but have also done some of the county roads as well. Attorney Shuler said that is correct and the letter was received shortly before Christmas.

Marcia M. Johnson – Clerk of Courts – Report

Clerk Johnson did not have a report.

Pam Brownell – Emergency Management Director

Mrs. Brownell stated the letter she received from the state said the last pass will be the 20th. She explained when they talk about picking up our county roads they are talking about our contractors as they assumed those contracts so the county's contractors are their contractors. She reported the county does not pick up Highway 98 so they have their own contractors for that. Mrs. Brownell explained the county set their date but the state is not finished yet. Commissioner Massey asked if they will pick up everything in the ditches. Mrs. Brownell reported the final pass is the 20th of the month and that is the information she received from DOT. Commissioner Parrish asked what will happen with all the debris that was brought in with the storm surge and is off of Highway 98 on the state right-of-way. He reported this debris washed across Highway 98 and onto private property. Mr. Moron said he will ask Ferrovial. Commissioner Parrish questioned if this is the responsibility of the private property owner and how it will eventually be cleaned up. Commissioner Massey agreed in Lanark Village it is very bad. Commissioner Parrish explained in some areas west of Apalachicola the debris has washed up against people's fences. He reported the ditches drain to the bay and they do not want all the trash in the ditches to go out into the bay. Mrs. Brownell said it should be the state's

responsibility since it is their right-of-way. Mrs. Brownell stated they can talk to DOT. Mr. Moron reported Mrs. Brownell will contact DOT and he will contact Ferrovia. Commissioner Boldt suggested after the final cleanup they could have a citizen's cleanup day for safe areas. Mrs. Brownell reported they have a Coastal Cleanup Day, River Cleanup Day and Adopt a Mile but it may come down to volunteers cleaning it. Attorney Shuler asked Mrs. Brownell to bring the Board up to date on the timing for state payment for the pickup. He explained the Memorandum gives one date and a senior person at DOT is telling them it is a later date than what is in the Memorandum. Mrs. Brownell said the MOU states it starts on the 14th and the MOU was approved by the Board on the 16th. She reported everything was worked out and it was entered in the web EOC on the 18th. She reported now the state and federal representatives have decided the start date was the 18th which is incorrect because the MOU says they assume it on the 14th. She said she received information from other counties that they are working with them to give them their retro back dates so she has contacted the state person that is handling this for Liberty County to see how to do that here. She reported when FEMA was here she talked with them and they will not be involved in setting that date as it is a state issue only not a federal issue. Attorney Shuler explained a person in the chain of command with DOT sent emails saying the 18th is the date but all the written correspondence he has from the general counsel says the effective date for payment is the 14th. He said they are working with DOT to get this straightened out and find out the accurate date. He pointed out four days could be \$40,000-\$50,000. Mrs. Brownell said it will be \$40,000 for Tetra Tech but they can file for reimbursement but it will not be a 100% reimbursement it will be 75%. She stated there will also be 2 days with Crowder Gulf but she is not sure of the amount. Attorney Shuler explained they are not asking for action but want the Board to know about the situation. Commissioner Parrish asked if they need to file with FEMA to be reimbursed for these 4 days. Attorney Shuler answered yes if the 18th becomes the official DOT pickup date for the beginning of DOT responsibility for the cleanup. He said the county would have to pay for the pickup and then apply to FEMA for the reimbursement for the 4 day period. He explained there is an internal disconnect at DOT as two different representatives are giving different dates of when DOT's financial responsibility begins. Commissioner Boldt stated they don't want to miss a deadline and not be reimbursed so he is glad they have the paperwork to keep the county current. Mr. Pierce said they indicated they were here to help with pickup the date after the storm. Attorney Shuler reported he does not think the general counsel for DOT signed and sent a letter to him with the date of October 14th unless he had his client's permission to send the letter.

Mrs. Brownell reported they are working on pulling paperwork to get the Project Worksheets (PW's) started. He said the kickoff date was set for the 30th but FEMA wants to move the date up. She stated she is waiting to hear if they will accept the 15th which was the original date she requested. Mr. Pierce reported they have 60 days after that date to get the PW's submitted.

Commissioner Jones said he saw the email about the meeting this Monday. Mrs. Brownell said it is a long term recovery meeting on the fire. She stated they will meet with Mrs. Deborah Belcher, Roumelis Planning & Development Services, Inc., and ESF15 about where they are on

the grant and who has been qualified and who has not. She reported people are calling her wanting to know about the grant and all they can do is refer them to Mrs. Belcher. She explained people ask about the money and the money is sitting there to help people that do not qualify for the grant but Mrs. Belcher has not given them information on who will not qualify so they can go ahead and get them a home. She reported the meeting is to decide what to do. Commissioner Jones said there has already been an after action report and after that meeting he would like to get a report of what is going on. He stated he would like to know if people ask them. Mrs. Brownell reported Mrs. Tress Dameron, Emergency Management Department, should be typing up this report and the Board will get a copy.

Erik Lovestrand – Extension Office Director

Mr. Moron reported Mr. Lovestrand was here this morning but had to leave to attend a University of Florida (UF) meeting.

Mr. Moron suggested he and Attorney Shuler present their reports before Mr. Pierce as his report is longer.

Michael Morón – County Coordinator – Report

Mr. Moron addressed his report, as follows:

1. There are two TDC items, one for Board action the other for information.
 - a. In past years, the TDC administration contract and the Eastpoint Visitor Center's contract were approved at the same time. However, when the TDC administration contract was approved in December 2018, the Eastpoint Visitor Center's contract was not. **Board action** to approve the Eastpoint Visitor Center contract, contingent on Attorney Shuler's review.

On motion by Commissioner Jones, seconded by Commissioner Parrish, and by unanimous vote of the Board present, it was agreed to approve the Eastpoint Visitor Center contract contingent upon Attorney Shuler's review.

- b. Previously, the Board approved a contract for the Apalachicola Visitor Center. Upon further review, there was wording in the Apalachicola Visitor Center contract that referred to St. George Island Visitor Center. That verbiage has been corrected and all wording in that contract refers to the Apalachicola Visitors Center.
2. The Florida Association of Counties has scheduled three core Certified County Commission workshops in Alachua County from January 7th - 10th which includes New Commissioner Workshops, a County Government Structure and Authority course, and a County Government Roles and Responsibilities course. Commissioner Jones missed the opportunity to complete the required courses to become a Certified County Commissioner because he stayed in the County during the Eastpoint Limerock Fire event instead of attending the conference where the course was being offered, therefore, he would like to attend the workshop on January 10th to receive

the necessary credits. **Board action** to authorize travel and expenses for Commissioner Jones to attend the January 10th FAC Certified County Commissioner course.

Commissioner Parrish asked if Commissioner Boldt is attending. Commissioner Boldt stated he is waiting until summer conference to do it all then. **On motion by Commissioner Parrish, seconded by Commissioner Jones, and by unanimous vote of the Board present, it was agreed to authorize travel and expenses for Commissioner Jones to attend the January 10th FAC Certified County Commissioner course.**

3. Inform the Board that Centennial Bank has contacted Commissioner Massey and expressed interest in providing financing for the new Weems facility and the purchase of a bigger building for the Supervisor of Elections office. **Board action** to authorize staff to negotiate loan terms with Centennial Bank for both loans. The Board will have the opportunity to compare both Centennial and USDA terms for each loan before making a final decision.

Mr. Moron stated one of the disadvantages he sees with Centennial is they cannot offer to grant any of the loan that USDA can. He said with the government shutdown he cannot talk with USDA which shuts down the process even more. Commissioner Parrish discussed the process of using the local bank and transferring the loan over to USDA and stated they will be involved regardless. He said he does not see how they can offer the same interest rate as USDA. **Commissioner Parrish made a motion to authorize staff to negotiate loan terms with Centennial Bank for both loans.** Mr. Pierce stated USDA has indicated there might be a grant component so Centennial giving an interest rate is premature. He reported the county should see the USDA numbers first because they do not know how much they are borrowing and if there is a grant. Clerk Johnson pointed out it is also premature because they haven't decided on that building yet. She reported the motion was to look into it and gets some figures and facts. She stated there may be another building that is cheaper or another option they have not talked about yet. Clerk Johnson said with Hurricane Michael they do not know what money they are going to have to come up with. She reported there may not be any money to buy a building. Commissioner Parrish agreed it will not be good. He said they will not get all the \$1 million they had in reserves back. He explained FEMA only reimburse 75% and they do not know what the tax base is going to be. He reported the Triumph Board is supposed to make up the reduction in the tax base but they do not know if that will happen. Commissioner Parrish stated they also don't know what land values will be after the hurricane and what the millage rate will be. He said he does not want the county millage rate to be maxed out like some other areas. Commissioner Parrish reported there will be a lot going on this next budget year. Clerk Johnson explained in talking with the Finance Department they are worried because the state is doing the cleanup but the county is paying overtime to employees. She reported hopefully these items will be reimbursed but it may take 2 years. Clerk Johnson reported they do not know the amount that must be paid for insurance deductibles for the county buildings and properties. Clerk Johnson explained they may need to put off a building for the Supervisor of Elections until they get a better picture of where they are with the budget. Commissioner Massey stated Centennial Bank just wanted a chance to be considered if the county did purchase a building. **Commissioner Parrish withdrew his motion.** Commissioner Jones said

Centennial Bank has also approached him about construction loans. Mr. Moron stated he will let them know further along in the process the Board will decide if they want to discuss this matter. Commissioner Massey said that is an old building. Commissioner Boldt reported he wants to be sensitive to what Clerk Johnson said because they do not know what they are looking at. He said the Property Appraiser has the best information about potential property values related to planning for their millage rate and they need to be thinking about their strategies right now so they are not surprised. Mr. Pierce reported Mrs. Rhonda Skipper, Property Appraiser, is present and they have talked and by the end of January she will have a preliminary idea of what the tax roll will be next year. He explained based on that number they will go to the Triumph Board and see how they are going to respond. Mr. Pierce said there are no details and at the last Triumph Board meeting they did not talk about it. Commissioner Jones asked if Mr. Jason Shoaf, Triumph Board member, is off the Board since he is running for office. Mr. Pierce answered no; he is still on the Board.

4. As an update, the Fire Link and Fire Net systems are functioning well with the temporary radios as Williams Communication waits for the arrival of the new equipment. Voice testing with Eastpoint, Apalachicola, St. George Island, and Alligator Point/St Teresa fire departments have went extremely well. The required FCC justification letter on the Sheriff's Department letterhead is needed to complete the FCC License application. We are still waiting for the Tower report to determine what repairs will be needed for the Fire Net tower.

Mr. Moron stated they are going to take this money and make an application to the Triumph Board for communication. He explained they are gathering invoices and then the final cost will be turned into an application for funding to Triumph. Commissioner Jones asked why they need a letter on the Sheriff's letterhead if the county is paying for it. Mr. Moron said he will ask Mr. Tal Whiddon, Williams Communications, about this. Commissioner Jones stated since they are going to try and get funding to help he does not want it to be circumvented because it is not on their letterhead. Mr. Moron reported the only justification he can see is the 911 dispatch system is at the Sheriff's Department. Mr. Moron stated he will find out and let the Board know.

5. At your December 18th meeting I explained that there was an ADA compliance issue with the County's website. The Board authorized 2K Web Group, the County's website vendor, to run a report of the County's 1,511 web pages on the site to determine how pages are out of compliance. With software and training, which was also approved by the Board, all future uploaded pdf documents will be compliant. During that same meeting, we discussed compliance issues with documents already on the website. I met with 2K Web Group to discuss the County's options regarding these non-compliant documents and forwarded that information to Attorney Shuler, who is currently researching this matter. I will keep the Board updated on this project.

Alan Pierce – RESTORE Coordinator – Report

Mr. Pierce read his report as follows:

1- Provide the Board with a copy of the profile for a proposed emergency beach berm for Alligator Drive that I have provided the FCMC Consulting. Using the profile recommended by our engineers, a berm 1300 feet long is estimated at costing \$240,000 for the initial creation. There would be maintenance and monitoring costs in addition. The county considers this beach berm as temporary emergency work to protect the road, but I will defer to FCMC as to how it should be submitted to FEMA. A contractor would have to be employed to build this berm as the volume of sand needed, some 400 truckloads, is more than the county can haul. Attached is a copy of a FEMA approved profile for a beach berm. The attachment also shows how Hurricane Michael pushed back and flattened the shoreline.

Mr. Pierce said he has not confirmed these numbers with Mr. Clay Kennedy, Dewberry. He explained the attachment was provided to show how large the berm is and how the shoreline got pushed back. He reported the weight of the water and the action has flattened out Alligator Point and other beach profiles. He stated they have lost about 3 ft. of elevation on the road and they are closer to the water than they used to be. Mr. Pierce reported this was sent to FCMC on Monday and he has not heard back from them but hopefully he will hear from them in a few days on how they should proceed. He said over the weekend the county crew was there again trying to fix the road. Mr. Pierce pointed out some people have been tampering with the traffic lights. He stated the contractor put a generator on the lights and it was unplugged or turned off so the traffic light was not working for a time over the weekend. He said the county is trying their best to provide traffic control and if someone is tampering with public equipment and someone gets hurt then they will be looking for this person. Commissioner Parrish reported one person emailed complaining about the noise of the generator. He explained the solar lights will not work with the clouds and rain the county is having and without a generator the light will not function. Attorney Shuler advised the Board a police report needs to be filed and they need to request the Sheriff's Office patrol down there because it is a life safety issue. Mr. Moron said it is the Sheriff's Office that called him to contact Mr. Nabors. He stated he will let the Sheriff's Office know so they can tell the deputies about the vandalism. **Commissioner Parrish made a motion to file a police report and request the Sheriff patrol down there to make sure the vandalism does not continue and request he add cameras to the two lights so they can find out who has been fooling with them.** He stated this person will bear responsibility if there is another accident because the traffic light was not working. **Commissioner Boldt seconded the motion. Motion carried; 5-0.**

2- Right before the Christmas holidays, Commissioner Parrish received a phone call from Senator Montford regarding the annexing of Alligator Point into Wakulla County. As I understand it, Senator Montford said he would sponsor a bill if Franklin County wanted this to happen. As this was an item that needed some background research, Michael Moron asked me to provide an analysis. In generating this analysis, I have spoken to Dave Edwards, Wakulla County Administrator; Jim McCloy, APTA President who made the motion at the APTA meeting for this idea; Rhonda Skipper, Franklin County Property Appraiser; and the Supervisor of Elections Office. Ms. Skipper might be in attendance this morning to answer any questions.

The initial action by APTA did not describe a boundary for the annexation so Mr. McCloy and I agreed on the proposed boundary. The boundary should follow some well

established landmark. The boundary could shift if the Board so chose to move it, but the current proposed boundary includes the tax paying area Mr. McCloy wanted included, as well as the non-taxpaying Bald Point State Park, and some vacant land taxed at an agricultural rate. The boundary ends at Alligator Harbor but does not include Leonard's Landing boat ramp. The exact boundary at the Harbor has not been defined.

The attached document is the analysis that I created.

An Analysis of the Impact of Alligator Point Annexing Into Wakulla County

As the Board is aware, the Alligator Point/St Teresa Taxpayers Association has made an inquiry if Alligator Point could be annexed into Wakulla County. For the purposes of this analysis, the proposed annexation boundary would be everything east of US 98 down to Alligator Harbor, and it would include all of Alligator Point. The central features that would move to Wakulla County would be Bald Point State Park, Bald Point residential area, Sun and Sand mobile home area, Alligator Point residential area, and then several thousand acres of agricultural land. A map is attached.

The following facts are presented to the Board for their consideration:

1. According to the Franklin County Property Appraiser, the area to be annexed has a current taxable value of approximately \$90M, out of the county's total tax base of \$1.9B, based upon the 2018 certified tax roll. So, the annexed area represents about 5% of the county's tax base. (However, remember that the county tax base is going to take a hit based upon the impact of Hurricane Michael. The Property Appraiser has not completed the assessment of hurricane damage, but it is possible that next year's tax base will be smaller than this year's, and therefore a \$90M loss of taxable value from Alligator Point might end up being slightly more than 5% of the county's tax base for 2019.)

2. The county tax base generated some \$12M in revenue this year. So, if the annexation moved forward the county would lose some \$600K in tax revenue at the current milage rate. Approximately ½ of the tax revenues go to the Franklin County Sheriff's Office. If the annexation goes through, the county budget would have to be reduced by at least 5% in order to avoid a tax increase on the remaining property. (And, next year is going to be a challenge because of the broad based impact Hurricane Michael had on the tax base.)

3. The Franklin County School Board also receives tax revenue from Alligator Point so the School Board might have an opinion on the annexation. The School Board might be able to recoup their loss in tax revenue if the state would include Franklin County in the sparsity(?) allocation approved by the legislature.

4. Franklin County has a fire tax of \$50 per residence, and \$10 per vacant lot that goes to the Alligator Point Fire Dept. The funding and structure of the Alligator Point Fire Dept would be uncertain as Wakulla County has its own existing fire departments. Wakulla County has a higher fire tax assessment.

5. The Alligator Point Fire Department responds to fires in St. Teresa, so it is unknown if the Alligator Point Fire Department would still respond to St. Teresa if they became part of Wakulla County, or if the fire response for St. Teresa would move to the Lanark Village and Carrabelle Fire Departments.

5. The annexed area has about 200 rental units that contribute to the Franklin County TDC. These 200 units represent about 10% of the TDC tax collected here so there would be a reduction in TDC revenue by about 10%. Wakulla County also has a TDC, but it only has about 200 houses so the Wakulla County TDC could see a significant increase in their TDC by gaining 200 rental units on Alligator Point. The state DOR handles the disbursement of TDC funds so this division would be the responsibility of DOR.

6. Franklin County does not have mandatory garbage or a fee for its collection, but Wakulla County does.

7. According to the Franklin County Supervisor of Elections Office, the Alligator Point Precinct has 384 registered voters. While it is unclear if the Precinct line is the same as the proposed annexation area, if it is assumed that it is then Franklin County would lose 384 voters, and the county commission and school board district lines would have to be redrawn. If 384 votes were lost out of one district, the other four district lines would have to be adjusted to keep all things equal. Currently each district has approximately 1700 voters. If annexation were to occur, each district would shrink by some 78 voters. Wakulla County has a population of some 31,000 residents; almost triple the population of Franklin County, so the annexation of some 384 registered voters in Wakulla County might be insignificant to their district lines.

8. If annexation were to occur, the service area of the Franklin County EMS would shrink as EMS calls on Alligator Point would be dispatched from the Wakulla County Sheriff's Office. EMS calls on Alligator Point would probably not come to Weems Hospital, but it would depend on the medical emergency.

9. The Alligator Point Road, commonly known as County Road 370, or Alligator Drive, would become the property of Wakulla County. Since the road has suffered hurricane damage while it was in Franklin County, it is not clear who would be responsible for fixing the road if it was annexed into Wakulla County. But to give the Board an idea of the possible liability of the road, if the proposed repairs to Alligator Drive were \$5M (and considering FEMA approved \$2.6M for damages caused by Hurricane Hermine, a \$5M cost for Michael is certainly possible), then the county's local match of 12.5% of \$5M would be \$625K. Which county will be willing to allocate \$625K of local funds to repair the road?

10. The county currently spends an extra-ordinary share of Road Department budget maintaining Alligator Drive. The amount varies tremendously from year to year depending on the weather, so a base line cost is not currently available. The solution to the Alligator Point Road is still for the state to assume ownership, but at this time an annexation by Wakulla County would not move that issue forward.

11. Alligator Point does not generate any gas tax revenue for Franklin County, as there are no gas stations in the proposed annexation area, so there would be no loss in gas tax revenue to the county if annexation occurred.

12. Franklin County shares in a number of revenue streams from the state. Some of those revenue streams might go down because of a reduction in county population. The county finance office can provide a complete list of revenue sharing the county receives.

13. There may be additional impacts that have not yet been considered.

Created by Alan C. Pierce, RESTORE Coordinator
12/20/2018

Mr. Pierce stated Senator Bill Montford wanted Board discussion about this issue so that is why he presented this. He said this document is a public record but he does not need to read the entire document. Commissioner Parrish explained Senator Montford called and wanted to know how the Board feels about this issue. He said there does need to be a decision by this Board as Senator Montford is expecting a call before he proceeds because the Legislative session is not too far away. He went on to say the Board needs to consider if they lose 5% of the tax base along with the other issues he and the Clerk provided earlier in relation to where they are going with next year's budget. Commissioner Parrish said if they let Alligator Point go to Wakulla County he does not want to raise the tax base 5% and increase the millage rate and be like other municipalities that are over 9 mills. He reported he does not want to be a government entity that has no means for providing for the people if an emergency arises because they are maxed out on the millage rate. Commissioner Parrish said the Board needs to be aware of the implications of whatever they do because they are going to have to deal with it during budget time. Mrs. Skipper stated the numbers she provided are based on her 2018 certified tax roll. She explained her 2019 tax roll is still a work in progress and this is where the damage from the hurricane will come in. She reported the loss from the hurricane is not calculated into the estimate she provided. Mrs. Skipper reported the only saving grace is the fact that the Commission has fallen under the 10% limitation cap ever since it took effect several years ago. She stated the \$34 million loss in structural value at this point is not taxable value it is market value. She said the taxable value will be calculated later. Mrs. Skipper reported the Alligator Point amount they calculated is based on taxable value off the 2018 certified roll. She offered to provide her information to the Board. Commissioner Jones asked what the current millage rate is. Mrs. Skipper was not sure but said she thinks 6.3. Commissioner Boldt questioned what the millage rate is in Wakulla County. Mr. Pierce answered higher. He said the people of Alligator Point feel like they are not getting services and Wakulla County may be an option but Wakulla County is three times as large as Franklin County with 31,000 people and they have reached the threshold to be able to assess people for urban services and things communities want. He stated Wakulla County accesses \$250 a year for garbage service and \$200 a year for fire protection. He reported Wakulla County has a 7% utility surcharge for all utilities but he was not sure what was done with the money. He explained Franklin County does not have this kind of assessments so it will be more expensive

to be a property owner in Wakulla County if you live at Alligator Point. Commissioner Parrish said if Alligator Point wants a road then Wakulla County might put an assessment for the road and not ask the citizens. Mr. Pierce stated they could. He explained if you have a road with extraordinary costs then there will be an assessment for the road and it will come from people who use the road and he does not see another way around it. Commissioner Massey stated they are going to create an assessment and they want the road fixed before they take the area. Mr. Pierce commented the School Board will also be affected by this decision. He explained there is a rule on sparsity and there is funding that other areas receive but Franklin County does not receive it. He explained the county could receive this funding to make up the lost revenue. He reported Senator Montford would have to include this item but Franklin County is eligible for sparsity funding and the money would go to the School Board. Mrs. Skipper inquired what the position is of the School Board because the 10% limitation will cause any of the lost revenue from Alligator Point to come off of the school's taxable value. Mr. Pierce pointed out there will not be a big change in students because most of the students living at Alligator Point are already going to school in Wakulla County. He said there does not seem to be any change in how the school will operate but they would lose money. Clerk Johnson stated the millage rate for Franklin County is 6.2679. Commissioner Parrish expressed concern about losing 5% of the tax base and the millage rate rising and trying to generate the same amount of money. He explained a lot of things affect the millage rate and some contingency money will need to be put back as FEMA will not reimburse all of the money. He reported the storm is out of their control but there are things that are in their control. Commissioner Parrish pointed out last year people wanted to cut reserves but where would the county be if they had cut the reserves. He said he would like to see the contingency fund remain at \$1 million and the millage rate will have to go up to put the money back. He reported this could be quite a decision to make at budget time on how they handle this issue. Commissioner Jones questioned if the Board needs to have a conversation with the Superintendent of Schools about the sparsity funding before they make a decision. Commissioner Parrish said they need to talk with the Superintendent of Schools and Senator Montford. He reported it will be about 6 weeks before they know who the House representative will be. He stated bills are introduced before the Legislative session begins so they cannot wait long before making a decision. Commissioner Massey said he does not know what difference Wakulla County is going to make because former Commissioner Cheryl Sanders and Mr. Pierce have been on top of the issues at Alligator Point for 20 years. Mr. Pierce stated he thinks the difference is Wakulla County will assess the residents. Commissioner Parrish reported that is a decision for the residents. He explained they think they are not getting services and that the taxes collected in one area are put back in the same area but all the taxes are used together from all areas to fund all the departments and services. He stated everyone pays taxes but they are not set aside by geographical location. He said they have a consultant and he met on site twice with this person and told them the county needs more resources. He explained the people at Alligator Point cannot vote for him but he went down there to try and help and then got blasted in a newspaper article. He stated they have done what they could with the limited resources they have. He explained the Legislature will not let them go up but just so much on the millage rate without a 4/5 vote of the County Commission. Commissioner Parrish said he has done what he could but does not know what

else to do. Commissioner Massey reported \$11 million have been spent there. Commissioner Boldt stated the people have spoken and they now have a representative that is present, accessible and involved and that has taken decades. He said they now have traction with the intergovernmental agency headed by Mr. McColm and the Governor's Office and state and federal people. He reported the research is appropriate to do if the people at Alligator Point wish to do it but it is very disruptive to change governance. Commissioner Boldt said it will cause confusion and Senator Montford will be confused. He stated Wakulla County is not present today and he thinks this premature. He suggested collecting the data but talking about it in a year because some of the things they wished for are happening now. Commissioner Boldt asked how Wakulla County plans to provide services for the people that would be annexed. He said the capital infrastructure for all the projects could be changed. He listed the items that could be disrupted by these annex issues. He suggested they stop, look and listen and see how it goes for the next year. Commissioner Massey pointed out Commissioner Boldt would not be a Commissioner if they annexed the area. Commissioner Jones clarified the question from Senator Montford is whether they stand in opposition to the annexation or are they for it. He stated this Board cannot control what is done at the Legislature or whether a bill get introduced. Commissioner Jones reported the Board can say yes, no or they are not opposed to it but they do need to respond. Commissioner Jones stated Wakulla County's millage rate is 8.00. Commissioner Massey stated he is not for it until he finds out more information. He reported he is not going to put the county in the position of having to raise taxes. He explained Clerk Johnson has reported on the situation at this time. Commissioner Massey said he feels like the county has helped the people at Alligator Point and have tried to do everything they could do. He reported workers have been there for weeks straight and the dump trucks were not running anywhere except Alligator Point. Commissioner Boldt stated the county should clearly communicate with Senator Montford on their position and their position should be qualified that they stand by it for a year and they are opposed at this time only. He reported a letter should be sent receipt receipt requested certified mail and they all can sign it. Commissioner Parrish said they cannot be sure what will happen as other people could support the bill and move it forward. Commissioner Massey asked if Mr. Pierce has talked to any of the Commissioners from Wakulla County. Mr. Pierce answered no; he just talked with Mr. David Edwards, Wakulla County Administrator. Commissioner Parrish said county staff needs to make the Superintendent of Schools aware of this so they can communicate with Senator Montford as they are their own taxing authority. He reported the Superintendent of Schools needs to know so they have a plan for replacing the funding for the school. Mr. Moron agreed to contact the Superintendent. **Commissioner Boldt made a motion to wait for a year and oppose annexation.** He stated he needs to be careful he is not in a conflict of interest as he lives there. He said he is one of the most knowledgeable people about this issue. Commissioner Parrish said he wants to know if the people of Alligator Point want to move forward with annexation. He reported if they are moving forward with annexation then why is the county trying to fix the road. Commissioner Boldt said they do not have all the people just the research right now. Commissioner Parrish reported he does not want to work on the road for a year and then they want to move over to Wakulla County. He stated the people were there to write the newspaper article and get this started. Commissioner Parrish explained they finally got the

state to hire a consultant and then they get partially in it and it changes. Commissioner Massey said one of the Commissioners in Wakulla County said the road must be fixed before they go to Wakulla County. Commissioner Parrish asked why they should fix the road if people want out. He said they have written articles degrading this Commission and today have said the Board is not reacting. He stated they are trying to help but it is not enough. Commissioner Boldt said the Board does their best at the time and focuses on the issues and the rest has been disruptive. He reported a letter could be sent that the County Commission does not have anything to go on about what the will of the people is. Commissioner Jones stated no one has been slack about sending him information on any issue since he has been a Commissioner but nothing has been sent to him from anyone at Alligator Point and he knows they know about this issue so apparently they are good with it. He said everyone knows how to contact the Commissioners. He reported the people have put forward what they want because there are Senators calling the Commissioners. Attorney Shuler offered to help draft a letter but said he needs some instructions from the Board on what their wishes are. He pointed out there is not a full Board today so they may want to defer a decision until the next meeting as they do not have a deadline they will fail to meet before the next Board meeting. He suggested Mr. Moron or Commissioner Parrish get in contact with Senator Montford and let him know they will take action at the next Board meeting. Commissioner Parrish reported it will be a recommendation but that does not mean it will change the outcome. Attorney Shuler commented Senator Montford asked if the county wanted him to move forward and if they say no then he may not file the bill. Commissioner Parrish said that is what he said but he could not give him that answer because it had to come to the Board. He stated Senator Montford did reach out and at some point the Board is going to have to respond. Commissioner Parrish reported someone else may take action. He pointed out the county does not know who their new House Representative will be. Commissioner Parrish asked how the agenda looks for the next meeting. Mr. Moron said it is busy with the Planning & Zoning report and Board of Adjustment. Mr. Pierce reported there may also be a presentation on the airport. Commissioner Massey said if this area is going to Wakulla County then the Board should not sink any more money into the road. He reported a Commissioner in Wakulla County said they will not take this area until the road is fixed. He stated Wakulla County will raise their taxes and they will assess them for everything. Commissioner Massey reported if the residents want to pay then they will assess a road tax and fix the road. **Commissioner Boldt amended his motion to oppose any annexation to Wakulla County.** He said if they start in the other direction then everything stops on the road and that is not fair to the people. He stated the county government has decades of experience and needs to keep pressing on with the business of the people. Commissioner Massey asked if the county should spend \$4 million on a road and then give the property to Wakulla County. Commissioner Boldt stated this is speculative since Wakulla County is not even here. Commissioner Boldt said the county takes care of the road just like they have for 30 years. He explained there is now a Governor appointed task force to find solutions for the road long term. Commissioner Parrish said that is something they never had. Commissioner Boldt stated they need to harbor that and work with the consultant and not confuse the whole picture by saying anything other than they are opposed to Wakulla County taking over Bald Point and Alligator Point. Attorney Shuler clarified the Board can act today if they want to

because they have a quorum. **Commissioner Boldt amended his motion to complete opposition to annexation to Wakulla County.** He said they can do research again so they just need to give this a year. Commissioner Parrish stated he thinks they need to have a public hearing on the issue to hear from the people of Alligator Point. He suggested if the meeting agenda is full for the next meeting then they conduct the public hearing at 1:00 p.m. or 1:30 p.m. and then the people from Alligator Point can tell them how they feel. He reported the people that are here today can spread the word about what was said today. Commissioner Parrish stated if they still want to annex then he wants to hear it from the people and he will cast his vote accordingly. Commissioner Massey said he would also like to have one of the Commissioners from Wakulla County at the meeting. Mr. Pierce said he can invite them. Commissioner Parrish stated that is not a good idea. Attorney Shuler explained they will probably want Franklin County to make a decision before they appear. Commissioner Parrish stated he does not want to oppose annexation if this is what the people want. **Commissioner Boldt withdrew his motion. Commissioner Parrish made a motion to conduct a public hearing at the next meeting at 1:30 p.m. and listen to the people of Alligator Point. Commissioner Jones seconded the motion.** Commissioner Parrish reported at some point they must give a recommendation to Senator Montford. Commissioner Massey agreed if that is what they want then the county will not spend any more money on the road. **Motion carried; 5-0.** Mr. McCloy suggested they conduct a public hearing with their Commissioner as only a small amount of people will travel here to the public hearing. Commissioner Parrish explained in the past they went there and it was very disrespectful and he is not going back without a deputy to control the crowd. He went on to say if only Commissioner Boldt goes then he will not get the sentiment of the people and get to look at them when they speak. Commissioner Parrish explained this is where the Board holds their meetings and they are inviting the people to attend. Commissioner Jones said he feels the same way. Commissioner Boldt stated they are a full Board for all the people. He said all of them should go there and they can have a moderator to facilitate the meeting. Commissioner Parrish reported he is not going back there but if they come here he will listen and give them every consideration.

Michael Shuler – County Attorney – Report

Attorney Shuler did not have a report.

Commissioners' Comments

Commissioner Jones said many people do not watch Franklin County athletics but they do not want to miss Friday night because Port St. Joe and Franklin County are both undefeated in district play and someone has to lose. He stated the game will be in Eastpoint and the Junior Varsity will play at 5:00 p.m., the girls at 6:00 p.m. and the Varsity will play at 7:30 p.m.

Adjourn

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at

10:25 a.m.

Noah Lockley - Chairman

Attest:

Marcia M. Johnson - Clerk of Courts