

**FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
COURTHOUSE ANNEX, COMMISSION MEETING ROOM
FEBRUARY 18, 2026
9:00 AM
MINUTES**

Commissioners Present: Ricky Jones-Chairman, Jessica Ward-Vice-Chairman, Cheryl Sanders, Ottilie Amison, and Anthony Croom, Jr.
Others Present: Michael Shuler-County Attorney, Michael Moron-County Coordinator, and Erin Griffith-Fiscal Manager/Grants Coordinator, Jessica Gay-Clerk to the Board

Call to Order

Chairman Jones called the meeting to order.

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

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

Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Moron speaking, the only change we have is the Grayson Shepard item. We may have to move him to later in the meeting. Commissioner Sanders noted that she will have to leave early today due to an appointment. **On a motion by Commissioner Amison, seconded by Commissioner Croom, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the board approved the agenda as presented. Motion carried 5-0.**

Approval of Minutes and Payment of County Bills

1. County Bill List for Payment

On motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Sanders, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the Payment of County Bills. Motion carried 5-0.

Constitutional Officers

2. AJ Smith (Ginger Coulter) -- Sheriff -- ICE Detainee Program Discussion

Chairman Jones speaking, we are going to move to the next thing on the agenda, and that is the discussion about ICE with the sheriff's office. While they are coming, I will say we have plenty of speaker cards. We will give you ample time to speak. Let us all be heard today.

Good morning, commissioners, members of the public. I am Captain Angela Millender. I am the assistant jail administrator with the Franklin County Sheriff's Office. I have never addressed the board, so if I fumble a little bit, please forgive me. So, we are here this morning seeking an MOU, that is a memorandum of understanding between the county and the sheriff's office to facilitate discussions and agreements with Sabot Consulting regarding the housing of ICE juveniles. Sabot Consulting specializes in the office of ICE integration. Their expertise in developing, executing, and operating migrant criminal detention operations is essential for minimizing compliance issues. Throughout the contract term, they will serve as the county's independent advisor and oversight consultant, providing both on site and remote services to ensure compliance with ICE regulations. Additionally, they will be present for any audits, inspections, or other meetings required by ICE. The concerns raised by the county attorney have already been discussed with Sabot. A representative from Sabot stated that the attorney could red line any of these concerns and adjust the language from that point, none of the issues mentioned were anything they were unwilling to address, and they are happy to collaborate with us throughout this process.

Chairman Jones speaking, commissioners. Are any questions? Commissioner Ward speaking, I probably

do, but I let the public speak first, because they may bring up what I want to ask. Chairman Jones speaking, No problem. Commissioner Croom speaking, same here, Mr. Chair. Chairman Jones speaking, I am just taking these in the order that they are. I did not move them or change them. Ms. Wilder, do you wish to speak this morning?

My name is Lynn Wilder Apalachicola, and I wish I were not first, but sorry, that is okay. I am I guess I am here just to say that this is, I do not know what is really, I do not know what is really going on. I do not know what is going on. So why we would want to house juveniles here in Franklin County at this point, with the limited information that we have. I watched AJ yesterday on Facebook, and I have heard from other people what the reports are, who is going to be doing what? And it really is so confusing now I am not sure how you can make a reasonable decision. The presentation I saw yesterday on Facebook. I was hoping to see here this morning and have some back-and-forth discussion. That is all I have. Thank you.

I am prepared, have a paper. My name is Martha Harris. I live in Apalachicola. I have been here about 21 years. I am speaking to this proposal to house juvenile males ages 13 to 17 in our Franklin County Jail. I am a retired minister, and that does not mean exactly I have God's ear, but it does mean my perspective is more of a spiritual one. However, I will begin with some statistics. ICE, which had 39,000 detainees in custody just one year ago, recently said that its detention re-engineering initiative will provide capacity to hold more than 92,000 persons in its warehouses. This extension that I think we are talking about here into jail space is meant to be a temporary measure, most likely between arrest and deportation, but we, the people of Franklin County, would become part of that same expansion of housing people unjustly, in my opinion. The current administration is openly building policies that remove people from the fabric of our neighborhoods, people who live here and contribute greatly to the welfare of our community, families who have lived here for years lose status overnight. Legal protections disappear by announcement, the Department of Homeland Security now recruits agents through an accelerated 47-day training process, a number chosen for its symbolism and not providing for readiness. And that policy is enacted often with force, certainly not necessarily here, but we have seen it in so many places, and that is the system we would be participating in, in a greater degree than we do now. The system produces exactly what it was built to produce, fear, escalation and dividing people from us and them. The sheriff, in his comments yesterday on Facebook, said that he hoped it was not true that our immigrant neighbors fear the police, but it is true. Detention centers are bad, and certainly they might be worse in many cases than jail, but that does not make for a good argument to lock children up, children from somewhere else, far from their own families, their own network of community. We would not be warehousing our own children, but somebody else's children. Is that supposed to make it better? Especially in Apalachicola, we increasingly have a tourist economy known for many things, hospitality, beaches, fishing, craft beer, increasingly, and an old Florida vibe. This is not that this action would be a blot on all the communities of Franklin County, and it is unethical and immoral. Jesus said the first and greatest commandment is this, to love God and to love your neighbor as yourself. The best way to practice our Christianity, I believe, is to love our neighbor, and who is our neighbor? Jesus said in the parable of the Good Samaritan and Luke's Gospel that it is not just someone who lives close to us, who lives in our proximity, who looks like us and talks like house, but even someone from elsewhere, even far away, who does not like these boys. Let us not lock them up here. It may be politically expedient, but it is morally corrupt. Thank you.

Hi, I am Teresa Bestor. I live in East Point, and I have been a full-time resident since 2016. I am retired now, but before that, I was the state director of adult education for the state of Florida, which includes secondary ESOL and migrant education. So, I have had a lot of experience with ICE in the past, and even as far as 20 years ago, when it was a fairly new agency and they were all federal employees, they were problematic in many areas at the time. They had small printers, and they could go around, and if they saw something so small as a Haitian flag hanging from the rear-view mirror in your car, they could print out a warrant and try to arrest you. So, this is something that has been going on for a long time, and they were full time federal employees at the time, not the part time mercenary type person that we have now. I have

seen severe excesses of judicial power occur just over those small things, and the people actually involved in it thought it was funny. They actually enjoyed what they were doing, and we have seen that escalate to a stage that is really quite appalling. So, I have real concerns about that, in addition to the fact that this age student will require resources that Franklin County typically has difficulties with. I know that sometimes we have difficulty in recruiting and retaining qualified teachers. These students will need educational services. They will need other services that could possibly withdraw resources from existing populations here in the county. And thirdly, I just want to say that several years ago, when we were faced with another tragedy of a school shooting, I remember our sheriff saying, you do not have to worry if something like that occurs, we will rush the building. And my first thought was, yeah, they would. I knew that our Sheriff's Department would rush the building. And this is the type of sheriff's department that I want to see continue in Franklin County, for a number of reasons, a sheriff's department that is in favor of mercy, in favor of justice, and not in incarceration, especially for this age of student who 13 to 19, that is very young, that's middle school, all the way not even through high school. So, I really do want to stand on record and say I do oppose this for a number of reasons, but I think that mercy and justice are the main one, and thank you for your time.

My name is Penny Marler, and I live in Apalachicola, Florida. I am here Mr. Chairman, to urge the county commission to reject the proposed ICE memorandum of understanding. I am a retired professor from Sanford University in Birmingham, Alabama. I have lived full time in Apalachicola for seven years. I was drawn to this town by its openness, historic diversity, and small-town intimacy. Over the past year, I have watched in dismay as our tightly knit community of Hispanic neighbors, one by one, are arrested, detained and or deported for the primary misdemeanor of driving without a license and the civil status of being undocumented. It has been devastating for families, friends, and I think indeed the whole community. I know my Hispanic neighbors as hard working, generous, law abiding and family-oriented residents of Franklin County, I read to their precious children at Franklin County School, I mentor an honor graduate, and I drive mothers to school. A little over three weeks ago, I gave a long-time landscaper a ride from East Point to Apalachicola. With such pride he showed me a picture of his 17-year-old daughter. A week and a half later, he was arrested while looking for a ride from a job in East Point, removed to another county jail in less than 24 hours, transported to Miami and then deported. He had lived and worked here for 17 years. As an educator who specializes in psychosocial and moral development, I am especially concerned about a proposed program to detain immigrant adolescents at the Franklin County Jail. The 1997 Flores Settlement Agreement establish national standards through the Office of Refugee Resettlement for the detention, treatment, and release of minors in federal immigration custody, including a rapid transfer of custody, standards of care into issue in detention in a least restrictive environment, and the release of children to parents, legal guardians or suitable sponsors without necessary delay, it remains in effect, despite implacable litigation from the current administration. What the sheriff presented on Facebook yesterday is very concerning. It involves immigrant adolescents who have committed serious crimes. What are the crimes of these adolescents, and how are these cases to be adjudicated? Adolescents, as we all are considered innocent until proven guilty, and if the crime is not a misdemeanor but a felony, why would they not be processed in the juvenile justice system? The juvenile justice system, after all, has a goal of rehabilitation for children rather than punishment as adults. Will the Franklin County Jail be holding adolescents separate from the juvenile justice system to deport them without due process, and for how long, and if they are not from Franklin County? Won't that be a barrier to due process and necessary family and legal support for children ages 13 to 17, the juvenile justice system, along with the Office of Refugee Resettlement? Are the appropriate agencies to handle adolescent immigrants who have been arrested despite the good intentions of the sheriff and the motivations of ICE contractors? The whole community is divided between those who are increasingly afraid of or even exploit immigrants, those who are concerned for their dehumanization and welfare, and immigrants themselves who are paying the price with their liberties and lives. Please do not further traumatize our community by inviting deeper entanglement with ICE.

Kung Li speaking, I was raised in an immigrant family just outside of Tallahassee. I now live in Franklin

County, where I grow oysters in the Apalachicola Bay, the greatest place on earth to grow oysters. Between my time in Tallahassee and my time here, I was an attorney prosecuting violations of the Constitution. I am no longer an attorney. I love being an oyster farmer, and that is all. I am an oyster farmer, not an attorney, but my love and respect for the United States Constitution remains intact, and I felt a duty here to speak plainly when I see it under threat. I am urging you to reject any contract to house immigrant children on behalf of ICE for these three reasons. So, first is the legal risk to Franklin County is severe. Since the start of 2025 since the start of this surge of deportations, federal habeas corpus petitions, these are legal challenges to unlawful detention, have increased 100-fold. If you will flip to the back page of there, you can see it as a graph. This is known as the habeas corpus petition. Is known as the Great writ. It is the last line of defense when a person has been unlawfully detained. Habeas corpus is a command from the court, bring me the body. These lawsuits, name defendants. The first that named defendant is not ICE. It is not going to be Sabbat, the private contractor selling the contract. It is the entity that is physically holding the person, that is the sheriff and the county commissioners. That means you signing a contract to house immigrant children is stepping into a mess that we do not want to step into. This explosion in habeas petitions is not the result of frivolous filings. The increase is definitely telling you that ICE is doing something that is very damaging and unpopular, but it is the number of habeas petitions that have been granted that tells you the tactics of ICE are actually unlawful, and that is the second reason to reject the proposed contract. Number two is just that ICE is routinely violating the Constitution. I love the Constitution. I spent my legal career with it, and I am appalled at the disrespect that ICE has shown it. The Fourth Amendment prohibits seizures without warrants and probable cause. ICE has been pulling people from homes and workplaces without either. The Fifth Amendment guarantees due process for any person, citizen or not, adult or child. ICE has been detaining people, including children, without meaningful hearings and adequate process. This is not just aggressive enforcement. When you house somebody on ICE's behalf, you are not a neutral party. You become the instrument of an unconstitutional detention. It does not matter how clean your jail is, and it is very clean, how good the food is. You treat people well, but the conditions inside the jail cannot cure the constitutional violations that created the detention. When you take on that detention function, you become part of the constitutional violation. You may have been told different. Which brings me to the third reason to reject this proposal, and the third reason being, ICE is not a trustworthy partner. The contractor, even less so to do its hardest, dirtiest work, ICE relies on willing and now increasingly, with each act of new bad faith on the part of ICE, less willing collaborators who they promise to pay very well. They work through private middlemen like Sabat, the entity that is approaching this county. These companies profit from filled beds and bear none of your exposure when litigation arrives, when a violation occurs, the contractor might be standing next to you when the inspector comes, they will not be standing next to you in court. You will be there alone, and it seems you have been assured that only dangerous criminals, who Franklin County would be asked to hold. Now, we have heard this before, and it is safe at this point to assume this is deceptive marketing on the part of the contractor, ICE claims it is going only after dangerous criminals. In fact, only five to 8% of the people detained by ICE have serious criminal violations here in Franklin County, by the way, the percentage of our neighbors who we have lost to serious, those who have had serious criminal violations, zero, but most of all, if a young person actually commits a crime like steals a car, for example, they go into the juvenile justice system, then at the end of their sentence, if they're sentenced for something like stealing a car, a serious crime, if they're not a citizen, then they may be deported. The children who are going to be sent under this contract are not criminals. Their detention is going to be based on their immigration status. So those are my three takeaways. You are being asked to sign a contract that, one, puts this county in severe legal risk because two, the contractor, the dude who is asking you to dance, disrespects the Constitution. And number three, that person, that entity, has turned out to be loose with the truth and untrustworthy. So, I urge you to reject this proposal with great respect. Thank you.

My name is Ginger Lawson. I have lived in Franklin County for almost 20 years. My husband, I live in Apalachicola on Seventh Street. I am here to oppose the proposed ICE contract to detain immigrant children in the county jail. I watched the Facebook video Sheriff Smith posted yesterday. You know, a large part of

this country, associates southern jails with the movie Cool Hand Luke, well, good job, Sheriff, it is nice you have dispelled that myth in our county. First, I would like to know the legal status of these boys. Are they, by virtue of the 14th Amendment to the Constitution US citizens, or are they, like many of their parents, undocumented? The sheriff listed serious crimes. They were charged with some having been prosecuted and found guilty. If they are guilty, why are they coming here instead of a deportation center? He refers to these potential inmates as youths. As a mother and a former teacher of children 13 to 17, they are boys. My experience with that age group, regardless of the socio-economic class, is they do not have enough common sense or self-control to find their way out of a paper bag, and they require constant supervision whatever hand reaches in to help them out of the said bag may determine their future. I know a woman whose career involves statistics for the US juvenile prison system. She said, you have a window of opportunity for turning a child's life around. That window is between the ages of 12 and 17. After 17, it is just a crap shoot. I know that our sheriff believes he is doing the right thing and that it might also make some money for the county jail to boot, but I hope we can all agree for profit prisons are not good for anyone. Our jail becomes for profit when it rents out its first bed. Problem is, when this has happened in other states, it becomes not for profit in this rent a bed program, but a negative cash flow situation. Where are their health records? When ICE removed them, I doubt they ask for their health records. Facilities across the country are dealing with a measles outbreak. This happens here, are we prepared for an outbreak requiring a quarantine at the jail of prisoners and staff will the per diem cover this also, there's specific guidelines set out for the minimal Educational Standards and Services for unaccompanied children who are detained in the US. All children, regardless of their immigration status are entitled to access free public primary and secondary education. No doubt, ICE has found a way around it, or is ignoring this law. But if we do the right thing, we follow those guidelines. Otherwise, if there are no classes, will these boys be picking up trash along the bridge with the adult prisoners? Right now, the ACLU is suing jails across the country, and those are not even facilities that are accepting children. In the last two years, the ACLU has had a 70% success rate in the cases brought forth that deal with immigration. If we accept children, it will make the news, and not just the local news. It will make the national news, not a good optic for a county whose bread and butter are tourism. Here you have politely listened to someone's granny naively wax on about her mischievous grandsons and the boys she taught band that may have done nothing worse than stuff rolls of toilet paper in the tuba. But please, let us not put lipstick on a pig. You are being asked to warehouse 13-year-olds or ICE right now, what some people want you to see are faceless, tattoo covered sons of El Chapo who deserve to be treated like hardened criminals, you may agree. But one thing this granny does know is, when you are asked or forced to warehouse someone else's prisoners, you never come out on the right side of history. I believe this would be a losing proposition for the county. Thank you.

Good morning, commissioners, and county staff. My name is so Xochiti Bervera. I am originally from Mexico, and I am proud now to be here living in Franklin County as a seafood worker growing oysters in the oyster capital of the world. I am speaking to you as a Franklin County resident, also urging you to reject this proposal to detain immigrant children in our county jail. But like many others, I am also speaking to you as commissioners so that I can convey some of the serious harm that ICE has done to our community in this past year, because I feel like at a time when we as a community need to be coming together in the face of challenges and working toward a better future. Collaboration with ICE is doing just the opposite. It is pulling us apart. I actually really do not like speaking on behalf of other people, but I was specifically asked to come and share some things with you from our immigrant friends and neighbors here in the county, many of whom have been here longer than I have, because they cannot safely be here in this room and participate in democracy with us today. You know the folks I am talking about because they are your neighbors. Also, their children go to school with your children. They play soccer and basketball. They go to church every Sunday. They have been here for 10 and 16 and 18 years. Some are still learning English. For many of them, it is a third or a fourth language. While they work two and three jobs. They come from Mexico, from Honduras, from Guatemala, where many of them came in the aftermath of the genocide that took place there. They came to the Forgotten Coast and made a home here. They built new and hopeful lives here. And most of all, they tell me to tell you that they used to feel safe here. And then ICE changed

its mission and its scope and its tactics and started targeting anyone who was not born here, even hard working, law abiding immigrants who are absolutely critical to the vitality of places like Franklin County, our neighbors who once trusted law enforcement currently live in terror of ICE, and because of the collaboration with local law enforcement, they live in terror of the very deputies and officers they used to trust and rely on for safety and protection. Like I said, many will not come into a space where there are deputies present, such as this, for fear of being questioned and detained. They will not call 911, and that is a public safety crisis. If they have an emergency for fear that they will end up in Alligator Alcatraz, despite having been a victim, their fear is real, and it is not unfounded. In our county, we know of 10 neighbors on Eighth Street, on 23rd on 25th on 24th who were lost to ICE in the last 13 months, two were detained directly by ICE, but eight others were turned over to ICE by our Sheriff's Department in a small community. The impact of this loss of 10 people is profound. I am going to say some of their names, Manuel, Rossi, Mario, Nicholas, Martin. They were part of the fabric of this county. Martin built the boxes in the Apalachicola community garden. Mario shucked oysters in the mornings at Barbers, and then ran his small grocery store in the afternoon. Rosie worked in the marina for almost two decades. One young man who is just 19, he arrived while he was still a minor. He has been deported to a country now leaving behind his mother, his father and all of his siblings. He is alone there. There are at least eight children in our county who went to bed last night without a parent because of ICE. A father who was with them every day of their lives, until suddenly he was just gone. The question everyone asks is, but are they legal? And it is one of the biggest misconceptions, I know many of you know, but this idea that people are legal or illegal or they could just go get legal if they wanted to. Immigration law is horrendously complex, and it literally changes with every administration. There are currently 22 different ways the federal government can give permission for a person to come visit, live or work here, and every one of these visas, green cards, protected statuses, refugee programs, asylum processes, and I could go on, everyone has a different set of rules, regulations, requirements, and timelines. Picture a huge waiting room with lines of dozens of different lines. Some of those lines are three years long, with certain things you have to do, and others wind around and around with a wait time of about 120 years. In some lines, you can get work authorization, permission to get a driver's license, and other lines you cannot. Worst of all, under this administration, rules that people have been diligently following have changed midstream, resulting in sudden changes in status, so a person who was in status yesterday can, with a stroke of a pen in DC, fall out of status today, despite having followed all the rules and checked in with ICE every year for 10 years here in Franklin County, every person I know who is in that waiting room is desperately trying to remain or get in status, to make their way out of that room and into full protected residency and citizenship. So, to me, the most important question is not, were they legal? The question is, how in the future, do we provide a pathway to citizenship for our neighbors who we know and trust, who are important and meaningful parts of this community? How do we work together to make that pathway a reality, but since we know that is larger than us and takes both time and effort, the question here is, how do we keep our folks safe until such a time comes? So that is the question I would like to be discussing here with the agencies charged with the safety of the community of everyone in this county, but the one thing I know that makes my neighbors less safe is increased collaboration with ICE of any sort. That is why, like many here, I am opposed to this proposal, and I am opposed to any proposal that will come before you that strengthens the relationship between our local and trusted law enforcement and this very divisive agency. Thank you.

Donna Knutson speaking, Commissioners, fellow citizens, I just want to talk a little bit about the kids themselves. The formal federal program for detaining and caring for unaccompanied migrant children was created under George W Bush in 2002 and originally the Bush era program was designed for children who arrived without a parent or a guardian. What ICE is doing right now under the Trump administration is looking at children who did arrive with parents but were reclassified as unaccompanied after being separated under the zero-tolerance policy, which then put them into this system. The big question that I would ask you guys is, if you remember back with the first group of kids that came without parents, many of them were never reunited with their parents again. They lost, we lost track of the parents. The parents were still in the home countries. The kids did not know where their parents were. If we are bringing up to

25 13- to 17-year-olds into Franklin County, how are we going to guarantee that they are going to see their families again ever and they are being detained and held under a different interpretation of the legislation? Thank you.

My name is Patty McCartney, and I have been a resident of Franklin County for 30 years. I am not necessarily here to oppose this proposition of the sheriff. But what I would like to point out is we just pledge for liberty and justice for all. I do not believe ICE can be trusted to provide justice for everyone, including our immigrants. So, I would challenge the commissioners to look at all of the realms that might be involved in housing juvenile immigrants. Have they been given due process? I doubt it seriously. ICE has been shown lately to never give a citizen due process. Why would they give an adolescent immigrant, an illegal immigrant, due process? You have heard all the reasons to not accept this proposal. I hope you will take all those things in great consideration. We admire our sheriff. We know what he is doing for our citizens. I am not sure that this is the right decision to make for our county. Thank you.

Mr. Moron speaking, Mr. Chairman just for the record, I received two speaker cards, but they were after the deadline. But I will tell you, they were both in opposition, but I know we do not hear speaker cards after the deadline. Chairman Jones speaking, Commissioners, any questions, concerns, discussion? Commissioner Ward speaking, I do, but I will let the others go first.

Chairman Jones speaking, does anybody have anything? Inaudible speaker from audience asking to make a comment. Chairman Jones speaking, we just did public comment. We just went through the whole thing. I am sorry there was a deadline. It is published and posted. It has been that way for a long time. Inaudible speaker speaking, I got an email from that gentleman right here that said I could speak. Chairman Jones speaking, what is your name? Let me see if I missed it. Hold on. There is one friend, I must have missed it. Sorry. Come on.

Ms. Anne Wright speaking, no problem. We all make mistakes. Dollars, date together, papers date together. The whole neighborhood knows my name. So hi, I am Anne Wright, and I am here to speak to the commission. I thank you for your time. I thank all the sheriff and his staff for their efforts. In fact, one of these gentlemen was outstandingly helpful for me during a very trying time in my life. I am speaking in opposition to the ICE detention center in Franklin County. They are saying walk. The walk is meaning to support one's words with actions, demonstrating integrity by doing what was promised rather than just talking about it. Today, I am standing here with voicing my concerns. I am walking the walk. The question of undocumented individuals can be handled through the due process of law and constitutional based legal solutions, and not detention centers, as my previous speakers had alluded to. I perceive detention centers as a personification of hate, a likened to consecration camps, and find the principle of financial reimbursement for the dehumanization of humanity, appalling. We can enact change and overcome gaps in the immigration process to the power of humanity. Where is humanity in this project? Under our current administration, the dehumanity human undocumented in our country is based on fear, cruelty, and labeling for financial gain through ICE operation and detention centers. This harkens to the clouded history built on slavery, eradication of indigenous peoples and the internment of Japanese Americans. James Talarico states, the power of love is not passive. It is not neutral or weak. It requires us to stand between the bullies and the bullied that look at evil in the eye and not blink to flip over the tables of injustice. Martin Luther King viewed nonviolence and love as inseparable, powerful and active for social change aiming to redeem opponents, rather than to defeat them. The foundation of determinant of detention centers is in the dehumanization of others and not to follow the aforementioned principles dehumanizing language, such as alien, savage Tonks, Guatemalans and rats, an action scene in Minneapolis, diminishes the humanity of both the perpetrator and the victim. This dehumanizing process is used to justify harm and reduces social connection, which makes it easier to tolerate violence and abuse. Bren Brown speaks, when we desecrate the Divinity, we desecrate our own and we betray our humanity. Nicholas Hallman writes, to human dehumanization is a fearsome word calling to mind the greatest autocracies of the past and the present.

People seen as less than human have suffered and suffered violence, deprivation, exclusion, dispossession, and that suffering has been and is routinely ignored or minimized. Humankind no longer is seen as a contributor to society or part of our community. Do we in Franklin County want to be known as the incarceration Coast instead of the Forgotten Coast? I am beseeching you to find your power of humanity, to cast your vote against this detention center. The power of humanity rejects the dehumanization of people with language, or the incarcerating of juveniles away from their families with the deprivation of love and understanding. Are we betraying humanity? Humanity with these policies? Can we move forward toward love and understanding rather than follow a quick financial fits built on dehumanizing behavior? May you reflect on this in your prior vote and prior to your vote and not pursue this and but follow love and mercy. I also want to add that I am the proud mother-in-law of a Peruvian daughter in law. I am the proud mother-in-law of three Amerasian grandchildren, and I am the proud mother-in-law of a Latino grandchild, and I fear for them every day. In fact, I tell them not to speak Spanish anymore, which is a beautiful language, because I am afraid, they will be pulled over just become words that utter out of their mouth. So, I live with that every day, and that is a concern. And so, I just wanted to speak. I really thank you for your time. I am sorry. I am shaking like a leaf.

Chairman Jones speaking, commissioners before we start discussion, I will say this. This was done today for the discussion. That is how it is on our agenda. It is not on our agenda for anything other than that today, and the conversation that was had with me and the sheriff, and the conversation had yesterday on Facebook was about, how does this fit for us? So, you know, this is the time we can discuss. If you have any questions.

Commissioner Croom speaking, Mr. Chair, I have a question for Captain Millender and Chief Carol, the answer is, or you may not, I do not know. They detainees or do we know if they are violent offenders have criminal charges, or we are just holding because they are undocumented? Do we know that?

Captain Millender speaking, so right now, what I understand is there are four juvenile males in Virginia that have to be moved and placed somewhere. They are felony offenders. They are still going through their due process, their court proceedings. What I can tell you in Franklin County is this is just that a discussion. We are asking for the memorandum of understanding to enter into a discussion. It is not a binding contract yet. Okay, there are a lot of ins and outs for this. For everyone. It is a learning curve for all of us. Here in Franklin County, we are not out actively seeking the individuals that are brought to us. It is because of a call. We can offer, and do offer GED. We have counseling therapy. We do yoga with our inmates. We have painting classes. We have a compassionate facility. We have a wonderful staff. I do think if the youth have to be housed somewhere, it is better in a place like we are that can offer them that compassion, they are going to put them somewhere.

Commissioner Croom speaking, okay. Second question, you know, I know when, previously, it has been a while, but when the sheriff office was over capacity, there it was on the former administration as well a tent put up outside. We are not planning on doing that, if or if not this, you know. Captain Millender speaking, no sir. Commissioner Croom speaking, so, you know I listen to all the people that had speaker cards today. And this is to the public I am talking to who spoke. You know, we mentioned about 13, ages, 13 through 17. If the detainees were not 13 through 17, would you still have an issue with that? By show of hands, what? The question was, if the if the detainees were not the ages 13 through 17, which, if they were adults, would you still have an issue with US housing in our facility? Alright? Thank you. That is all I have, right now. Chairman Jones speaking, anyone else?

Commissioner Ward speaking, Mr. Chairman, I will go next. I have listened to everybody, and I appreciate you all being here. I wish our meetings were this popular any other time, but it is a hot topic, and I know a lot of people have a bad idea of ICE. I get it. I am all about welcoming our immigrant neighbors. But I want to emphasize, this is not a decision-making thing today. I was under the impression I spoke with the sheriff on, I think was Monday, about this situation, because, you know, I got emails and I am thinking, what is

going on here? It is just a lot of misinformation, misunderstanding. I appreciate the sheriff's office staff being here today, I appreciate the public being here and expressing their concern. I did have concerns and have these questions. And one of my questions, I believe Miss Lawson did bring up a good point about any outbreak. I did ask the sheriff about these offenders if they are going to be released back into our community. I know their children. I did ask about all that, you know, are they violent offenders? What crimes did they commit? All these questions you guys raised. I even asked about, you know, the mental health aspect, if they are separated from their loved ones. So, all these questions I had in my mind as well. But with that being said, again, this is just a discussion, because a lot of these questions the sheriff could not answer because he does not know himself. I am a type of person I like to have everything laid out on the table before I make a decision. Any decision I make as a commissioner on this board is done by thorough research, talking to people, talking to the people that are involved with the situation, and that is how I will make my decision. At the end of the day, I am a religious person. I pray about it, I hope, and I pray that God leads me in the direction to make the right decision, but I also put the people in our community into consideration. How is it going to affect them? I trust that our sheriff is not going to do and his staff is not going to do anything to this county that is going to hurt or harm it in any way or to any person or individual in any way. I do appreciate that they do not go out actively seeking I know that. You know how they work. I do believe in our jail, our jail staff, because they do have a lot of programs. And I am under the assumption, and if you can answer this, Captain, do so, these individuals are going to have, they are in jail anyway, it is not that they are coming here to be put in jail. They are already serving a sentence for whatever crime they committed. So, by coming here to our jail, I know we basically renting whatever terms were. I feel like they if, hypothetically, they have a much better chance here to get help that they may need, versus at a jail in Virginia where they do not really care. I feel like we may care for them here more. I am not saying I am advocating for or against. I am just trying to play both sides of the table here and trying to put everything into perspective. I do realize this is going to be a lot more of a discussion on our part, because it is a lot to take in. It really is. It is a sensitive subject. Again, I do and trust, obviously, the sheriff is, his team is not going to do anything to put this board or his staff in any kind of precarious issue or situation, even these individuals, if it should hypothetically happen, he is not going to put them in a precarious or a bad position, either. So those are my thoughts. Again, I do not know it is a serious situation. We all got to look really hard at. I do not really see any hurt in getting more information. I do not know if, I know attorney, he would have been brought into this. They have to have this memorandum, memorandum of understanding, just to get information right, like just to see what it all is going to entail. They, they will not really elaborate on a lot of the information. I have not done any this, this Sabot, that is a third-party ICE. Captain Millender speaking, yes, and that is strictly what it is as of right now. It is just an agreement between the county and the sheriff's office with Sabot to go into further discussions to even see if this is something that we can do, all right, it is not a binding contract at this time. Chairman Jones speaking, Attorney Shuler do you have anything to say or to add to this discussion?

Attorney Shuler speaking, as you know, I have been out for a few days. I did take time when Mr. Moron sent me the paperwork last week and made me aware of the documentation I did, I have not made a deep dive in looking at all of the paperwork. I have spent 10 or 15 minutes looking at it. That 10 or 15 minutes was enough to convince me that, as it is presently written, I would never recommend that the Board sign this paperwork in the form that is in now. Primarily, yeah, I mean, y'all, y'all heard me talk about the basically the red lines that I look at in contracts. When I review things, I want to know what law governs the contract. Well, in this case, it is California law. Where is the venue? Which means, if we have a dispute, where have you got to go to court? It is in California. I cannot tell what these people are even asked to be paid for their services. I looked for a formula, I looked for a number. The way I recollect hearing or reading it last week is once they send people here, then they send us an invoice and we pay it. So that is not acceptable to me. They want binding arbitration in the event of a dispute. I do not like arbitration. I mean mediation, which is, if you mediate a dispute and people reach a decision voluntarily, that is fine. If you cannot mediate, then you go to court. Arbitration is binding, and you know, you have an arbiter who probably is a retired judge. You do not go through the court system. The officer just makes a decision, and

then you have to live with the decision. So, I just philosophically oppose arbitration. They had an unlimited, as I recall, essentially an unlimited indemnification of the vendors, Sabbath, I think since the name of it, so, yeah, there is lots of tons of problems and questions in my mind, and I just would not recommend that the Board enter into any agreement with this group as it was presently written. I know they have indicated, I think, in an email, also here this morning, that the vendor is willing for me to red line and make changes which that is fine. I mean, I can, you know if the board wants to move forward with this, I can make red line changes and see if it can be reformatted in a manner that I would be willing to recommend that the Board at least consider entering into the contract. But that is basically what I recall off the top of my head, they are probably I may be missing a few things, but that is what I recall from my review last week.

Chairman Jones speaking, well, I will say this, it is the thing that concerns me greatly about all that is and it is nothing against you or your profession. We have talk of arbitration or court or suing or all that kind of stuff enough without getting into some kind of contract that we know is laced with that, I have great concerns over that. And I do not see this program going any other way. If you look at, you just have to turn on the national news. It is hard not to see it that way. Most of all those things are winding up in court. You know, we are not the biggest county in Florida, and I just do not see us, you know, having to pay for litigation to fight something that is something that we have invited so I do not know if it is a good fit for us, and I am just being honest. You know, I know from what is being said here this morning, if I am wrong, I am good to be corrected. Currently, if, if someone is detained here, ICE is coming pick people up from here. So, you know what I mean, there's already inner workings with ice. I do not, I do not understand how this third-party vendor thing works. So, you know, I just do not know if it is good fit for us, just me personally, but I am not, you know, I am one of five. Commissioner Croom speaking, Attorney Shuler, so you reviewed a contract already?

Attorney Shuler speaking, yes, Mike sent me an email last week that had some documents attached to it. I think it was labeled as a memorandum of understanding. There was also a mention of an of an NDA and to be quite honest with the commissioners, I am over people wanting us to enter into NDAs. I mean, something is either a public record or it is not, okay. NDAs will not change that. Okay, so now I am done with NDA at this point, I am just done with them. Commissioner Amison speaking, you are saying for us not to bring you any more NDAs? Attorney Shuler speaking, yeah, pretty much something is either a public record or it is not. And what people always want, are these horrendous penalties for violating the NDA. I am just philosophically and legally; I am just over it. The document is either a public record or it is not. The NDA is not going to change that one way or the other. There are already state laws out there that you know certain confidential information, trade secrets are already protected under state law. We do not need an NDA. So frankly, if that is their beginning point for this negotiation, my recommendation is to tell them no. Commissioner Croom speaking, well, my question was, have we already received some form contract or MOU? Attorney Shuler speaking, yeah, they sent the document. I think it was labeled as a memorandum of understanding. I, frankly, do not really recall what the heading of it was, but it was a document, and it covered things like I discussed earlier, attorney's fees, which state law governs, where is your venue is, how much they are going to get paid. I cannot, it just was kind of shocking to me, frankly.

Mr. Moron speaking, I did not, because attorney Shuler had immediate concerns with it, so I wanted him to address his concerns. First, before the board got a copy of agreement that we could possibly move forward, it was so far, looking at his notes, it was so far away from something I would present to the board for you, even for your consideration or review. I'm sorry to answer your question. No, sir, I did not Commissioner.

Commissioner Croom speaking, all right, just making sure, because I know he had a problem with it. You know how I am about contract, yes, sir. And another thing is, you know, I heard, you know, concerns about Sheriff office. Listen guys, let us not compare our sheriff office, our local guys, with the federal agencies. You know, the federal agencies do not care about our neighbors, our sheriff office, our city policeman's and

Carrabelle and Apalachicola care about our neighbors. And Franklin, that is probably one of the way, one of the one. We are one of the safest counties, you know, when majority of our deputies are local. So, let us not sit up here and bash our sheriff office, because they truly care about our neighbors. Something I had seen right before I went to bed last night, I guess my phone probably knew I was thinking about it. I do not know. Yeah, I was literally last thing I clicked on I saw where our fellow Commissioner, Mayor Demings, over in Orange, he threatened to cancel an agreement with ICE. I do not know if y'all seen it yet. It was over cost, you know, I guess it is on my renegotiating calls, because it actually was higher, and they sent a letter. And I think that is one of the things, you know, I was thinking about right before I went to bed, was, you know, I do not want us to become in that situation that Mayor Demings is dealing with. That is probably a discussion that we need to have as well, because it may be too much for us.

Commissioner Sanders speaking, well, Mr. Chairman, is not here, so Madam Chairman, I am going to go ahead and say what I want I need to say. I think we need to keep on with the dialog and discussion, and then at the end of the day, let the attorney say what he feels like would be a good give staff with the sheriff's office they think would be good, and just continue the discussion. And at the end of the day, we do not know how it is going to come out, but we have got a lot of people that are opposed to it, because, if you like me, you do not know nothing about it. So, you know, the more informed you are, the more you learn, you learn about it. And I agree with Commissioner Ward on the things that she said, also, and I just, I feel like we owe it to the sheriff, because he has asked us to consider the discussion and what is going on, and I think that is where we need to go, is continue the discussion, not make a decision which we are not going to make a decision today. It is not on the agenda to do that, but I think we need to iron out all these because I have some real big questions too. I do know our neighboring counties, they, some of the neighboring counties do have detainees in their facilities. I would like to see how those facilities operate, and especially the counties that is closest to our ability to take care of detainees. But I would like to see all of it worked out and ironed out, and then we look at each section and then see if it is a good fit for Franklin County. If it is not a good fit for Franklin County, we will say no. If it is a good fit, we feel like it is a good thing to do, we will say yes and just go there. But until then, I do not have no decision on it right now, because you got to me, to me moving parts, and they are moving pretty fast, you know. So that is my that is my way of looking at it.

Commissioner Croom speaking, Attorney Shuler, I think it is worth you know this third parties, middle person about to be, have a representative to you know, to speak on this. Commissioner Sanders speaking, can I ask a question? Well, ask it to him, make sure he can answer. Do we have to do this with a third party? Attorney Shuler speaking, this is all new to me.

Commissioner Sanders speaking that is what I am saying. Why are we going through a third party? Can you do it directly? You know, that is what I am saying. It is a lot of things. They may not be the third party that we want to handle it, not knowing anything. I mean, that is what I am saying. So anyway,

Commissioner Amison speaking, Mr. Chair, I have got some questions here. I mean, obviously we are not going to get too many answers, because we are just starting really in this discussion, but I would rather go ahead and voice some of these questions now, that way, if, as we are moving forward, getting information on this, you kind of know where my mind is at. I will tell you this. I know I am not getting into a political banner about where I stand and all that, but I do believe in the rule of law. There are consequences to actions regardless. And I know a lot of y'all do not want to hear that, but I will tell you this, and I have been in third world countries multiple times, and I understand why people are looking for better lives. Trust me, I do, but there is a legal process to it, and we have to have consequences to actions that matches. That is the world we live in. Without law, there be chaos. But we are not going to go down that road. But what I will say, is this where my concerns and the job I have sitting here is, what kind of impact is it going to have on our county, and not just the perception of our county, where my questions are, and this would be directly for the Sheriff's Department is, and I've had multiple discussions with the sheriff, and I believe that you

guys do a wonderful job so but just so I have this in the in your preview going down the road if we do this, do we have and I asked Sheriff this, and he assured me, we do, but I just want to go a little more in depth real quick with it. But do we have the resources to do this? I know there are 13- to 17-year-olds, are they going to need specific counseling? I mean, do y'all have any idea of what those types of resources will be needed for these kids?

Captain Millender speaking, from my understanding, Sabbat will facilitate mental health counselors, all different type of counseling. But I would like to say, and I honestly do not know myself what that would look like yet, but I will say this. Currently, what we offer and when we do have juveniles that we have, not migrant juveniles, but juveniles that we house while they are awaiting their trial, once they are adjudicated by a judge as an adult, we offer GED. We have mental health counseling and therapy five days a week. We offer blitz therapy. What we do is once a week, we meet, we round table if you will. We meet with our nurses, we meet with our care coordinators, we meet with Disc Village and some of our other counselors, and we try to identify those that are in the most need, whether they are adult or juvenile. We give them all the therapy they need if they accept it. We have in care and after care programs. We track individuals once they leave our facility. We track them and give them resources if they will accept it. Most do not accept it, but we do have those that are receptive to it and take it. So, I believe we can, you know, we already do a lot of those things with our current populations, so I believe we can support and facilitate that for these youths.

Commissioner Amison speaking, I know this was asked, and we do not, I am assuming we do not have the answers to this yet, but I was wanting to know what the status of the detainees are. Have they made it through the criminal court and now they are just being detained until they have due process with the immigration court? I would like to find out the answer to that. Just, you know, I think we need to know that that moving forward. Getting back to the resource thing this, this is something that has been on my mind too with this is now if let us just say we, please, everybody remains calm. Let us just say we go forward with this, and then all of a sudden, we have 25 detainees over there. Do we have the enforcement on the correction side? Do we have enough people to handle that with what we got as well, or are we going to have to go and hire more positions to come in and fill that? Because this is where my concern is, and I guess this is a talking to the commissioners and Sheriff Department. You know, we know that we are going to be in a little bit of a we've had to tighten that belt up here in about a year, because whether we like it or not, we can, we can project it, but we're probably going to be looking at not having a residence tax in the state of Florida, which is going to put a strain on our ad valorem, okay. What I am worried about from this position, like I said earlier. This way, I got to look at it. But are we going to get to a position where, hey, we hire these folks on, two years the White House turns blue? You know how this goes. We are back because I feel like I am in ping pong and I am the ball, but, uh, now that we got changes there, now we are stuck with X amount more employees. And from what I understand, if we do away with residents' tax, the one budget that we cannot cut is law enforcement. So, I do not want to potentially put us in a position where, down the road, we do not, you know, we just, we run out some money because we are not getting this program, this program is going away. And then I do not want to just be sitting there, kind of flat.

Sheriff Smith speaking, so, if I can answer that for you, so we are not going to hire any additional staff. If it takes more staff, then we are just not going to do it. If we cannot do it with what are the resources we currently have, then we are not going to do it. And that is the bottom line right now we are at about 60 to 65 inmates. A year ago, we had almost 100 and we have been running prior to this, a lot more inmates. Y'all been paying for almost 70, 80, to 90 inmates. I mean, we have been working hard to get that inmate population down, to save the county money. We have been working with the State Attorney's office to get people out that need to be out. 20 out of the 65 are in jail because they have violated probation on a technicality, which means they were out late past the curfew, had a bad UA, something that is not a crime, but it is a technical violation. They get violated, then they sit in jail until they go to court. And we are working on, one of my thoughts has been, how do we fix this so that they are not sitting in jail? Because that would even decrease our population more. Now there is another 20 or maybe 30 that are in jail because

they have committed a crime and violated their probation, which is a different situation we are going to have, they need to be in jail. With these folks that have done something as a technical violation, I know I am kind of getting off track, but I am trying to let you to let y'all understand what is going on in the jail and that we are watching it, and that we are not going to, you know, if we were to house folks, we're not going to hire new people. If there comes a time that we need additional staffing, then it will be an opportunity for folks to make overtime because of the money that immigration is going to be paying. So, we are not going to, we are not going to take on additional financial burden to the sheriff's officers and taxpayers as a result of this. If we cannot do with what we got, then we just will not do it. Commissioner Amison speaking, thank you for that sheriff. Really, that is all I have. I just, we do not know. I have had multiple people call me. I said, you know, we do not really know this. We got to get into it. Sheriff Smith speaking, I heard one of the commissioners mentioned about the third party. Here is the deal with the third party. They make it easier to maneuver. I mean, just like everybody said, hey, immigration is a very technical and very cumbersome procedure for folks trying to get here legally. So, the third party makes it easier for us to work with the federal government, which we all know it is not always easy to work with them. So that is the reason for the third party, because the folks that are part of this third-party company, they have been previous ICE employees or immigration. That is the reason for that just makes it easier for us, and they know all the policies and procedures. So, if there is something that we need to get right, they can help us do that much easier than us just trying to go out and figure it out. Commissioner Sanders speaking, do you know how many counties they already have? Sheriff Smith speaking, there is a lot of, I mean, Liberty County talked to Liberty County Sheriff last night. They are about to get busloads of them up there. They are actually building an ICE facility. I like to call it immigration. ICE has such a, people just look at it as such a terrible word, because of what happened in Minnesota. You know, none of us can agree with some of the things that went on, but we are not Minnesota. Bay County, Walton County, those counties are already housing inmates. I am not sure about Leon. I have not spoken to the sheriff about it. I am not sure, but I mean, a lot of counties are doing it. Commissioner Ward speaking, Mr. Chairman, one of the questions, you know, Commissioner Amison and brought I had a lot of questions too. I did not express all of them. I kind of touched on some, but one of the questions I did ask the sheriff too, and I did mention the word indemnification, if someone hypothetically, again, just hypothetical here, if we do this and one of these juveniles gets hurt or killed in our jail. What does that look like for us? So, you know, all these are great questions, and again, the sheriff could not answer because we do not know this is an information seeking phase that we are looking at. So, I think that at this point I again with Attorney Shuler and his recommendation, I feel like I am not going to do, in my opinion, anything that is going to put the county. I know the sheriff's not going to do anything either, but since the attorney has some issues with the contract, the MOU, whatever you want to call it, I feel like we need to pause and, you know, see if we can redline and then have another discussion. I do not know how that is going to look. Sheriff Smith speaking, what was the problem? I did not hear the problem with the MOU. Attorney Shuler speaking, Mr. Moron sent me the paperwork last week to look at Sheriff. I spent about 10 or 15 minutes just checking the things that I look at in all contracts. For example, what law governs the contract, in this case is California. Sheriff Smith speaking, now they are totally fine with that being struck right now. Attorney Shuler speaking, I understand from your office that they want me to make a redline with proposed changes and send it back to them, but I have not done so well. Sheriff Smith speaking, we already talked to them and told them that was just a kind of boilerplate contract they had used in California. So, Florida is fine. I mean, that is not a problem. Attorney Shuler speaking, do they have a contract with another Sheriff's Department in Florida? Because I would love to know that and see what their experiences have been. Sheriff Smith speaking, I did not ask them about that. Commissioner Amison speaking, Mr. Chairman, Sheriff while you are there, so we got to sign a contract to just have a discussion? Is that what I am hearing? Attorney Shuler speaking. they have proposed an NDA as part of the package of documents. As I had mentioned to the board earlier, I am over recommending NDAs to the board. I mean, it just, I do not think they serve any valid purpose from the county's perspective, as far as I am concerned. I mean, paperwork that people give to us is either a public record or it is not. If there is an exemption already in state law, then they do not need the NDA. So, I mean, they are going to need to give up that requirement, as far as I am concerned, I want to have conversations,

and let us have a conversation. But with an NDA, I am just, y'all are the decision makers. I know who I work for. Please understand me when I as a precondition, I understand that when I tell you I am over NDAs with as far as the board is concerned. Commissioner Amison speaking, I mean, in layman's terms for the rest of us, that's not lawyer speak. NDAs are rough because we have to do everything in the sunshine, and he sweats bullets over there when we are under an NDA, because he does not know what any of us five might say. I just see a lot of faces out there, so I had to put it in our terminology. Sheriff Smith speaking, can I address that? So, if we are held to an NDA, I mean, an NDA, I am not good with that either. But again, all I want to do is get more information. That is what I am trying to you know, they want us to assign and I was totally fine with that. We are not bound to anything. I just want to get the information to see if it is something that will work for us. And I am not going to be a part of an NDA or litigation in California or any of that stuff. And I think they were good with redlining that. And because, yeah, if we do something here, then it needs to be in the sunshine. It needs to be, you know, we are not hiding anything. We want everything to be right out there in the wide, open, clear, blue sky. Chairman Jones speaking that is the reason this discussion is like it is today. We are operating in the sunshine. Because I have had people ask me before the meeting about what we are going to discuss. I said, well, I cannot tell you because I do not know yet. All right, questions, commissioners? Mr. Moron speaking, so that I am clear, get the direction here, Commissioner, so basically, Attorney Shuler and myself are going to work with the agreement. And when we think there is something that we can bring before the board, then we let you know you schedule it on agenda or special meeting, correct? Commissioner Sanders speaking, make sure you keep in contact with the sheriff. Mr. Moron speaking, oh, definitely. That is where we are. I just want to make sure. Chairman Jones speaking, it will become very evident as we increase the discussion whether it fits for us or not. I think that is what we need, what you are trying to find out for us. At this time, the Board recessed briefly.

Chairman Jones speaking, all right, so at this time, we will go to regular public comments.

Public Comments

My name is Brenda Carlin, and my husband and I are residents of St George Island, and this is an exciting year for America and Franklin County, because we celebrate our 250 years of America's founding and our Declaration of Independence. How is Franklin County celebrating or planning to celebrate? After checking the BOCC County and ABC School and library calendars for East Point, Carrabelle, and Apalachicola, and not seeing any event or activities scheduled, I am here to propose a suggestion and offer a couple of resources. I urge county commissioners and staff to encourage support for using these resources to celebrate our 250th birthday. Did you know that a significant percentage of US teens are not aware of the Declaration of Independence? For example, 15% of them did not know it was adopted on July 4, 1776, and many are unsure about the reasons for declaring independence from Britain. Overall, surveys indicate a general lack of historical knowledge among younger American age six to eighteen regarding this important event. Also, over a half of Americans that are over age 19 do not know the main reason the American colonies declared independence from Britain in 1776 which indicates a significant lack of awareness among the population. And to me, this is a truly shocking statistic. One resource to help Americans and my fellow Franklin County neighbors of all ages to understand the significance of the Declaration of Independence and our heritage as individuals who enjoy the blessings of liberty, we enjoy today is presented by the White House web page. That is what you are seeing on the screen is the White House web page. The White House Task Force 250 has partnered with Hillsdale College to create a video series that tells the remarkable story of American independence. It highlights the stories of the crucial people, places and events that resulted in a rag tag army defeating the mightiest empire in the world and establishing the greatest Republic that ever is ever to exist. These videos can be used and viewed by county governments, schools, libraries, businesses, churches, families, and individuals for free, and at a time that is convenient, I propose that our schools and libraries schedule viewing days for these videos leading up to July 4, 2026. They can be used throughout 2026 including Constitution Day, which is celebrated in our schools, September of each school year. Another

resource is the National Center for Constitutional Studies. They have printed a special commemorative 1776, 2026, pocket Declaration of Independence and US Constitution. I have personally purchased these pocket guides and will gladly provide a supply for franklin county libraries and schools to use, along with these videos for scheduled viewing or classroom events, as John Adams wrote in a letter to his wife, Abigail Adams, this day in July 1776 quote will be the most memorable epic in the history of America. It ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illuminations. From the end of this continent to the other, I urge you commissioners to encourage support for my proposal and for using these resources to celebrate our 250th birthday. To encourage you, I give each of you a commemorative Pocket Guide, and I have extras for anyone else who would like them. The videos there is, if you were to scroll the page, the videos are anywhere from seven to like 15 minutes. They are short, concise, and very informative. So, thank you very much for your time, and I hope we do something really cool to celebrate our 250th. Chairman Jones speaking, thank you and I will say because you mentioned Hillsdale College. They have a lot of the stuff online. It is free, and I know that they have a course, Constitution 101, I believe there's constitution 102, very insightful, because they are not political in nature. They are strictly the facts of what happened and how it happened. Ms. Carlin speaking, yes, the history. I appreciate you saying that. I have taken several and currently I am taking one too. Here are the pocket guides for y'all, and I do have extras if anyone else needs them.

Chairman Jones speaking, we have Ms. Patricia Lively. Mr. Moron speaking If online, please indicate by raising your hand., no hands raised. Chairman Jones speaking, we did have a card filled out, said it was about a property 2323. Commissioner Sanders speaking, we took care of that already.

Ms. Teresa Jacobs speaking, good morning. How are y'all today? Chairman Jones speaking, we are doing well. Thank you. Ms. Jacobs speaking, good. I just wanted to come online today and speak to you about the barnacle issue. I know that the contract was supposed to be terminated. I know that we have had someone from the barnacle company down doing some rechecking to see what the problem was, along with Major Segree, and we have found no issue here on Alligator Point with the barnacle use. So, I would like to encourage the board to reinstate the barnacle contract, maybe with some concession on how we can recoup some of the money that was spent on last year's contract and the barnacle was not used at all. The lack of trainings on the part of the deputies seems to be the issue, and I think that can be easily resolved. This is a good product, I think, and it will certainly help with the parking on Alligator Point and reduce the time that our officers have to spend here trying to get people to come move their cars or do something with the illegal parking situation that we have over here. I just want to encourage the board to reinstate it, and that is all I have. Thank you.

Mr. Rudy Meng speaking, good morning, commissioners. Rudy Meng, Alligator Point, 10-year resident now. Again, also addressing the barnacle. Embarrassed to be addressing that after the ICE subject this morning, but parking is still an ongoing issue. The barnacle seemed like the resolution to that last year never was, ended up being deployed. They said that it would not connect properly for the payment aspect. The barnacle representative came down, Major Segree came down, went through all of the areas of Alligator Point where parking would be an issue, and it worked flawlessly. The Sheriff's Department, Brad said it might have been operator error. We are going to go with that, but hopefully we will continue to use that product, and at some point, Ricky, it would be good for St George Island also.

Chairman Jones speaking, , I was going to respond and say something to Ms. Jacobs, but I knew you also wanted to speak. The only issues I have with this discussion are this, we spent \$18,000 taxpayer dollars and never issued one citation for a year. So, it took us cancelling the contract for the vendor to say they want to do something about the fact that we are not utilizing it. The other thing that is very interesting to me, and it is not my district, is there was absolutely no uproar discussion about lack of parking enforcement for a year from this device that was not being utilized. So, parking still a problem? Why do we not hear

about it? I mean, those are just valid questions I have.

Mr. Meng speaking the frustration level was pretty high. The deployment I will say from our side that the deployment attempt was a failure, and we took that information as valid, yeah, so that is why we backed off. To be perfectly honest, I am obnoxious about parking out there. So, and to find out that Major Segree said that it was on their side. Sidenote last year was an interesting year for parking. There was not as much parking problems. Obviously, parking is a problem when it is a sunny day and it is a weekend, but if there is a lot of rain, which there was. So, there were some issues that made last year the least parking issues I think what we saw in our 10 years of being there. So that is a little bit of an oddity. Also, that is not going to be the case moving forward with the growth of Crawfordville, and you have seen personally with St George Island, the parking is getting outrageous over the last two years. The weather did impact it, and again, we still do not get as much police presence when we need it for the parking. Chairman Jones speaking, well, you also bring it up. So, I will mention it because you brought it up. what concerns me is, is after a year of not utilizing at all, why was it never moved to St George Island? We cannot answer that, but that is we were spending taxpayer dollars on this system, it was not utilized at all. So, here is the thing, as the chair, I get an email every month of every time it was deployed, like a copy of the invoice and all this different stuff. And I am looking for every month, and there is nothing and nothing and nothing. Mr. Meng speaking, we would hope that you would challenge the Sheriff's Department. Chairman Jones speaking, oh, it is definitely going to be a challenge to push them to. Mr. Meng speaking, again, the conversation we have always had with the sheriff's department is when they come for a parking problem, they would try to remove the issue. They would walk out onto the beach, spend twenty minutes trying to find the people that are parking badly. This usually, it is safety issues. They would park over into the street. Those are the ones that I call for. So, what would happen is they would spend twenty minutes, they would be getting hot, miserable, and they would just escort the people off the beach. There is no, they did not issue tickets because they say a Shuler judge would not want them to issue tickets. That sounds a little ridiculous also, but as a side note. I had always told them; we do not want you to waste your time going out onto the beach. That is not it. You stick something on that car, whether it is a ticket, we have some lovely stickers that we came up with. The barnacle still the best boots obviously would not work. It would be too much time for them. They would have to come back with the barnacle. They stick it on. The representative said, in New York, they are deploying that in 60 seconds. Chairman Jones speaking, well, they probably are, they have a lot more people that. Mr. Meng speaking, but that is how quick they are. That is a training issue again. But once that gets deployed and they are gone, the sheriff can leave. He is done with it. They do not have to mess with it moving forward. That is what we want to see, that sticker sticking on the car, that barnacle on there that prevents the next person from parking there they see, just like a ticket on a windshield. That is going to be they are going to be less likely to park. The problem with when they cleaned off the beach after the sheriff left, fifteen minutes later, there is more cars parked. So, this ongoing thing that we think the barnacle will be an effective device, and again, at some point, hit it your way. But let us continue to be the test. At this point, how we looked at it, you committed \$18,000 we saw it as per year toward the barnacle being on alligator point, if it goes away. I would still like to see that \$18,000 somehow spent toward parking issues. So, I think it's easier just to keep the barnacle because it looks like it's an effective device. The representative made a great case. The Sheriff's Department came down. Two of their reps were there. They seem to think that, again, it is going to save time for them also, so that would allow them to get back to speeding, which is, of course, the other primary problem. Thank you.

Commissioner Sanders speaking, I need to comment on this because I am going to be leaving out in just a few minutes. Major Brad secret got in contact with me one day toward the last of the week, and he informed me, and I just for y'all, just information. I got Michael to forward a letter, I believe, and they have already tested on Alligator Point and at St George Island on 11th Street and 12th Street on St George Island, and he said it is working now. He said it was mechanical failures because they did not know how to do everything anyway. I think the one thing that has helped Alligator Point is Emergency Management putting up a Starlink down there, and I think that helped try to help it. But he said they had all tests. He said the

Bald Point area, took a few more minutes, but then after it took that time, it got to operating good and said, I guess he is wanting to come in the near future and bring this back before us. Now, one of the questions that was asked at the active meeting for the other day was, can we have sort of like a reimbursement of some of our money that we paid out and did not get no services for? So that is one thing we need to look at. But I do want to say that thank y'all for bringing it up, Mr. Easton and Rudy bringing it up, because this is we are fixing to get on spring break, and so hopefully we can get something maybe by the next meeting.

Commissioner Amison speaking, just ask a quick question while we are talking about that. The sheriff's department is the one that brought us, obviously, must be a lack of communication between the company and the Sheriff's Department. If our staff come because, if memory serves me right, the sheriff's department was very motivated for us to get this for them. So, I mean, I really think, and I have not had a chance to talk to Major Segree or anybody about this, but I mean, that falls back on that company to provide adequate training to law enforcement. So, you know, I am just saying.

Mr. Moron speaking, so commissioners here, following what you guys are saying. From an administrative point of view, we have a lot of vendors that we use for different services. To me, I am sorry. I am not too good at blaming the, I am not in with saying it is a sheriff's department's fault. I am more with the company, because if we are using a company and we are not, if we are paying for a service and we're not getting it, you know what the vendor does? Send me email, hey, Michael, what is going on? You are paying for this service. We are not seeing any action on the and the app or whatever. You know what I mean? So yes, I am in full agreement. I am not saying to not go forward. I am saying the company needs to kind of own some of this situation and work with the county on this.

Commissioner Ward speaking, look, that is me. I was going to say the same thing, and I was going to bring this up, but my thing is this, if they are going to, if we paid all that time, for one communication is key, not once that I get an email or any kind of response from anybody saying these things are not working. We are having issues, not once, and I did not look at the contract. I briefly read through it, but it, I'm sure there's training included in that amount of money, if it is truly an error and it was a user error, then okay, that's all fine and good, but they're going to have to give us a really, really big discount in order for me to rethink that, because that's a lot of money, and that's how I feel about it. I did talk to Major Segree about it, and at that point, I believe he was going to have a meeting with Commissioner Croom. Of course, Commissioner Croom and I cannot talk, and I told Brad said, well, do not tell me what Commissioner Croom says, but I think we were going to bring it back up to light, but I am really willing and interested to read, you know, talk about it again. But that company is going to have really, really to come off some, some, some kind of incentive or something for us to for me, I am one of five to agree to go back with it since, because, again, the company should say, hey, we are not getting anything from you guys. Y'all not having any issue, you know, they should also check, you know, and I do not know if they did. Again, communication is key. I am that person. If I do not hear anything, I am assuming everything is fine. Should I reach out, call, and ask? Sure. But again, that was not something that we wanted. It was a request made by the sheriff's office to this board, and we are just trying to do what they requested, to help them in their efforts. But anyway,

Commissioner Sanders speaking, well, and finally, barnacle has sent somebody down here, you know, an agent for their company, and showed them how to operate the whole thing. And they say it is operating without a little glitch, you know. And that is a good thing, but the main thing is that we know that coming into spring break season, we are going to have parking issues. Commissioner Amison speaking, my question is, when did Barnacle come and give them a class? Month eleven, month ten? Commissioner Ward speaking, they did it month 13. Mr. Moron speaking that is my point. Commissioner Ward speaking, we cancel the contract and they then come back. Commissioner Sanders speaking, when we consider the contract, if we do consider the contract, we need to let them know that we feel like there needs to be a credit given to the county for paying \$18,000 that we got no services from.

Attorney Shuler speaking, I just want to remind the board, but it seems like we found out about this sometime in the fall of last year, and at the board's direction, I contacted their attorney and said that the board wanted to terminate the contract early. What I seem to recall was they said that the product would not work because of the cell coverage. So that is what I seem to recall. But the point of the story being, when they were asked to terminate early so the board would not because we were not used that, they just said, no, you got to, this is your contract. This was not your contract, if you will. If you are not using the service, you are still going to make the payment because the contract payment. Because the contract is a contract, basically. And I mean, I get that. I mean, contracts do say what they say, there was no early termination provision in there. But it would have seemed to me that if they wanted to come back and work with the county in the future, that they would have been more receptive to the board's request to terminate the contract early.

Commissioner Ward speaking, but I will say this, if we do hypothetically renegotiate the contract, I do want an early termination clause because I will not prove if we are two three months in and it's still not working and it's not user error, then I don't want to continue to pay, and I don't think they'll be willing to do that. But that is just my thought.

Commissioner Amison speaking, I will say one last thing, as a business owner, you can bet one thing, and somebody, one of my clients, called me up and said, hey, I am not buying any product from you, I am finding out why, and I am making it. We are making some try to keep that client, and for us to reach out to them say we want to terminate seems like, instead of month 13, they would add somebody down there at right after that phone call came through. That is just me, but I am leaving it alone.

Commissioner Croom speaking, well, I was commenting on what Mr. Chair said earlier. You know, the whole time I am thinking, you know, getting utilized and hearing the complaints from, you know, Alligator Point. So, I am thinking something is going on there. You know, some kind of enforcement action was taken in when I was told about service issue and has not been utilized. So, my next question was, well, why wasn't it taken to St George Island? Got no answer on that, but I agree with Commissioner Sanders. You know, if we do reconsider this, you know, some kind of credit or get some credit from Barnacle. At the same time, I do know spring break is approaching and summer, so we do need to have some kind of enforcement in place for Alligator Point, and they are parking issues.

Chairman Jones speaking, so anyone else? All right, sir, we are going to move on.

RFP/RFQ/Bid Opening

3. Invitation To Bid: Franklin County Annex Courtroom Renovations

The scope includes demolition of existing walls, doors, ramps, casework, and carpet flooring in the courtroom, as well as removal and storage of existing seating for later reinstallation. New work includes construction of wood-framed platforms with plywood and oak trim, new ramps, wall partitions with gypsum board and sound attenuation insulation, and installation of solid surface countertops with oak wood tops and trim. All casework shall adhere to AWI standards. Electrical work includes updates to receptacles, outlets, and related power provisions as indicated in the electrical plan. Carpet installation will be provided in designated areas, with transition strips and vinyl nosing as specified. All materials and finishes, including carpet, vinyl nosing, and pony wall braces, are based on the provided design standards.

| COMPANY | LOCATION | BID AMOUNT | BID BOND |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|---|
| CP Squared | 10 th St, Apalachicola, FL | \$163,680 | No, bidder in attendance and will get to Erin today |
| Galloway Construction | 122 Oyster City Dr Eastpoint, FL | \$239,166.81 | Yes |

| | | | |
|----------------------------|--|--------------|--|
| D&B Builders | 670 Molino Rd Molina, FL | \$175,815.54 | Yes |
| Southland Contracting, Inc | 1843 Commerce Blvd Midway, FL | \$486,571.10 | Yes |
| Oliver Sperry Renovation | 401 Office Plaza Dr Tallahassee, FL | \$175,997 | No, they will need to provide to Doug Shuler |
| F&F Construction | 420 Reid Ave Port St. Joe, FL | \$260,669 | Yes |

On a motion by Commissioner Sanders, seconded by Commissioner Ward, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board authorized staff to release the bid packages to Doug Shuler for review and recommendation. Motion carried 5-0.

Fiscal Manager/Grants Coordinator Report

4. Erin Griffith – Fiscal Manager/Grants Coordinator BID OPENING: Franklin County Annex Courtroom Renovations

Today we are opening the bid responses for the Franklin County Courthouse Annex Courtroom Renovations. The project scope includes demolition of existing walls, doors, ramps, casework, and carpet flooring in the courtroom, as well as removal and storage of existing seating for later reinstallation. New work includes construction of wood-framed platforms with plywood and oak trim, new ramps, wall partitions with gypsum board and sound attenuation insulation, and installation of solid surface countertops with oak wood tops and trim. All casework shall adhere to AWI standards. Electrical work includes updates to receptacles, outlets, and related power provisions as indicated in the electrical plan. Carpet installation will be provided in designated areas, with transition strips and vinyl nosing as specified. All materials and finishes, including carpet, vinyl nosing, and pony wall braces, are based on the design standards provided.

Chairman Jones speaking, before you get started, commissioners, is there anything on Mrs. Erin's report that you would like to pull for consideration individually? Are you good with discussing them as one? Commissioner Ward speaking, I am good with all of them as consent, Mr. Chair. Chairman Jones speaking, I do want to ask one question, what is the timeline? I want to make sure the public is aware of what we are looking at on the transfer station. What is the timeline? Mrs. Griffith speaking, well, the transfer station project, you know, of course, step one is to accept the notice of award through the US Treasury, and then I will come back at the next meeting, and we will actually have a grant administration proposal for me from Langton, which is your Restore consultants. And then also from there, we will start working on doing the RFQ for engineering services for the project. So, we are probably still a good two years out, realistically before actually seeing construction, because you also have the extensive federal permitting reviews. Chairman Jones speaking, that is the thing that concern me, if I am honest, when I was looking at the documentation, was one of the things went from month four to month 24 and then the other was like, five months apart. Five months apart, you I mean, I am like, yeah, it seemed like a long time at the beginning. Maybe they, maybe they have given themselves that time because they know that the federal government is going to be a problem. **On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Croom, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved items 1-6 from Mrs. Griffith's report. Motion carried 5-0.**

1. BOARD ACTION: SCOP, SCRAP, AND CIGP GRANT APPLICATIONS

FDOT currently has three roadway grant programs open for applications through March 25th & 26th: the Small County Outreach Program (SCOP), the Small County Road Assistance Program (SCRAP), and the County Incentive Grant Program (CIGP). In total, the county can submit (5) applications for the various programs.

SCOP program funds (2 applications) are for use on the County Road system and must be related to road safety improvements, resurfacing or reconstruction, repair or rehabilitating county bridges, road related drainage improvements, constructing road capacity and paving unpaved roads. SCRAP program funds (2 applications) are for use on the county road system and are evaluated on the physical condition of the road, whether the road is used as an evacuation route, whether the road has high levels of agricultural traffic, whether the road is a major arterial route or a feeder road, whether the road is located in a fiscally constrained county and the impact of the project on the state or local economy. CIGP program funds (1 application) are for use on the State or County Road system. If it is on the County Road system, it must relieve traffic congestion on the State Road system.

Roadway application concepts for consideration:

- Widen and resurface Lake Morality Road east of Carrabelle. This road serves as a designated truck route to deter heavy traffic from the residential areas of downtown Carrabelle. This road connects CR67 to US Highway 98 and this connection provides quick access to a northern route evacuation road for residents during hurricane evacuations. Lake Morality Road also sits just north of the Franklin Correctional Institute and is frequently traveled by staffers and supply delivery trucks for the prison.
- Widen and resurface 4th Street in Eastpoint from US Highway 98 to the intersection with Avenue A. This road alleviates traffic from the state highway system and provides connectivity to throughfares Otterslide Road and Avenue A which runs parallel to US Highway 98. 4th Street serves as a connector road for both residential and commercial traffic.
- Widen, resurface, and stabilize the shoulders of C30 Gulf Avenue from the intersection of US Highway 98 to the city limits of Carrabelle. This road relieves traffic from the state highway system and feeds traffic into the marine street area of Carrabelle.
- Widen and resurface Lighthouse Road in Carrabelle from Frank McKamey to Beacon Street. This road is a feeder road and runs parallel to US Highway 98/SR 30.
- Widen, resurface, and improve areas of drainage concern along West Bayshore on St. George Island from SR300 Franklin Boulevard to 3rd Street West. This is a feeder road and provides access to the water utility.

Board action to approve the project concepts above for the 2026 road paving grant application cycle.

2. BOARD ACTION: SCRAP CR67 PHASE IV FINAL CHANGE ORDER

The County has received the final pay application for the final phase IV CR67 Widening and Resurfacing Project. This final phase has completed the resurfacing of CR67 all the way to the Liberty County line. Engineers have submitted the attached \$-19,861.72 change order as part of the final reconciliation of material quantities. The final construction contract with Roberts and Roberts is now \$1,879,532.78.

Board action to approve and authorize the chairman to sign the attached final change order.

3. BOARD ACTION: RESTORE MUNICIPAL SOLID WASTE TRANSFER STATION NOTICE OF AWARD

Franklin County had come to a crossroads whereas due to the lack of remaining capacity in the existing landfill and the extensive permitting, construction costs, increased environmental regulations, and lack of acreage necessary to build a new landfill made it necessary for the County to begin plans to transition to a transfer station similar to waste disposal operations common in other coastal communities. The County amended the multi-year implementation plan to account for updated construction costs in 2024 and had enough funds available to apply for RESTORE funding in 2025 to fund the County Transfer Station. The attached notice of award will provide \$6,262,966 to design, construct and equip a new transfer station operation and administration building for the Franklin County Landfill.

Board action to approve and authorize the county's signature on the attached notice of award.

4. BOARD ACTION: DFS FIRE MARSHAL GRANT AWARD AGREEMENT EASTPOINT VFD FIRETRUCK

The county received notification in July after last year’s legislative session that funding was provided through the State Fire Marshal’s Office for \$577,440 to purchase a new fire truck for the Eastpoint Volunteer Fire Department. In August the county issued a purchase order for the truck chosen by EPVFD and it was noted at that time that the custom truck could take up to 650 days to be delivered. The attached grant award agreement follows the July 2025 notice of funding availability and is for the period from July 1st of 2025 through June 30th of 2026. As the truck will not be delivered by June 30th, the county has applied for and will hopefully receive a reappropriation of funds from the Legislature in this year’s session to extend the grant’s performance period. *Board action to approve and authorize the chairman’s signature on the attached grant award agreement.*

5. BOARD ACTION: 25/26 FLORIDA SMALL CITIES CDBG GRANT APPLICATION TASK ORDER – EPSWD COOPERATIVE PROJECT

The county has received notification that the funding cycle for the CDBG Small Cities Program will be opening in March. The county usually pursues the \$700,000 housing assistance grant through the neighborhood revitalization category but has completed a cooperative project with Eastpoint Water and Sewer District in the past. This past funding cycle, residents had a hard time qualifying for the housing program due to the strict federal household income requirements. Billy Fuentes with Eastpoint Water and Sewer District met with county staff and county grant administration consultants Langton & Associates and they have expressed interest in applying for a cooperative project with the county through the program for water and sewer expansion into the proposed TEAM Franklin future development of workforce housing in Eastpoint. Langton has submitted the attached task order to not exceed \$6,552 to prepare and submit the grant application package for the small cities CDBG program application should the Board want to pursue a water and sewer infrastructure project in lieu of housing in the upcoming cycle. The cost of this task order will be paid by professional services. **Board action to approve and authorize the chairman to sign the attached task order to prepare the grant application.**

6. BOARD ACTION: EVERGREEN EMS COMPENSATION REPORT & DEPARTMENT APPLICATIONS

The county has received the attached EMS Compensation Report from Evergreen Solutions. Evergreen conducted a market survey for the following job descriptions of EMT, Paramedic, EMS Captain, and EMS Director using a focused peer group of Florida counties selected based upon size, location and similar services offered. Market peer organizations that provided data included Leon, Gadsden, Gulf, Dixie and Hardee Counties.

In the attached plan specific to the EMS Department, there are 15 steps that employees will move through by year. Evergreen has recommended that existing Weems EMS employees who are hired by the county as EMTs or Paramedics, should begin their county tenure at step 2 to provide greater pay differential between new hires for the lower pay grade classifications. EMS employees will be paid based upon a shift-style payroll processing structure with a certain amount of built-in overtime hours (to annualize the hourly values for EMT, Paramedic and Captain: EMS is anticipated to work an average of 56 hours per week, to annualize their salary you would take the proposed hourly rate once established x 3,328 per year. The director will be salaried and exempt from overtime). The EMS department will work through a step-style pay plan whereas every year of service will account for a change in step in terms of their hourly pay. The grades listed below will begin at the following rates:

| Classification | EMS Grade | Pay Step 1 Hourly Rate | Step 1 Annualized Salary | Step 2 Hourly Rate | Step 2 Annualized Salary | Total Position Cost with Benefits Step 1 | Total Position Cost with Benefits Step 2 |
|----------------|-----------|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--|--|
| EMT | 4 | \$20.31 | \$67,591.68 | \$20.65 | \$68,723.20 | \$107,217.40 | \$108,833.66 |
| Paramedic | 6 | \$22.37 | \$74,447.36 | \$22.74 | \$75,678.72 | \$117,010.05 | \$118,768.92 |
| EMS Captain | 8 | \$25.14 | \$83,665.92 | n/a | n/a | \$130,177.84 | n/a |
| EMS Director | 17 | \$48.07 | \$88,337.60 | n/a | n/a | \$136,850.87 | n/a |

County benefit costs included in the calculations above include:

FRS Special Risk Service Class Retirement, county contribution rate 35.19%, employee contribution rate: 3% FICA

taxes, county contribution rate 7.65%

County provided health \$861.99/month, Dental \$25.83/month and Life Insurance \$1.30/month

A) Board action to approve the job descriptions and recommended salaries for EMTs, Paramedics and the EMS Captains and authorization to proceed with advertising for the positions.

The board approved the job description and salary for the EMS director at the January 20th meeting for that position to be filled first. The applications for the EMS director position are due to the clerk's office on Friday, February 27th. An applicant review committee will be necessary to interview the applicants and make a recommendation for hiring to the Board. Staff recommends County Coordinator Michael Moron, EMS County EMS Consultant Richard Lewis, and the current Weems EMS Medical Director Dr. Colby Redfield.

B) Board action to approve the EMS Director Applicant Interview Committee (Michael Moron, Richard Lewis and Colby Redfield).

7. BOARD INFORMATION / MISCELLANEOUS PROJECT UPDATES:

- RESTORE SGI Stormwater Project – final installation of pipes and inlets should be completed this week; extreme temperatures impacted the construction schedule – roadway resurfacing and retention pond grading, landscaping to begin after.
- Island View Park FRDAP Project – Project is currently out to bid; the mandatory pre-bid meeting is scheduled onsite, 10:00 a.m. tomorrow, February 19th - construction bids will be opened at the March 4th meeting.
- Patton Drive Resurfacing Project – Planner Bree Robinson and project inspector Kim Raffield attended pre-construction meeting on Thursday, notice to proceed for construction issued yesterday, February 17th
- 8th Street East Dune Walkover – project permit specifications/design attached. Project currently out to bid, the mandatory pre-bid meeting is scheduled at the Eastpoint Annex, 11:00 a.m., Friday, February 20th
- DW Wilson Sports Arena Lighting Project – light poles have been installed, project moving along quickly.
- DW Wilson Sports Arena Pickleball Courts – Stormwater Permit Application has been submitted
- SGI Fishing Pier and Boat Ramp Access Road – Permit Application has been submitted, attached for reference.
- SGI Multi Use Path Project – path has been resurfaced, awaiting crosswalk connections, pavement markings, benches after pavement has sufficient time to cure

Chairman Jones speaking do we have any updates to talk about? Mrs. Griffith speaking, we do. The RESTORE SGI stormwater project, the final installation of pipes and inlet should be completed this week. Extreme temperatures did impact the construction schedule. Roadway resurfacing and retention pond grading and landscaping will begin afterwards. There were also several inlets that I had mentioned to project engineers because they appeared to be a little high in their elevation. They were not, you know, basically were not set deep enough. So, we are going to look at those inlets as well. So yes, those are going to receive some attention. Chairman Jones speaking, so quick question after they go from this part of the project to the pavement side. Are they going to be able to change some of those inlets if they are still too high? Mrs. Griffith speaking, it will need to occur prior to paving. Chairman Jones speaking, so they need to answer that prior to pavement, correct? Because the last thing I want to do is take somebody to court, but they are

going to be right when they get through. This is a \$5 million project, and if we still have drainage issues on the island of the commercial district, somebody is going to have problems. Mrs. Griffith speaking, and I do want to mention something about that. You know, you will actually notice earlier on in my report, I had actually mentioned an area of drainage improvement for one of the roadway grant applications. And the area that is actually in front of Harry A's Bar and Grill. That area was somewhere that actually the pond thing started after we had started the permitting process. Because, of course, we started working on this project back in 2021 and then in the aftermath, there was basically some elevation changes on the waterfront parcel in front of Harry A's, and it kind of change the flow in front of there. So that is one thing that we hope to be addressed with the other grant application, because it would actually shoot the water probably farther to the west. Island View Park FRDAP project is currently out to bid. The mandatory pre bid meeting is scheduled on site at 10am tomorrow. Construction bids will be opened at the March 4th meeting. Patton Drive, resurfacing project planner, Bree Robinson and project inspector Kim Raffield attended preconstruction meeting on Thursday of last week. The notice to proceed for construction was issued yesterday, February 17th. Eighth Street East dune walk over, the project permit specifications and the design are attached. The project is currently out to bid, and the mandatory pre bid meeting for that project is scheduled at the East Point annex for 11am Friday. DW Wilson sports arena lighting project, the light poles have been installed. The project is moving along quickly. Attorney Shuler, I believe just received the easement documentation from Duke Energy yesterday, but he has not had a chance to review yet, right?

Attorney Shuler speaking, I think you do need to go ahead and take action to authorize the chairman to execute these with deed, as opposed to me waiting for me to review and then bring it back in the next meeting. Chairman Jones speaking, all right, so you are talking about for where the lighting poles are being installed, correct? Attorney Shuler speaking, yes, the original deed that they sent did not, the document was incomplete and it did not have a drawing on it. Yes, I know I feel like I am really but this is for y'all protection, not mine. They finally set the drawing at my request. I have had Mr. Davis look at the drawing to make sure that wherever they were proposing to put the power lines would not interfere with his operations at DW Wilson Park, he is given his sign off on it. So as far as I am concerned, it is just, you know, print the deed, and have you sign it and send it to them, get the work done. Chairman Jones speaking, it also helped, because of baseball, softball, start pretty soon as well. So, what is the pleasure of the board before we vote on this? Now I will call for public comment because it was not on our agenda. Commissioner Ward speaking, Mr. Chairman, this is time sensitive, right? Chairman Jones speaking, well, it is going to help with what is going on in that area. Commissioner Ward speaking, I am okay with calling for public comment. I mean, it is not like a hot topic. Chairman Jones speaking, first we need a motion and second, then we call for public comment. **Motion to approve by Commissioner Amison, seconded by Commissioner Ward.** Chairman Jones speaking, is there anyone in the public or online that wishes to comment on this publicly, as it was not published in our agenda previous to now? Mr. Moron speaking, this is a time for public comment. If you are online, please indicate you would like to comment by raising your hands on your smart device. No hands raised. Chairman Jones speaking, all right, seems to be the one in the room. I want to make sure everybody knows what we are talking about. So, we are putting in some new lighting system at DW Wilson Park here in Apalachicola, and there were some issues with areas that we need to get easements from Duke Energy to be able to install some of those poles. The kids have already started practicing for the season, so we are trying to expedite this, instead of coming back to the next meeting to have this kind of vote. So that is all we are really looking at today. Any other discussion before we vote? There was no public comment. All in favor. Any opposed, that is unanimous. **Motion carried 5-0.**

Mrs. Griffith speaking, also, the storm water permit application has been submitted for the DW Wilson sports arena pickle ball courts. That is another moving in the right direction. SGI fishing pier, boat ramp access road, the permanent application has also been submitted for those repairs. So of course, the permitting for that one will likely take much longer, but we are hopeful that it will happen sometime this year. SGI multi use path project, the path has been resurfaced. They are awaiting crosswalk connections, pavement markings and benches after the pavement has sufficient time to cure. Carolina Street, actually, in

Lanark Village, has been resurfaced. I spoke to Andy Bailey this morning in the striping contractor is in the county, and he is starting to work on the road paving segments that were awarded as part of the 2025 project.

Chairman Jones speaking, what was this before? Commissioner Sanders speaking, what happened, it had never, well, you know what. Look at it, before you did not have that many people living on it. Now you got a lot of people living on it. You need a better road. But when he went in there to take up the old asphalt, it was just crumbling like sand, and it was not nothing, did not have any base whatsoever. So, it is a mess. But now I know the people are happy because they have been wanting it. Mrs. Griffith speaking, then one other update for Vrooman Park in East Point. The basketball court is in the process of being resurfaced this week. And also, I wanted to compliment Commissioner Croom. I did ride out to Sylvester Williams Park and the volleyball courts look fabulous. That is very nice. Yep, looking really good. Commissioner Amison speaking, question on Sylvester Williams, did the lights work? Commissioner Croom speaking, that was a thing that Director Davis and I, you know, discussion that we, we talked about is genuine, because I know we do not have portable lights in the county, you will see, what the sheriff office does. Maybe they can even utilize. Commissioner Amison speaking, well, that is where our first practice was. And I was right bombarded, when are we going to have Wilson open? You know? And me and one of the guys that work with Duke was walking around trying to find the switch, and he said, I do not think this is hooked up, because he wants to name an awesome stuff that was out of my pay grade. But I figured I would ask right quick, but the beach volleyball court looks great. Commissioner Ward speaking can Sylvester get Musco too? I mean, did they I know we had one. Can two parks go up for that grants as be one, right? Mrs. Griffith speaking, actually, we can go out for that grant we requested. We did a basketball court improvement in Vrooman. Bre worked on that application. And then for legislative appropriation, the lights were one of the requests. Chairman Jones speaking, they were in the original release of the budget. Commissioner Sanders speaking, well, and that was from FRDAP. That was the second three, yeah, that we have not been funding still the 80 million. Mrs. Griffith speaking, we have not seen any updates on that for now. Commissioner Sanders speaking, I got to have that pickleball. But anyway, Mr. Chairman, can I ask, where do we stand on the fire department demolition? Have you y'all got the final permit? Mrs. Griffith speaking, they are working through the permitting process right now. Commissioner Sanders speaking, well, how much longer we got? Mrs. Griffith speaking, unfortunately, it takes a while. Commissioner Sanders speaking, we have been working on that a long time, yeah. And then where we at on the extension of the bike path? Mrs. Griffith speaking, that was actually approved in the draft DOT work plan. So, the funding, we just kind of have to wait for the funding to come. Think it was in the 2028 cycle if my memory serves correct. Chairman Jones speaking, what time of year they normally update that. Mrs. Griffith speaking, let us see they made the announcement for the draft work plan. I think they released that in November, and then it is usually finalized, sometimes through session. Yeah, it actually happens March, probably, yeah, when the budget gets approved. Chairman Jones speaking, anyone else have any questions for Mrs. Erin? Commissioner Croom speaking, Erin, I went over to the new EMS station. It looked very good over there. I noticed when I was getting a tour a bunch of excess items like a bunch of big tiles and everything. Okay, so, so does that go to hospital now, or do the contract to come pick all this stuff? Mrs. Griffith speaking, some of those items should remain, because I know they had left behind some buckets of paint and different things, and that would actually be useful to have on hand. Let us say, if one of the floor tiles were to bust in the bathroom or something along those lines. It would really be good to actually store those items somewhere. So, anything that is left behind, they probably need to find a good place to kind of lock them away.

Commissioner Croom speaking, and I noticed, like my vents and stuff, I guess, got to come in and cut holes in dryers. Were you aware of it? Mrs. Griffith speaking, okay? I was not aware of that. I will give the contractors a call on that because they are not finished yet either. Because we, you know, we awarded the change order for the backup emergency backup generator, and that will likely not be installed only for two or three more months, because they had to order it. Commissioner Amison speaking, just one thing this. I guess this might be a question for you too. Mr. Chairman, when are they going to start paving from East Point to Carrabelle? Commissioner Ward speaking, Mr. Chairman, I will say that there is a sign now just

past Franklin Street in East Point that says road work next 16 miles. So, I do not think they would put that up if they are going to wait to another two three months before they actually start paving. Chairman Jones speaking, yeah, they have shoulder work to do, the drainage work now they have shoulder work to do, and everything is going to be done in the pavements last and honestly, I am just asking, because I have been asked. Mr. Moron speaking, Mr. Chairman, I did get a response yesterday was a little later than we did. Let me make sure I know my way to the exit so they will not start paving probably until after spring break has already started. Unfortunately, they are having, I know nobody wants to hear that. I get it, but it is what it is, because you just stated, there is still plenty of shoulder work that has to be done, and there is still working on some drainage work. Believe it or not, I know we tried to avoid that. Chairman Jones speaking, also what they are probably looking at, they are probably wait until it gets warmer so they can work more than just during the daytime. And they cannot do that when you have, we have actually had some cold weather this year. Yeah, that is not conducive to paving. So, they are waiting till it gets warmer. So, they can probably work 24 hours if they need to, or work night shifts or cause it to be warmer, yeah. And they can actually lighter out later, like, like, what was talking about the parking earlier at Alligator Point. I am hoping we do not have another rainy season like we did last year. You know, yeah, you know, it prevented the parking that is good. But by the same token, that is going to affect paving. It just does. Commissioner Sanders speaking, you know, we are fixing to go into a different weather pattern too. And we are going to be moving out of the La Nina into the El Nino. And when you do that, you get a little bit more water and storms and stuff. So, everybody be vigilant about that because it is going to happen. We have been on a drought for so long.

Presentations/Updates/Requests

5. Chuck Anderson -- City Manager (Apalachicola) -- Scipio Creek (Mill Pond) Project Funding Request

Chairman Jones speaking, Chuck Anderson, city manager for Apalachicola, thank you for being here with us today. Chuck Anderson speaking, thank you commissioners, and good morning. My name is Chuck Anderson. I am the city manager in Apalachicola, and I am here today to seek your support, to assist the city and funding a portion of the Scipio Creek electrical upgrades. Having been the city manager since the end of September, I quickly learned a number of things. So, when I say Scipio Creek, I also mean Mill Pond, because I understand that the terms can be interchangeable, depending on whether you are somebody who grew up here or somebody who is new here. What I would like to provide is a little bit of additional information for the commission and the community. The Marina at the mill pond is a city marina, and it is not a private one. So, it is not subsidizing a private entity, as we do these electrical upgrades and infrastructure upgrades, the damage to the Marina was primarily occurred during Hurricane Michael in 2018 and the fixes are long overdue. The total cost for the electrical upgrades were scoped and quoted at about \$470,100. The upgrades are part of the restoration efforts to bring the system back to full operational status and to improve the resiliency of that critical infrastructure to withstand future storms. The upgrades include demolishing the old electrical system and installing four elevated electrical panels, installing four new meter bases and panel boxes to service those newly installed dock power boxes, installing new light fixtures for existing light poles at the dock, and also to install two new light poles with fixtures. The electrical work will be able to withstand 140 mile per hour ultimate wind speed in accordance with the Florida building code. The city just completed dock and piling repairs at a cost of approximately \$102,000 and the city is also working to fix the ADA accessible elevator that is at Mill Pond. With that, the city is requesting that the County Commission support this project, potentially through the available residual balance in the CRA of approximately \$130,000. That is all I have for my report unless you have any questions.

Chairman Jones speaking, do you have any questions, commissioners? So, I did have one question. Currently, any tenants that are at the Mill Pond, that are using it, that are parking their shrimp boat or other boat, what is the average cost they are paying for a month to be there? Mr. Anderson speaking,

Commissioner, I do not have that off the top of my head. I will definitely get that information provided back to the commissioner. Commissioner Sanders speaking, how much is in the Apalachicola CRA that we have got? Mrs. Griffith speaking, the amount remaining is \$130,175.33. That is the available balance the county has been holding. However, they are requesting for the funds to be given as an advancement, but we historically have done reimbursement. As far as you know, so I do not know if that would work for the city. If you all would be okay with the reimbursement basis? Mr. Anderson speaking, we would make it work. Thank you. Commissioner Jones, if I could, I do know the rates are being looked at, because I know they are very competitive. And in fact, the rates for the individuals that are out there are, from what I understand, according to industry standards, very low. So, we are looking at those rates, but we cannot really look to increase rates for individuals who are there until we can make these upgrades. You know, we need to take care of the docks, the pilings, the electrical we need to make sure the facility is in better shape and the infrastructure is repaired before we would look at changing rates. Chairman Jones speaking, well, the reason I was asking that, number one, I did not know. I was hoping you would know. But number two, I know that a lot of the utilization currently that has been at the mill pond for forever are commercial shrimpers. So, you know, I am glad that the city is finally, I should not say finally, but the city is repairing this infrastructure and doing and taking that on. It has been needed. A lot of people that have been there, whether it was a lower amount or not, they have been paying the whole time, even with the way the infrastructure has been. So, I am just hopeful that it does not turn out to be a doubling of their rent because renovations have been made. That is my expectation. Mr. Anderson speaking, okay, well, thank and I will get that information back to the Commission. Commissioner Croom speaking, one thing was when Manager Wade, when he came before this commission, didn't we agreed to sit funding aside for this? We did. Mrs. Griffith speaking, yes, he had originally come and presented to the board, and I believe it was more of a conceptual approval, yeah, because he did not have any hard quotes or anything available for us at that time. But yes, we have discussed it previously. Commissioner Ward speaking, I had the same question. I did, and I appreciate you taking my call yesterday, Mr. Anderson, I did talk to him about some things. That was one of my questions, too, after I got a phone name, but I am glad you brought it up again. This is for commercial shrimpers. I mean, they use these docks, and have for years. There are boats that have been way before any of us were even around, that were built and moored there. So, if we can help with this project in any way, I am for it. So, I do not know. I know we have got the \$130,000 and Erin, I do not want to put you in a spot. Is there any other, I know this quote? When I got this quote, I was like, whoa, \$410,000. I am like, what is this all about? It is a lot of money, but I understand there is a lot of infrastructure that needs to take place. And I meant to ask this, Mr. Anderson, is this something that we would have? I guess the question I need to ask is, is there any other money that that we put aside that we could contribute more than the \$130,000 to this? Mrs. Griffith speaking, the \$130k would be the only thing that the county could do. In discussions with Chuck, you know, I had actually asked him like, are you all able to complete the entire project? And he did relay that they had ARPA funding remaining for the rest of the balance. Mr. Anderson speaking, and if I could correct that, not correct, but just add to that, is we have some CIP funding that we can take portion of out, and we are pursuing another grant to finalize the full funding scheme for the project. Commissioner Ward speaking, with that, Mr. Chairman, I guess we need to have a motion to I will make a motion to direct the, before I do that, though the reimbursement, I want to make sure that we reimburse, not cut them a check. Nothing against the city or you or anything. But I want to make sure that this money is actually going, not again, nothing against you or anybody. But I just want to make sure that we are, you know, funding this particular project specifically. So, do I need to make the motion to reflect the reimbursement? **So, I am going to make a motion to reimburse this money to the city of Apalachicola for the repairs, and you all can submit progress billings as well. Seconded by Commissioner Croom.** Chairman Jones speaking, so we do have a motion to approve this request with the understanding that it is a reimbursement for this individual product project, and as the county receives invoices, we will do the reimbursement. **The motion was made by Commissioner Ward. It has been seconded by Commissioner Croom.** Any other discussion before we vote? Chairman Jones speaking, I do want to ask one question, Mr. Chuck, sorry, Mr. Anderson, the quote that we have in this packet is from November, and it says at the bottom of the quote, that is only good for 30 days. Mr. Anderson speaking,

that was not the actual company that actually won the bid for the project. We just asked them to scope this so we do have an approximate idea of what the overall cost is tracking with the company that did put in the quote it is in that ballpark. Chairman Jones speaking, okay, fair enough. Thank you. Any other discussion before we vote? All in favor, any opposed, that is unanimous. **Motion carried 5-0.** Mr. Anderson speaking, thank you for your support and no offense taken.

6. Destiny Bates -- ARPC -- Franklin 98 Project Update

Destiny Bates speaking, I am Destiny Bates. I am the new environmental project manager at the Apalachicola Regional Planning Council. With me, I have our new environmental planning manager, Brian Branciforte and Lydia Johnson works on our vulnerability assessments. So, I just wanted to come today, introduce our new faces and then give some updates on the living shoreline project that we have going on. We are about to start up construction again, so we are really excited to get going. So, you will be seeing us a lot in the community. So just some high level, I am sure you guys are all really familiar with this project. Just some high-level goals that we had. We want to install 20 acres of new reef, 30 acres of new marsh down Highway 98. This will bring a lot of benefits to the area. Tourism is a big one, potentially pulling people to the area to see one of, if not the largest living shoreline in the state. We have also already seen a boost in fishing in the area. We have seen a lot of fishermen out there catch some really good red fish. It is also just a very good scenic drive now and then; economic development is another one. We wanted to try to keep the money as local as we could. So, we have gone with a lot of local contractors, Franklin's Promise Coalition, Coastline Construction and North Florida Construction are some that have helped us with the work so far. And then this diagram that you can see, we wanted to stick with the kind of nature-based solutions. So, the one on the left shows kind of a typical linear layout of a living shoreline. And then we went with a more organic layout, which helps boost biodiversity as well as just looking pretty. Here is some before and after conditions so the before you can see very small shoreline, a lot of manmade rip rap structures. Below is a generated photo of our goal, what we hope to achieve, a larger shoreline. And I do want to point out that this project, will not stop storm surge, but it will help with everyday erosion, which will make the shoreline more resilient in those storm events.

Chairman Jones speaking, Ms. Destiny, one of the things that transpired because of this project, commissioners ought to make sure you are aware of it there. There was nothing on DOT's five-year plan to pave the road between Carrabelle and East Point until after this project got approved. Okay, it was not in their thing that we are not going to fund it because the road was constantly eroding and wearing out. There is a lot of problems. But since this six months after, this project actually got going, DOT put it in their five-year plan for the next year. Okay, so that is where we are at, and that's why we're that's why we're about to get that road paid. It is part and parcel of this. So no, is it meeting? And I am not trying to steal your thunder. How does it mean the ecological concerns of the living shoreline? It's also helping protect the infrastructure that the state's putting taxpayer dollars in to make sure we have a good and decent road in the county for sure.

Ms. Destiny speaking, thank you for adding that. So just adding some design considerations that we have gone through. The design started back in 2019ish, 2020, there were a lot of sea grass studies, pilot testing, monitoring, and we really wanted to focus on the stakeholder community aspect. So, we did a lot of community workshops, getting a lot of input on the most vulnerable areas along 98 so we can do our project in those areas that need it the most. So far, we have had three different funding sources. First was FDEP. They helped with the preliminary planning. So that has done, we worked, or we moved on to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation with the emergency Coastal Resilience Fund that helped with the rest of the design and permitting, and also the Phase One construction that we have already completed. And right now, we are working with the Gulf Environmental Benefit fund that will help, or that will get us through the rest of construction that we have planned and then monitoring after. Since we are picking up momentum now, with more construction starting, we are gaging interest for future phases, and we are looking for funding sources for those additional phases. So here we have a map of the areas. The green is phase one that we

have had completed. That is the Franklin County School and Tate Hell east and west that was completed back in May 2024, phase two is just kind of an extension of those phase one areas, and that construction is set to start next month. Then phase three, we have in the blue that's approximate right now, we are still working with our landowners to get those permitting documents finalized so we can have those exact parcels where we are going to include and just more about our construction. As I said, phase one was completed, it covered about a mile of shoreline that was all public area, and we installed 99 reefs and about an acre of marsh. And since that marsh was planted, we have had a 30% growth for the area, and we have also seen oyster coverage on all the reefs that we have installed. Some are pretty much 100% covered with oysters. Phases two and three are both include private landowners. Phase two permitting, everything is done. We are just waiting on construction to start waiting for that funding. Then phase three, we are still working with those landowners this week, and last week, I have been picking up boundary line agreements to get them added to the project. Our internal cut off to get all those together is the end of this month, so we are looking really good to meet that deadline. And then these are just some of our project partners. We have me the project manager, Will Mather, with WSP, who helps with engineering and consulting, and then Rick Carter, who also helps with design and consulting. I just want to say we are very excited to get construction started back again, and if you have any questions, I can answer them.

Chairman Jones speaking, we are excited to have you guys here today. I am not trying to take away from commissioner questions. Rick has been kind of with this project since it started, like me. You know, did not think we would ever get as far as we did, but I am glad we did, because I think it's going to help. You know there were some valid concerns that we addressed in the beginning that you guys might not be aware of. Some commissioners were afraid that these artificial reefs were going to be creating oyster habitat, and people were trying to be eating the oysters and getting sick and all those things. Those are valid things, but most of this is created marsh areas, and I am just glad to see it continue to go forward. Because what is different and you kind of said it when you were saying your presentation, there were a bunch of property owners that did not have nothing to do with to begin with. Nope, we do not have nothing to do with that. You are taking away our use of our property, or this out of the other whatever. So, they did not want to do it. Then we did the first stage, and things actually went well. And now so a lot of people want to do it. Ms. Destiny speaking, we did it that way, just public property as an example, and it is completely voluntary. We are not making these landowners participate, but it really is a benefit for them. Commissioner Ward speaking, Mr. Chairman, I will say, in looking at the project itself, when that first started. To be honest, I was a little skeptical, because I thought, well, the first big storm that comes those little rocks that are out there pushed onto the highway, and it is going to become a county problem but I'm actually amazed, because we've had several bad storms since that project and how it's all come together, and those rocks are still there, the marsh grass is still there. So, I am impressed with how that all has transpired. So, it is interesting to see. And anytime, anything we can do, in my opinion, to help erosion of our road or anything like that is, I know it is FDOT, but still, I feel like it is worth it so but anyway, thank you. Thank you all for being here and being patient and waiting your turn. Ms. Destiny speaking, thank you, guys. Chairman Jones speaking, anyone have any questions? Commissioner Sanders speaking, no, I miss Evan. I miss him on that project, but it has significantly grown back toward the shoreline, all those grasses, those native grasses that is in there, has really done a very good job. And I hope that one day I can ride across there and you will not even see the rocks. That is what the intent of it is, to build a shoreline. Chairman Jones speaking, hopefully it just takes time. So, what was happening, especially like with these fort channels over the years. The reason it got so filled in down at the east end by Barber's Seafood is because every time we would have a major storm, it would erode Highway 98 toward East Point, and it would fill in the channel, and they'd come put more back to put 98 back another storm, and it would erode and it reticulate toward you know, it was just a bad cause and effect, so maybe this help with some of that as well. It is all good. Thank you all for being here today, and we really appreciate all you do on behalf of Franklin County from the Regional Planning Council.

7. Grayson Shepard -- Apalachicola Artificial Reef Association -- Application Request

The Apalachicola Artificial Reef Association is applying for the 2026-27 FWC \$60,000 grant for reefs. Same grant we were awarded 2 years ago that paid for the deployment into the Buddy Ward site in August 2025. This time we're cooperating with OAR to join forces and hopefully use our grant and theirs (if we are awarded them) to start putting material into the Franklin 30 mile reef which will benefit the entire county. The application will need to be approved by the Board and the cover letter signed. Deadline for the application is March 20, 2026.

Mr. Shepard speaking, I am here just to ask you guys approve the request for application for a grant, the FWC grant for artificial reefs. The paragraph that is in the agenda pretty much sums it up. There are roughly 10 grants awarded statewide to counties we are working in coordination with or the organization of artificial reefs. They are the reef association for Tallahassee. They put a lot of stuff out on the eastern side of the county, off of Carrabelle, off of Alligator Point. You guys are familiar with them. We are kind of working together. They are applying for the same grant. It is a \$60,000 grant if, if both of us are awarded this. We are going to pool them together and try to get some material in that Franklin 30-mile reef. That is basically, if you draw a line between here and Carabelle and then put a point 30 miles out in the Gulf of Mexico, basically right between our two communities. That is where this reef is, if you are familiar with the Exxon template, or the S tower. It is right there in that area, 105 feet deep. It is roughly a little under half a mile wide by a mile and a half deep, north, and south. But I just need you guys to approve us to apply for the grant. I guess Michael's got all the information there. We were awarded this grant in 2024 \$60,000 we added some Apalachicola artificial funds to it. And this was that last deployment that we did in, I think it was August of 2025, that went into the Buddy Ward reef. So, we skipped a year just kind of let it rest. This is we are applying again, because we are working with OAR, we feel pretty confident that hopefully we will be awarded. FWC is really happy that we are working together with the neighboring reef association to combine our efforts into one spot. So, we feel pretty confident. But I just need you guys to sign off on it. It is a reimbursement award, so we would have to pay the contractor first, and immediately afterwards, we get reimbursed the \$60,000. So, Erin's already done this before, so she is familiar with the process. Chairman Jones speaking, alright. Any questions commissioners? Commissioner Ward speaking, Mr. Chairman, I will make a motion to approve with comment. **Chairman Jones speaking, okay, we have a motion to approve by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Amison.** Commissioner Ward speaking, I just want to tell you thank you, Grayson, for taking on the role of the riparian stakeholders' member from the board. When Michael and I met with Mr. Jones, I am going to be honest, you were the first name that popped in my head. I did not say your name over the meeting because I did not know how you felt about it. But I appreciate you taking on that role, so thanks. And I know you had your first meeting this morning. Mr. Grayson speaking, that is my second, actually. Since you brought it up, you guys are aware there is a resolution that needs to be signed by you guys. Chairman Jones speaking, let us vote on this. Let us keep we will let you talk in a minute. Any more discussion on this motion before we vote?

All in favor. Any opposed, that is unanimous 5-0. Mr. Grayson speaking, I did attend that meeting this morning. It was my second one. And actually, Brock Shiver attended this one. So, it is good to see him. Glad that you guys invited him on board. It is nice to see younger people in our community starting to get active, because we will need them down the road. But back to the RCSC, that resolution you guys are aware of. I know there was some clerical changes that were made to it, but there are the six counties along the river, of four of them have already signed the resolution. I think Jackson County is doing it today, tomorrow, and then that leaves us. So, you guys, it is something that needs to be dealt with, because we need to present that to the Corps of Engineers. Mr. Moron speaking, I am sorry, you guys already approved that I was waiting for Attorney Shuler to get back to change the language for me and get the chairman to re-sign a new one. So, yes, that has been approved. Mr. Grayson speaking, that is all I have to say. There is nothing really going on there. The Corps of Engineers is still engineers is still working through their process of dredging, whether it is going to happen, how it is going to happen, you know, we are really not clear on that. It is the federal government and they are slow as molasses. Commissioner Ward speaking, we just want our maintenance contract, dredge maintenance contracts. That is what we want, need. So anyway. Thank you again. Mr. Grayson speaking, you bet I will keep you guys posted on that as needed. Appreciate

it. Chairman Jones speaking, thank you Grayson.

Planning and Zoning Adjustment Board Report

8. Critical Shoreline Applications

a. 225 Rio Vista

A consideration of a request for the construction and use of a 12 ft x 4 ft access pier, a 12 ft x 12 ft platform, a 4 ft x 10 ft pre-manufactured gangway, a 12 ft x 16 feet pre-manufactured dock, a 15 ft x 6 ft walkway, a 3 ft x 24 ft walkway and a 26 ft, 8 in. x 30 ft, 8 in. roof structure totaling 1,403.78 sq ft of pile supported structure. Property located in Sopchoppy, Franklin County, Florida. Request submitted by Joseph Webster, Spartan Exteriors, LLC, agent for Michael & Ginny Crowder, applicants.

Ms. Robinson speaking, this was a unanimous approval of recommendation from the P and Z board, and they do have their permits in order. **On a motion by Commissioner Sanders, seconded by Commissioner Ward, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the critical shoreline application for 225 Rio Vista as listed above. Motion carried 5-0.**

b. 570 River Road

A consideration of a request for the installation of a second 168 sq. ft. uncovered boat lift to the existing dock. Property is located in Carrabelle, Franklin County, Florida. Request submitted by Jessica Williams, Edgewater Group, agent for Frederick Jones, applicant.

On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Croom, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the critical shoreline application for 570 River Road as listed above. Motion carried 5-0.

9. Variance Requests

a. 570 River Road

A consideration of a request to install a living shoreline consisting of approximately 171 linear ft (513 sq ft) of natural limestone concurrent with the planting of Spartina alterniflora to stabilize an eroding shoreline along the Carrabelle River. Property located in Carrabelle, Franklin County, Florida. Request submitted by Jessica Williams, Edgewater Group, agent for Frederick Jones, applicant.

On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Amison, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the variance request for 570 River Road as listed above. Commissioner Ward speaking, just as variances come before the board, we have to ask ourselves the question, is there a hardship? And anybody, in my opinion, that comes to me, I am one of five, but if anybody comes asking to protect their investment in their property by putting rip rap or a sea wall or something to protect the erosion of their property or protect from the erosion of the property I am going to be for. Now, of course, I look at everything else in addition to just that, but with that, like I said, I am in favor of this, and that is why I am approving this variance, because they're protecting their property. **Motion carried 5-0.**

b. 1369 Chip Morrison Drive

A consideration of a request for a Variance of a 90 ft x 14 ft seawall to be placed above the MHWL but within the Critical Shoreline District (150' from MHWL). Property is located in Alligator Point, Franklin County, FL. Request submitted by Josh Hall, Backroads Consulting, LLC, agent for Ana Bueno, applicant. This was also a unanimous recommendation of approval from the P&Z board.

Mr. Chairman speaking, questions commissioners? Commissioner Ward speaking, Mr. Chairman, I do. Are you guys the applicants? Yes. Why are you guys' way out, if you look at the houses and how they are all set up, and y'all may not know this. I do not know if y'all built the home or you just bought it, but it is

sticking out there like a sore thumb. And in comparison, to all the other ones in the line, I guess I see that it is kind of curving a little bit, but, but man, oh, man, that is pretty close, which is, I guess, why you guys are wanting protector, right? Mr. Wezner speaking, yeah, I can comment on that. My name is Mike Wexner. My wife and I live on St George Island. We are residents here, and I am the El are on this project, and this beach area here has changed significantly in the last two years. There was formerly before Helene, the month before a sea wall on 1371 which is just adjacent to it on the west side. And that sea wall was back filled with enough sand to redo the whole beach, and Helene took it out, and that sand actually washed down in front or seaward side of the 1369 property. And this particular property, we had to get surveyed several times for FDEP, and the mean high-water line has shifted, and there is actually more beach there now, but under this house, they have lost six to eight feet in elevation of sand, and it has not rebuilt itself, and so it is sticking out there like a sore thumb. Chip Morrison Drive, if you have not been out there, you may or may not know, was completely reconfigured because of previous storms. DOT had to reconfigure the road just to allow access to this part of Chip Morrison Drive and the houses at the end of Chip Morrison Drive were there one day and gone the next. So, this is a critical need for this area. There are actually three properties involved. We are going to go back to Bree this coming month to continue that wall to the west, because of the concerns with 1371 and 1373. So, I am here to answer any questions that you might have, but also to tell you that we really appreciate Bree and her thoroughness with her team to evaluate and, you know, just be responsive to the attention to detail in this area and the communication. So, if you have any questions, glad to answer questions. Commissioner Sanders speaking, just to comment, if you look at that whole area, that whole area has shifted down toward Chip Morrison, now that we have fixed that it you know that 1100 feet there joins up to Tom Roberts now. So, you know, you have this, you have the wash out that you have and this is bad. This has always been bad in here, and it is worse down towards the east, because. Nothing left in there. Mr. Wezner speaking, I will just add to that is what you are looking at is a picture of the design plan for the new wall with a walk over this question came up with P&Z about the height of the wall. The wall actually starts three feet under the current elevation of the shoreline and then goes up about 10 feet. So, it is a significant wall being built, but the design is consistent with the DOT jetties that they do. Commissioner Ward speaking, Mr. Chairman, I guess I have a question for Bree. It says here that a recommendation. Now this is our P&Z board? Did P&Z board recommended approval base on contingent on some permits? Ms. Robinson speaking, yes, I should have noted that during talking about their motion. So, thank you for reminding me, just to kind of simplify this is within the CCCL line, so they have to have a letter of no objection from county staff before they move forward with their application. Staff cannot sign that letter unless they have everything in order, so they do need the variance first in order to submit that application. So, while this application does not have their permits right now, they are essentially asking for the variance so they can apply. And so, I did provide a staff recommendation for a contingent approval, so I will read that now. It is staff recommends approval of the proposed variance for sea wall installation, contingent upon all required permits being obtained as the project is within the CCCL. Should the permitting process require modification to the proposed design, the revised design must be returned to the board for review and approval. Mr. Wezner speaking, I would like to add one more thing. We are up the wall, up against the wall with turtle season, and so we are hoping to get this project started. So, we would really appreciate the no objection letter so we can move this project forward. Commissioner Ward speaking, I will make a motion to approve based on staff recommendation, which is the motion to approve contingent upon all required permits. So, let us get this straight then because you are talking about the coastal construction. So, you all have received your permits from the state. We have not received them. Not received they got to wait for this vote today. But this is what I am saying that the thing about it is, it got to watch out for that coastal construction line. And just because we give you approval do not mean you do not get approval at state level. Mr. Wezner speaking, right. We are looking through the note letter of objection in order to get the permit. Commissioner Sanders speaking, I would like to ask a question. I mean, it seems like y'all have already in here and know what you are going to have to have? How many, how many tons of feel are y'all going to have to have in here? Mr. Wezner speaking, that is a good question, because they have lost so much, but we are looking approximately 300 yards. Commissioner Sanders speaking, 300 yards. I uh, like it is going to be more than 300. Well, I am just looking. But anyway, okay,

so you made a motion. **I will second it.** Chairman Jones speaking, all right. **So, we do have a motion to approve consistent with what the P&Z board did with a contingency by Commissioner Ward. It has been seconded by Commissioner Sanders.** Any discussion, all in favor, any opposed? That is unanimous. **Motion carried 5-0.**

c. 2638 Highway 98

A consideration of a request for a Variance for 5' of encroachment into the 25' front setback and 10' into the 50' Critical Habitat Zone setback. Front: 20' requested; CHZ: 40' requested. Property is located in Carrabelle, Franklin County, Florida. Request submitted by Jon Pine, applicant.

Ms. Robinson speaking, so front they are requesting a 20-foot setback and the critical habitat zone 40 feet is requested from the mean high-water line. This was a unanimous vote to deny this request by the P&Z board. Chairman Jones speaking, any questions, Commissioner, what is the pleasure? Commissioner Ward speaking, Mr. Chairman, I am going to have to agree with staff recommendation and P&Z on this. There were a lot of issues that I found with this, this particular property. I feel like personally that when you are talking, I know we talked about critical habitat zones and things, but this is the critical habitat versus critical shoreline. it was an issue for me. Also, I feel like this applicant that purchased the property in December of 2025, should have done us due to their due diligence to see what they could build. Also, I think in reading this, I feel like they can kind of work with county zoning building staff to change the footprint. So, I believe there was an open-air deck and a garage that was discussed. I feel like they can maybe omit or change to make the footprint of this build where it needs to be. So, I feel like that at this point with what we have in front of us today, for me, I am one person. **I am going to vote to deny this request.** Attorney Shuler speaking, is there anyone for the applicant present? Mr. Moron speaking, I did not see anyone online. Mr. Moron speaking, the Chairman is calling if the applicant is attending on Zoom. Please indicate that by raising your hand. No hands raised, Mr. Chairman. Chairman Jones speaking, okay, so have we had any motions yet at all? **Commissioner Ward speaking, I made a motion and Commissioner Sanders seconded.** Chairman Jones speaking, so we have a motion and a second. Any other discussion before we vote?

Commissioner Amison speaking, just Mr. Chairman, please, just for clarification for me, it is not unbuildable. It is just not what they are wanting to build, to not build them correct. Ms. Robinson speaking, that is correct. If you are looking at the visual, the pink is what they can build with no variance at all. It is 17 feet wide by 75 feet of buildable area, so similar to the shotgun style. Just turn sideways. Chairman Jones speaking, all in favor, any opposed? **That was a vote to deny, and it was unanimous. Motion carried 5-0.**

County Coordinator & Attorney Reports

10. Michael Morón – County Coordinator

Mr. Moron speaking, the first one is the Rural Renaissance Bill, you guys, we all support that. Councilman Gamsby of the town White Springs. He directly went to the Commissioners, so you guys are aware of what I am saying. So, just wanted your support in that. Item two was the Nest program. This is on me on the 17th. You know, this is Ms. Howze who came before the board. We just we did the letter of support. You guys asked me to put the request for the \$10,000 on the next agenda. I failed to do that. She is planning for her summer program. The board was willing to do it, we just needed it to be action item. We should have put it in the next meeting. She is getting ready for her summer program and looking at a budget not looking too good. So, she wanted any help she can get with that. And the third one is the code enforcement class that Mrs. Smith would like to attend. If you looked at that class, is very comprehensive class training and an exam. I do not know if it's if she needs those credits for renewal could be, I think she's away at a class right now, so she should be back later in the week, but the board has encouraged any classes that she can take to keep her certification to do that. And that is my three action items for the board.

Commissioner Ward speaking, okay, Mr. Chairman, I have a question on number three. In her registration fee is the accommodations included in that? Mr. Moron speaking, no, that is just a registration for right now, accommodations will come as we get closer to the day. Commissioner Ward speaking, I just want to make sure she has got a place to stay in this. Mr. Moron speaking, I was trying to let her do it so she can try, like the board, try and get in the same hotel, or close to the class, whoever is being normally when we go on our conferences, you just say the cost of the trip, or whatever. Now, if you just got want to go ahead and do registration and expenses travel, we could do that. Commissioner Ward speaking, I would like to personally, just because that way you are not coming back, and that way when she, because these hotels go quick, and do not want for her to have to be waiting on us to make a decision, and her not be able to get into where she needs to go. Mr. Moron speaking, I guess we are going to do all these on consent. Or do we you could do on consent and just add, just indicate, now that when you do number three, it will include travel and expenses. Commissioner Ward speaking, I will make a motion to approve all three with the add on to action item three to include the accommodations for Mrs. Smith. **On a motion by Commissioner Ward to approve items 1-3 and to include travel and expenses on action item 3, seconded by Commissioner Croom. Motion carried 5-0.**

1. Action Item: Senate Bill 250

Commissioner Ward received a letter from Councilman Robert Gamsby, of the town of White Springs, Florida, requesting a letter of support from the Board for Senate Bill 250, also known as the Rural Renaissance Bill. Attached to my report is the Councilman's letter, a flyer, and a draft letter of support. The Councilman's letter explains some of the challenges experienced by Hamilton County, and the Town of White Springs, as a rural county and city. Franklin County shares in some of those challenges in addition to others. As the Councilman's letter states, the Rural Renaissance Bill attempts to address many of these unique challenges. Board action to authorize the Chairman's signature on a letter of support to our Legislative Delegation and the Governor expressing the importance of the Rural Renaissance Bill.

2. Action Item: The Nest Program Funding

At your November 17, 2025, meeting, Ms. Stephanie Howze appeared before the Board to request a letter of support for grant applications for The Nest Afterschool and Summer program funding. Ms. Howze explained the due to state-wide budget cuts, the program was enduring serious funding deficits. During that discussion, Commissioner Amison asked the Board to consider giving the program \$10,000, from the Parks and Recreation budget, as was done the previous year. As requested by the Chairman, I should have placed this request on the following meeting agenda for approval but failed to do so. Board action to approve disbursement of \$10,000 for The Nest Afterschool and Summer Program from the Parks and Recreation budget.

3. Action Item: Code Enforcement Class

Mrs. Wyndolyn "Sissy" Smith, your Code Enforcement Officer, registered for a Florida of Institute of Government's Legal Issues in Code Enforcement Course and Exam. This course and exam will be held in Lakeland from August 10th – 14th. The course overview and other information, along with the registration confirmation is attached. The registration cost is \$700. Board action to authorize reimbursing Mrs. Smith the \$700 registration cost for the Legal Issues in Code Enforcement Course and Exam.

4. Informational Item: NFWFMD Warter Shortage Warning Order

"On February 11, 2026, the Governing Board of the Northwest Florida Water Management District (District) issued a Water Shortage Warning Order 26-001 calling for voluntary reductions in water use for all water classes within the District." "While water supplies are currently meeting demand, the Water Shortage Warning is intended to encourage conservation, reduce drought impacts, and protect water resources. Users are encouraged to conserve water where practicable and to limit landscape irrigation to early morning or evening hours when possible. Activities necessary for fire protection are not affected, and

any existing local mandatory water restrictions remain in effect.” A copy of the Water Shortage Warning Order Fact Sheet is attached.

5. Informational Item: March 2026 Meeting Dates

- Your regular meetings are on Wednesday 4th and Wednesday 18th at 9:00 a.m.
- The Planning and Zoning meeting is on Tuesday 10th at 5:30 p.m.
- The Airport Operations Economic Development Board regular meeting is on Tuesday 24th at 9:30 a.m.
- Weems Board of Directors regular meeting will be on Thursday 26th.

Mr. Moron speaking, I know item four commissioners is old news right now. It has been broadcast everywhere, but I just thought it was still very important that I put it on my agenda, and if anything changes with their order, which more a recommendation than mandatory from how I read it, I will let the board know and let the public know. If you guys have received any comments about it or not, you know that is that. Your meeting dates, commissioners, that is it. Now I know the Chairman has two items he is going to talk about. One is a meeting with the DEP secretary. He is going to inform the board of that, and he is going to move on to the federal requirement for our websites to be ADA compatible. And that is a task on its own.

Chairman Jones is speaking. I want to ensure that we handle the meeting scheduled for next Wednesday, the 25th, which is available anytime between 8:30 AM and 12:00 PM. We need to communicate what time would be suitable for us. I want to ensure that everyone has at least a week to prepare a plan and determine if it will work within that timeframe. Commissioner Ward is speaking, stating that he has a prior engagement that day, but he acknowledges the importance of the meeting. He recalls mentioning either Wednesday or Friday, but he was not aware of any specific arrangements. We can inquire with them. What about Friday the 27th? Could they accommodate that? Chairman Jones is speaking, indicating that he can make the inquiry. Commissioner Ward is speaking, suggesting that we simply ask them. If that is not possible, Mike can adjust to make the 25th work, correct? Chairman Jones is speaking, asking what time would be suitable for everyone if we were to proceed with the 25th. It would need to be before noon for me, as all proposed times fall before noon, or just one of us. Yes, this meeting has been organized by Representative Shoaf with the DEP secretary for the commission. It is not a board meeting; he has specifically called it, which is acceptable. We will attempt to provide a timeframe between the proposed hours, and I will request an alternative for Friday, just in case. Yes, sir, for now, unless we can reschedule to the 27th.

Chairman Jones speaking, the other thing is, and Michael and I have talked about this for a while, the federal government has new requirements coming down the line for ADA compliance for our county website, for all county websites, not just ours. Like Michael was talking about a while ago on the site plan on an ADA reader, it has got to be a flip your website to do away with those maps and those drawings, and label out what that picture is doing. This is a picture of a dot. The length is so and so, the width is so and so, the height above the sea level is so and so. You know, it has got to be a flip all that.

Mr. Moron speaking, yes, so every, if I may, sir, so every site plan, every picture, every image that we have on the website, will have what they call alt box. I am sure that is what he said in that alt box. The reader would have to go without alt box and has to explain what is on that particular image. Because once someone would with that sight disability, turns on the reader that is a blank page that they see, they depend on the alt box to explain what is in front of them. Commissioners, I am talking about every single site plan. So, you saw how many site plans, drawings, everything that, just in a very small P & Z meeting came up today, every single one would have to have that on it. Now, Commissioner, what I will say. One of the things that has been pitched us, we have talked to different people, but I have the different people about this, is, well, just do not put site plans online on the agenda. Just show them during the meeting. Looking at the public, I

do not think the public will like that too much, because we have worked very hard in providing as much information as we can to do that. And so yes, it is very important. You said that over and over again, so we are in the process, me and, you know, I'll be honest with you, I've kind of drafted the chairman into this discussion, because he's been talking about this change for some time now, from since it's, I believe, the summer when you guys came back from conference last year, he's been talking to me about this to get it done. So now we are getting a lot closer to the date and having to make some decisions. So, it is not just the website and the content of the website, it's any document that you have there, and what you cannot do is, basically, from what I've been told, you cannot pull it off of well, let me say, let me spin that around. You cannot not provide it on the website and tell them they got to come to the office to pick it up. That is unacceptable. That does not work, because you are still restricting, restricting accessibility. In addition, any if they make a public records request in an email and it falls within that there is a date going forward to basically have the documents that way, that document has to meet ADA requirements, and if it includes an image, a site plan, a drawing, that alt box has to be completed and add it. Now, I will say to you, we have our current vendor. They are good with the reformatting our current website to make it ADA accessible. But they are not too. They basically told the clerk and me that no one myself, Angela actually, that they are not able to help with these documents that we have. That has to be that. So, if you know, it will have to be them. And then we have to get a company to help us with the documents. There are other website providers that I have started talking to some offer a limited assistance with the documents, and there are others that say, yeah, we are in there with you. We will train your staff how to use it and provide a maintenance plan that if you have a really tough document, you send it to us. We will do it for you. Mr. Chairman, with, is it Citizens Serve we are going to transition to for code enforcement. Yes. Is that? Is that something they can do, since a lot of this stuff is going to be basically what they do in terms of, because that is where all these this is going to go, right? Mr. Moron speaking, yes, Angela is reaching out to them to has it. Because do not forget, it is not just like you are saying. It is not just the code enforcement. We use it for zoning. We use it for the building department, right? That is what I am saying. I am looking at other possibilities. The chairman found another software. I believe civic plus now owns it. Think they bought it from somebody looking worried about the price, but still, it has got to get done. So, like, I guess I want you guys to be thinking about this, because I am going to be working on it. And there are times I am going to present scenarios to you, and I will try my best to say, okay, we can do it this way. But if you want to keep this document on the website and keep putting these type of documents. Here is the cost it is going to and I know I'm talking to you guys at the same time when the legislature is talking about reducing our ad valorem taxes, I get that. But this is the federal government. This just is not for Franklin County, or the state of Florida, this goes extended Attorney Shuler's memory is better than mine, even though he is not feeling well today, when the state did their ADA thing, there was a group of South Florida attorneys that were testing every site, and I think we had a small payout to one of those groups. The Chairman does not want to end up in that position on a federal level, you know, dealing with the situation so. Chairman Jones speaking, well, there are pillages and we can be levied for websites that are not compatible after that date. Now we are still way ahead of that date, but Michael, what I would rather if the boards okay with it is to have you do is kind of like you did with the code enforcement software. You do the research; you bring us back up and find us. If there are any companies that can kind of help us do all of it, okay, and just let us know, because I do not think it is going to meet the threshold to have to be bid out. So, find us and bring us back recommendations or some recommendations, unless you have a different idea, keep in mind, we will be dragging some of these because it is handling, you know, yeah, we do not need to, because it's easy to put something to the side, and then before you know it, it's been three months since you talked about it. Yeah, that is what I am trying to avoid, trying to be as active with this as possible. Mr. Moron speaking, I hate that we are in a position where we have to consider going backwards in the information we put out to the public. I do not like that. You know, we work really, really, really hard to, I mean, we put out more information than counties bigger than us. I feel well, you know, I pay attention to other counties and their agendas, and you know what they put out there. So, I want to, I want to make it better, not worse. Let me be honest with you know, I really enjoy and the staff likes it too. The more information is out there, the less phone calls that staff gets for information, true, you know, so it benefits us all the way around. But yeah,

we have a little challenge ahead of us. Just want to make the board aware of that.

Commissioner Ward speaking, I know that the end of February they are going to close out the bay again for oystering. I want if we can have someone representing FWC to come give this board or I do not know if I think it will be best in person, to kind of give us a rundown of how it worked, how it went, but I also want to nail down this whole licensing thing. Like I had a lot of people come to me and say, well, you know, John Doe got his but John Doe two did not, and it was for some reason or another. It just does not make any sense how they are doing the licensing aspect of it. So, I do not know if we can maybe talk to them about how they do it in November, or whenever, hopefully we will come back up in November, October, November. But October, if we could change how that happens, or if the ones that are that have the opportunity now, are they going to still be able to do it in November? They have to go back and reapply? There is a lot of I know they have workshops and things like that, but as far as applying, but I want some clarification, if you will, on how the next process and what the next plan of action is an outline of that, if that is okay with the rest of the board. Commissioner Amison speaking, some of those questions we could probably discuss right now, but I would rather FWC come and break it down to the commission. But as far as this, the number is 151. Whatever that was, that is why I was down there trying to get them, because that is the number going forward. It is 151, You had 151 people, individuals, got their commercial oyster license. Now, out of that 151 and that, we are just going to use a round number. Let us say 30 of those did not go and commercially harvest an oyster. That is what we need to do between now or between January and February of next year. So, they still have the October, February. What will happen then is those 30 will go into a lottery, and then you do not have to meet the same criteria as you did to begin with, with having catch history between 12 and 20, the violations, I am not sure about that. I have checked on that one. But then there's individuals that did not have landings between 12 and 20, could apply for the lottery time.

Commissioner Ward speaking, that answers some of my questions. Because the way it was explained to me was, was kind of that, and then the violation aspect of it, you know.

Commissioner Amison speaking, so and again, you know, because I have had these conversations with some folks so well, I was working, you know, here and there, because the bay had already started gotten to the point where we could not really make a living. So, I had to get off the water and go get a job. So, I do not have lands between 12 and 20. Like I said, that was the stakeholders were pushing for that oyster because they wanted really, I think it was a relation to try to keep any kind of outside residents from being able to oyster what it was. And I have said this numerous times. You know, we are kind of unique in our area. We do not have to worry with that, because people are not going to come from all over to come stay. Where are they going to stay, St George Island? I mean, that math does not math. You know, cannot make any money. We do not even have workforce housing. Where are they going to stay? Do not worry about that. But everybody just really wanted to make it to where it was only Franklin County residents that were going to be able to oyster and that is why that language was put in there, because the only legal way that the state could do it would be to fall back on a catch history. I mean, that was that was to appease the people that was wanting it to be just Franklin County folks. So that is one of those things I always say, you got to be careful.

Chairman Jones speaking, because it did exclude some people, yes, but that was the whole point of using those years, if I understand what you are saying, was to include some people, exclude the people that did not think it was. Commissioner Amison speaking, yeah, I see a lot of the questions that you are getting as well. But I would love for FWC to come in, because I, as they come in, I would like to see really, some numbers on what was landed. Just give us a good little rundown of what, what transparent there. Commissioner Ward speaking, I am interested to know. Commissioner Amison speaking, one thing with that though I would give them a little time, because, I mean, you know, you got to realize, obviously there were some bugs, you know. Really, they were shooting for that October with setting up the app and the hell in the hell out and all that stuff. They did a really good job of getting a condensed from that. What was it, August, you know, whenever the FWC Commission decided, they were going to open January? I mean,

they were putting, they were burning the candle both ends. Get it there. But there were still some bugs and, and I am just saying it would probably give them a little time, yeah, after the actual closure, that way they have all that information. Commissioner Ward speaking well, maybe the second meeting in March, because February 28 is the last day, so they should be able to get some time.

Commissioner Ward speaking, just really quick to update everybody on Team Franklin, we have a negotiations meeting today on that, but they are preparing. We are kind of waiting for this meeting. We are going to meet with the Team Franklin board the 26th and then be expecting them to come before us this board to kind of give an update of whatever, how everything has been going along.

Chairman Jones speaking, can I ask you a question about that? What are they proposing? I know this is not affordable housing. We are not talking about Section 8. We are not talking about stuff like that. We are talking about workforce housing. However, please make sure, one of my concerns is, whatever the number ends up being for the rent on the houses they want to do are going to not be affordable for the workforce we have. So, the way we talked about this program to begin with, and just the discussion, was not using the economy to qualify you. So, it is not like the apartments. What qualifies you as you, where you are positioned in in our local economy, in society, you have a kind of what the Governor did with the Hometown Heroes program. You have a certification or a license what you do, so you are automatically qualified. Now, the discussions about, what do you make?

Commissioner Ward speaking, not to interrupt, excuse me, but they that is, with all the workshops we have had, a lot of the discussion was, how do we select these individuals? I think Miss Gayle had a question too. She has been all the way from workshops, but what? How do you select these folks? How are we going to pick and choose who gets these however, 250 housing units out there? So, these are all questions, again, that these workshops provided that we have got our first meeting since those workshops next week. So, these are all good questions that we definitely need to address.

11. Michael Shuler – County Attorney

No report.

Commissioners' Comments

There were no additional Commissioner comments.

Adjournment

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

Ricky Jones – Chairman

Attest:

Michele Maxwell – Clerk of Courts

The audio is available upon request. Please e-mail jgay@franklinclerk.com, call 850-653-8861 to speak with the Administrative Assistant, or submit a request in writing to obtain audio of this meeting.