

**FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL MEETING
COURTHOUSE ANNEX, COMMISSION MEETING ROOM
OCTOBER 26, 2023
4:30 PM
MINUTES**

Commissioners Present: Ricky Jones-Chairman, Jessica Ward-Vice-Chairman, Cheryl Sanders, Office Amison
Commissioner Absent: Noah Lockley
Others Present: Michael Shuler-County Attorney, Michael Moron-County Coordinator

Call to Order

Chairman Jones called the meeting to order.

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Jones led the Board in prayer followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comments

Mr. Paul Riegelmayr voiced his concerns to the Board on purchasing the property noting he felt the county could make better use of tax dollars. He asked the Board to not move forward with the purchase.

Special Meeting Item(s)

1. Erik Lovestrand - Formosa Termite Information

Mr. Lovestrand spoke to the Board via Zoom regarding his research on the Formosa termites and treatment. He noted that he was not speaking as an expert in the treatment of pest control. He said in researching literature he could not find any statement of where a facility that had been treated for termites was more likely to have reoccurrences. He noted that even new structures would need to be maintained for termite prevention. This would be done by having an expert maintain inspections and retreatments to prevent occurrences and or reoccurrences.

2. Proposed Addendum - Gulf State Bank Building

Review and consider action on a proposed addendum reducing the purchase price of the old Gulf State Bank Building located on the corner of Highway 98 and Island Drive in Eastpoint (Franklin County), Florida

Attorney Shuler presented the proposed addendum to the Board. He explained the process that had and where they are now. The first appraisal appraised the property at \$750,000.00. The second and final appraisal appraised the property at \$1,060,000.00. The average of the two appraisals constitutes the purchase value. The average of the two appraisals is \$905,000.00. However, the contract established that the lowest price at which the Seller had to sell is \$950,000.00. The seller presented an addendum to the contract with the following terms:

1. Purchase Price is \$905,000.
2. Closing will take place on or before November 17, 2023.
3. Buyer accepts the Property in "as-is" condition. Seller is not obligated to make any repairs.

Attorney Shuler said at this time the Board could accept or reject the counteroffer or propose a counter to the counteroffer. Attorney Shuler noted that there is no contract to be enforced at this time due to the appraised values.

Commissioners' Comments

Commissioner Sanders said that she is not going to be in favor of purchasing the property due to the termite infestation. She noted that she believes that she would have voted no at the time of the original contract had the termite infestation been disclosed.

Commissioner Amison noted that we are not looking at a building that has been condemned. He noted that even with the cost of treatment and maintenance of termites he does not believe that the cost would surpass the cost to build a new building.

Chairman Jones noted that even with a new building you would have the cost of termite preventative maintained. He noted that the county owns another building that had termites in which they have poured millions of dollars into.

Commissioner Sanders noted that the armory was donated to the county by the State, and they paid for the treatment of the termites. She reiterated her sentiment that there is better use of \$905k than purchasing a building with termites. She noted that she has no problem building a new building or even buying a modular.

Commissioner Amison inquired as to who pays to maintain the termite bond on the armory. Mr. Moron noted that he will have to get with staff on that and let him know.

Commissioner Ward noted that even with a new building there are risks of termite infestation. She noted we have limited land on which to build a new building noting there is no property in Apalachicola and moving easterly in county was only option. She noted that with rising costs it could be years before a new building could be built.

Commissioner Sanders reiterated that she did not feel this was the best use of funds and she did not want to put her name on it as being in support of.

Chairman Jones called for a motion at this time. Attorney Shuler noted that the Board could reject, accept, or submit a counteroffer.

Commissioner Amison inquired as to the cost for tenting. Commissioner Ward noted there were also other issues with the HVAC and electrical. Attorney Shuler noted his recollection of the repair costs the treatment of termites was around \$25k, he was not sure on the electrical and the HVAC was estimated at \$7,500. Mr. Moron noted that the tenting costs is estimated at \$23,592 and he has Mrs. Griffith looking into the cost for the bond. Together the two should be around \$30k Commissioner Amison asked if the seller would be agreeable to a counteroffer.

Mrs. Candace Varnes, agent for the seller, noted that the seller was agreeable to help cover the costs of the repairs and termite treatments until the appraisals came back. They were not in agreement with the comps used from Niceville when there is an almost identical building in Wakulla. The seller has proposed \$905k selling price but is not willing to pay any additional costs for repairs or treatment. Mrs. Varnes noted that the Board could certainly make a counteroffer and she would take it back to the seller.

Chairman Jones noted that we are still under \$50k for total repairs which is lower than the original contracted price. Attorney Shuler noted the quotes for repairs as follows: Cates Electric \$11,140, Gunn HVAC \$7,000 and \$28k for termites. Commissioner Amison said let us make a counteroffer noting with the termite infestation being brought to light the seller most likely does not have anyone offering the

original \$1million plus asking price. Commissioner Ward noted that they could deduct half of the repair cost. Commissioner Amison recommended counteroffering \$870k. Commissioner Amison made a motion to counteroffer \$870,000. Commissioner Ward seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-1, Commissioner Sanders opposed.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned.

Ricky Jones – Chairman

Attest:

Michele Maxwell – Clerk of Courts

The audio is available upon request. Please e-mail jgay@franklinclerk.com, call 850-653-8861 to speak with the Administrative Assistant, or submit a request in writing to obtain audio of this meeting.