
WASHINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
February 9, 2023, 9:00 a.m., Commission Board Room
1331 South Blvd., Chipley, FL 32428

DISTRICT 1 Alan T Bush	DISTRICT 2 David Pettis, Jr.	DISTRICT 3 Tray Hawkins Chairman	DISTRICT 4 Wesley Griffin	DISTRICT 5 David Corbin Vice-Chairman
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I. PROCLAMATION

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

Attorney Milton explained the purpose of the workshop is to allow the board to discuss agenda items. The workshop is not a voting meeting. Public input is at the discretion of the board. Items that do not require additional discussion can be added to the consent agenda for the regular board meeting.

II. AGENDA ITEMS

1. Request a Future Land Use Map Amendment for Two Parcels Totally 2.41 Acres, Proposed to Change from General Commercial to Residential Low Designation - Dawn McDonald, Senior Planner addressed the board. The planning commission and staff recommended approval of the land use amendment. A public hearing will be held on this item and it will be listed on the regular agenda at the next board meeting.

2. Request an update to the Capital Improvement Element of the County’s Comprehensive Plan to Review the Five-Year Schedule of Capital Improvements - Dawn McDonald, Senior Planner addressed the board. This is an annual update. The two hearings and two advertisements are not required through the state. The capital improvement schedule has been advertised for approval for the next meeting via ordinance, which includes the five-year schedule. The plan can be adjusted. The planning commission recommended approval. It is beneficial to have the projects in the five-year schedule when applying for grants.

Attorney Milton addressed the board. The five-year plan can provide points for grant applications which increases the likelihood of approval. The ordinance to adopt the plan must be advertised

before adoption.

A public hearing will be held for this item and it will be listed on the regular agenda.

3. Discussion Regarding Foreclosure for Property Located at 2416 Victory Lane - Janet Riedel, Code Enforcement Officer addressed the board. The code enforcement process with this property has been ongoing for two years. It has been through the court system, has a lien against it, and it remains in non-compliance.

Attorney Milton went over the process with the board. The board has retained a special master/magistrate to handle code enforcement violations. The order has been issued by the special magistrate and recorded in the county records. The order constitutes a lien against their property. They have not cleaned the property or paid the assessments based on the order. The next step is to foreclose on the lien.

The suggestion is to foreclose the lien and go through the foreclosure process. If nobody bids on the property the county ends up with the title to the property and is responsible for cleaning it up and vice-versa if a subsequent owner receives it. The issues can be addressed up to the date of the sale. The county will incur out-of-pocket costs.

Chairman Hawkins commented during this time a moratorium was given for them to clean up the property and if that was done all liens would have been removed.

This item will be listed on the consent agenda.

4. Discussion Regarding Charging for Property Liens Searches - Janet Riedel, Code Enforcement Officer suggested the board implement a fee for this service as other surrounding counties do. Walton County charges \$75.00 per lien, Jackson County charges \$50.00 for the code violations and \$50.00 to search for permits, and Bay County charges \$50.00. Daily searches can range from 3 – 9 per day. The estimated time depends on if issues are found and additional research is required.

Attorney Milton informed the board the purpose of the searches is to find out if code enforcement violation proceedings are occurring on the property, open building permits/applied for permits before the property is purchased. These are often requested by title companies.

This item will be listed on the consent agenda to implement a \$50.00 fee for this service.

5. Discussion Regarding New Public Nuisance Ordinance - Janet Riedel, Code Enforcement Officer addressed the board. The current public nuisance ordinance covers things such as nonworking appliances sitting in a yard. The request is for the ordinance to be more inclusive/broader of what occurs in the county. Some examples of public nuisances are scrap metal, appliances, vehicles, tires, furniture, etc. The current ordinance does not cover what is normally seen in the county.

Attorney Milton informed the board that he is not sure that one public nuisance section will address everything, but it would be broader to encompass some of the items. The board does not want to contradict anything in the new ordinance that is already there. The new ordinance could replace the specific section brought before the board.

Chairman Hawkins suggested referencing what is in the existing code.

Staff should work with the county attorneys regarding the updates. The board does not want to handicap code enforcement. The board wants to ensure that other adjoining property rights are being protected.

The direction is for Janet Riedel, Code Enforcement, County Administrator Massey, and the county attorneys to work together on changes while making sure they are enforceable.

6. Discussion Regarding Issuance of Citation - Janet Riedel, Code Enforcement Officer addressed the board. This is another tool to add to code enforcement. The enforcement includes issuing a notice of violation and going before the special magistrate. The citation could be issued directly to the person/renter on the property instead of the property owner. The property owner will receive a

notification. This citation would be like those issued by animal control. The judge prefers to see one charge per citation in the event the case goes to court. The first compliance period is 30 days.

Chairman Hawkins commented there are many situations where the renter leaves household items in the yard and the landlord wants to file a complaint, however, the landlord would be filing a complaint against themselves. With this process, the citation will be issued to the offender. The days the recipient must respond should be identified.

Commissioner Griffin expressed concern if the situation is an elderly person that cannot clean their yard.

Janet responded that would be found out before a citation is issued. Everything is done with discretion. The desire is to assist the county.

Chairman Hawkins commented there are church groups that offer assistance.

Commissioner Pettis addressed the board regarding his experience as a prior code enforcement officer. Each case is different. The amount of progress or lack of should be considered and included in the report. Discretion should be used.

County Administrator Massey commented that the process could be drug out for 3 – 4 months before the 4th offense is reached.

Janet responded that is also at the staff's discretion. The citations are guided by the recipient's actions.

Commissioner Pettis confirmed that immediate action can be taken if the situation is life-threatening, such as sewage being dumped on the ground.

Janet confirmed Commissioner Pettis' comment as correct.

Attorney Milton informed the board that additional cost comes with being more aggressive. County Administrator Massey and Janet should consider meeting with the clerk. The process is not money-making. It is a way to help the county.

Chairman Hawkins suggested revisiting this item in April. 60-day expenditures and lien searches should be looked at.

Clerk Bell informed the board that filing code cases with the court is not that expensive, however, the additional process has to be considered.

Commissioner Bush questioned why the maximum civil penalty of 500.00 is required and is listed in the document multiple times. Per offense is not listed. If \$500.00 is going to be included it should state per citation.

County Attorney Milton advised that this is the maximum. The statute includes per offense. It also addresses repetitive violations.

If the board chooses the route of citations and the nuisance is being amended, something will need to be included in the ordinance regarding this process.

A fine imposed shall not exceed \$250.00 per day for the first violation and \$500.00 per day for repeat violations, not to exceed \$5,000.00. There is some flexibility. The statute under 162 takes some of that into consideration.

Commissioner Bush referenced section B. It should say per citation. It looks like something that could be challenged.

Chairman Hawkins commented that it is also referenced on page 3 or 4.

County Attorney Milton responded that this is for the citation.

Chairman Hawkins advised County Attorney Milton to include per citation.

County Attorney Milton addressed the board. If they agree with proceeding, the consent agenda item will be the approval to move forward with revising the ordinance to include the citation process.

Commissioner Pettis confirmed the consent agenda item above would mean approval with proceeding with the draft ordinance.

7. Request for Amendment to Approve One-Year Extension with Animal Control of West Florida Sheltering of Confiscated Animals by Animal Control Officers - Lynne Abel, Public Safety Director requested an amendment to the extension that was approved last week. West Florida Shelter requests the agreement be amended changing 90 days to 30 days at the private shelter. The original contract included 30 days.

County Attorney Milton confirmed the termination language is being adjusted from 90 days to 30 days. The renewal is annual.

This item will be listed on the consent agenda.

8. Sale of County Owned Property Policy Review - Tray Hawkins, Chairman commented that he is okay with the way the policy is written.

Commissioner Corbin commented that he was not familiar with it at the prior meeting, but is okay with it now.

Commissioner Pettis commented that the policy is clear. He was caught off guard receiving a new bid the morning of the meeting. The information should be provided before the board meeting.

Commissioner Corbin questioned the bid opening process.

Wendy White, Human Resource responded once the initial bid is received, it is opened, and letters are sent out to property owners around that parcel. They have until five days before each quarterly meeting. Counteroffers are taken to County Administrator Massey with a synopsis of how they were received and any counteroffers. Once all this is done, the highest bid will be presented before the board.

The recipients of the letters do not know the initial bid. The only known information is that there is a bid and the assessed value.

The bids are opened privately by Ms. Loretta.

Commissioner Corbin commented that he wants to ensure that it remains that way.

Commissioner Griffin commented that he felt caught off guard as Commissioner Pettis mentioned.

Wendy White, Human Resources advised they would correct the notification time of when the board receives the information.

There is no action for this item.

9. Request for Approval of 2023 Board Schedule with Workshop Dates - Tray Hawkins, Chairman commented that there will be times the schedule will need to be amended, however, they intend to follow it. Sometimes conflicting things come up such as other conferences, meetings, or health issues.

Commissioner Bush commented the point of the evening meetings is to make it so that the public can attend. 5:00 p.m. makes it difficult for that. The evening meetings should begin at least at 6:00 p.m.

The board agreed.

This item will be listed on the consent agenda amending the workshop meetings to begin at 6:00 p.m.

10. Request for Commissioner Appointment to Public Safety Committee - Tray Hawkins, Chairman informed the board the meetings are quarterly and held at the courthouse, with the judges and clerk where public safety is discussed.

Commissioner Griffin volunteered to be on the committee.

This item will be listed on the consent agenda.

11. Holmes Creek Proposal - Tray Hawkins, Chairman addressed the board. This goes along with the completion of Culpepper last year. The dock and the landing were completed. Changes were required due to snail/muscle habitation. It was known that the creek rising and falling ingress and egress would have to be addressed by loading vessels onto the dock. The previous County Engineer Knauer was tasked with this. Gator Docks submitted a proposal of \$15,290.00 in addition to a \$200.00 freight charge.

Commissioner Griffin questioned if the dock would assist with the kayak congestion.

Commissioner Hawkins commented that commercial kayaks are not allowed at Culpepper Landing.

Commissioner Griffin suggested the landing needs to be checked for that.

Commissioner Hawkins commented that an ordinance was passed to prevent that. It will be addressed this summer.

Commissioner Griffin informed the board that a contractor cut the water service to a private property that has not been fixed. This needs to be addressed.

Commissioner Pettis commented many families launch kayaks from there. Will this address the

kayak issues? Does it allow those with kayaks to get out of the way of the boat ramp?

Commissioner Hawkins responded yes, it will help get in and out of the water. It is a dock that moves with the water level instead of having the long step down. This will help free up the boat ramp.

Attorney Milton questioned if the proposal falls under the procurement policy where three quotes are not required.

Attorney Milton advised the board that he would review the policy for the threshold amount that requires three quotes.

Chairman Hawkins commented that Cliff Knauer had a hard time obtaining bids for the boat ramp.

Attorney Milton advised the procurement policy can be set aside for this purchase.

This item will be listed on the regular agenda.

Commissioner Bush advised County Administrator Massey to check the procurement policy regarding setting it aside, so they will have the information at the next meeting. Also, review the kayak ordinance before summer.

Chairman Hawkins gave directions to send the ordinance to businesses.

III. FEMA COORDINATOR – Kevan Parker updated the board.

- RFRs are at \$56.9 million.
- \$56 million has been approved with \$917,000.00. in validation.
- \$1.6 million was transferred to the general fund from Hurricane Michael last week.
**Note – This is a reimbursement to the general fund.*
- RFA was offset for \$662,000.00 +/-.
- Worley Road remains closed. The road has been bid with mitigation included. The bid

submitted was high. Certain items were removed from the bid, such as fill, concrete, and asphalt and then it was rebid with the pre-disaster cost. Added mitigation to that to get up to what was bid for the project. The next call with FEMA regarding this project should be next week.

- Roads – 13 roads have been paved and sod put down, which is about 11.77 miles. 22 roads are complete with paving. The punch list, sod, etc. have not been done on these. The total is 24.65 miles. This does not include the mile plus on Duncan and Hard Labor.

The schedule for the next roads to be paved includes Clark Lane East, Pine Forest Road, and coming back to Hard Labor and Duncan. The contractor plans to begin Friday. If the rain affects the schedule, they will be able to start back at the beginning of the week. C.W. Roberts is the contractor.

- Notice to proceeds upcoming – Project 20 – Carter Circle
In the next few days projects 17, 24, and 25 will be done. Project 17 includes Rogers Road, Sylvania, and Owens Community. Project 24 includes Julie Lane and Shackelford Road. Project 25 is Ferguson, Firetower, Bunyon, Victory, Pine Log, and Leonard. Those roads will have the notice to proceed in the next few days.

The roads approved last month for bid should be advertised on the website by the end of the week/first of next week.

The process of a fourth vendor is being worked on. Currently, there is a struggle with rock base.

- Request for Bids for the appraisal service, survey, closing, hazmat, and demo will be sent to staff for the website today. This is for the Buyout Program and the Resilience Florida Program.

The board confirmed that Kevan Parker does not need to attend the regular board meeting.

**Note – Unless there is additional information to update the board on.*

Commissioner Pettis asked if Clark Lane West is scheduled to be paved through Mr. Fussel's property. Is rock base, etc. being put on it?

Kevan Parker responded they are going to go back and put sod and hydroseed. They did a lot of work on that road after Hurricane Michael so they could get through it. There is a lot of dirt exposed on the shoulders on both sides of the road. Some hydroseed may be done on the county's side and something may have to be done on the bottom.

Approval to issue the bid will be listed on the regular agenda.

IV. MSBU COORDINATOR – Steve Healis addressed the board.

- MSBU Committee Member Appointee for District #4 – Betty Lee Weekly – This item will be listed on the consent agenda.
- Sunny Hills Fiscal Year 2023 Road Project – The high bid was \$609,507.97 and the low bid was \$396,654.00, which is Roberts and Roberts. Approval is requested from the board to award the project to Roberts and Roberts, the low bidder.

There is \$425,000.00 in the budget for the paving project.

This item will be listed on the consent agenda.

- Sunny Hills Mowing Contract – The MSBU committee voted to proceed with renewing the contract from May 1, 2023 – April 30, 2024. This is the last renewal included in the contract.

Commissioner Pettis advised the board that he will refrain from voting on this agenda item. They refer business to one another, via a working relationship, not a partnership.

This item will be listed on the regular agenda.

V. PUBLIC WORK SUPERVISOR – Johnny Evans addressed the board.

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- Discussion of Selling the Roche Pitt Property – The pit has not been used in years. The pit does not have any good dirt for roads. There is a property owner behind the pit and an old cemetery. The property owner has a signed paper that states the county will maintain the road through the county pit for him to use for entrance/exit to his property, which joins up to that. If the pit sells his property will not be landlocked.

County Attorney Milton advised the board that it is their option to agree to an easement with the landowner. If there is a written agreement it would need to be disclosed if/when the property is sold.

Chairman Hawkins advised Johnny Evans to provide the document to County Attorney Milton.

Commissioner Griffin questioned if the pit was a licensed vegetation pit.

County Administrator Massey responded the only vegetative pit in the county is Moonseed.

The surplus of the Roche Pitt as requested by Johnny Evans will be listed on the consent agenda.

Purchase of a CAT 140GC Grader to Replace 2014 670G John Deere Grader – The grader has over 10,000 hours on a 9,000-hour engine. There is a sale in March. After this, the oldest grader in the fleet is 2019, which has 4,500 hours. A good rotation for the dump trucks would be two years and the graders three or four years. They are at a point where the rotation process can begin with graders and dump trucks.

The cost is \$294,801.00 for the CAT 140GC Grader, which is off the Florida Sheriff's bid.

The line item for equipment does not show enough funds but cash carried forward could cover the purchase, however, he would like to wait until the March board meeting to see if it is necessary based on what revenue the sale brings in.

The purchase of this item and the surplus of the equipment that is being replaced will be listed on the consent agenda.

County Administrator Massey commented maintenance costs should decrease dramatically.

VI. PARKS UPDATE – George Swauger addressed the board.

- Drafted a letter to Sgt. Cooper, Department of Correction requesting more qualified inmates.
- The current focus has been on Blue Pond, Hunter Park, Hicks Landing, and Campbell Park. A headwall has been installed at Blue Pond to handle some of the drainages in the parking lot. 18 – 22 trees need to be removed.
- Hicks Lake – Working through the procurement phase with the planning department. The gazebos have been removed. The plan is to put a pole barn up to the left of the boat landing. The location will be able to be guided through better. A floating dock may suit the area.
- Dunford – Commissioner Bush requested Dunford be looked at. A code is needed to enter, which he will have to obtain.
- Monroe Sheffield Park – There are two bathroom facilities, with only one being in good shape. The one down by the park looks to be full of black mold.

County Administrator Massey advised checking with Wheeler Emergency Management to see if FEMA funds were set aside for the park.

Before work is done cameras need to be installed.

Mr. Swauger does not have to attend the regular board meeting. The update provided is sufficient.

VII. COUNTY ENGINEER – Vance Coley, Melvin Engineering addressed the board. There is a grant available under the most recent infrastructure act passed two years ago. It is primarily for major infrastructure projects in underserved areas. Washington County falls in the middle. With board approval, Melvin Engineering will apply for a railroad spur under that grant. This will connect Florida Gulf and Atlantic Railroad to the industrial park. Board action is not required.

Each board member will be asked to sign a letter of support.

Chairman Hawkins informed the board that it was added to the rural TPO as line item 4 in priorities.

Vance Coley informed the board there is a new round of infrastructure money available. If there are any recommendations from that, they will be presented at the next board meeting.

Chairman Hawkins called a recess from 10:24 – 10:32.

Jonathan Sims, Dewberry informed the board the bids for South Boulevard were opened and were high. A supplemental agreement has been issued by the Department of Transportation for \$532,704.00. A resolution will have to be adopted along with this.

This item will be listed on the consent agenda.

Crystal Lake – Appropriation funds for the project were approved by two separate agreements, totaling \$1.2 million. The Department of Transportation has received everything. The updated cost is estimated at \$1.4 million. The Department of Transportation has requested a letter from the board that the county will supplement the difference.

Chairman Hawkins asked the board if they would like to proceed knowing \$200,000.00+/- will have to come from county coffers for the difference.

County Administrator Massey informed the board the agreement will end at the end of June.

**Note – This is if the board does not proceed.*

Chairman Hawkins commented that public works do tremendous upkeep on the road, ingress, and egress.

Jonathan Sims informed the board the funds were approved in two different cycles. When the project was submitted the first time, it appeared the county had issued money to the project, and they hadn't. They issued for design. That cut back on the original funding of \$1.2 million, and the county was allotted \$750,000.00. In the next cycle, \$450,000.00 was approved for the project.

Deputy Clerk Brantley advised that the clerk's office can work with County Administrator Massey and find the funds within the budget.

This item will be added to the consent agenda.

Sunday Road – Bids will be opened on the 15th. The contractor asked if the county would provide borrow from the county's pit. This may help supplement the cost.

Commissioner Bush advised no if it was not in the initial bid.

VIII. COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR – Jeff Massey addressed the board.

- Live Stream – Neighboring counties have been contacted to see what process they use for this. Quotes for equipment have been obtained for the necessary equipment. Demos and zoom calls have been held with Civic Plus. Civic Plus offers agenda management, and they will be a custodian of records of items that occur in the meeting. The live stream goes directly to the website.

Diligent will also be providing a demonstration. Once that is done, the board will be provided with options.

Wendy White, Human Resources informed the board the meeting with Diligent is scheduled for next week. The presentation should be presented to the board by the March meeting.

Once a company is selected the process will take two to three months before it will be live.

County Administrator Massey continued with updates.

- Website - The issue with the search engine has been alleviated. Feedback on any issues is requested.
- Landfill – Two wells at Mudhill are currently being capped and another is going to be drilled. The capping process of all the wells at the Chipley Landfill is ongoing. The costs should be lower than what the board approved for the wells at the last board meeting.
- Broadband – Wildstar has been advised a representative should be present at every voting board meeting to give an update.

IX. CLERK – None

X. COUNTY ATTORNEY – Attorney Fuqua addressed the board.

- Palmer Case – A judgment has been issued for the David Palmer case, for attorney fees for frivolous claims. This case is from years ago. A check for \$4,281.22 has been issued for that and given to Clerk Bell.
- Line of Credit – First Federal submitted a proposal for a revolving line of credit for five years. The line of credit can be paid up and paid down. The upfront fee to secure the loan is around \$25,000.00.

Commissioner Pettis confirmed the \$25,000.00 will be a one-time fee.

County Attorney Fuqua requested this be put on the consent agenda. The loan resolution can be adopted at the March meeting. The loan closing will also be in March.

XI. ADJOURN