

**FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR MEETING  
COURTHOUSE ANNEX, COMMISSION MEETING ROOM  
FEBRUARY 4, 2026  
9:00 AM  
MINUTES**

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

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

**Call to Order**

Chairman Jones called the meeting to order.

**Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance**

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

**Approval of the Agenda**

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

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

**1. Approval of Minutes**

FCBCC Public Hearing 12/2/2025

FCBCC Public Hearing 7/25/2025

FCBCC Regular Meeting 1/7/2026

FCBCC Regular Meeting 12/3/2025

FCBCC Special Meeting 10/22/2025

FCBCC Workshop 10/26/2023

FCBCC Workshop 10/28/2025

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

**2. County Bill List for Payment**

**On a motion by Commissioner Amison, seconded by Commissioner Croom, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the County Bill List for Payment. Motion carried 5-0.**

**Public Comments**

My name is Al Stone. I live on St George Island, and I have a have a proposition. Many times, here at this diocese, we talk about problems and we are reacting. This is proactive, something I have asked you to do many times, to be proactive. But in 1827 we went from being West Point on this side of the bay to Apalachicola. It used to be called West Point, so unusual that most people do not know that. But then, 194 years ago, almost to the day, February 8, we became Franklin County, which is amazing. But in that time, in 1831 a logo was created that still hangs on many of the welcome signs as you come into our community. One of the things that you will notice there is a cross. What I am proposing to you today is that in 38 days, in a place called the Kendrick Boardwalk, Dwarf Cypress inside of Tate's Hell, that communion would take place? Why? for the healing of our community, not only here in Franklin County and unity. You say, well, you do not need our permission, though? I've asked this question, and I'll go to that many times. Why are you asking for permission? Any good deed does not go unpunished in our county. May I say that again, any good deed does not go unpunished. In our county, I am raising my head to do a good deed, and I am sure I will be punished for it. I am asking for your support in that process. Yes, we need a permit. That permit will have to take place in the next 38 days. I am just asking that you would be supportive to such a thing as taking communion on Good Friday, April the 3rd, which would take place between 7:03 and 8:09 am. If we do not get the permit, as long as we don't have 75 people at one place at one time, we're okay within that permit. I have not asked the sheriff's department for any help. We need a type A permit in the NEPA, the National Environmental Policy people are the

only people that I am having a stone wall with. But the last person I spoke to on this cell phone in my truck outside this door lives inside the beltway. His name is Scott Schultz. He is the chief of the US Department of Agriculture. He has got 33,000 employees. I hope I have his permission. He said, why do you need such permissions at the top, because there are always the devils in the details. I am just asking you to join me. If you so choose. If you do not, that is okay, but that you would if it becomes an obstacle, someone tries to stop us from doing it, please just be supportive. That is all I am asking today, no resolution, no vote, anything like that. But on, Lord willing, April the third, at sunrise in Tate's hell, we will take you in the Lord's supper for the benefit of our county, and hopefully, whether you are left or right, up, or down, whatever you choose, you will come and join us on that day. Any questions, commissioners? Commissioner Sanders speaking, I got something I want to say here. This is the United States of America, we can take him anywhere we want in your district. Mr. Stone speaking, well, she may want to make a resolution to that. I agree with that. Commissioner Sanders speaking, that is what I am saying in this day and time, we may have had a lot of things go wrong in this country, but one thing I know is you can take communion when you feel the need. Mr. Stone speaking, I appreciate, I appreciate you being vocal about that. Commissioner Sanders speaking, I appreciate other than, I do not see nobody you need to ask other than the God Almighty up above and forestry. Mr. Stone speaking, I think he was the one that initiated the idea who God was. He was the first one to do reconciliation. It was his reconciliation for community unity that caused Good Friday. So, we are just remembering that. But thank you Ms. Cheryl, any other questions? Chairman Jones speaking, no, I will tell I was supposed to send everybody a copy of that video last night of what he was talking about, and I was at basketball game and I forgot to do it, but I will send it out. Mr. Stone speaking, yeah, he will share the video. There will hopefully be a Facebook page, simply explaining that. If you have any questions, please reach out to me. I may share again right before that happens in 38 days, but thank you all for what y'all do, and I really mean that. Thank you all for what y'all do, thank you for our county. We live in a blessed place.

Chairman Jones noted there were no action items on Mr. Nabors, Mr. Davis, Mrs. Daniels, Mr. Polous, Ms. Roundtree, or Mr. Osteen's reports. feel free to contact them, but there were no action items in their reports. Or do you want to discuss any of the information they had before we move on? Commissioner Ward speaking, I had something, but I am going to talk to Howard or Virginia after the meeting. But it had to do with the number of inmates that they did not receive. It seemed like they have been getting a lot here lately. Yes, and all of a sudden it dropped like nobody's business. No holidays. So, I was just curious as to why that was, but I will ask. I will get with them after the meeting. Chairman Jones speaking do not be surprised if there was an issue, so they locked it down. But yeah, I did notice I have been 16 to the day. It has been a while since we have had that. Mean, yeah, it has been a good while, thankful for the state working with the Department of Corrections, working with Franklin County in that regard.

## **Department Directors Reports**

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

No action items.

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

No action items.

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

No action items.

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

No action items.

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

No action items.

### **8. James Osteen -- EMS Director**

No action items.

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

Mr. Kirschenbaum speaking, Erin looked at it and said, it looks fine. And also, the airport board looked at it and said, it looks fine and it is ready to go in. Secretary Kelly and Deputy Secretary Justin were in communication with me, and they said the 2.5 million is a sweet spot. Do not, do not go a lot crazier than that, and hopefully something good will come of this. So, I am asking permission to submit the two have AVCON who submits a lot of grants for the airport to submit that grant, and hopefully, in the next month or two, we can get 2.5 million towards the hanger project, which will be an income producing project for the airport.

Chairman Jones speaking, so let me ask you a question before we get started here. Is this a voted-on recommendation by the AOED board? Mr. Kirschenbaum speaking, yes, it is. They voted. Chairman Jones speaking, what was the vote? Mr. Kirschenbaum speaking, unanimous? Chairman Jones speaking, okay, I just want to make sure everything we are doing, so having the benefit of serving the county on some of our volunteer boards that recommend to this board they need to be voting on, not just having a discussion about them. Mr. Kirschenbaum speaking, no. Chairman Jones speaking, so the way you were presented a minute ago was just they were aware of it, but we know for sure, looking at what you have. Mr. Kirschenbaum speaking, I will make sure, I say voted on or not. Yes, it was voted on, unanimous and they want to see this happen. Chairman Jones speaking, all right, I just want to make sure. Sorry, I just want to make sure our volunteer boards know that they are important and not trying to be bypassed. I am not talking about just AOED, I am talking about. Mr. Kirschenbaum speaking, and sometimes I may come to this board and I may differ in opinion from what they say, but this was unanimous. Chairman Jones speaking, alright, so any questions commissioners? When is this due? Is the cycle open right now? Mr. Kirschenbaum speaking, the job growth grant is just ongoing. And I called, there's still money there and we will definitely be considered. Commissioner Ward speaking, is there, Mr. Chairman, there is no match or anything for this, how grants work? Is there a match to this, or is it just straight money?

Mr. Kirschenbaum speaking, actually, there is a match but I used the 2.3 million that the FDOT already has on the table for the project, so that means we will have, if we get this grant, we'll have 4.8 million towards the project, and also, we still have the 2.5 million appropriation with the House and the Senate and the state still waiting on that. So, the match was FDOT.

**Action Items:**

1. A recommendation for the County to file the Florida Commerce Job Growth Grant for 2.5 million dollars towards the hangar complex and terminal building. Prepared by Avcon & Airport Manager, reviewed by AOED and County's Fiscal Manager for submission. (attached).

**On a motion by Commissioner Amison, seconded by Commissioner Croom, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the County to file the Florida Commerce Job Growth Grant. Motion carried 5-0.**

2. A recommendation to execute a license agreement to Phil Shelley to lease the former Burgher hangar at the airport for fair market value. (attached)(If approved he will be donating temporary space to the Airport Manager)

Mr. Kirschenbaum speaking, thank you, commissioners. I appreciate that the hanger, next action item is the hanger that just got turned back to the town on the early termination lease. The I call it the burger hanger, but it is actually hangar 13 on a master plan. We have somebody who is willing to go in there immediately, and what he is willing to do at fair market value. And I gave you a copy of the sheet because I called surrounding airports. We were previously getting over, a little over \$100 a month on a land lease. On that property to start, we will get \$1,100 a month. He wants a five-year lease, and he is going to give me the back 20 feet of the hanger to use for an office, because I have been, I had to get all my stuff out of the Haney hanger, because they are moving forward over there, but it is going to be a temporary office, and I am hoping in a few months I'll be out of there. At that point, the lease payment goes up to \$1,500 a month. The surrounding airports, when I called all the surrounding general aviation airports, they are all getting between \$1.87 and two and change a square foot for storage hangers for aircraft storage hangers. On a business note, I would get five to \$8 a square foot for a huge business and a hanger like we bring in an FBO if we bring in a. Uh, MRO facility, but for straight up storage hangar for an aircraft, that is what the other airports are getting. And I think it is we have been getting about \$18,000 from the get-go. Well, I am sorry, hang on. I have it on the sheet. We will be getting \$13,200 from the get-go, and as soon as I am out of there, we will get \$18,000 a year from the from the lease payment. And Phil is an integral part of that airport, and he is a very educated consultant, and actually he is my brainchild with a lot of stuff, and he helped tremendously with the air show. And I do not think this is a good old boy lease. I think this is doing, this will be good for the airport. So, I am asking if we could execute the lease that was reviewed by the AOED. They voted in favor of moving forward with it as it sits and Attorney, Shuler, cleaned up the one paragraph of it. **On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Amison, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the license agreement to Phil Shelley to lease the former Burgher hangar at the airport for fair market value.** Commissioner Amison speaking, you mentioned commercial tenants, what would you say the rate was on commercial tenants? Mr. Kirschenbaum speaking, I am still working on the surrounding airports, but I worked on Tallahassee, which is a busy airport, if they rent to a corporate jet company that is moving jets out of a hangar, they get \$18 a square foot at Tallahassee. And I am sure, I did not hit Panama yet, but when we get to that point that we have commercial facilities built at that airport, we will be the less expensive choice for corporate aircraft, and I think it could generate a ton of

money. I would go up at this point, if we bring in, or even on a renegotiation of lease with Centric I would say we moved to \$5.75 to \$7 a square foot, but that is just me speaking right now, I think they are in about the \$2 or \$3 range. Commissioner Amison speaking, I was just curious what the rate was on commercial, because I know we got, I think, three hangars right now that are commercially rented as well under market value. But I was just. Mr. Kirshenbaum speaking, yeah, there is not anything else that we could do commercial and everything commercial is rented to Centric. Chairman Jones speaking, I just, I just have one question, Michael, is Mrs. Erin on the line? I hate to put her on the spot, but I want to know we have talked about this before. Mrs. Erin, if you can hear me, what, when we were looking at hangars before, and they keep giving us from the I think it was from not DOT, or FAA, one of them was given us issue with hangars and leases and talking about fair market value and talking about cutting off funding, did they give us any kind of dollar per square foot deal when we were having those discussions. Mrs. Griffith speaking, they did not know. We were never able to get a square footage price out of them, and that was something initially we had talked about trying to get an actual appraisal done at the airport, but we were not, also not successful. I believe Attorney Shuler had actually done a little bit of research on, you know, trying to get fair market value for rents at the airport, and he did not really find anyone either. Chairman Jones speaking, yeah, well, it might have been one of those things where they were not going to give us the answer to the quiz we were doing. Mr. Kirschenbaum speaking, yeah, Chairman, can I interrupt on that? Chairman Jones speaking, give me just a second. But anyway, I just want to make sure that that was, you know what I mean, it seems like it is on the up and up as far as way it is with other places. I just want to ask you your brains of this operation, so on the spot, you because. Mr. Kirshenbaum speaking, what I was going to say at that time when that came up, it was because we were looking to give the hanger to Haney for free, and that is why that whole fair market value thing came up. But what I plan on doing, this broad informational thing I did with surrounding airports. I am going to take this documentation and go back to the FAA and FDOT, and get something written up that says we are okay, and the big thing I want to do is land leases as well, but we are well within the realm of all the surrounding airports, and with our T hangars were actually higher than Tallahassee and higher than Panama. So, we are doing really good with T hangars, but I will bring something back. I will try my hardest by next month, executed by FDOT and FAA saying that here are the rates, and we agree with these. Chairman Jones speaking, that would be fair. Thank you. Yeah. And it was not an effort to attempt to derail it. We have already got a motion. And second here we are under discussion. I just wanted to make sure that we were not run afoul or anything, or have not going to have any unintended consequences. That is why I want to ask the question. Thank you. Any other discussion commissioners before we vote? All in favor, any opposed, that is unanimous. **Motion carried 5-0.** Mr. Kirshenbaum speaking, any other questions on my report from anybody? Chairman Jones speaking, Commissioners, you have any other questions or concerns? All right, thank you. Mr. Steve, we appreciate it. Mr. Kirschenbaum speaking, there is one thing informational I just like to bring up it got emailed to me last night Mr. Chair Beth Kirkland, who is now Beth Cicchetti from the Florida Economic Development Council I've been in touch with because I was researching the freight logistics zone and money that gulf County was getting. And I was just wondering, what was the status of that. We started talking, and I said, at some point, I said, I will bring this back to the county, and I'm not doing it now, but at some point, when the airport board reviews things and starts talking, maybe I'll come back to the county commission. But I said I would love to do a round table at the airport at some point, and she sent me this last night. Very short paragraph. Thank you so much for my call this afternoon. I appreciate you looking into hosting a group of state agencies and regional economic development leaders. She wants to do this on Friday the 20th for tour of Franklin County Airport. We are also looking for an appropriate space where approximately 10 state and regional business resource agencies and organizations can table at a small business Fair, which is available to the public. So, parking and accessibility should be a solution if you want to bring this up on your next meeting, because I kind of threw it at you, but I would like to talk to John Solomon on this, and maybe Bill Williams, and come up with some kind of a plan. But the most important part of this is Secretary Kelly is going to be part of this, and we are going to have this job growth grant on the table, and I think it would be an excellent opportunity for the county. So where do I go with this? Chairman Jones speaking, you would need to get your information and forward to Mr. Moron so he can put it on the agenda. Mr. Kirschenbaum speaking, okay. All right, that sounds wonderful. Thank you, gentlemen. Mr. Moron speaking, actually, Mr. Chairman, actually, if we if you would ask Tom and George to put it in a workshop discussion that you guys have next week. Mr. Kirschenbaum speaking, that is fabulous, yeah. All right, thank you so much.

## **Presentations/Updates/Requests**

### **10. Kim Bodine -- CareerSource Gulf Coast -- Approvals**

1. Subsequent Designation
2. Request for Extension to Provide Direct Services
3. Updates to the CareerSource Gulf Coast Regional and Local Workforce Plan a) the signature page that goes with Updates to the Regional & Local Workforce Plan

Ms. Bodine speaking, good morning. Thank you for hearing me today. I have three items that I need to bring forward for the commissioner's approval. As you know, we are under federal grants mostly related to workforce, Investment and Opportunity Act. And so, these are items that come up every two to three years. They are either required by federal law or they are required by state law or state policy. So, the first item is subsequent designation every two years. We must bring this back before our local elected officials, and we have to make a few statements to you. I think you have those there about fiscal sustainability and integrity and also about performance. Our performance was very good in the past years. We have just recently gotten our newest performance, and we have exceeded or met all measures, with the exception of dislocated worker grants. And so, we meet all the reasons why you would want to go ahead and approve this. And what this ensures is that we maintain the same regional footprint that we have and continue to operate in the manner that we do. And after this, it will go to the state board and it, they approve it. It will be signed off on by the governor, and we do that every two years. I will entertain questions about that. If you have any, do you have any questions commissioners? Chairman Jones speaking, so Ms. Kim, what you are looking for this morning is it three separate motions? Ms. Bodine speaking, there are three separate items. You can take them as you choose, as long as you sign off on the approvals that we have to send up to the state, we are all good. Okay. Commissioner Ward speaking, can we, Mr. Chairman, approve all three. They are kind of the same in nature, right? Looking at them, okay.

Ms. Bodine speaking, so do you want me to move on to number two? Chairman Jones speaking, do you have any questions Commissioners, before she moves on? Go ahead. Ms. Kim let us talk about number two. Ms. Bodine speaking, number two is the request for extension to provide direct services under WIOA law. When it was first created, it was envisioned that boards would contract out for services and contract out for one stop operators and everything would be separated, although it does leave flexibility in the law for us to be provide our own direct services. With the exception of training, we cannot provide training services. Those must be facilitated through training providers or work-based training opportunities. And so, we have been providing direct services for a very long time, probably 20 years. And the reason we do it primarily is because it saves us so much money. When we have to contract with the service provider, we have to share all of the information from the state with that service provider, and then they oversee staff that provide the services. And when we cut that out, it has been a pretty good savings for us of about \$300,000 and over the last four years, we have lost half of our funding. And so, it is critical for us to be able to provide direct services. This includes working with businesses, handling students that are going through college, that with our training, that we are helping to manage their pathway, and then put that data into the state system and also working with youth. And so that is what that request is about, and I have to bring that to you also every three years and annually, we have to provide a statement to the state letting them know that we are still performing well, we are still saving money, and that is still fitting our business model. Chairman Jones speaking, all right, any questions commissioners. Ms. Kim, go ahead and let us discuss number three.

Ms. Bodine speaking, okay, for number three, this is also a requirement by federal and state law. Well, it is state policy, actually on this we write a local plan, and it is a very big plan. It is about 81 pages long. It is required under federal law, and we submit that, and it is called a four-year plan, but every two years we have to modify it. But in this case today, the reason we are modifying it is because we became our own one stop operator and in state policy, if anything significant like that, changes in your organization, you must update your plan. I believe we sent highlighted copies to show the things that we updated. So primarily our changes, you know, sort of centered around that one stop operator piece, but anything else that had changed, like our board member roster, or any policies we had changed. We also moved in Bay County from one location to two smaller locations. All those kind of changes were included in this, as required by the policy, and we need your permission to move this forward to the state for their approval. Chairman Jones speaking, all right, any questions commissioners? Seeing no questions, I would entertain a motion. **On a motion by Commissioner Ward , seconded by Commissioner Sanders and Commissioner Croom, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved items 1, 2 and 3. Motion carried 5-0.** Chairman Jones speaking, Ms. Kim, thank you for everything you do. Commissioners, do you have any questions before Ms. Kim leaves the meeting? Ms. Bodine speaking, thank you so much. I appreciate all your support and thank you for approving these items today.

## **11. Sarah Beth Stewart -- Retail Strategies -- Strategic Plan Presentation**

Mr. Moron speaking, Mr. Chairman before you, as you move on to Ms. Sarah Beth, I would ask that Erin provides a little history. It has been a while since we had this presentation, and I think some of the commissioners want a little refresher as to how we all started off with Duke Energy, you know, with that grant, etc., etc.

Mrs. Griffith speaking, alright commissioners, in August of 2025 the board submitted a grant application to the Florida

Department of Commerce to assist in the development of a retail recruitment strategic plan. Economic development consultant Mary Swope connected the county with the Retail Strategies Group. Retail Strategies has worked with other small counties and municipalities in Florida to actively recruit new retailers, provide data and market outreach to support growth of existing local businesses, and actively market business development opportunities. The grant through Florida Commerce will provide 73% of the cost. For the first year, up to \$32,930 the remaining \$12,070 will be paid by the county's \$20,000 line item set aside for general economic development services. Last year, a presentation was made by Retail Strategies on a project related to the airport site, and county staff saw firsthand the economic data and outreach services which would be available, and how this program could provide insight as to where retail dollars are being spent, how much is being lost outside of the community, where the customer base is located, and how to better fill demand in that presentation. Retail Strategies uses retail data available by tracking cell phone data and visit numbers for Apalachicola Outfitters and the Dollar General and East Point, I believe, Commissioner Amison sat in on that presentation with us. The county had previously applied for funding through the Duke Energy Foundation in 2024 and we are very excited to have access to data that has not been previously available to the county. Later in my report today, you will see a request to approve the independent professional analysis for the county's first section six public facilities TDC project, that consultant has already contacted the county, requesting traffic counts and visitor numbers, which previously was indetermined and limited due to reliance upon FDOT traffic counts on various roadway segments in the off season, and rough estimates of attendance at various festivals and events, retail strategies will be able to provide the county with the supporting data to aid in documentation for these projects going forward. I will now introduce you all to Sarah Beth Stewart of Retail Strategies, for her to provide a brief presentation of their services provided and a short synopsis of the grant scope of work, which will include a tailored, market driven approach providing valuable customer data to existing local businesses and aid in the recruitment of new small businesses.

Ms. Sarah Beth Stewart speaking, good morning. Thank you so much for allowing the opportunity to see you guys this morning. I am joined with my colleague Garrett Smitherman. He is also labeled as service Stewart right now because we are using the same zoom. So, I apologize that he does not have his own name, but he is excited to join you as well. Erin, thank you so much for that introduction that we basically stole everything that I was going to say basically, but I am going to go through this presentation and talk about the partnership with Franklin County. So let me share my screen. Just give me one second. Okay, hopefully you guys can see it now. Perfect. Okay, as Erin mentioned, I am Sarah Beth Stewart with Retail Strategies. I have been with the company for going into my ninth year, and I have been working in Florida for the whole nine years. It is truly my favorite community, my favorite state. My husband and I were part time residents from 2022 to 2024 because he had a commercial construction so we were living all over the place, and so Florida really is home for me. So, a little bit about Retail Strategies. We were actually born out of a commercial real estate firm. So, our sister company does everything from major mixed-use development to property management to tenant representation. We formed our municipal consulting side because we were trying to build a pretty unique Home Depot prototype and a very rural community in Alabama, we had walked into the mayor's office and asked for some information, and he pulled out some dusty, outdated data, and that was kind of our aha moment. But there is a missing link between commercial real estate and municipalities, so we act as the extension of staff to make a proactive approach to retail development. We have worked with communities nationwide. We are trusted, and we do have a four to one client staff ratio, so we are very proud to make sure that all of our communities are served appropriately and with a great staff, which is why Garrett's on the screen with me, we are heavily involved with ICSC. The president of my company actually sits on the board of trustees. ICSC is the largest networking group of commercial real estate. So, anyone from Target to Dollar General and everyone in between is basically a member of ICSC. And so, we are very active with that organization. I have also personally spoke at the Florida League of Cities conference as well as Frida. And of course, we are very active with Duke Energy, as Erin had mentioned previously. So we are, we are definitely understanding the government realm. So, a little bit about our process, and I am going to go through each of these, but just a bird's eye view. We do start with a market analysis, and Erin really talked about some of those information that we are going to be pulling for you. The first 30 days of our partnership, we spent a lot of time studying your consumers, not just your residents, but who has the opportunity to engage with your downtown businesses to other businesses throughout the community. We are also going to do a Real Estate Assessment, and then we are going to put together a retail strategy that is very unique to Franklin County, with very specific, targeted prospects. The best part about this partnership is that this plan, this strategy, is not going to sit on the shelf. We are actually going to implement this strategy. We are going to be doing the active recruitment component of bringing in retail. And then we are going to be supporting you in different ways. We become your data concierge. So, if there is a data report requested for tourism or the airport or whatever it might be, we have access to a lot of information out there. So, we are here to just provide that support in any way that we can so let us dive into more of

that market analysis. So, this is probably how you would see your commute, or how you do see your commute, and how you might explain to someone a little bit about Franklin County. Well, here we are in the state. We have got roughly 12,000 people, but when it comes to retail and commercial real estate, they just do not really care about your mental boundaries. You care about your mental boundaries. We care about it. But retailers see communities from a different perspective. They are going to be looking at drive times, radius rings, and they want to see who the consumers within those different boundaries are, so they know for specific destination retail people are going to come in and out of a community, so they will cross those municipal boundaries. So, we are very intentional about describing a community to the right retailer. So, we put together what we call a custom retail trade area. So, I know there is a lot of data on the screen. I am going to try to walk through it. As Erin mentioned, we collect cell phone data. So, if you have a smartphone, it is tracking where you are going. It is very big brother. It is very creepy, but there is a lot of information being collected that we can then utilize to showcase different data sets. So, as we can draw a geo fence around any destination in the community to see just who is coming in and out of the area. Um, so for this specific example, we have the Dollar Generals that are on the screen. And so, we did a geo fence around this certain Dollar General, and we can see just how strong the consumers that are coming in and out of that specific Dollar General we are able to see that that trade area jumps up to a 14,000 population. So, it is even bigger than your missile boundaries, also really strong medium household income. Retailers want to know what the buying habits and spending patterns and the buying power that your consumers have most one of the other most important numbers that we do pull is that retail leakage. So that basically means the supply versus the demand within for goods and services within the community. So overall, your retail leakage in Franklin County is \$54 million that means that there are not enough amenities within Franklin County for your residents and consumers to shop local, and so that is a number that we see is leaving the community. People are going outside of your community, to the tune of \$54 million to shop. We want to retain those dollars. We may not retain all 54 million, but we do want to chip away and finding those very specific goods and services that we can keep our services local for the community. Some of the other reports that we are going to pull are just key demographic numbers, traffic counts, really understanding who those consumers are. What is the next five years look like for Franklin County? What's the next 10 years look like for Franklin County. These are just some of the basic reports we have pulled from other communities. Our psychographic analysis is also really cool. We actually have a new data provider specifically for this, and it is really interesting because it takes into account social media buying and selling. So, we are able to see what people are buying from their cell phones from Tiktok and things of that nature. So, it is really interesting to profile your community. One of my favorite reports is the peer analysis. So, we want to see based off of key demographics, like daytime population, household income, more rural, type of communities, looking at communities that look very similar to Franklin County and uncovering what retail brands have located to those communities that have not located to Franklin County, that starts a prospect list. So, if they are successful in these other communities that look very similar, then those retailers can be successful in Franklin County. So again, that starts a prospect list. We are then able to grade that prospect to say, hey, this would be an A or a B or a C, or this is not a good fit for our community. So, we are very intentional setting this data about what would be the most appropriate fit for Franklin County. Now, as I mentioned, we spend the first 30 days really honing in on data and demographics and. We can spend hours upon hours upon hours nerding out on data. There is so much information we can pull. I can tell you how much money is being spent on apples in your community or men's underwear. There is just so much information that we have access to. But truly, the driving force behind a commercial real estate transaction is the real estate as I mentioned the beginning. We were born a commercial real estate firm, so we look through that lens. So, we are going to be looking at your community from a real estate perspective. Now this is the data program that I mentioned. This is for St Cloud, Florida. I know a very different community from you guys, but each of those little green dots is sites that we have evaluated and put into our program, and then have filled out information. So, we are going to figure out the site. Does it have an easy right turn in? Does it have an easy right turn out? Is it on a hard corner? What are the parking spaces? Is it vacant land? What is the property owner wanting to do with that land? So, all these different pieces of the real estate asset are logged into our computer program. So again, this is us coming to the market, driving the marketplace, looking for real estate assets, whether it's for redevelopment, looking at land for new development, or just existing vacant space, or just maybe tracking if a retailer has an is at risk to close, we want to make sure that we're tracking that so that when the retailer does go bankrupt or whatever happens, that we can then backfill it fairly quickly. Now, Franklin County has a lot more land available, which not a ton of communities in Florida have that, but that is a huge benefit for Franklin County, but we just want to be very intentional about what that growth looks like for your community. We are not trying to make you a St Cloud. We are not trying to make you a Panama City. We just want to find really unique assets and really unique prospects for Franklin County. Again, to keep dollars local. While we are in Franklin County for our real estate analysis, we are going to host a stakeholder meeting, so of course, open to the public. This could also be for your local businesses. We really want to share that big data that we have access to and providing it to those local mom and pops. We want them to have access. So, if we

see, hey, there is a really big retail leakage in hammers, just for example, if there is a local hardware store. We want them to know. Hey, a lot of people are driving to the next county over to go get a hammer. Maybe expand your selection of hammers, and some dollars will be retained local, and your business can grow. That is just a silly example. I am sure there is not, you know, all that many hammer any case, I digress. We are also going to do a windshield tour with you guys to really see the history. We know that there is a lot of local politics and a lot of local knowledge of who owns what piece of property. You might say, hey, that person is never going to sell their property? This is the history there. We want to know that. So, we will work with you guys to understand those local dynamics, but we are also going to take it from an outsider's perspective. So, what would a retailer see if they drove through Franklin County? We are going to take that perspective to an outsider objective opinion on those real estate assets. Then we are going to formulate our retail strategy. So, this retail recruitment plan is going to be a SWOT analysis of those different corridors. We are going to be then looking at very specific properties and then putting together a prospect list. This is where we say, hey, these are the retailers that would be very sustainable in your community. Your residents want to see them, and they would not hinder any other local business. So, this strategy, again, is presented to you guys. You get, do get to have approval on those retail prospects. And this is where the rubber really meets the road, the active recruitment. So again, we are not just saying, hey, here is a list of retail prospects. Have a nice life. We are actually going to call on the retailers, brokers, and developers to see about getting them to come open their next location in Franklin County. So, I mentioned earlier Garrett Smitherman. He is my colleague. He is the portfolio director. He is also backed by Sheldon, who is our retail development coordinator, and Ashton Rosen, who is our communications coordinator, and Aaron Ashton is the guy that you and I have been talking about, has all the data. He is, he is our data guru, so any kind of request that you have for information, he's, our guy. We are also backed, of course, by our marketing team and our leadership team. And I will be remiss if I did not point out Clay Craft from the very bottom. He was actually the Florida portfolio director. Gosh, he started out Retail Strategies over 10 years ago, so he is still very active, and knows a lot about Florida. So, Florida is very lucky to have Clay also on this team. He has just got a lot of historical information and relationships in the state, and so this is where our team sits in the middle of all of the commercial real estate individuals. So, we are going to be calling on those local brokers, the commercial developers, working with community leaders, talking to the retailers and the tenant reps, and working with those property owners, whether they are local or not local, whether the lands in a trust or maybe the person does not want to sell. We will be working with all of those different individuals to make the magic happen, to get a deal done. One of the ways that we will be calling on those retailers, brokers, developers, is our ICSC. I mentioned that earlier that this is the largest networking group of commercial real estate individuals. They have several conferences throughout the country. The biggest one is ICSC Vegas every May it is the Super Bowl of all retail trade shows, and it is the craziest two and a half days. It is 15-minute incremental meetings. Last year, 2025 our team had 386 meetings. So that is a lot of people to talk to, a lot of people to connect with, and a lot of opportunities for Franklin County to get in front of some really quality retailers. Another very important conference is the retail live that is in Orlando. I think that is usually in March, so perfect timing. You guys will be represented at that conference, as well as the ICSC Orlando show, which is usually in August, July, time frame. So, and, and I think that date is incorrect. That is that should speak 2025 so at the 2025 ICSC Orlando, we did have 18 meetings. Again, that is directly for our Florida clients. And as I mentioned earlier, Lacey Beasley is on the Board of Trustees for ICSC. So, she is gaining a lot of intel from those major national retail chains, and we are able to trickle that information down. Have an inside look to what is happening in retail, and it just gives you an upper edge. Next is our reporting, because, as you know, our partnerships are only as good as what you guys get to hear. So, we utilize base camps communication portal. So as Franklin County's team grows, we they can get access to this base camp, and so they can see all of the data that we house, all of our communication anytime we have an update. So, if we hear from a retailer, no, we are not interested in moving to Franklin County right now, we are going to log that in there so that you guys know exactly what is happening, or if it is a yes, great. What is the next step with getting this retailer to open their doors in Franklin County? So, all that information is housed the good, the bad, the ugly, and even just what the next steps are, and any other kind of information that we collect through our process. I know I have talked a lot, shared a lot of information. So, what questions do you have? Chairman Jones speaking, any questions? Commissioner Croom speaking, yes, Mr. Chair, got a couple. What evidence shows this model's work for our size, a lot of counties over similar markets? Ms. Stewart speaking, say that one more time. I am so sorry. Commissioner Croom speaking, what evidence shows this model that you presented work for our rural counties or similar, similar markets? Ms. Stewart speaking, absolutely. So, there are, I think, 19,000 communities across the country, and they all want the same type of retail, and all of those retailers, they are getting hounded by all of these communities saying, hey, you should look at my community. You should look at my community. And in reality, there are very specific retailers that go to more rural communities. And so instead of chasing those major chains like Trader Joe's, something like that nature that is not a right fit for your community. We work with rural communities to set them apart. That is our goal, is to get communities that get overlooked and get

them in front of the right retailers. So, I mentioned Trader Joe's. That is not a right fit for you guys, but there are other prospects that make sense, again, that would be sustainable in your community, and it is our job to put you in front of the right individuals. Our typical model is to work with rural communities because that is who gets overlooked the most. We have worked with Dixie County. We have worked with Suwannee County, or we are currently working with Suwannee County. We have had a ton of success in Florida and really seeing brands develop in our communities across the country. Commissioner Croom speaking, gotcha, okay, one of my last I guess, is a two-part question. It is a bottom-line question that I have. How did this program realistically move the needle for Franklin County, and how can this board measure success? That success from a year from now? Ms. Stewart speaking, great question. Yes. Thank you so much for asking that. Success is going to depend on what you envision. And so, during our stakeholder input session, when we come to visit you guys, we are going to want to gain information. We want to understand what you envision for your community. What retail do you want for your constituents? They probably call you and say, hey, why do not we have a pharmacy, or why do not we have a Chick fil A or whatever that retail brand is. We want to gain that information so we want to understand what your expectations are. Now we cannot guarantee success because there is a lot out of our control. Property owners are going to dictate what they are going to lease or sell their property for. Sometimes they have a very inflated vision of what their property is worth. It is our job to work with them to say, hey, this is actually the right opportunity for your property, for your community. So, success does look different from community to community. So, what we can guarantee, though, is that within the first year, a minimum of 30 retail prospects is going to hear about Franklin County and know about the sites that are available to them now. And usually, before I give that guarantee, I typically ask our partners, our communities, who are you guys currently talking to? Who is currently leading this effort for retail development, and how many retailers are you talking to most of the time? The answer is not really sure who is leading the charge. We are just kind of waiting to see what happens. And so, as I mentioned, it is a guarantee of a minimum 30. Most often it is way more than 30 that we put in front, typically closer to 100 just depending on the appropriate brands and who is actually expanding in the region, so we are very intentional about who those retail prospects are and showcasing the right sites to them.

Commissioner Ward speaking, Mr. Chairman, I have got some questions and some statements. I am Commissioner Ward, thank you guys for being here today and presenting. I do have a question, but I got a couple things, statements, I guess before that. One is, you know, Franklin County, a bulk of it is owned by the state, so that we got land, but there is not a lot of land left. Number two, we kind of have a dynamic. The dynamic is different. You have got some group of folks that want a Walmart or Publix, but then you got some others that just are dead set against anything like that. So, it is kind of a dynamic that you have got some wanting stuff growth and some don't want any of that. In addition to that, we also have, you know, the mom and pop so a lot of the mom-and-pop grocery stores and or hardware stores, things like that. You know, they may not want something big coming in to compete with them, but that leads me to my question is, in relation to numbers, do they look at the number of residents? So, the population of Franklin County is 12,000 and some children. Some change, versus the visitors coming to our county to utilize these services. So, you know, we have a lot of visitors that come into our county to stay, stay during summer, or go to the beach or whatever. Or we have people come and stay during the winter. But the question is, do they base this information on the number the population of the permanent residents, or do they look at the permanent residents in addition to the people coming to our community?

Ms. Stewart speaking, great question, and you made a lot of really great points too. My sound is a little off on my computer, so I have a hard time hearing, but I do believe I got everything that you said. But yes, retailers are going to want to see where the density changes. So, during daytime population? Are you a community that has a lot of people during the day, or are you a community that has a lot of people at night? Or do you have a lot of people for tourism during the summer? Or, of course, snowbirds. So, there is a lot of information that we are trying to collect to really showcase that opportunity for that specific retailer. They do care about all the things that you just mentioned. And when you talk about those real estate assets, you know, when the state owns it or the city owns it, or the county, or even just locally owned, there is a lot of dynamics with working with property owners and knowing what the best path is. Again, commercial real estate is our background, so we do understand those dynamics. But to your other question, yes, all of that data is collected. We really do want to show, hey, here is a bigger population during the summer, so there is an opportunity for them to make more money during these different times. So that is definitely a part of our puzzle when we are presenting sites to specific retailers. Commissioner Ward speaking, thank you.

Mrs. Griffith speaking, yeah, commissioners. And actually, you know, one thing that I mentioned to Sarah Beth, actually, multiple times, is the need for a pharmacy on the western side of the county, you know. So that is something that you know, personally, I feel like it is a deficiency. You know, a lot of residents over in the western side of the

county have expressed they are having to actually go to Crawfordville to pick up prescriptions or come over to Apalachicola, you know. So that is something that you know. Granted, it would be a smaller retailer, like a CVS or a Walgreens or something of that nature. But you know, it could definitely fill, fill those type of voids, or try to recruit those type of services and retailers.

Chairman Jones speaking, commissioners do you have any more questions? Chairman Jones speaking, I have a question, not that it matters, and I know this was preliminary, just in getting this report together for today. Thank you for everything you presented. First, by the way, it is good to actually see a number, because I, like probably everybody else in this community, have known for a long time it is hard to really gage the economy in Franklin County because so much is spent in our surrounding counties. It is not spent here so that at the end of the day, that creates problems, so that that puts more of a tax burden on our residents, because now it is ad valorem. It is not coming from commercial retail, where, where our people are not only traveling out of our communities to spend money, but they are also buying their gas out of the community because they have already traveled there, and all of that affects the amount of money we have for roads. So, it is all a domino. Thank you for painting that picture for us. The question I have is on the slide about the trade area, and it does not matter, it is just preliminary, anyway, but I noticed that the dollar store you pulled from is the one in Apalachicola or what is listed. And I know from talking to the people that work with the company, the one in East Point is top five in the nation. So, it is going to paint you a lot of different picture.

Ms. Stewart speaking, so we are actually it is our data provider that we have. I know in that specific slide, it has those little green dots surrounding the dollar generals that it is color coded, and so the green dots mean it is an "A" grade for that retailer. We can pull exactly how it grades in the county versus its other peers of dollar stores. So, comparing Dollar General to Dollar Tree and all those other different types of dollar stores, we can do for the county, we can do it for a region, we can do for the state, we can do for the country, we can do it for the brand. There is truly so much information that we can pull to see this is the top-ranking dollar store in the region. That is a huge asset to boast about. So, another retailer can be successful, because this is one of the most successful stores of this brand. So, the information that we can pull, you know, this local knowledge you have this, those local relationships, and you're hearing this type of information, but we'll have the data to back it up, to showcase no actually, this is one of the top performing stores. Hey, another retailer, you could be very successful here. So spot on with that.

Mr. Smitherman speaking, I would like to add a little something if I can, just to that point in question that you are asking about the trade areas. I was actually doing that yesterday, looking at the Dollar General, both in Apalachicola as well as East Point. I believe there is a third in Carrabelle as well. And so, part of how we do some of our initial analysis is for those national brands that we can access the mobile data and track and sort of see where their standard customer base is for that specific score, we will use basically an aggregate of all of your existing strong retail, national retail drivers, overlay all of their individual trade areas at once to basically identify a custom trade area. Now with the county, it is going to be a little interesting, because you basically have kind of three, your core three markets. You have got Apalachicola, you have got East Point, you have got Carrabelle, and so those lines will kind of naturally, kind of edge off. And actually, looked at that yesterday. But just back to your question, yes, we are going to be analyzing and using all of the advantageous data from any of your existing national retailers, which would also include, say, on the food front, there is a Burger King in in Apalachicola. I know you all have multiple Ace Hardware. We are going to be using all those kind of things to as supporting evidence and data, just as Sarah Beth said, to basically present the market's opportunities to like brands similar type national retailers, so that they can sort of use the performance of existing in market brands alongside their own projections, and then we'll also be using, as Sarah Beth alluded, to sort of peer market analysis, so that they can then compare to their own locations within peer markets to say, okay, here's a competitor in the market we're talking about. Here is a peer market where we have a store. If all of this is pointing towards, yeah, we could, we can make this work. And there is, there is a profit to be made, because ultimately, that is, this is all a numbers, a numbers game. It is all math. And so, these, these businesses are in it for profit. And so, we are going to be providing as much supporting evidence to point towards, yes, this is a good market, a good location, a good place, and community of strong consumers that will support your brand, and here is all the backing evidence as to why we believe so. Chairman Jones speaking, sounds good. Anyone else have any questions? Commissioner Amison speaking, Mr. Chair, yes, I do not know if this is a question for them or us, but should the cities join with us on this? Because, I mean, really, the only area would be East Point service. Erin has there ever been some discussion on that? Mrs. Griffith speaking, actually, yes, Commissioner, so this first year, it will be paid 73% the cost of the grant. And then, you know, the county will actually chip in the balance that \$12,070. Now there is, you know, if we are pleased with Retail Strategies for this first year, there is an option to renew that would extend the program for an additional three years. And that was something, you know, even when we applied for the grant last

year, we had actually sought letters of support from the cities of Apalachicola and Carrabelle, and then also we received a letter of support from, I believe, Team Franklin as well on it when we did the application. So that is something kind of like, future years will be kind of subject to negotiation, but this first year, you know, it will be grant funded and county funded, and the two cities will be included in the analysis, so they will get the benefit. You know, it is county wide, so it will include East Point, Apalachicola, Carrabelle, you know, the entire area. But going forward, that may be something that we have to talk about in the future. Like, you know, look, is the county going to want to continue this economic development initiative for 45,000 a year? Or, if we do, you know, is there a cost share at that point? Are the cities willing to contribute so that it will be, it will be something that's performance based, you know, we are going to have to see the value in it for it to continue. Chairman Jones speaking, the other thing is too, so I do like the approach. Honestly, we, in my time on the board, we have had a lot of discussion about managed growth, and so far, we have not managed anything. We have waited till they walk through the front door and kind of ask what they want to ask. And this way we are actually can be engaged and know who we are actively recruiting and what it is going after. So, it is helping to manage it. So, you are still trying to go after growth, but it is on a managed spectrum, because you are not trying to, you know what I mean, you are not. It is different. It is a different approach. It is more proactive. Mr. Moron speaking, yes, I was just going to say maybe Sarah Beth was watching when Steve for the airport, was just here, talking to Beth Kirkland, whatever her married name is. And that initiative, they are trying to bring commerce here too. So maybe all this could kind of, you know, work off each other to benefit the county and the airport at the same time. Chairman Jones speaking, they know about that too, because that is on the site selection. Commissioner Sanders speaking, I often talk about, you know, in my early 10 years, back in 2000 when we realized that the only place that you really have in the unincorporated Franklin County is East Point, and that is when the enterprise zones and all that came to pass. And so, we were real up on that to try to promote growth, because even back then, we knew that you had to have something in here sustaining to and to go along with what we had, the bay and all that and everything. But, you know, we are it is like we have all said, we are very limited on what we have when we do not want to bust out the scenes either with people, but yet, we want to take care of the folks that we've got in here by bringing jobs in here. And unless you sit here and live with us and cohabitate with us, you are really not going to know what the issues are. Chairman Jones speaking, so is there anything needed from us today? Or this just a presentation? Mrs. Griffith speaking, commissioners yeah, just to introduce you all to Sarah Beth, and then also we will be, you know, setting up that community stakeholder meeting at some point. So hopefully we will have, you know, a lot of participation from some of the local business owners. Members probably coordinate with some of the chambers and also the business associations to try to get maximum participation, because, you know, we want our local businesses to thrive, and we want to help them identify, you know, areas of leakage, and also where their customers are coming from, and be able to staff appropriately and such. So, it will be a lot of useful data. Chairman Jones speaking, so hopefully at our next meeting, we can have more discussion about the EDC, because we have been putting together people that want to serve on that board under this county, and so that is something Ms. Stewart we've never had an Economic Development Council yet, but we're in the process of putting one together, and they could also be involved in this process, because a lot of our business owners across several different industries in the county. Miss Gayle, you had a speaker card filled out for public comment.

Mrs. Gayle Riegelmayr speaking, thank you. Gayle Riegelmayr, St. George Island. I am here to first of all, I want to acknowledge and thank you for your desire to take a proactive approach to job and economic development. I am a big proponent of data. I said, what I heard today is this organization will provide a lot of good data that helps local businesses determine their customer base and what products move, what products are needed, so on and so forth, and it could provide opportunities for local people to maybe want to start new businesses that are desired here. My caution and things I want you to please think about that might create a slippery slope. The focus here is on retail. Retail is low paying jobs, no benefits. We have a plethora of retail shops. You look around the county right now, they cannot fill the jobs that exist today. Even the county I am seeing in the paper county has jobs that they cannot fill. So, we are not filling retail jobs now. Retail jobs are low paying. We run the risk, and I have seen it in other communities, and you cannot control who wants to come in and buy property and what they build. And the lady mentioned about another community where Home Depot came in, well, you get a Home Depot or a similar type of company. What happens to Ace Hardware, Taylors, the little Carrabelle hardware store? What happens is, you open this door and the big box people come in, and they displace and push out the mom and pops, the local people. I have seen it everywhere. Okay? Secondly, and that is fine, if that is what you want to make Franklin County into. I tell you, not only do people like me and I am sure a lot of locals, but even visitors, they live with that, and they come here because we do not have the big box stores. We have the mom and pops. They want to support our little local businesses. Secondly, we have limited land. As was already pointed out, we are owned by the federal and state government a lot of land. So, what little land we have? Do we really want to turn it over to retail companies, or do we want to leave that available and really continue

what you have already started, attracting the kinds of industries that are compatible with our area, that are higher paying jobs have benefits are for skilled workers full time, not part time, and so you only have a limited amount of land to work with? And what you do proactively is going to recruit whether the retail, low paying jobs more of those that we cannot fill now, or you save that land to make it attractive, to attract the higher paying industries and jobs. So, I just ask that you think about these things. Who do we want to become? Because Franklin County is changing, and you proactively are going to control in what way it changes. And we can become unintentionally through a retail effort like Panama City and Destin and all the other places, or we can continue to grow organically with the local businesses and let people start businesses that way. So, thank you for the opportunity to express my concern.

Chairman Jones speaking, thank you Miss Gayle. You know it is, there is not that much property in Franklin County. There is not, but as a person that worked in a retail business, that was one of those lower paying jobs that closed and put three of us out of work, if we can get any retail businesses in here, because we have lost three of them just in East Point in the last six months. So now we are a community and a county that wants to continue to have the best water access we can have, but we do not have anybody that does marine supplies. We lost people that do auto parts. So, if you come in here and you break down, I do not know where you are going to get your stuff from, because we do not have it here, because we do not want any low paying jobs. I want jobs period. And that is not meant to be against Ms. Gayle, but I have nine years of stomach in this diatribe, I have had about all I can take. We want to get jobs, period. And the jobs for people to fill jobs, it is not always about there is an open job and they cannot fill it. Sometimes people are looking for a different job or a different fit. That is up to each individual business owner, and I will remind everyone while we are talking about it these retail strategies. It is the same way in Franklin County as the rest of the world, if I open a business, I am one putting myself at risk with the amount I am collateralizing at the bank or what I am doing. I am the one deciding if I want to try to provide jobs in my community that can help people, help people support their families, help them grow. It is all part of it. So, you know, to always we are not going to I do not see us ever getting jobs here, where everybody in Franklin County is making \$100,000 a year, that is like trying to hit a bull's eye from here to the exit sign back there, instead of from here to the edge of this desk. It is you are making it harder. Is all you are doing. So, I am glad that we are doing this Retail Strategies. I am looking for good things out of it, because the data is going to help us. And so, I do appreciate you Ms. Stewart and you sir for your presentation this morning. I know that this is some of what that engagement meeting is going to be like. Just so you know.

Mr. Moron speaking, Mr. Chairman, can I ask a question just for my own because maybe I misunderstood. So, Sarah Beth, tell me something, you are offering us the data so that the board can make decisions and try encouraging business, not necessarily big box stores. I remember a while back, Commissioner Amison and I were trying to get some information for a local store, data for a local store, so they could know how much inventory to buy for future years. So, I guess maybe I missed the mark. I was not paying attention. Is this about big box stores, or is this just data to help us guide the businesses we already have and find services that we do not have to fill a gap. I mean, did I miss something? I am sorry. I kind of need some help here.

Mr. Smitherman speaking, I would love to jump in here if I can. If that is all right with everybody. I know that I think a lot of people when they think about retail development, when they think about real estate development, I think a lot of people's thoughts immediately, sort of move towards big box. Our approach and really what we want to accomplish, and our understanding of how markets grow, how communities grow, you don't go from the bottom rung of the ladder to the top rung, and you know this will be an incremental effort to where we not only are constrained by the availability of real estate, which at this point we don't exactly know who might be willing to sell, who may not. It could be that the best pieces of real estate that make the most sense for a national retail brand, which could be, say, it is a quick service restaurant. Say it is one of the commissioners just mentioned auto parts. Say it is an O'Reilly, say it is an Auto Zone. The site that they want the owner might not be willing to sell. And so, we are going to be looking at very constricted sections of frontage roadway in potentially Apalachicola, East Point and Carrabelle. And our approach is very, very specific to identifying the sites that we know these brands like, so using the characteristics of the real estate as well as coupling that with brands that we know will go into markets the size of the communities within Franklin County. And so, it is a very, very tailored approach, and ultimately, it is the retailer that makes the decision. So, you know, I do not want anyone to think that we are going to be going out and our focus is going to be trying to bring a Target or, you know, a Walmart distribution center. Now at the same time, if that's something that y'all would like for us to do, of course, the way we also want to approach this as we are your partners, this is y'all community, not ours, and so we're not, we're not intending on doing anything that's sort of outside the realm of not only what you want, but what makes sense, because ultimately, we want to be good stewards of the investment and trust that you would be placing in our team to be as efficient and effective as possible. Because the reality is that any of these deals take a

good bit of time to go from start to finish. Some of these take years to complete, just doing analysis, depending on the brand. Now, certain brands move faster than others. Certain real estate transactions get bogged down. You know, as an example, if an owner is willing to sell their property for \$500,000 and this is a complete hypothetical. Yeah, someone wants to buy your property, they would be willing to buy it for \$500,000 okay, great. Well, six months down the road, when the deal is about to close, if that owner, even if it's not true, say there's a rumor that Chick fil A is going to come into that property, that price tag on that property might have just gone from 500,000 to 1.5 million, and at that point, the deals off, you know that that will kind of kill the deal. So I share that as an example of not only just the challenges and the difficulties of any of these things coming to fruition as it is, but also the balance between our approach, y'all desires, and also what makes sense, because we're not going to want to go and start, you know, rattling the phones off the hooks with brands that don't make sense for your market, and so all of the front end data and analysis and market research is what's going to point us towards. Okay, these brands make sense because of all of this front end work we have done. Now let us try to find a piece of property that that the brand you know it will check the boxes, because the way they operate is they basically will grade a site, and they are not going to take a C rated site if there's an A rated site down the street, and so they'll just hold off. Because, again, as one of the other Commissioners mentioned, this is, this is investment, and people do not invest with the intent of losing money, they invest with the intent of making a profit, and it comes with a sizable amount of risk. Just as an example, Longhorn Steakhouse, and I just want to put this on the table just as dollars, so that we understand the risks that these brands are taking. For Longhorn to build a full spec out of one of their locations, they have told us it cost them \$6 million. Well, if the piece of property cost a million dollars, they are in it for \$7 million before they have ever staffed, stocked, or sold a single steak. So that is a \$7 million upfront investment where they are going to have to recoup that over hopefully a shorter amount of time than longer, but these are the financial analyzes, the market projections about how much they are going to be able to sell. So that is digging into your sedentary population, your tourism population, all of these kind of things. So, it is a, we like to say it is not really complex, but it is kind of complicated, and so I just wanted to share that you know, we are going to be starting with what makes sense to try to back to what Sarah Beth had mentioned, fill that void on some of those specific products that are lacking that those brands would consider opening a store within Franklin County. Chairman Jones speaking, any other questions, commissioners? Thank you both for your time today and for the presentation. I am sure we will be in touch. Ms. Stewart speaking, thank you so much. It was so great to see all of you and have a fantastic day. Thank you. Chairman Jones speaking, all right, Mrs. Erin Griffith, we are up to your report.

## **Fiscal Manager/Grants Coordinator Report**

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

Mrs. Griffith speaking, alright, commissioners, I had kind of a lengthy report. Let us see. We had nine action items and then just some informational items. So, I do not know if there is anything that you all would like for me to pull from the action list, or if you want to rock on to the informational items. Chairman Jones speaking, commissioners, anything y'all want to discuss and vote on separately that is not in consent. Or if you have any questions, we can ask them. But other than that, we can do one through nine through consent. It is up to you. Commissioner Sanders speaking, well, I want to talk on item number four and make a couple of statements, and then on item number nine. Chairman Jones speaking, do you want Mrs. Erin when she gets to number four to read that whole narrative? Commissioner Sanders speaking, not the whole thing, but I do want to make a comment about the communication system and about, okay, I have been approached by Alligator Point per month. Can we do that? Chairman Jones speaking, yeah, we can do that. We can do number four, number nine as well. Commissioner Sanders speaking, well, I just want to comment on that, because I might add something to it. Chairman Jones speaking, do you want them to be voted on separately? That is what I am asking. Commissioner Sanders speaking, no. Chairman Jones speaking, okay, go ahead and do your comments. Commissioner Sanders speaking, well, number four is a big, long thing. It is what, what I called Erin yesterday. Erin, were you able to talk to Brian with Williams Communication?

Mrs. Griffith speaking, I was yes, and actually Brian did confirm so one thing by the board authorizing the emergency patchwork with Williams Communications to actually kind of hobble us along until we can get the first responder system upgraded and implemented for construction of all the new towers. This patch will actually change the process, whereas separately, let us say the tower that was located in St Teresa, so that tower previously was only utilized by that volunteer fire department. So that's kind of why it made sense to actually have you know, even though the agreement was with the board, the expense for the monthly lease was actually borne by the fire department's MSBU revenues. And then you also had a tower located in East Point, and the St George Island volunteer fire department had been paying for the annual lease on that tower as well, because that was specific to their system. Now granted, once Williams actually makes the

upgrade, the sheriff's dispatch will actually utilize both of those tower sites at that point, so it will be used by basically first response and fire departments county wide at that point, along with dispatch. So, at that point, it would make sense for actually the board to assume the cost of the lease agreements for those two tower sites until we can actually get the construction of the seven new towers up and running. And at that point, Williams said that they are actually able to mobilize February 16. Shuler and I have been going back and forth with SBA towers, and we hope to have something worked out by the next meeting to present to you all on that, as far as you know, the assignment of the lease for the St George Island tower in East Point. And then also, you know, we will actually work something out formal with the rental rate as well for the St Teresa tower. So, we hope to come back to you all at the next meeting with some hard details on that transfer, but just wanted to keep you posted that Williams is getting close to mobilizing. We should have the patch in place soon.

Commissioner Sanders speaking, okay, I got approached by one of the members of the alligator point Fire Department last week, and they were saying it would be burdensome on that fee that they have to pay. The fire department has to pay for the tower, the use of the tower down there. And I just wanted to bring that to the board. And I talked to Aaron about what we could do, and this is what she came up with. I just wanted the board to know that, you know, they are having that discussion, yeah, and that we need to have discussion about that, because they all provide no service for Franklin County, Mr. Moron speaking, if I may, and Erin jump in if I am wrong here. So basically, what is happening the status of the use of the towers are changing. Where the tower was for that particular fire department is not part with Williams' update. It is not going to be part of the network. So, since it's part of the network, the county needs to sue every tower that's now part of the network that was just, you know, for that particular fire department.

Commissioner Sanders speaking, and this is what I told the gentleman from Alligator Point, that once we get, you know, all the system going, then it will be under one that is right under one in that Franklin County. Now on item number nine, it was brought to my attention that the State Department of Transportation has complained about Miller Street out there at Lanark. Miller Street and Jubilee Street is draining down to 98 it is a dirt, little dirt road. So, I just want to let Erin know and the board know that I am going to try to include this into my paving process. We will satisfy FDOT's concerns. So, you will be seeing something come in a work order for Jubilee and Miller. Erin did you ever get the surveys for that?

Mrs. Griffith speaking, no, I actually reached out to the road department. I know Andy went out there and actually was on site, and he said that he could not determine where the right of way was for that roadway section. And then I also reached out to the road department, and Howard said that he did not have any clear maps either. So that is something we will need to actually have the Miller and Jubilee, both of those streets actually formally surveyed, where we can actually know where the right of way is for both of those roadway sections. Commissioner Sanders speaking, okay. Thank you, Erin, for that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Chairman Jones speaking, Mrs. Erin, that would not be on the maps that are over at the clerk's office where our right of ways? I know it is where Mark used to go look at them.

Mr. Moron speaking, so Mark had a list that Bree now, hope Bree has it. But the issue is, it is not necessarily what road is right, is the markings? Because remember, a couple of times we did some paving and we actually ended up so that is what. Commissioner Sanders speaking, Spring Street, and Miller comes off of 98 and where Jubilee and Miller's supposed to intersect. It is like rounded there, so you do not know if Jubilee goes on down toward those houses or not, so we got to find out. Mr. Moron speaking, that is what Andy's trying to avoid. Chairman Jones speaking, the other thing, just a question, because we're talking about this here, and I didn't have the question until Commissioner Sanders was saying, going forward, as we try to get this whole communication system up and going, is there the possibility for sites that were occurring to lease to see what it would take to buy those sites, if our towers are going to be there perpetually? Mrs. Griffith speaking, well, the two sites that are there, I am not sure on that Commissioner. I mean, we would have to ask, we would have to ask SBA towers if they would consider, you know, but once they have already made the investment, they likely have some other carriers, but we will definitely, you know, make the inquiry, because that could be something that, you know, they are already there and constructed. Chairman Jones speaking, a continual drip of money, if we owned it, yeah, a thought. Mr. Moron speaking, yes, sir, we would have to be, I am sorry, go ahead. Commissioner Sanders speaking, another question did Brian say when? I mean, he already told us, \$185,000. Commissioner Griffith speaking, they are mobilizing on February 16th. So, they should, you know, they actually have the equipment on hand, and they are getting their crews ready to go. Mr. Moron speaking, Mr. Chairman, to go back to what you were saying. Keep in mind any tower that you try to acquire in any way, you have to consider all the leases that are tied into that to SBA that owned it before. So, yeah, that might be a task. Chairman Jones speaking, any more questions before we consider one through nine on consent? Commissioner Croom speaking, yeah, I got something on. Mr. Chair, Erin, in regard to tower for, I guess over here in west part of the county, we still have problems trying to find land?

Mrs. Griffith speaking, we are, and actually, Omnicom has reached out, and they are. They do have a representative that they are working with Deseret for the western side of the county. We did reach out to FWC, and their initial response was no, that communications towers were not allowed. I know Susan Skelton when she when I forwarded their formal response. You know she actually got, she actually started making some calls on behalf of the County, because public safety is actually one of the exemptions for that management plan. So, there may be a chance that we can go back to FWC and get approval that way. But really, in discussions with the state, the state will also not allow for private carriers to co locate on any sort of towers that we construct on state owned property, you know, they would allow for public safety to be located on towers located on their parcels. However, for us, you know, yes, that is important, but we also wanted to remedy the lack of communication service for, you know, basically just private residents, you know, when they are going up north highway 65 because that is also a safety concern. So, for us, the best-case scenario is for us, it to be on a county owned parcel, because then we can actually lease the space to private carriers. And as it is right now, you know, the existing tarpon tower site up there, the reason why they have not constructed that tower is because, granted, tower construction is very expensive, roughly a million dollars or so, and then they do not have a tenant in place, you know. And that was one thing, even at tarpon tower, when we had approached them about locating on their tower, they are like, oh, well, if you share in the cost of construction with us, you know. And unfortunately, Triumph will not fund that for us, so, so that is something where, you know, we definitely prefer for it to be on county owned property. Worst comes to worst, if we do have to go back to the state, we will pursue that option, but the best-case scenario is, is for it to be owned by the county. Commissioner Croom speaking. I got you, that was one of my questions about Deseret, and I did not know if anyone reached out to the city of Apalachicola, because I know they had acquired some property from Deseret for the fire range. Mrs. Griffith speaking, oh, okay. Mr. Moron speaking, so the firing range leaving Apalachicola got that from Deseret? Yes, that is good to know. Commissioner Croom speaking, just an FYI. Mr. Moron speaking, I'm sorry, then we could try to, I do not think Chuck will know, but we can try and find out from the city who they contacted, and then pass that on to Omnicom. Mrs. Griffith speaking, yes, that would be great.

**On a motion by Commissioner Croom, seconded by Commissioner Ward , and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved items 1-9 from Mrs. Griffith's report. Motion carried 5-0.**

**1. BOARD ACTION: CEI SERVICES CONTRACT PATTON DRIVE RESURFACING PROJECT**

At the December 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting, the Board authorized staff to begin contract negotiations with the highest ranked firm AECOM for construction engineering and inspection services for the FDOT grant funded widening and resurfacing of .74 miles of Patton Drive from Island Drive (SR 300) to U.S. Highway 98. The project will also include necessary drainage improvements, upgraded signage, pavement markings, and other safety improvements. Planner Bree Robinson has concluded contract negotiations and recommends approval of the attached time and materials services contract not-to-exceed \$78,288.30. The pre-construction meeting will be scheduled within the week. Board action to approve and authorize the chairman to sign the attached CEI contract with AECOM for the Patton Drive Project.

**2. BOARD ACTION: DESIGN TASK ORDER 6<sup>TH</sup> STREET WIDENING & RESURFACING PROJECT**

At the November 18<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Board approved the \$261,697 FDOT grant award agreement for the 6<sup>th</sup> Street Widening and Resurfacing Project. The county has since received the fully executed award back from FDOT and can now proceed with the project's design. The grant award will cover design, construction, and CEI services to widen and resurface 6<sup>th</sup> Street in Eastpoint from US Highway 98 to Avenue A. As Franklin County follows the Consultants' Competitive Negotiation Act (F.S. 287.055) in selecting engineering firms for design improvements, the ongoing county engineering contract with Dewberry and Florida Statute 287.055 allows the county to negotiate with the contracted engineer for this project and staff recommends approval of the attached design services proposal in the amount of \$26,288. *Board action to approve and authorize the chairman to sign the attached task order with county engineers Dewberry for the design and construction bid plans/specifications for this project.*

**3. BOARD ACTION: TDC SECTION 6 INDEPENDENT PROFESSIONAL ANALYSIS PROPOSAL**

At their January 28<sup>th</sup> meeting, the TDC voted to advance the county's first section 6 public infrastructure project on for the completion of an independent professional analysis. This analysis will demonstrate the positive impact of the proposed roadway resurfacing in the St. George Island Commercial District on tourist-related businesses,

consistent with the requirement of Section 125.0104(5)(a)6. Economic Development Consultant Mary Swoope provided county staff with contact information for Paul Scheuren, Principal Economist with Impact DataSource to aid the county with the completion of the analysis. Impact DataSource has reviewed the project information packet and has submitted the attached \$5,500 proposal to complete the analysis which will take approximately three weeks to complete. *Board action to approve and authorize the chairman's signature on the attached consulting agreement with Impact DataSource, LLC. for the completion of the section 6 project analysis.*

#### **4. BOARD ACTION: FIRST RESPONDER COMMUNICATION SYSTEM UPGRADE – POSSIBLE TOWER SITE APPRAISAL & FIRST RESPONDER COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM PROJECT LIASON**

The county is struggling to locate viable tower site locations up Highway 65 north of Eastpoint and along West Highway 98 to the far west of Apalachicola. Triumph will not provide funding to construct towers unless the towers are located on publicly owned land. If the county owns the land, the county may then lease space to private carriers in addition to the towers supporting the first responder radio equipment, however, any revenues generated by private carrier leases are to be set aside to fund economic development activities as stipulated by Triumph. If the county were so lucky as to execute a long-term site lease on a state-owned parcel (managed by Forestry, lands managed by FWC have declined), Triumph can still fund the construction of a tower, however the county will be unable to rent space to other carriers on the tower as the state would only allow the public safety equipment or other state systems to be co-located on the tower. There is a parcel which went through the zoning process up highway 65 and has already cleared the initial design and permitting hurdles up Highway 65 owned by Walter Armistead Investments, LLLP. That parcel already had a lease agreement in place with another tower company, however, that company has not constructed the tower and they do not currently have the tenants in place to move forward with construction. The county has contacted Mr. Armistead and asked if he would be interested in selling the 100x100 parcel which has already been through permitting (and the buyout of the option with the tower company) but it is unknown at this time what the value of a remote, rural tower site would be. An appraisal is needed to determine the value of a tower site location and although the appraisal will be site-specific, it will be useful in future negotiations to have a ballpark value to provide to other property owners of suitable locations if the subject site does not move forward. The site detail from the September 4, 2019, Board of Adjustment meeting is included for reference as an attachment. Triumph approved the additional services task order with Omnicom to complete the site analysis work. The Omnicom proposal has since been signed and work is in progress. Two mobile command centers are also being written into the design specifications to alleviate areas of concern mentioned by the commission at the last meeting (areas located deep in forest areas without roadway or utility access). As this project moves forward, there will be a need for county staff to have additional hands moving forward to aid in the implementation of the communications system. Similar to the county's reliance upon EMS consultant Richard Lewis for his hourly contract services assisting with the conversion of EMS to a county department. County staff would like to request this same arrangement to contract hourly with a communications project liaison to assist with coordination between the departments, system engineers, and communications contractors for the system planning and implementation. Staff has been in contact with David Snow who manages the communications for the St. George Island Volunteer Fire Department who has an extensive 25-year background in the communications industry including experience constructing cell towers, planning wire line transport and cell tower project management. This experience and background with communications and firsthand knowledge of the local fire departments and equipment used/available will aid the county with a smooth transition to a new system.

- a) Board action to approve staff ordering an appraisal of the tower site located on Walter Armistead Investments, LLLP's property up Highway 65.
- b) Board action to approve David Snow as an hourly consultant to serve as the Franklin County First Responder Communications System Project Liaison to assist through project implementation.

#### **5. BOARD ACTION: SGI MULTI-USE PATH PROJECT – TIME EXTENSION CHANGE ORDER**

Extreme temperatures have slowed the paving progress on the multi-use path project on St. George Island. The attached no-cost time extension change order will extend the project completion deadline to March 9<sup>th</sup> for substantial completion and ready for final payment to April 9<sup>th</sup>. This extension will allow enough time for warmer days to allow for the pavement to cure and apply pavement markings. *Board action to approve and authorize the chairman*

*to sign the attached time extension change order.*

**6. BOARD ACTION: AIRPORT TRIUMPH HANEY CONSTRUCTION PROJECT BUDGET**

Construction work on the Haney Hangar at the Airport is moving along quickly. On Friday, I was able to do a construction site inspection and was impressed by the progress. While onsite, project construction manager Drew Robertson expressed concerns relative to several maintenance issues related to the exterior of the building. The cypress window trim, wooden siding, and gutters on the patio area near the ADA entrance are in poor condition and some wooden screen panels are needed around the air conditioning units at the main entrance for the building. These items were not included in the original project budget and an additional \$20,000 - \$25,000 would be sufficient to cover the items missing in the original project budget. The county's airport fund has held approximately \$24,856 in a separate repair and maintenance line item since Hurricane Michael for an insurance payoff from the collapse of one of the roof structures at the old DOC work camp on airport property. As this amount could be used to address the immediate needs of the Haney Project Renovation, my suggestion is to go ahead and move those funds to the project and cease carrying the amount forward as the dormitory building with the collapsed roof is not repairable for future use. *Board action to approve and authorize moving the \$24,856 in insurance settlement proceeds to the Haney Hangar Project Renovation budget.*

**7. BOARD ACTION: CORRECTION DESIGN, PERMITTING AND BID SPECIFICATION TASK ORDER – EASTPOINT NATURE CENTER**

At the last meeting, the Board approved a \$16,800 proposal from Dewberry Engineers to develop the plan set and construction bid specifications for Phase I of the Eastpoint Nature Center Project. Phase I of the proposed project will include a small parking area, a modular restroom facility, two footbridges, stage area, minimal site grading, concrete sidewalks, and an exhibit path along the park's perimeter. Phase II of the project will include the construction of picnic pavilions alongside the path areas (cooperative construction project with the Coastal Conservation Corp group) and the installation of educational signage and path exhibit areas highlighting local native species (cooperative project with the Apalachicola Natural Estuarine Research Reserve ANERR). Unfortunately, I had attached an outdated proposal instead of the one dated in January which did not include the engineering/design work for the stage area's roof structure, the attached proposal is the correct version, and it totals \$18,250. The cost of this task order will be paid by the board's infrastructure line item in the county's capital outlay fund and will replace the earlier proposal approved at the last meeting. *Board action to approve and authorize the chairman to sign the attached proposal from Dewberry Engineers.*

**8. BOARD ACTION: LANARK EMS STATION – RADIO BASE STATION QUOTE**

At the last meeting, EMS Director James Osteen reported poor signal and communications issues at the new Lanark EMS Station. The Board asked Mr. Osteen to get a quote from Williams Communication to install the necessary EMS base radio control station at the new station in Lanark Village to address the signal strength issue. The attached \$11,503.20 quote will remedy the connection issues for the new station. *Board action to approve the attached quote to be paid out of the Health Care Trust Fund.*

**9. BOARD ACTION: COUNTY ROAD PAVING PROJECT 2025 CHANGE ORDER - DISTRICT 2**

Commissioner Sanders had requested the attached resurfacing quote for California Street in Lanark Village. The attached \$36,104 quote will resurface California Street from US Highway 98 to Oak Street. Board action to approve the attached change order to be paid by District 2's paving funds.

**10. BOARD INFORMATION/UPDATE: FLORIDA COMMERCE PROJECT RETAIL RECRUITMENT STRATEGIC PLAN**

At the January 7<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Board granted approval to sign the attached contract when issued by the Florida Department of Commerce for the development of the Retail Recruitment Strategic Plan. The grant award will cover approximately 73% of the cost of the \$45,000 plan. The county received the attached agreement which will be signed by the chairman after the meeting today. Also approved at that meeting was the proposal from Retail Strategies based

upon contract match piggyback pricing through their services provided to the City of Apopka. With most other clients, the agreement is for a four-year term, as Franklin County only received the grant award to cover the services for the first year, the county's agreement is for one year at the same rate. The commerce grant has a quick timeline for submission of the deliverables, with the research analysis summary due by February 28<sup>th</sup> and the final strategy report by April 30<sup>th</sup>. As the county's agreement is for a one-year term, Retail Strategies was unable to deviate from their standard terms for the \$45,000 to be paid after execution of the contract in lieu of upon completion of the deliverables.

#### 11. BOARD INFORMATION / MISCELLANEOUS PROJECT UPDATES:

- **RESTORE SGI Stormwater Project** – final installation of pipes and inlets should be completed this week; extreme temperatures last week did impact the construction schedule – roadway resurfacing to begin after.
- **Courtroom Renovation Project** – project was re-bid with additional design clarifications; mandatory pre-bid meeting was well attended. Bids will be opened at the February 18<sup>th</sup> meeting.
- **Island View Park FRDAP Project** – Project is currently out to bid; the mandatory pre-bid meeting is scheduled for February 19<sup>th</sup>; construction bids will be opened at the March 4<sup>th</sup> meeting.
- **EMS Director Position** – attached job advertisement posted to county website and advertised in The Apalachicola Times. Applications are due by Friday, February 27<sup>th</sup>.

Chairman Jones speaking, on the stormwater project, the other roads that the TDC considered and did recommend to this board add to the list of paving once that for finishing that project, where are we at in that part of that because it was going to be done as a change order, correct? Mrs. Griffith speaking, it was, yep, and that's actually part of let's see here. Action Item number three was the EDC Section six, independent professional analysis. That is, we will be signing that proposal. And they said, from their date of receipt, it will take them approximately three weeks to generate the report. And fortunately, it is coinciding with our retail strategies project, because some of the information that they needed, you know, they said, basically, with the packet that was provided, it did a good job of tying the commercial district to tourism infrastructure. However, without having it would be more difficult, without having access to visitor counts and also some of the traffic count data that retail strategies has access to. And for us, you know, even when I was scrambling trying to find supporting, you know, news articles or different data sources to put together the initial request, the only documented visitor count that I that I could lay my hands on was actually the state parks visitor count numbers. So that was something, that number was hard. It was hard to get a good number to provide to them. So, I am very excited about that, but it will take approximately three weeks before we have that, that professional analysis back, and then, once we get the green light, there, we should be good to go. Chairman Jones speaking, so is that going to put us doing pavement until April? Mrs. Griffith speaking, it will probably put us mid-March. Chairman Jones speaking, okay, all right. Well, we did as quick as we could. So, I mean, we waited. We waited because it was asked for us to wait, and we did. And so that is the way it goes. Commissioner Amison speaking, Mr. Chair, I got one question, since we are talking about stormwater project over there, it was brought up in the partnership meeting that they are, what is, what is the end goal for that. Right now, they have got pipes that is pumping all that water out into the bay, Chairman Jones speaking, they are going to go to the ponds and then to the bay. Mrs. Griffith speaking, that is correct, sufficient filtration. Our engineers designed it, and then it was permitted through Northwest Florida Water Management District and run through DEP and all the other regulating agencies.

Commissioner Amison speaking, I'll tell this board why it was brought up is that these whole area right there that they were being able to or should it be open, or they've showed a tremendous weather the oysters are gone. They are dying off. Now, we had not had a bunch of fresh water come down, which, you know, predation, other areas like that. And it was brought up that, you know, before the storm water project started and they had the pipe that is pumping. Could that potentially, be it? It was brought the question was brought to Department of Agriculture about potentially doing some water quality checks out there. As far as consumption, water quality checks are fine right now. Again, it was just brought up. I figured I would bring it up here, asked a few questions that way. Y'all know what is going on. I do not know if that is that has anything to do with it. Honestly, on a low drought year, it is going to, even when everything was fine, you would have that kind of falling numbers over there. Chairman Jones speaking, we do not get, we do not get the fresh water like we used to get. Commissioner Amison speaking, no, we do not, but anyway, that was something that was brought up. I figured I would mention it here when I am front of the five and everything. But they are going to do some just, I believe DAX is going to try to do some more quality checks over here. It is obviously, if it is if it is consumption, if it's safe for consumption, obviously it's not, but, but they're going to just do a little,

potentially, do a little bit more just to get the finger on it. But anyway, it was brought up, figured I would pass it along.

Commissioner Ward speaking, I have something. I have a couple things. I called Erin yesterday in relation to a couple different things. One is the job assessment tools, I think. It is okay with Evergreen. So, I know we have with Evergreen, the job assessment tools that get sent out to the employees, our county employees about their job and what they do. I know that those are due to go out again, right? Mrs. Griffith speaking, they are, yep, you know, my intention is to actually have that in with their payroll checks. That is actually kind of an addition for anyone who feels like, you know they have been miscategorized, or they feel like their job duties have changed significantly since the last time that the county did the study. They can actually resubmit that, just to be sure that they are categorized correctly. Those will go out on February 15, and then we've have had Evergreen under contract. However, our priority has been trying to do the setup for the new EMS department. So that's kind of something that's kind of shifted the focus granted. And I also know that we are doing the certification pay analysis as well. And that was something that, you know, they had sent me several months back. They actually need the historical documentation of in the past, five to ten years, what has the county done historically? So, we actually have to run through the personnel files and find those employees that have been impacted just with kind of the various, you know, oh, so and so received a certification, and we gave this amount, So, it is trying to provide a historical trend to them where they can actually establish a policy. Commissioner Ward speaking, and that leads me into my next question, Mr. Chair, is when, say, someone gets a certification, like, for example, excavator, you know, whatever mechanic, whatever, is it up to the department directors to alert you, to let you know that they should get an increased grade or increase like a raise, or is that something the employee should do? Or how should that work? Mrs. Griffith speaking, now, as far as with the department heads. Now, if they move from Equipment Operator one to a two, you know, that is something that that the department head would make that determination. So, then they would just, you know, simply include that as an informational item on their report that they had moved someone, if their duties had changed and all of a sudden, you know, let us say they were more responsible for working independently and things of that nature. They do have the ability to actually change them from inmate supervisor one to a two versus, you know, that type of progression. Commissioner Ward speaking, and they should come to you for that correct. Mrs. Griffith speaking, they would actually just put it as an informational item on their board report. But yes, I mean, there should be some sort of formal document included in the board report to you all for that. Commissioner Ward speaking, thank you. In addition to that, just one more thing, and I talked to Erin about this. I know we talked about it at our meeting, one of our meetings, I think in December. I am still getting emails and phone calls about this Dixie Youth League for the county, and I am just going to throw this out there. We discussed, and I know we discussed this at our December meeting about how some parents are dissatisfied with how things are moving along with the Dixie Youth, I asked Erin. To take that on as a county would be a nightmare, logistical nightmare. It would be a budgetary nightmare, and then instead of them, the parents, making their own decisions and rules, then this board will be making decisions and rules and, you know, teams and things. And I just, I am one of five, but I do not want to get involved in all of that. I do not know what the solution is. I did talk to Mr. Davis about it, but, I mean, I do not know what the end game is going to be, except we are just going to keep getting inundated with emails and phone calls about some parents not happy, how their kids are treated, or how a decision is being made about pulling players. The most recent was specifically about players from Franklin going over to Gulf County and playing so I do not know. I just, I have been getting phone calls about it, and I just wanted to bring it because, again, we cannot talk about any of this behind closed doors. I know we discussed it December, but not that specific difference in the change of what the most recent issue is.

Commissioner Amison speaking, so, Mister Chair, just for conversation's sake with that, for them, like in Dixie rules, for them to go, a Franklin County child, to go to the Gulf County child or Gulf County team, they would have to have a hardship for that. For them to further on the roster, to go, like state level stuff like that. So, I mean, there is some, I don't, I don't know how they're doing that, to be honest with you, just from my experience with it through the years, really the only way, and I've had this discussion with some parents, the only way that we would be able to do this and do it the proper way, would be to form a Parks and Rec separate like we had at one time, and then they would be, it would be up to whoever that director is to set that up, and they would have to play within our rules. So, it would not be, you know, that is what I told them. I said, you really want government in your life. You know, everybody talks about, you know, I do not want government in my life. Because once we get that point, you know, we may not be able to do a Dixie League. Now, we can still have ball games and stuff like that, you know, this traveling to, you know, all over the place, and a lot of that may have to go away, you know? I mean, I do not know, I do not have a crystal ball with that, but that would be the only way that we could properly structure. It would be to have a dedicated parks and recs because there's other areas around that does that. And that may be a discussion we can have down the road, but

that is, you know, that is why I tell the parents, somebody needs to step up. And either, you know, run, run it properly, whatnot, because at the end of the day, do you really want government in your life? Because we will get in there.

Commissioner Croom speaking, yep, and that is what I said, too. You know, I get the phone calls and emails, but most recently, the phone calls. And, you know, from my understanding, from talking to several parties involved, originally, there was not going to be, there was not enough for a Franklin team. Or, you know, some couple parents reached out to the other counties, you know, and now there is a Franklin team. So now there's issue with the people, and that is over there. So, I just like, I said, I like Commissioner Ward said, I do not know that is a beast we want to tackle right now.

Commissioner Amison speaking, I do not really think we can tackle it right now, until we had something set up. I mean, you cannot do it at the 11th hour. I mean, season is going to start in a month and a half. But, I mean, I am more than willing to have that discussion moving forward. You know, as far as parks and recs for the sports and all that stuff, I mean, I am, that is what I tell people. I am more than happy to have that discussion. But, like I just said, and I do not keep beating that dead horse. Do you want government in your life, or do you not want any in your life? make a decision. Commissioner Ward speaking, and then, Mr. Chairman, we make a decision, then they are not going to be mad at whoever the president is, definitely going to be mad at us. So, I do not know. Commissioner Amison speaking, the thing about it is, if we do that, there is going to be a standard, and that is going to be the standard, because we cannot entertain. And I am not beating up on parents, because I have been there every time my kid did not get, you know, did not get to play, or did not get them not doing that. I mean, that is it is something that, especially when it comes to kids I have got, I have got mine and. Commissioner Croom speaking, I am not, and what they got to understand too. I mean, the season is here. We cannot do nothing, really, right now, anyway.

Commissioner Ward speaking, that is what is so funny, though, is it, you know? And I can tell I pretty much set my clock by when it is going to be starting Dixie season soon, because that is what I am starting to get, the emails, text, and focus. I am not saying I do not you know, that is fine. Please call me, tell me, because I am that person. If I do not know something that is going wrong. I do not know unless I am told, I try to have eyes and ears everywhere, but I do not know of everything. And I do not have kids, so I do not have to deal with the Dixie youth ball or anything like that. So, I do not know what, what goes on in that era, but, or the schools for that matter. But the thing that, at the end of the day, it all boils down to our kids. I do not have kids, but kids, our kids. I have nieces. I have nephews. You know, it is all about them. And I try to tell these parents, try to be the adult in the situation and let the kids have fun. And try to just, I do not know, try to come together, and make a, be a united front for the kids. But I do not know, I just wanted to bring it up because I said I would bring it up. So, there you go.

Commissioner Amison speaking, I will say one thing. And Erin, we got progress out there with the light. I am sitting there. Every time I ride about, I just look at my calendar because I am waiting on those calls. I am not knocking anything. Those guys are working. I mean, they are working even when it is 20 degrees. They were out there working.

Commissioner Sanders speaking, yeah, there will be so much of a difference. Commissioner Amison speaking, but you all know, we probably going, you know, it might be a week before in a camp practice, because part flows, my phone is about to explode coming to room all East Point had to play over here and in Carrabelle, whenever they were getting those. I mean, it is this part of getting something done. You know, we do not control the calendar. When the money's there you get on it, when the contractors can line up, you do it. And that is just the bottom line. But anyway, I just figured we would all have a little laugh at my expense on the end of that discussion.

Commissioner Sanders speaking, and another thing for Erin at the last meeting, I brought up about having maybe a workshop on the property tax stuff. Have we gone anywhere on that?

Mrs. Griffith speaking, yes, and actually, I wanted to talk to you all about that. I mean, really, until there is actually a proposal on the ballot, you know, where we know what is being proposed, it would be difficult to have a workshop. One thing that you know does need to be, you do need to think about, you know, is basically the county. There are certain services that we are obligated by statute to provide, and then there is a lot of quality-of-life services that the county provides that are not mandated by statute, you know. And those are actually kind of some of the programs which are near and dear to the hearts, you know, of some of the citizens of the county and most of the citizens of the

county, but different programs, such as, you know, the library, Veterans Services, you know, there, there's a lot of things that, you know, our quality of life services, and then, you know, with some of the proposals that are on the table, you know, if the county has to start, you know, cutting back, it will be some of those services that are the quality of life where we will be able to cut, or where we will have to cut, essentially, you know, or even being able to provide funding to the sports teams when they travel out of town, you know, it'll be services such as that that we will have to pare back. Because, for one you know, from what I have seen thus far, we are not going to be able to actually do any cuts for, you know, public safety with law enforcement, you know, so their budget will be preserved. You know, the school board is also, you know, I believe that they are off the table as well for education. So, then your kind of, you are limiting, then the county's core services, and, you know, parks and recreation, you know, that is a prime example there. You know that entire department is a quality-of-life department, you know. We try to provide, you know, nice parks and nice facilities for our residents and visitors, you know. And that is something that, you know, just kind of keep in mind going forward, and then whenever we do get a formal proposal on the ballot, then at that point, it would probably be wise for us to go ahead and schedule the workshops, because they will know what we are looking at, as far as percentage reduction. You know, how is it going to impact us at this point? There are so many proposals out there. I have heard about 15 different versions. So, it is just hard to plan at this time, and you may even at some point, want to think about doing a hiring freeze until we actually see what is going to happen.

Commissioner Sanders speaking, well, one of the things too, it is like each county is different, because, like, we offer services. Sometimes in the libraries, which to me, make the library be an essential service. You see what I am saying and but in real life, they call it the quality-of-life service. And so, I mean, it is going to be difficult. I saw where yesterday on the news, where the state of Georgia is looking at the same thing as the state of Florida about the property tax. And so, you know, it is a real. I mean, it is going to be the real deal when you get down to that you are talking about. I do not believe the people realizes what all goes in to making up the services that the county does provide and where you do get your money from, because, I mean, that is it. It comes from tax money. So anyway.

Mrs. Griffith speaking, and it is unfortunate, because it is the most you know. It is the most tangible form of government, you know, where your citizens can go visit your parks, and you know that that is your tax dollars in action, you know. So that is something that you know is visible to all of us every single day, but we will see how it turns out.

Chairman Jones speaking, going back to where we were before I want to make this statement about the recreation or the park services or whatever. So, I foresaw, yes, there is usually some kind of issue at least once a year with some of our sports teams, the youth sports teams. But I foresaw, as more and more people are wanting to push kids to travel ball, the problem I have is now those kids that want to play, that cannot travel, or are part of families that do not have that ability, even if they wanted to. And if I do think that we need to do something with the Parks and Recs director and not just them, it needs to be football, basketball, whatever we are doing for the youth, we need to find a way to bring it under us, to make sure that kids can have opportunities to play sports locally in Franklin County, I do think that those kids are important enough. Yes, people might say, well, it is more government in my life. I understand all that. But if we are going to provide a way for the all the kids that want to play, to be able to play and have access to that that would fall under us. Currently it is fallen under individuals, and it has been done here a little, there a little because there is more push for travel ball. And you know, we could have the same situation if somebody started a travel football team, that has not happened yet. But if they started travel football and tried to take all the kids, we have that are good at football and do the travel team well, then the local team would not have enough kids left to play, that is a problem. We need to provide whatever we can provide so there's equal access to all kids in this county whose parents want them to be able to play sports, other kids want to play sports. I think it is important enough that we do need to really look at.

Commissioner Amison speaking, Chairman this is why I have had some discussion, and I know I mentioned to y'all that we need to get that TDT percentage increase, because Gulf County dedicates one whole cent to parks and recs, we could potentially take it, especially given the challenge we may be with property tax, we could possibly take Parks and Recs completely off ad valorem. I mean, obviously Erin would have to do the numbers and explain. You know, I am sure you can do it, but kind of goes in hand in hand in my mind. That is why I was floating around the TDT and stuff like that. You know, we need to start getting, or start looking and keeping in our mind of ways to manipulate that, that challenge, so to speak, and then we could potentially establish a Parks and Recs director. We can, one day get it to a point where one whole cent can go towards that. Be wonderful. I mean, we can do a lot of stuff with that.

Chairman Jones speaking, well, I think that is the designation of the fifth penny, so you would have to ask the residents to vote. Commissioner Amison speaking, now we can only do one at a time. I have been digging a little bit, I promise you, I have been trying to figure a way to scratch something up. Commissioner Ward speaking, Mr. Chairman, that is a whole other workshop in and of itself. Want to vote on the tax? Well, that's tax we are not paying, yeah, but that people do not know that. They just see tax. Commissioner Amison speaking, but anyway, I just, I figured, why was in discussion. I cannot call y'all up and tell you that, but that's where my brain's been going. So yeah.

Chairman Jones speaking, I can tell you right now current year's collections last year one, because we have three pennies, so it is easy to divide one penny of TDC tax last year would have been \$1.2 million. I do not think we put that much money in parks and recs.

### **County Coordinator & Attorney Reports**

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

1. Action Item: RCSC Appointment
  - Commissioner Amison has submitted two candidates, for your approval, for the County's seats on the Riperian County Stakeholders Coalition.
  - Mr. Grayson Shepard and Mr. Brock Shiver as volunteered to serve and represent the County.
  - Mr. Ken Jones has their contact information to explain their roles on the RCSC to include meeting dates and times.
  - Board action to appoint Mr. Shepard and Mr. Shiver to represent Franklin County on the RCSC.
2. Action Item: 2026 BOCC Meeting Calendar
  - Attached is the 2026 regular meeting calendar discussed at your last meeting.
  - There are only two meetings that should be changed to Tuesday, due to Florida Association of Counties' events, September 15<sup>th</sup> and December 1<sup>st</sup>.
  - A big "Thank You" to Chairman Jones for creating the calendar.
  - Board action to accept the 2026 regular meeting calendar, including the September 15<sup>th</sup> and December 1<sup>st</sup> meeting dates.

**On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Amison, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved items 1 and 2 from Mr. Moron's report. Motion carried 5-0.**

3. Discussion/Action Item: FACT Flyer
  - Attached to my report is the draft flyer for the Florida Association of Counties Trust Customer Service and First Amendment Classes.
  - As the Board is aware Commissioner Croom contacted FACT about these classes based on feedback from his meeting with County directors.
  - Besides your directors, invitations to these classes will be extended to the Clerk of Courts, Tax Collector, Supervisor of Elections, and Property Appraiser's offices.
  - Once reviewed and approved the flyer will be circulated to the stated offices.
  - Board discussion and action to approve the flyer.

Mr. Moron speaking, just wanted to make sure you guys were good wit the flyer before we send it out. If there is any tweaking, anything else you want on it, please let me know. We will get Denise to do that, and Commissioner Croom will reach out to Denise and tell her full speed ahead. Chairman Jones speaking, commissioners, do you all have anything today? If not, you can get in touch with Mr. Moron and we will go from there.

4. Discussion Item: School Zone Cameras Program
  - A while back, the Board was asked if there was interest in Blue Line Solutions' Automated Speed Enforcement Program.
  - This program tracks vehicle rate of speed in school zones at specific times during the day (see attached report). Drivers traveling above the speed limit will be ticked by mail. The Sheriff's Department will have the opportunity to review the citation prior to it being sent.
  - Is the Board interested in hearing from a Blue Line Solution representative?
  - Board Discussion.

Mr. Moron speaking, item four, Commissioner, if I may, Mr. Chairman, remember a while back we had someone from this company reached out about these blue line solutions of the automated speed enforcement program. They reached back out to the sheriff. The sheriff, Sheriff's Department, his staff, forwarded them to me. The concern seemed to be still the same, that if someone is determined to be driving at particular times, I think their time, they set up the times exceeding the speed limit. It is an electronic ticket that goes to the sheriff for verification, and then it goes for processing, and it goes to your residents or the visitors. A few years ago, your complaint was you did not want that, simply put, you did not want your residents and your visitors receiving these electronic tickets for driving through the school zones. You had deferred to the sheriff that if it ever becomes a problem with speeding in school zones and he was having issues, he will come back to the board and we could discuss it then, but they are, they want to make a presentation. I want to let them know the board still is not interested. Or if you are, let me know I consider the presentation.

Commissioner Croom speaking, so with this, Mr. Chair, yes, I think it was two conferences ago, a couple reps stopped me about it, and I deferred them to the sheriff office, because this, you know, that is I felt like that was the appropriate office, you know, to talk to. And from my understanding, they got a new representative, new regional manager, I know she reached out to the school system, deferred back to the sheriff office. I talked to sheriff's office two different occasions, actually, and one of the commanders felt like they do not need this solution. They did not need this right now. So that is where I am at. Commissioner Ward speaking, I think our sheriff's office has a good program right now with the traffic that they do already, that they pull over. You know, they are proactive and pulling people over if they are speeding through the school zone. Number two, these tickets, like, let us just say, these cameras, how, how accurate are they? Because the car that goes by the camera snaps picture. Who is to say they are not taking the wrong vehicle? In addition to that, it says the sheriff's office will have the opportunity to review the citation. They have enough on their plate. They do not need an extra added task to their list to do that. And that's just I feel like a waste of time, of county resources on their end. So, I do not think we should proceed with this until the sheriff comes to us and says, hey, we have reevaluated, and we probably need to go and move forward with that. So, I am one of five, but I say we just not worry about it till the sheriff says otherwise, not interested.

Chairman Jones speaking, I want to go one step further, I think we should not be looking anything like this, unless we ever get information from the sheriff's department saying that they have issued a bunch of citations in the school zone, that they're having an issue with it, then I think this board should be considering going to try to find a solution, instead of there's nothing wrong with wanting to do a presentation. Commissioner Ward speaking, but I just think it would be wasted time. Chairman Jones speaking, if they have no current tickets for it. This would wind up being another solution we are paying taxpayer dollars for it. It is not being utilized, just like because they will get paid either way. Commissioner Croom speaking, yeah, I think right now the traffic, because I ride through there every morning, traffic enforcement, you know, there is a deputy out there every morning and, in the afternoon, regardless of what this data show, which I think is incorrect, but I think that is suffice right now. If like I said, the sheriff office come to us say, hey, we need some help. Yeah, okay, I will let him know. Commissioner Amison, speaking I am just sitting here smiling, thinking about the flood of emails, because you remember the tag readers and those that even produce tickets? Mr. Moron speaking, yeah, you got a good point there, sir. Commissioner Ward speaking, it'll probably be a burden on our clerk's office as well, because they'll be getting a lot more tickets than probably what they would normally be getting if they're ticketing, if this is going to ticket everybody that's speeding through there, whereas the sheriff's office may be hit and miss, but they, I mean, they do a phenomenal job, but I'm just saying, I don't, I'm not for this. Commissioner Amison speaking, well, Mr. Chairman, and I will just wind it up for me. I just feel like, I think, tie in on this. I will tell you this. I am dropping my kid off. I have seen Commissioner Croom actively out there. There is a police officer present at every school zone if somebody was speeding through there, you know. And again, like y'all said, whenever it becomes a problem and the sheriff needs help with it, that is what I feel like. We need to address it. We do not need to go when trying to do his job.

Commissioner Ward speaking, I have got something, some things for Mr. Moron chairman. So one is, let us see how where do I start? Okay, so first of all, and I think I am, so I talked to Jennifer Daniels with our EOC yesterday, and she because I got called when all this cold weather came about, a warming shelter, they wanted us to open the Carabelle Garden Center as a warming shelter. And I said, well, we cannot do that. And I want to explain why we cannot. We are required by Florida statute to have any certain number of shelters or anything like that for our community and the stipulations, that is not a county stipulation, it is a Florida State regulation and stipulation. So, it is not that we cannot help we are not helping our people. It is just that we have all these situations where and Jennifer and I spoke about it yesterday, has to be manned by credentialed individuals. We had to provide food; we have to provide a lot of other

things. And, you know, so we kind of, and I mean, it does not really, I know the past couple years we have gotten really cold weather, so warming shelters, we do not really, it's not often we have that situation, but that's also why I shared her information from her EOC website, that we do have stuff available where we call the number you get on this registry. They call you before the storm comes or whatever weather event it is, and they allow we have these MOUs with transportation to the school, to transport people that are in need to Tallahassee or to the shelters in a neighboring county. So, I just want to put that out there for the public, please. I know a lot of people do not do Facebook, but go and sign up for the alerts on Franklin, on the Franklin EOC website, and just be a part of that. That helps. I know Weems was help helping with people, so appreciate that. And they were giving out blankets. I think the sheriff had donated some heaters. So, and I even, I mean, I am, I am always available. I mean, I will open up the house even. I mean, I even make, you know, I do not mind helping people in any way I can. So, it's just the matter of, I don't, I know people were kind of upset that we didn't have a warming shelter, but that's why we didn't. So that was one thing. Number two, I do not know if people, other people, got some emails or phone calls about some upset local folks because they tried to get a booth at the Mardi Gras parade, Mardi Gras event at the end of the month, they were told to fundraise for their local team, and they were denied. So that kind of upset me a little bit, because, you know, you got people coming to our community to these for these events, and there is they, they are raising money. I get that they are raised in this particular for the Humane so I am all about animals. I am all about Humane Society, but they are trying to raise funds, and I get that, but they have vendors in there, and they are all raising money for themselves, or whoever. And I thought, how can you dictate who you will and will not let into your little fun? You know, fundraising event, if you are letting a vendor in there, they are putting money in their pocket. Nothing against that. Please do not get me wrong. Take this the wrong way, but if that is the case, and how is that, you know, helping your event, because they do not want the competition for people you know, donate, giving them money, versus the donation to the event itself. So, I was like, how, what is the difference between having a vendor versus having a local. A team, or from our schools, or whatever, trying to fundraise for their purpose. So, I called Michael. I called some other people. I am like, this is not right. You know, we, they should be able to go in there if they want at the end of the day. I told Attorney Shuler about it, but at the end of the day, they do have a right, I guess, in some instance, because, again, it is where how much government you want in your life. I was thinking, we maybe should do a resolution where you have X amount of people local have to be in your event. But then I am like, well, that is not fair to them, because that is their event. So, I was kind of struggling with this over the weekend, but I just want the other Commissioners to be aware that that has come up, I have been on this board for going on six years. I have never had that come up until recently. So, I just want to put a little bug in your ear if somebody calls about that, just kind of put that in your think tank. I am hoping it does not become a problem. We did work out a way where this particular group will be able to set up. They are just, we are kind of circumventing the festival itself. Do not know if I should have said that. Just want to throw that out, because I do not know if y'all got the same phone calls or emails texts. Chairman Jones speaking, so that would not have anything to do with the county. So that is probably I did not get anything. We are not over events. Commissioner Croom speaking, but do we know, like, the do we go as far as, like, reach out to the city to see what the criteria, like, is it permits, or anything they got to pay, or fee, or anything like that with this whole event? Because I am not involved in it. Commissioner Amison speaking, just a question, is it the city that is running this, or is it a 501c? Commissioner Ward speaking, I think it is not, it is in the city. It is in riverfront parts of the city, city venue, but it was a non-charitable the Humane Society and some kind of mammal conservator conservation place that they did. They rented the space. And I see that too. They are renting the space. There was an issue of insurance and liability purposes. And so, I see that side too. So, it's like I told this individual, I see both sides. I really, really do. But I kind of thought, well, if y'all are raising money, you know, why can't it anyway? I just want to throw that out to you guys. And then one more, just an update. I have also been getting more complaints about highway 98 we all know; it has been a been a pain. I reached out to Mr. Webb, who is the resident Construction Engineer. He is the one in charge of all the individual contractors that is doing the work. They did measure the pipes to make sure that the pipes that they were replacing were the exact same size. Because what has happened is it is like a dip. It is almost like they are not packing the dirt or making sure that everything's level or that the pipe was smaller, but he has assured me that the pipes have been the same size, and then someone from FDOT is actually going to be riding through, or supposed to be riding through sometime this week, to make sure that everything is copacetic and go from there. So, I just wanted to give the public an update on that, and he said it is not going to be too long before, I actually did see a sign that says construction next, however many miles there at Franklin Street in East Point. So, I have a feeling they are about to start the next section. Chairman Jones speaking, so all those patches they were doing, actually, what they were doing was replacing culverts, right? And those patches are meant to be temporary nature because they know they are coming back through to pave. Commissioner Ward speaking, he said they are going to shave off a half an inch and put another, like redo the whole thing. It is not going to look that way. And I have assured the public that as well. Chairman Jones speaking, well that section of roads has been bad for a long time. Commissioner Ward speaking, they have, the dips

are bad right now, because going over with trailer or boat. It is rough but I mean the end product is going to be so much better. Commissioner Amison speaking, I can attest to the boat, but again, it is just a matter of time and patience. It will be temporary. Mr. Moron speaking, Mr. Chairman, how is the traffic on the bridge going with where they have started their work there and closing one lane? Chairman Jones speaking, it has been studied but they are doing it at a time of year. I mean, at least they are not doing it in May or July, you know what I mean. So, they are doing it at a good time. Mr. Moron speaking, and like I said to you, I did not say to the rest of the board, they are going to do this one differently than they did. They are going to do shorter sections, both sides, at the same time in that section. Then move one to another section. Chairman Jones speaking, so they are doing one side, when they finish it, close the road to the other side, then they move to the next section. Commissioner Sanders speaking, I think that will be a lot better. Commissioner Ward speaking, I do not know if the other commissioners got this letter. We did not really have a chance to glance at it. Could you read it and think about putting it on your next agenda? It is basically a letter from an individual out of Hamilton County, a councilman requesting a letter of support for the Rural Renaissance bill. So, if you could just read that and put it on your next report, please. Chairman Jones speaking, anyone else have anything for Mr. Moron? At this time the Board moved on to Attorney Shuler's report.

5. Informational Item: Code Enforcement Application

- As directed by the Board, Mrs. Angela Lolley and I participated in a few code enforcement application demonstrations, and we are proceeding with Citizenserve's application.
- I sent you and Mrs. Wendolyn "Sissy" Smith (Code Enforcement Officer) a link to the demonstration which was done using an iPad. The software includes talk to text (type) and integrated AI. Mrs. Smith had no objection to using this software.
- The County currently uses Citizenserve applications for your Building Department and Zoning offices. The code enforcement application would be an additional module to our current account.
- The annual new user cost will be \$2100 (code enforcement officer). There is no additional cost for current users on the account. There is a one-time setup, configuration, and data migration cost of \$10,000. (Quote attached)

6. Informational Item: Camp Gordon Johnston Parade

- The Annual Camp Gordon Johnston Veterans Parade is scheduled for Saturday, March 14, 2026, at 10:45 am.
- Parade line up will be in the vicinity of B Avenue and 4<sup>th</sup> Street.
- Mrs. Angela Lolley will complete the registration form so let her know if you are brining your own golf cart/UTV.

7. Informational Item: ECCC Supply Baskets

- A big "Thank You" to Elder Care Community Council of Franklin County for the donated New Years Baskets to the Senior Activity Center located in Carrabelle.
- A few weeks ago, Mrs. Valentina Webb of ECCC called and asked if a staff member was available to pick up some supply baskets for the seniors at the activity center in Carrabelle.
- Mrs. Kim Raffield, the County's staff point of contact for the activity center did go by the 6<sup>th</sup> Street center last Wednesday and got the New Years Baskets and delivered them to the center in Carrabelle.
- I've attached some pictures the show the volunteers in action filling the baskets with supplies and then standing proudly in front of the packed baskets.
- Again, we thank ECCC for including the seniors at the activity center in Carrabelle as part of this wonderful event.

8. Informational Item: ARPC Coalition Letter

- Attached is a signed letter requested by Apalachee Regional Planning Council regarding an application for a Brownfields Assessment Grant.
- Chairman Jones can provide information on the previous Brownfields Program done at the Airport.

9. Informational Item: District 3 Streetlights

- Streetlights added in District 3 (see attached quote)

10. Informational Item: February 2026 Meeting Dates

- Your next regular meeting is on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m.
- The Planning and Zoning meeting is on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m.
- The Airport Operations Economic Development Board has a workshop on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m. and a regular meeting on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m.
- Weems Board of Directors regular meeting will be on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup>.

#### 14. Michael Shuler – County Attorney

##### 1. Sheena Klink Lawsuit Settlement

This lawsuit seeks damages based on the allegation that the Plaintiff was injured while attending a youth baseball game at one of the County's parks. Attached is Franklin County's conditional offer of settlement in the amount of \$25,000.00, together with the Plaintiff's acceptance of the conditional offer. The condition stated in the offer is that the offer is subject to approval by Franklin County. The recommendation from myself, outside counsel and the adjuster is for the Board to approve a \$25,000.00 settlement with the Plaintiff. If the Board approves the settlement offer of \$25,000.00, then it will be paid by the county's insurance carrier. I have confirmed with outside counsel appointed by your insurance carrier that the county's only payment will be its \$5,000.00 deductible. Board Action Requested: Approval of the \$25,000.00 settlement to be paid by your insurance carrier.

Attorney Shuler speaking, item number one I am asking the Board to approve a conditional settlement offer that was made to the plaintiff in a lawsuit against the county. You are familiar with the basic facts because we talked about them at the last meeting? The essential facts are that this plaintiff was alleging personal injuries from an incident that allegedly occurred over at Kendrick Park during a youth baseball game. The county had sent a conditional settlement offer in the amount of \$25,000 on January 7<sup>th</sup> of this year that was sent in advance of a January 29<sup>th</sup> hearing on the county's motion for summary judgment. On the morning of the hearing on January 29<sup>th</sup> the plaintiff sent a written acceptance of the \$25,000 conditional settlement offer. The condition on the offer that was made, as with all other settlements with the county, the condition is it has to come back before this board for your approval. However, both I, outside counsel and the adjuster for the insurance company, who actually he runs the money, so he is the one who authorized the amount of the settlement offer. The three of us are jointly recommending that the Board approve the \$25,000 conditional settlement offer, which has been accepted by the plaintiff. And as is stated in my report, the county has already paid its \$5,000 deductible, so the insurance company would be paying the balance of the settlement offer. So, with that, I am requesting Board's approval to pay \$25,000 to the seller to the plaintiff in the Sheena Klink versus Franklin County lawsuit. **Commissioner Ward speaking, Mr. Chairman, I will make a motion, but I have a question.** Chairman Jones speaking, okay, we have a motion to approve by Commissioner Ward. Do we have a second? **Commissioner Sanders speaking, second.** Chairman Jones speaking, we have a second by Commissioner Sander, Commissioner Ward go ahead. Commissioner Ward speaking, again, I do not know how much you can go into this because it is a lawsuit. One, was she asking for, she was asking for more money? Attorney Shuler speaking, at your last meeting myself, outside counsel, and the adjuster had recommended rejection of her settlement offer of \$150,000. It was just our view of the case and the facts of the law; is it was completely unjustified to request that amount. The \$25,000 amount authorized by the adjuster, essentially is a cost of defense settlement officer for lack of a better phrase. Commissioner Ward speaking, so in other words, it was, it is going to cost, if we go to litigation with this, it is going to cost us way more than \$25,000? Attorney Shuler speaking, in my opinion, yes. Even though our only financial obligation as the county is the \$5,000 deductible. But yes, it would certainly cost more to take this to a final hearing. Commissioner Ward speaking, an additional question, I do not know if we can do this. In reading this case, can we, or do we have signs up at our county, on our ball fields or whatever? And if you can answer this, fine, if you can't, I won't put you on the spot. But can we have some kind of sign or something, disclaimer that says, if you are in no, the county is not liable if you get hurt or injured or how does that work? Attorney Shuler speaking, it has been decades since I had children that were involved in youth sports. I have not been to the fields. But if there is not a sign, I can, I will check with Parks and Rec and find out what kind of signage is there. Commissioner Ward speaking just like a disclaimer, like, if you go to the carwash, it is mechanical. It says we are not responsible for any damage done to your vehicle. Just like, I do not know if that is going to prevent us from getting any lawsuits if they do, somebody does get injured. But I feel like if you have a disclaimer, then you can say, well, we do have a disclaimer that says you are entering this park at your own risk. Attorney Shuler speaking, I usually tell clients you could make yourself bullet resistant but you cannot make yourself bullet proof. Commissioner Ward speaking, well I think I see that, but I think having something up at least might protect us in some instances. Attorney Shuler speaking, perfectly reasonable. Commissioner Croom speaking, that was mine too. Have y'all read through the whole case file? I read through it. I express my concern with Attorney Shuler and the other attorney. I do not care for this claim at all. I am

not going to go too far in depth in it because it is a lawsuit. I do not know if I can, but I will say I wanted to know if it is permissible for us to have a shade meeting so we can discuss this as a board? Attorney Shuler speaking, you can obviously call for a shade meeting. You and I actually had that discussion before, but keep in mind, in the shade meeting, you cannot make any decisions. All you can do is talk about the cost of litigation and litigation strategy. Those are the limitations of a shade meeting. So that was one of the reasons I did not schedule this for a shade meeting is where we are at a point where you just need to make a decision. You accept the settlement or you do not. Our recommendation, I will say, rather strongly, is that the board does approve their acceptance of our conditional settlement offer and conclude the case. However, that is totally a policy decision for the board to make. Commissioner Croom speaking, I just felt that it needed to be discussed. From reading the whole case style, I am not all, I am not personally and professionally, all about just settling cases, because it is an easy way for us. You know especially from reading the facts of this case. Commissioner Ward speaking, Mr. Chairman, I agree with you Commissioner Croom. I did read the whole case file. My hang up and again, please stop me if I am getting out of line. Attorney Shuler speaking, I do not want to get into the details. I would really like for us, just to limit the discussion. Yes or no, it is an up or down. But the recommendation, again, from the adjuster, outside counsel and myself is for the board to approve the conditional settlement that they have accepted and authorized the payment for the \$25,000. Again, it is an economic consideration, and I do think if we were to trial, it would cost us and the insurance company more money to defend the case than it is going to cost to settle. And unfortunately, Commissioner, I hear you, but this happens quite a bit in litigation. I mean, we have had a couple of cases like this over the years that I have been with the board, and trust me, I have had this conversation with commissioners. I remember Commissioner Putnal was very upset. If you remember Commissioner Sanders, where we were paying a former employee a settlement offer, I think it was \$15,000 at the time. He did not want, I mean, he just did not want off. He just kind of like what you are saying, Commissioner Croom, taking the trial. But unfortunately, the economic reality is, you know, this is a financial decision, and it is a cost saving measure, you know, for the county and this insurance carrier. Commissioner Croom speaking, but at the same time with this, I guess it is getting too far into it. Commissioner Sanders speaking, we had a similar case like this, if you remember a claim, that is when the woman walked over the hot coals on St. George Island beach. And it was awful, just sometimes things happen. Chairman Jones speaking, alright any more discussion before we vote? We do have a first and a second. **All in favor, any opposed? Let the record reflect it was 4-1, Commissioner Croom opposed.**

Attorney Shuler speaking, since we are talking issues regarding county litigation, I will just tell the board in summary fashion, we did have a hearing on the county's motion to dismiss the Landings amended lawsuit yesterday before Judge Allman. If you remember, they have filed a Bert Harris claim against the county seeking approximately \$6.7 million in damages that they claim result from the St George Island overlay. The judge did not rule from the bench. What the judge has ordered is for both parties to submit proposed orders no later than close of business on March 2nd and then he will make a decision thereafter on the county's motion to dismiss. So, give you that brief update. The next item on my report. Commissioner Sanders speaking, can I ask a question about that meeting? I know I am not going to ask any of the particulars on it, because I was called by some of my constituents and said, what would this six point something, million-dollar lawsuit? I do not know. And I tell them it was concerning the St George Island overlay. I just want to make people understand that we cannot talk about that. Attorney Shuler speaking, we do not talk about pending litigation. Commissioner Ward speaking, social media, Mr. Chairman, that is all it boils down to, social media. There was a post made about it and I even called Attorney Shuler and just gave him a heads up, but that was what that was from, was a social media post that someone put out there. And I do, and I tell them the same thing, like, I cannot discuss any pending litigation with anybody. If you want to go, go to the court hearing, go ahead. Attorney Shuler speaking, the public are welcome at those hearings.

## 2. Code Enforcement Draft Ordinance for Discussion

Attached is a revised draft Code Enforcement Ordinance concerning dilapidated structures and abatement of nuisances, together with a copy of the Wakulla County ordinance provided to me by staff. I removed the sections for mowing and junk in the draft I prepared; however, the nuisance abatement section also includes code enforcement for overgrowth and junk. Does the Board have any further guidance on how it wants to proceed regarding dilapidated structures and abatement of nuisances? It is my intention to discuss this again at your second meeting in February with presentation of a final draft ordinance for further Board discussion, to be followed by a public hearing in March 2026, if approved by the Board.

Attorney Shuler speaking, so item number two on my report is just a discussion regarding the draft code enforcement ordinance that we talked about in the fall of last year and talked about again at the workshop that was recently held by the board a couple of weeks ago. I have made what I believe to be the correct revisions to that draft by removing the

specific sections dealing with mowing, and also the sections dealing or the section dealing with basically the removal of junk on property that leaves us remaining essentially with the dilapidated structures public nuisance abatement and emergency situations in that ordinance. I do want to point out to the board, though, that even though I have removed the specific length the individual sections on mowing and junk in the public abate or the nuisance abatement provision, there's still code enforcement that could be authorized for overgrowth and junk. So those items are not completely removed. And I did not completely remove them, because I know that to the extent that we have had now, I think three sessions in front of the special magistrate for code enforcement, overgrowth and junk are two items that just come up repeatedly in addition to the sanitary nuisances. So, I did want to leave that in the draft that I have prepared, I have also revised this draft to follow the board's instructions to remember I had reference to, like a nuisance abatement board and also a code enforcement board that by definition, I had changed to the special magistrate. The board had expressed some concern about that, specifically Commissioner Ward and Commissioner Croom. I remember bringing that up, so I have gone through and deleted out all of those references to boards and replaced them just with a special magistrate. So, this morning, I just want to find out if I had any further instructions or directions from the board on the draft that I have prepared. And then also, as part of my report, I did receive from county staff a copy of essentially a code enforcement ordinance out of Wakulla County. I do not have any instructions from the board relative to that, so I did not I just want to put it on my report, and if the board has any instructions for me concerning the Wakulla County code enforcement ordinance, let me know, and I will follow whatever directions the board gives me. Commissioner Sanders speaking, Mr. Chairman, yes, may I have the floor? Commissioners, I got a problem, and I hate to bring it to the board, but I got to. I am not going to go nowhere on this code enforcement until something is solid in here, because I just learned Sunday of a code enforcement that was done on a piece of property out there at Lanark. I made mention, I did not say whose it was, but I said Lanark at the last meeting, little did I know that he was going, supposed to go before the magistrate for a camper or motor home in his yard. Now, I three times last year called Fonda Davis and had him take a dumpster out there to help clean this man's property, because the man is nothing on but on Social Security at the same time, from what I've and I am okay. What happened was the man was cited for not going to court. When the notice was put at that man's property, it was not handed to him to be notified to go to court. It was put on a post by the camper that is in his yard, and he has four lots. The man has a disability that was not taken into consideration. But at the end of the day, the magistrate levied \$1,040 fine against the man, and I am in an uproar about it, because I know personally that man and his family has tried to clean up that and had done a very good job, I have to say, for the past three times that I know of. I was not notified at all about this, except for the initial thing when Courtney was on there. I assume the problem had been taken care of, because it was cleaned up and there was not nothing, but maybe a doodle bug and a Durango and a camper in his yard, which no one's living out of. It is just there, and he has made mention that he will get rid of it when he can find somebody with a trailer big enough to haul it off. But what I am saying is this man does not have the means to pay \$1,040 fine on something I assumed was being taken care of. I never did hear from no one on it, so I assumed it was being taken care of. That is the second one in district two, and I am not putting up with a third one the way that was done. When the commissioner of that district does not know that something like that is being done, I do not get communication. Then I am going to come here and let y'all know how I feel. Now I am going to tell you I do not know. I have already talked to Mr. Shuler about it. He is looking into the procedural side of it. But this man did not know he had a meeting with the court magistrate on that day. Had he known it, knowing the man, as I do, he would have been there, but he did not know it. So, because he did not know it, and the only thing he knew was when Buddy Shiver served papers on that he had \$1,040 fine on him for a camper being in his yard. So, I am telling you, until we ride around Franklin County and clear everybody up for them extra campers and them extra things and all, I'm not supportive of this. Now I am for the sanitary nuisance and dilapidated houses have got no problem with it, but a person that needed to be considered a little bit more than what they were because they have a disability, and I am not quite so sure how he was served, was legal. Him having a disability and no one actually told. Commissioner Ward speaking, did he not get a certified letter in the mail? Commissioner Sanders speaking, no, he had a thing that was posted on a post next to the camper at the end of his property. He has four lots out there. Commissioner Ward, he has four lots, and the campers on one of those lots out there. So, he did not know. It is not like he sees it every day. You see what I am saying. But my thing is, I never had been communicated on it. Well, you all may be communicating with stuff. I never was communicated other than that. One initial thing with Courtney, and Courtney said she was going to take care of it. I assumed it was taking care of it. When the family called and asked for doctors, they said, we need to clean up some more. We want to clean up some more. And so, they went up and beyond the call of duty to clean up. And I am just I am just beside myself, because I know the man's situation, and I know he does not have the money to pay that \$1,000 for that \$1,040 fine, and it bothers me. And like I said, until we read every property in Franklin County of a camper or something like that, that nobody's living in, I do not see how you can move forward, because that is picking and choosing. Chairman Jones speaking, to start in one spot Commissioner, I know you cannot get all of them at one time if you do not get the first one. I know that is not

picking and choosing. Now the procedure, yeah, we talked about that because that falls under us. I do believe we need to discuss that, but it is not picking and choosing to start with one, because if you do not do 1,2,3, then you will never do 500 and we do currently have something on the book. Commissioner Sanders speaking, yeah, but it just upset me, because I know of three different time that I have had called that dumpster, to be at that property, for that family to clean that property up, right, to put debris and all in it. So, and that bothers me, because I know that is it, but for me not to have any kind of a phone call and until the family call and lets me know they have been served with paper from the court and that, you know that upsets me, it would upset you too if you had not been notified. Chairman Jones speaking, oh yeah, but I think Michael did not we have discussion. Did we have discussion the other day because we are still in the processes of all this stuff, and Courtney is not with us anymore. But did we have discussion of moving, of having somebody from Sheriff's Department serve anybody with any kind of paperwork and not just mailing paperwork going forward? Mr. Moron speaking, yes. Commissioner Ward speaking, yeah that was my thing. You and I had that discussion. Chairman Jones speaking, we talked about that for going forward, how it might look, instead of just relying on mail or relying on this or the other, I think we need to spend the extra \$13 and have it actually served at every level, not just. Mr. Moron speaking, unfortunately commissioners. I mean, it is still with code enforcement. We are still kind of a term you have used before, building the plane as it is flying, because we try things and it, you know, it does not work out. So, we try another route, you know. So, to answer your question about, we have shifted from certified to using Deputy Buddy, Mr. Shiver, to do process serving on these particular incidents. So, we make sure we reach somebody and it is not certified mail that might go and come back go to the wrong address, because sometimes the violating address is not the one, the address that you need to send it to reach the person that is responsible for that. Commissioner Sanders speaking, like me, I have a PO box, but that is not that is only where I get my mail. You know, I think that is it. But anyway, it just concerns me. It just concerns me about all this, and I know we have to do something, and I am like Commissioner Amison, and last meeting on sanitary nuisances, and you know that is something you got to take care of. But I am just concerned with this because the property, you look at the property two years ago, you look at it now, it is so much of it different, you know what I mean. And if I had not been the one calling and getting the dumpsters, I would have said something, you know, I would have, would not have thought nothing. But I know what had that family has done so, and like I said, the man does have a disability. Commissioner Amison speaking, Mr. Chairman, just for clarification, because I was looking back, and you did not want to name names, and I am not, but that was, I am assuming, that was one of the ones that we just discussed last meeting in the case file that was sent out in December for the January Magistrate Hearing, is that what we're talking about? Chairman Jones speaking, yes, okay. So, the problem we have is, is that we have a breakdown in the communication as far as a notice to the individual, the property owner, so they do not mail they just posted on the property, is that the procedure. Attorney Shuler speaking, Commissioner Sanders has instructed me to look into. Commissioner Amison speaking, so we do not know that kind of information yet? Attorney Shuler speaking, when I spoke with the code enforcement officer before the hearing, the general question was asked as to all the case files, have we achieved service of processes provided through your adoptive policies and procedures? And the answer is yes, but sometimes, as Mike has said, when the data is input into the county's computer system for the addressing some we've recently discovered for one of the case files that went not the one you're talking about Commissioner Sanders, but another case file, the certified mail, was actually sent to the property address where the violation existed, as opposed to the mailing address for the person that was supposed to so it was just, It was a data input problem. So, whenever the certified mail was spit out, it was sent to printed out. Sorry, that was printed out and served. Then it went to the property address instead of the residential address. So that was an invalid service, service, the process from. Mr. Sanders, again, has directed me to look into specifically the service on this particular individual. I have not yet had a chance to yesterday was a busy day, but I will be looking into that and talking with the code enforcement officer just basically doing a back check on the service to see if it was valid or not valid. Commissioner Ward speaking, and then Mr. Chairman, I am sorry not interrupt, but when the letter does get returned like because you know, if you sign forward, it goes wrong address or whatever, does it and again, does it go back, come back to the here at the courthouse, or our office, admin office? Mr. Moron speaking, yes, it goes to admin office over in East Point, and Angela has a folder that she puts all the file anything that comes in to do for code enforcement, it is in the file for the code enforcement officer to come by and pick up and review. Okay, because when we discuss that at that meeting where we talked about the new procedure. Commissioner Ward speaking, yes and I agree and again, but something we probably do need to talk about is procedurally, what to do. But I think that having someone physically go there and deliver the letter and say, you have it just like a subpoena in court, whatever that way nobody can say, well, I never got the letter, never was served or wasn't aware, so I agree with Chairman Jones and pay the extra \$15 because that's going to save us in the long run, if say someone says they didn't get served and want to appeal the magistrate's decision and we have to go back to court or whatever. Commissioner Sanders speaking, well, that one thing the people the family said is they have the thing that was posted on the post with the tape on it and the whole nine yards on it.

So, I mean, I do not know what that is. Michael had Angela called me yesterday. Angela looked through that file she had, she could not find an update on that file since January of last year, so it was still an open case. So, see where I am coming from and my thing is, I hear y'all saying, oh, you know you met with me, and had nobody called me? Had nobody called me to tell me that this person, I know my people, I know my people, and that is what makes I think we still have to have that hand from our administrative part of it. I still think we need to have a hand on it, because they are the ones that know who to contact. They knew how Commissioner you need to know about this. Is that not, right Michael? Commissioner Ward speaking, well, if I can interject, there was an email sent by Sissy to all of us that said these cases are pending. Commissioner Sanders, the magistrate did not say the name. Commissioner Amison speaking, yeah, I am looking at it right here. It is on 12 12, 425, yeah. Commissioner Sanders speaking, anyway, I just wanted to bring everybody's attention to it. And I still believe we need to have Angela and Michael look at this situation. I sure do. Commissioner Ward speaking, Mr. Chairman, I have not reviewed the whole entire ordinance. There are a few pages left I have to do, but there was some I will get with you after the fact, just some grammatical things that is not really pertinent, but just in the cleanup of the ordinance before it is presented for the public hearing. Chairman Jones speaking, oh, absolutely. We are going to have it in our next meeting. Yeah, so I think you heard more of the board's direction this morning, in the discussion of where we are talking about going with code enforcement. Mr. Moron speaking, can I ask one thing would the board consider? So, the Wakulla ordinance has like a checklist for what they quoted dangerous houses. I would really like the board to consider adopting some of those, because it helps, it helps your code enforcement officer, it helps the building official, and it helps us all. If there is a checklist you guys agreed to for them to follow to determine if a house could be sent to the magistrate for and I do not know Commissioner Ward, you had it. I know it is coming up next. You had an issue with paying for an engineer which is coming up next, maybe, maybe that checklist could help reduce the need for an engineer. Maybe, I am not sure, but I would really like you guys to look at that that I can't remember what section it is, and we'll call it eight terrible with that part memory like that. But if you would look at a dangerous house, entire section in that, what it also does in that ordinance a couple sections prior to that, maybe it allows the code enforcement officer a little bit more leeway to make that determination based on the checklist and only require an opinion from your building official as to the structure, which gives them a little bit more leeway, because that was another concern we were discussing in the past. So, I will just kind of like you guys are doing, and then kind of talk to Attorney Shuler about it as he completes this, this draft of presentation. Chairman Jones speaking, that is a good thing to mention, because we also need to consider this needs to come up before we have the public here. So yes, I am in favor of us adding things that give kind of a checklist of kind of a known where to go. But bear in mind if you are trying to this is where the difficulty comes in. If you are trying to come up with an ordinance that spells out everything, and this is exactly what you should do and when you should do it, and you give no discretion to the officer in the field. I know some people say, oh, no, they need to do you know, it's got to be what's written. Yeah, if there is something not written that falls through the cracks. You can be back trying to redo that for every time it comes up. Yes, there has to be, have not gone through it there. There has to be a way that. Yes, there is a checklist, but there still has to be that ability of those working in the field, to use discretion. Because at the end of the day, I think the rest of them are like this. I know for me; I am not really about fines. I am about compliance, yes. So yeah, discretion is being there for that to happen. Mr. Moron speaking, so more like not shall, but more like a maybe or might, or and, or use those terms to allow that yes, and, or thank you that will allow the code enforcement officer that discretion. So, case in point, so Commissioner Sanders of saying the one gentleman was, you know, challenged, you know, physically, that would create some discretion as to how you deal with that case and how much leeway you give that particular person? Yes, I guess Chairman, I agree with you 100%. Commissioner Ward speaking, Mr. Chairman, and talking to procedurally and how this is all going to come to fruition, we also need to take in consideration when we do have to abate, or when it is ruled that we can abate a property, how that process is going to go, we have to go out for bids, where the money is going to come from. I know that. Again, we are not in it to make money. We are in it to just abate the issue, the nuisance, but the fees that they do get paid. Can we use those fees to abate or pay an engineer or whatever? I know we got the 90/10 thing, but we need to have a way and put in place to when the magistrate makes these rulings, how to continue the follow through process to abate the nuisance, get the fines, all that kind of stuff. Does that make sense? Chairman Jones speaking, it does, because the rule is not going to matter if we do not have a way to finish it. Commissioner Ward speaking, that is my point. Again. Stop. We get to somewhere, and then we stop, and then a can gets kicked down the road, and then it is we got to get a plan all the way through. Attorney Shuler speaking, commissioners, based on Mr. Moron's comments I will get with him regarding the elements out of Wakulla County ordinance that he would like to see embedded into the new draft, and I will see what I can do to embed them, then have that to you at your next meeting. Commissioner Ward speaking, we also need to include our code enforcement officer right now too with this stuff, because she is the one who is going to have to be enforcing these things and following these guidelines, just the thought. Chairman Jones speaking, to make sure they are understanding, yep, sure what's draft, what is in the draft, and what the implications are of what is written.

Attorney Shuler speaking, I have not directly forwarded a copy of this draft to or I will, once I revise this revised draft, I will copy her on what I send out. Also, based on Mr. Moron's commentary does the Board want to defer on the next discussion on the cost of the engineer until a future date? Because it sounds like the Board may under a new ordinance, want to go through this. I will use his words checklist, as opposed to an engineer, do you need to proceed on with? Chairman Jones speaking, I was under the understanding the only thing that was holding us up with these three properties was this engineering. Attorney Shuler speaking, yes. Do y'all want me to proceed with that? Chairman Jones speaking, okay, yeah, well, I will find out if they make a motion to vote, but I am good with it. Commissioner Sanders speaking, I am good with the three. Attorney Shuler speaking, okay, yeah, so may I move on to item number three on the agenda?

### 3. Engineer's Estimate for Evaluation Reports for Three Structures Which May Constitute Public Safety/Public Nuisance Actions for Discussion

On November 18, 2025, the Board authorized me to retain an engineering consultant to provide reports on structures located at 2340 Highway 98, Carrabelle: 1271 Alligator Drive, Alligator Point and 1009 W. Pine Street, St. George Island. A copy of page 8 of the minutes from the November 18, 2025, meeting is attached.

The engineer, Southeastern Consulting Engineers, Inc., has provided me with a quote of \$4,000.00 per report for three reports, totaling \$12,000.00.

Attorney Shuler speaking, okay, so we have already had the discussion about the engineers so everyone knows what's on the table. Does the board have any further directions for me? Or should I just proceed on with retaining the engineer, getting the reports prepared? Commissioner Ward speaking, Mr. Chairman I do need to make a motion. I feel like that we have waited way too long this, this 123, 40. I went back and look, this has been going on for going on three years. It is the one that has gotten hit by storms. And the roof, even from the Property Appraiser website, the roof's got a big gaping hole. So, we need to move forward with this. In my opinion, I am tired of waiting on it. Chairman Jones speaking, do you need a motion to vote on, or what? Attorney Shuler speaking, I went back and checked the minutes from November 18, when the board authorized this, and I do not think I need any further authorization. When I read the minutes, it said that y'all had already authorized me to move forward. So, I just want to bring because there was a lot of discussion about this at the workshop, so I just want to bring this back to the board, make sure that was still the board's desire, so I am not hearing anything contrary. So, I will move forward with retaining the engineer and getting the report prepared. Alright, I have also asked them, as part of that report to give us. He cannot give anything other than, like an estimate, a ballpark for the cost of any demolition if, in fact, that report recommends demolition. But I have asked him to include that as an item in the report, so the board would have that information, and then we have my information and possible discussion items. Does the Board want to discuss any of those individually?

Chairman Jones speaking, the only thing I will say is on the rate study, since Mr. Hartman represents both cities, please reach out to him and ask him if they will be included. If not, we need to go and wrap up move this November. Attorney Shuler speaking, he and I had that conversation last week, alright, and everybody is getting another follow up email this week. Was all of the VFDs, and that will be notifying them that, as far as I know, every other VFD has submitted data other than the two cities. Chairman Jones speaking, okay, we are still on track to be able to have the November ballot, correct? Attorney Shuler speaking, so far as I know, yes, sir, okay. I mean, I will go back and look at the schedule, but I think we are well ahead of time. I mean, I don't think they were even planning on and again, I haven't looked at that schedule since November, but my memory is they want to get us to a point where the board can consider and adopt the ordinance, and I think June in advance of the because you have to adopt an ordinance and as part of getting this on to the tax rolls or collection so but I will double check the schedule and send a copy of that back out to the board. Chairman Jones speaking, what is that schedule? What is the drop-dead date for the supervisor? When is the latest subcommittee added? Attorney Shuler speaking, I do not know the answer. Remember, we are not, the board's decision was not to go to a vote. The board's decision, y'all are going to adopt an ordinance. Chairman Jones speaking, I did not remember that. Attorney Shuler speaking there will be some public hearings and things of that nature in advance of the ordinance. But no, this is not going on the ballot. Chairman Jones speaking, okay, that works. I did not remember that.

### Informational/Possible Discussion Items

#### 4. MSBU Rate Study

To date, all volunteer fire departments except the City of Apalachicola and the City of Carrabelle have submitted data to Accenture, the consultant you retained to prepare a rate study. I defer to Accenture as to the sufficiency of the data submitted to it.

5. Duke Energy Land Swap Update

Duke Energy has approved of the 90% complete road construction plans and requested the 100% complete sealed plans. On February 2, 2026, Dewberry provided the 100% complete sealed road construction plans. These plans have been forwarded to Duke Energy's attorney. Once Duke Energy issues its letter of no objection to the road construction plans, we can then schedule a closing on the land swap.

6. Animal Control Interlocal Agreement with the City of Apalachicola

Attached is the full signed interlocal agreement between the City of Apalachicola and Franklin County.

7. Settlement Offer Regarding: The Landing at SGI, LLC Lawsuit Against Franklin County The Plaintiff accepted the county's \$10,000.00 settlement offer. The settlement agreement is being drafted and will be circulated for execution.

8. Temporary Storage Agreement with the School Board of Bay County of Behalf of Tom P. Haney Technical College

Attached is the signed temporary storage agreement for Tom P. Haney Technical College to temporarily store the contents of the hanger formerly leased by CAAZ, Inc. The temporary storage ends on or before February 17, 2026.

**Commissioners' Comments**

Chairman Jones speaking, any commissioner comments? Commissioner Sanders speaking, thank y'all for listening to me when I have it. You know, I appreciate. I take it hard, and that is what it is, but I have, I have to tell y'all I am proud of this young gentleman, one of the firefighters out there at Lanark had got his FF1, firefighter one. And so, we got some good news coming down the pipe, hopefully on the ISO and all that. So that young gentleman called me the other night to let me know that he did get his certification. And so that makes that fire department a little bit better with little baby steps. Chairman Jones speaking, so to make sure all the commissioners are aware, if you like watching high school basketball, we are about to have a really good showdown tomorrow night in St Joe at seven o'clock the Port St Joe Sharks are undefeated 24-0 District semifinal, Franklin County is 19-2. One team can win. Mr. Moron speaking, Mr. Chairman, tell them the best part, we have not played St Joe for a year. Commissioner Sanders speaking, one other thing I want to tell you. How much I enjoyed being with all of y'all at the Capitol up there, and we had such a real good time. The weather was excellent. It was not cold, was not raining, and we saw so many people, and we were able to see the Speaker of the House and the representative and this, and the senator, and so that meant a lot to it by being there. Commissioner Amison speaking, I cooked all day, Wednesday, not all day, but I cooked. Got up at five or left at four. I forgot even what time. I even started driving, but it was, it was great. It was fun. I enjoyed being around y'all and to be able to meet people up there with together, representing the county.

Chairman Jones speaking, it was also highlighting small counties around the state, rural counties day and also, thank you, to Opportunity Florida. So, I did not know they were telling us at the event. So, they said they started doing this, I guess during covid, any rural county that goes to that event, there is a certain amount of money you pay to register, but we are getting reimbursed. Almost half of it from Opportunity Florida. We give them the receipt, and they send us back half. Mr. Moron speaking, yes, they do, sir. I talked to Bill Wills. Thanked the sheriff. They are already planning for next year.

**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.