

**FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR MEETING  
COURTHOUSE ANNEX, COMMISSION MEETING ROOM  
MARCH 19, 2024  
9:00 AM  
MINUTES**

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

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

**Call to Order**

Chairman Jones called the meeting to order.

**Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance**

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

**Approval of the Agenda**

Mr. Moron noted that the public hearings are time certain. **On a motion by Commissioner Sanders, seconded by Commissioner Ward, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the agenda. Motion carried 5-0.**

**Approval of Minutes and Payment of County Bills**

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

**On a motion by Commissioner Amison, seconded by Commissioner Croom, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the Payment of County Bills and the FCBCC Regular Meeting 2/20/2024 minutes. Motion carried 5-0.**

**Public Comments**

There was no request received through the portal or received during the meeting. Chairman Jones noted that he had one, but Mr. Moron noted that they would like to be put on the next meeting agenda.

**Constitutional Officers**

2. **Michele Maxwell -- Clerk of Court -- Government Finance Professional Week**

**GOVERNMENT FINANCE PROFESSIONALS' WEEK  
MARCH 18-22, 2024**

WHEREAS The Florida Government Finance Officers Association is a professional association founded in 1937 and serves more than 3,300 professionals from state, county and city governments, school districts, colleges and universities, special districts, and private firms: and

WHEREAS the FGFOA is dedicated to being your professional resource by providing opportunities through education, networking, leadership, and information; and

WHEREAS, this Government Finance Professionals Week, sponsored by the FGFOA and all of its member governmental organizations, is a weeklong series of activities aimed at recognizing government

finance professionals and the vital services that they provide to our state and our community; and

WHEREAS, during this week, government finance professionals throughout the State of Florida will be acknowledged for their hard work, dedication, and leadership.

NOW THEREFORE, I, Michele Maxwell, Franklin County Clerk of Court, on behalf of Commissioner Jones, Commissioner Amison, Commissioner Croom, Commissioner Sanders and Commissioner Ward, do hereby proclaim March 18-22, 2024, as Government Finance Professionals Week in the County of Franklin and extend our appreciation to all government finance professionals throughout the state and here in Franklin County for their hard work, dedication, and leadership.

Dated this 19<sup>th</sup> day of March 2024.

Michele Maxwell  
Franklin County Clerk of Court

Clerk Maxwell presented the above proclamation declaring March 18th-22nd as Government Finance Professionals Week in Franklin County.

Clerk Maxwell thanked her finance staff which includes Linda Phillips, Danny Gay, Amber Segree, and Krista Downing. Chairman Jones thanked Mrs. Erin Griffith. Sheriff Smith recognized Ms. Ginger Coulter presenting her with a vase. Commissioner Ward inquired as to how long Ms. Coulter had been with the sheriff's office, Ms. Coulter noted that she had been there 23-24 years. Chairman Jones noted that he does not see any other constitutional officers in the room however he thanked all government finance professionals.

**On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Amison and Sanders, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the above resolution recognizing Government Finance Professionals' Week.** Commissioner Ward thanked all of the finance departments throughout the county. **Motion carried 5-0.**

### **3. Captain David Varnes -- Sheriff's Department -- Boiler Room Repairs**

Mr. Varnes presented the quotes to the Board for the boiler room repairs noting it is the main issue at this time. He noted the pumps have already been replaced. Mr. Keith Lawson is the best quote coming in at \$23,969 which is just under \$25,000.

Project: Franklin County Jail Boiler Room Re-pipe

Keith Lawson Company proposes to furnish labor, material and equipment as required for the plumbing scope of work per plans, specifications and clarifications as stated herein.

PLUMBING \$16,700.00

Proposal Based Off Drawings Dated: 1988 Clarifications The following clarifications have been taken into consideration:

- 1) All work to be performed during regular business hours.
- 2) This proposal, in its entirety, must be made a part of the contract.
- 3) KLC reserves the right to review the subcontract agreement and request modifications to make it mutually agreeable.

Inclusions

- 1) Replace existing Copper piping in Boiler room with CPVC Sch80 pipe and fittings.
- 2) Re-pipe existing pumps, tanks, boiler, mixing valves and heat reclaim units. If pumps are replaced, they will be an additional \$1,148.00 each. Pump pricing is a best guess and will be confirmed +/- once existing data plate information can be verified.

- 3) Existing instrumentation to be reused.
- 4) Provide and install new isolation valves at mechanical room wall. Add \$2,769.00 for all valves to be brass ball valves.
- 5) Permits if required .

#### Exclusions

- 1) Performance and Payment Bond.
- 2) Fiberglass piping insulation. If required add \$4,500.00
- 3) Overtime, shift-time and fast-track development premiums.
- 4) Labor for composite project cleanup. We will clean up our debris. Dumpsters by others
- 5) Warranty on any equipment or products not furnished by Keith Lawson Company.
- 6) Temporary domestic hot water system.
- 7) Domestic water booster pump.

Captain Varnes said the request is to go with Mr. Lawson. Chairman Jones inquired about the CPVC recommendation noting that it would last longer than the copper lines. Mr. Varnes noted that Mr. Franklin King said the copper is thin where the actual bends are, and they are starting to leak. Mrs. Erin Griffith noted that we budget \$100,000 for maintenance to the jail each year and it will be paid for out of those funds. Mrs. Griffith noted that we will be paying the vendor directly and we have three quotes.

**On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Croom, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved accepting the quote from Mr. Lawson for the boiler room re-pipe repairs. Motion carried 5-0.**

Mrs. Griffith presented the following items from her report.

### **3. BOARD ACTION: Sheriff's Department Air Conditioner Mold Remediation/Mildew Repairs**

In late January, the Sheriff's Department ordered an air quality evaluation test of the jail and administration building. The test concluded that there were trace amounts of mold and mildew in some of the air condition ducts and components. The remediation protocol called for cleaning and scrubbing to be completed by a licensed mold remediation specialist and for the cleaning/repair and replacement of the damaged HVAC ductwork and coils. Franklin County has received an \$8,274.24 estimate from SERVPRO of Bay County to perform the mold remediation services as outlined in the inspection report and an estimate of \$5,800 from Air It Cool to clean and remove mold from three 10 ton evaporator coil packs and cabinets, full cleaning of three mini split units, and removal and replacement of moldy duct board from the return box of one of the 10 ton air handlers and installation of new duct board for the return box of the main air handler at the jail. The ceiling air vents will be cleaned and repainted by the jail's maintenance department.

Board action to approve the attached two quotes to complete the mold remediation protocol at the County Jail and Administration Building to be paid by the Board's jail repair budget line item.

**On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Croom, and Motion carried 5-0.**

### **4. BOARD ACTION: SHERIFF'S AMENDED TDC FUNDING REQUEST – PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES**

The Sheriff's Department was recently approved to hire and equip two additional full-time deputies for patrol of busy tourism areas as part of the TDC's public safety services budget category. As Spring Break

is here already, the Sheriff has been able to purchase the necessary equipment for those patrols, however, he has not had any success in filling the positions to be ready for this season. The Sheriff has asked to amend his first year request to allow for him to pay overtime to deputies during this busy spring and summer season to be able to provide adequate staffing and attention to areas struggling with increased numbers of visitors until he is able to get the positions in place – if payment of overtime works better for staffing flexibility and meets the need at peak times for tourism related response, it may be a permanent transition for this request, but that will be discussed during the upcoming budget cycle. The vehicles purchased through the program for tourism response will have the TDC decal on the vehicle whereas the public can clearly identify the additional patrols being paid by TDC sales tax proceeds.

Board action to approve the reimbursement of documented tourism response related overtime for the sheriff's department.

**On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Sanders, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved reimbursement of documented tourism response related overtime for the sheriff's department. Chairman Jones noted that he is good with this, but he thinks the residents and people involved would rather see a full-time deputy. Once we can, would like to see full time positions. Motion carried 5-0.**

### **Presentations/Updates/Requests**

**4. Valorie Hill -- Pan Care – Update**

The Board skipped over this item noting Ms. Hill was not present.

**5. Lynn Wilde -- ANERR -- Sea Turtle Update**

The Board skipped over this item noting Ms. Wilde was not present.

**6. Evan Blythe -- ARPC -- F-98 Shoreline Project: Waterway Markers**

Mr. Blythe presented several photos for the Board's viewing. He noted that his goal is to leave this with the Board, let them reflect, talk to others, and then bring suggestions back at the next meeting.

**7. Joe Ross -- SJLVFD Fire Chief – Update**

Mr. Ross gave a brief overview of the history and status of the fire department. Commissioner Ward noted that the sheriff's office received legislative funds for new radios. Not sure if you could speak with sheriff about getting the old ones and reprogramming them. Mr. Ross noted that Mrs. Griffith had already talked about doing that. Chairman Jones noted that we are working to do a countywide system, it is a significant project. Commissioner Sanders noted that she has one of the old radios, that has not ever been used. She said she would bring it to them. Thanked them for what they have done, volunteering and bringing it back doing a great job. I know without a fire department; we have been very lucky. Mr. Ross thanked all of the volunteers. Commissioner Sanders told Mr. Ross to stay in contact with Mrs. Griffith and Mr. Moron and if you need them anything let them know. Mr. Moron noted that the communication line has been great and nothing like before. Glad to hear you have two twenty-year-old volunteers. Commissioner Sanders noted that the main thing she is hearing is the ISO rating and there is nothing we can do until we get up and fully running. Chairman Jones thanked the Carrabelle fire department for backing up and helping during this transition period.

**The Board moved back to Valorie Hill – Pan Care at this time.**

Ms. Hill came in and introduced herself as the Case manager for Starting Point. She noted that we do have a big opioid crisis going on and we are here to help those users and families. We meet them where they are

at. If they need to get to detox or rehab, we take them. Once they get out, we follow up with them. We also do medical detox. We have medical, optical, dental. We have drug take back kiosks. In Calhoun County we had over 200 pounds within the past six months. We offer training to the communities. We are trying to reduce the stigma of substance abuse disorders. We are here for the community and will be glad to help you in any way we can.

### **8. Dr. Huy Nguyen -- Healthcare Proposal**

Dr. Nguyen introduced himself and colleagues as follows:

Huy Nguyen, MD

- a) Univ of Chicago and Navy Physician
- b) Treated Gulf and Franklin residents during the pandemic at ASHG
- c) CEO of Doctors Memorial Hospital and Emergency Physician
- d) CEO and Managing Partner of North Walton Doctors Hospital

James McLoughlin, MD

- a) Columbia University and Navy Physician
- b) Spine surgeon with offices in Tallahassee and Panama City
- c) Board member and physician owner at North Walton Doctors Hospital

Andrew O'Connell

- a) CFO at Alys Beach and previously multi-billion-dollar subsidiary of Weyerhaeuser
- b) CFO at North Walton Doctors Hospital
- c) Experience with mergers and acquisitions and corporate brand/marketing

Gary Gargus

- a) Experienced healthcare architect familiar with AHCA and Weems

Christopher Ryan of Phillips

North Walton Doctors Hospital (NWDH)

- a) Physician owned, managed, and operated hospital in 15+ years
- b) First new hospital in Florida in 10+ years
- c) Renovation
- d) Will be first Florida REH under new Florida legislation

### **NWDH Renovation**

1) Florida Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) treated NWDH as an existing vacant building being licensed as a new hospital, even though it had previously been a functioning hospital. Therefore, NWDH had to be upgraded to meet all current codes that govern hospital construction by AHCA.

- a) Made AHCA approval and construction to be more extensive

2) Requirements

- a) ADA compliant bathrooms
- b) Hurricane impact resistance door and windows
- c) new fire alarm systems
- d) new fire separation walls
- e) Redesign of existing ER
- f) Redesign of existing laboratory
- g) Expansion of existing CT room for new equipment

- h) Correct deficiencies in all fire partitions and corridor walls
- i) Complete installation of roof a/c units
- j) Existing sprinkler system shall meet current code standards
- k) Install second 4-inch water service line to building
- l) Provide hurricane resistant enclosure around emergency generator and oxygen tank
- m) Existing medical gas system shall be tested and recertified
- n) Existing electrical systems shall meet current code standards
- o) Add additional medical gas outlets and electrical outlets to meet code standards
- p) Close gaps beneath ceilings
- q) Replace lightning protection system,
- r) Replace all light fixtures with LED

### **Current State of Weems – Outsider Perspective**

- 1) Financial unsustainability
  - a) Weems FY23 Net Op Rev - \$7.6M; Net Op Loss (\$3.4M); Neg Op Margin (42%)
  - b) Weems annualized FY24 Net Op Rev - \$9.6M; Net Op Loss (\$3.3M); Neg Op Margin (34%)
  - c) Low-income pool demand letter
  - d) Ad valorem tax and sales tax rev/subsidy - \$2.6M (2023); \$3.1M (annualized 2024)
- 2) Financial Benchmarks – Doctors Memorial Hospital (DMH)
  - a) DMH FY20 Net Op Rev - \$12.4M; Net Op Loss (\$0.6M); Neg Op Margin (4.5%)
  - b) DMH FY23 Net Op Rev - \$21.4M; Net Op Loss (\$0.5M); Neg Op Margin (2.4%)
  - c) DMH annualize FY24 Net Op Rev - \$24.4M; Net Op Income \$1.5M; Positive Cap Margin +6%
- 3) Financial Benchmarks – 2022 CAH Operating Margin
  - a) National – 3.6%; Florida -4.7%
- 4) Loss and poor recruitment of providers – ‘Death Spiral’
- 5) Definition of insanity is to do same thing but expect different results

What other county initiatives could this Board undertake with the subsidies currently diverted to support Weems?

### **Rural Emergency Hospitals (REH)**

- 1) Requirements
  - a) New Medicare Part A provider type beginning in January 1, 2023
  - b) Has transfer agreement with a Level I or II trauma center
  - c) Staffed Emergency Department 24/7
  - d) Licensed in a state that provides for licensing of Rural Emergency Hospitals
  - e) Cannot provide acute inpatient care but can provide outpatient observation and surgeries
  - f) Was a CAH or small hospital (less than 50 beds) as of December 27, 2020

- 1) Advantages

- a) Additional 5% over the Medicare payment rate of Hospital Outpatient Prospective Payment System (OPPS) including surgeries
- b) CY 2024 REH facility monthly payment amount is: \$276,233.58
  - c) Can still paid for Ambulance Services and Post-Hospital Extended Care Services licensed as a distinct Skilled Nursing Facility
  - d) Allows for physician owners to be exempt from Stark self-referral laws

2) Weems has not had the Medicare volume to derive positive benefit from CAH designation or from the 340B drug program to offset operational losses.

### **Florida 2024 Legislative Session Update (Pinpoint Results – Bryan Cherry & Jason Maine)**

#### **SB 644/HB 309 Rural Emergency Hospitals**

- SB 644 Passed Senate Committees and Full Senate
- HB 309 Passed House Committees and Full House
- Governor signing
- North Walton Doctors Hospital will likely be the first rural hospital in Florida to be designated as an REH.
- Legislation:
  - Rural Emergency Hospital (REH) is a new Medicare provider type made available as of January 1, 2023. The REH model was created by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to respond to rural hospital closures and to give rural communities access to healthcare. Through the new REH Medicare enhances reimbursement rate, the goal is to ensure rural hospitals in rural underserved areas remain open, and access to healthcare continues. Since the REH will be a new hospital designation, for rural hospitals in Florida to become designated a “Rural Emergency Hospital”, we must amend our statutes to define REH as a new covered provider type and service in s. 409.905.

#### **Renovation of Weems Hospital**

##### **1) Key Elements of Current Hospital**

- a) Outdated and not compliant with current codes
- b) Inefficient use of space with approximately 60% of 17.950 sq ft being nonclinical

##### **2) Key Elements of Proposed Renovation**

- a) Renovate within current total space
- b) But expand clinical space within current space to achieve 60% clinical
  - a) Reopen 2 ORs
  - b) Increase ED for more rooms
  - c) Expand Lab to accommodate new equipment
  - d) Expand Radiology to accommodate new equipment including CT within hospital
- e) Update patient rooms to be larger and comfortable

c) Renovate hospital exterior and grounds to project modern, coastal appearance

Current and Proposed Layout (Please see PDF – Gary Gargus)

#### **Construction Cost – Regional Benchmarks**

- 1) Florida cost to renovate or build hospital per sq. ft.
  - a) Miami Health Renovation 188,000 sq. ft. - \$287 per sq. ft.
  - b) Tampa General Behavioral 83,000 sq. ft. - \$120 sq. ft.
  - c) Baptist Health, Pensacola 602,000 sq. ft. - \$1,079 sq. ft.
- 2) Recent local cost to renovate hospital per sq. ft.
  - a) Gulf Coast, Panama City
    - i. 3North & 3Central 29,000 sq. ft. - \$101 per sq. ft.
    - ii. MRI & CT 2,547 sq. ft. - \$661 per sq. ft.
    - iii. New OR #11 & Support 985 sq. ft.- \$1,602 per sq. ft.
    - iv. Diagnostic Center 18,544 sq. ft. - \$250 sq. ft.
  - b) North Walton Doctors Hospital 43,758 sq. ft. - \$100 per sq. ft.

### **Projected Weems Construction Cost and Timeline**

- 1) Total square footage of Weems to be renovated: 17,950 sq. ft.
- 2) Projected cost to renovate, worst case at \$350 sq. ft.
  - a) Total projected cost - \$6.3M
- 3) Projected cost to renovate, best case at \$200 per sq. ft.
  - a) Total projected cost - \$3.6M
  - b) Avg. renovation time with Gary's projects have been 6-9 months, but we believe that we can continue to operate hospital as a REH during renovation
- 4) Projected cost to build new hospital, best case at \$500 per sq. ft.
  - a) Total projected cost -\$9.0M
  - b) Avg. new hospital construction is 2+ years
- 5) Please note that above projected cost does not include capital equipment and furnishings, or pre-opening expenses

### **Tentative Proposed Capital Purchases**

- 1) Surgery:
  - a) Mako Orthopedic Robot: \$500,000
  - b) OSI Hana Table: \$140,000
  - c) Misc: \$250,000
- 2) All new lab equipment: \$471,000
- 3) Radiology:
  - a) MRI: \$1,200,000
  - b) CT: \$542,000
  - c) Xray: \$142,000
  - d) PACs: \$148,000
  - e) Misc: \$200,000



4) ER

- a) Patient Monitoring System: \$135,000
- b) Misc: \$100,000

5) Infrastructure and furnishing: \$500,000

6) Tentative total capital cost: \$4,329,000

**Electronic Health Record/ERP/IT**

1) MEDHOST – Electronic Health Record (EHR)

- a) Emergency Department Information System
- b) Perioperative Information System
- c) Laboratory Information System
- d) Radiological Services – Separate PACs
- e) Patient Access: Registration & Scheduling
- f) Healthcare Information & Management Systems (HIMS) – Medical Records
- g) Billing & Coding
- h) Financial Systems & Reporting
- i) Materials Management & Procurement
- j) Patient Portal

2) IT Network and Cybersecurity

3) Proposed IT Investment: \$400,000

**Proposed Expansion of Clinical Services**

1) Invest in lab automation to position as ‘reverse reference lab’

- a) Can perform more studies with less staff
- b) Partner with other lab service companies that would send samples from regional practices withing to hospital lab generating additional revenues

2) Increase imaging services via capital investment

- a) Offer comprehensive radiology services to region

3) Spine, Joint, and General Orthopedic

- a) Invest in specialty equipment for low complexity spine surgery
- b) Invest in Mako robot for joint representatives

4) Increase ED volume by 33% over next 2 years via rebranding and restructuring to decrease transport to outside Franklin

5) Cardiology services focused initially on outpatient consultation but will consider potential cath lab in the future

**Corporate Rebranding**

1) Consider complete rebranding

- a) Change of name to mesh branding of hospital to overall growth of area as a unique destination, so consider ‘Coastal Doctors Hospital’

- b) A new logo, website, and invest in social media
  - c) Investment in marketing of specialty services such as orthopedic and spine to Tallahassee market especially in conjunction with local businesses
- 2) Cultural Emphasis on Accountability, Excellence, and Customer Service
- a) Place priority on Google review score and customer-centric culture
  - b) Have defined Key Performance Indicators
  - c) Merit-based pay with departmental bonuses
  - d) Work with current staff on cultural change

**Physician Ownership**

- 1) Public-Private Partnership
- a) County has minority ownership with physician consortium
  - b) County can be partial source of financing to physician consortium
  - c) County has seat on governance board
  - d) Community support foundation
  - e) No further surtax subsidy
- 2) Physician Owned, Managed, and Operated Hospital
- a) Physician consortium purchase hospital with external financing
  - b) Community advisory board and foundation
  - c) No further surtax subsidy

**Transitional Phase to Ensure Community Buy-IN**

- 1) 90-day period under a Letter of Intent prior to closing
- 2) Franklin BOC hires an independent consultant to:
- a) Oversee smooth management transition
  - b) Conducts a fair market valuation of Weems
  - c) Advises BOC during negotiation with physical consortium
- 3) Physician consortium is obligated to:
- a) Develop an acceptable Strategic Plan for BOC approval
  - b) Develop a Renovation Plan to include architectural design and engineering requirements
  - c) Engage current staff and providers
  - d) Community outreach
- 4) A financial penalty if either side does not follow through with closing under stipulation of Letter of Intent

**Summary**

- 1) Franklin County Board of Commissioners is exploring options to buttress and improve healthcare within the County anchored by Weems Memorial Hospital
- 2) Weems has incurred significant financial losses, intertwined with contraction of staff, providers, and services. The rural hospital ‘Death Spiral’

- 3) Rural emergency hospital is a new hospital classification that provides a significant monthly facility payment and allows for physician ownership of hospital
- 4) North Walton Doctors Hospital provides a model of physician recruitment and participation in sustaining quality rural healthcare
- 5) We believe that Weems is an underperforming hospital that is weighing down a growing community with extensive social needs
- 6) We have a comprehensive, 'battle harden' team that can develop strategy, oversee construction/renovation, implement marketing, and manage/operate hospital in a 'turnaround' process
- 7) We proposed a transition process that ensures Community buy0in and participation in defining future direction of a sustainable hospital

Commissioner Amison inquired about the clinics. Dr. Nguyen noted that the clinics and ambulance services would be included and would need to be written into the plan. Commissioner Amison noted that he wanted to bring that up because we have just lost several primary physicians.

Chairman Jones said I know that the Rural Emergency Hospital has to already be a building that was built before a certain date. Dr. Nguyen noted that yes, and Weems meets all of the requirements. This is the perfect hospital to be. This is your classic hospital that this legislative was designed to save. Physician managed; physician owned. Chairman Jones asked if all the procedures would be outpatient, Dr. Nguyen noted that yes, and they could stay overnight if they needed to. He noted that we would not be doing massive spine reconstruction. Chairman Jones noted that he only mentions that because his younger son had to have spine surgery, but it was a significant surgery. Dr. McCloughin noted that you would be limited mostly on your larger surgery, those would have to go to a larger facility. He noted that you could do a lot of neck procedures but believed you would be limited to 72 hours. Dr. Nguyen noted there is now a two to three month wait for hip/spine centers. In all of Tallahassee there are five, in Panama City there are four, and Walton there is one. If you put a MAKO robot in, they will come. Chairman Jones noted that it would be good to schedule a nighttime workshop and give time for the public to appear. Mr. Moron suggested engaging consultant, then schedule workshop because he is sure they would want to be a part of the discussion. Commissioner Croom you mentioned Bonifay it was a CAH when you came on board. Doctor Memorial is doing good? Right. How do you keep CAH here? Dr. Nguyen noted that he is not sure how you would. He noted that the physicians are personal guarantors on loans. He does not see a way to stay as CAH. Commissioner Croom asked how many jobs we are going to lose. Dr. Nguyen noted that he believes you would be adding 30 jobs. See a net gain of jobs. In North Walton we are already on track for a 20% increase in jobs. Commissioner Croom asked Mr. Walker how many employees we have at Weems. Mr. Walker noted at present we have 120-126 employees, 60-65 full time. Dr. Nguyen noted that at Walton there are two operating rooms. We are already projecting that we are going to be at 150-175 full time employees. Your full-time staff is going to increase. Commissioner Croom restated so there will be an increase of jobs? Dr. Nguyen said there is no doubt of that. There has been a loss of staff and noted there is going to have to be an adjustment for salary upward. Commissioner Croom expressed concerns with the financial analysis of the Doctors Memorial Hospital. Dr. Nguyen noted that there were cash flow issues. But our cash flow is strong as of now. He noted that the 2023 analysis is coming, and he would be glad to get the 2024 when available. Commissioner Croom will the 2023 be better when it comes available. Dr. Nguyen noted that it will be a lot better. Dr. Nguyen noted that if he did not know how to turn around a distressed hospital he would not be here. Commissioner Ward asked if you could have REH and CAH both. The CAH really does not help us? Dr. Nguyen noted Weems does not have enough volume to offset your losses. Chairman Jones said the hospital you were discussing with Commissioner Croom is that in Walton? Dr. Nguyen noted it is in Bonifay. It has no intention of converting to a RAH due to the volume that they have. Commissioner Amison noted that we are similar to the hospital in Gulf County because they are just shipping patients out. Commissioner Ward asked if they felt like this REH is a way for them to weed out the CAH? Dr. Nguyen noted that he does not know if they are deliberately trying to phase it out. I think this legislation is trying to help struggling CAH hospitals that are not doing the

inpatient care. At the end of the day, you want inpatient care, but you need a team to manage heart attacks. He described the CT cardiology machine bought at Walton and the benefits of the images for follow up with cardiologists. Commissioner Croom asked if they would continue to manage EMS. Dr. Nguyen noted that yes, if anything, he would be out telling EMS not to drive anywhere and come to Weems.

The Board recessed at 10:45 a.m. and reconvened at 10:54 a.m.

## **9. Sandra Brooke PhD -- Presentation**

ABSI seeks to understand the causes of decline of the Apalachicola Bay ecosystem, with focus on oyster reefs. ABSI will help develop a management and restoration plan for oyster reefs and the long-term health of the bay. ABSI funding is provided by Triumph Gulf Coast Inc., and Florida State University. The Apalachicola Bay System Ecosystem-Based Adaptive Restoration and Management Plan developed by the ABSI Community Advisory Board provides recommendations on how to restore and maintain a healthy Apalachicola Bay System. The Community Advisory Board (CAB) was implemented in 2019. Members came from many stakeholder groups, including the seafood industry, commercial and recreational fishers, Government agencies, non-profits, and local businesses. The CAB met 26 times and the final plan was accepted in November 2023. The full and summary versions of The Plan are posted online as of January 2024. The plan framework is as follows.

Goal A: A healthy and productive bay ecosystem

Vision: The Apalachicola Bay System is sustainably managed to ensure the ecosystem is productive and economically viable.

Outcome: By 2030, the Apalachicola Bay System is a healthy, productive ecosystem that supports a viable oyster fishery and other economic opportunities.

Strategy: Establish monitoring methods that can be used to help restore and manage the Apalachicola Bay System, including oysters.

Actions:

1. Develop Ecosystem Service targets to guide restoration.
2. Assess use of spat on shell for restoration.
3. Conduct restoration experiments to identify best material and location.
4. Create ecosystem models to inform management.
5. Restore and create reef structures

Goal B: Sustainable Management of Oyster Resources

Vision: A sustainably managed and enforced wild oyster fishery with a management plan that protects the resource and provides fair access to stakeholders.

Outcome: By 2030, a science-driven plan will be in place to sustainably manage oyster resources in the Apalachicola Bay System.

Strategies:

1. Evaluate management actions that could be used to maintain a sustainable oyster fishery.
2. Evaluate management actions for a sustainable oyster fishery.
3. Develop criteria for opening and closing the oyster fishery.
4. Conduct periodic oyster stock assessments.
5. FWC Law Enforcement reviews enforcement strategies and penalties.
6. Establish advisory committee to provide oversight on management of oyster habitat and harvest.

7. Recommend policies and actions that help retain and recycle cultch for habitat replenishment.
8. Evaluate and develop spawning reefs for protection of broodstock.
9. Ensure oyster aquaculture practices and locations are compatible with oyster restoration and wild harvest.
10. Assess effectiveness of oyster replenishment using cultch or hatchery juveniles.

Actions:

1. Evaluate potential for a limited entry fishery.
2. Consider daily harvest limits and 5-day working week.
3. Manage harvest areas to avoid effort concentration and resource depletion.
4. Consider Bay-wide summer (June-August) fishery closure
5. Consider recreational daily harvest limit

Goal C: Management and Restoration Plan

Vision: The Apalachicola Bay System Ecosystem-Based Adaptive Restoration and Management Plan is developed with support from stakeholders who will help implement the Plan.

Outcome: By 2030, the Apalachicola Bay System will be a productive and sustainably managed ecosystem with an Ecosystem-Based Adaptive Restoration and Management Plan.

Goal D: Stakeholder Education and Engagement

Vision: Community members support the implementation of best management practices and serve as a communication hub between stakeholders and management.

Outcome: By 2030, the public are aware of the importance of sustaining the health of the Apalachicola Bay System and are working together to implement the Plan.

Goal E: A Thriving Economy connected to a Restored Bay

Vision: Community members support the implementation of best management practices and serve as a communication hub between stakeholders and management.

Outcome: By 2030, the Apalachicola Bay is thriving economically due to a restored Apalachicola Bay System.

The Plan is available at <https://marinelab.fsu.edu/absi/cab/>. The Community Advisory Board has been replaced by The Partnership for a Resilient Apalachicola Bay. The partnership will help implement a restoration and management plan for Apalachicola Bay; make recommendations for changes to the plan as needed; serve as communication hub between community and management entities. Funding for the partnership is secured for four years (2023-2027). Ms. Betty Webb is the Partnership coordinator/facilitator. The Partnership will be an independent non-profit 501(c)3 organization. Those interested in joining the partnership or have question may contact Ms. Webb at 850-323-0567 or [betty@partnershipforapalachbay.org](mailto:betty@partnershipforapalachbay.org) .

Chairman Jones inquired in a lot of the material we have the date on the outcome is 2030, is that a recommendation that ABSI has made to FWC? That they need to keep the bay closed until then. Dr. Brooke noted that no, that is just a target date for the plan, gives us something to work for. Ask for our understanding as well as those who may be looking at document. Strategy B4 – that is on FWC it is incumbent upon them. Dr. Brooke if you cannot enforce a complete closure it is going to be difficult to maintain a management plan. Chairman Jones noted that when we had check stations a lot of things were held to check. Dr. Brooke noted that use of the check stations worked. Dr. Brooke noted that is something

the partnership could push. The funding does not come unless the support is there. Commissioner Sanders noted that she is glad they see the need for aquaculture and wild oysters. ABSI is due to end in June, we are requesting a no cost extension. We want to wrap up some of the science. We would like to work with FSU to try and look at local businesses and see how they can enhance the working waterfront of Apalachicola. Commissioner Sanders noted that she is all about the working waterfronts. Chairman Jones noted he does not think there is any problem with aquaculture and wild caught. Hope the state gives them the entire water column. When power lines were moved in the bay shrimper's lost 10% of the area. The biggest issue those that have been in wild industry, most think they are self-employed, but they are more vendors or sub-contractor. When you go to aqua culture you are going to business for yourself. Hoping they work with Franklin's Promise. Restoration is an entire industry these days. Commissioner Amison asked if we are going to continue monitoring the concrete. Dr. Brooke said yes. The oysters do not seem to care. Commissioner Amison said he is pulling for concrete. Commissioner Jones said several years ago they had the discussion noting in Louisiana they were using concrete because they could mill it and kind of size it to the needs.

The Board moved to the public hearing at this time.

17. 11:00 a.m. (ET) – Public Hearing- Working without Required Permits

AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR WORKING WITHOUT THE PERMIT REQUIRED BY THE FRANKLIN COUNTY ZONING CODE; PROVIDING FOR ISSUANCE OF STOP WORK ORDER FOR WORK COMMENCED WITHOUT THE PERMIT REQUIRED BY THE FRANKLIN COUNTY ZONING CODE; PROVIDING A PENALTY FOR VIOLATION OF THE STOP WORK ORDER; PROVIDING A DEFINITION FOR VIOLATION OF STOP WORK ORDER; RESCINDING ALL ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT THEREWITH; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Attorney Shuler noted this ordinance does not address violations of the Florida Building Code. Limited just to people who fail to obtain a permit, essentially for site development.

(1)PENALTIES FOR COMMENCEMENT OF WORK PRIOR TO OBTAINING THE PERMIT REQUIRED BY THE FRANKLIN COUNTY ZONING CODE:

(a) 1st Offense – Issuance of a Stop Work Order plus a Double the Permit Fee which would have been due for the work and a \$50.00 fine per day commencing with the date that the stop work order is issued and ending on, and including, the date that the completed application for the fact permit is received by the Franklin County Planning and Zoning Department, together with payment in full of all fees and fines. Upon payment of all fees and fines, the after the fact permit shall be issued and the Stop Work Order shall be deemed lifted upon the issuance of the after the fact permit. Failure to file a complete application or failure to pay all of the fines and penalties will result in the continuation of daily fines.

(b) 2nd Offense – Issuance of a Stop Work Order and Triple the Permit Fee which would have been due for the work and a \$100.00 fine per day commencing with the date that the stop work order is issued and ending on, and including, the date that the completed application for the fact permit is received by the Franklin County Planning and Zoning Department, together with payment in full of all fees and fines. Upon payment of all fees and fines, the after the fact permit shall be issued and the Stop Work Order shall be deemed lifted upon the issuance of the after the fact permit. Failure to file a complete application or failure to pay all of the fines and penalties will result in the continuation of daily fines.

(c) 3rd Offense – Issuance of a Stop Work Order plus a Triple Permit Fee and a \$500.00 fine per day commencing with the date that the stop work order is issued and ending on, and including, the date that the completed application for the fact permit is received by the Franklin County Planning and Zoning department, together with payment in full of all fees and fines. Upon payment of all fees and fines, the after the fact permit shall be issued, and the Stop Work Order shall be deemed lifted upon the issuance of the after the fact permit. Failure to file a complete application or failure to pay all of the fines and penalties will result in the continuation of daily fines.

(d) 4th Offense – Issuance of a Stop Work Order plus prosecution in the same manner as misdemeanors is prosecuted pursuant to Florida Statute Section 125.69, as amended from time to time. The Stop Work Order shall not be lifted until the resolution of the prosecution and the payment of all fines and penalties, if any. If found not guilty, then the Stop Work Order shall be automatically lifted.

Chairman Jones noted there are copies of the ordinance for the public on the back table. Commissioner Ward inquired if it was amended for penalties. Attorney Shuler noted that the language has been updated to reflect upon the submission of completed application, payment, and the fines would stop. They must satisfy all conditions, application and payment of all fines and fees. Attorney Shuler just so were clear the public will still have to submit completed documents and fees, if they do not do both those fines are going to continue racking up. Chairman Jones called for public comments at this time.

Ms. Debi Jordan spoke to the Board noting where she is confused some of these fines could put people out of their homes especially low income. What about people that have not obtained permits in the past. Attorney Shuler noted this ordinance is not retroactive and he has not received any direction from the Board to do so. Chairman Jones noted the building official was good with what was on the books for building violations. This is specifically about zoning. Most of it has to do with clearing land. Ms. Jordan said she still has a hard time navigating through the website. Noting she wishes it were more in layman's terms. Chairman Jones noted that we have a zoning website with a search bar, and you should be able to type in there specifically what you are looking for.

Mr. Mason Bean encouraged approval of this.

Mr. Jack \_\_\_ inquired as to how the Board is going to confirm that the alleged violator has received a notice of violation? Chairman Jones noted through staff, noting the Board has a formal process. Chairman Jones noted that it is sent certified mail and staff post a stop work order on site. Mrs. Bankston noted that if you have a question as to whether you need a permit or not, it is better to ask first for permission than after.

Ms. Debi Jordan asked when you hire a contractor, and they tell you they filed a permit? Does liability fall on contractor or homeowner? Attorney Shuler noted that would fall on the contractor with the license. This ordinance imposes a penalty it does not recite all of the steps in the process. A notice is mailed to the contractor and the homeowner. Ignorance of the law is no excuse. If the permit is not pulled there is still a penalty.

Mr. Moron asked for online comments and there were none.

Attorney Shuler said the permit application stops the fines, but the stop work order does not lift until the permit is issued. **Commissioner Ward made a motion to approve the ordinance regarding Working without Required Permits, seconded by Commissioner Croom. Motion carried 5-0.**

### **Planning and Zoning Adjustment Board Report**

Chairman Jones asked if all applicants requesting boat lifts have houses. Mrs. Bankston noted that all have houses except 1470 Alligator Drive, but they have a permit to build.

#### **10. Critical Shoreline Applications**

The Board will consider action on all Critical Shoreline applications with one motion. A Commissioner may request to have an application considered with a separate motion. The Board discussed and decided to take items a, c d, e, with one motion.

**On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Amison, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved Critical Shoreline Applications for 1273 East Gulf Beach Drive, 857 Hwy 98, 2532 CR-30A, and 1911 Hwy 98 W. Motion carried 5-0.**

**a. 1273 East Gulf Beach Drive**

A consideration of a request to construct a 116 linear foot riprap revetment located at 1273 E Gulf Beach Drive, St. George Island, Franklin County, Florida. Request submitted by Florida Environmental & Land Services, agents for Jack Rohlinger, applicant.

**b. 1567 Alligator Drive**

A consideration of a request to construct a private single-family dock that consists of a 4'x350' access pier, a 10'x6' terminal platform, and 20'x40' covered boat slip with lift, and a 16'x40' uncovered boat slip with lift located at 1567 Alligator Drive, Alligator Point, Franklin County, Florida. Request submitted by Florida Environmental & Land Services, agents for BrandEast, LLC, applicant.

The Board addressed this item at this time. Commissioner Sanders noted that she was concerned with the length of it. She asked if the P&Z board voted yes on it. Mrs. Bankston noted yes, and they have DEP and Corp permits. Electricity to dock. **Commissioner Sanders made a motion to approve the Critical Shoreline Application for 1567 Alligator Drive. Seconded by Commissioner Amison. Motion carried 5-0.**

**c. 857 Hwy 98**

A consideration of a request to construct a 1688 square foot single-family dock with 4'x300' access pier, 10'x20' terminal platform, a 12'x24' covered boat slip with lift and 12'x32' uncovered boat slip with lift located at 857 Hwy 98, Eastpoint, Franklin County, Florida. Request submitted by Florida Environmental & Land Services, agents for Joseph Hutchins, applicant.

**d. 2532 CR-30A**

A consideration of a request to construct a 1,216 single-family dock that consists of 4'x264' access walkway, a 10'x16' terminal platform, and (2) 10'x10' open boat slips located at 2532 CR 30A, Apalachicola, Franklin County, Florida. Request submitted by Garlick Environmental Associates, agents for Fred McGill, applicant.

**e. 1911 Hwy 98 W**

A consideration of a request to construct an 840 square foot single family dock that consists of 4'x170' access walkway, a 10'x16' terminal platform, and (2) 10'x10' open boat slips located 1911 Hwy 98 W, Carrabelle, Franklin County, Florida. Request submitted by Garlick Environmental Associates, agent for Anthony Dipaola, applicant.

**f. 1470 Alligator Drive**

A consideration of a request to construct a 4'x288' access pier, a 10'x16' platform, a 22'x5' lower platform, with two boatlifts, a 96.5 linear retaining wall faced with riprap to extend 7 feet waterward at the property located at 1470 Alligator Drive, Alligator Point, Franklin County, Florida. Request submitted by Florida Environmental & Land Services, Inc., agents for Christopher Register, applicant.

Mrs. Bankston noted they are showing us through step one that they are bringing things into compliance. The gazebo and shed were placed without a permit. This is not the end of the violation but one step in moving forward. Commissioner Sanders asked if we go ahead and approve it if there are other things that are in non-compliance. Attorney Shuler noted that if the Board wanted a legal opinion, he would recommend the Board table for his review and recommendation. **On a motion by Commissioner Sanders to table and have Attorney Shuler review for recommendation at the next meeting, seconded by Commissioner Amison. Motion carried 5-0.**



**g. 564 River Road**

Consideration of a request to construct a single-family dock that consists of a 25'x6' access pier, a 10'x20' terminal platform, with one 14'x26' boat slip with a lift located at 564 River Road, Carrabelle, Franklin County, Florida. Request submitted by Florida Environmental & Land Services, agent for William Oliver, applicant.

Commissioner Ward said you noted there is a current building permit pulled to construct a primary residence on this property. She would like for staff to make sure that we follow through with the building noted she knows they have a certain amount of time to start commencement on that build. Moving forward we need to be careful approving these types of things. She noted that she will give them the benefit of a doubt. **On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Sanders to approve the request above for 564 River Road.** Commissioner Amison said going back to what Commissioner Ward said, what kind of course of action do we have on that? Someone pulls a permit to build but does not follow through. Do we have a leg to stand on? Attorney Shuler noted that we are building 'a leg' with code enforcement. He noted that he is working with the Gulf County attorney, they have built a good building code structure. He will bring it back to the Board to discuss to see if they are ready to schedule a public hearing on business license and code enforcement. We have adopted an ordinance for code enforcement and magistrate system, but I think no recreating the wheel for how Gulf County has been handling it over the past few years. Cortni is working on the software side, Civitek, they have the ability to add code enforcement/business license module. Attorney Shuler noted that the current system the Board has enacted me to invoke is the Board authorizes me to sue, it is not very effective due to the time it takes for court cases to resolve. People do not like to have to pay fines, lawyers or to come before magistrates. Mrs. Bankston said the building official did bring up that the Board may want to consider whether they want to designate docks as an accessory structure or not? That may keep them from applying for a dock permit without a house on property. Mr. Moron noted another approach would be looking at limiting them to temporary power. Commissioner Sanders noted that she is concerned about the temporary power. She noted that is the one thing we have holding over them to make them comply. Mr. Moron noted that is easier to deal with Duke Energy because once we give them permanent power that is between us and them. Commissioner Ward called the owner/applicant this is nothing against you, but we have been burnt in the past from people getting dock permits and then adding RVs. Mr. William Oliver addressed the Board at this time noting this is his future home. He agrees with Mrs. Bankston that docks should be accessory. He noted that he is definitely moving forward with the home build, and this will be his future home. As a contractor, he wants people to use contractors. He noted that he likes to get all of his permits at one time so that he knows how much the costs are, and line up all of his contractors. Ms. Bankston noted that he did reach out to her and opted to pull permits before going before P&Z. Commissioner Sanders said her only concern is she does not want this to impede the boat traffic coming down the river. We need to be careful in this area. New River is not as wide as it used to be. Applicant noted that part of the river is very deep. **Motion carried 5-0.**

**11. Variance Requests**

**a. 143 W Gorrie Drive**

Consideration of a request for a variance to encroach 13 feet into the West Gulf Beach Drive 25-foot front setback to construct an 870 square foot storage addition on the property described as 143 West Gorrie Drive, St. George Island, Franklin County, Florida. Request submitted by Sam Gilbert, agent for Walter Armistead, applicant.

Staff Notes:

The applicant has two front streets and is only requesting encroachment into the Gulf Beach Drive side. Staff has no objection to this variance request.

Staff recommends approval

Chairman Jones noted that in talking with applicant they are doing something historically done on property. Mrs. Bankston noted that they are not going any further than the concrete pad they have now. Commissioner

Ward noted that they are not impacting anyone on either side.

**On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Sanders, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the variance request for 143 W Gorrie Drive. Motion carried 5-0.**

**b. 1273 East Gulf Beach Drive**

Consideration of a request for a variance to encroach 50 feet into the 50-foot critical shoreline/mean high waterline setback to construct riprap revetment at the mean high waterline on the property described as 1273 East Gulf Beach Drive, St. George Island, Franklin County, Florida. Request submitted by Florida Environmental and Land Services, agents for Jack Rohlinger, applicant.

Staff Notes:

They property owner has to encroach into the 50-foot setback to construct the riprap.

Staff recommends approval

**On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Amison, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the variance request for 1273 East Gulf Beach Drive. Motion carried 5-0.**

**12. Commercial Site Plan Applications**

The Board will consider action on all Commercial Site Plan applications with one motion. A Commissioner may request to have an application considered with a separate motion.

**a. 20 Shuler Street**

Consideration of a request for a Commercial Site Plan Review of 900 square foot Pole Barn located at 20 Shuler Street, Eastpoint, Franklin County, Florida. Request submitted by Donald Deveau, applicant.

Staff Notes:

Applicant has met with staff on numerous occasions and staff is satisfied with new site plan  
Staff recommends approval of this commercial site plan

**b. 143 W Gorrie Drive**

Consideration of a request for a Commercial Site Plan Review of 870 square foot storage building addition on existing concrete slab located at 143 W Gorrie Drive, St. George Island, Franklin County, Florida. Request submitted by Sam Gilbert, agent for Walter Armistead, applicant.

Staff Notes:

Applicant meets all requirements with adding the addition and have exceeded parking requirements and have proposed stormwater for the addition. Staff has no objection to his request

Staff recommends approval

**c. 114 Oyster City Drive**

Consideration of a request for a Commercial Site Plan Review of 8,000 square foot new commercial building located at 114 Oyster City Drive, Eastpoint, Franklin County, Florida. Request submitted by GeoFlora Group, LLC, agent for Bay and 98 LLC, applicant.

Staff Notes:

Applicant meets all parking, setbacks, stormwater, and lot coverage. Staff has no objection to this request

Staff recommends approval

**On a motion by Commissioner Amison, seconded by Commissioner Croom, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the Commercial Site Plan Applications for 20 Shuler**

**Street, 143 W Gorrie Drive, and 114 Oyster City Drive. Motion carried 5-0.**

### **13. Re-Zoning & Land Use Change Applications**

The Board will consider action on all Re-Zoning & Land Use Change applications with one motion. A Commissioner may request to have an application considered with a separate motion.

#### **a. 2390 Oak Street**

Consideration of a request for Public Hearing to change the zone and land use of parcel of land located in Section 12, Township 7 South, Range 4 West, 2390 Oak Street, Lanark Village, Franklin County, Florida from C-4 Commercial Mixed Use Residential to C-3 Commercial Recreational. Request submitted by Joellen Joseph Paige, agent for Charles and Lyda Shultz, applicants.

#### **b. 263 Patton Drive**

Consideration of a request for Public Hearing to change the zone and land use of a parcel of land located in Section 31, Township 8 South, Range 6 West, 263 Patton Drive, Eastpoint, Franklin County, Florida from R-1 Single Family to C-3 Commercial Recreational. Request submitted by Thurman Roddenberry, agent for Jerry Davis and Shannon Boyd, applicants.

**On a motion by Commissioner Amison, seconded by Commissioner Ward, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board authorized staff to schedule a public hearing on the Re-Zoning & Land Use Change Applications for 2390 Oak Street and 263 Patton Drive. Motion carried 5-0.**

### **14. Sketch Plat Approval**

#### **a. Petit St George's Bluff**

A consideration of a sketch plat request to reconfigure 2 lots 1707 St. George's Court, Eastpoint, Franklin County, Florida. Request submitted by Thurman Roddenberry, agents for Jean M. Cassese and McCormick/Young Farms, LLLP, applicants.

Chairman Jones asked if they are just changing lot lines. Mrs. Bankston noted that one property owner is giving so many feet of the rear of their property and one is giving so many feet of front. Commissioner Ward asked if we had this discussion earlier and determined the Board was not in the business of lot reconfiguration. Attorney Shuler noted that there was discussion about the Board changing the legal description of a property which is done through the court. The Board has the legal authority to plat land and amend those plats. Commissioner Ward noted that this is in platted subdivision already.

**On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Amison, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the Sketch Plat for Petit St. George's Bluff. Motion carried 5-0.**

### **15. Final Plat Application**

#### **a. Petit St. George's Bluff**

A consideration of a final plat request to reconfigure 2 lots 1707 St. George's Court, Eastpoint, Franklin County, Florida. Request submitted by Thurman Roddenberry, agents for Jean M. Cassese and McCormick/Young Farms, LLLP, applicants.

**On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Croom, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the Final Plat Application for Petit St. George's Bluff. Motion carried 5-0.**

Mrs. Bankston noted that Ms. Elva Peppers from Florida Environmental and Land Services, Inc. would like to address the Board regarding the Critical Shoreline Application for 1470 Alligator Drive. Ms. Peppers noted that she would like to take this opportunity to discuss noted when the Board voted to table it

was not open for public comments. She would like to explain what is happening out there. So, the project, they had gotten dock and seawall permit previously then they added the riprap. That was what the critical shoreline application was for. On the upland there was an old shed that was in the setback (built by previous owner), and they had to move out of the setback, then they built a gazebo structure that did not have a permit. I wanted to explain what is going on, it is not that there are no permits out here. The rip rap, I do not know if your system makes all of the permits or corrective actions. What can they do to move this forward? Chairman Jones noted that is why it was tabled today, to allow Attorney Shuler an opportunity to research and determine how to move forward.

**(\*\*\*11:00 a.m. ET) -- Public Hearing(s)**

**16. \*\*\*11:00 a.m. (ET) -- Public Hearing -- Working Without Required Permits**

\*\*\*This is a time certain agenda item that cannot be heard prior to the scheduled agenda time.

*Item addressed earlier in the meeting.*

**(11:20 a.m.) RFP/RFQ/Bid Opening**

**17. NOTICE TO RECEIVE SEALED BIDS: OLD FERRY DOCK BOAT RAMP IMPROVEMENTS**

PIGOTT ASPHALT AND SITEWORK, LLC	12 ASPHALT WAY CRAWFORDVILLE, FL 32327	\$1,377,471	yes
MICHAEL L. ANDERSON, INC DBA ANDERSON MARINE	PO BOX 1455 LYNN HAVEN, FL 32444	\$1,271,590	yes
H.G. HARDERS & SON INC	5521 EAST HIGHWAY 98 PANAMA CITY, FL 32404	\$1,052,095	yes
RJ GORMAN MARINE	1944 FRANKFORD AVE PANAMA CITY, FL	\$1,073,603.78	yes

	32405		
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Project is located in Franklin County, Florida and consists of removing and existing boat ramp and concrete sheet pile wall and replacing them with a steel sheet pile wall, two boat ramps, a fixed timber dock, and improvements to the access road at the Old Ferry Dock Boat Ramp in Eastpoint, FL.

The Board discussed how the project has been a long time coming and how the wheels of government often move slowly. Mrs. Griffith noted that the permitting process has only gotten slower. Commissioner Ward and Commissioner Amison congratulated Chairman Jones on the beginning of this long-time coming project.

**On a motion by Commissioner Sanders, seconded by Commissioner Amison, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board authorized staff to release the bids to Dewberry Engineers for recommendation. Motion carried 5-0.**

### County Staff & Attorney Reports

#### 18. Erin Griffith – Fiscal Manager/Grants Coordinator

**1. BOARD INFORMATION: Lanark EMS Station Site Layout** The civil site layout for the new Lanark EMS Station is included as an attachment to this report. The Station will be located at 2341 Oak Street, directly to the west of the Lanark/St. James Volunteer Fire Department on the two-acre parcel donated by the City of Carrabelle. At this time, it appears construction will be funded by the Florida Legislature.

Attorney Shuler noted that he did look up the deed, and it was recorded a couple weeks ago. Oddly, they did not put a reverter clause in it. Chairman Jones noted the legislative funding that we have been able to get for this area over the last few years.

#### **2. BOARD ACTION: SCOP Hickory Dip Road Construction Grant Award Agreement**

Design work for the SCOP Hickory Dip Road Widening and Resurfacing Project has been completed and accepted by FDOT. Attached is the construction grant award agreement in the amount of \$565,652 which will widen .372 miles of the existing roadway from Hickory Dip Road at Old Ferry Dock to North Bayshore Drive, improve drainage, upgrade pavement markings and signage. Drainage improvements will also include the extension / replacement / correction of the dual 36” cross drains at Indian Creek.

Board action to approve the grant award agreement and adopt the attached resolution of authorization for the chairman to sign.

**On a motion by Commissioner Sanders, seconded by Commissioner Amison, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the grant award agreement and adopt the attached resolution of authorization for the chairman to sign. Motion carried 5-0.**

#### **3. BOARD ACTION: Sheriff’s Department Air Conditioner Mold Remediation/Mildew Repairs**

In late January, the Sheriff’s Department ordered an air quality evaluation test of the jail and administration building. The test concluded that there were trace amounts of mold and mildew in some of the air condition ducts and components. The remediation protocol called for cleaning and scrubbing to be completed by a licensed mold remediation specialist and for the cleaning/repair and replacement of the damaged HVAC ductwork and coils. Franklin County has received an \$8,274.24 estimate from SERVPRO of Bay County to perform the mold remediation services as outlined in the inspection report and an estimate of \$5,800 from Air It Cool to clean and remove mold from three 10 ton evaporator coil

packs and cabinets, full cleaning of three mini split units, and removal and replacement of moldy duct board from the return box of one of the 10 ton air handlers and installation of new duct board for the return box of the main air handler at the jail. The ceiling air vents will be cleaned and repainted by the jail's maintenance department.

Board action to approve the attached two quotes to complete the mold remediation protocol at the County Jail and Administration Building to be paid by the Board's jail repair budget line item.

*Item addressed earlier in the meeting.*

#### **4. BOARD ACTION: SHERIFF'S AMENDED TDC FUNDING REQUEST – PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES**

The Sheriff's Department was recently approved to hire and equip two additional full-time deputies for patrol of busy tourism areas as part of the TDC's public safety services budget category. As Spring Break is here already, the Sheriff has been able to purchase the necessary equipment for those patrols, however, he has not had any success in filling the positions to be ready for this season. The Sheriff has asked to amend his first year request to allow for him to pay overtime to deputies during this busy spring and summer season to be able to provide adequate staffing and attention to areas struggling with increased numbers of visitors until he is able to get the positions in place – if payment of overtime works better for staffing flexibility and meets the need at peak times for tourism related response, it may be a permanent transition for this request, but that will be discussed during the upcoming budget cycle. The vehicles purchased through the program for tourism response will have the TDC decal on the vehicle whereas the public can clearly identify the additional patrols being paid by TDC sales tax proceeds.

Board action to approve the reimbursement of documented tourism response related overtime for the sheriff's department.

*Item addressed earlier in the meeting.*

Commissioner Sanders noted that Alligator Point and that area need additional presence down there. Commissioner Ward said she feels the same about Miccasimick Beach and Carrabelle Beach.

#### **5. BOARD ACTION: Beach Park Facilities Task Order SGI Basketball Court & Pickleball Court**

Upon the completion and payoff of the county's most recent Beach Park Facility Improvement, the Restoration of Carrabelle Beach Park, the next scheduled improvement as funded by TDC sales tax proceeds will be the replacement of the basketball court and the addition of a pickleball court (one or two courts, contingent on-site limitations) at Lighthouse Park on St. George Island. County staff requested the attached task order from Dewberry Engineers pursuant to their ongoing services contract with Franklin County to develop the construction bid specifications, perform construction administration and inspection services for the project based on the conceptual site plan and design provided by the county.

*Board action to approve and authorize the chairman to sign the attached task order for \$13,250 to be paid by TDC sales tax proceeds for the development of the construction bid specifications and construction inspection services for the beach park facility improvements mentioned above.*

**On a motion by Commissioner Amison, 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 for \$13,250 to be paid by TDC sales tax proceeds for the development of the construction bid specifications and construction inspection services for the beach park facility improvements mentioned above. Motion carried 5-0.**

## **6. BOARD ACTION: Designated Peddler's Cove Improvement and closure of new parking area and Franklin Boulevard to Peddler's**

The county has just opened the new beach parking lot area between Chili Boulevard and 1<sup>st</sup> Street West on St. George Island. This improvement added approximately 32 designated parking spaces in the commercial district. Unfortunately, with this designated parking, this area is no longer suitable for peddler's parking as the trailers are unable to fit within the confines of a single parking space and this improvement was completed to maximize the county's limited right-of-way open space available for parking. Peddlers are encouraged to relocate at this time to a vacant parking area located to the east of East Chili Boulevard on the opposing side of Lighthouse Park (noted as 'Temp' in the image pasted below). After reviewing various right-of-way areas within the commercial district, staff would like to request permission to begin design work for a graveled 'Peddler's Cove' area along the right-of-way of Gulf Beach Drive and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street East. Also requested at this time, is formal closure of the new parking area to peddler's along with the busy right-of-way areas of Franklin Boulevard due to traffic and safety concerns caused by high numbers of visitors entering and leaving St. George Island during peak season. The existing Peddler's Ordinance has been in place since 1997, and at that time, areas marked as 'parking' or 'park' as noted on the plat were closed to peddling, which included the parking areas of Lighthouse Park. Pursuant to the original policy, additional areas can be closed by the Board through adoption of a resolution.

Commissioner Ward looking at this map we are moving the peddlers to the east side. It has kind of gotten dangerous with the food trucks and beach traffic.

*A. Board action to move forward with design concept for a designated Peddler's Cove Parking Area on St. George Island.*

**On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Sanders, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved moving forward with design concept for a designated Peddler's Cove Parking Area on St. George Island.** Mr. Bean asked if they had considered putting them on the causeway. Mrs. Griffith noted that she does not believe it is owned by the county but DOT. Chairman Jones noted that we had looked at that area before, but DOT would not allow it. There's another with a U-shape area we had looked at but there was a coastal construction problem. If you are going to give peddlers somewhere to be, it is a better solution to not have peddlers on any right of way. Mrs. Griffith noted that she did not feel like it would cause impact to future public parking. Commissioner Sanders noted that she is just glad that we have a place for the peddlers to go. Chairman Jones noted that it will be first come first serve. Mrs. Griffith noted that there is also no overnight parking. **Motion carried 5-0.** Attorney Shuler noted that he has reviewed the ordinance and resolution. There is no other action needed at this time.

*B. Board action to adopt the attached resolution closing Franklin Boulevard and the Parking area between 1<sup>st</sup> Street West and Chili Boulevard to peddling.*

**On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Sanders, to adopt the above resolution closing Franklin Boulevard and the Parking area between 1<sup>st</sup> Street West and Chili Boulevard to peddling.** Commissioner Ward noted we are not blocking off ways for them to peddle. Commissioner Amison noted the peddlers have been through the winter, and visitors in the past knew where they are. He noted he does not want to put any undue pressure on them. He noted he does not want to hinder anyone's business at short notice. Mrs. Griffith noted that the way Franklin Boulevard is there is one way off and on the island. The Franklin Boulevard corridor is really busy this time of the year. It is unsafe for them to be there. **Motion carried 4-1, Commissioner Amison opposed.**

## **7. BOARD Information: Miscellaneous Project Updates**

- CR67 Phase III Construction Bids still under review by FDOT, construction to be awarded at the next meeting.
- Fisher Roofing has repaired the leak at the FBO, repairs to the FBO restrooms are underway as a plumbing leak had damaged the wall between the restrooms.

Phase III – progress photos the men were spraying the concrete up on the ceilings. Commissioner Sanders they are going to replace all of the pipes from the bridge.

Chairman Jones meeting with ARPC as chair to find out if there is anything that can be done with the Eastpoint spoil area. They are thinking if they have any funds left, they may request a change order to strengthen burn as well as other ideas that we are going to discuss tomorrow. Commissioner Sanders noted that she went by this morning, and it is not going to be long before it is going to be closed in again.

### 19. Michael Morón – County Coordinator

1. Action Item: Economic Development Proposal
  - At your last meeting, the Board discussed the possibility of entering into an agreement with Mrs. Mary Swoope as the County’s Economic Development consultant.
  - Mrs. Swoope submitted a proposal (attached) with objectives, methodology, deliverables, timeline, etc. for a \$150.00 per hourly cost.
  - Staff recommends adding an up to \$10,000 not to exceed amount. The Board will be notified if Mrs. Swoope services approach the not to exceed amount.
  - Board action to authorize the Chairman’s signature on the agreement with Mrs. Mary Swoope as the County’s Economic Development consultant at a rate of \$150 per hour not to exceed \$10,000.

**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 agreement with Mrs. Mary Swoope as the County’s Economic Development consultant at a rate of \$150 per hour not to exceed \$10,000.** How much did we budget for in economic development? \$50,000 but we did not have the lobbyist. Mrs. Griffith noted that we do have a professional services budget we could use also. Commissioner Ward noted that just like hiring the lobbyist if we get some help here it will be worth its weight in gold. **Motion carried 5-0.**

2. Action Item: Streetlight Request
  - Commissioner Croom requested a streetlight on the corner of Earl King and Avenue M in Apalachicola.
  - This area is very dark at night and there is a steep curve that creates a dangerous driving condition.
  - There is a pole with a transformer on the corner, therefore, there is no installation cost, only the recurring monthly \$6.61 fee.
  - Board action to approve the Duke Energy Lighting Agreement for a streetlight on the corner of Earl King and Avenue M in Apalachicola for a monthly cost of \$6.61.

**On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Amison and Commissioner Croom, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the Duke Energy Lighting Agreement for a streetlight on the corner of Earl King and Avenue M in Apalachicola for a monthly cost of \$6.61. Motion carried 5-0.**

3. Action Item: Visit Florida’s Letter of Support



- Attached to your report is a letter of support to the Triumph Gulf Coast Board on behalf of VISIT FLORIDA and Northwest Florida Beaches for the “Adventure within Reach” grant application.
- Mr. John Solomon, a member of the VISIT FLORIDA board, asked for your support and stated that other counties are submitting similar letters of support.
- Board action to authorize the Chairman’s signature on the letter of support to Triumph Gulf Coast on behalf of VISIT FLORIDA and Northwest Florida Beaches.

**On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Croom, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board authorized the Chairman’s signature on the letter of support to Triumph Gulf Coast on behalf of VISIT FLORIDA and Northwest Florida Beaches. Motion carried 5-0.**

4. Discussion/Action Item: TDC Procedures

- At your last meeting, the Board discussed changes to the TDC policies and procedures.
- Attorney Shuler and I were tasked with making the changes and presenting a draft for your review.
- Below is a list of proposed changes, based on your input, for consideration:
  - i. The term for each TDC member seat is for four years. Current member 4-year terms are based on most recent appointment/re-appointment date.
  - ii. All TDC board members and terms are listed on TDC Website.
  - iii. The TDC Administrator will be responsible for notifying the BOCC ninety (90) days prior to the end of a TDC member’s term. That seat shall be advertised for potential candidates. Individuals interested in continuing to serve on the TDC will have to re-apply. There will be no automatic renewals. This advertising requirement will **not** apply to the three elected official seats.
  - iv. All recommendations to fill vacant seats will be forwarded to the BOCC for appointment. If a mayor uses the option to appoint a designee, that information will be forwarded to the BOCC for review and comments.
  - v. It is the BOCC’s preference that the TDC membership is comprised in the following manner: The Chairperson of the BOCC (or a designee); The Mayor (or designee) from the City of Apalachicola Commission; The Mayor (or designee) from the City of Carrabelle Commission; one additional appointee from the City of Apalachicola area; one additional appointee from the City of Carrabelle area; two representatives from the St. George Island area; and two representatives from the Eastpoint area. It is expected that all recommendations for vacant seats will be presented with the consideration of the BOCC’s preference.
- These proposed changes are not intended to conflict with Florida Statute.
- Board discussion/direction.

Commissioner Ward noted that she is okay with the way this is drafted. However where is Alligator Point and Lanark Village in this. It was brought to my attention that they have Airbnb’s and VRBOs. Chairman Jones noted that the feedback he has received from Alligator Point, they do not even want to be in the visitor’s guide. They have parking issues and they do not want anybody to know they are there or want anyone coming there. He noted that he is not trying to bypass them and noted the Carrabelle positions do not have to be specific to city of Carrabelle but the area. Commissioner Sanders noted that they do have Airbnb’s and VRBOs. Commissioner Sanders inquired about the application process and if they will go through the TDC and then brought to the county commission. Chairman Jones noted that just with any of our advisement boards, they can make a recommendation, but we can make the final decision. Commissioner Sanders noted that she would like them to continue to make a recommendation. Commissioner Sanders went on to clarify that at the last meeting she said Ms. Alice Collins always said bring heads to bed. But when you bring heads to beds you are also bringing money to the shops and

restaurants. Commissioner Amison noted that will we be privileged to see all of the applications. Mr. Moron noted that yes you would. Commissioner Sanders said when the city of Apalachicola and Carrabelle brings someone forward to appoint, is the Board going to accept that or vote them off? Mr. Moron noted that the mayor has the authority to put a designee. The Board could look at that name, if you have an issue, you could let them know, but I do not think you can take the authority from the mayor. Commissioner Amison noted that it does have to be the mayor or one of the city commissioners. Attorney Shuler said the statute expressly says nine TDC members appointed by the County Commission two of which would be appointed by the cities. Commissioner Sanders noted that in the Florida statutes is states there shall be somewhere there who collects the tax. Mr. Moron asked that on item number four we could change the language to say designee to the Board for review and comments. Attorney Shuler noted that you can continue doing what you have been doing for decades, similar to the delegation the Board gives the Chairman to declare an emergency. If you want to change it, you can change it. Commissioner Ward said the problem is, if the mayor of Carrabelle designates someone, there is only a certain amount of people who qualify. Attorney Shuler noted that he is not saying you should change it, but you are not bound by statute. Chairman Jones noted that we are not trying to do away with the statutes. What we are discussing is this Board preferences on the makeup. With a nine-member board, one has to be a member of this Board, two from the municipalities, and three no more than four to be collectors of tax. So, the other two or three members, if there are already a tax collector on St George or Eastpoint, could be someone involved in tourism from Eastpoint or St George Island. We would just be asking the TDC to acknowledge our preference when they are making a recommendation. Commissioner Sanders noted that she wanted to make sure that we are inclusive. Mr. Moron noted that with the discussions today is take away is the board accepts what we have presented, and we will convert that into the actual policy. Attorney Shuler noted that he will prepare the draft and bring it back to the Board.

5. Informational Item: Alligator/Bald Point Boat Ramps

- At your last two meetings, the Board discussed boat ramps and water access for the Alligator/Bald Point area.
- At the last meeting, the Board directed staff to look at the possibility of asking the State to designate the old FSU Marina as surplus property, suggested by Mr. Will Kendrick, allowing the County the opportunity to own that property.
- The Board also directed staff to look at property around Lenard's Landing, preferably, away from the Preserve's sensitive area and owned by the St. Joe Company that the County could negotiate for purchase.
- Chairman Jones is in the process of scheduling a meeting with the County's lobbyist for some guidance on both ideas.

Commissioner Sanders noted that a lot of people were not happy but noted that we will not know until we find out about the FSU Marina. Commissioner Amison noted that we need as much information as we can to decide.

6. Informational Item: Airport Appropriation Request

- At you last meeting, Mr. Steve Kirschenbaum (AOED Chairman) stated during his report that he would be seeking a federal legislative appropriation for the airport.
- The appropriation (attached) is for \$2.5 million and will be matched with FDOT's \$800,000 grant to construct 18 T-Hangars at the airport.
- As explained to me, if this request is selected by Congressman Dunn for funding, the County will have to complete a more detailed application.
- Mr. Kirschenbaum was assisted by Mr. Jim Dean, a retired USDA staff member, who is now part of a consulting firm that assists governments and other agencies seeking federal funds, and Mrs. Mary Swoope a former Duke Energy Economic Development specialist. Both Mr. Dean and Mrs. Swoope assistance was provided without cost.
- Mr. Kirschenbaum will keep the Board updated on this request.

7. Informational Item: Board Equipment

- Staff has purchased a new copier for BOCC, and advisory boards use during meetings. It should be delivered and installed in two weeks.

8. Informational Item: Fertilizer Spraying

- Last week, there were concerns expressed about a low flying plane spraying an unknown matter on the western end of the county. Commissioner Amison investigated this matter and will share what he found out.

Commissioner Amison noted that after the monsoon of the meeting we had. The next morning, I get a call from Mr. Barber who had a crabber observe a crop duster along the pine trees. He reached out to FWC, but they said it was not them. It turned out to be fertilizer. The FWC reached out to me and said it was the Department of Agriculture. Informed me that they do not regulate fertilizer and was not sure what department in the state dealt with this. Spoke with Mark at DEP, he said he was going to try to figure out who in state regulates. In the meantime, I reached out to see if we could do some water quality samples in the area. Ms. Harper asked if I could reach out to Deseret. They did email back, and it is attached. It basically says thanks for reaching out, as it relates to the type of fertilizer that they are using, that is proprietary information that we do not share. He noted that he does not see much of a buffer zone coming down the beach. We are waiting for local DEP to get back with us. Ms. Harper noted that the DEP lab is agreeable to process samples. Thought is to do some baseline samples and then three to four weeks do another set. Still looking into, DAX silver culture best practices. Commissioner Amison understands they are a big landowner but share a little information where you are dumping stuff into a thirty-million-dollar bay restoration. Commissioner Sanders noted that since the Board has an ordinance on herbicides, it would not be out of order to send them a letter notifying them of what is prohibited. Mr. Moron said he can respond to the email. Chairman Jones said even though they state that it is proprietary information but is there some type of regulation on when they do it, not on the day before a huge rain. Commissioner Amison noted that it would be nice to know if they are abiding by the application instructions, etc.

9. Informational Item: Workshop

- As a reminder, there is a public workshop scheduled at 5:00 p.m. (ET) this afternoon for the Sea Shire Planned Unit Development proposed project presentation.

10. Informational Item: Next Meeting

- Your next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 2, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. (ET).

Commissioner Ward noted that at the last meeting we talked about ECCC and the garden building. Mr. Moron noted that they want to be on the agenda on April 16<sup>th</sup>. Commissioner Ward noted that at the last meeting there was discussion about the financial statements for the stand-alone ED. Has Mr. Hall reached out? Mr. Moron noted that is on him and he will reach out.

Chairman Jones asked where we are at on talking with some of the consultants. Mr. Moron noted that hopefully at the next meeting he will have dates set.

Mr. Moron asked if the Board wanted to have a workshop with them all present, or do we want them spread out. Commissioner Ward noted that she thinks spreading them out is wasting time. Mr. Moron noted that he will work on a date, Commissioner Ward noted that any day, but Wednesdays works for her. Commissioner Amison asked if the hospital board is an authoritative board or a hybrid. Attorney Shuler noted that it is a hybrid. The Board has given them more decision-making authority than the other boards due to the daily decision making needed to run a hospital. There are certain limitations such as they cannot build a new hospital or hire a new management company. Attorney Shuler noted that he cannot seem to locate the original bylaws, but he should be able to bring back to the Board an update on the bylaws for your consideration at the next meeting. Attorney Shuler noted that the hospital board has updated their organizational chart, which shows the county commission at the top not sure why, but they have done that.

Chairman Jones noted that he received an email today regarding the survey they have been doing on the Gulf intracoastal waterway, he will send to Mr. Moron to forward to all of the commissioners.

## **20. Michael Shuler – County Attorney**

Attorney Shuler had no report for the Board.

### **Commissioners' Comments**

Commissioner Ward expressed that she would like to look into what can be done in regard to job the Corps has done. She noted that we are looking like a bunch of fools with the crappy job and that she is not scared to take on the federal government. She indicated she would like to look into suing them. She suggested possibly contacting Senator Scott since he is up for reelection. She noted that she does not know how the other board members feel about it and she knows litigation does take a lot of money, but she is tired of them getting away with it. She noted that she cannot sit here and set well with it anymore.

Commissioner Amison said did not we say we were going to get Dewberry to look at it. Chairman Jones noted that he will be discussing this with ARPC tomorrow. Since that permitted area goes all the way to the boat ramp its possible, they may be able to include it. Commissioner Amison noted that in looking at the aerials we had and the contract the Corps did the job other than that little bit down by Barbers. Not saying that really, we could have asked a little more or dug a little deeper. But if we get someone to look into it, they may say that they did what was included in the contract. Commissioner Ward said she agreed 100% but by looking at it there are some things that were not done that were in the contract. I think that they missed the bar on some things, and we need to call them out on it. We are having to pay TDC funds \$250,000, to repair or fix things they should have done in the beginning that they failed to do or do correctly. A local contractor has had to go twice to fix things they should have done. Chairman Jones said he has expressed that no one is good with what they have done. When I got on the board, we already had this permit. We went through four almost five years, that they never perceived that we were going to be able to do the project. So, they gave us sideways calculations and inadequate figures. The spent a million dollars surveying to see how much spoil they were going to have. We had to wait an additional eight months because they were not sure if they needed a bird watching. Then we waited another eight or nine months for a planting period. The plants out there now are not going to be stabilized. Every part of this project has been miscalculated. Chairman Jones noted that what he would like for this Board to do is make sure that we are putting good money towards getting a good outcome. Having a plan in place to keep both of these channels maintained. We should have said no when we were told give us the money first and we will come do it. From people I have talked to, it was not done correctly in Apalachicola either. It has not all been perfect. If I have learned anything in the process, dredging is not an exact science. It is going to fill back in that is the way it works.

Commissioner Croom commented on requiring presentations in advance of meetings and workshops. Mr. Moron noted that in the past he tries to make sure the attachments are attached no later than Friday. He noted that they still had not received the documents by Monday morning. He said he will in the future let them know that if he does not have the documents by Thursday close of business day, he will cancel the workshop. Commissioner Croom noted that he likes to do his due diligence and is unable to do so receiving documents at such short notice.

The Board recessed around 1:45 pm and reconvened at 5:00 pm.

## **21. 5:00 p.m. (ET) Public Workshop: Sea Shire PUD**

NOTICE OF PUBLIC WORKSHOP TO DISCUSS THE SEA SHIRE PUD, EASTPOINT, FL Notice is hereby given that on Tuesday, March 19, 2024, beginning at 5:00 p.m. (ET), the Franklin County Board of County Commissioners will conduct a public workshop discuss The Sea Shire PUD, (100 Gilbert Street, Eastpoint, FL). This is not a public hearing to adopt an Ordinance for The Sea Shire and no vote will be taken at this workshop. The Public is invited to attend this workshop. The meeting may be attended in person or via Zoom. The meeting will be held in the Courthouse Annex meeting room located at 34 Forbes Street, Apalachicola, FL 32320. A zoom link for the public workshop will be provided prior to the meeting and can be found on the Franklin County website at [www.franklincountyflorida.com](http://www.franklincountyflorida.com). The meeting room is handicap accessible; however, those persons who may require special assistance to attend the public meeting must make arrangements in advance by calling Mrs. Jessica Gay at 850-653-8861 ext. 101, at least three (3) business days in advance of the public workshop. Publish dates: 1. March 7, 2024, 2. March 14, 2024, please publish as a display ad in the Apalachicola Times Invoice: Franklin County Attn: Linda Phillips 33 Market Street, Suite 203 Apalachicola, FL 32320.

Mr. Joshua J. Parker presented to the Board the Sea Shire Planned Eco-Home Development in Eastpoint, Florida. The structures would be Air Crete Domes which are dome shaped residential units constructed of Air Crete blocks. The units may be a single dome, or a larger central dome with smaller dome rooms connected like intersecting bubbles. The construction method is easily adapted to add additional domes to a central dome as an addition at a later date. The proposed property address is 100 Gilbert Street, Eastpoint, Florida. The proposed project is planned to have as little environmental impact as possible. The roads will be gravel with a creative approach for wetlands. Mr. Parker noted that there are two places where you have to cross wetlands. They intend to preserve the natural habitat and use natural landscapes. There will be a setback buffer zone from wetlands. He noted that they planned to incorporate food gardens. They have been in contact with Mr. Fuentes at Eastpoint Water and Sewer with a preliminary plan for connection. Mr. Parker noted that the project plan was to complete in two phases. Phase 1 to include infrastructure, road, utilities and (10) units consisting of (3) three domes, (3) two domes and (4) one dome units. Phase 2 to include additional ( ) units and the community center. The plan is to offer three model sizes ranging from 500 sq feet single dome to three dome, two bedrooms. The estimated cost is \$100 or less per square foot. Mr. Parker noted that the cost savings on these builds would include increase in density, labor intensive, building workshops with construction style that can be taught. He noted that they have considered a work program where you could contribute to construction of other units to reduce the cost of your own. He noted that the units would be energy efficient which should reduce energy costs. He noted that he has been in Franklin County since 2017 noting it is a community that really cares and takes care of one another. He would like to do something that makes an impact. Chairman Jones noted that several people have expressed concerns to him because they are not familiar with these types of builds. He noted that the construction requirements are not necessarily in the Board's wheelhouse and that would be the building department to determine structural safety, etc. Commissioner Ward questioned if they would be building the homes in the wetlands or if they would just be crossing them. Mr. Parker noted that they would just be crossing the wetlands. She noted that Mr. Parker had mentioned the price would be minimum, with a single dome 500 square feet unit to market at under \$100k. Mr. Parker noted that the two to three domes would be more money, but it is hard to gauge the price of those. However, he noted that they would not be out of range. He noted that there is a lot of work to do to get the road developed and he is not sure of the exact costs. Commissioner Ward noted that a lot of people use work force because it appeals to us. She asked if this would have an HOA. Mr. Parker noted that due to the nature of the project he does feel an HOA would be necessary. Commissioner Ward asked if at any of the workshops Mr. Parker had attended, they had covered the sustainability of the blocks during a hurricane. Mr. Parker noted that this would be done during the engineering phase, and they would be built to meet county and state building codes. Commissioner Amison asked if these were targeted towards single occupants and noted that a lot of workforce has children. He is curious to see how much space we are talking about. Mr. Parker noted that they would range from 500-1000 square feet and could be a little bit of a challenge for families.

Commissioner Ward inquired about the number of acres owned which is 75 and the 15 acres being developed. She restated that the request was for 43 units. Mr. Parker noted that the uploaded PowerPoint did not include the finalized map and he would send that to each of the Board. Commissioner Sanders inquired as to where the property was, asking if it was behind Brown. Chairman Jones noted that it is close to the Eastpoint Water and Supply property. Commissioner Croom asked if the property was in a subdivision. Mr. Parker noted that the property is not and is undeveloped. Chairman Jones called for public comments at this time. Ms. Polly Watts said she was curious as to where these people are going to park their cars. Mr. Paul said he thought it was an innovative idea to workforce housing. However, he thinks something needs to be put in place to keep it workforce housing and not turned into short term rentals. Mr. Cliff Butler noted he believed they were asking for a density transfer and not an increase in density. He noted these units would increase tax revenue and tourism because they would be perfect for short term rentals. Something would need to be put in place for workforce housing. Mr. David Adlerstein asked if there are any examples of similar builds in Florida or the southeast area. He also inquired about collective amenities included in the PUD. Mr. Parker noted that the updated map shows (2) parking spots for each unit. He noted they do not propose any garages. As to the amenities to be provided, Mr. Parker said there will be a community center and walking trails. He noted that the design is such to leave things as natural as possible. Chairman Jones inquired if these were intended to be sold or month-to-month rentals. Mr. Parker noted the idea is for them to be owner occupied and rentals with annual leases. He noted they planned to put something in to place for short-term stays in units while the project is being completed. Its going to require doing something to capture the workforce housing without deflating the value. Chairman Jones noted that Eastpoint Water and Sewer have been discussing workforce housing and something they had discussed was the need for HOA. He noted discussions of preventing people from buying the homes as investments and flipping. Commissioner Ward asked if these workshops did, they discuss insurance costs? Will homeowner insurance companies recognize these as insurable? Mr. Parker noted that it is going to be challenging but it can be done. It is unconventional but happens all the time in construction. The type of hands-on work would be more on the overall structure. That structure is such that you can have tasks for people that can be overseen by a foreman. Not proposing that we have unskilled laborers running plumbing and wire. Commissioner Ward said I have not gotten any negativity from the public, but have you received any negative from homeowners around the area. Mr. Parker noted that he has not, and he has put the information out on social media platforms. He received a lot of inquiries about how to get in one of these.

### **Adjournment**

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

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**Ricky Jones – Chairman**

**Attest:**

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**Michele Maxwell – Clerk of Courts**

The audio is available upon request. Please e-mail [jgay@franklinclerk.com](mailto: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.