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WASHINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

May 10, 2022, 9:00 a.m., Commission Board Room

1331 South Blvd., Chipley, FL 32428

DISTRICT 1	DISTRICT 2	DISTRICT 3	DISTRICT 4	DISTRICT 5
Alan T Bush	Charles Kent	Tray Hawkins Chairman	Todd Abbott Vice-Chairman	Steve Joyner

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I. PROCLAMATION

- A. Call to Order – Chairman Abbott
- B. Invocation – Johnny Evans
- C. Pledge

The following persons were present at the meeting: Chairman Hawkins, Vice-Chairman Todd Abbott, Commissioners, Charles Kent, Alan T. Bush, and Steve Joyner. Also present were County Administrator Jeff Massey, County Attorney Clay Milton, Fuqua & Milton, P.A., Clerk of Court Lora C. Bell, and Deputy Clerk Risha Brantley.

II. AGENDA ITEMS

Agenda Additions – Community Service Parks (Chairman Hawkins) and Trane Agreement (County Administrator)

1. Resilient Florida Grant Application – Karen Shaw, Grants Coordinator addressed the board. The program is split into two different programs. One is a planning side, and one is an infrastructure side. The planning side is open until the end of June and the infrastructure side will open on July 1 and end in September. Approval is requested to apply for the planning grants, which is the vulnerability assessment of the entire county. This will check all the areas that are at risk for flooding. An official plan will be created to be used for mitigation money. There is a buyout program on the infrastructure side. There is \$20 million available for the vulnerability assessment on the planning side. \$500,000.00 or less for the study is projected. On the infrastructure side, there is \$180 million statewide.

The next buyout is projected at \$12 million.

This item will be listed on the consent agenda.

2. Impact Fees – Dana Whipple, Building Inspector addressed the board regarding the plan review for residential fees. Plan review fees only apply to commercial currently. There is nothing set for residential. The state requires that the plans must be reviewed.

Chairman Hawkins clarified that based on a 1,500-square-foot home, in Holmes County the permit would be \$1,461.76, and in Washington County, with the plan review, it would be \$612.61. Additional help would mean a quicker response time.

Increasing the fees would lessen the expense of a second building inspector.

None of the impact fees is used for the building department.

Jeff Massey, County Administrator commented that assessing the fees for residential would assist with Mr. Whipple's time being spent reviewing plans for those that change their mind.

This item will be listed on the consent agenda.

3. Commercial Usage at County Boat Landings – Alan Bush, Commissioner addressed the board regarding complaints received about boat landings where people are launching or retrieving their boat causing a hindrance by people loading/unloading kayaks. Concern about parking is expressed at the creek landing in Vernon. The improvements made there should help with the parking. It is suggested to the board to have an ordinance prepared so that it could readily be put in place.

Attorney Milton commented that drafting the ordinance will take minimal time. The Bay County ordinance includes specified landings where commercial use is prohibited. There are other landings where it is allowed with a permit/license. If that is the direction the board would like to go, a list of the boat ramps will be needed to identify which boat ramps are included and which aren't for specific uses.

Chairman Hawkins suggested that Cotton Landing should be used more.

Crystal Gainey, Cypress Springs Adventure addressed the board. Utilizing Cotton Landing doesn't give the customers the availability to experience all of Holmes Creek. Many of the customers want to travel from Burnt Sock to the park or from Cotton Landing to Hightower Springs. The board should consider if the commercial usage is closed to the public landings and private property is forced to be used, a lot of business and tax revenue will be forced out of the county.

Water Management calls and makes requests that they move trees that are in the way. Cypress Springs Adventure employees are paid by the company to repair some of the erosion. The company is known for being the keepers of the creek. Private boat owners are also assisted so that traffic will flow faster.

Cypress Springs Adventure customers don't park at the landings.

This is one of the biggest draws to the county. If the board makes it hard for businesses' it will be hard to get customers.

Are there ever calls made to let the board know that employees were putting out sandbags on their day off? The road is fixed at Cotton Landing by Cypress Springs after receiving approval from Water Management.

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Chairman Hawkins advised that Culpepper is the most utilized ramp by boats in Washington County.

Candace Blackmon, Owner of Holmes Creek Canoe Delivery in Vernon, Florida addressed the board. The main reason that Culpepper Landing is used by her business is due to alcohol.

If there are people that can't make the 3-mile trip back from Cotton Landing due to age or other reasons, they go and pick them up.

They are also keepers of the creek. Since Hurricane Michael and Hurricane Sally, there has been no help getting the creek cleaned out. People that live along the creek need to be aware of the erosion. The creek flowing inadequately is causing erosion. Is the board aware that the length of the trips has been shortened since the last two hurricanes? You can't travel from Burnt Sock to Cotton Landing. The board should ride the creek to see the debris and erosion. The erosion is causing banks to collapse. No help has been provided.

Taylor Elliott, Cold Water Excursions addressed the board. Delivery, local businesses, restaurants, and sales and tax revenue will be affected. Cold Water Excursions assist with repairing the springs, mitigating erosion, and picking up trash. The tours are designed to begin at Cotton Landing and end at Culpepper. Cotton Landing is too busy to put in and pull out at the same time.

Greg Hutchins addressed the board. There has been a group at the springs that would be considered bullies. They take up the whole grass area with their towels, and cabanas coming from the beach. Bullying is not being a partner. A van has been witnessed backing down unloading canoes and kayaks and then loading them with food and other items. They are taking up what used to be two different ways to land the boat. It is about respect.

The updates to Culpepper Landing don't look like they will assist with the situation.

Chairman Hawkins commented that two ladders will be built for temporary use. The future includes an 8' floating dock with a walkway up to it.

Commissioner Bush commented that there was supposed to be a double launch there.

Greg Hutchins suggested that there will be an issue with commercial versus private trying to use one small landing where there is nowhere to park, and you must wait your turn.

Taylor Elliott informed the board that he plans to move his business here and is currently under contract on a property in Vernon, which will allow all his tax dollars to come to Washington County. They are planning on rethinking how they run their tours. The intent is to use the boat ramp less, make their business more efficient, and be good neighbors.

Attorney Milton requested direction from the board.

Chairman Hawkins advised that he doesn't feel every park should be listed. The only park that is in question is Culpepper Landing.

Candace Blackmon informed the board that another business named Florida Springs Adventures is running out of a warehouse off Creek Road. They park their customers at boat ramps.

She informed the board that the area by Wayside Park is kept up by her/her family.

Commissioner Abbott questioned if the persona is being put off that this belongs to us, and we are allowing you to use this. Are negative vibes being put off to the people?

Candace Blackmon asked if you only believe one side of a story. Limiting the size of the boats and motors that are put in the creek is something that the board should look at.

The creek is a liability issue.

If someone has been made mad by her it was by good cause.

Commissioner Joyner commented that there is a county ordinance that prevents the use of alcohol.

Nick Graham informed the board that he uses the tours to educate about the effects of trash on the ecosystem. He advised that he can also assist in emergency medical situations.

Crystal Gainey suggested eliminating alcohol would cut back on the altercations and congestion.

Cory Blackmon suggested hiring a deputy to monitor the area.

4. Lien and Clean Program – Alan Bush, Commissioner addressed the board about the program not having any enforcement. It is suggested to the board to use funds from the land sales to implement a program that puts a lien on the property if it isn't cleaned. The process would be to identify the property, compose a resolution, bid for the repairs, and the owner or the county can fix it. If the county pays for the repairs a lien will be placed on the property.

County Attorney Milton expanded on the process. The program is called nuisance abatement. There are due process issues, which are the noticing requirements before you clean up someone's property. It is a losing proposition from a monetary standpoint. The value of a property may be less than what it cost to clean it up and fix it. Other fees also include attorney's fees, and court costs to foreclose on the lien after it is done to force the sale of the property. Any mortgage that was done before the lien takes priority.

In Florida, if it is a homestead property you can't foreclose on it.

Chairman Hawkins questioned what could be done when the property in question is affecting neighboring properties.

County Attorney Milton commented that the ones that are most aggregates take priority. A title search will be ordered to find out where the county's lien would fit in.

Commissioner Abbott presented a situation before the board where heirs obtained property that had a lien on it due to neglect of cleaning a property.

County Attorney Milton informed the board the magistrate process was working but it has been pushed back since the hurricane. The magistrate can order fines.

If a fine becomes a lien and it is a homestead, the board can't put a lien on a homestead property unless it has been cleaned up and work has been done on it.

If the board wanted to tear a property down the building official would have to declare it uninhabitable.

Sheriff Crews addressed the board. It can affect the whole community and draw in criminals to those areas.

County Attorney Milton informed the board that injunctive relief can be requested from the court via court order and if it isn't done the judge can hold the resident in contempt of court.

The county ordinance allows for this.

Simon Sheffield suggested crossing out the word lien and replacing it with ownership. He requested St. Joseph Park be cleaned up and include a porta-potty there. Hopefully, the park can be cleaned before Memorial Day so a program can be held there.

Commissioner Bush expressed concern about the code enforcement officer knowing how the process works. The board's consensus is to have a mechanism to enforce the code enforcement issues.

County Attorney Milton and Commissioner Bush will work on this.

Commissioner Bush asked if there is a means of setting the fines aside if the resident cleans the property?

County Attorney Milton advised, yes.

Recess 10:07 a.m. – 10:22 a.m.

5. Community Service and Parks – Chairman Hawkins informed the board that he, Karen Shaw, and Sarah Hand are meeting with Walton County tomorrow. The health department, sheriff's department, and another part of

Summary Minutes Prepared by Risha Brantley

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their county administration team are working with their school partners and art alliances to paint murals on the side of park buildings. Their goal was to increase traffic. Since this has been done the vandalism has stopped. More people are looking at the murals, which is putting more eyes on the park.

He suggested the board approve community service hours for students who take two pictures of a county park each week and upload them to [reportvandalism@washingtonfl.com](mailto:reportvandalism@washingtonfl.com). This gives eyes and ears to the park. Discussions have been held with the superintendent and a couple of principals.

It has been requested for County Administrator Massey to include funding in the budget for a parks and recreation director position. The person should be licensed to spray and carry small tools with them, such as a weed eater.

Commissioner Bush confirmed that items that would be done are as follows:

- Community Service Program for Students
- Mural Program
- Include Parks Director in the Upcoming Budget

Wendy White, Human Resources informed the board the parks director position isn't currently on the pay scale.

Chairman Hawkins informed the board the plan is to bring something before the board at the June meeting.

### III. FEMA COORDINATOR – Kevan Parker

- ITB 2022-08 Culvert Installation, Construction of Concrete Headwalls, Construction of Paved Ditches, and Installation of Sod/See for Erosion Control – May 3 the committee received one bid from Sammy Hayes Enterprises on the headwalls, culvert pipes, sodding, seeding, ditch paving,

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and mitered end sections. The consensus from the committee was to allow County Administrator Massey to negotiate with him on a couple of items. There are some cost increases but that is in line with the increase in the cost of supplies. Pipe install was the largest difference. The cost was about \$75.00 per foot for pipe installation. The bid for that expense is \$225.00 per foot.

This item will be put on the regular agenda.

IV. COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR – Jeff Massey

- Trane Agreement – There are currently two active agreements for intelligent services and repair. They monitor issues at the jail and the courthouse before they become major expense items. The 2021 amount for intelligent services is \$11,456.00 and the 2022 amount is \$12,613.00. The building automation system increased by \$708.00, totaling \$7,887.00.

This item will be on the consent agenda.

Clerk Bell informed the board that she asked Trane to provide an evaluation of the last year of savings regarding the energy savings plan.

V. PUBLIC WORKS SUPERVISOR – Johnny Evans informed the board the Kenworth 900 was received this past week. The vendor has two 880's for \$219,550.00 each. This would help with getting rid of all the old stuff.

This item will be on the consent agenda.

Chairman Hawkins informed Johnny Evans that the next JM Auction is June 14.

VI. ADJOURN