

**FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR MEETING  
COURTHOUSE ANNEX, COMMISSION MEETING ROOM  
NOVEMBER 18, 2025  
9:00 AM  
MINUTES**

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

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

**Call to Order**

Chairman Jones called the meeting to order.

**Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance**

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

**Approval of the Agenda**

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

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

**1. County Bill List for Payment**

**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. Motion carried 5-0.**

**Update/Presentation**

**2. Jon Creamer -- FWC Regional Director**

Beginning January 1, 2026, the Apalachicola Bay oyster fishery will reopen to commercial and recreational harvest. An Apalachicola Bay (AB) Endorsement is required for commercial oyster harvest from the bay. The Apalachicola Bay Permit (AP) will no longer be issued. Qualifications for the AB Endorsement for the January 2026 season:

- Individual or Crew Saltwater Products License (SPL) holder
- Shellfish (BV) Endorsement holder
- Florida resident
- Legal commercial wild oyster landings from Apalachicola Bay between 2012 and 2020

All qualified applicants could receive the AB Endorsement for the January 2026 season. The AB Endorsement can be renewed. The number of AB Endorsements issued for the January 2026 season will set the cap on participation for future seasons. Apply online for the AB Endorsement at [www.MyFWC.com/CLS](http://www.MyFWC.com/CLS). Applications will be accepted between Nov. 10, 2025, and Dec. 16, 2025. If you need help with the application, FWC Staff will be at the FDACS Apalachicola Shellfish Center (260 Dr. Frederick S. Humphries Street, Apalachicola, FL 32320) from 9:00 am – 4:00 pm on these dates:

- November 12-14
- November 17-21
- November 24-25
- December 1-2
- December 9-10
- December 15-16

**Requirements BEFORE Applying**

- Take the Shellfish Harvester Training Course
- Online: <https://myfwc.com/fishing/saltwater/commercial/shellfish/>
- In person: 10:00 AM and 3:00 PM, Monday – Friday at the FDACS Apalachicola Shellfish Center (subject

to change)

- Secure your Crew or Individual Saltwater Products License (SPL) and Shellfish (BV) Endorsement
- For more information, call (850) 487-0554 or email [Marine@MyFWC.com](mailto:Marine@MyFWC.com).

Mr. Jon Creamer presented an overview of the Commercial Apalachicola Bay Endorsement Application Process. He noted that the Carrabelle office is on Timber Island.

Commissioner Amison said it is only going to be for people who fished 2012-2020 and nothing has changed for license requirement. You are not exempt from a saltwater fishing license. It is basically the same license required for the past 40 years. Have you got the app up and running? We are working on that. Erica spoke via Zoom. The application is still in development we will put together a training video to learn how to use it. We will also show people when they come to pick up their harvest tags. Commissioner Sanders inquired as to the outreach they are using; you feel confident that there will be a good turnout. Mr. Creamer noted that they have had a good response so far, and there have been quite a few folks. Commissioner Sanders asked Erica is there anyway you can give us a number maybe once a week who have applied. Erica noted as of yesterday 85 people have applied and we are encouraging everyone who believes they are qualified, to apply. Chairman Jones asked were we able to put this in the paper. Mrs. Griffith noted that we have two display ads that will come out this week and next week. Commissioner Sanders said she thinks this is a good thing happening and she would like to have a celebration for it, possibly a ribbon cutting at one of the boat ramps. I think we need to do something, because January 1<sup>st</sup> will be a momentous occasion in this county. Hopefully, we will keep on growing oysters. Chairman Jones asked where would be the approved locations that are going to be approved to leave and come back to? Mr. Creamer noted that he will get those specific locations to Mr. Moron. Chairman Jones noted that we will get those and decide on a location. Mr. Moron inquired as to whether he saw the video of the bear running through downtown. Mr. Creamer noted that it is most likely a juvenile bear who has become misplaced from his family unit, and they are working to capture to relocate. Commissioner Amison noted that we need to encourage as many as qualify for this license to apply. This year sets the number for the future. We need to promote and get the word out, so that we can set the benchmark going forward.

#### **Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

#### **Department Directors Reports**

##### **3. Jennifer Daniels -- Emergency Management**

Letter of Support for Gary Sinise Foundation Grant

**On a motion by Commissioner Amison, seconded by Commissioner Croom, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board authorized a letter of support for the Gary Sinise Foundation Grant. Motion carried 5-0.**

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

1. On November 12th, 2025, the TDC Board voted to recommend approval of a request from the City of Apalachicola / History Culture & Arts Building for \$23,463.20 from the Museum Infrastructure Grant Program for Construction of ADA Compliant Restrooms in the museum.

**On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Sanders, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the request from the City of Apalachicola/History Culture & Arts Building for \$23,463.20 from the Museum Infrastructure Grant Program for Construction of ADA Compliant Restrooms in the museum. Motion carried 5-0.**

##### **5. Steve Kirschenbaum – Interim Airport Manager**

Mr. Kirschenbaum noted that he had a written report that was not included in the package. It was determined that it was included in the package online. The Board continued with the action item.

1. We are facing a deadline for legislative member appropriations and Senate 2026-2027 appropriations Nov 21st deadline. After the Airshow I will assist Bill Williams Team Franklin, with AOED, Avcon's assistance and Fiscal manager review to submit by the due date to move more funds into the proposed revenue producing hangar

complex.

Mrs. Griffith noted that sometimes there is an internal deadline with Shoaf and Simon's office. She noted that 11/18 was the deadline. Mrs. Griffith noted that she feels we have missed the deadline on this, but we could see if they would accept it. She noted that would be a tight timeline because she nor Tracy Buzbee have reviewed. Chairman Jones asked what the actual ask is. Mr. Kirschenbaum said the ask is \$2.5 million. Commissioner Amison noted this is the request that George has been working on. Commissioner Amison noted that given the fact that George has some exhausted so much energy into this, I would like to make a motion that we give it a shot. **Commissioner Amison made a motion to submit, seconded by Commissioner Croom.** Commissioner Ward noted that this was technically on our agenda, but should we call for public comments. Attorney Shuler noted that would be in agreement with past practice. Chairman Jones called for public comments and there were none. **Motion carried 5-0.**

Mr. Kirshenbaum noted that Mrs. Griffith could kill the insurance on the fuel farms. He noted that the person who took it away saved us \$150k by removing it. Mrs. Griffith noted that when the form is signed, please send it to her and she will remove the insurance. Mr. Kirschenbaum gave an overview of the airshow. He noted that without Mr. Phil Shelly and Mr. Cliff Butler this event could have not happened. He noted that we will be a little bit profitable. Mr. Butler noted that this was the most detailed plan he has ever been involved in. Asked the Board and public to let him know any comments they may have. Mr. Shelly noted that overall, it was incredible. He noted that if you look along the gulf coast, this is the only airport with this many runways within a few hundred miles. He noted that it has definitely grown the awareness. Commissioner Ward noted that we had a car registered that came all the way from Ocala. Commissioner Croom noted that he has written and read hundreds of operation plans and he was impressed with this one. He noted that the volunteers were phenomenal. Commissioner Ward noted that there were a lot of issues with people's internet. I do not know if there is something we can do next year. Mr. Moron noted that we can use Starlink. Commissioner Sanders inquired as to how many people attended. Mr. Kirshenbaum noted that he believes it was about 4,000. Commissioner Amison thanked everyone.

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

### **6. Invitation to Bid: DUNE CONSTRUCTION AND VEGETATION PROJECTS**

#### **BID RESPONSES**

##### **1. Bid Opening: RESTORE Dune Construction & Vegetation Project**

Today we are opening bid responses for the RESTORE Dune Construction and Vegetation Project at two county beach park locations:

Site 1. The Carrabelle Beach Park project includes the placement of approximately 1,800 cy of beach compatible sand along 800 ft of park shorefront, the installation of approximately 14,500 native dune plants on the constructed dune, installation of roughly 620 ft of Moni-Mat at eight beach accesses, and the installation of 1,240 ft of post and rope.

Site 2. The SGI Lighthouse Park project includes the placement of approximately 1,250 cy of beach compatible sand along 450 ft of park shorefront, the installation of approximately 10,500 native dune plants on the constructed dune, installation of 82 coastal trees and shrubs, and installation of approximately 1,620 ft of post and rope.

A mandatory, advertised pre-bid meeting was held for this project with 14 contractors in attendance: WestWind Contracting, Earthbalance, PowerHouse ICF, Dickerson Infrastructure, C.W. Roberts Contracting, Duggar Excavating, Blueterra, HG Harders, JWTC, Greenupind, North Florida Construction, Monolith, T&H, and Davidson Construction. Responses will not be accepted from contractors who did not attend the mandatory pre-bid meeting. Board action to release the bids to the project's engineers MRD & Associates/Coastal Protection Engineering for their review and recommendation.

1. The Carrabelle Beach Park project includes the placement of approximately 1,800 cy of beach compatible sand along 800 ft of park shorefront, the installation of approximately 14,500 native dune plants on the constructed dune, installation of roughly 620 ft of Mobi-Mat at eight beach accesses, and installation of 1,240 ft of post and rope.

2. The Lighthouse Park project includes the placement of approximately 1,250 cy of beach compatible sand along 450 ft of park shorefront, the installation of approximately 10,500 native dune plants on the constructed

dune, installation of 82 coastal trees and shrubs, and installation of approximately 1,620 ft of post and rope.

There was one bid submitted by T&H Construction from Eastpoint, FL in the amount of \$423,088. **On a motion by Commissioner Sanders, seconded by Commissioner Ward, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board authorized staff to release the bid packet to MRD & Associates for review and recommendation.** Commissioner Ward asked do we have to have three bids. Mrs. Griffith noted this is funded by the US Treasury RESTORE so one should be acceptable. **Motion carried 5-0.**

#### **7. Notice to Receive Sealed Bids: PATTON DRIVE CIGP FPID NO. 449878-1-34-01**

Bid Opening: CIGP Patton Drive Construction

This second construction bid opening is for the widening and resurfacing of approximately .74 miles of Patton Drive from Island Drive (SR 300) to U.S. Highway 98. Other work includes necessary drainage improvements, upgraded signage, pavement markings, and safety improvements. Board action to release the bids to the project's engineers Dewberry & Associates for their review and recommendation. The project is the widening and resurfacing of Patton Drive for approximately 0.74 miles from Island Drive (SR 300) to U.S. Highway 98. Other work to include necessary drainage improvements, upgraded signage and pavement markings and safety improvements.

Mrs. Griffith noted that Pigott submitted their bid today, because they received the original notice to bid which had a due date of today. Attorney Shuler noted that we have received late bids before, and he believed this would be acceptable.

**On a motion by Commissioner Amison, seconded by Commissioner Ward to accept the recommendation to receive the late bid from Pigott and include in this bid opening. Motion carried 5-0.**

1. GULF COAST UTILITY CONTRACTORS \$797,771.50 bid bond included
2. PIGOTT ASPHALT AND SITEWORK LLC \$589,450.68 bid bond included
3. AMERICAN SAND AND ASPHALT PAVING \$729,778.17 bid bond included
4. ROBERTS AND ROBERTS INC \$574,201.18 bid bond included

**On a motion by Commissioner Ward , seconded by Commissioner Amison, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board accepted the bids as received above and authorized staff to release them to Dewberry for review and recommendation. Motion carried 5-0.**

#### **8. Request for Proposals: Civil Engineering Services**

**RFP Response Opening: CIGP Patton Drive CEI Services**

Also opening today are responses to the request for proposals for the construction, engineering, and inspection services to be performed concurrently with the construction activities bid above. Board action to release the bids to the review committee (Planner Bree Robinson, Grants Coordinator Assistant Kimberly Raffield, and County Coordinator Michael Moron) for their ranking and recommendation.

The Franklin County Board of County Commissioners is seeking civil engineering services relating to the construction engineering and inspection (CEI) for the widening and resurfacing improvements of Patton Drive for approximately 0.74 miles from Island Drive (SR 300) to U.S. Highway 98. Other work to include necessary drainage improvements, upgraded signage and pavement markings and safety improvements. Consideration will be given to only those firms that are qualified pursuant to law and that have been prequalified by FDOT to perform the indicated types of work.

1. NORTH FLORIDA PROFESSIONAL SERVICES INC
2. SOUTHEASTERN CONSULTING ENGINEERS INC
3. INOVIA CONSULTING GROUP
4. AECOM TECHNICAL SERVICES
5. GAI CONSULTANTS' INC
6. KENT SMITH GROUP

**On a motion by Commissioner Amison, seconded by Commissioner Ward, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board accepted the proposals and authorized staff to release them to the review committee (Bree Robinson, Kimberly Raffied and Michael Moron) for review and recommendation. Motion carried 5-0.**

## **County Staff & Attorney Reports**

### **9. Erin Griffith – Fiscal Manager/Grants Coordinator**

Mrs. Griffith pulled 7 to address separately. Commissioner Amison pulled 5 address separately.

**On a motion by Commissioner Croom, seconded by Commissioner Amison, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved items 1-4 and 6. Motion carried 5-0.**

The Board moved to item 5 at this time.

**Commissioner Amison made a motion to approve.** He noted that he only wanted to have the item read into the record for the public's benefit. **Seconded by Commissioner Croom.** Chairman Jones inquired as to if there will be any remediation of the other ponds. Mrs. Griffith noted that they will take the existing ponds to their initial compacity and slopes. Commissioner Ward noted that they are digging the ponds deeper to allow for additional compacity. **Motion carried 5-0.**

The Board moved to item 7 at this time.

Commissioner Amison noted that we just tried to repair the old one. Mrs. Griffith noted that we did try to repair, but she did not know the exact cost of that repair.

**On a motion by Commissioner Croom, seconded by Commissioner Sanders, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the Landfill Compactor Emergency Replacement in the amount of \$77,818.40. Motion carried 5-0.**

The Board moved to item 8 at this time.

**On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Sanders, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the attached task order with Dewberry Engineers to be paid by District 3's paving funds. Motion carried 5-0.**

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **1. Board Action: Budget Resolutions 2024/2025**

Attached are resolutions for the adoption of unanticipated revenues as part of the end-of-the-fiscal year bookkeeping, these revenues were not included in your original adopted 2024/2025 budget because they were unanticipated at the time of budget adoption. Florida Statute 129 allows a county 60 days after the end of a fiscal year to incorporate unanticipated revenues into the prior year's budget. At the last meeting, the BOCC adopted budget resolutions 1 through 8. The budget resolutions below are the final resolutions for fiscal year 2024/2025.

Resolution #9 is for \$52,000 of federal LATCF program revenues relative to park improvements. Resolution #10 is for \$105,000 in state grant revenues received for the Airport Runway Extension Feasibility Study. Resolution #11 is for \$358,891 in state grant revenues received for the Airport Hangar Roof Upgrade Project. The 12<sup>th</sup> resolution is for \$600,000 in state grant revenues received for the Lanark EMS Building Project. The 13<sup>th</sup> resolution is for \$527,910 in revenues related to the rolling dump truck lease-purchase program for the Road Department. The 14<sup>th</sup> resolution is for \$353,900 in state shared revenues for various operating expenditures. The 15<sup>th</sup> resolution is for \$1,985 in state grant revenues for the mosquito control program. The 16<sup>th</sup> resolution is for \$775,150 in loan proceeds for equipment financed for the departments during the year. The 17<sup>th</sup> resolution is for \$128,821 in state and federal FEMA funds for disaster response efforts. Board action to adopt the attached budget resolutions.

### **2. Board Action: CIGP 6<sup>th</sup> Street Grant Award Agreement**

Attached is the grant award agreement for the CIGP 6<sup>th</sup> Street Widening and Resurfacing Project. This project was applied for last year and was funded earlier than anticipated. This \$261,697 will cover design and construction to widen and resurface 6<sup>th</sup> Street in Eastpoint from US Highway 98 to Avenue A. Board action to approve and authorize the Chairman's signature on the attached grant award agreement and resolution of authorization.

### **3. Board Action: Lanark EMS Change Orders**

As the Lanark EMS project is nearing completion, the county received the following change orders 1-5 totaling \$15,222.70 for minor project design/material changes during the construction process. Contractor OliverSperry has submitted an additional change order #6 for \$127,734.15. This change order would provide and install an emergency

backup generator which would power the entire building during extended outages from natural disasters or other inclement weather events. Should the Board decide to move forward with this change order, it will take approximately eight weeks or more for the generator to arrive. Completion of this change order can occur after EMS moves into the facility and will not delay the opening date for the station. Change orders for this project are funded by the Health Care Trust Fund. A) Board action to approve change orders 1-5 during the construction process. B) Board action to approve change order 6 for the backup generator.

4. Board Action: Lanark EMS Helipad

As part of setting up for the Lanark EMS Station, Commissioner Sanders has requested a helipad for the site. Dewberry Engineers have submitted the attached \$7,500 task order to assist with civil site engineering and permitting for a new concrete helipad pending wetland delineation. Board action to approve and authorize the Chairman to sign the attached task order to be paid by the Health Care Trust Fund.

5. Board Action: RESTORE SGI Storm Water Project Change Order #2

Unfortunately, the construction of the third retention pond to expand capacity for the SGI storm water project ended up removing a good portion of the landscaping at the 'Y' area where Franklin Boulevard Splits. The 'Y' landscaping was part of an FDOT grant project several years ago. The attached \$36,627.50 change order #2 will include replacing and relocating landscaping and irrigation along the perimeter of the pond areas to put back landscaping and plants. Board action to approve and authorize the Chairman to sign the attached change order pending review and approval by the US Treasury's RESTORE program.

6. Board Action: Armory Convention Center Project Change Order #2

Architects Gilchrist, Ross and Crowe have submitted the attached change order #2 in the amount of \$17,996.62 for the Fort Coombs Armory Project to address some additional areas of rot repair and relocation of Air Conditioning lines. Board action to approve and authorize the Chairman to sign the attached change order #2 for the Fort Coombs Armory Convention Center Project.

7. Board Action: Landfill Compactor Emergency Replacement

Landfill Director Davis has reported that the existing transfer station compactor at the landfill has started to fail. Mr. Davis has submitted the attached \$77,818.40 quote based upon Sourcewell Contract Pricing for consideration. Unfortunately, the transfer station will be inoperable for 3-4 weeks during the installation process, but a planned shutdown is more manageable than one caused by a breakdown. There may be some repairs needed to the concrete pad once the existing compactor is removed, but the condition of the pad will not be known until then. Funding for this purchase will come from the Landfill Tipping Fee Fund. My hopes are to pay for the equipment outright, but it may be necessary to secure financing for the project depending upon revenues depending upon the impact of the shutdown on the budgeted revenues for the fund. Board action to approve issuance of a purchase order.

8. Board Action: Sylvester Williams Park Parking Area – District 3 Road Paving Task Order

After consultation with NWFWM, engineers have determined that the desired parking area paving will require additional stormwater permitting at Sylvester Williams Park. The attached \$6,400 proposal from Dewberry Engineers will cover the costs for the additional sub-consultant services for survey and geotechnical investigation to satisfy stormwater requirements. Board action to approve the attached task order with Dewberry Engineers to be paid by District 3's paving funds.

9. Board Information: Miscellaneous Project Updates

- Lanark EMS Station-final walk-through is scheduled for today at 1:00, appliances will be delivered on Friday.
- RESTORE County Wide Dune Vegetation Project-vendor Earthbalance planted segments of St. George Island, Alligator Point and Bald Point, planting project is now complete. Earthbalance planted approximately 170,170 sea oats, 21,270 silver sea oxeye daisy, and 21,270 beach morning glory.
- Apalachicola Health Department Siding Project- contractor is working on final punch list
- SGI Multi Use Path- resurfacing 3<sup>rd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> to begin within the week after Thanksgiving
- RESTORE SGI Storm Water – next two weeks anticipated to work on area around BJ's Pizza and Mango Mikes on West Pine and 1<sup>st</sup> Street
- Received permit for 8<sup>th</sup> Street West Dune Walkover-permit attached.

Commissioner Sanders inquired about an open house for the Lanark Village/Carrabelle. Mrs. Griffith noted that she will give them the green light to move in. Commissioner Ward inquired to the current building they are in. Mrs.

Griffith noted that may be Weems. Chairman Jones asked staff to update the Board when they find out. Chairman Jones gave the award letter to Erin for the strategy TriRivers Waterway they want us to become a member of their organization. I want to add this to the next agenda for discussion possible action. Commissioner Amison asked with the island stormwater repair, is this all state funded? No, it is RESTORE. Commissioner Amison noted that he wanted to talk about this publicly, there is no right time to do this type of project. We do have spring break coming, this is the best window that we could use. Encourage everyone to be patient, there is never a good time to do road construction. This is our slowest period of time. Chairman Jones noted that as the commissioner of this district for nine years he has heard there is never any investment in their community. There is over six million dollars of investment going into their community. He noted that we have been working on this project for five or so years. There were delays from Covid, then there were asks from business owners to delay. Chairman Joines noted that part of what is in the TDC plan, is going to allow us to do some road construction in that area. Part of that is included in the spending plan update. When we get through, it will all be done from third to third. Commissioner Ward noted that the new red light is going up, but it is not going to be in service anytime soon. Chairman Jones noted that he believes it will be active on January 1<sup>st</sup>. Commissioner Amison noted that the light has been a long time coming. Commissioner Croom concurred noting there have been multiple accidents. Commissioner Amison noted the culvert replacement on the east end of the county. They are going to pave all the way from the Apalachicola bridge to the Carrabelle bridge. He noted that they have to get the infrastructure done before the resurfacing. Commissioner Sanders noted that Hwy 67 is paved all the way through Carrabelle to the Liberty County line.

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

##### **1. Action Item: Letter of Support**

Ms. Cassidy Manzonelli, FWC's Division of Habitat and Species Conservation, is "developing a new living shoreline project, in partnership with the NERR, with a goal to use nature-based solutions to protect the St. George Causeway Island Critical Wildlife Area. The project will be called "St. George Causeway Living Shoreline". I am working with the Causeway working group at ANERR, to applying for internal FWC funding to kickstart the engineering and design for this project. The hope for this phase of the project is to get feasibility and a 10% design, while getting a high priority area (area 4) to a higher level of design. I have attached a map provided to me from the working group, so you can see area 4. Ms. Manzonelli is requesting a letter of support to assist with the request for funding. A draft letter of support along with the map is attached. Board action to authorize the Chairman's signature on the letter of support.

**On a motion by Commissioner Ward contingent upon Attorney Shuler's review, 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 contingent upon Attorney Shuler's review. Motion carried 5-0.**

##### **2. Informational Item: Triumph Meeting**

The next Triumph Board meeting will be on Monday, December 15<sup>th</sup>, at 11:30 a.m. (ET) in the Holley Academic Center at the Florida State University Panama City Campus.

##### **3. Informational Item: Duke Energy Rate Reduction**

Below is information from Mr. Scott Dixon regarding a Duke Energy rate reduction. The Florida Public Service Commissioner approved Duke Energy Florida's request to lower customer bills beginning in March 2026. As a result, residential customers can anticipate an approximately \$44 decrease for every 1,000 kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity they use when compared to February 2026. Commercial and industrial customers can also expect to see lower bills in March 2026, with decreases ranging from 9.6% to 15.8% when compared to February 2026, though the specific impact will vary depending on several factors. This considerable bill reduction is largely due to the removal of the storm cost recovery charge associated with Duke Energy Florida's response to hurricanes Debby, Helene, and Milton at the end of February 2026. In January and February 2026 (prior to the removal of the storm cost recovery charge), bills will temporarily increase for \$7.54 for typical residential customers using 1,000 kWh of electricity, and commercial and industrial customers' bills will increase between 4.3% and 8.2% during those two months, when compared to December 2025. Duke Energy Florida remains committed to supporting customers with flexible payment plans, tools to help manage energy use and various assistance programs. More information can be found at [duke-energy.com/HereToHelp](https://duke-energy.com/HereToHelp) and [duke-energy.com/SeasonalSavings](https://duke-energy.com/SeasonalSavings).

##### **4. Informational Item: Upcoming Meeting Dates**

- The Planning and Zoning meeting is scheduled for this afternoon at 5:35 p.m.
- The Airport Operations Economic Development Board meeting will be on Wednesday, November 19<sup>th</sup> at

9:30 a.m.

- The Weems Board of Directors regular meeting will be on Tuesday, November 20<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m.
- Your December regular meetings are scheduled for Wednesday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> and Wednesday, December 17<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m.

Chairman Jones requested that each of constitutional offices submit a written holiday calendar. Chairman Jones noted that he is fine with whatever calendar each office chooses, however, it should be posted on an annual basis.

Mr. Moron noted that SHIP payments

Thanked the Sheriff for paying for the shoes for the boys of the basketball team.

Commissioner Croom inquired about Air Methods. Are we waiting on them to come back to the Board? Commissioner Amison noted that he had mentioned to them after the air show that he would like to have the discussion with the Board. The Board consensus was to move forward with this discussion.

Commissioner Ward noted that she wants our code enforcement software to be top priority, I want this to move forward. We need to get the kinks worked out, and I want to circle back. Maybe let's get together for a meeting, I know we have a policy, but I want us all on the same page. Mr. Moron noted that he had the same conversation with the Chairman. Chairman Jones recommended using the Cloud Permit to clear all of the old cases and work on a new software for new cases as they come in. If not, we would have to manually move the cases. Mr. Moron noted that he needs from Commissioner Ward's input as to what the public looks for in a website. The Board discussed state land donation for firing range.

## 11. Michael Shuler – County Attorney

Action Items:

### 1. Possible Public Safety/Public Nuisance Abatement Actions

Staff has brought to my attention three structures that may be so severely damaged that they constitute a public safety hazard or public nuisance that require abatement in the interests of the public's health, safety and welfare. Abatement may or may not include demolition of one or more, or all, of the three structures depending upon the conclusion and recommendations of the evaluation reports. Abatement may only require repairs to resolve any public safety hazard or public nuisance.

I am requesting authorization to retain consultants to provide the county with an evaluation of the three structures and a recommendation on how to proceed, including, but not limited to, whether the structures should be demolished or whether they can be repaired and made safe and sound.

The structures are located at: 2340 Hwy 98, Carrabelle; 1271 Alligator Dr, Alligator Point; 1009 W. Pine, St. George Island.

Board Action: Discussion and possible approval to proceed as described above.

Chairman Jones inquired what happens if you have a home that is beyond 50% repairable. Do we have to pay an engineer to determine this? Commissioner Ward noted that she knows our building official does not want to take it upon himself, but she does not want us to have to pay an engineer each time. Commissioner Amison asked if we could direct our building official to go out and if it is more than 50% ask him to get an engineer to determine if it needs to be demoed? Attorney Shuler noted that he needs an expert's opinion in the event it is taken for litigation. We have to provide information to the courts. All I am suggesting is to do the due diligence on these three structures. Commissioner Sanders noted that she does not have any problem with due diligence. **On a motion to approve by Commissioner Sanders, seconded by Commissioner Amison, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved proceeding as described above. Motion carried 5-0.**

### 2. Resolution Concerning Dredging on the Apalachicola River

On November 3<sup>rd</sup>, the Board directed me to review a resolution concerning dredging and dredge spoil on the Apalachicola River. I recommend that the Board consider the following draft amendments I made to the resolution such that it, in sum, states that Franklin County supports dredging on the Apalachicola River to re-establish navigation and prefers that the dredge spoil be deposited on an upland area where local governments can, as they deem appropriate, access, and take the spoil and use it for public purposes. Board Action: Discussion of the draft



amendment to the resolution and possible approval of same as submitted or as amended by the Board.

**On a motion by Commissioner Amison, seconded by Commissioner Croom.** Chairman Jones asked Mrs. Griffith if we are still holding the check for this group. Mrs. Griffith noted that we can hold it, I did prepare the check on today's bill run. Are we okay to mail it? Chairman Jones noted that I had asked Mrs. Griffith to hold on to the check until we approved this resolution. I just wanted to make the Board aware that if we approve this resolution today, we will be mailing the check. Commissioner Ward noted that she still thinks that they need to provide us with additional information. Chairman Jones asked Mr. Moron to have a discussion with the repair and stakeholder council, what they are doing, if there is a council and what can we do to have a seat at the table? If they are not having regular meetings, what are we funding? Mrs. Griffith asked if the Board wanted to hold the check at this point. Yes. **Motion carried 5-0** (resolution). Mr. Jim from the organization attended the meeting via Zoom. Your money goes to support the science. We have to determine how much water do we need. It is a much more difficult question for Florida. A lot of what we have been doing is trying to answer this question. Mr. Jim noted that one of the most difficult things he has had within the past year, is trying to maintain a full board and to hold meetings. We plan to meet in person during the spring. We have been holding calls every other week, I will make sure you all get the information for those calls. If you do not want to be a part of it, that is your decision. I think we speak louder with more counties, versus one. Chairman Jones noted that he does not think we are questioning whether or not we want to be a part, but we have been paying membership fees for years, and there has not been anything done. Mr. Jim noted that he was asked about a year and half ago to be on the board and then appointed as chairman. Commissioner Amison noted that we as a commission voted for Commissioner Ward to be a member, and I think the issue is me as a member of the partner, they are addressing me. I think we need to clarify that Commissioner Ward is the member and add her in to the emails. Chairman Jones noted that he is fully confident in Commissioner Ward on this board, and he is okay with sending the check on. The Board concurred with this.

#### Information/Possible Discussion Items

##### 3. Duke Energy Land Swap Update

Same report: I followed up with Duke Energy concerning the updated information from Dewberry Engineering, but I have not received a response approving the construction of a road underneath the transmission tower. Duke Energy's approval of the entry road onto the property proposed to be transferred to Franklin County in the land swap is a material condition of the land swap and must be approved before the land swap occurs.

##### 4. Sylvester Williams Park Title Opinion

I have provided Ms. Bree Robinson with a title opinion letter for submission to DEP for park improvements at Sylvester Williams Park.

Note: a small part of the park in the SW corner is currently titled in the City of Apalachicola Housing Authority. The city is aware of this and is working to transfer title back the City of Apalachicola. However, the improvements mentioned above are all in the part of the park owned by the city.

##### 5. Tourist Development Tax ("TDT")

Presently, Franklin County collects three cents for its TDT. In 2004, Franklin County adopted ordinance 2004-45 levying a two cent TDT. In 2021, Franklin County adopted ordinance 2021-06 levying an additional one cent TDT pursuant to Fla. Stat. 125.0104(3)(d).

#### 11:00 a.m. (ET) Public Hearings --Time Certain

##### 12. 11:00 a.m. (ET) Tourist Development Spending Plan

AN ORDINANCE APPROVING A PLAN FOR TOURIST DEVELOPMENT IN FRANKLIN COUNTY, FLORIDA; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; RESCINDING ALL ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT THEREWITH; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Attorney Shuler noted that he came to his attention yesterday afternoon that the proposed ordinance and notice of intent was not on file at the clerk's office. He asked the Board to consider tabling this matter to a date/time certain and suggested 11 a.m. on December 17<sup>th</sup>.

**On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Croom, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board tabled the hearing on the Tourist Development Spending Plan to December 17<sup>th</sup> at 11 a.m. Motion carried 5-0.**

**Commissioners' Comments**

Commissioner Croom noted that when he held his meeting with the department heads, they suggested holding some type of uniform training to boost morale. Every now and then you have to have a training to get you on track. This would provide interaction amongst the multiple workers. Commissioner Sanders suggested a county employee of the month. Chairman Jones noted that he would like to see a county wide picnic once a year.

**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.