

**FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR MEETING  
COURTHOUSE ANNEX, COMMISSION MEETING ROOM  
MARCH 5, 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.

Chairman Jones announced that at the last several meetings there have been some things done that are against policy, hats, clapping when things are said, etc. He just wanted to remind everyone of the Board's policy and noted that we will not be doing any of this in the future. He announced that the building and planning office is open today in Eastpoint. They were able to make the move over the weekend. Thanked everyone for facilitating the move.

**Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairman Jones led the Board in prayer followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman Jones reminded the audience if they would like to speak during an agenda item today, they would need to fill out a speaker card. He said he would allow for another few minutes to fill out a speaker card for those who need to do so.

**Approval of the Agenda**

Mr. Moron noted that he believes Mr. Kirshenbaum has a grant application but he does not have any of the information at this time. Chairman Jones noted that we can make this change to the agenda when Mr. Kirshenbaum is ready to present. Commissioner Sanders thanked the Board for their support during her recent knee surgery.

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

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

**On a motion by Commissioner Ward, 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 minutes from 2/6/2024. Motion carried 5-0.**

**Awards and Recognitions**

**3. John Solomon -- Franklin County Volunteer Week Proclamation**

Franklin County Volunteer Week April 21st – 27th, 2024

**WHEREAS** the entire community can inspire, equip, and mobilize people to take action that changes the world; and

**WHEREAS** individuals and communities are at the center of social change, discovering their power to make a difference; and

**WHEREAS** during the week of April 21st – 27th, 2024, all over the nation, volunteers will be recognized

for their commitment to service; and

**WHEREAS** the giving of oneself in service to another empowers the giver and the recipient; and

**WHEREAS** over 22.8% of the Floridians volunteered in 2023; and

**WHEREAS** Volunteers are vital to our future as a caring and productive community; and

**WHEREAS** A volunteer saves a national average of \$31.80 an hour for the organization it volunteers for.

**WHEREAS**, In Florida, a volunteer saves the organization it volunteers for an average of \$29.41.

**WHEREAS** Volunteers give of themselves for no other reason but to improve our community.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, We, Franklin County Commissioners, do hereby proclaim April 21st – 27th 2024, National Volunteer Week in Franklin County and also urge our fellow citizens to volunteer in Franklin County. Also, we urge others to recognize those who serve by tirelessly sharing their time and talent with those in need.

Signed this 5<sup>th</sup> day of March 2024.

Ricky Jones, Chairman

Franklin County Board of County Commissioners

“Volunteers don't get paid, not because they're worthless, but because they're priceless.” Sherry Anderson

Mr. Solomon presented the above referenced proclamation. Thanked the County Commission for the last eleven years they have entertained this proclamation recognizing our volunteers who are so vital.

**On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Sanders, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the above referenced proclamation for Franklin County Volunteer Week.** Commissioner Wared noted that she does not know what we would do without volunteers. I appreciate each and every volunteer we have in this community, statewide and nationwide. Thanked everyone who volunteers. Chairman Jones expressed the same token Commissioner Ward did. He noted that most people he knows volunteers at some level. It brings about a sense of pride in community that this world needs. **Motion carried 5-0.**

#### **4. Jennifer Daniels -- Excellence in Volunteerism Award**

Mrs. Daniels noted that last year we applied for a volunteer award for Tim Keith-Lucas. He is my go-to for anything I need at the EOC. He is always at my side. He gives at least two to three days a week to Franklin County. He volunteers for the ---, lighthouse, Carrabelle Museum. He is always willing to volunteer. We finally heard from them last week and instead of the award we applied for, he was awarded the Excellence in Volunteerism Award which is only awarded to one person in the state per year. Mrs. Daniels thanked Mr. Tim for his volunteer work throughout the county and at the EOC. Thank you!

Mr. Tim said being a volunteer keeps his brain active in retirement. In the last year, Jennifer Daniels has developed the best environment that he has ever seen. The EOC has volunteers working every day of the week, some days several volunteers. A whole army of volunteers that expand our staff of three at the EOC. It could not happen without the environment Mrs. Daniels has built.

Commissioner Ward congratulated Mr. Tim. She noted that Mr. Tim drew the plans for the new EOC at no cost to the county and they are grant plans. Thanked Mrs. Daniels for everything she does to facilitate

volunteers at the EOC.

### **Public Comments**

Rudy Meng addressed the Board thanked them for their efforts on the boat ramps. The license plate readers, there is now one facing in. Previously there was one only facing out.

Debi Jordan had submitted a speaker card but was not available via Zoom.

### **Constitutional Officers**

#### **5. Steve Lanier -- Superintendent of Schools -- Ballot Language for Franklin School District**

Superintendent Lanier addressed the Board regarding a request to amend the current millage to increase from a half mill to a full one mill. The school board approved on January 25<sup>th</sup>. All we need for the Board is to approve allowing this to be on the ballot. This is not a tax increase. This is something that will allow us to give our teacher's a pay raise. Teachers are having a hard time finding housing and we need to do better than that. This is not a tax increase. It has been successful since 2008 and believe it will go in again. Chairman Jones asked if this had to pass by 2/3 vote or majority. 4.2 mills from the county out of that the legislative requires us to put 1.5 mills in capital projects. We are not looking to build any additional meetings. We have always shifted a half mill over. With the additional half mill we will be able to provide raise increases for staff.

**On a motion by Commissioner Croom, seconded by Commissioner Sanders, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board authorized the School Board to add the millage increase to the ballot. Motion carried 5-0.**

### **Department Directors Reports**

#### **6. Howard Nabors – Superintendent of Roads and Bridges**

Mr. Nabors noted that he has no action items for the Board this morning. We do have the culverts in for the airport and we hope to get those in as soon as the rain lets up. We had everything looking good for the Chili Cookoff we are moving on to Lanark Village and Carrabelle. Commissioner Amison inquired about Jule Road and if the culvert had been replaced. Mr. Nabors noted that they have just received the additional pipe because it had been on back order.

Mr. Moron asked Mr. Nabors to have his mechanics check with Mr. Mosteller. He has some equipment that needs to be looked at. Mr. Nabors noted that as soon as they get caught up, they will take a look at it.

Commissioner Sanders asked about Womack Creek on Hwy 67 noting that one of the concrete trucks dropped some concrete on Hwy 67 and it is pretty high. If y'all could go out there and see if they are going to take care of it. I do not want to have any more of a hazard than what it is already. Check the sidewalks and stuff out there at Lanark. Commissioner Ward noted that she sees he has had minimal inmates. I just want to make sure that you have adequate staff. If you ever get to the point, you need help, please come to us. Mr. Nabors noted that some people are wanting to work on Friday. Commissioner Ward noted that she does not want us to depend on inmates and you have a big job to do. I do not want y'all to be understaffed. Mr. Nabors noted that last year we were down from 25 inmates a day to 4. Chairman Jones noted that we need to have the conversation sooner vs later. Definitely need to have before budget time. Mr. Nabors noted that he will get with them and see what they have coming up. Will get back with the board.

#### **7. Fonda Davis – Solid Waste Director**

Mr. Davis made the board aware that he will be making a change to the organizational structure that is in

place within the solid waste department. The changes will include the landfill manager's position. Mr. Davis noted that he is in the DROP program and is preparing for the future. Chairman Jones asked if we are adding a landfill manager or getting rid of one. Mr. Davis noted that we are just swapping. Mr. Davis noted that he is in the drop and will be leaving in five years. Commissioner Ward noted another successful Amnesty Day. Congratulations on that! I know you were out sick, so I hope you are feeling better. I have received some requests from baseball parents asking for the fields to be dragged and grated. She noted that what she said to Mr. Nabors also applies to you in terms of staff. We have a county and parks that we have to keep up. Want to make sure you have staff to keep these up timely and efficiently. Commissioner Ward noted that there are already cracks and weeds growing up through the resurfaced areas on the basketball court, do we have a warranty? Mr. Davis noted that this was basically a temporary fix and in order to remedy completely you would have to complete take them up and replace them. Mr. Davis said he would like the Board to consider about how we do Amnesty Day. We are the only county within surrounding counties that does it once a month. We are losing between a half to a million dollars between the Amnesty Day, free yard trash and side of the road pickup. We are going to have to do something with our tipping fees. Chairman Jones said we made a request for bear resistance trash cans for the county through the legislature. In doing this, we will have a mandatory trash pickup. It is all going to have to fit hand and glove. Commissioner Sanders let us look and make sure that we have adequate fields to accommodate whatever we have to sign up. Chairman Jones asked if we still had an issue with t-ball field not being ready at Vrooman. Mr. Davis noted that he has asked for staff to put in overtime in order to get it done. Commissioner Ward noted that is the only field that did not get funding by the FRDAP grant. Mr. Davis noted that the entire complex is lighted with the Musco lighting. Chairman Jones noted that once we get into the season, we can turn them off. Commissioner Ward noted that a parent contacted her, and she asked Mr. Davis to turn the lights on. Noting he was able to turn the lights on and off from his house. Commissioner Sanders noted that is why she likes Musco. Said there is no better thing than being able to sit at your house and turn them on and off. Commissioner Amison noted that us folks as DW Wilson field do not know how the Musco lighting feels. Mr. Moron noted that if you need temporary or part time help for the season, you can do that. Even if it is just temporary, we can figure out an hourly pay. Commissioner Amison noted that he has some plans pertaining to the batting cage, and some other improvements that are needed and he would like to meet with Mr. Davis.

#### **8. Jennifer Daniels – Emergency Management Director**

Mrs. Daniels had no action items. She noted one additional information item. Mr. Luke Honeywell has the Weather Stem at Alligator Point working as of yesterday. If you get a chance check out the new views from Alligator Point. Commissioner Sanders inquired as to where we are on the new EOC building. Mrs. Daniels noted that she spoke with Erin last week and we are waiting for AHP to give us approval to move forward. Commissioner Sanders asked if we had everything in place to move forward after this approval. Mrs. Daniels noted that Erin handled that part; I did not handle that part. We need to move ahead with this thing. Stay on top of it, need Mr. Shuler and Michael to help with anything let them know. Chairman Jones asked Mrs. Daniels if she could explain or describe the change to the way they do the cone according to storms. Mrs. Daniels noted that the main thing is normally on the cone of uncertainty it shows more coastal, but they are trying to change it to show more inland surge values. Our entire county is flood zone. But as you watch the cone of uncertainty this year, you will see more information on the surge warnings and watches more inland.

#### **9. Dewitt Polous – Mosquito Control Director**

Mr. Polous noted the sheriff's department has assisting in getting some things caught up. We will be working with them for the next couple of weeks on other projects. Mr. Polous recognized Mr. Richard Wade, he has already passed the Florida Public Pesticide and Florida Core Exam and he has his own license now. He just finished his first 90 days. Mr. Polous noted they have been receiving two or three inmates.

They are caught back up and things are moving along. Chairman Jones asked if we ever got the piece of machinery to clean the ditches. Mr. Polous noted that it has been extremely wet, and we tried to use it some, but it was causing more issues. Noted that once it dries up some we should be able to use it. Commissioner Amison inquired as to what ditch was cleared in Apalachicola. Mr. Polous Noted it was the one on Bluff Road out there towards Big Oaks. The sheriff sent his inmates out to help us and they did a good job. Noted he would like to get the mini excavator. Commissioner Amison noted that the ditch kind of damns up behind Tommy's shop. It may alleviate some of the standing water if we could get in there. Mr. Polous said he will get with Mitch and Howard and see if there is a way to get in there. If we could get on the other side of the ditch, we may could do it.

#### **10. Erik Lovstrand – Extension Office Director**

Mr. Lovstrand had no action items. Chairman Jones asked Mr. Lovstrand to explain some of what is going on with the SONS working group and the 30A shoreline project. The nature conservancy spear headed a project to identify infrastructure related projects that could be addressed by nature base solutions. One of the primary solutions they use is developing something called a living shoreline. We have an area that sustained a lot of damage down on 30A. There are a couple of large, scalloped areas. This was one of the primary projects that came up during discussions with SONS working group. That project has been selected from a large list. Noted he participated on that list as well as a lot of others from local government. The nature conservancy is getting us all together to go after funding to develop a hybrid living shoreline to try to protect our coastal highway structure. He noted they have worked with an engineering firm. This project has some potential. Chairman Jones said he brings it up, so the public is aware. But also, to make sure to mention so that group will know there are a couple other living shoreline projects done. One was done by NAIR that seems to have stabilized that shore. There is one being done in between Eastpoint and Carrabelle. Maybe the group can utilize some of the designs so that they do not have to waste time reinventing the wheel to help speed up the project. Mr. Lovstrand noted those groups are in the discussion and want to make sure the Board is a part as well. Mr. Lovstrand noted that he has spoken with Erin about scheduling a time to present to the Board for their input.

#### **11. Whitney Roundtree – Library Director**

Chairman Jones noted that Ms. Roundtree is not feeling well today and will not be presenting her report.

### **(10:30 a.m.) Other Reports**

#### **12. John Solomon – TDC Administrator**

Mr. Solomon had no action items. He highlighted the study received from Visit Florida was included in the Board's packet. Chairman Jones asked if the impact study was included because he did not see it in his. Mr. Moron noted that he will go ahead and add it now. Mr. Solomon noted that in 2022 \$460,100,000 was spent by tourist in Franklin County alone. That includes anyone who's residence is 50 miles or more. It was a large increase.

#### Information Items:

1. Economic Impact of Tourism for Franklin County Report & "It all Starts with a Tourist"
2. The December 2023 Collections were \$158,894, which is a \$30,665 increase or a 24% increase over December 2022.

#### **13. Ted Mosteller – Interim Airport Manager**

Mr. Mosteller had no action items but noted Mr. Moron may have one on his report. Chairman Jones noted that he believed it was on Erin's report. Mr. Mosteller noted that he is really proud of Scott Kelley he is doing a great job. We are getting ready for inspection. Fuel farm is coming along fine, waiting on Duke Energy at the moment. Commissioner Ward inquired about a buried car that the mower keeps hitting. Mr. Mosteller noted there is a buried car, that we are trying to dig out and get rid of it. Commissioner Ward noted the issues with maintenance that needs to be done on hangars. Thank you for trying to remedy the issues. Mr. Mosteller noted that he is able to handle some of it, but some may need a professional contractor. Commissioner Amison asked if Jason ever got out there to check the FBO roof to see what we can do. Mr. Moron said he will ask Erin when she comes in and she can let us know. Mr. Moron noted that on item H, we have resolved this issue well over a month ago. Mr. Mosteller noted that yes, that report has been debunked and we are waiting on repairs. Commissioner Amison asked if the big butterfly (bushhog) was working. Mr. Mosteller noted that one is working fine. The one we are having issues with now is the HH10. We are having trouble getting parts to fit it. Commissioner Amison asked if the work to 1836 helped. Mr. Mosteller noted it helped but it is still rough. Chairman Jones asked if the tractor was a John Deere tractor? They cannot tell you by the vin number what part it needs? The mower was purchased in 2003 and rather obsolete. He noted that the part he ordered is the only one listed in their book. Chairman Jones noted that it should not be that difficult. Commissioner Sanders noted that if John Deere does not have the part for it, you should be able to cross match.

#### **14. Steve Kirschenbaum -- AOED Chairman**

Mr. Kirschenbaum noted they are going to do an inventory of all equipment in advance of the auction at the airport. With board approval, we are going to put up old equipment for auction and try to get FDOT to fund purchase of new equipment. He noted that as Commissioner Amison has said it is better to rent equipment used periodically than the upkeep and maintenance on it.

#### **INSERT NOTES FROM HIS WRITTEN REPORT**

##### **This Month's Progress**

- Delegated oversight of T-hanger complex to AOED Coordinator Mescher (Toms report attached) Per Tom he has verbal commitments on all 18 T-hangers in phase one of the T-hanger complex which will yield approximately an additional \$75,000.00 year in airport revenue. Many of the users said they would like to relocate to the area if they secure space at the airport. Tom also flew into CFASPP meeting of Airports in Pensacola with our Airport Manager
- Delegated oversight of educational facility to AOED Board Member Wilkerson. He has already opened a new line of dialog with Space Florida
- Met rep Tyndall AFB at AAF re training
- Met with regional representative Congressman Dunn's office re funding
- Met with Senator Scott re Appropriation had follow up with his office
- Currently Airport tech Scott inventorying all equipment for necessity, replacement and for upcoming County auction
- Met with Opportunity Florida Board for update on progress at AAF and thanked them for the grant to MRO Chicago. Courtney took care of hotel and airfare
- Met with Mary Swoope re discussions for her potential assistance securing grants for impending projects at the airport
- Met with Jim Dean from SERCAP re: USDA grant monies for T-hanger complex
- Met with Commander Eglin AFB
- Spoke at Republican Committee event in Apalach with an update on the airport Pg#2
- Worked with AOED Board for final revisions on county T-hanger license agreements and will have ready for legal to review to submit for county approval. The final agreement recommendation will include when executed a \$50.00 deposit for a county lock that will be supplied for each hanger at the site that the county and the FBO will have copies of keys to each hanger.

- The FBO still needs a letter of direction from the county attorney to the tenant of the Helicopter hanger terminating his use and a 30day window to vacate.
- Will move forward soon on airport website Action Items
- The county needs to appoint a representative from the AOED to oversee and assist the FBO in the administration and marketing of the County's T-hangers. (The AOED recommendation is Tom Mescher)
- The AOED recommends annual maintenance of all T-hangers. To replace rollers hinges tracks as needed. This has not been done in decades and will actually save the County monies
- The AOED Board recommends moving forward with trying to secure FDOT funding for a future permanent structure that can house all airport equipment. (The Helicopter hanger will be a temporary solution it cannot fit all the equipment)
- The AOED would like to make a recommendation to move forward on a potential appropriation from Senator Scotts office to fund the runway extension and ILS project

Mr. Moron noted that he would prefer that it be county staff. The FBO does not have a contract with AEOD, but with the county. Mr. Kirschenbaum noted that Mr. Mescher

Chairman Jones noted that as long as they are aware that before they apply it has to be approved by the county.

Mr. Moron presented item no 1 from his report at this time.

1. Action Item: FDOT Airport Grant Extensions

- The County received Amendment for Extension of Public Transportation Grant Agreements from FDOT for two airport projects.
- The first is G2194, the Stormwater and Drainage Improvement project. The project deadline is extended from June 30, 2024, to June 30, 2025.
- The second is G2210, to design and replace the airfield vault backup generator. This project deadline is also extended from June 30, 2024, to June 30, 2025.
- Board action to authorize the Chairman's signature on the Amendment for Extension of Public Transportation Grant Agreements, G2194 and G2210, for airport projects.

**On a motion by Commissioner Amison, seconded by Commissioner Croom, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board authorized the Chairman's signature on the Amendment for Extension of Public Transportation Grant Agreements, G2194 and G2210, for airport projects. Motion carried 5-0.**

The Board recessed at 10:20 a.m. and reconvened at 10:33 a.m.

**(11:00 a.m.) Presentations/Updates/Requests**

**15. Mason Bean & Candy Varnes -- TDC Board Members Request**

Mr. Bean and Mrs. Varnes presented their request to the Board at this time. Mr. Bean congratulated Commissioner Sanders. He noted that as a volunteer no one does more than John Solomon. The TDC board feels somewhat whap sided. The reason for this urgency is two seats are coming up. We know this is a legal process, but we did want to make you aware of this. We are totally on board with resumes if that is what you chose you do.

Chairman Jones said the one thing that became clear is what we have been practicing does not necessarily follow the statute. The two chambers can present someone to be appointed. Over time it seems like these are chamber seats. It is not what was initially passed by the commissioner or what is required by Florida

statute. With the current makeup saying I somewhat represent district one is not fair because I represent the county. If I were replaced, then there would be no representation for district one. First discussion, we need to make sure we are doing what was tracked by ordinance and complies with state statute. I do not know that we need a motion for this because it is already in statute and ordinance. Commissioner Ward noted that she is glad Mrs. Varnes brought this up. According to our policy and procedure, under the selection process, there are multiple things. It says here under the selection process, the persons on the board can be automatically reappointed and do not have to reapply. I have full confidence they are qualified. The process is that we have to advertise when these seats become vacant. Advertise twice and the individual has 21 days within the first date of advertisement to reapply. Have we advertised for the vacant TDC positions? What good is a policy if we are not following it? I cannot in good conscience do something that we have not been following proper procedures. That is something that we need to do. It is not right if we do not do it that way. I do think that on another note we need to address some issues with the policy. Things have changed and I do feel like we need to readdress. Noted she does agree that it is not quite equal. Moving forward by changing some things with this policy it may prevent the lop side. Commissioner Sanders agreed we need to follow the process. The TDC does not know what is out there and someone else may want it. I have a view of the TDC when it was originally created, we really did not, we were just happy to get the TDC approved by the voters. In the years that we have had the TDC when they came to the TDC is there something the TDC did not fund. There is plenty of money out there for everyone. I can understand the people on the island feeling it was lopped sided. The chamber of commerce represents all of the businesses. I want to know who is serious about getting down and dirty on the TDC. I know that TDC board because I was chairman from about 2004. Who was on the fore front during the hurricanes, heads to beds? There is a recourse that we can take that tries to solve this problem. We are Franklin County. We want to know everyone is accounted for and accommodated. I would like to see it go through the process. It may be something like the ARPC where you rotate in or out. Do not believe in someone else getting on another is back to push them down. Mr. Bean noted that our intentions were not meant for that. We just want the process followed and the best members selected. Chairman Jones noted that he has heard that this discussion is about who collects the tax. It is about the community that bears the burden of the number of people. We are very limited about how we can spend the funds in regard to infrastructure. There are a lot of things that larger counties can do with the funds that we cannot do. It is not necessarily about who collects the tax but who is receiving the brunt of the visitors. Commissioner Croom thanked Mr. Bean and Mrs. Varnes for their presentation. Commissioner Croom noted that we cannot have the perception that we are handling it and bypassing our policy and procedures. I read the resumes and they are phenomenal. We need to relook at our policy. For those reasons, I feel like we should follow our process and advertise. Commissioner Amison said he agrees with following policy. There is something else we need to think about. Who do we contract to? We contract TDC to Chamber of Commerce to be specific. My biggest complaint that I hear is the TDC tax. Our community should be behind TDC. Perception is perception. At the end of the day when you look at the TDC it is comprised of Chamber – a big influx of chamber members on TDC board. I would like to see those seats get spread out. I think we need to take those chamber seats away it just does not look very inclusive. That is where I have the hang up. We need to follow the process, as far as the immediate seat that is the Apalachicola Chamber seat. I feel like that person would extend another month to give us time to do this in the proper way. Commissioner Ward said furthermore how do we know when these seats come up? I cannot keep up with everything. Whose responsibility is it to bring these to the Board? I feel like we have failed our community and citizens. We need to fix that process also. So that we are not deer in the headlights when we get phone calls. That process needs to be streamlined also. We need to revisit the policy and procedures manual. Mr. Moron noted that normally the TDC board's administrator will bring it to the Board. I think the problem has been we ended up treating the TDC differently than how we treated all of our other boards. We need to get back to treating them like all other advisory boards. By saying this, I am not saying that Mr. Solomon as administrator did anything wrong. The committee can make a recommendation, and the board can choose to appoint or chose to appoint others. If we treat everyone the same, it keeps it simple.

**Commissioner Sanders made a motion to send this back to TDC to advertise the two seats becoming**



**vacant, direct TDC to go out for advertising, accept all applications and come back to us with a recommendation.** Commissioner Ward asked if we could add to the motion to address and update our procedures moving forward. Mr. Moron noted that it would be best to do a separate motion. **Commissioner Ward seconded the motion.**

Commissioner Amison said these seats need to be specific to a general area, correct? Attorney Shuler noted the statute does not provide for members of the TDC to come from a specific district. The only real restriction of statute is the six remaining members at least three or no more than four, they have to be electors of the county, so it would be county wide. Commissioner Amison noted that the majority of the TDC tax is coming from St. George Island. I do not really like the way this going. Mr. Bean noted that even after we get the application process it may be lopped sided, but they will be okay with that. Commissioner Amison said one of the county commissioners, municipality representatives (2), now we have six seats out. We can simplify this, say get one from Apalachicola, Carrabelle, then have two from Eastpoint and St. George Island. Now you have fair representation. Attorney Shuler noted as long as statutorily criteria are met the discretion is to the board. The threshold you cannot change is what the statute requires. Mr. Moron noted we have a clear message to TDC of what you are looking for. Hopefully, they will take that into consideration when submitting applications. If after they present those to you, you are not happy, you can return those and ask them to resubmit. Commissioner Amison noted that we may be putting the cart before the horse. Maybe we should work on amending the policy first. Mr. Moron noted that he is hearing from the board that the TDC positions coming up will not be automatically reappointed. Attorney Shuler noted that when a term expires on TDC or advisory board that member does not automatically renew. However, that person would sit in that seat until the Board appoints someone else. They can still fulfil their duties of the law. Only the majority of the board could renew someone's term. Commissioner Ward noted that the policy needs to be revised because it reads in the policy that if a member would like to be renewed the TDC can waive the process and reappoint. Commissioner Sanders noted that it is her understanding the two seats that are coming up, they are going to sit until the selection process is completed. **Commissioner Sanders and Commissioner Ward withdrew their motion. Commissioner Ward made motion to redraft the policy.** Attorney Shuler noted that he would recommend we redraft the policies for all boards so that they are consistent. Attorney Shuler said how about Mr. Moron, and I get together, and we propose some language that applies to all of your boards, and we can present to you at your next meeting. Mr. Moron asked Board members to send their proposed changes to him. **Commissioner Ward made a motion to turn this over to Attorney Shuler and Mr. Moron so that we can address changing what needs to be changed that will cover all advisory volunteer boards. Seconded by Commissioner Sanders. Motion carried 5-0.**

### **RFP/RFQ/Bid Opening**

#### **16. Notice To Receive Bids: CR67 Phase III Widening and Resurfacing Project**

The project is the widening and resurfacing of County Road 67 for approximately 1.79 miles from State Forest Road 166 to State Forest Road 172. Other work to include necessary drainage improvements, upgraded signage and pavement markings and safety improvements.

Roberts and Roberts, Inc. 1538 Metropolitan Blvd, Tallahassee, FL 32308

Bid Bond - yes

Bid Amount -\$1,658,047.25

Pigott Asphalt and Sitework, LLC 12 Asphalt Way, Crawfordville, FL 32327

Bid Bond - yes

Bid Amount - \$1,612,992.44

CWR Contracting, Inc. 3660 Hartsfield Road, Tallahassee, FL 32303

Bid Bond - yes  
Bid Amount - \$1,394,131.80

**On a motion by Commissioner Sanders, seconded by Commissioner Amison, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board authorized release of the bid packages to Dewberry for review and recommendation.** Commissioner Ward noted let us not make a repeat of Timber Island, noting she does not want to have the big dip going onto a bridge. **Motion carried 5-0**

### County Staff & Attorney Reports

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

##### 1. BOARD ACTION: REVISED ANTI-DISPLACEMENT AND RELOCATION POLICY FOR FEDERALLY FUNDED PROJECTS (CDBG)

At the last meeting, the Board requested changes be made to the Anti-Displacement and Relocation Policy for Federally Funded Projects (namely the CDBG Program). With the CDBG housing program there is typically a short period of time during construction whereas the awarded families will be required to vacate their homes. This period of relocation causes an additional financial hardship for recipients who meet the income and asset qualifications. The prior policy was adopted in 2024 and provided a \$500 one-time allocation for moving expenses and up to \$55 per month for rental of a storage unit. The attached revision to the policy will provide an additional living expense allowance of up to \$1,000 for up to three months to not exceed \$3,000 per family unit and up to \$125 per month for rental of a storage unit.

*Board action to adopt and authorize the chairman to sign the attached revised Anti-Displacement and Relocation Policy for Federally Funded Projects.*

**On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Sanders, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board adopted and authorized the Chairman to sign the attached revised Anti-Displacement and Relocation Policy for Federally Funded Projects. Motion carried 5-0.**

##### 2. BOARD ACTION: EASTPOINT LIBRARY FORMAL ASSUMPTION OF LOANS & OWNERSHIP

The USDA is nearing completion for the review process needed for the county to assume the (2) outstanding USDA loans on the Eastpoint Library and formally transfer ownership from the Friends of the Library group. The goal is to close on the assumption and transfer on April 1<sup>st</sup>. The county has occupied the Eastpoint Library Building since it was completed in July of 2013. The county paid the Friends group \$2,700 per month for the first 15 months and then paid \$2,000 per month from October 2014 until today. Last summer the county began working with the USDA on the assumption as the existing rates on the two loans are much better than today's market rates. This change in ownership will allow the Friends group to focus their efforts on fundraising for the library's programs instead of struggling with high insurance premiums/maintenance costs and allow the county to own the location instead of leasing. The two loans have an interest rate of 3.125%, a combined balance of approximately \$162,554, and a combined annual payment of \$11,401 per year.

*Board action to approve the formal assumption of the USDA loans and ownership transfer summarized above for the Eastpoint Library Location.*

**On a motion by Commissioner Amison, seconded by Commissioner Sanders, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the formal assumption of the USDA loans and ownership transfer summarized above for the Eastpoint Library Location. Motion carried 5-0.**

### **3. BOARD ACTION: EASTPOINT DREDGE PROJECT EMERGENCY REPAIR WORK AUTHORIZATION**

On Friday, Alan Pierce and I met with the Coastal Conservation Corp and yesterday with Kim Miller of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. Several weeks ago, FDEP staff along with the Conservation Corp had conducted a site review visit in hopes to begin the planting efforts at the spoil site within the next few months. The Conservation Corp along with the Friends of the Reserve/ANERR had grown over 5,000 spartina plants needed for the perimeter planting as part of the original dredge permit's planting plan. Unfortunately, while inspecting the site, staffers noticed a widening breach in the retention cell and now with each tidal change, water enters the site and then recedes with sediment from the spoil reservoir. This breach is affecting the structural stability of the project site and must be repaired immediately.

The original planting plan was developed over four years ago based upon the theorized size of the retention cell and spoil composition. The county had initially tried to get a hard breakwater design permitted, and later proposed a groin breakwater concept but the Army Corp did not feel that the project would be impacted enough by current and wave action to warrant the hard structures. Now, based upon updated scientific guidance and current site conditions, it will take clusters of ten spartina plants instead to immediately stabilize the shoreline, and a varied vegetation footprint comprised of a mixture of spartina, sea oat grasses, mangrove, and pine plantings will be needed for long-term stabilization along with some form of hard structure to slow wave action. At this time, until a repair is completed on the south shore of the retention area, it will be impossible to stabilize the site along that edge.

Coastline Clearing and Land Development had assisted the county with land-based removal efforts for the channel areas not addressed by the Army Corp's dredge contract earlier in the year. As now the Army Corp Dredge and associated sub-contractors have left the Patton Drive site, it is not possible to pull the group back for the emergency repair of the retention cell. County staff contacted Coastline Clearing to request assistance with the emergency repair of the cell and to address the remaining 'high' hump area between the channel markers at the entrance to the channel and the incomplete section of the east channel entrance which narrows from the specified 100' of channel width per the original permit.

Coastline Clearing has submitted the following rates:

Mobilization of excavator to spoil site \$5,000.00

Excavator & Operator to fix blow out at spoil site \$350.00/hour

Excavation & Relocation of sediment from channel areas to repair breach \$65/cubic yard

Excavation & Land Based Removal of sediment from channel areas \$35/cubic yard

At this time, it is uncertain as to how much dredge material/man hours will be needed to buffer the retention cell and restore the shoreline's stability.

Board action to approve up to \$200,000 be spent as an emergency repair to the Eastpoint Channel Dredge Project to repair and stabilize the breach in the retention area and address the remaining high hump areas as left by the Army Corp at the proposed sole source/ emergency procured rates summarized above. TDC sales tax proceeds will fund these emergency repairs to the Channel Dredge Project.

The county is now working with partners at FDEP, ANERR, the Conservation Corp and the ARPC to pursue funding opportunities and nature-based solutions to address the long-term stability concerns at the retention site.

**Commissioner Ward made a motion to approve and to direct staff to send the bill to the Army Corps of Engineers. Seconded by Commissioner Sanders.**

Attorney Shuler noted that the Board will need to make two separate motions: one declaring a state of emergency and one approving the terms of the emergency contract. **Commissioner Ward made a motion to determine this to be a state of emergency, seconded by Commissioner Amison. Motion carried 5-0.**

**Commissioner Amison made a motion to approve up to \$200,000 be spent as an emergency repair to the Eastpoint Channel Dredge Project to repair and stabilize the breach in the retention area and address the remaining high hump areas as left by the Army Corp at the proposed sole source/emergency procured rates summarized above. Seconded by Commissioner Croom. Motion carried 5-0.**

**Commissioner Ward made a motion to send the bill to the Army Corps of Engineers, seconded by Commissioner Sanders.** Mr. Moron asked Commissioner Ward to amend her motion to send a reimbursement request to Army Corps. Commissioner Amison noted that we may need to send documentation with the bill. Commissioner Ward noted that she will hand deliver to Mobile. **Commissioner Ward amended her motion to send a reimbursement request to the Army Corps, seconded by Commissioner Sanders. Motion carried 5-0.**

Chairman Jones noted this project has been snake bit from the beginning. Now instead of 5000 plants we need 50,000 plants. Just another example of how the calculations changed. I do think we have a way forward with DEP. They were instrumental with getting grants for living a shoreline in Eastpoint. Commissioner Ward noted that moving forward let us take them out of the mix of maintenance dredges. Chairman Jones said the Army Corps of Engineers did not have to have a permit because they can exempt themselves from it. But Franklin County is not exempt, and we have to apply for a permit. However, there is a permit in place that may cover most of the area. Commissioner Amison said we are so far behind on TDC, Gulf County is at 5% and Wakulla is at 4%? Show me who is visiting Wakulla? I just want to make sure that we have positive communication with TDC.

Mrs. Griffith updated the Board as follows:

FEMA representative signed damaged description we have not been obligated on the funds for the project Phase II Island View Park – we have applied for a FRDAP, believe it is some time in the summer

Emergency Management New building - EHP environmental site review process

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.

Jason White stormwater, paved concrete apron, have to survey

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.

## **18. Michael Morón – County Coordinator**

### **2. Action Item: FDOT Airport Grant Extensions**

- The County received Amendment for Extension of Public Transportation Grant Agreements from FDOT for two airport projects.
- The first is G2194, the Stormwater and Drainage Improvement project. The project deadline is extended from June 30, 2024, to June 30, 2025.
- The second is G2210, to design and replace the airfield vault backup generator. This project deadline is also extended from June 30, 2024, to June 30, 2025.
- Board action to authorize the Chairman's signature on the Amendment for Extension of Public Transportation Grant Agreements, G2194 and G2210, for airport projects.

**On a motion by Commissioner , seconded by Commissioner , and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board authorized the Chairman's signature on the Amendment for Extension of Public Transportation Grant Agreements, G2194 and G2210, for airport projects. Motion carried 5-0.**

3. Action Item: Medical Examiner's Contract

- Last meeting, you received the Medical Examiner 2025 fee schedule. In addition, the Board was informed that a new Medical Examiner would start soon and once a start date was determined, a new agreement would be submitted for your review and approval.
- The County received notification that Dr. Thomas Coyne M.D., the new Medical Examiner, anticipated start date is May 1<sup>st</sup>. His new contract is attached for your review and approval.
- Board action to authorize the Chairman's signature on the new Medical Examiner's agreement.

**Defer for clarification, they are asking us to fill out a form for the current medical examiner.**

4. Action Item: Gulf Consortium Appointments

- Last week Mrs. Erin Griffith accompanied Mr. Dan Duarte (Gulf Consortium) on an inspection of the two dredge sites. Chairman Jones was present for the Eastpoint dredge inspection, and Commissioner Amison was present for the 2-mile dredge inspection.
- During the 2-mile dredge inspection, Commissioner Amison and Mr. Duarte had a conversation regarding the seafood industry. Based on that conversation, Mr. Duarte suggested that Commissioner Amison represent Franklin County on the Gulf Consortium board of directors.
- As per the Gulf Consortium website, the Franklin County Director's seat is vacant, and I serve as the alternate. If both Commissioners are willing, Commissioner Amison could serve as the Director and Chairman Jones could serve as the alternate, as the main Board of Directors meeting is held during the FAC annual summer conference.
- Board action to appoint Commissioner Amison as Franklin County's director and Chairman Jones as the alternate on the Gulf Consortium Board.

**On a motion by Commissioner Sanders, seconded by Commissioner Ward, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board appointed Commissioner Amison as Franklin County's director and Chairman Jones as the alternate on the Gulf Consortium Board. Motion carried 5-0.**

5. Action Item: LVA Law Enforcement Appreciation Event

- The Lanark Village Association has requested the use of Jean Sewell Park, on Saturday, May 18, 2024, to host a Law Enforcement Appreciation event. This event will take place from noon until 6:00 p.m.
- Board action to authorize the use of Jean Sewell Park for the Lanark Village Association's Law Enforcement Appreciation event on May 18, 2024, from noon to 6:00 p.m.

**On a motion by Commissioner Sanders, seconded by Commissioner Croom and Commissioner Ward, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board authorized the use of Jean Sewell Park for the Lanark Village Association's Law Enforcement Appreciation event on May 18, 2024, from noon to 6:00 p.m. Motion carried 5-0.**

6. Discussion/Action Item: Alligator Point Boat Ramp Update

- At your last meeting there was a lengthy discussion regarding the need for a boat ramp at the Alligator/Bald Point area. The Board requested possible emergency permit options for what is referred to as the Sun & Sand boat ramp.

- The DEP representative, Mr. Jon Brucker, stated at the meeting that Lenard's Landing was never permitted as a boat ramp.
- After hearing that, Mr. Mark Curenton, County Planner, made an inquiry to DEP for permit history on Sun and Sand and S-Curve boat ramps. DEP stated that based on a 10-year search, neither boat ramp is permitted.
- In addition, Commissioner Sanders was recovering from surgery so was not at the meeting and did not have the opportunity to respond.
- With all that said, I would like the Board to discuss this matter today and possibly offer staff some direction.
- Board discussion and possible action.

Attorney Shuler said at the last meeting there was a public comment that caught my ear that FSU trustees owned the FSU lab. Reverter clause, the title would revert back to, did a title search at no cost to the county. The title to the old marine lab is in the board of trustees which is the governor and cabinet, no reverter clause, no record, or evidence that supports this.

Commissioner Sanders noted that she always thought the FSU board turned it over to the governor and cabinet. How can we go about and asking for some type of lease agreement, allow the residents to be able to use it? Attorney Shuler noted that during the title search there is some record evidence that the property was in the state board of education, then in late 60s a new law passed, there was a deed transferring the property to the governor and cabinet.

Commissioner Sanders noted there is no way that we can expand the Sun and Sand area because you have property owners. She sent the road department in there and they have put rock in because people were getting stuck. At Leonard's Landing, it has been a boat ramp since the 40s because the army put it in there. I do not think that St Joe company sold the property between Leonard's Landing and Bay North. Since then, sat down with St. Joe and they were asking what we would give them. Bay north side. I know from hearing the presentation that Mr. Edwin Lott did it was mentioned that FSU lab could be used for some of the crabbers and clambers. That is a little too far out. Commissioner Sanders spoke about additional leases being added for aquaculture. She noted that we need to engage the Department of Aquaculture to see what they can do to help Franklin County out. **Commissioner Sanders made a motion to direct Attorney Shuler and Mr. Moron to write the governor and cabinet letting them know there is a need for boat access on Alligator Point and ask for a lease for the old FSU lab for a boat ramp.** Commissioner Ward noted that she went down a week or so ago and a guy was having a hard time getting a little small boat in. **Seconded by Commissioner Ward.** Mr. Will Kendrick recommended the commission ask that it be put on the surplus property list. There is a strong movement on the governor and cabinet to get property off. It would benefit the county to have them donate to the county for water access as opposed to the lease. **Commissioner Sanders amended her motion to reflect recommendations from Mr. Kendrick, seconded by Commissioner Ward. Motion carried 5-0.** Commissioner Sanders noted that another letter needs to go to the St. Joe Company to negotiate Leonard's Landing and Bay North. **Commissioner Sanders made a motion to direct staff to send a letter to St. Joe Company, seconded by Commissioner Ward.** Commissioner Amison inquired how we would be able to maintain the Leonard's Landing ramp. Commissioner Sanders noted that she would like to see one of the better ramps. **Motion carried 5-0.**

#### 7. Discussion/Action Item: CHP Update & Consultant Interviews

- On Thursday February 22<sup>nd</sup>, Chairman Jones, Mrs. Erin Griffith, and I met with CHP to get a better understanding of their in-network coverage. At this point, I will ask Chairman Jones and Mrs. Griffith to comment on the meeting.
- As discussed at your last meeting, is the Board ready for me to contact the three rural hospital/healthcare consulting firms (The Ryder Group, Stroudwater, and Baker Tilly Healthcare) recommended by Mrs. Mary Mayhew and schedule interviews if they are interested?

- Board discussion and possible action.

Chairman Jones said from sitting down with them, they definitely are not hindering healthcare in Franklin County. We have some different avenues that we can chase. They are also the providers for both of the municipalities. There is some discussion that they communicated with us that they feel we could have with other medical providers that we can work things out. Mrs. Griffith noted they are not licensed in Gulf or Bay County. Granted you can go anywhere for emergency. There may be hit or miss offices who still bill through their Tallahassee office. Were Dr. Newton to come back and be based in Franklin he would be covered. It was more of a geography issue on that side. There is not any issue should Sacred Heart try to get a primary care physician here, noting Dr. Pharr is already a provider. Chairman Jones said there are gaps with needs. Mrs. Griffith noted they brought three main things being durable medical equipment, physical therapy, and the third I cannot remember. Chairman Jones noted that there was a big one, dialysis. Chairman Jones noted that during their discussions they learned that dialysis treatment at Fresenius is covered by CHP. Mr. Moron noted that there is a federal law that they must cover the closest dialysis treatment. Chairman Jones noted that we will be having further discussions about helping them with the dialysis center.

Commissioner Amison inquired about how CHP does recognize some people in Gulf and Bay and how billing is done. Commissioner Ward noted that if Dr. Newton bills through his office here that it should be covered. Mr. Moron noted that CHP did not act like where they are billing from is an issue but where they are providing services and it must be five days a week. They want to make sure that all Dr. Newton's referrals will be made to CHP specialists. Mr. Moron noted he has another meeting with CHP next week. After that, maybe have a meeting with Sacred Heart and CHP at the table. Commissioner Ward inquired about the licensing. Mrs. Griffith noted that the licensing is a two-year ordeal. Mr. Moron noted that TMH is building a hospital in Margaritaville that is scheduled to open in 2027. He said he asked about TMH in Bay County, but they said they have not decided if they are going to bring them into network. Commissioner Ward said we need to look at for one insurance companies. Furthermore, it is getting more and more difficult to get doctors to come to our county. We are going to have to come up with a solution with the nurse practitioners and how they practice. We need to talk to our legislative representative or lobbyist. Why do NP have to work under doctor? They have all of these certifications. What is the difference in not just having them be able to practice themselves and not have to be under the umbrella of a doctor? Commissioner Amison noted that then there is the issue that insurance would only cover 80% under NP. Commissioner Ward noted the struggles in dealing with insurance companies. We need to come down on these insurance companies. They are dictating what health care we get. Chairman Jones noted that he believes it is in state statute that a NP work under a physician. Commissioner Amison noted there are restrictions on what they can prescribe, etc. Commissioner Ward noted that statutes can be changed. Mr. Moron asked if he could go ahead and contact the consultants. He noted that he will contact all three consultants and report at the next meeting so that we can lock down some dates.

#### 8. Informational Item: Lease Termination

- Last week, the County received a request from Cardiology and Internal Medicine Group of North Florida (Dr. Sanallah) to terminate the lease at 155 Ave. E (Chapman Building) in Apalachicola on Thursday, February 29, 2024.
- This was anticipated based on prior communication with Dr. Sanallah's staff.
- Your Facilities Maintenance Coordinator, Building Official, and I will inspect the building and discuss needed repairs and upgrades. We will present our findings to the Board at a future meeting.

#### 9. Informational Item: SHIP Update

- As directed by the Board at a previous meeting, I met with Mr. Tim Center (Community Action) and negotiated the transfer of the SHIP program administrative duties effective April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024.

- Mrs. Cortni Bankston and I are scheduled to meet with a Community Action representative tomorrow to start the transition process.

10. Informational Item: Economic Development Update

- Last week, Chairman Jones, Mrs. Erin Griffith, and I met with Mrs. Mary Swoope and Mrs. Beth Kirkland regarding Economic Development consultation services for Franklin County.
- Based on those meetings, the Chairman requested a fee proposal quote from Mrs. Swoope for the Board’s review.
- If approved by the Board, the County’s relationship with Mrs. Swoope will be like the relationship with Mrs. Tracie Buzbee, based on an hourly as needed basis.
- Once received, the fee proposal will be submitted to this Board for approval.
- Chairman Jones and Mrs. Griffith may have additional comments.

11. Informational Item: Forerunner Program

- After much research, Mrs. Angela Lolley, your Floodplain Administrator, found a program to assist with the County’s Community Rating System program and with post storm recovery. The software will also provide a public portal to assist with flood and permitting information.
- This software is cloud based, is recommended by the State Floodplain Manager, and used by several coastal cities in Florida and throughout the rest of the country.
- Mrs. Lolley negotiated a six-month contract to allow for a “test” run, especially since she is in the process of starting the CRS reporting.
- Attorney Shuler will review the agreement before it is executed by staff.
- If Mrs. Lolley determines that the program is good for the county and staff, an annual contract will be presented during budget for your approval.

12. Informational Item: ARPC Appointment

- Late last year, the Board appointed Commissioner Sanders and Mr. John Berry to the Regional Rural Transportation Plan Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).
- There is a third vacant Franklin County seat on the TAC that is appointed by ARPC.
- ARPC is looking for some suggestions to fill that seat. It could be a municipal representative, a staff member from your Road Department, Planning office, or county engineer.
- Let me know if you have any candidates that might be interested, and I will forward those names to Mr. Kwentin Eastberg.

13. Informational Item: Promotional Items

- Commissioner Croom has asked Mr. John Solomon (TDC Administrator) to add the new County logo to TDC promotional items, especially on challenge coins, hats, and other related items.
- Mr. Solomon has already started on draft designs for these items.

14. Informational Item: Triumph Gulf Coast April Meeting

- The Triumph Gulf Coast April Board meeting will be held here in your meeting room on April 10<sup>th</sup>.
- As we get closer to the meeting date, I will provide additional information including starting time.

15. Informational Item: Camp Gordon Johnston Parade



- As a reminder, the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Camp Gordon Johnston Veterans Parade will be held on March 9<sup>th</sup>, this Saturday, at 10:45 a.m. (ET) in Carrabelle. Mrs. Cortni Bankston registered the Board for the parade. Commissioner Ward will bring her golf cart and Mrs. Bankston is in the process of securing another golf cart from Parks and Recreation.

Commissioner Ward noted that it would be good to get some type of sign for the golf carts for the parades.

16. Information Item: Workshop Reminder

- As a reminder, there is a workshop scheduled at 5:00 p.m. (ET) this afternoon for The Landings at St. George Island proposed project presentation.

17. Informational Item: Next Meeting Date

- Your next regular meeting will be on Tuesday, March 19, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. (ET) here in your meeting room.

Commissioner Ward noted that she would have liked to have had this presentation two days ago. She noted that when anyone is bringing something before the Board, she would like to know what she is looking at. It limits feedback when they do not have the information ahead of time. Commissioner Amison asked if we ever clarified the records storage for Dr. Sanuallah’s office. Attorney Shuler said the question was poised to him, about storing the records, what amount, etc. He noted that in speaking with staff it is a thumb drive, stored at Weems. Commissioner Amison noted so for public knowledge patients can request those records from Weems. Attorney Shuler noted that from what he received from the hospital managers it is not an issue. Apparently, Alliant had a similar situation, and they gave their records. It seemed like it was not much of an issue, noting he dropped it at that point. The public should be aware they are advertising in the newspaper. Commissioner Amison inquired if this was HIPPA kosher, Attorney Shuler said he deferred to Aliant, and they were okay with it.

Commissioner Sanders inquired about Planning and Zoning moving where are you going to be located at. Mr. Moron noted that he will have two offices. He will float. Erin and I have to have a space where we can make copies etc. during meetings. Commissioner Sanders said back a few months ago we asked for the financial and income statements on the hospital. Mr. Moron noted they had asked for separate audits on two clinics and ambulance services. Mr. Moron noted that they wanted to meet with the Board individually and no one followed up to make an appointment. He is on standby to meet with you. He has to make some notes that he would like to explain one on one. Chairman Jones hopes to meet with lobbyist sometime next week. It appears two out of our three asks are going to be funded. EMS station and bear resistance trash cans.

**19. Michael Shuler – County Attorney**

**Action Items**

**1. Request Authorization to Schedule Public Hearing on Possible Ordinance Regulating Harassment in Public Spaces**

I am requesting authorization to schedule a public hearing for the Board to consider whether to adopt an ordinance regulating harassment in publicly owned spaces and also for the issuance of no trespass orders under appropriate circumstances and limitations. Board Action Requested: Authorization to schedule a public hearing on the above subject matter.

**On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Amison, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board authorized staff to schedule a public hearing on a possible ordinance regulating harassment in public spaces.** Chairman Jones noted that it is amazing we made it through Covid and are now having to do this. **Motion carried 5-0.**

**2. Speed Limit Reduction Brownsville Road, Apalachicola, FL, and C.C. Land Road, Eastpoint Pursuant to s.316.189, Fla. Stat. – State Uniform Traffic Control Statute**

A. Brownsville Road, Apalachicola: At present, the current posted speed limit is 35 MPH from the city limits of the City of Apalachicola to the roundabout at Pal Rivers Road, a distance of approximately one mile. See attached map.

B. C.C. Land Road, Eastpoint: At present, the current posted speed limit is 35 MPH from the intersection of C.C. Land Road with 6<sup>th</sup> Street at Vrooman Park to Tenth Street, a distance of approximately 4/10s of a mile. See attached map.

C. S.316.189, Fla Stat. provides that in a residential district a county may set a maximum speed limit of 25 miles per hour after an investigation determines that such a limit is reasonable. A copy of the statute is attached.

D. Any change in the speed limit is not effective until properly posted with speed limit signs. See pages 5-8 for exhibits.

Board Action Requested: Board discussion and possible action to reduce the speed limit from 35 MPH to 25 MPH as described hereinabove. If the Board reduces the speed limit, then another motion directing the road department to install new speed limit signs.

**On a motion by Commissioner Amison, seconded by Commissioner Croom, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved reducing the speed limit from 35 MPH to 25 MPH as described hereinabove and directing the road department to install new speed limit signs. Motion carried 5-0.**

**Discussion Items**

**1. Working without Permit Required by Zoning Code: Stop Work Orders and Penalties – Draft Ordinance**

At its February 20, 2024, meeting the Board authorized a public hearing to consider penalties for the commencement of work without the permit required by the Franklin County Zoning Code. I have prepared, and attached, a draft ordinance which I propose the Board consider. It has penalties in addition to the ones recommended by staff. Staff proposal is attached hereto for your convenient review. The Notice of Intent to be published in the newspaper is also attached. The public hearing is scheduled for March 19, 2024, at 11:00 a.m. (ET). Please note that this ordinance, if approved by the Board, does not address building code permit violations. Mr. Paterson advises that he is satisfied with how building code matters are enforced.

*1st Offense - Issuance of a Stop Work Order plus a Double the Permit Fee  
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 after the fact permit is issued.  
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 perm it.*

*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 after the fact permit is issued.*

*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.*

*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 after the fact permit is issued. 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.*

*4th Offense - Issuance of a Stop Work Order plus prosecution in the same manner as misdemeanors are 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.*

*(2) PENALTY FOR VIOLATION OF THE STOP WORK ORDER shall be prosecution in the same manner as misdemeanors are prosecuted pursuant to Florida Statute Section 125.69, as amended from time to time.*

*a. Violation of the Stop Work Order shall be defined as the continuation of work without the permit required by the Franklin County Zoning Code subsequent to the posting of the Stop Work Order on the property subject to the Stop Work Order.*

*b. Franklin County shall also mail a notice of the Stop Work Order to the property owner at their address as shown on the records of the Franklin County Property Appraiser and to the contractor's address on file either with Franklin County or the State of Florida, Division of Corporations.*

*c. The effective date of the Stop Work Order shall be the date that it is posted on the property on which work has commenced without the permit required by the Franklin County Zoning Code.*

Chairman Jones asked for clarification if on the second offense is it \$50 per day until they are issued a permit or until they have applied for one. I am fine with that language, but I think that is something we need to have with planning and zoning appointment. Just want to make sure that we are not doing something punitive, then we are compounding it by our policy. Unless we know for sure that a permit is going to be issued today or tomorrow, if they are going to get charged per day waiting upon us. Complete application submission daily fine stops. Once you get stop work order, work stops. Attorney Shuler noted he could clarify this, the stop work order stays in place until permit is issued, but the daily fine stops upon submission of a completed application, and payment of the the fines. The draft ordinance has to be on file 10 days before the public hearing

## 2. Supervisor of Elections – In Re Franklin County Senior Center Stopping Use for Polling Place

On March 9, 2024, the Supervisor of Elections begins early voting for the Presidential Primary. Historically, the Franklin County Senior Center has been a polling place in the City of Carrabelle, Florida. On February 16, 2024, the Franklin County Senior Center informed the Supervisor of Elections that she could not use the building for “voting/election purposes”. A copy of their letter to the Supervisor of Elections is attached. The Supervisor thereafter entered into a short-term rental agreement to use the Senior Citizens building for three days for a total rent of \$750.00. See pages 16-17 for exhibits.

Discussion: The Board will need to find a long-term replacement for the policy in place in Carrabelle, Florida. I suggest discussing with the Supervisor of Elections the Garden Club building now owned by Franklin County and across the street from the current polling place is suitable for her needs.

Attorney Shuler noted that the Supervisor of Elections was booted out of the Senior Center just prior to the Republican primary. He noted this did not sit well with him. Clearly from their letter they do not understand that the Supervisor of Elections is not the Franklin County government and is her own independent

constitutional office. She had to sign what he would consider an emergency lease to occupy that building for three days to be able to conduct the Republican primary. He has suggested to Mr. Moron that we look at the Garden Club building. Commissioner Sanders noted that we have had voting there since the building was built. But since they are upset with Commissioner Ward and others of us. Commissioner Ward noted that this all stemmed from when there were two different senior citizens center. The two entities in Carrabelle separated. When they pulled the funding, Mr. Moron and I met with them. We were giving them money. They wanted to dictate what senior citizens were in and out of the building. Now they are being vindictive. She wants to make sure, this was unanticipated revenue that she had to take out of her budget, so if she has a shortfall I will take out of my pocket. It is not over yet. I am still looking at some other avenues. She is not punishing me or this Board she is punishing the people of this county. Commissioner Sanders noted that ever since that building was built it has always had the elections there. It is just sad that they have such a problem with the Board that they take it out on the residents. Mr. Moron noted that the building was built by volunteers and donations. It was dedicated to the senior citizens of the county. It has now turned into a private club. He noted that he will get with Mrs. Riley and have her look at Garden Club. Mr. Moron noted that he will get with ECCC again to see where they are at. Commissioner Sanders noted that if the Garden Club is not sufficient maybe we could look at using city hall conference room or possibly the annex. Mr. Moron noted that the funds would be a transfer from courthouse maintenance.

Attorney Shuler noted that he was made aware the deed from the City of Carrabelle was recorded about three weeks ago. He noted that he would have liked to review before recording. However, he will be pulling the deed and present it at the next meeting. Commissioner Sanders noted the benefits of city and county working together for the benefit of residents.

Chairman Jones asked about the bylaw update at Weems. Noted he is interested in looking at what they are talking about. Attorney Shuler noted he will send a copy to the Board of what they have sent him. He received a document with red lines and strike lines. He needs the original documents from the Clerk's office in order to verify. He noted that it appears to just be a cleanup of typos. Chairman Jones noted that with the issues discussed about TDC, he would like to make sure the Board is aware of what they are redlining and changing.

Commissioner Ward announced a car show fundraiser that will benefit the VFW. If you come to the parade and want to see some cool cars, just come by.

Commissioner Sanders noted that she is glad to be back.

### **Information Items**

#### **1. TDC Board- State Statute and County Ordinance**

The following three documents are attached for your convenient review:

- a. s. 125.0104(4) showing the membership of the TDC board. I have highlighted and underlined the essential requirements of the membership of the TDC board. See page 18 for exhibit.
- b. Complete copy of s.125.0104, Fla. Stat. which is the Tourist Development Tax; procedure for levying; authorized uses; referendum and enforcement.
- c. Franklin County ordinance 2004-34 creating the TDC board and establishing its initial membership. See pages 33-34 for exhibit.

#### **2. Weems Hospital By-Laws Update**

On February 16, 2024, Mr. Walker advised me that the hospital board is in the process of updating the hospital by-laws and asked to review the draft. I am in the process of gathering the original by-laws and all subsequent amendments from your records as part of my review process.

3. **FDOT Eminent Domain Petitions**

FDOT is proceeding with five petitions in eminent domain as part of its planned repaving of Highway 98 between Eastpoint and Franklin County. As I understand it, the real property sought is for stormwater management resulting from the improvements to Highway 98. They are very small parcels of land, all of which are less than 1000 square feet. Quick Take hearings are scheduled in March and April 2024. I expect the Court to grant FDOT's request for the quick take, which means that title will then transfer to FDOT during the pendency of the five eminent domain lawsuits and therefore show not slow down the repaving project. The Franklin County Board of County Commissioners, Tax Collector and Property Appraiser have been served as parties to the lawsuit, even though they have no ownership interest in any of the parcels. We are all named simply to preserve our right to claim any outstanding real property taxes or other liens which may be owed to the local government. The Tax Collector and Property asked me to represent them in these five eminent domain lawsuits. As I see no possible conflict of counsel, I agreed, but I also wanted the Board to be aware of this.

4. **Notice of Claim from Gill and Osborne Re: Alligator Point Multi Use Path Claim of Alleged Stormwater Damage**

As of the date of this report, I have not received the report from the County's engineer.

5. **Land Swap with Duke Energy**

This land swap negotiation involves the possible swap of one 30x80' city lot in the Bowery section owned by Franklin County for five acres, mol, owned by Duke Energy at the old ABC School site off 25<sup>th</sup> Street in Apalachicola. I have followed up a couple of times with Duke Energy and am still waiting on them to move forward.

### **Commissioners' Comments**

There were no additional Commissioners' comments.

### **Recess**

The Board recessed at this time.

### **Reconvene**

The Board reconvened at 5:00 p.m. for the public workshop.

### **Public Workshop**

#### **20. The Landings at St. George Island**

Notice is hereby given that on March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024, beginning at 5:00 p.m. (ET), the Franklin County Board of County Commissioners will conduct a public workshop to discuss The Landings at St. George Island, FL located at 41 West Bayshore Drive, St. George Island, FL 32328. This is not a public hearing to adopt an Ordinance for The Landings at St. George Island, FL, and no vote will be taken at this workshop.

Chairman Jones called the workshop to order. Chairman Jones noted that the Board is seeing this presentation for the first time today. He explained the flow of the meeting will be a presentation from

the requestor, public comments followed by Commissioners' comments. At this time, Clint West, one of the developers from Landing at SGI, LLC, spoke to the Board. He noted that they wanted to be conscience of the laid-back design of the island while filling some holes in needs. He noted his team originally began working with Mr. Dan Garlick on this project who we lost in December. However, his team has picked up the project. At this time, Mr. Ron Schultz from the Edgewater Group gave an overview of the project noting the property's history and zoning. According to Mr. Schultz a portion of the property is zoned as C3 Commercial Recreational and a portion as R1 Single Family Residential. Therefore, the C3 Commercial Recreational district allows for boat ramps, marinas, recreation vehicle parking and camping, fish camps, motels and hotels, restaurant, and food services. The R1 Single Family Residential district allows for one single family detached dwelling per lot. Mr. Schultz noted that the team has factored in engineering and environmental considerations when drafting the plan which include things such as MBR wastewater treatment, electric-crane dry stack, solar capacity, stormwater management, water quality study, bungalow shading study, additional green efforts, public benefits, and experimental shoreline. The proposed master plan would include residential units in the western parcel, bungalows, resort pool and beach club, dry stack marina with retail south side, rental units on north side, wet slip marina, beachfront restaurant with conference/meeting room, marina front rental homes and wastewater treatment plant.

Mr. John Auber spoke in opposition of the project noting the impact on affordable housing and the job market. He asked the Board how they would assure that the promises made by the developers would be kept. He noted that during a downturn of marinas everyone flees. He voiced concerns about runoff, dredging, and protecting the oyster beds.

Mr. George Finn spoke in opposition of the project noting concern of putting a sewage plant in direct line of hurricane.

Mr. Kenneth Justice spoke in opposition noting the need for affordable housing.

Ms. Doty Thornburg noted that she is not against development of the property. However, this type of resort is overwhelming for the little island. Suggested a small marina with a restaurant.

Ms. Kimberly Baxley spoke on behalf of the Riverkeepers Association noting the property's wetlands, and active oyster beds. She noted that the wastewater would eventually seep into the bay. Noted that a recent pharmaceutical study in fish revealed 94% of red fish have been affected and Apalachicola ranked the worst quality of water.

Mr. Cliff Butler spoke to the Board on behalf of the land trust noting if this should move forward, they would like to work with the Board to make sure that affordability housing is included. As an individual, he noted that if their project meets the state, federal and local merits, it should be approved.

Sulc Brevard spoke regarding concern and opposition for all mega developments noting in the interest of oyster reefs plan that improves water quality. Noted there is no way this amount of waste will not have a negative impact on the bay. Also noted studies have found that noise levels affect development of oysters.

Mrs. Barbara Sanders noted that Board had a really big responsibility to those who live on the island. She inquired about the impact on evacuations with a two-lane bridge. She suggested the county and state purchase the property to avoid future litigation.

Mr. Covington asked how much do they anticipate pricing the bungalows for? How long the project will take to complete? Have you had any discussions with the State of Florida regarding their position considering the amount of funds they have spent on restoration efforts of the bay?

Mr. TJ Saunders noted that this project is a threat to the environment and the bay. He noted that there has been no discussion of the fuel on marina property and how it would be stored or how storm surge could possibly spread fuel.

Ms. Rebecca Jatine noted a lot of physical challenges with the property pointing out wetlands, salt lands, sea grass prohibition, breakwater requirements, high hazard zone, and other factors. She noted that the PUD needs improvement as well as pointing out a PUD is not required. She noted there needs to be a better breakout of density and will these be short- or long-term rentals.

Mr. Wayne Williams spoke on behalf of the Seafood Workers Association noting a requirement for buffer zones with shellfish beds. He noted there are at least twenty small reefs between this property and Nicks Hole. There would have to be a buffer zone. How would this development affect restoration in that area? Expressed concerns with dredging, traffic, and wastewater. He noted that with increased concrete and asphalt, there would be more water shed. He noted that he would send the Board a link to the guidelines regarding buffer zones.

Mr. Jonathan Goodson provided the Board with a handout. He expressed concerns with chemicals used to treat 'golf course' quality lawns. These chemicals would end up in the bay. He suggested the county partner with state to turn this property into a nature reserve.

Mr. Nobel Davidson noted that there is an important precedence to be set with this project.

Mr. David Ring noted that low density is St. George Island's signature. He would hope the character of the island would remain. He noted that high density does not happen overnight, and we are permanently changing nature of it.

Ms. Joellen Pearman expressed concerns with traffic, safety, and evacuation during disaster.

Ms. Krista Miller noted that tourism is a driving industry for our county. We cannot use the tag line of 'the Florida everyone remembers', then go and change it. How will anyone be able to clean up the litter under the bungalows in wetlands?

Ms. Teresa Spohrer expressed concerns of evacuations and there only being one way off.

Ms. Cheryl noted that a sense of community is important. She noted that there does not seem to be anything about this project that wants to be a part of the community. We have to look at it to see if it is something that will crush or fold in our community or become a critical part.

Ms. Lynn Wilder noted she is concerned about pollution and changes to the environment. Has a traffic study been completed? There needs to be some kind of study done for parking.

Mr. Brett Martina noted that his clients say they come here for our charm. Are we trying to change the charm of our community? This could drive the market price of everything in the county and affordable housing already an issue.

Someone (inaudible) noted to keep in mind that bald eagles are in the area also.

Mr. Jason Hooper noted that the raised bungalows look like they would pose a hazard and challenge to the volunteer fire department.

Mrs. Barbara Sanders noted that Apalachicola has just approved another marina. We really do not need another one.

Commissioner Amison noted that his main concern is the oyster habitat. He noted that he has a lot of questions with list of cons. He noted that he is great with playing the devil's advocate however he has a lot of reservations and questions. He inquired about parking and the environmental impact. He noted that we are about thirty million in on pilot studies for the bay.

Commissioner Ward noted that a lot of project goes against the land use comp plan. She noted that the Board had just received this presentation today and she likes to be able to do her own research. She noted questions about how many houses, bungalows, long-term or short-term?

Commissioner Amison noted the possible impacts of the bungalows due to storm surge noting that he does

not think any of the docks survived Hurricane Michael or Dennis. There would be lumber floating everywhere. He noted that he would love to hear from some of the state agencies.

Commissioner Ward noted that any type of dredging could have effects on the eco system with the affects to sensitive oyster beds and fishing.

Chairman Jones noted that there is a need for a marina on the island. However, the issue at hand is the dredging. It is not always easy when it has been 30-40 years. In nest case scenarios it is something that needs to be addressed. They abandoned dredging the channel because it was deemed unmaintainable. If that is still an issue, then that is a big part of the project.

Commissioner Croom noted that he had a lot of questions and concerns some being the oysters, traffic, and safety. He noted that there would need to be more discussions on this this.

Chairman Jones asked those in attendance if everyone had a chance to speak. Ms. Julie Krontz came forward to speak. She noted that there are a lot of supporters for the project. She noted that she felt like they are trying to put something that is aesthetically beneficial and fits the environment. She noted that marinas can be done safely. She noted that the wastewater management system proposed was probably one of the best there is. She implored the Board and the public to take a look at the entire plan.

### **Adjournment**

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

---

**Ricky Jones – Chairman**

**Attest:**

---

**Michele Maxwell – Clerk of Courts**

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