

**FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
COURTHOUSE ANNEX, COMMISSION MEETING ROOM
FEBRUARY 20, 2024
9:00 AM
MINUTES**

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

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

Call to Order

Chairman Jones called the meeting order.

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

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

Approval of the Agenda

Attorney Shuler noted that he and Mr. Moron received an email from Grayson Sheperd regarding a request for Board authorization to apply for a \$60,000 FWC grant to put additional material on the Buddy Ward Reef.

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 Attorney Shuler's addition as noted above. Motion carried 4-0.

Payment of County Bills

1. County Bill List for Payment

On a motion by Commissioner Amison, seconded by Commissioner Ward, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the County Bill List for Payment. Motion carried 4-0.

Mr. Moron noted that there are now times around the different sections on the agenda. He is trying to balance out the agenda and create time management. This helps determine what time speakers and presenters will be heard. The only time certain event is the public hearing at 5:00 pm. Chairman Jones noted that things that have been advertised for time certain cannot be changed.

Public Comments

Adrienne Johnson executive director of the Florida Shellfish Aquaculture Association which represents 377 clam and oyster farmers in Florida, and 67 in Franklin County. She spoke of the difficulties farmers have when trying to access their farms from the boat ramps in use. We are asking the county to address the short term and long-term solution to access of the water. In the short term we would like for you to find ways and to direct staff to apply for state grant funding to repair/replace Sun and Sand. In the long-term, we would like to be part of a stakeholder group to identify other options to improve water access to our farms. A lot of things are out of our control when working on the water but fixing these boat ramps is not. We ask that you invest in critical infrastructure that allows farmers to access their farms, support their families and contributing to growing our local economy.

Andy Arnold noted that Ms. Johnson pretty much summed it up and he noted they are all in agreement with her.

Myrtis Wynn noted she is here to bring awareness to a growing problem in Franklin County which is

homelessness. She noted there are people living under the bridges and in cars. She also noted that there are others who cannot afford a place of their own, and live with family members etc. Not all homeless are on drugs and suffer from mental illness. Florida House and Senate are proposing bills to make it illegal to sleep in public places. Concern is what will happen to the homeless under the new bill. She said she is more concerned with the human factor. She noted that the school has a program called Backpack Buddies and they send home about 300 backpacks each Friday. Noted that possibly the county and cities could come together and come up with a solution to this problem.

Constitutional Officers

2. A. J. Smith -- Sheriff -- Opioid Settlement Presentation

Major Varnes presented the request to the Board noted they need the machine to keep drugs out of the jail. He noted that most jails have this one. It is smaller in size and emits a low amount of radiation. It detects from the shoe all the way to the head. It is easy to use. Extremely safe. It has a quick setup, quick scan, and detects temperature also.

Chairman Jones asked if the Opioid Settlement funds would be used to pay for this and just for the public knowledge how much is this piece of equipment. Major Varnes noted that it runs around \$150k maybe a little more. Chairman Jones said it kind of functions like the ones at airport going through TSA. Sheriff Smith said all of the drugs that come into the jail are through inmates and trustees. Major Varnes said this equipment could save a life. Getting fentanyl in our jail could be fatal and having this equipment can identify drugs in the body.

Sheriff Smith noted that Mr. Mike Watkins was going to try to be here, but he is at the capital today. He noted that Mr. Watkins is on board with this request. He noted that a couple of years ago they started funding a care coordinator position and now funds another position. These two people help people who have mental health or substance abuse or just need help in the community. They have interreacted with over 2100 in the last six months. They have helped them get substance or mental health counseling. Everyone that comes into the jail they interview and meet with. You are going to see some overdoes stats, with how many people have died, overdosed. We are offering people help but we are also putting them in jail. We are trying to keep Franklin County drug free.

Mr. Moron asked Sheriff Smith to address the proposed legislation Ms. Wynn mentioned regarding homelessness. He asked Sheriff Smith would this legislative make the jail like a hotel. Sheriff Smith said no, because if you are not arrested you cannot sleep at the jail. If they are arrested, if that does become law, we will certainly have to house them. Chairman Jones said that is really beyond all of us because we do not make those decisions, we will just have to deal with it if it becomes law. Sheriff Smith said it is definitely an issue noting that he encountered a gentleman sleeping in his car yesterday at the Ace Hardware. He noted the gentleman stated he had nowhere to go, he is a local guy, his family had put him out and he was just trying to sleep somewhere he was not bothering anyone. Sheriff Smith said he is happy to be a part of a discussion for a resolution. He noted they have a parcel of land behind the jail, he knows no one wants a homeless camp in their back yard, so this would be a good location. He noted that it is one big problem. We are here to do anything we can do to help. He noted that he will leave some information regarding the care program for the Board to review. He noted that the opioid funds would likely be expended for the next two years and believed Ginger has worked something out to split the payment.

Commissioner Croom asked if they have the anti-drone system yet to prevent drugs from being dropped. Sheriff Smith noted that they have not, and they really have not had a problem with that yet.

On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Croom, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the purchase of the Intercept camera system using funds from the Opioid Settlement. Motion carried 4-0.

Ms. Renee Brannan spoke regarding transitioning the 911 system. She noted they have previously been in a tri-county contract with Gulf and Calhoun both of which have withdrawn from the contract. The transition will be from E-911 to Next Generation 911. The new system will allow for video, photo, other things to be sent in. This will be a complete revamp of the 911 system. We are required to have a stand-alone system so that means we will need more equipment, however, it will provide better services for our citizens. This upgrade will bring us up to state level standards. We do not qualify for regional grants because we have the funds to purchase. This will connect us to other counties, allowing us to better serve our citizens. The digital will stay with Solacom and Guardian that we already have. There should be no training cost as our employees are already familiar with the program. Chairman Jones clarified that if training is needed, those funds would not come from the opioid funds. Ms. Brannan noted that is correct and the opioid funds can only be used for 911 equipment only. Mrs. Griffith noted that there are enough funds in the fund for the purchase. Ms. Brannan asked the Board to approve the request contingent upon approval of the 911 board and Attorney Shuler's approval of the contracts. Commissioner Ward inquired about training. Ms. Brannan noted the employee would see the same screen as before, but the technical side will be different. **On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Croom, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the 911 upgrade system purchase contingent upon the 911 board's approval and Attorney Shuler's review and approval of the contract. Motion carried 4-0.**

Presentations/Updates/Requests

3. Sarah Quaranta -- Health Department Administrator -- Community CPR & Choking

Response Class

Ms. Quaranta introduced herself and allowed Mrs. Nicole Sandoval, Ms. DT Simmons, and Mr. Richard Lewis to introduce themselves. Ms. Quaranta presented the website gulffranklin.com to the Board and public asking each person to take out their phone follow her to the page. She noted that the website is a health hub, and online resource guide for all the resources available in Franklin and Gulf County. Ms. Quaranta presented the Back to Community project which is a program that provides CPR and choking course. This is a free opportunity for the public to be held at Holy Family. Mrs. Sandavol noted that they have partnered with Weems Memorial Hospital EMS, Franklin County Emergency Management and ECCC. It will be held tomorrow at the Senior Citizen also known as Holy Family at 6:30 pm. Mr. Lewis noted that CPR is extremely important for everyone to know. You do not have to be certified to do it. We have done hundreds of classes throughout the years. Throughout the state they track bystander CPR and return of circulation. When I first started this our bystander CPR was around 10-11% and return of spontaneous resuscitation at 12%. The last time I checked it was at 32% and 35%. We have noticed there is a direct correlation between bystanders doing CPR and saving lives. Taking the classes allows people to become comfortable. He strongly encouraged the public to attend. Ms. Simmons noted that as a health department we are heavily invested in primary prevention. We recognize that behavioral interventions go a long way in preventing heart disease which is the number one leading cause of death. Commissioner Croom noted that he believes this is a good idea noting he has done CPR multiple times. He noted that it is within the first 8-10 minutes to save a life. He noted that he has had to do this on his wife. Commissioner Ward appreciate them extended sick visits noting we have lost a couple of providers here locally. Ms. Simmons noted that they have added a cardiologist. Mr. Lewis thanked Ms. Quaranta and the health department for working with them over the years.

4. Richard 'Louie' Lewis -- EMS Director -- Introduction of New Director

Mr. Lewis introduced Mr. Randall Lottman as the EMS Director noting he has been in EMS about 15 years and a captain since 2019. He is extremely knowledgeable in systems and 911 as a whole. Mr. Lewis noted that he has know Mr. Lottman for 15 to 16 years and he will remain a resource for Mr. Lottman and Franklin County as needed moving forward. Mr. Lottman noted that he looked forward to

working with the Board to continually enhance health care in the county. Commissioner Ward welcomed Mr. Lottman and thanked Mr. Lewis for his service. Chairman Jones told Mr. Lewis to not forget where we are. Further noting that Mr. Lewis has done a great job. Mr. Lewis noted that family still has property on the island so they will definitely be around. Chairman Jones noted this will be about as smooth of a transition as possible and EMS matters. Mr. Lewis thanked all for the Commissioners, Michael Moron, and Erin for the working relationship through the years.

5. Dennis & Marie Dingman -- CDBG Administrator -- CDBG Program Funding Awards

Mr. Dingman announced the following rehabilitation funding awards and asked for the Board's ratification.

1. Approve CDBG rehabilitation funding for Margaret Richards, 123 Hathcock Road, in the amount of \$95,390.00, to The Pinnacle Group of Panama City
2. Approve CDBG mobile home replacement funding for Ronald L. Custer, 279 Tallahassee Street, in the amount of \$130,969.60, to Ironwood Homes of Perry
3. Approve CDBG mobile home replacement funding for Franklin A. Evans, 720 Ridge Road, in the amount of \$139,707.60, including sewer tap fee, to Ironwood Homes of Perry
4. Approve CDBG mobile home replacement funding for Karen and Jackie Foley, 733 Wilderness Road, in the amount of \$138,089.60, to Ironwood Homes of Perry

Mr. Dingman noted that the each of the homes were upgraded to include higher efficiency materials such as HVAC units, water heaters, and siding for increased energy efficiency and durability. Chairman Jones inquired about in the proves of the homes being to be placed, where are the people going to be living? Mr. Dingman noted that the program provides for the homeowners to move out of the homes. There is a \$55 a month storage fee but there is nothing in the policy that allows for temporary housing allowance. Mr. Dingman noted that the last time he was here you asked for an update, we are three months ahead of that schedule. It is our hopes that we have the homeowners back in their homes by April. We have really been working hard to get this pushed up. There is a lot of need here still. He noted that we would like to get this done before the cycle is closed out so that if you all decide to go out again for the program. Commissioner Ward noted that we as a commission contacted the Department of Commerce to change the perimeters and they would not change it. Have you heard how much the money will come out next year? Total 24-28 million per year. Typically, housing gets 7-8 million of that. For years they have said they are going to up the allotment for each county, I believe Franklin gets around 750k/ I am hoping they look at it. What is hurting us in helping more people is inflation. We had applications for 24 people, and they were either over income or did not own their property, etc. Commissioner Ward said if it is something like a policy change that we need to address in order to house these people while they are getting a new home, we can do that. Mr. Dingman noted that is something that the commission can address, not all counties do. AS far as changing the rule of income in the fall, you have legislation delegation you may want to speak to. Commissioner Ward asked if he would keep them informed as to when the program funds are becoming available again. **Commissioner Ward made a motion to approve the CDBG Program Funding Awards as presented, seconded by Commissioner Amison.** Chairman Jones noted that everything that is 32328 is added together and it skews the numbers. If we can get help from the federal level on this, it would drastically help the community of Eastpoint. **Motion carried 4-0.**

6. Edwin Lott -- Alligator/Bald Point Boat Ramps -- Presentation

Mr. Lott presented a presentation on the Alligator/Bald Point boat ramps on behalf of the Alligator Point St. Teresa Taxpayer Association (APSTA). He noted that the area we are talking about around Alligator Harbor include the communities of St. Teresa, Bay North, Pine Street, Mariner Circle, Bald Point and Alligator Point. All of these communities represent thousands of people and hundreds and hundreds of boats. That is not the only users of the harbor because we have the lease holders, visitors from all around to launch their boats to go fishing and enjoy the natural resources in the area. The four ramps that we are going to talk about today are Leonard's Landing, Sun n Sand, the S Curve boat ramp and the Maina ramp. Chairman Jones asked if this is the only ramps that he thinks are options. He noted these are the only ramps that are called ramps. It is

potential that we could look further out like at FSU. Chairman Jones noted that we had this discussion several times but most of the time we had these discussions we were told you could do it here, but we do not want it here. Mr. Lott noted that Leonard's Landing is completely unusable for public. Sun and Sand ramp is county owned and is barely usable. The S-curve ramp is public county owned and is unusable due to broken concrete and washout. The Marina ramp is privately controlled the submerged portion is leased through DEP. The county owns 1.8 acres across the street from Leonard's landing and .12 acres adjacent to Leonard's landing. You can see how torn up the road to the ramp is caused by all of the construction to the road. Leonard's Landing is unusable for boaters trying to access Alligator Harbor. As a result, local launch traffic (St. Teresa and Bay North), public vacationers, day visitors and 67 aquaculture lease holders are redirected and launching at the Sun and Sand boat ramp in the Mariner Circle neighborhood. Obtaining a dredging permit required to make Leonard's Landing a publicly usable boat ramp will be almost impossible. The Sun and Sand boat ramp has become the primary boat ramp providing access to Alligator Harbor for the past few years due to the unusable condition of the other ramps serving boaters on Alligator Harbor. The previous photos show the massive washout at the base of the ramp and massive berm blocking ingress and egress at all but high tides. The rapid deterioration of this dirt ramp is because the launch load has rapidly increased because of the failure of the other ramps which helped to disperse the launch load traffic. The launch load on Sun and Sand includes most residents of Alligator Point, St. Teresa and Bay North, aquaculture lease holders (originally 46, now 67), vacation renters and day visitors. This dirt ramp has been destroyed from heavy use and inadequate maintenance. The S-curve boat ramp has served our community since the late 1960's. County staff expressed they are not supportive of its repair and continued operation because of the lack of parking and being located on a curve. The reasons we are wanting the broken concrete repaired are: it is the only hard surface ramp usable by non 4wd vehicles; parking has never been needed because the ramp has always been used for unloading and loading by the locals; traffic speed is already reduced to 25 in this area because of the public access parking area across the street but a speed limit reduction to 10 mph is needed regardless; historically the ramp is used steadily from Friday afternoon until Sunday afternoon during the season; resurfacing the ramp will redirect large amounts of launch traffic back to the S-curve and away from the Sun and Sand ramp. APSTA is offering on behalf of our community to contribute up to \$10,000 to resurface the S-Curve ramp. To get this resurfacing started we need the county to submit a permit application to DEP for the repair of this ramp. DEP has stated stamped engineered drawings are not required for the permits. Mr. Lotte noted that he just learned moments ago that DEP owns just the submerged land, any of the dirt portion of the property is owned by the Marina. There is a lease that the Marina has. As riprap has been added to the ramp it is making it smaller and smaller. The lease does not call out the boat ramp specifically regarding maintenance nor standards for usable condition. Marina representatives have stated the boat ramp is a liability and they are doing the minimum regarding its maintenance. The county has no control over the Marina owners nor the ramp's poor condition. Mr. Lott noted that funding for the repair of our boat ramps is provided by:

- State via Grant programs: FWC Florida Boating Access Improvement program – grants application processing started January 19, through March 20, 2024 (did not apply for grant last year) (applied and received grants the previous 3 years)
- DEP – Stan Mayfield Working Waterfronts-FL Forever Grant Program. The application cycle will be open March 1 and closes April 1, 2024.
- State/county via boater registration fees
- Last year the county did not apply to FWC or DEP for grant funding for ramp repairs nor did the county use the boating registration fees provided by the state that could be used for our boat ramp repairs per FWC.
- Bald Point funds
- TDC – dredging funds

Mr. Lott presented the following solution approach for short and long term.

Short-term

1. Submit an exempt permit application to DEP for repairing the S-Curve ramp.
2. Submit a permit application to DEP for the removal of the massive berm at the Sun and Sand ramp before the summer season arrives if at all possible.

Long-term

1. Submit a design and or construction grant application to FWC for an improved (paved)
2. Consider a feasibility study for a public boat ramp in Alligator Harbor

Chairman Jones noted that in the past when we have talked about doing things with ramps in Alligator Harbor. We are aware of the leases and how the state continues giving out leases without ramp access. We had talked about in the past creating access at the marine lab, but the community did not want it there. From my understanding and remembrance there is an issue with dredging in the aquatic reserve. Chairman Jones noted that when applying for grants you would have to attend to all requirements for example adequate parking, etc. It has not been that the Board has not put in the effort, but it is going to have to be in someone's back yard. Mr. Lott said it is going to take compromise on everyone's part including the state. That is why we need all the stakeholders coming together in order to come up with a solution. He noted that he had asked the FWC Administrator Boating improvement program and asked the specific question is there any parking requirements attached to their grants. He was told no. Chairman Jones said please get that in writing. Chairman Jones said other organizations that we have dealt with over the years, they will tell residents one thing, and then tell us another. Mr. Lott noted that we have new faces that are willing to compromise and work together. Commissioner Ward noted that they went to Capital Day and one of things on her list was the increased boater's improvement budget, expanding Leonard's Landing. We showed them how important these ramps are, and they have been made awarded. The biggest thing that they have had issues with is the dredge part. We are working and they are aware on the state level of the needs. Chairman Jones asked if there has been any discussion about the marine FSU lab. Mr. Lott noted that there would be a substantial dredging over the area there. The preserve goes all the way over to the new FSU lab. They have a launch area being used and it is a really large piece of land. I think a feasibility study would show us what we can do. Commissioner Ward these aquaculture leases these monies are going back to the state. If they are getting the money from these leases, why cannot they give us money back to improve these ramps. I believe we mentioned that to Senator Shoaf and Simone's staff. I feel like the state could help us out a little bit. Mr. Lott said the leaseholders pay about \$100 per year. Chairman Jones noted it would be like you having to build a house, but the county only come a half a mile to your house, and you have to finish the road so everyone else can enjoy it. Mr. Lott asked for the criteria for putting in leases and then asked if there were any criteria for accessibility. Chairman Jones said he just wants everyone to understand that this board has tried to find solutions. Commissioner Amison said he heard mention the KOA, what has been the argument about these properties in the past. Mr. Moron noted that he had invited a couple of people to be here today, Mr. Broker and Mr. Pierce. First, I agree if the state is going to issue a lease, do not issue if you do not have access.

Mr. John Broker spoke saying he has been having these conversations since 2019. Being an aquatic reserve there are a lot of natural resource concerns. We are not trying to prohibit use. There are more and more leases and limited access. A lot of the push back was from residents. A lot of that too was during development of the road. We have documented a lot of our conversations. Dredging in aquatic reserves is very difficult. There are literally rules that are written. The last thing we would want to do is dredge to provide access and then it damages the reserve. We have looked at the property just east of Leonard's Landing commonly known as Two Rut. It is incorporated into the Bald Point property. It is not necessarily off the board but there may be a better location. The last bit of land acts as a buffer. We could greatly impact water quality. Still think the FSU marine lab is the best option. Because there is an existing footprint, you can do maintenance dredging. There is no existing permit for Leonard's Landing. Anything new would require a new permit. There are just strict rules that the aquatic reserve must abide by. Chairman Jones noted that a few years ago they went to an open house, but they were told at the time they did not intend to put in a new boat ramp. The area of Two Rut is now part of Bald Point. Would it require dredging? Mr. Broker noted that to create a boat ramp you are only allowed to dredge 100 cubic yards. Something Mr. Lott pointed out was the emergency permit. That may be something to look at. In aquatic preserves they tend to get a finer comb when

going through those requests. Chairman Jones noted that at Sun and Sand, that looks like more than 100 cubic yards to be moved. Mr. Broker said there may be a way to skirt around it due to an emergency issue. To dredge something brand new is difficult but to do on an emergency basis may be easier. He would like to see everyone get back together and get on the same page. Chairman Jones noted that he has spoken with several across the region people about what it would take for DOT to move the road near Leonard's Landing kind of like they did at Windmark Beach. Mr. Broker noted that DOT had said with the turn being a blind turn and a two-lane road, without adding a red light at a weird location. Moving the road would be a task and a half, and a bigger ask. Chairman Jones said it would give a way that we have more parking, etc. Mr. Broker noted that refurbishing Leonard's Landing it is 700 feet. What is to say what would be needed to keep the sediment. There would be complications there as well. Leonard's Landing is a difficult and tight spot to look at. Mr. Alan Pierce said 100 cubic yards of dredging is nothing. The old marina may be something AFTA could work out. The S-Curve and Sun and Sand ramps both do not have adequate parking and are street ends with access to the water. All of the ramps are in aquatic reserve and would require some dredging or at least maintenance dredging. As far as the old FSU marine lab, Mr. Barry just mentioned to me there may be a reverter clause in the deed, and it may not be owned by state of Florida. As for the new FSU Marine lab, the program wants to ensure that they have quality water, and they try to minimize boat traffic. We may have to go back to FSU to see what we can do possibly reason with them. He noted that he is disappointed that Leonard's Landing is not going to work. In response to Commissioner Amison's question about the old KOA property, Mr. Pierce noted that there is no relief for a boat ramp on this property. It would serve as a public beach access with parking, but there is no boat access. He noted that he would caution on spending funds from the Bald Point fund due to past damage to roads during hurricanes. Noting that DOT requires a 12.5% local match. If the Bald Point funds are not available to use, the match would have to come from the general fund. He noted that the FWC boating improvement funds accrue from year to year. If the funds are not used, they roll over and they are not lost. Mrs. Griffith noted that recent projects on Old Ferry Dock Road (\$74K) and the SGI boat ramp (\$5K) were funded through some of these funds. Chairman Jones noted that we started working on the Old Ferry Dock in 2019. Mrs. Griffith noted that they may not tell you up front the parking requirements, but when it gets further into the design that is when the hammer hits the road. Mr. Pierce noted that Commissioner Sanders and a FWC officer went around the county looking for boat ramp locations to include parking. He noted that the state did an injustice by closing the boat ramp at Bald Point. Mr. Pierce noted that the KOA is a valuable resource for other things but not for the boat ramp. Chairman Jones said check with DEP to find out what the requirements are for the emergency grant. It would basically just put back what is there. Chairman Jones noted that may be the only thing to act on today. Mr. Pierce noted that he is only aware of emergency grants being issued after hurricanes. Mr. Lott noted that he would like to correct the terminology for types of permits, there are exempt, general, and individual. If we are going to be able to do something on an emergent. Sun and Sand, we are not asking to improve it, we are just wanting to put back what was there. We need to know that it is actually going to go somewhere. I do not want to take a vote today. Commissioner Ward asked about the Stan Mayfield water grant. Mr. Pierce noted that Alligator Harbor and Alligator Point are not really working waterfronts. Maybe the clam industry would count but I am not sure. Chairman Jones said maybe just ask about it to see. Mr. Moron and Mrs. Griffith noted that they believe this may be an option. Mr. Kendrick noted that he was in legislature when Stan Mayfield was created, and it was more for acquisition of waterfronts. Chairman Jones asked Mr. Moron to do some research and have something for the Board in writing at the next meeting.

RFP/RFQ/Bid Opening

7. Notice to Bidders: Stormwater Infrastructure Improvements

Notice is hereby given that the Franklin County Board of County Commissioners will receive sealed bids at the Franklin County Office of the Clerk of Court, 33 Market Street, Suite 203, Apalachicola, Florida 32320 (office: 850-653-8861) until 4:00 PM local time on Friday, February 16, 2024, for the Stormwater Infrastructure Improvements project at Apalachicola Regional Airport. All bids will be publicly opened and read aloud in the regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of County Commissioners on Tuesday, February 20, 2024, at 9:00 AM. Bids must be submitted in a sealed envelope clearly marked "BID ENCLOSED:

STORMWATER INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS – APALACHICOLA REGIONAL AIRPORT.”

The project generally includes, but is not necessarily limited to the following tasks:

Concrete pavement removal and replacement, stormwater structure repair, dewatering, removal and replacement of stormwater structures and pipes, excavation and embankment, and sodding.

Mrs. Griffith opened bids as follows:

Gulf Coast Utility Contractors, Southport, Florida

\$717,050

Bid bond included

NECSC LLC, Panama City, Florida

\$572,525.01

Bid bond included

Pigott Asphalt and Sitework LLC - Crawfordville, Florida

\$672,390

Bid bond included

North Florida Construction, Inc. – Clarksville, Florida

\$1,388,680

Bid bond included

Mrs. Griffith noted the bids should be released to the airport engineer, AVCON, for review and recommendation. Staff will present the recommendation to the Board at the next meeting.

On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Amison, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board authorized release of the bid packages to AVCON for review and recommendation. Motion carried 4-0.

County Staff & Attorney Reports

8. Cortni Bankston -- Zoning Administrator

1. Code Enforcement update

a. Florida Association of Code Enforcement (F.A.C.E)

- i. Must complete “The Fundamentals of Code Enforcement” within a year or year and a half. This is the first certification.
- ii. There are a total of 4 certifications – Fundamentals, Administrative Aspects, Legal Issues, and Officer Safety.

Need direction from the Board on how to proceed.

- 1) Work with Sheriff’s to get officer(s) certified (need a maximum of four officers)
- 2) Post wanted ad for Code Enforcement on Indeed

Commissioner Ward inquired as to option 2. Mrs. Bankston noted that she believed the Board wanted to work with the Sheriff’s department first to see how things go. Chairman Jones said he believed that was something that we may look in to in the future if we decided to have an actual code enforcement department. **Commissioner Ward made a motion to work with Sheriff’s office to get officer(s) certified, seconded by Commissioner Amison.** Chairman Jones noted that he does believe it should eventually work into a department. **Motion carried 4-0.**

2. Penalty fee for working without a permit

- a. Spoke with Building Official and he suggested stages of penalties
 - i. 1st Offense – Double Permit Fee
 - ii. 2nd Offense – Triple Permit Fee
 - iii. 3rd Offense - \$500.00 Penalty Fee and Double Permit Fee
 - iv. 4th Offense – To be Determined

Chairman Jones asked if this were not in our current ordinance would we have to change this by ordinance. Attorney Shuler noted that he thought we had adopted the double permit fee but if we are making any changes it would need to be done by ordinance. He noted the Board could determine this to be an emergency you could declare an emergency and by 4/5s vote of the Board pass. Attorney Shuler noted that his thoughts would be to authorize a public hearing for discussion. Commissioner Ward said in light of what we had happened recently, we have to make some changes. Apparently there have been some misunderstanding and misinterpretations of the ordinance. Its not what we have on the books is not good, we may just need to make it more precise and easier to follow. I know that we have the ARPC working on our current land comp plan. This is something that we need to address. Maybe we need to make people that have businesses like these apply for a business license. So, we can revoke their license altogether. As our county grows, these are things we are going to have to look at. Noted she had someone tell her they had pulled a site prep permit, but no one came out to check to see what I was doing was correct. I think right now it is a good time to address since we are having these workshops with ARPC. Mrs. Bankston noted that they have a meeting this afternoon with ARPC, and they may have some input on it. Chairman Jones said you can only do so much, if people do not want to be honest, they are not going to be honest. We are needing to implement and do things because of just a few that do not care. Even if we change it, we are going to have the same issues with the same people. Attorney Shuler noted that if you are going to update like Commissioner Ward is wanting to do, I think we should ask ARPC to look at this. One is an ordinance to adopt a penalty for working without a permit. Commissioner Ward is wanting to look at this further to recommend some changes. Attorney Shuler noted that two things the Board has been working on is one a business license and two a zoning code. Gulf County already has an ordinance in place which I used in drafting one for your review earlier. Noting there is nothing wrong with letting ARPC look at it and see if there are some amendments. Chairman Jones asked Attorney Shuler if he was recommending that we hold a public hearing for setting penalties for working without a permit then we can pass that along to ARPC. Attorney Shuler noted that ultimately the penalty for violated the building code is a second-degree misdemeanor. Chairman Jones noted that we could do one of two things: schedule a public hearing to talk about updated the penalties to pass along to ARPC or we can ask ARPC to bring us back some recommendations with the other. Commissioner Ward noted that she thinks we should hold a public hearing to discuss penalty fees for working without a permit.

On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Amison, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board authorized scheduling a public hearing to discuss penalties for working without a permit. Motion carried 4-0.

3. Workshop Request – PUD The Sea Shire

- a. Possible Date: March 19th @ 5:00pm

On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Amison, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board authorized scheduling a workshop on the PUD The Sea Shire for March 19th at 5:00 pm. Motion carried 4-0.

9. Erin Griffith – Fiscal Manager/Grants Coordinator

1. BOARD ACTION: RESOLUTIONS OF AUTHORIZATION AND RANKING – ROAD PAVING GRANT APPLICATION CYCLE – SCRAP & SCOP

Attached are three resolutions of authorization and ranking for the county's applications for the 2024 FDOT

transportation grant cycle:

- Small County Road Assistance Grant (SCRAP)– Alligator Drive: design of roadway improvements - including widening the roadway, resurfacing the road, the addition of paved shoulders, and drainage improvements from State Road 30/Highway 98 to Gulf Shore Boulevard (where the multi-use path begins). The county will apply for construction funds after the design is complete. This is the 1st priority SCRAP application.
- Small County Outreach Program (SCOP) – Fire Station Cutoff on Alligator Drive: design and construction of a new road to straighten out an existing sharp elbow that is vulnerable from storm damage from proximity to the Gulf of Mexico. It may also include the relocation of a small section of the recently completed multi-use path on the north side of the road. This is the 1st priority SCOP application.
- Small County Outreach Program (SCOP) – Gulf Beach Drive on St. George Island, design of roadway improvements, including 1’ paved shoulders in areas that the right-of-way allows, resurfacing the road, and drainage improvements from the St. George Island State Park to 12th Street West at The Plantation. This is the 2nd priority SCOP application.

Board action adopt the attached three resolutions authorizing the chairman to sign the transportation grant project applications as prioritized above.

RESOLUTION
FRANKLIN COUNTY, FLORIDA
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

WHEREAS County Road 370, also known as Alligator Drive, is the only access road for Alligator Point and Bald Point in Franklin County, and
WHEREAS this road is the only evacuation route for these areas, and,
WHEREAS this is a narrow road, consisting of two 10’ wide lanes with no paved shoulders, and,
WHEREAS Franklin County is desirous of widening and resurfacing County Road 370 to provide a safer driving surface, and,
WHEREAS the Florida Department of Transportation has offered the opportunity to apply for funding through the Small County Road Assistance Program to design improvements to County Road 370,
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS that they support the application for a Small County Road Assistance Program grant from the Florida Department of Transportation for the design of improvements to County Road 370 from State Road 30 to Gulf Shore Boulevard, and Ricky D. Jones the Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners, is hereby authorized to sign the Small County Road Assistance Program grant application requesting funding for the project. This is Franklin County’s first priority for a Small County Road Assistance Program grant this year.

RESOLUTION
FRANKLIN COUNTY, FLORIDA
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

WHEREAS County Road 370, also known as Alligator Drive, provides the only access to Alligator Point and Bald Point in Franklin County, and
WHEREAS since 1985 County Road 370 has been repeatedly washed out in the area south of the old KOA campground, resulting in Franklin County having to reroute the road further inland, creating a sharp curve beside the old Alligator Point Fire Station, and
WHEREAS at this sharp curve there have been several accidents of cars not negotiating the curve and running off the road, and
WHEREAS Franklin County has purchased the old Alligator Point Fire Station to provide the right-of-way for straightening out this sharp curve,
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY

COMMISSIONERS that they support the application for a Small County Outreach Program grant from the Florida Department of Transportation for the design and construction of a new road to alleviate this dangerous curve, and Ricky D. Jones, the Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners, is hereby authorized to sign the Small County Outreach Program grant application requesting funding for this project. This project is Franklin County's first priority for this year's SCOP Application.

RESOLUTION
FRANKLIN COUNTY, FLORIDA
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

WHEREAS Gulf Beach Drive provides the only access to the State Park at the East end of St. George Island, and,

WHEREAS Gulf Beach Drive is the most heavily traveled road on St. George Island, and

WHEREAS this road has issues with flooding every time it rains or a storm passes through, and,

WHEREAS Gulf Beach Drive provides the only access to the west end fire station of St. George Island situated just beyond the gate of the St. George Island Plantation.

WHEREAS Gulf Beach Drive needs paved shoulders, and

WHEREAS the Florida Department of Transportation has offered the opportunity to apply for funding through the Small County Outreach Program to design improvements to the entire length of Gulf Beach Drive on St. George Island from the State Park to the St. George Island Plantation, and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS that they support the application for a Small County Outreach Program grant from the Florida Department of Transportation for the design of improvements to the entire length of Gulf Beach Drive on St. George Island, and Ricky D. Jones the Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners, is hereby authorized to sign the Small County Outreach Program grant application requesting funding for the project. This is Franklin County's second priority for a Small County Outreach Program grant this year.

On a motion by Commissioner Amison, seconded by Commissioner Croom, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board adopted the above resolutions authorizing the Chairman to sign the transportation grant project applications as prioritized above. Motion carried 4-0.

**2. BOARD ACTION: NOTICE OF AWARD ENGINEERING & CONSTRUCTION
OVERSIGHT RESTORE PROGRAM COUNTY-WIDE DUNE RESTORATION
PROJECT**

At the last meeting, the sole response to the RFQ for the professional engineering and construction oversight for the RESTORE County-wide Dune Restoration Construction Project was released to the ranking committee for review and recommendation. The committee has reviewed and scored the response and recommends award to respondent MRD and Associates of Destin.

Board action to issue the notice of award to MRD & Associates and to authorize staff to begin contract negotiations.

On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Croom, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved issuing the notice of award to MRD & Associates and to authorize staff to begin contract negotiations. Motion carried 4-0.

**3. BOARD ACTION: RESTORE MULTI-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN TASK ORDER
LANGTON & ASSOCIATES**

At the last meeting, the grant award agreement was approved for the County-Wide Dune Restoration

Project. The county had hoped to include additional ADA access improvements in the original scope; however, Treasury had removed those items because those improvements were not outlined in MYIP amendment #1. The restoration of the coastal hammock and the installation of post and rope boundary at Lighthouse Park will restrict foot traffic onto the dunes and will also impede access to the beach at the park location for EMS/law enforcement/patrol vehicles. The scope amendment will address this access issue and will include the installation of a 12' wide Mobi-mat rated for vehicular traffic along the far west boundary of the park and add designated ADA parking and accessibility improvements along the same western boundary. Treasury staff suggested the county ask for the amendment once the construction grant funding was approved to quicken the process. The county had included the landfill transfer station in MYIP amendment #1 as project #3, however, the cost estimate was only about 1/3 of the total estimated cost of the transfer station as outlined in the feasibility study that was incomplete at time of submission. The county's USDA Clean Water Act Grant application was not funded this cycle, and it is uncertain if there will be any success with this year's legislative line-item request for this project. The landfill is quickly running out of space, and it will be necessary to move forward with a construction grant application for the full construction amount through RESTORE. The SGI Storm Water Construction Grant Application has now moved forward to the NEPA environmental review process phase with Treasury – no MYIP plan changes are currently needed for this project. The county's RESTORE consultant Langton and Associates has submitted the attached task order to not exceed \$3,978 to assist the county with the MYIP amendment process to be paid from professional services. *Board action to approve and authorize the chairman to sign the attached task order with Langton and Associates to assist with amendment #2 to the county's RESTORE MYIP.*

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 task order with Langton and Associates to assist with amendment #2 to the county's RESTORE MYIP. Motion carried 4-0.

4. BOARD ACTION: NOTICE OF AWARD CEI CR67 PHASE III

At the last meeting, responses were opened to the RFP for the CEI services for the Phase III CR67 Project (State Forest Road 166 to State Forest Road 172). The evaluation committee has reviewed and ranked the responses and recommends award to the top ranked firm AECOM. *Board action to issue the notice of award to AECOM and to authorize staff to begin contract negotiations.*

On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Amison, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board authorized issuance of the notice of award to AECOM and to authorize staff to begin contract negotiations. Motion carried 4-0.

5. BOARD ACTION: PHASE II FORT COOMBS ARMORY CONVENTION CENTER RENOVATION

After the adoption of the new TDC spending plan, the county can now proceed with Phase II of the Fort Coombs Armory Convention Center Renovations. In 2021, after the retirement of the prior Armory Architect Warren EMO, the County advertised for RFQs. Following the requirements of the Consultants' Competitive Negotiations Act, Franklin County selected GRC Architects out of Tallahassee as the new architects for the building. GRC designed and oversaw the renovations to the building in 2022-2023, which included the installation of a fire suppression system in the building. GRC has submitted a \$38,112 proposal for the architectural design services and development of bid specifications relative to phase II improvements. Exterior renovations during this phase will include the restoration of the windows, exterior paint, roof replacement and additional parking adjacent to the west entrance. Interior renovations will include the resurfacing of the wood floors, renovation of hallway 108, trim in the main hall, HVAC for the large meeting room, reorganizing the restroom to provide space for the HVAC equipment, a

storage room, and the bride's room/restroom. *Board action to approve and authorize the chairman to sign the attached fee proposal from GRC Architects to be paid by TDC sales tax proceeds.*

On a motion by Commissioner Croom, seconded by Commissioner Amison, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved and authorized the Chairman to sign the attached fee proposal from GRC Architects to be paid by TDC sales tax proceeds. Commissioner Ward noted that we are advertising this as a convention center but there is like one outlet. She asked if it could be included to add additional outlets. Mrs. Griffith noted that she can add that in. Chairman Jones asked what else is needed to be done at the armory. Mrs. Griffith said she believes this should be it. **Motion carried 4-0.**

6. BOARD ACTION: CONSIGNMENT AGREEMENT RENEWAL – FLORIDA AUCTION NETWORK

Franklin County has begun working to compile a list of surplus equipment and vehicles in hopes of hosting another auction in late spring. This year, with board approval, it would be nice to hold the auction on-site at the county airport as there is ample space for staging. Attached is the 2024 renewal agreement with Florida Auction Network. The auctioneer's fee is unchanged at 5% of the gross sales price of any county owned item and Florida Auction Network handles all advertising, administration, accounting, and title work at the sale. The county had great success with the last auction held by the FAN in 2023. Other agencies are also able to participate in the onsite auction. *Board action to approve the 2023 renewal of the consignment agreement with Florida Auction Network, LLC.*

On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Amison, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the 2023 renewal of the consignment agreement with Florida Auction Network, LLC. Motion carried 4-0.

7. BOARD ACTION: CHANGE ORDER DUNE WALKOVERS 8TH-10TH STREET WEST

Coastal engineers MRD & Associates have submitted a deductive change order for the 8th-10th Street Dune Walkover Project. The original bid for this project included planting vegetation along the area of shoreline in front of the three dune walkovers. However, this shoreline area is included for planting as part of the just funded RESTORE county-wide dune restoration project. This change order will remove the task and associated bid line item for vegetation from the dune walkover construction contract with MKM Quality Construction. All other elements that were part of the original contract award are complete at this time. Before and after photos of the walkover are included below.

Board action to approve the attached deductive change order in the amount of \$16,205.80.

On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Croom, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the attached deductive change order in the amount of \$16,205.80. Commissioner Ward noted these looks really good. Chairman Jones noted that as we get these done, we can designate these as official parking spaces. **Motion carried 4-0.**

8. LATE ADD ITEM: GRANT AWARD AGREEMENT STATE FIRE MARSHAL LANARK/ST. JAMES VFD FIRETRUCK GRANT

The county has received the formal grant award agreement from the State Fire Marshal's office for up to \$450,000 for the purchase of the Lanark/St. James Volunteer Fire Department Fire Truck. The grant's period of performance began on July 1st, 2023, and the truck was delivered in early December. The county had received the notice to proceed on the truck before the formal grant award agreement had been sent – the fire marshal's office does need the formal agreement signed before they can reimburse the county. *Board action*

to approve and authorize the chairman to sign the attached grant award agreement with State Fire Marshal.

On a motion by Commissioner Amison, seconded by Commissioner Croom, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved and authorized the Chairman to sign the attached grant award agreement with State Fire Marshal. Motion carried 4-0.

9. BOARD INFORMATION: ROOF REPLACEMENT CARRABELLE HEALTH DEPARTMENT

The roof replacement is now complete at the Carrabelle Health Department. In addition to replacing the aged shingle roof with galvalume, the contractor also replaced an additional (6) sheets of rotted plywood sheathing for an additional \$720 which was not included as part of the original bid. The facility looks great – please see the before and after photos.

10. Michael Morón – County Coordinator

Mr. Moron noted that he received an email from Mr. Patrick Sparks requesting withdrawal of his application for road abandonment and requesting the Board to motion to accept his withdrawal. Attorney Shuler noted that he has reviewed the resolution authorizing the public hearing and the only applicant was Patrick Sparks. The Board can cancel today’s public hearing by motion. **On a motion Commissioner Amison, seconded by Commissioner Croom, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board canceled the public hearing scheduled for this afternoon for the above referenced road abandonment request. Motion carried 4-0.**

1. Discussion/Action Item: FWC Hunting Season

At your last meeting, the Board discussed contacting FWC regarding the possibility of changing the county’s hunting season to match other areas of the state.

- Attached to my report is an email from Mr. Jon Creamer, Northwest Regional Director, explaining why the hunting season was changed. The email also states Florida dog hunter associations have expressed concerns with hunter migration into this area.
- Mr. Creamer explains that there is a current proposal for rule change, which is a no cost deer-dog hunting permit, for consideration at tomorrow’s FWC meeting.
- The intent of this free permit, requested by Florida dog hunting organizations, is to provide a method of collecting information regarding participation in deer-dog hunting. This information and data on potential hunter migration should help the Commission address potential issues of overcrowding.
- Mr. Creamer is available after this week’s (FWC) Commission meeting to discuss this matter with you.
- **Board discussion and possible action.**

Chairman Jones noted that he would still like to meet with him. He noted that in speaking with other dog hunters there is more issues than overcrowding. Those that are overcrowding are killing everything that moves and FWC is the only one that can enforce that. Commissioner Amison noted that they are spot on about when the season is. The biggest problem we have is FWC presence in those areas. FWC needs to increase presence, do possible sting operations. You are not going to stop people from breaking the law all of the time. Until you have a larger police presence there you are not going to stop it. Chairman Jones suggested changing the start time to that of everyone else. Commissioner Amison noted that we would still have the issue of the out of town because their season ends before ours. We need a greater FWC presence, a little stronger in that particular area.

2. Action Item: FAA/FDOT Airport Grant Update

At your October 17th meeting, you approved a \$800,000 FDOT Public Transportation

Grant Agreement for an Airport West Hangar Development project. FDOT resubmitted the \$800,000 PTGA with additional language on a different invoicing procedure for this project. Board action to authorize the Chairman's signature on the \$800,000 FDOT Public Transportation Grant Agreement (PTGA #425613-6) for an Airport West Hangar Development project.

On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Croom, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board authorized the Chairman's signature on the \$800,000 FDOT Public Transportation Grant Agreement (PTGA #425613-6) for an Airport West Hangar Development project.

3. Action Item: MRO Conference

Back in December, Commissioner Amison, Mr. Steve Kirschenbaum, Mrs. Erin Griffith, and I met with representatives from Triumph, Opportunity Florida, Duke Energy, Florida Commerce, Space Florida, Florida Great Northwest, and other agencies. The purpose of this meeting was for the creation of economic development opportunities at the airport.

During the meeting, there was a discussion of the need for aviation maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO) operations across the country. My previous report item for a FDOT \$800,000 grant for new hangars at the airport allows for the Board to consider using one of these new hangars for an MRO operation. A few of the meeting attendees suggested that the county send a couple of representatives to the Aviation MRO Americas conference in Chicago from April 9–11th. We are told that this conference would serve as a great networking opportunity for the airport. Commissioner Amison would like to send AOED Chairman, Steve Kirschenbaum, and AOED Coordinator, Tom Mescher to this conference.

Commissioner Amison may have additional comments. Board action to authorize travel, accommodation, and expenses for Mr. Kirschenbaum and Mr. Mescher to attend the Aviation MRO Americas in Chicago from April 9– 11th.

Commissioner Amison noted that he cannot think of two people better to represent Franklin County and the airport at this conference. **Commissioner Ward made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Amison.** Commissioner Ward noted that people talk about money. She noted that the money that they will bring back will far exceed what we spend for them to go. Commissioner Amison noted that Opportunity Florida will reimburse the county for the expense. Chairman Jones noted as we turn the corner and got Opportunity Florida involved, this is now the second time they have stepped up to help us. They helped at Legislative Day in Tallahassee. **Motion carried 4-0.**

4. Action Item: SHIP Program

Over the last few months, some of you have stated that you would like the SHIP program administered by county staff. The 2-year SHIP Administrative contract with Community Action Agency will end in June 2024. I have contacted Mr. Tim Center, Community Action Executive Director, and informed him that the county will probably assume the SHIP Administrator duties on or prior to July 1, 2024. With that in mind, we are in the process of training and then transferring the Zoning Administrative duties to the Building Department staff. This will allow the transfer of the SHIP Administrator responsibilities and duties to Mrs. Cortni Bankston. Before Mr. Center can be officially notified of the county's intent to assume the SHIP Administrator duties, Board action is required. Board action authorizing staff to notify Community Action Agency of the county's intent to assume the SHIP Administrative duties, therefore allowing the SHIP Administrative contract to expire in June 2024.

Chairman Jones noted that it should be middle of March or first of April because we have to make sure that we are ready for this date. In good faith the county should continue to honor the contract which I believe is 10%. Mr. Morion noted that even if we are able to take over before then there will still be questions, we may need help with. Commissioner Ward noted that there was some confusion in terms of where our citizens are getting services from. This will offer some continuity for our constituents.

On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Amison, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board authorized staff to notify Community Action Agency of the county's intent to assume the SHIP Administrative duties, therefore allowing the SHIP Administrative contract to expire in June 2024. Motion carried 4-0.

5. Informational Item: CHP Meeting

- At your last meeting, the Board discussed the need to meet with Capital Health, the county's insurance company, to discuss the primary care services shortage in the county and the possibility of allowing additional doctors and health services to be classified in-network.
- Chairman Jones, Mrs. Erin Griffith, and I are scheduled to meet with Capital Health representatives on Thursday, February 22nd. You will be updated on the meeting's outcome.
- After the CHP meeting update, I would like the Board to discuss Mrs. Mary Mayhew's recent presentation and her follow-up email, that contained consultant contact information. Perhaps, the Board will authorize staff to schedule interviews with these consultants, which would get the County closer to determining the future of Weems Memorial and countywide healthcare services.

6. Informational Item: Opportunity Florida's Monthly Meeting

- Opportunity Florida's February monthly meeting will be at Fort Coombs Armory on Wednesday the 28th.
- Commissioner Ward, the County's representative on Opportunity Florida's Board, is on the agenda to provide opening remarks and welcome the attendees to Franklin County.
- Other commissioners may want to attend this event, so I plan to advertise this event on the county's website and include a statement that more than one county commissioners may attend this event.

7. Informational Item: Medical Examiner FY25 Fees

- Attached to my report is the Medical Examiner fee schedule for Fiscal Year 2025 that take effect on October 1, 2024.
- Fees have been flat for the last two years, however, with increased costs of staff and supplies, along with the cost associated with a new Medical Examiner, Dr. Thomas Coyne, M.D. PhD, the fees have increased.
- Once Dr. Coyne's startup date is determined, the county will need to amend and reassign the contract for these services.

8. Informational Item: Sheriff Vehicle Donations

- I want to take this opportunity to thank Sheriff A. J. Smith for his donation of two

vehicles. The first vehicle is a van to Elder Care Community Council of Franklin County, Inc. This van will be used to transport supplies for the county's senior citizens. The second vehicle was a SUV for the airport that will be used by the airport's maintenance staff during the workday hours. These donations will save each entity from having to purchase vehicles.

9. Informational Item: Public Hearing

- As a reminder, there is a public hearing scheduled for this afternoon at 5:00 p.m. (ET) to consider a public street/alley abandonment.

10. Informational Item: Next Meeting

- The next BOCC regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 5, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. (ET). There will also be a 5:00 p.m. (ET) workshop that afternoon.

Commissioner Ward noted that there is a chance that we may change insurances can we hold a workshop. If we do something that large, would we need to hold a workshop. Mr. Moron and Mrs. Griffith noted that we would definitely need a workshop. Chairman Jones noted that hopefully there will be resolution.

11. Michael Shuler – County Attorney

Attorney Shuler provided an update on the Notice of Claim received by two residents of Alligator Point regarding stormwater damage due to the new bike path. At a past meeting, the Board authorized Attorney Shuler to obtain the engineering services of Mr. Jack Husband and he will have his written report to me within the next two weeks.

At a recent meeting, Commissioner Ward inquired about reducing the speed limit on a portion of CC Land Road. According to my research this can be done. Essentially it will be a reasonable inquiry that reduces the speed limit. The s-curve there is autistic child, a church, and a bus stop.

Attorney Shuler noted that he provided the Clerk with the signed special use permit for McIntyre Road.

Action Item:

2024 FWC Reef Grant Application

AARA is contracting with Bill Horn to fill out the application for the 2024 \$60,000 FWC Artificial Reef Grant for more material on the Buddy Ward Reef. It will require a signature from the BOCC. We applied for and were awarded one in 2020, and this application will be exactly the same as that one, just the dates are changed. There is zero cost to the County for this. If we win, the funds will go towards additional materials in the Buddy Ward Reef site, which currently has 53 modules in place. The deadline is March 15, 2024.

Attorney Shuler noted that although there was a little bit of time the deadline was coming up. The applicant requested the Board authorize the application to be submitted.

On a motion by Commissioner Amison, seconded by Commissioner Croom and Commissioner Ward, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board authorized the 2024 FWC Reef Grant Application. Motion carried 4-0.

Commissioner Amison spoke about the possibility of reducing the speed limit on Brownsville Road. He noted that he was under the impression that it would take a traffic study etc. If we are going to start changing some speed limits, he would like to jump on this. Attorney Shuler noted that he believed the issue was that it was in the city limits. Commissioner Amison noted that he will check back into and get back with Attorney Shuler.

Commissioner Ward asked Attorney Shuler to bring this back to the Board at a future meeting for an action item.

Chairman Jones inquired as to the Alliant contract when would be the last date that we would need to tell them if we are planning to renew or not. Attorney Shuler noted that there are a couple of termination clauses one being the 90 days for convenience clause. Even if contract is renewed the Board could terminate with 90-day notice.

Commissioners' Comments

There were no additional Commissioners' comments.

Public Hearing *Cancelled earlier in the meeting.*****

12. Public Road/Alley to be Considered for Abandonment

Notice is given that on the 20th day of February 2024 at 5:00 p.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.

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.