

**FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
COURTHOUSE ANNEX, COMMISSION MEETING ROOM
JANUARY 2, 2024
9:00 AM
MINUTES**

Commissioners Present: Ricky Jones-Chairman, Jessica Ward-Vice-Chairman, Cheryl Sanders, Ottilie Amison, and Anthony Croom, Jr.

Others Present: Michele Maxwell-Clerk of Court, Michael Shuler-County Attorney, Michael Moron-County Coordinator, Erin Griffith-Fiscal Manager/Grants Coordinator, and Jessica Gay-Clerk to the Board

Call to Order

Chairman Jones called the meeting to order.

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance Approval of the Agenda

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

Attorney Shuler requested an item be added to the agenda for the Board to consider hiring Engineer Jack Husbands to provide an engineering analysis and report to rebut the claims that have been made by two individual owners at Alligator Point that the recent bike path construction has caused significant damage to their property and seawall. The fee for this report would be \$6500. Attorney Shuler explained that he reached out to Dewberry first, however they are not able to provide the services needed for this. He noted that he received the estimate Wednesday of last week and had a call with Mr. Husbands. If the Board wants to hold off until the next meeting they can. **On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Amison, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the agenda with the addition to Attorney Shuler's report as stated above. Motion carried 5-0.**

Payment of County Bills

1. County Bill List for Payment

On a motion by Commissioner Sanders, seconded by Commissioner Ward, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the Payment of County Bills. Motion carried 5-0.

Public Comments

There was no request for public comments.

Department Directors Reports

2. Howard Nabors – Superintendent of Roads and Bridges

Mr. Nabors wished the Board a Happy New Year and welcomed the new commissioner. Commissioner Sanders thanked Mr. Nabors for putting up additional signs at the county line. Mr. Nabors noted that there is still water out there. Commissioner Ward noted that she has a couple of signs that need to be replaced and she will send him an email.

3. Fonda Davis – Solid Waste Director

Mr. Davis wished the Board a Happy New Year. He noted they recently hired one employee for Parks and Recreation and had to let one employee go. Commissioner Sanders noted that we are going to have to do something about the carcasses being thrown out. Commissioner Ward noted that carcass containers have

been removed. Noted that we may have to put at a different location. Let us get together and talk about that we need to do. Chairman Jones asked if FWC helps us in anyway with these containers? Commissioner Sanders noted that they do not. Commissioner Ward suggested reaching out to FWC.

4. Jennifer Daniels – Emergency Management Director

Ms. Amanda Anthony wished the Board a Happy New Year. No action items noting it was a quiet month.

5. Dewitt Polous – Mosquito Control Director

Mr. Polous was not present.

6. Erik Lovestrand – Extension Office Director

Mr. Lovestrand wished the Board a Happy New Year and welcomed Commissioner Croom. No action items and there were no questions from the Board.

7. Whitney Roundtree – Library Director

Ms. Roundtree wished the Board a Happy New Year. No action items but noted the upcoming closure for Martin Luther King Jr. Day and the soup fundraiser.

Other Reports

8. Ted Mosteller – Interim Airport Manager

Mr. Mosteller had no action items. Commissioner Amison inquired about the roof over the FBO. Mr. Mosteller noted that Mr. Collins said there was a problem with replacing the roof completely. That would trigger a major overhaul of the entire building. He came back with a suggestion of a spray fibrous flexible sealer. Mrs. Griffith asked if we could get Mr. Collins to come to the next meeting to discuss what the different options are for the building. Chairman Jones said is it because it is meeting a certain dollar threshold, etc. Mr. Mosteller noted that the deal is we can repair it but cannot replace it. Commissioner Croom inquired about the t-hangar roof repair and asked how many attempts Mr. Mosteller had made to contact the contractor. Mr. Mosteller noted that it has been several. Mrs. Griffith said she has not been asked to contact him. Commissioner Amison asked when he tried to reach out to him was it during the holidays. Commissioner Sanders noted that we need to keep Mrs. Griffith in the loop as she seemed to not know anything about it.

The Board moved to Mrs. Griffith's report at this time.

Public Hearings 9:30 a.m. (ET)

9. 9:30 a.m. (ET) Public Hearing - Public Road/Alley Abandonment

This public hearing was tabled (continued) at the December 19, 2023, regular meeting, to be heard at the January 02, 2024, regular meeting at 9:30 a.m. (ET). The following is the original notice:

Notice is given that on the 19th day of December 2023 at 11 :00 a.m. (ET), or as soon thereafter as is possible, in the courtroom at the Courthouse Annex, located at 34 Forbes Street, Apalachicola, Florida, the Franklin County Board of County Commissioners shall conduct a public hearing to consider adopting a resolution abandoning the following public road/alley:

Public Road/ Alley to be Considered for Abandonment:

All of a 30' wide alley/Gunn Street in Block 3 East, St. George Island Gulf Beaches, Unit 1, as recorded in Plat Book 2, Page 7, Franklin County, Florida.

The abandonment is pursuant to Florida Statutes Section 336.09, 336.10 and 336.12.

Item to be addressed later in the meeting.

County Staff & Attorney Reports

10. Erin Griffith – Fiscal Manager/Grants Coordinator

1. BOARD ACTION: ENGINEERING SERVICES CONTRACT DEWBERRY ENGINEERS

At the December 5th meeting, the Board authorized staff to begin contract negotiations with the highest ranked firm, Dewberry Engineers. Attached is the services contract and schedule of rates. For project services, the rate schedule may be subject to review by various granting agencies and will require additional approval from the Board for specific task orders which will outline the scope of services, the amount and required completion date.

Board action to approve and authorize the chairman to sign the attached general services contract with Dewberry Engineers.

On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Amison, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved and authorized the Chairman to sign the attached general services contract with Dewberry Engineers. Commissioner Sanders inquired if this was a one-year contract. Mrs. Griffith noted that it is either a two-year contract or a three-year contract with Commissioner Sanders noted that she does not want to lock in to one company with others coming into the county. Commissioner Amison inquired about how long our contracts normally last? Mrs. Griffith said we are trying to get our contracts on a consistent renewal. A lot of times your projects span several years, same way with auditing. This is more for services you are able to handle internally or projects. **Motion carried 5-0.**

2. BOARD ACTION: LETTER OF SUPPORT OPIOID SETTLEMENT FUNDS

Northwest Florida Health Network is the state's designated agency to manage the region's share of Florida's Opioid Settlement Funds. It is our understanding that Franklin County is slated to receive a first-year allocation of about \$80,000 followed by smaller payments for (5) years. There are strict programmatic limitations on what the funds can be used for, and Sheriff Smith has requested support from the Board for his efforts to purchase an x-ray machine at the local jail to prevent narcotics from reaching the inmate population. If this request is approved, the Board could invite Northwest Florida Health Network and Sheriff Smith to a future meeting to discuss the settlement proceeds and the benefits of the screening technology.

Board action to approve and authorize the chairman to sign the letter of support for the X-ray screening equipment at the Sheriff's Department pending review of the settlement agreement from Attorney Shuler.

On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Amison, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved and authorized the Chairman to sign the letter of support for the X-ray screening equipment at the Sheriff's Department pending review of the settlement agreement from Attorney Shuler. Commissioner Ward noted that she does want them to come because X-ray machine could mean a lot of different things, look forward to seeing what they have to present. **Motion carried 5-0.**

3. BOARD ACTION: 2 ACRES FOR LANARK EMS STATION PROPERTY SITE SURVEY

The county has been moving forward with the design and environmental permitting for the Lanark EMS Station. As part of the civil engineering and Geotech work, approximately six bore holes were drilled at the initial proposed site adjacent to the Lanark St. James Volunteer Fire Department. Unfortunately, when

the bore samples were done as part of the Geotech work, even the seemingly non-wetland areas of the site (which is high elevation, dry soil) revealed a water table only several feet below the surface – this site condition thus required a much larger, more shallow storm water retention area which could not be fit on the site without reducing the size of the proposed station. After receiving this bad news, Commissioner Sanders approached the City of Carrabelle to see if they would consider donating an adjacent two-acre parcel directly to the west (farther from the wetlands area) whereas the station could still be sited near the fire department with direct access to Oak Street and Highway 98 via Spring Road. The Carrabelle Commission voted to proceed with the donation at their meeting in December and the county and city attorneys are working through the details at this time. The EMS building’s architectural plans are about 60% complete and to keep the project moving forward without delay, we suggest ordering the survey work on the new site as it typically takes up to a month to get a survey completed. A draft rendering of the new site layout is attached.

Board action to approve ordering the preliminary surveys of the new two-acre site.

Commissioner Sanders and Commissioner Ward commended the City of Carrabelle for their collaboration in working with the county on this and other matters. **On a motion by Commissioner Sanders, seconded by Commissioner Ward, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved ordering the preliminary surveys of the new two-acre site and to send the City of Carrabelle a letter of appreciation for the donation of the land. Motion carried 5-0.**

4. BOARD INFORMATION: UPDATED DRAFT TDC SPENDING PLAN

The Tourist Development Council will review and make their recommendations on the attached TDC spending plan at their January 10th meeting. After that meeting, the board will hold the public hearing before adoption of the plan at the January 16th commission meeting. In the attached there was one minor correction to the budgeted amounts for the new curtains at Chapman Auditorium. The TDC shall review and make their recommendations on the attached draft plan at their meeting on January 10th. A final draft plan will then be included on the agenda for the public hearing on January 16th.

5. BOARD INFORMATION: MISCELLANEOUS PROJECT UPDATES

SGI Parking Project: Started construction 1/2/24

Vrooman Park: Project underway

Womack Creek: Project underway

SGI Fishing Pier Access Road: Met with FEMA representatives, very close to being obligated funding for this project

Commissioner Ward said she wanted to be sure that Dewberry or someone is going out to make sure they are doing the correct work as far as French drains etc. Noting that she knows what she is looking at but does not know where they need to go. Mrs. Griffith noted that Dewberry is doing the inspections on these projects.

Chairman Jones noted that we had a request from Mr. Roy Baker of Opportunity Florida to hold their quarterly board meeting on February 21st at the armory. If they do, I do not know if it would require Board direction. Mr. Moron noted that we do not necessarily need a vote. Believe with everything going on at airport, think it is a good idea that they hold the meeting here. Chairman Jones noted they are very enthusiastic about the direction that things are going in. Commissioner Ward noted that she is on the board and attends the meetings remotely. The last meeting, they did mention Triumph, the airport and seafood industry. Commissioner Sanders noted that previously they did not represent all of the counties. Now they are more tuned into what each individual county needs. Commissioner Ward noted that the drone video Mr. Moron shared some time back was provided by Opportunity Florida.

The Board moved to the public hearing at this time.

1. 9:30 a.m. (ET) Public Hearing - Public Road/Alley Abandonment

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Attorney Shuler explained the process of today's hearing. Recommended the Board call for public comments. Chairman Jones noted that the applicant had made a request for an extension. Attorney Shuler noted that the Board would need to act on this first, then he would receive instructions from the Board as to when you want to reschedule. Attorney Shuler noted that he will advertise. Chairman Jones noted that he sees no issue with extending it, it is right after the holidays. Mrs. Barbara Sanders inquired as to who pays for the readvertisement. Attorney Shuler noted that the county pays for the advertisement. **Commissioner Amison made a motion to table, seconded by Commissioner Croom.** Commissioner Amison noted that he will completely fall on the sword on this one. Noting in his haste, he kind of pushed the Board to get this done. He was not really thinking about the holidays. He apologized for his over zealousness. Commissioner Croom noted that we are going to make sure we do this correctly. Attorney Shuler noted that he would need some direction as to when this needs to be rescheduled for. Attorney Shuler noted that in this case there is a full two-week requirement. He noted that he would suggest the second meeting in February. Mr. Moron asked if this is something the Board wants to do during a regular meeting or at a special meeting at 5 pm. **Commissioner Amison amended his motion to table and reschedule for February 20th at 5 pm so that the public has the opportunity to attend. Seconded by Commissioner Croom.** Commissioner Ward noted that if the issue is important enough for an individual, they will make a priority to attend. That is why we advertise, time place certain. **Motion carried 5-0.** Attorney Shuler noted that he will bring a resolution to the Board at the next meeting with place, date, and time certain.

11. Michael Morón – County Coordinator

Mr. Moron did not have a report.

12. Michael Shuler – County Attorney

Item added at the beginning of the meeting.

Attorney Shuler explained he had received a Notice of Intent to sue the county from two individuals at Alligator Point regarding the recent bike path construction. He noted that we have a six-month period to review and file a response. The individuals claim the bike path construction has caused stormwater damage to their property, and an engineer is needed in order to provide a rebuttal. The cost is \$6500.

On a motion by Commissioner Sanders, seconded by Commissioner Ward, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board authorized Attorney Shuler to hire Mr. Husbands to prepare an engineering analysis and report to rebut the claims being made. Commissioner Ward asked if the \$6500 would be something we could recoup from the plaintiff. Attorney Shuler noted that we could request to recoup the cost as part of the negotiations assuming there is a lawsuit against us. He noted that he does not believe the Garlick Environmental report is credible as they are not engineers. **Motion carried 5-0.**

Commissioners' Comments

Commissioner Croom asked for information on Rural Counties Day. Mr. Moron noted that this would take some assistance from John Solomon. Basically, it is a tent that we set up and man representing the county. I think it is for the day. The Board has not participated in this in quite some time. Chairman Jones noted that he thinks we should move forward with it. He noted that he would for sure be there one day. Commissioner Amison said he has a connection for shrimp. Mr. Moron said he will look into and get with each one of the Board members individually. Reminded the Board of Legislative Day on January 17th. Commissioner Ward wished everyone a Happy New Year. Commissioner Sanders noted it has been a great holiday season. Chairman Jones announced the next meeting will be held on January 16th.

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.