

**FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
COURTHOUSE ANNEX, COMMISSION MEETING ROOM
FEBRUARY 6, 2024
9:00 AM
MINUTES**

Commissioners Present: Ricky Jones-Chairman, Jessica Ward-Vice-Chairman, Cheryl Sanders, 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 to order.

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Croom led the Board in prayer followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of the Agenda

On a motion by Commissioner Sanders, seconded by Commissioner Amison, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the agenda as published. Motion carried 5-0.

Approval of Minutes and Payment of County Bills

- 1. Approval of Minutes**
- 2. County Bill List for Payment**

On a motion by Commissioner Sanders, seconded by Commissioner Amison, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the minutes from the FCBC Regular Meeting on 12/19/2023 and 1/16/2024 and approval of the payment of County Bills. Motion carried 5-0.

Public Comments

Debi Jordan spoke to the Board via Zoom. Touch base on things that she has asked for in the past

Lanark Village first responders who have problems finding addresses

Recommended putting road numbers on roads

Mention traffic flow, please consider traffic flow

Lynn Wilder with update on Keep Franklin County nonprofit status.

Litter index next step in becoming member of Keep America Beautiful. Selected five areas in Franklin County, randomly selected ten areas in districts. Use results to see where we need to start and figure out how to minimize and prevent litter.

Rudy Meng gave an overall view of the volunteer work the residents of Alligator Point do in response to Commissioner Sanders previous remarks.

Department Directors Reports

3. Howard Nabors – Superintendent of Roads and Bridges

Last month we have been fighting the weather. We had a few calls not a lot about flooding. 67 at county line where water is under road, it is starting to undermine. We definitely are going to have problems with 30-50 foot where water runs across the road. Commissioner Sanders noted that is what she was afraid of. How far are we into the 45-day extension? Mr. Moron noted he would have to find out. When they go to open up, they do not need to open all at one time. If not, we are going to have a mess. Mr. Nabors noted that he spoke with Mr. Ted about doing the ditches at airport. We are going to have about three culvert pipes to drain and they are about \$1000 each. Chairman Jones asked if this is something the airport needed to purchase and have installed. Mr. Nabors noted that they can install them once they are purchase. Chairman Jones noted that he is in favor of going ahead and getting them purchased and installed. Commissioner Ward noted that she asked for some signage some time back. She said she has contacted Mr. Nabors and Ms. Virginia and they were taken care of very quickly, appreciate that. Commissioner Ward asked Mr. Moron if he would like to bring up the gun range while Mr. Nabors is here. Commissioner Ward said there were some issues with an area in her district, not sure if we can reduce the speed limit. Attorney Shuler noted that he would like to get with Commissioner Ward about this after the meeting. Commissioner Ward noted that she has been looking for somewhere to relocate the gun range. Proposed a 50-acre lot of land. I do not want them to be charged for it and do not necessarily need it manned. The property is between the sheriff's office and road department. That was kind of what we were talking about. We wanted to get your input on it. I know we will have to get wetlands delineation on it. I think it is a good distance away from the sheriff's office and road department. Mr. Nabors noted that he is not sure how far the school board property goes, and there are some wetlands. Mr. Nabors noted that he is not sure this would be the best place. Chairman Jones noted that we should have a wetlands delineation survey and see where we could put it. DOT would have to allow us to do a road cut from Highway 65. Mr. Nabors noted that we also built the road for the school for emergency. Chairman Jones noted that they did not complete the road. Unless they have done something recently you are not going to go far down that road. Commissioner Ward asked where the fuel tanks were located, Mr. Nabors noted they are spread out. If you try to build on the far corner, that will be a long road you have to build. Mr. Nabors noted that you talked about the shooting range in Apalachicola, it was built for the public, not sure what happened. Commissioner Ward noted that she appreciates Mr. Nabors input, trying to make it safe and where people can use. I think getting a wetlands delineation would be the first step. Even if we decide to do something else with the property. It would be good to have this information. Mr. Moron noted that he will ask Mrs. Griffith if this is something Dewberry could do. **Commissioner Ward said she would make a motion to authorize staff to go out and update a wetlands delineation study on this property, seconded by Commissioner Croom. Motion carried 5-0.** Chairman Jones inquired about the days on the calendar with zeros and does that mean there were days you had no inmates? Mr. Nabors noted that some days there were no inmates, two to three is the average. Commissioner Ward noted that we cannot continue to depend on these inmates. We cannot continue to disservice our citizens because of the lack of inmates. Noted she knows no one wants their taxes raised, but we have to serve our community. I know we had talked about getting some Workforce folks. Mr. Moron noted that we did not because we wanted to offer overtime to existing employees. Mr. Nabors said this has worked out, but they mostly do it in the summertime. Chairman Jones noted that he wants to go look at culvert on Hickory Dip. Until DOT gets to doing that project, we may need to do some things. Mr. Nabors noted that he will go look at it.

4. Fonda Davis – Solid Waste Director

Whitegoods Sale:

Unfortunately, we had to discontinue the service with Cumbaa Enterprises, Inc. as of November 15, 2023, due to the fact they were unable to provide service for baling, loading, and transporting white goods in a timely matter to uphold our permit. I would like to sell our whitegoods to Emerald Coast Recycle (DBA) Louis Metal out of Bay County.

ACTION REQUESTED: Motion to sell whitegoods to Emerald Coast Recycle.

Chairman Jones inquired if there were any details available. Are we going to be selling to Emerald Coast at half of what we were before? Mr. Davis noted that it will be half or a little more. 128 gross ton or less

than a penny a pound right, them coming to us and taking it off. We would have to load it. Chairman Jones noted that to keep our permit viable we have to get rid of what we have. Commissioner Sanders asked if there were any other companies out there. Mr. Davis noted there are, there is another in Panama City but have not had a chance to reach out to them. Commissioner Sanders noted that we have had Cumbaa for years. Mr. Davis noted the contract with Cumbaa was from like 2008.

On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Croom, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the request to sell whitegoods to Emerald Coast Recycle. Motion carried 5-0.

Mr. Davis noted that John Creamer said he would get up with Commissioner Ward. He is still researching trying to find some help with the deer carcasses. Commissioner Ward noted that she did receive an email and he is going to check with some of the other rural communities and see how they are handling it. Mr. Davis noted that he did mention another county who had a fenced in area, but people were still abusing it. Commissioner Ward thanked Mr. Davis and Mrs. Griffith for their work with the Vrooman Park project. To see the youth out there utilizing the park brings so much joy to me. Commissioner Amison commented on the carcass wagon. Said someone brought up an idea of next year figure out a way to build the ramp up so that people can back up and dump into the container. Something we can look at for down the road. The main thing in Apalachicola is location. We really need to try to find somewhere else because buzzards and airplanes do not mix well. Mr. Davis noted that the one in Apalachicola does sit on a trailer and it is higher. Commissioner Sanders noted that when it was set back out, it is better than it was before. Noted that the bears do get into it and drag it. I think we have been doing it for a long time and maybe it is time to let FWC put some money in it. Commissioner Croom noted that the signs for beach access on the island was a great idea. A very good implementation. Commissioner Ward noted that she appreciates the signage at Carrabelle. Mr. Davis brought up the boat ramp. Mr. Moron said you guys tell me how often it is used and how you want me to proceed. Commissioner Sanders noted there has always been an issue on the left side. If you do not be careful, you will hang your axel. Mr. Nabors noted that most of the time this happens on a real low tide. Noted they hope to get some oyster shells out there during a low tide. Commissioner Sanders noted that you can see the pieces of concrete. Mr. Moron noted that Mr. Nabors will look at it to see if it can be temporarily fix, if not we may have to close it.

5. Jennifer Daniels – Emergency Management Director

Action Items: None.

Information Item: The EOC started pushing out a weekly newsletter in November, therefore we only be placing the major highlights from the month in the information item of our reports henceforth.

1. EOC Director is attending EM Day at the Capital to meet with our legislature on issues and needs in Emergency Management.
2. The EOC Volunteer, Rob Zingarelli, will be teaching a Ham Radio Technician Prep Course in March.
3. EOC staff and Volunteers will be teaching and upcoming CERT Class at the end of the month.
4. The EOC will be hosting the quarterly Intergraded Preparedness Plan Meeting and the Local Mitigation Strategy Meeting on 2/8/24.
5. EOC is closely monitoring the progression of Florida House Bill 1567 and Senate Bill 1262 and how it will affect County Emergency Management.
6. EOC Director and SPN Coordinator attended the Florida Emergency Preparedness Association Annual Conference.
7. EOC staff attended the quarterly Region 2 Emergency Management meeting in Liberty County.
8. EOC staff attended a National Weather Service Training.
9. EOC coordinator assisted with teaching G400 for the County Health Department.
10. Staff have worked with the Hurricane Idalia contractor, Jeanee Devlin, on gathering information and documentation for the Idalia reimbursement claim.
11. EOC staff and volunteers continue to participate in the weekly ham radio call down check with the State.

12. Staff completed monthly IPAWS test.

6. Dewitt Polous – Mosquito Control Director

Mosquito Control Board Report Information Items (December 28, 2023 – January 31, 2024)

- I spoke with the owners of the Indian Creek ditch off of Daisey Lane in Eastpoint and they told me the property was still in probate and would update me when anything changes.
- I reached out to Sheriff AJ Smith to see if he could possibly help me with an inmate crew to help out with our mosquito ditches and he has agreed to help us out with a few of our larger ditches. We have been receiving approximately 1 inmate from the state when available and this is just not enough to do what we need done.
- Employees are scheduled to go to the yearly DODD courses held in Gainesville, Florida for the week of January 29 – February 1, 2024
- Mosquito Adult Trap Counts • Apalachicola St. George Island Eastpoint Carrabelle 1/24, 40 1/24, 10 1/24, 20 1/24, 0 1/18, 5 1/18, 10 1/18, 10 1/18, 0
- Mosquito Control Drainage ditches cleaned out. Lanark Between Franklin St & Hinton St from HWY 98 to Bay Oak St North (Between Hinton & Franklin St) 400 ft Eastpoint Close to Coastline RV Park, from CC Land Rd going south 400' At Eastpoint Church of God on Ave A, south 200 ft Wilderness Road to the south, Eastpoint 150 ft Apalachicola Oyster Rd (West), Apalachicola 140 ft Oyster Road going North, Apalachicola 128 ft AirPort from Bayshore Dr going south from curve, Apalachicola 180 ft Morris Cannon Rd to Bluff Road, Apalachicola 450 ft

7. Erik Lovestrand – Extension Office Director

Mr. Lovestrand did not provide a report for the Board.

8. Whitney Roundtree – Library Director

Action Items: None

Informational Items:

- 1) Thank you to everyone who joined us for our two soup, bread, and book sale fundraisers. These events were sponsored by Friends of the Franklin County Public Library and proceeds from this event will be used to fund future library programs and special projects.
- 2) Our next Pen to Paper event will be held February 19th at 2:00 PM and will feature local authors Sydney Watson and Ginnah Howard.
- 3) The Franklin County Public Library is happy to welcome its new and returning seasonal visitors. A friendly reminder that a non-resident library card is only \$10.00 for a one-year term and patrons can still enjoy all our digital resources when returning to their home states. Patrons will need a card to borrow materials; however, library programs are free and open to the public, and do not require a library card to attend.

Library Events: Eastpoint Branch 160 Hickory Dip Rd Eastpoint, FL 32328 850-670-8151

February 6th- Book Chat at 1:30 PM. A social group that meets once a month to discuss and recommend titles.

February 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd and 29th - Home School Hangout at 1:00. Join other local home school families to network and enjoy the library's resources.

February 13th - Storytime at 3:30 PM. Join library assistant, Ms. Jamie Paulk, for a story followed by an interactive craft. Recommended ages 2-6.

February 20th - Adult Crafts at 2:30 PM. Make some friends and try something new. Supplies are provided.

February 21st - Writer's Forum at 1:30 PM. Local authors meet to discuss their work and the writing

process.

February 27th - Candy Olympics at 3:30 PM. Compete with friends and family in fun minute to win it games featuring candy!

Carrabelle Branch 311 St, James Ave Carrabelle, FL 32322 850-697-2366 February 2nd - Book Chat at 1:30 PM. A social group that meets once a month to discuss and recommend titles.

February 3rd - Souper Celebration Book Sale from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM. The Friends of the Franklin County Public Libraries host their annual soup, bread, and book sale fundraiser. Proceeds go to funding for library programs and special projects.

February 13th- Storytime at 3:30 PM. Join library assistant, Ms. Morgan, for a story followed by an interactive craft. Recommended ages 2-6.

February 14th - Home School Hangout at 1:00. Join other local home school families to network and enjoy the library's resources.

February 19th- Pen to Paper at 2:00 PM. Join us as local authors discuss their writing and the writing process. The February 19th program will feature authors Sydney Watson and Ginnah Howard

Commissioner Ward inquired about the fire damage in Carrabelle and asked for an update on the repairs. Ms. Roundtree noted that they wrapped it up yesterday. Chairman Jones asked if they got everything squared away with the insurance at the Eastpoint library. Mr. Moron noted that Erin has been working on it and we are waiting for USDA's legal team is reviewing.

Other Reports

9. Ted Mosteller – Interim Airport Manager

Airport Managers Update and new developments. report for BCC Meeting (02/06/2024) Good Morning: Most of my report is FYI.

- a) Our Airport Maintenance Technician--Scott Kelly is on board and busy doing a good job—mowing, spraying, maintenance, setting up shop, etc.
- b) Site work on the new fuel farm has been under way and reportedly materials and components ordered.
- c) The sweeper truck is now back in LIMITED service—Scott has been cleaning Runways and Aprons.
- d) A rental dozer is on site grading excavated ditch debris, etc.
- e) John held a pre-bid conference for the West Apron Rehab and Apron Storm sewer revamp project—several contractors attended.
- f) Have had more requests for T Hangars, Box Hangars,--also inquiries for the reportedly dormant Randall Terry Complex (The Dan Garlick hangar).
- g) Pending--Multipurpose/multilevel Building/Hangar—Aircraft Hangar, Administrative offices including Airport Managers office, Airport Terminal, Restaurant, Venue, Hotel, Museum, etc. etc.
- h) Roof concerns—John reports that his report to replace the FBO roof/insulation as planned/pending would trigger a complete overhaul/update of the FBO building—has been debunked. He is working on a solution.
- i) Note: Centric reports that the FBO roof is currently leaking again. Hopefully, the weather will cooperate so we can patch it soon.
- j) Request's for Self-serve 100LL and jet are still pending—so is Mogas.
- k) The FDOT has given a heads up that the annual airport inspection is up-coming—date pending.
- l) Jason Fisher Roofing has patched BJ's T hangar roof. Scott and I re-erected the partition between A1 and the North end unit --And plan to replace the 8' x 8' garage door with a larger ~12' x 12' door to temporarily accommodate sheltering some of the weather sensitive airport equipment.
- n) T Hangar B2 needs structural roof and door attention

Mr. Moron noted that Sheriff Smith is donating a Tahoe to the airport for Mr. Kelly to use. They are in the process of removing the sirens, lights, etc. and it should be delivered sometime next week. Chairman Jones inquired about the recent fire inspection asking if it was someone from the state or a company that we contract with. Mr. Ted noted that it was a company, and they inspected the hydrants by the fuel farm. Commissioner Amison inquired as to if all hydrants would be inspected. Mr. Ted noted this was part of the FDOT annual inspection coming up in April. Commissioner Sanders asked what was going on with the t hangars, etc. Mr. Ted noted that Mr. Terry is in a twenty-year lease, and we are about halfway. Noted that it is a controversial situation. Mr. Ted noted that except when he comes down here there are no aircraft in this hangar. Commissioner Amison asked if we need access to that hangar due to the breaker box. Mr. Ted noted we have had trouble getting into the building to reset the breaker. We have since ordered and installed a trailer type pole for that purpose. Commissioner Amison asked if these other hangars would need to be inspected on behalf of the county. Mr. Ted noted that yes it would. Mr. Moron noted that he would have to check. Commissioner Amison noted that if we do not, we need to send a letter requesting a copy of the keys. Commissioner Croom asked if it was common for us to do a twenty-year lease? Chairman Jones noted that was before his time. Mr. Moron said he will do some research and get back with him. Commissioner Amison asked where we are at on the t-hangar lease agreements. We are assuming the t-hangars, have we got our leases renewed? Attorney Shuler noted that Centric has informed the board they have license agreements and not leases. The airport board is still looking at the leases. They are on a month-to-month rental with termination at notice. Commissioner Amison noted that we need to come up with some type of lease amount. We cannot pick and choose what we charge someone. It needs to be fair and transparent. Noted that we need to figure out how we are going to charge for these leases. Attorney Shuler noted that he believes that is one of the issues they were reviewing as a committee. Mr. Moron noted that we have all heard FAA talk about fair market value so that needs to be a factor when figuring the amounts for the leases.

10. Steve Kirschenbaum -- AOED Chairman

The following report and recommendations are for your review.

- The AOED board has had a discussion with our airport engineering firm Avcon regarding a proposed cell tower inquiry at the airport. The proposed location, if erected, would impair operations at the airport. I am submitting for your review a map with 4 alternate locations furnished by Avcon. After review by the AOED Board members and Avcon it was decided to recommend option 4 as the best choice. This choice based on a past tower at that location and combined piloting of AOED Board members in attendance.

Mr. Moron noted that the county has applied to Triumph for the same system that Wakulla has. What I do not want to do is give prime real estate to someone else's tower. With the project we have applied for, the county will own the tower and the providers will have to pay the county. Before we negotiate directly with any provider can we have a discussion at a later date. Please do not tie into a specific tower company. We do not want to cut off any access with broadband. Commissioner Ward asked what the timeline is? Is this going to delay any funding or delay any processes right now? Mr. Steve noted that the tower will have to comply with FAA and can only be a certain height. Commissioner Sanders noted that she would recommend tabling. Chairman Jones noted that the county would have to come up with another source of funds to maintain the tower once Triumph has funded. Commissioner Ward noted that we need a tower up Highway 65 and 67. Noting if they have a number for them, please have them call her.

Commissioner Sanders made a motion to table this request, seconded by Commissioner Ward. Commissioner Amison noted that the cell phone company reached out to the county and not to the airport board. Mr. Moron asked Mr. Steve to please explain to the board the reasoning for tabling. **Motion carried 5-0.**

- The AOED Board after careful review and his qualifications, recommends George Wilkerson to be appointed to the vacant position as an AOED Board member. His qualifications in the corporate world, his flying experience, and his local involvement with creating Aaron meals to help those in need in our

community.

Commissioner Amison made a motion to appoint George Wilkerson to the vacant alternate position as an AOED Board member. Seconded by Commissioner Ward. Motion carried 5-0.

- New license agreements for the tenants of the County T-Hangers are currently being worked on. It is the recommendation of the AOED that all T-Hanger license agreements are from the County to the tenant with Centric acting as an administrator to collect funds, pay taxes and lease units subject to AOED review and County approval. This action will clearly show the FAA and FDOT County control of the T-hanger complex and its revenue. This will help support future grants at the airport facility.
- The AOED Chairman and Commissioner Jones have met with representatives of the USDA and Opportunity Florida re: potential grant monies for capital improvements at the airport. The meeting was very favorable, and we were asked to divide the hanger/educational complex into phases. The phases as to make it more palatable to State or Federal agencies committing to a piece of the eight-million-dollar project. A copy of the proposed phases prepared by our airport engineer are attached to this report and we will keep the commission abreast once we get to the point of a formal grant application for your review and potential approval.
- Opportunity Florida has graciously agreed to fund, re: grant application two registrations and expenses to get two representatives to MRO America in Chicago the first week of April. This event is a huge convention of the Aerospace industry in America. Our goal would be to walk the floor and look for opportunities for jobs and industry for the County and absorb enough info so next year with appropriate material we can secure a booth and market our airport facility. It is the AOED Boards recommendation to allow the Chair to complete the grant application and select one other representative to attend this important event.

Commissioner Amison noted that when we were in meeting with Triumph, they stressed that we really needed a presence at this meeting. **On a motion by Commissioner Amison, seconded by Commissioner Ward, to authorize the Chair to complete the grant application and select one other representative to attend this important event.** Commissioner Amison noted that in a meeting with Triumph we received a firm commit from them as long as we can confirm MROs out there. This is the first time we received a firm commit and not a maybe. **Motion carried 5-0.**

- Upon necessity the Airport Manager and employee need a base of operations at our airport and a place to keep equipment sheltered. The helicopter hanger at the airport is currently occupied by a non-compliant use and has no lease in place. It is the recommendation of the AOED that the tenant of the hanger be given 30days notice to vacate the hanger so the Airport manager can utilize the hanger.

Chairman Jones asked Attorney Shuler for guidance in this matter. Attorney Shuler noted that he would recommend providing them with lawful notice to vacate the premises in a lawful manner. **On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Amison, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board authorized a letter to the tenant providing them with lawful notice to vacate the premises in a lawful manner. Motion carried 5-0.**

- The Chair has met with Space Florida and has received favorable input re: the potential of funding an educational facility at the site. Further meetings are required to bring something tangible to the AOED for review and to the County for a decision.
- The Chair has met with the County Coordinator, Commissioner Amison and representatives from Triumph and they are willing to look at funding an MRO facility at the Airport. The meeting went well, and we will keep you abreast of developments.
- The Chair met for a second time with the Commander and Vice Commander of Tyndall in regard to helping them with a training antenna at the airport. Tyndall continues its support of our potential runway extension

and ILS system. They continue to inform us of the importance of additional training facilities for our military. I also asked the base to potentially support our 4th of July Celebration in Apalachicola and was put in touch with my contact at public affairs. I am going to push for a two ship F-35 flyby hopefully in conjunction with the National Anthem and a Color guard from our Cadet corps at the High School.

Mr. Moron presented the following item from his report at this time.

2. Action Item: Airport Obstruction Removal Construction Contract

Mr. John Collins (AVCON) forwarded a construction contract with Collins Land Services for an obstruction removal project at the airport (indicated in red circled area on attached sketch). This project is funded by a FAA \$525,000 AIP grant and the required match will come from a FDOT \$79,200 grant. The county requested \$600,000 for this project but was only awarded \$525,000. Mr. Collins is working with FAA to secure the additional \$75,000 and should have an update for the Board at the next meeting.

Board action to authorize the Chairman's signature on the Collins Land Services construction contract for obstruction removal at the airport.

Commissioner Ward asked Mr. Moron to confirm the two Collins' were not related. Mr. Moron noted they two were not related in any way. Commissioner Amison noted that he had contractors reaching out to him after the projects had gone out to bid. He explained to them the bid process and encouraged them to submit bids in the future. Chairman Jones noted they can also sign up to receive alerts for future projects and request for bids. **On a motion by Commissioner Amison, seconded by Commissioner Ward, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board authorized the Chairman's signature on the Collins Land Services construction contract for obstruction removal at the airport. Motion carried 5-0.**

Clerk Maxwell noted that six checks were omitted from the original check run and requested Board approval for the additional check run. **On a motion by Commissioner Sanders, seconded by Commissioner Ward, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the additional check run. Motion carried 5-0.**

Presentations/Updates/Requests

11. Mary C. Mayhew -- President & CEO Florida Hospital Association -- Health Care Discussion

Ms. Mayhew gave a presentation and overview of the state of Rural Health Care. She highlighted some issues which were outlined in her PowerPoint.

National Rural Health Statistics

Nearly 20% of the US population lives in rural areas, but only 11% of physicians live and practice in rural communities. The US faces a projected shortage of up to 124,000 physicians by 2034, the AAMC reports, with the biggest gaps in primary care, behavioral health, and access to care in rural communities. Some 57 million rural Americans depend on their hospital as an important source of care as well as a critical component of their area's economic and social fabric. The shortage of health care providers in rural areas worsens rural health disparities, the National Rural Health Association says. People living in rural areas already experience higher rates of poverty, food insecurity and chronic disease, often leading to poorer health outcomes.

Hospitals' overall workforce costs have increased over 45% (\$6.2 billion). The average Operating Margin percentage for Florida Hospitals dropped 59%. Hospitals have less cash on reserve with increased daily costs. Cash on hand decreased by 28%. There is less cash on hand and that cash is worth less. Margins allow hospitals to invest in critical health care services to meet growing demand, keep pace with the rapid changes in health care and subsidize access to community services.

Medicare and Medicaid account for almost two-thirds of all hospital admissions but comprise only 40% of

hospital payments. Florida hospitals and health care systems continue to face critical workforce shortages. The statewide vacancy rate for 2023 is 13% and turnover rate is 20%. Both numbers are down from 2022 rates.

Florida's Challenge: The number of Medicare funded training slots has been capped-limiting a key tool for physician recruitment and growth. In 1997 Congress "capped" the number of residency slots at existing residency programs. Most hospitals have had more than 25 years of unmoving Medicare GME funding. Florida's population has grown from 14.7 million to 22.2 million people since 1997. These caps have resulted in an inequitable distribution of GME funding. Turnover and vacancy rates have significantly improved for nurses and allied health professions at Florida hospitals in 2023.

Rural hospital and health systems are the lifeblood of their communities. They are focused on ensuring local access to high quality, affordable health care. Rural Health Care challenges include the aftereffects of a worldwide pandemic, crippling workforce shortages, soaring costs of providing care, broken supply chains, severe underpayment by Medicare and Medicaid, and an overwhelming regulatory burden. Rural hospital closures jeopardize access to healthcare with 136 total between 2010 and 2020, 19 closures in 2020 alone. Regional partnerships bolster rural hospitals by sharing staff and expertise, supplies, technology, care coordination, and behavioral health services. Increases collaboration results in better coordination. Sixteen members of the Rural Collaborative shared data and collaborated on an improvement project to increase depression screening rates among their patients. Participants attribute their success to provider training that helped normalize treatment of behavioral health in primary care settings; better documentation in electronic medical records; and the addition of care managers for behavioral health, among other factors. Margins improved in December and are up by more than 15% compared to 2022, which marked the worst year since the beginning of the pandemic. Hospitals are experiencing general improvement across operational and financial measures. Average length of stay has declined on a year-over-year basis. Outpatient revenue has grown significantly increasing by more than 40% compared to 2020. Most rural hospitals are the only source of hospital care in their community. The majority of urban hospitals are less than 5 miles from another hospital, and over 80% are within a 15-mile drive from another hospital. In contrast, almost two-thirds of rural hospitals are more than 20 miles away from the next closest hospital, and one-fourth are 30 miles or more away. The Health Resources and Services Administration's goal is to achieve health equity by reducing illness and death rates related to substance use disorder. The Federal Office of Rural Health Policy funded nearly \$328 million in grants in fiscal year 2023 to: increase health care access; strengthen health networks and delivery systems; and improve quality for critical access hospitals and small rural hospitals.

Nationally – Behavioral Health

HRSA's \$328 million in grants are directed towards:

- Addressing behavioral health funding: \$145 million through the Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP)
- Funding: \$4 million through the Rural Behavioral Health Workforce Centers
- Funding: Nearly \$93 million through Rural Health Outreach Programs to increase access to high quality health care and expand the delivery of services in rural areas
- Expanding Rural Health Workforce: Through the National Health Service Corps Program, HRSA supports more than 7,400 providers serving in a rural community, which includes:
 - Nearly 3,100 rural primary care clinicians
 - More than 3,700 rural mental/behavioral health clinicians
 - More than 600 rural dental clinicians

Nationally – Workforce

- Funding: \$47.2 million through the Rural Public Health Workforce Training Network (RPHWTN) Program

HRSA-supported SUD and Nursing Corps Providers

- More than 7,200 Substance Use Disorder Treatment and Recovery Loan Repayment with 2,666, or more than 1 in 3, providing care in rural communities
- More than 3,900 Nurse Corps-More than 800 (or 21% percent) Nurse Corps participants serve in rural communities
- Nine percent of rural Nurse Corps participants are teaching future nurses as faculty (9%)

Nationally – FLEX Program and Maternity/Obstetrics

- Funding: \$8.9 million through the Rural Maternity and Obstetrics Management Strategies (RMOMS) Program that increases access to maternal and obstetrics care in rural communities
- Funding: \$51.4 million to support small rural hospitals across the country with funding to states for the Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility (Flex) Program to work with states to assist Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs) improve financial and quality performance

Rural Health Grants in Florida

The Federal Office of Rural Health Policy provided approximately \$2.8 million to Florida in fiscal year 2023 to increase health care access, strengthen health networks, and focus on care quality improvements for critical access hospitals and small rural hospitals.

Directed Payment Program – Key Takeaways

DPP is not a substitute for general revenue. DPP does not replace other supplemental payment programs. DPP closes the gap on the shortfall; it is a solution to help address the funding gap between hospital Medicaid patient costs and Medicaid reimbursements for those patients. DPP is contingent on annual CMS

Approval. Delays from the federal government impact states' ability to provide critical reimbursements to hospitals for care provided to Medicaid patients.

Community Health Assessment

Rural communities and healthcare facilities have limited resources to address many health-related needs. Research and needs assessments can help determine where and how resources may best be targeted, and program evaluations can indicate whether a particular intervention or approach works well in a rural context.

Telehealth

Telemedicine was underused and until the COVID-19 pandemic, during which reduced regulations and increased payment parity. This facilitated a rapid increase in telemedicine usage. Telehealth allows specialists and subspecialists to visit rural patients virtually, improving access as well as making a wider range of healthcare services available to rural communities via telemedicine, including:

- Radiology
- Psychiatry and behavioral health services
- Ophthalmology
- Dermatology
- Dentistry
- Audiology
- Cardiology
- Oncology
- Obstetrics
- Medication for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD)

In response to over 400 rural hospital closures during the 1980s and early 1990s, Congress created the Critical Access Hospital (CAH) designation through the Balanced Budget Act (BBA) of 1997. Since its

creation, Congress has amended the CAH designation and related program requirements several times through additional legislation. CAH designation given to eligible rural hospitals by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). The CAH designation is designed to reduce the financial vulnerability of rural hospitals and improve access to healthcare by keeping essential services in rural communities. CAHs receive certain benefits, such as cost-based reimbursement for Medicare services. The Flex Grant Program was also created to award funds to states to support CAHs through training and technical assistance to build capacity, encourage innovation, and promote sustainable improvements in the rural health care system.

Federal Legislative Timeline

- 1997: H.R. 2015, Balanced Budget Act (BBA) of 1997 (P.L. 105-33)
Describes the critical access hospital program and the application process for CAH designation.
- 1999: H.R. 3426, Balanced Budget Refinement Act (BBRA) of 1999 (P.L. 106-113)
Included several changes aimed at increasing the flexibility of the critical access hospital program.
- 2000: H.R. 5661, Medicare, Medicaid, SCHIP Benefits Improvement and Protection Act (BIPA) of 2000, (P.L. 106-554)
This measure provided further improvement to the CAH program, allowing swing beds to be exempt from the SNF prospective payment system. CAHs would be paid for covered SNF services on a reasonable cost basis.
- 2003: H.R. 1, Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act (MMA) of 2003 (P.L. 108-173, Section 405)
This measure provided further improvement to the CAH program, including enhanced reimbursement, and provided continued funding of FLEX Program grants.
- 2008: H.R. 6331, The Medicare Improvements to the Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA) of 2008 (P.L. 110-275)
This law expanded the FLEX program to provide grants to mental health services by veterans and residents of rural areas.
- 2009: H.R. 1, American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARA) (P.L. 111-5)
This bill established federal grant and loan programs through the states to investment in health technology.
- 2010: H.R.3590, Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) (P.L. 111-148)
Expanded the 340B drug discount program to allow CAH participation as a covered entity.
- 2014: H.R.3547, Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014 (P.L. 113-76)
Amended the National Housing Act to provide mortgage insurance to critical access hospitals.

Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs) provide essential medical care to rural communities across the country.

- There are 1,332 CAHs located in the US.
- 36,000 babies are delivered at critical access hospitals per year.
- 7 million patients are treated in CAH emergency departments.
- CAHs handle more than 22.4 million emergency visits.
- Every dollar spent by a rural hospital produces another \$2.29 of economic activity.
- A typical critical access hospital employs 216 community members.
- 43.4% of 340B hospitals are critical access.
- 19.3% of Americans reside in rural areas.

- CAHs survive in large part due to a federal reimbursement structure that provides them funding of 1%
- 40-50% of CAHs could be operating within negative margins by 2025
- 60% of hospital revenue comes from government payers

2024 Legislative Proposals for Rural Hospitals

Rural Emergency Hospital License

- FHA Sponsored Legislation: HB 609-SB 644
- Rural Emergency Hospital (REH) is a new Medicare provider type available as of January 1, 2023
- REHs can only provide emergency department and outpatient services, inpatient services

Rural Hospital Capital Improvement

- Build on 2023 success of securing \$10 million non-recurring for this program
- FHA request \$10 million recurring funding to continue the program
 - Secured in Governor DeSantis' proposed budget:
- There were 19 applications submitted with more than \$15 million in requested grant funding for the current state fiscal year

Grant Program

Rural Hospital Capital Improvement Grant Program

- In 1999, the legislature established the rural hospital capital improvement grant program that provided a mechanism for a rural hospital to apply for a grant from the Department of Health (DOH)
- Subject to legislative appropriation, each rural hospital that applies must receive a minimum of \$100,000 annually, upon application to DOH, for projects *to acquire, repair, improve, or upgrade systems, facilities, or equipment*.
- Between 1999 and 2008, DOH awarded \$34.45 million in grants under the program. The program was defunded after that time.
- FHA has worked closely with DOH this year to make sure these grant funds were included in the state budget, \$10 million nonrecurring, and subsequently signed into law by Governor DeSantis in June.
- This year, the Governor is recommending a recurring \$10 million for the Rural Hospital Capital Improvement Grant Program within the Department of Health (DOH). This success builds on the work FHA has done in the previous session to secure \$10 million in non-recurring funds for the grant program. It is important to note that this is the first time the program has been funded since 2008.

With the Rural Hospital Capital Improvement Grant Program Survey, FHA surveyed our Rural Hospital Committee to ask about their funding needs for projects to acquire, repair, improve, or upgrade systems, facilities, or equipment for their facilities in the current fiscal year through June 30, 2027. A total of thirteen hospitals responded with a combined need of \$137,061,952 in funding over the next four years. This total is much higher when we think about the overall statewide need. In the current fiscal year, there is more than \$29 million in need to acquire, repair, improve, or upgrade systems, facilities, or equipment such as generators. This need grows to more than \$33 million by SFY 2026-2027.

Commissioner Ward inquired about accepting the rural emergency healthcare designation and if that would do away with the critical access designation.

Ms. Mayhew noted that she could not answer this question noting the county would need to look at all sources of income coming in when deciding.

Chairman Jones noted this may come up in the rule process. Ms. Mayhew noted that much of it is driven by the federal government. She would be glad to follow up and make sure the Board gets an answer to this.

Commissioner Amison inquired as to if it was an either-or situation with the rural emergency healthcare and critical access designation. He noted that the rural hospital designation does not carry any pharmaceutical benefit and inquired as to how that could be better.

Ms. Mayhew noted that you have to be able to line up the revenue. Noting that specialized support depends heavily on 340b drugs and as a rural hospital being able to buy those drugs at a deeply discounted price. She noted that she cannot speak to being able to retain rural hospital designation with critical access. She noted that the sacrifices and benefits would have to be looked at.

Commissioner Amison inquired if critical access came with a certain percentage of write off of certain expenses.

Ms. Mayhew noted that critical access receives 101% reimbursement of Medicare costs. Noncritical gets about 86%. She noted that under Medicare you have ability to get some bad debt recovered.

Commissioner Amison noted that the only benefit of critical access would be Medicare at 101%.

Ms. Mayhew noted that this is often not enough. The Medicaid side is not reimbursed fully, it is about fifty cents on the dollar of cost. She noted that the uninsured rate of Franklin County was about 17% during the pandemic. During this time there was an increase in Medicaid enrollees. They have since started recertification and there has been a reduction of about 15% of those who had previously qualified.

Mr. Moron noted that they have been told through the years that certain expenses can be written off on cost reports and we get reimbursed 101%.

Commissioner Amison inquired as to whether the management contract is considered an allowable expense according to Medicare.

Ms. Mayhew noted that she would have to check into this and get back with an answer.

Commissioner Sanders noted that there have been discussions of building a hospital and a stand-alone emergency room. She asked Ms. Mayhew if she sees a trend with hospitals building standalone emergency facilities.

Ms. Mayhew noted that it is different for urban and rural hospitals. Noting that technology has changed, and some nurses do remote monitoring. It all comes back to vision, population growth. Noted there is issue with hospitals building free standing emergency facilities for the benefit of referral process.

Commissioner Sanders noted that TMH now has an urgent care facility. She reflected on how she had read an article about ten years ago predicting the downfall of rural hospitals and how they would be replaced with standalone emergency facilities.

Ms. Mayhew noted that we have a problem with the entirety of the payment system and what it incentivizes. Whether it is the government, Medicare, or Medicaid, or whether it is private, still is largely based upon the

crisis or the more acute urgent need. Primary care physicians are very poorly reimbursed. There is a lot that is preventable, if there were primary care facilities where they could get care to prevent.

Ms. Mayhew noted there are only a handful of options, and you need a professional to come in and weigh the pros and cons.

Commissioner Amison noted that the community has recently lost a lot of their primary care providers and that has created more of an urgency. Commissioner Amison inquired as to how can we bring CHP to the table and get them to accept Gulf County? CHP will not allow you to go to Gulf County, but you can go through Gulf County to Bay County and visit Ascension over there. We are going to have to figure something out with CHP or find another insurance company. Disservice to our citizens to drive to Tallahassee when there is a facility in Port St. Joe. What kind of advice you give us to remedy this?

Ms. Mayhew noted that the Board should negotiate with whatever carrier that is going to be able to provide the services needed. In this instance, it is network adequacy. Are they enrolling enough providers to timely meet the needs? Think you are putting on the table what you need to evaluate. Do you bring Florida Blue in with their relationship with CHP? There are probably others in the community who have connections with senior executives. There is a lot that your local delegation may have as to thoughts on this.

Commissioner Croom echoed the sentiment noting that the limited number of available pediatricians is an issue. He noted that there is a pediatrician in Port St. Joe, but CHP insured cannot go over there.

Ms. Mayhew noted that Franklin County is not alone, and that network adequacy is an issue all over the country. She noted that a recent study shows patients are waiting for up to seven months to get into a primary care office which is a huge problem. Some of it comes back to who is providing primary care and the legislature is trying to expand nurse practitioner services in rural areas.

The commissioners thanked Ms. Mayhew for presenting to the Board and providing the information today.

Commissioner Amison asked if there was any particular person who was a guru for critical access. Ms. Mayhew noted that there are gurus, and she could send Mr. Moron a list of names. She noted that there are firms out there who have been doing this for a long time and that she would make sure to get this information for resources.

Commissioner Sanders noted that she began serving on the Board in 1988 and critical access was already in place.

Commissioner Amison noted that he has a hard time figuring out the logic of medical care. Ms. Mayhew noted that it really is not logical. But you are clear about and know what to expect. You know what ideally should be, it is just knowing what you need to do to get closest to it.

Public Hearing 11:00 a.m. (ET)

12. 11:00 A.M. (ET) -- TDC Spending Plan AN ORDINANCE APPROVING A PLAN FOR TOURIST DEVELOPMENT IN FRANKLIN COUNTY, FLORIDA; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; RESCINDING ALL ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT THEREWITH; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Mrs. Griffith presented the proposed TDC Spending Plan for the next two years. As reported during this year's budget discussions, there was a change in the 2023 statutes which authorized

the expenditure of up to 10% of tourist development tax proceeds to fund public safety services. Before this could occur, the county had to go through the process to amend the TDC spending plan to reflect the change. Attached is the draft plan which has been circulating since early December. The attached draft plan clearly outlines the goals and objectives for Tourist Development and provides a guiding document for budgeted revenues and expenditures going forward. The 2023/2024 plan budget allocates the current year's revenues as % totals: a maximum of 9% can be spent for administrative activities, 40% in advertisement and promotional activities, 21% towards objectives e & f of the plan (museum improvements and operations, erosion control efforts, maintenance dredging and visitor center activities), 10% for public safety services, 10% for beach park facilities, and 10% as a reserve. Interest revenues are earmarked for engineering and design costs associated with projects and carry forward funds are proposed to be allocated to a variety of projects which fit within Florida Statute and the objectives of category e. and f. of the plan including: the replacement of dune walkovers on St. George Island as part of erosion control efforts, replacement of the decking on the access ramp to SGI fishing pier (fishing pier maintenance), replacement of the theater curtains at Chapman Auditorium (improvement of a publicly owned and operated auditorium), various improvements at the county sports arenas, construction of an Eastpoint Nature/Visitor's center, construction of a second county convention center on St. George Island (sized to be population appropriate, design similar to SGI Plantation Clubhouse – 1st convention center in county is Fort Coombs Armory Convention Center in Apalachicola) and completing the renovations to Fort Coombs Armory Convention Center in Apalachicola. Spending plan concepts are subject to the governing body making the appropriate legislative findings for the use of sales tax proceeds and/or some concepts and project elements may necessitate clarification on eligibility for funding by the state attorney general.

Chairman Jones noted that it is his understanding and expectation that the additional funding for public safety services would fund two full time deputies which would assist in all areas of the county as needed for events throughout the year not just seasonal employees during peak season. He noted it was his understanding and intent that the additional deputies assist not only on St. George Island but even on Alligator Point for example with parking issues. He noted that once the Board approves this allocation, we lose some control. However, he would like it on the record that these are to fund two full time deputies to be used throughout the county for events as needed. Commissioner Ward concurred with Chairman Jones sentiment noting there are other beaches throughout the county that have issues and she would like to see visible controls on all areas. Commissioner Croom inquired about events where there is high influx of visitors. Chairman Jones noted yes, this is the intent of what he stated. Chairman Jones noted that we still have a season that starts with Chili Cookoff and runs through Labor Day. However, there are events being held across the county to promote the county that need patrol. Commissioner Croom asked if the money allocated would be spread between the ranks. Mrs. Griffith noted that the funds would be reimbursable. She noted they would have to create reimbursement guidelines and it would not be part of their budget. Chairman Jones said a good marker that citizens could know who they see, possibly put a county logo and or TDC logo on the patrol cars. Commissioner Amison said we already have how many positions that are not filled, two? Mrs. Griffith noted that this would be a question for the Sheriff, but she knows we fund about 86 deputies. Commissioner Amison noted that we are not getting anyone who is applying for the jobs. If it does not get filled, will we have to bring those funds back out? Chairman Jones noted that these funds are reimbursable and would not be dispersed if not spent. Mrs. Griffith noted that the 86 number was actually all sheriff department employees and not deputies. Commissioner Ward said it is hard the element of being a law enforcement officer is not as attractable as before but if they can come patrol the beach on a four-wheeler it may appeal to them. Commissioner Amison asked what type of time frame we are looking at the sheriff filling those positions. Are we going to hold that money up for how many months, years? Chairman Jones asked how much is available under the current budget. Mrs. Griffith noted \$314,768 is available annually. Mrs. Griffith presented the two items from her report related to the TDC plan. She noted that we cannot act on these items until the TDC budget is approved.

8. BOARD ACTION: TDC FUNDING REQUESTS FOR PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES: FCSO & SGIVFD

As part of the 2023 legislative changes to Florida Statute 125, TDC sales tax proceeds can now be used to fund certain public safety services outside of the regular operating budgets of first response entities. In August of 2023, the county and TDC had received requests from the Franklin County Sheriff's Office and the St. George Island Volunteer Fire Department to fund tourism related public safety services. The newly adopted TDC spending plan now includes the 10% for public safety services under objective (h):

The safety and security of visitors to Franklin County is of the utmost importance to county leadership. Investment of up to 10% of the county's tourist development sales tax proceeds toward eligible public safety services will ensure that the county remains a 'positive' and 'safe' environment for visitors and residents alike and addresses the needs from agencies that are impacted from additional tourist traffic. As outlined in statute: the governing board of a county or municipality may not use such taxes to supplant the normal operating expenses of an emergency medical services department, a fire department, a sheriff's office, or a police department. Funding shall be provided in the form of a reimbursement for eligible tourism related activities upon the receipt of acceptable supporting documentation for the expense, recommendation to approve by the TDC and a majority vote to approve the reimbursement by the Board of County Commissioners.

The TDC has already recommended approval and the requests are now presented to you today for approval. The Sheriff's \$153,208 request will hire and equip two additional sheriff's deputies to patrol the high-tourism area of St. George Island. The SGI Volunteer Fire Department responded to 199 emergency medical calls in 2022 and nearly all the calls to beach areas were in response to non-resident tourists and visitors. The VFD is requesting reimbursement from the TDC to fund the outright purchase of a beach compatible ATV fully equipped with a medical sled in the amount of \$25,618.90 and approximately \$30,658.44 to cover the annual payment on a fully equipped quick response vehicle. Both requests are outside of the regular operating budgets for both entities.

Board action to approve the two requests summarized above to be funded by TDC sales tax proceeds.

Chairman Jones asked if the \$31k is for the same vehicle annually to be paid? Mrs. Griffith noted yes, they did a payment plan for \$31k annually. Mrs. Griffith noted that we would be looking at about \$100k remaining. Chairman Jones noted that this was done in conjunction with TDC, they looked at and approved. A lot of these issues we have been looking at for many years. Passing this TDC spending plan will give us the flexibility and ability for the residents to know what to look forward to. The state passing the building use funds in other ways helped to prompt this revision. He noted that we have had difficulty knowing what we can spend the money on but that is just how the legislative is written. Commissioner Sanders noted that she is glad the armory has been restored. Chairman Jones said there is some money set aside for dredging, depends on how our conversations go we may have to amend the plan due to some of the difficulties we have faced in Eastpoint, but we will do that at a later time.

Lynn Wilder spoke asking the Board to consider keeping Franklin County attractive and appeasable to visit. Hopes that TDC will help in reducing litter and cleaning area.

Attorney Shuler noted that the adoption of the Spending Plan it is different than ordinance. He noted that it has to be a 4/5s vote of membership. If four vote in favor it passes, but if four do not vote in favor, it fails.

On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Sanders, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the proposed TDC Spending Plan. Motion carried 5-0.

RFP/RFQ/Bid Opening

13. REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS – Roadway Construction Engineering Inspection – CR 67 Widening and Resurfacing Improvements

The Franklin County Board of County Commissioners is seeking civil engineering services relating to the construction engineering and inspection (CEI) for the widening and resurfacing improvements on County Road 67 from the State Forest Road 166 to State Forest Road 172. The total length of the project is approximately 1.80 miles. The scope of the project includes widening and resurfacing the existing lanes, the addition of 2' paved shoulders, shoulder stabilization and culvert extensions. In addition, signage and pavement markings will be upgraded or replaced. Consideration will be given to only those firms that are qualified pursuant to law and that have been prequalified by FDOT to perform the indicated types of work.

Mrs. Griffith opened the sealed proposals as follows:

Southeastern Consulting Engineers, Inc.
115A Sailors Cove Drive
Port St. Joe, Florida 32457

Anchor CEI, Inc.
450 Magnolia Avenue
Panama City, Florida 32401

AECOM Technical Services, Inc.
Tallahassee, Florida

Mrs. Griffith announced the review committee would consist of Kimberly Raffield, Erin Griffith, and Michael Moron. She noted Michael Curenton is not able to serve on the committee because he was the project lead. **On a motion by Commissioner Sanders, seconded by Commissioner Ward, to authorize staff to release the proposals to the review committee as stated above for a recommendation for the Board. Motion carried 5-0.**

County Staff & Attorney Reports

14. Erin Griffith – Fiscal Manager/Grants Coordinator

1. BOARD ACTION: RESTORE COUNTY-WIDE DUNE RESTORATION PROJECT

The county has finally received a notice of award for \$1.6 million dollars in construction funding for the RESTORE County-wide Dune Restoration Project. The restoration study was completed in April of 2022 and the county has since gone through an extensive review process with the US Treasury. The project will include template dune and habitat restoration at the two county-owned beach parks and will plant approximately 171,000 sea oats along 11 miles of shoreline: four miles of public beach on St. George Island, .8 miles of Carrabelle beach, five miles of Alligator Point, and 1.2 miles of Bald Point.

One significant hurdle for the project was relative to Special Award Condition #3 in the attached NOA. The US Treasury initially wanted a recorded covenant on each beachfront property for the indeterminate duration of the 'life of the plants' to protect and provide access to the sea oats of which they deemed to be 'federal assets' if funded by RESTORE. After much discussion and negotiation, county staff with assistance from County Attorney Shuler received approval from Treasury for them to accept a simple 18-month licensing agreement in lieu of the recorded covenant. The license agreements will be sent to all beachfront property owners along the 11 miles of the project area and this agreement will grant access to only the planting area along the shore for approximately six months

for planting and an additional twelve months thereafter for the warranty period. The signed licensing agreement will not be recorded but will be required to be on-file before sea oats can be planted. The template licensing agreement is included as an attachment.

Once the final NOA is approved (final draft from Treasury will correct minor detail to shift the responsibility to confirm receipt of the licensing agreements from the county attorney to the project's engineer), the county can proceed with getting the construction engineering and oversight contract in place, the permits re-issued, distribution and collection of the license agreements from all beachfront property owners, final bid/design specifications and advertise for construction to begin upon conclusion of sea turtle nesting season in the fall.

- A. *Board action to approve and authorize the Chairman to sign the notice of award from the US Treasury for the County-Wide Dune Restoration Project once issued with the final change to the special award condition mentioned above.*

On a motion by Commissioner Amison, seconded by Commissioner Croom and Commissioner Ward, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved and authorized the Chairman to sign the notice of award from the US Treasury for the County-Wide Dune Restoration Project once issued with the final change to the special award condition mentioned above. Commissioner Ward inquired about once the issue with the final change, we will not have to make another motion. Mrs. Griffith noted the change had been agreed to be changed, they are just working with their team to get the language change. Attorney Shuler noted the phone call that was had, the original discussion was the engineer would be responsible for the permits. He noted the original request requires a property right that he was not comfortable with. He noted that Erin and himself were successful to get them to reduce the period of time and the licensing agreements signed. Then when they sent the agreement in, they had belts and suspenders, wanting the engineer to do it the first time and then me to do it again. They have agreed and I do not think there will be any additional action required from the Board. **Motion carried 5-0.**

At the August 1, 2023, meeting, the Board opened responses to the RFQ for the Professional Engineering and Construction Oversight Services for the RESTORE County-wide Dune Restoration Construction Project. There was only one respondent to the RFQ, MRD & Associates of Destin, and the response was released to Langton and Associates for their review. Now that a construction grant award has been approved, the county can now release the response to the ranking committee which will be comprised of myself, Mark Curenton and Michael Moron for staff review and recommendation.

- B. *Board action to release the RFQ response for the Professional Engineering and Construction Oversight Services to the review committee stated above.*

On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Amison, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board released the RFQ response for the Professional Engineering and Construction Oversight Services to the review committee stated above. Commissioner Ward noted that she wished things could go a lot quicker. I know there is no way to consolidate and make it faster, it is frustrating. Chairman Jones noted that we actually started this project about five years ago. **Motion carried 5-0.**

2. BOARD ACTION: EXCESSIVE FORCE POLICY RESOLUTION

Franklin County, as a recipient of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding, acknowledges its responsibility to adhere to applicable federal, state, and local regulations requiring units of government receiving CDBG funds to adopt and enforce "excessive force provisions". Section 906 of Public Law 101-625, enacted as Section 104 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, requires sub recipients of federal funds to adopt and enforce a policy prohibiting the use of

excessive force by law enforcement agencies within its jurisdiction against any individuals engaged in nonviolent civil rights demonstrations.

Board action to adopt the attached resolution adopting the excessive force policy

RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION OF THE FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS (THE COUNTY) ADOPTING A POLICY FOR THE PROTECTION OF INDIVIDUALS ENGAGING IN NON-VIOLENT CIVIL RIGHTS DEMONSTRATIONS, REPEALING ALL RESOLUTIONS IN CONFLICT HEREWITH, AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNTY AS FOLLOWS:

Whereas 906 of Public Law 101-625, enacted as Section 104 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, requires subrecipients of federal funds to adopt and enforce a policy prohibiting the use of excessive force by law enforcement agencies within its jurisdiction against any individuals engaged in nonviolent civil rights demonstrations.

Whereas 906 of Public Law 101-625, enacted as Section 104 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, requires subrecipients of federal funds to adopt and enforce a policy of enforcing applicable State and local laws against physically barring entrance to or exit from a facility or location which is the subject of such nonviolent civil rights demonstration within its jurisdiction.

Therefore and henceforth, it is the policy of the County to prohibit the use of excessive force by law enforcement agencies within its jurisdiction against any individuals engaged in nonviolent civil rights demonstrations; and to enforce applicable State and local laws against physically barring entrance to or exit from a facility or location which is the subject of such nonviolent civil rights demonstration within its jurisdiction with due and proper consideration given to the extent and limits of the County's power and authority to do so.

All other resolutions and policies or sections of resolutions and policies of the County in conflict with the provisions of this Resolution are hereby repealed to the extent of such conflict.

If any section, paragraph, sentence, or clause hereof or any provision of this Resolution is declared to be invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining provisions of this Resolution shall be unaffected thereby and shall remain in full force and effect.

This Resolution shall take effect immediately upon its passage.

This policy adopted by the Franklin County Board of County Commissioners this 6th day of February 2024.

On a motion by Commissioner Sanders, seconded by Commissioner Ward, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board adopted the attached resolution adopting the excessive force policy. Chairman Jones noted that is not this already a law. Mrs. Griffith noted that it is a law, and we just have to put a policy in place saying we are abiding by that law. **Motion carried 5-0.**

3. BOARD ACTION: CIVIL ENGINEERING DESIGN TASK ORDER LANARK EMS STATION

The survey has been completed on the new two-acre site adjacent to the Lanark Village Volunteer Fire Department. The City of Carrabelle's attorney and the county attorney are now working on the formal transfer of ownership. The county's engineers have submitted the attached \$20,340 task order based upon the county engineering services contract to complete the civil site engineering and design,

permitting, bidding and construction contract award services for the new site of the Lanark EMS Station. The code compliant, county-owned station will be a major upgrade for the county's ambulance service and will provide a much-needed permanent base for eastern Franklin County.

Board action to approve and authorize the chairman to sign the attached task order with Dewberry Engineers to be paid from the Health Care Trust Fund.

Attorney Shuler noted that he has spoken with Mr. Dan Hartman, and he is to be presenting the deed to the City of Carrabelle at the next meeting.

On a motion by Commissioner Sanders, seconded by Commissioner Ward, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved and authorized the Chairman to sign the attached task order with Dewberry Engineers to be paid from the Health Care Trust Fund.

Commissioner Sanders asked how long it would take to see ground moving once the deed is signed. Mrs. Griffith estimated about six months. Chairman Jones said the funding for the building is being considered by the legislature. **Motion carried 5-0.**

4. BOARD ACTION: CR67 PHASE II RESURFACING PROJECT CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT & NTP

At the November 21st meeting, the Board opened construction bids for CR67 Phase II to widen and resurface approximately 1.92 miles of CR67 from the Crooked River Bridge to SFR 166. This was the second time the project had been bid and even with the bid alternates to remove paved shoulders along the roadway, the low bid was still more than the original grant award. As FDOT has now provided supplemental funding to fund the base bid and approval has been granted to use district paving funds for the inclusion of 1' paved shoulders as a necessary safety upgrade, the county can now move forward will awarding the construction contract.

Board action to approve and authorize the chairman to sign the attached construction contract with Roberts and Roberts for \$1,835,492.26 and issue the notice to proceed with a construction start date of February 23, 2024.

On a motion by Commissioner , seconded by Commissioner , and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved and authorized the Chairman to sign the attached construction contract with Roberts and Roberts for \$1,835,492.26 and issue the notice to proceed with a construction start date of February 23, 2024. Motion carried 5-0.

5. BOARD ACTION: DISTRICT 2 ROAD PAVING TASK ORDER – STRIPING

As part of the new county road paving project, Commissioner Sanders requested striping improvements in her district. As part of the county's continuing service contract for engineering services, Dewberry Engineers has submitted a task order in the amount of \$8,350 to create a striping plan and bid specifications for the district's striping needs. One specific area as requested by Commissioner Sanders was beginning at the Welcome Garden on Alligator Point to the Marina (excluding the area that was just resurfaced as part of the Alligator Drive Revetment Project).

Board action to approve the attached District 2 striping task order with Dewberry Engineers.

On a motion by Commissioner Sanders, seconded by Commissioner Ward, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the attached District 2 striping task order with Dewberry Engineers. Motion carried 5-0.

6. BOARD ACTION: DISTRICT 3 ROAD PAVING TASK ORDER – STRIPING & 24TH STREET INTERSECTION

Commissioner Croom has also asked to complete a comprehensive large-scale striping improvement in his district, the resurfacing of Laurel Street between 9th and 10th and repair of the intersection at Fred Meyer and 19th. As part of the county's continuing service contract for engineering services, Dewberry Engineers has submitted task orders for \$13,300 to develop the striping plan and bid specifications for the district's striping needs and \$15,430 for the engineering, bid specifications, survey and design of the roadway resurfacing.

Board action to approve the attached District 3 task orders 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 the attached District 3 task orders with Dewberry Engineers. Commissioner Ward asked if this would include storm water management. Mrs. Griffith noted that yes, as to engineering services, it would include storm water management. **Motion carried 5-0.**

7. BOARD ACTION: DISTRICT 4 ROAD PAVING PROJECT CHANGE ORDERS – BLUFF & HATCHCOCK ROADS

Commissioner Amison requested quotes from the existing county road paving contractor Roberts and Roberts to repair several roads in his district. The attached \$43,895 proposal for the Bluff Road work will include the excavation and replacement of 56 linear feet of 18" reinforced concrete culvert pipe, reconstruction of the 18" headwalls, asphalt, and base – this repair is necessary as the existing culvert pipe is collapsing and causing damage to the road. Unfortunately, this repair will require the road to be cut which will warrant another patch later in the year once the base material settles. The attached \$37,553 proposal for Hathcock Road will include reclamation and resurfacing of a section that is in poor condition.

Board action to approve the two change order proposals from Roberts and Roberts for Bluff and Hathcock Roads.

On a motion by Commissioner Croom, seconded by Commissioner Amison, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the two change order proposals from Roberts and Roberts for Bluff and Hathcock Roads. Motion carried 5-0.

8. BOARD ACTION: TDC FUNDING REQUESTS FOR PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES: FCSO & SGIVFD

As part of the 2023 legislative changes to Florida Statute 125, TDC sales tax proceeds can now be used to fund certain public safety services outside of the regular operating budgets of first response entities. In August of 2023, the county and TDC had received requests from the Franklin County Sheriff's Office and the St. George Island Volunteer Fire Department to fund tourism related public safety services.

The newly adopted TDC spending plan now includes the 10% for public safety services under objective (h):

The safety and security of visitors to Franklin County is of the utmost importance to county leadership. Investment of up to 10% of the county's tourist development sales tax proceeds toward eligible public safety services will ensure that the county remains a 'positive' and 'safe' environment for visitors and residents alike and addresses the needs from agencies that are impacted from additional tourist traffic. As outlined in statute: the governing board of a county or municipality may not use such taxes to supplant the normal operating expenses of an emergency medical services department, a fire department, a sheriff's office, or a police department. Funding shall be provided in the form of a reimbursement for eligible tourism related activities upon the receipt of acceptable supporting documentation for the expense, recommendation to approve by the TDC and a majority vote to approve the reimbursement by the Board of County Commissioners.

The TDC has already recommended approval and the requests are now presented to you today for approval. The Sheriff's \$153,208 request will hire and equip two additional sheriff's deputies to patrol the high-tourism area of St. George Island. The SGI Volunteer Fire Department responded to 199 emergency medical calls in 2022 and nearly all the calls to beach areas were in response to non-resident tourists and visitors. The VFD is requesting reimbursement from the TDC to fund the outright purchase of a beach compatible ATV fully equipped with a medical sled in the amount of \$25,618.90 and approximately \$30,658.44 to cover the annual payment on a fully equipped quick response vehicle.

Both requests are outside of the regular operating budgets for both entities.

Board action to approve the two requests summarized above to be funded by TDC sales tax proceeds.

On a motion by Commissioner Amison, seconded by Commissioner Croom, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the two requests summarized above to be funded by TDC sales tax proceeds. Motion carried 5-0.

9. BOARD ACTION: NEW CURTAINS AND SHADES AT CHAPMAN AUDITORIUM

Included in the TDC spending plan, was \$25,000 earmarked for the replacement of the stage curtains at Chapman Auditorium. The custom curtains and shades will be fixtures of the county-owned building. The auditorium is currently operated by the local nonprofit, the Panhandle Players, and the auditorium provides a much-needed entertainment venue for tourists. Pursuant to the county bid policy, when a quote does not exceed \$25,000, two quotes must be received (three are preferred but only two regional companies could be located specializing in the construction and installation of theater curtains). The low quote for the custom stage curtains was \$23,966.60 from vendor Main Stage. A separate quote in the amount of \$6,567 Florida Window Coverings will fit the custom blackout shades for the side windows. The Panhandle Players have agreed to fund the additional \$5,500.60 needed for the improvements at the auditorium.

Board action to approve up to \$25,000 to be paid by TDC sales tax proceeds to replace the custom curtains and shades at Chapman Auditorium in Apalachicola.

On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Sanders, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved up to \$25,000 to be paid by TDC sales tax proceeds to replace the custom curtains and shades at Chapman Auditorium in Apalachicola. Motion carried 5-0.

10. BOARD ACTION: REQUEST TO USE TWO ACRE PARCEL NEAR LEONARD'S LANDING FOR STAGING

Timothy Butler of Coastline Clearing and Land Development has submitted a request to use a 2-acre parcel owned by the county to the north of Leonard's Landing along Highway 98. Beginning in March, Coastline Clearing will be a subcontractor for FDOT's US Highway 98 Resurfacing Project. Coastline has requested to be able to clear the front of the property and use the two-acre site to stage equipment and road materials. It has been the county's hope to one day use this area for overflow parking for Leonard's landing and this initial site work and staging would assist in working towards that goal.

Board action to approve the use of the 2 acres north of Leonard's Landing as a staging site for the US98 resurfacing project.

On a motion by Commissioner Sanders, seconded by Commissioner Amison, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the use of the 2 acres north of Leonard's Landing as a staging site for the US 98 resurfacing project. Commissioner Sanders noted that she is glad to see we have some local contractors working with DOT on these projects.

Commissioner Ward noted that she is glad to see the resurfacing project beginning. Chairman Jones noted that they had a sooner date for the project between Eastpoint and Carrabelle, but they have been trying to line up with the living shoreline project as well. It looks like the landing date for that is 2025. **Motion carried 5-0.**

11. BOARD ACTION: REQUEST TO ADVERTISE FOR CONSTRUCTION BIDS – OLD FERRY DOCK BOAT RAMP & ARPA COURTHOUSE STRUCTURAL SEALANT AND ROOF REPAIRS

FWC has approved the bid specification packet for the Old Ferry Dock Boat Ramp Project and the bid specifications are now available from the architects for the structural sealant and roof repairs at the main courthouse.

Board action to approve advertising for construction bids for the Old Ferry Dock Boat Ramp and Courthouse Repair Project.

On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Amison, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved advertising for construction bids for the Old Ferry Dock Boat Ramp and Courthouse Repair Project. Chairman Jones noted that he is glad to see this project moving forward. **Motion carried 5-0.**

12. BOARD ACTION: FDEP RECREATIONAL TRAILS GRANT AWARD AGREEMENT- SGI MULTI USE PATH

The county has received a \$342,916 grant through the FDEP Recreational Trails Grant program to resurface the SGI Multi-Use Path in the commercial district from 3rd Street West to 3rd Street East. In addition to resurfacing, the project will also include the installation of surface warning tactile strips at seven intersections and will construct a small rest area beside the path near both ends of the project area that will include a bench, waste receptacle, low-maintenance native trees for shade, and bicycle repair station.

Board action to approve and authorize the chairman to sign the attached grant award agreement.

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 grant award agreement. Motion carried 5-0.

13. BOARD INFORMATION: MISCELLANEOUS PROJECT UPDATES

- Sod in at Vrooman submitted final reimbursement to FDEO, still some work to do on dugouts.
- Triumph pre application for first responder. Hopefully, we can get our application in front of them in April

Chairman Jones said when we had Hurricane Sally, we had a culvert fail in Eastpoint that had to be replaced. We did not put that on the list to have the contractor come back and look at. It does need to be repaired, there is a dip in the road most likely from this issue.

Chairman Jones noted that he would like for us to consult with Dewberry to give us a layout to see how many we could fit on the property the county owns west of Collins for vendors. We are probably going to have to amend ordinance, install signage for vendor designation. Mrs. Griffith noted that she will bring back conceptual idea to the Board.

Chairman Jones inquired as to what we need to do to get the economic development moving. Mr. Moron noted that he is going to reach out to the company that works with Wakulla County to set up a meeting and bring it back to the Board.

Commissioner Ward noted that she is glad Ms. Virginia sent the road list. Said she was waiting for the list to compare to her list. Has a feeling it is going to mirror each other quite a bit. Thanked Mrs. Griffith for her work on the park and the FRDAP grant and everything that went with it.

Commissioner Sanders asked if there are any updates on Walnut Creek. AECOM is reaching out to the contractor to see where they are. Not sure if they will be finished within the timeline or not. Commissioner Sanders noted that we gave them an extension back in December and we are getting close to the end of that. Commissioner Sanders noted that they have not done a good job.

15. Michael Morón – County Coordinator

Mr. Moron presented the following to the Board at this time.

11. Informational Item: Rural Counties Day

- I would like to thank Mr. John Solomon for his hard work on making Franklin County a “stand-out” at Rural Counties Day held at the Florida State Capital Courtyard in Tallahassee on Thursday, January 25th.
- I would also like to thank Commissioner Amison for donating the shrimp that Mr. Solomon boiled and gave away at the event. If Mr. Solomon is willing, the county plans to participate next year.
- Opportunity Florida has offered to assist the county with this year’s event registration fee.
- Commissioner Croom and Chairman Jones attended this event to help promote Franklin County and they both may have a few words regarding the event.

Commissioner Croom noted that it was a great event and Mr. Solomon, and team did a great job. Noted he was briefly able to speak with Senator Simone. Chairman Jones thanked Mr. Solomon for helping us to put our best foot forward despite being a small community. Commissioner Sanders explained how the small counties rural day began noting it was a way for the small counties to display.

The Board moved to item #3 at this time.

1. Discussion/Action Item: Relocation of Shooting Range

- At your last meeting, the Board discussed relocating the shooting range from its current location behind the Humane Society to county property further up Highway 65.
- Since the new proposed location will be next to your Road Department, you wanted to defer further discussions until Mr. Howard Nabors (Road and Bridge Superintendent) was present this morning.
- **Board discussion and possible action regarding the relocation of the shooting range.**

2. Action Item: Airport Obstruction Removal Construction Contract

- Mr. John Collins (AVCON) forwarded a construction contract with Collins Land Services for an obstruction removal project at the airport (indicated in red circled area on attached sketch).
- This project is funded by a FAA \$525,000 AIP grant and the required match will come from a FDOT \$79,200 grant.
- The county requested \$600,000 for this project but was only awarded \$525,000. Mr. Collins is working with FAA to secure the additional \$75,000 and should have an update for the Board at the next meeting.
- **Board action to authorize the Chairman’s signature on the Collins Land Services construction contract for obstruction removal at the airport.**

3. Action Item: AOED Board Member Temporary Reassignment

- In April 2023, the County Commission established the Airport Operations Economic Development advisory board. At that time, the administrative responsibilities that includes minutes, agendas, communication with board members were assigned to Mr. Ted Mosteller, Interim Airport Manager.
- It has become apparent that Mr. Mosteller’s airport maintenance and operation

responsibilities were not considered when he was tasked with AOED administrative responsibilities, as he is very busy with airport maintenance and operations.

- With that in mind, Mr. Mosteller and I discussed and agreed to allow Mr. Tom Mescher, AOED Vice-Chairman, be responsible for the meeting minutes. It then became convenient for Mr. Mescher to assist with the agendas and some board communication. However, Mr. Mescher's seat on the AOED board limits his ability to completely assist with administrative responsibilities.
- I recommend that the County Commission allow Mr. Mescher to temporarily step down from the AOED as a board member and serve as its coordinator. That will allow Mr. Mescher to do minutes, agendas, and communicate with all AOED board members without the restrictions of being a board member. He has agreed to serve as coordinator on a voluntary basis and in about 90 days the County Commission can discuss and possibly decide on a more permanent solution. His seat on the AOED will not be filled until the County Commission decides on a permanent plan for the AOED administrative responsibilities.
- Everyone that is affected by this temporary change is aware.
- Board action to authorize the temporary reassignment of Mr. Tom Mescher from AOED Board Vice-Chairman to AOED Board Coordinator.

On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Amison, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board authorized the temporary reassignment of Mr. Tom Mescher from AOED Board Vice-Chairman to AOED Board Coordinator. Commissioner Amison noted that we ask these folks to come in on a voluntary basis and serve on these committees. Once we got the airport board established, I did not realize the airport board was going to take off. We do not want to take these folks in the community and put them in a position where they can legally have an issue with Sunshine law.
Motion carried 5-0.

4. Discussion/Action Item: Code Enforcement Update

- Mrs. Cortni Bankston will update the Board on code enforcement certification class options.
- Based on the available options and information Mrs. Bankston received from The John Scott Dailey Florida Institute of Government, the Board could consider allowing the designated deputies to start their code enforcement role but require that he/she completes 'The Fundamentals of Code Enforcement' class within a year.
- Board discussion and possible action on code enforcement.

Mr. Moron noted that Mrs. Bankston was not able to attend today and asked if the Board would like to defer until the next meeting to discuss with her. The Board discussed briefly and decided unanimously to table the item to a future meeting. **On a motion by Commissioner Amison, seconded by Commissioner Sanders, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board tabled the above item on Code Enforcement to a future meeting. Motion carried 5-0.**

5. Action Item: Community Planning Technical Assistance Grant

- At 3:00 p.m. this afternoon, the Board will hear from Apalachee Regional Planning Council (ARPC) in a workshop setting.
- ARPC was engaged by the county to update the county's comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance and will present their initial review findings and recommendations and seek Board feedback.
- ARPC, on behalf of the county, applied for and received a \$50,000 cost reimbursement Community Planning Technical Assistance Grant Agreement that will be used to pay for this update project.
- This agreement is ready for your approval and the Chairman's signature.
- Board action to authorize the Chairman's signature on the \$50,000 Community Planning Technical Assistance Grant Agreement, earmarked to pay for the county's comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance update project.

On a motion by Commissioner Amison, seconded by Commissioner Ward, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board authorized the Chairman's signature on the \$50,000 Community Planning Technical Assistance Grant Agreement, airmarked to pay for the county's comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance update project. Motion carried 5-0.

6. Action Item: The Landings Workshop

- County staff received a request from The Landings representative to reschedule the workshop to Tuesday, March 5, 2024. At the workshop, representatives will present the project to the Board and the public for discussion.
- The Board will be in a workshop setting, therefore, there will not be any Board action for consideration.
- Board action to reschedule The Landings Workshop to Tuesday, March 5, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. (ET).

On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Amison, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved rescheduling The Landings Workshop to Tuesday, March 5, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. (ET). Motion carried 5-0.

7. Action Item: BOCC Canvassing Board Appointment

- Mrs. Heather Riley, Supervisor of Elections, requested a canvassing board commissioner and alternate appointment. The county canvassing board is composed of three members: the supervisor of elections; a county court judge who acts as the chair, and *the chair of the board of county commissioners*.
- "The law requires substitutes to be appointed whenever a member is disqualified or unable to serve. The substitute cannot be a candidate with opposition in the election being canvassed and cannot be an active participant in the campaign or candidacy of any candidate with opposition in the election being canvassed. For what constitutes active participation in the campaign or candidacy of a candidate, see Division of Elections Advisory Opinion DE 09-07. The process for appointing a substitute is set out in section 102.141(1), Fla. Stat."
- Board action to appoint a commissioner and an alternate, other than Chairman Jones, as the is a candidate for the 2024 election.

On a motion by Commissioner Amison, seconded by Commissioner Ward and Commissioner Sanders, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board appointed Commissioner Amison as the Canvassing Board member and Commissioner Sanders as alternate. Motion carried 5-0.

8. Action Item: Streetlight on Bluff Road

- Commissioner Amison requested a quote for a streetlight on the corner of Bluff Road and Timberwood Court for traffic and other safety concerns.
- Duke Energy quoted \$1940.50 upfront installation/construction cost and a \$10.66 recurring monthly fee.
- Board action to authorize the \$1940.50 installation/construction cost and \$10.66 monthly cost for a new streetlight at Bluff Road and Timberwood Court corner.

On a motion by Commissioner Croom, seconded by Commissioner Amison and Commissioner Ward, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board authorized the \$1940.50 installation/construction cost and \$10.66 monthly cost for a new streetlight at Bluff Road and Timberwood Court corner. Commissioner Croom noted that this is a real dark area and much needed. Commissioner Sanders noted that there are many areas throughout the county that need lighting. Commissioner Ward said to let her know what areas there are. Commissioner Sanders said let us look around and see what is needed throughout the county. Mr. Moron noted that at one time they tried to coordinate with the school board, however, they were told bus stops change. **Motion carried 5-0.**

9. Action Item: Facilities Maintenance Coordinator

- In the past, courthouse maintenance and custodian services were supervised directly by the county's administrative position.
- Over the years, the county added several buildings, which in turn, increased the role and responsibilities of our maintenance and custodian staff, making the current procedure for dealing with issues, ineffective.
- Today, I am asking the Board to consider, on an interim basis, changing Mr. Shane Philips role and title from Facilities Maintenance Custodian position to Facilities Maintenance Coordinator. That change would have Mr. Philips receiving all maintenance and custodial requests, complaints, or other related matters and then confer with me if needed. In addition, Mr. Philips would directly supervise all other maintenance and custodial staff.
- Mr. Philips agreed to assume this role for three months with no change to his salary. In three months, if Mr. Philips and the Board agree to make this a permanent change, then a salary increase will be discussed.
- Board action to change, on an interim basis, Mr. Shane Philips job title and role from Facilities Maintenance Custodian to Facilities Maintenance Coordinator.

On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Amison, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved changing, on an interim bases, Mr. Shane Phillips job title and role from Facilities Maintenance Custodian to Facilities Maintenance Coordinator. Motion carried 5-0.

10. Action Item: Chili Boulevard Closure for Shrimpfest and Chili Cookoff

- County staff received a request to close Chili Boulevard on St. George Island for the ShrimpFest that will be held on Saturday, February 10th and for the Chili Cookoff on March 4th.
- If this request is approved, the Sheriff will be notified and will assist with traffic control at both events.
- Board action to close Chili Boulevard on St. George Island on Saturday, February 10th for the Shrimpfest and on March 4th for the Chili Cookoff.
-

On a motion by Commissioner Amison, seconded by Commissioner Ward, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board authorized closing Chili Boulevard on St. George Island on Saturday, February 10th for the Shrimpfest and on March 4th for the Chili Cookoff. Motion carried 5-0.

11. Informational Item: Rural Counties Day

- I would like to thank Mr. John Solomon for his hard work on making Franklin County a "stand-out" at Rural Counties Day held at the Florida State Capital Courtyard in Tallahassee on Thursday, January 25th.
- I would also like to thank Commissioner Amison for donating the shrimp that Mr. Solomon boiled and gave away at the event. If Mr. Solomon is willing, the county plans to participate next year.
- Opportunity Florida has offered to assist the county with this year's event registration fee.
- Commissioner Croom and Chairman Jones attended this event to help promote Franklin County and they both may have a few words regarding the event.

12. Informational Item: RCSC Chairman

- County staff was notified of a proposed change of Chairman from Chad Taylor (Jackson County) to Jim McClellan (Calhoun County) on the Riparian County Stakeholder Coalition.
- Does any Board member object to this change?

The Board discussed briefly and there was no objection to this change.

13. Informational Item: Dr. Sanaullah & Dr. Nitsios

- Sadly, the county received notice that Dr. Sanaullah and Dr. Nitsios will be closing their offices, located in Apalachicola, within the next few months. Dr. Sanaullah's staff started the process of notifying patients of the office intent to close so patients can search for an alternate health care provider.
- The Board will be informed of the exact closing date once that information is forwarded to county staff.

Commissioner Amison noted that we need to get with CHP and moving forward. CHP at one time really helped the county, I have yet found a county employee that likes it. We should be actively engaging an insurance company every five years. Mr. Moron inquired from Erin if we get quotes every year. Mrs. Griffith noted that we have actually been able to roll back. Commissioner Amison noted that the companies tend to get complacent and our duty as commissioners is to keep them in check. Talk to CHP and see if we can change some of the options. Mr. Moron noted that we are in the process of meeting with CHP. Commissioner Ward noted that Bay County is with a different insurance company. She noted that the sheriff's association is a self-funded company. Mrs. Griffith noted that employees are fond of CHP and the deductibles. Mrs. Griffith noted that she feels like CHP is very popular. Commissioner Sanders noted that when she had her first hip surgery through Blue Cross, she had to pay \$5k out of pocket, when second surgery done through CHP, she paid nothing. Commissioner Croom noted that when paying out of network for emergency you are paying the higher. Mrs. Griffith noted that emergencies are covered out of network, and they bill directly through Blue Cross for those. Mr. Moron noted the problem with CHP is that they are cutting Gulf County out of the network. Commissioner Amison noted that they are in competition with CHP. Commissioner Ward noted that with the closing of the doctor's office, these people are without a job. Commissioner Ward noted that insurance companies are a racket all the way around. Our employees need more options. Noted she is in favor of getting CHP to the table to see what we can do.

14. Informational Item: FAC Annual Conference

- Florida Association of Counties announce open registration for the 2024 Annual Conference. This conference will be held at the Signia Hilton Orland Bonnet Creek from Tuesday, June 25th to Friday, June 28th.
- Please notify Mrs. Cortni Bankston as soon as possible if you are planning on attending.

15. Informational Item: Fill Ordinance Update

- County staff is scheduled to meet with Dewberry staff tomorrow to discuss language for a draft fill ordinance.
- Once the draft ordinance is completed, it will be presented to the Board with the intention of scheduling a workshop to allow for public input before scheduling a public hearing for adoption.

16. Informational Item: Alligator Point Boat Ramp Presentation

- At your last meeting during public comments, Mr. Edwin Lott of Alligator Point discussed the need for boat ramps on Alligator/Bald Point.
- I recommended that Mr. Lott is added to a future agenda to discuss this matter in more detail and allow Board feedback. Mr. Lott will be on the February 20th meeting agenda with a presentation for the Board.

17. Informational Item: Comp Plan Workshop

- As a reminder, the workshop to discuss the county's comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance with the Apalachee Regional Planning Council is scheduled later today at 3:00 p.m. (ET).

18. Informational Item: Next Regular Meeting

- Your next regular meeting will be on Tuesday, February 20, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. (ET). That afternoon, there is a public hearing scheduled at 5:00 p.m. (ET) to consider a public road/alley abandonment.

Chairman Jones noted that he has a couple of matters to discuss. One, for whatever reason, the state, our deer hunting times last a little bit longer than everyone else. FWC is tasked with managing wildlife. We have people coming from other states coming in and killing, leaving on the side of the road. We need to discuss with and ask the FWC and state to make our season the same as everyone else. Then maybe we will have less pressure on our wildlife from people who do not live here. Mr. Moron noted that he believes this was discussed with FWC previously and was turned down. Commissioner Sanders said she has never seen the disrespect for our hunters like this year. She noted that she has spoken to some of the local hunters, and they would like to come before the board and talk about this. Noted that she thinks we need to take a stand and let FWC know. Chairman Jones suggested holding a workshop after the first meeting in March. Mr. Moron said he would like to schedule a meeting for him and Chairman Jones with the lobbyist to discuss first. Then we can go from there. Commissioner Ward noted we need to make sure to hold it after five so everyone can attend.

Chairman Jones said the City of Bainbridge have been considering allowing a money breeding facility on the Flint River. The best estimate it was going to double to water consumption. I want to state on the record on eyes are on it. We are at the bottom of the river they are talking about. I want to make sure our public is aware; Franklin County is keeping an eye on that. We will do whatever steps necessary to protect our bay. Commissioner Sanders asked if we should do a resolution to send to City of Bainbridge. Commissioner Amison noted that we need to get the state involved on this also. The FWC are spending millions of dollars trying to restore our bay, they should act on this.

16. Michael Shuler – County Attorney

Information Item

1. McIntyre Road Special Use Permit Update

On October 17, 2023, the Board approved a special use permit for the Florida Forestry Service, and its independent contractors, to use McIntyre Road for a tree thinning operation. which was attested to as a treatment for pine beetles. On October 19, 2023, the draft special use permit was delivered to the representatives of Forestry for review. comment and provision of the dates for the beginning and end of the use of McIntyre Road. On January 30, 2024, I received an email stating that the start date of the permit should be January 26, 2024, to run for one calendar year. So much time has passed that I wanted the Board to be informed. Copies of some emails and the draft special use permit are attached for review.

Commissioner Sanders noted that with all of the water, McIntyre Road is in bad shape. We need to make sure that they are going to upkeep it. Commissioner Amison noted we could take pictures before and after and make them accountable. Attorney Shuler noted that he is using the same road maintenance standard as used in the first one. Attorney Shuler read into the record the verbiage.

While the Florida Forest Service may require its independent contractors to maintain and repair said McIntyre Road, the Florida Forest Service understands and accepts that it is responsible to Franklin County Board of County Commissioners for the repair and maintenance thereof and will promptly make such reasonable repairs and maintenance thereof as requested by Franklin County. The Florida Forest Service is not required to improve McIntyre Road beyond the condition of the road immediately prior to the issuance of this special use permit.

Road Maintenance Standard: The aforementioned part of McIntyre Road shall at all times remain passable by a passenger car in the same manner that it is passable immediately prior to the issuance of this special use permit. After the expiration of this special use permit, that part of McIntyre Road regulated by County Ordinance 92-3 shall be returned to the condition it was in immediately prior to the issuance of this special use permit.

Chairman Jones noted that he believes it will be taken care of, noting Commissioner Sanders will make a phone call if she needs to.

Chairman Jones noted there is back and forth that we need to remove the corps from the permit. We should have an answer by the next meeting.

Recess

The Board recessed at this time.

Reconvene 3:00 p.m. (ET) Workshop 3:00 p.m. (ET)

17. ARPC -- Comp Plan & Zoning Ordinance Update -- Presentation

The Board held a workshop to discuss the drafted Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance update. In attendance from ARPC was Caroline Smith, Economic Development Manager, Alex Valdes, and Marion Knowles. Ms. Smith noted that the update was being funded by a grant from Florida Commerce. The Board reviewed each element of the plan in detail and allowed for public comment throughout the workshop.

The elements of the Comprehensive Plan included the following:

- Capital Improvements
- Coastal/Conservation
- Housing
- Infrastructure
- Intergovernmental Coordination
- Land Use
- Recreation and Open Space
- Traffic Circulation

The elements of the Zoning Code included the following:

- A-1 Forestry Conservation District
- A-2 Forestry Agriculture District
- C-1 Commercial Fishing District
- C-2 Commercial Business District
- C-3 Commercial Recreational
- C-4 Commercial Mixed Use Residential
- I-1 Industrial District
- P-1 Preservation District
- P-2 Recreational District
- R-1 Single Family Residential District
- R-1A Single Family Residential Subdivision District
- R-2 Single Family Residential Mobile Home
- R-3 Single Family Estate Residential
- R-3MH Single Family Estate Residential/Mobile Home
- R-4 Single Family Home Industry
- R-5 Multi Family
- R-6 Rural Residential
- R-7 Multi Family High Density
- R-8 Multi Family Medium Density
- Z-1 Public Facilities District

Members from the public who spoke or gave input. Mrs. Barbara Sanders suggested adding a traffic element to Policy 5.2 sub 1 objective 5 noting that traffic has increased since the original plan was written. Mr. William Sanders recommended that Board add a provision restricting floating homes such as what Bay County is experiencing now with the Coquina floating home. Ms. Debi Jordan inquired as to why the S-4 zoning was excluded from the plan. It was determined to most likely be an oversight.

Ms. Rebecca had submitted a speaker card, but the Chairman was unable to connect with her at this time.

Mr. Foster asked the Board if there could be a provision added to the plan which required PUDs to be completed within five years or the property reverts back to previous zoning. He also suggested the county encourage downlighting for signs and buildings.

Ms. Rebecca spoke via Zoom noting that she would prefer to submit a written response to the document provided today.

Ms. Brenda spoke via Zoom asking the Board would Mr. Foster's suggestions be followed up on and or considered when updated the plan. Chairman Jones noted they would look into them and see if it is something that can be incorporated into the plan.

Commissioners' Comments

There were no additional Commissioner comments.

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.