

WASHINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

June 15, 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

Present – Commissioners Bush (via phone), Pettis, Hawkins, Corbin, and Griffin. Also, in attendance were Lora C. Bell, Clerk of Court, Fuqua & Milton, PA, Risha Brantley, Deputy Clerk, and Jeff Massey, County Administrator.

The board recognized the Chipley Baseball Team for winning the state baseball championship. Coach Andy Compton presented the team members with plaques provided by the Washington County Board of County Commissioners. The plaques were issued as follows: Coach Ty Russ, Coach Carter, Bryson Howard, Jonathan Peterson, Gavin O’Neill, Blaine Woodham, Rayce Griffin, Carter Kirkland, Brodie Price, Connor Goddin, Lawson Corbitt, Kason Nelson, Aiden Wheeler, Brantley Kirkland, Callen Scurlock, Thad Brown, and Mike Green.

Addition – Public Hearing for the MSBU Rate Resolution – Clay Milton

II. PUBLIC HEARING

- Request for Approval for Future Land Use Map (FLUM) Amendment for One Parcel of 8.09 total acres from Agriculture/Silviculture to General Commercial - Dawn McDonald, Senior Planner presented the request before the board that was submitted with the intent to build an RV Park on the site. The property is located next to Mobile Swamp Road. The public noticing requirements were met and there have been no comments in opposition. Staff and the planning recommended approval.

George Clayton Owens, an adjacent property owner requested that it be built to meet state and county regulations.

- Request for a recreational vehicle (RV) park within the Agriculture/Silviculture and Conservation Future Land Use Map categories - Dawn McDonald, Senior Planner presented the request from McCurdy Family Farms for a special exception for the use of the park. The property is located south of Caryville on Jackson Pit Road. The proposal is for an RV Park Campground for 120+/- acres/3 parcels. A concept plan was provided as part of the special exception request.

The public noticing requirements were met and the neighborhood information meeting was held on May 18, with several in attendance. The concerns expressed included safety, guest wandering on adjacent properties, neighboring property being used for hunting, which may be a safety issue, runoff, drainage, and the effect on water quality and wetlands on the site.

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Another concern by attendees and staff was how will utility's be brought to the site.

Per Dawn, a commissioner provided input that the roads have flooded there.

Jackson Pit Road was recently paved as a repair to mitigate the drainage and prevent future flooding.

The planning staff recommended denial based on the location. RV Parks are considered commercial development. The planning commission recommended denial based on the staff's recommendation.

Commissioner Hawkins asked if there have been any other RV Parks placed in agriculture throughout the county.

Dawn McDonald, responded yes. The case before this one was a special exception that was approved years prior. They did not decide in that case to change the land use. RV Parks are allowed within the general commercial land use category and the staff likes for them to be on major roadways.

The park operating outside of Vernon was a special exception to allow the use.

Dawn McDonald told the board that her denial was based on location because they are trying to place RV Parks on main roads. The road is paved but the area is remote. The planning commissioner had issues with the utilities, access to Jackson Pitt from Pate Pond Road, and safety issues. They are using a spine road for their development, which could create conflict.

Commissioner Hawkins questioned the number of trips provided and went on to say that he does not want to cause hardship by injecting something into the community.

Dawn McDonald responded that it is two trips per day for 24 spaces;48 trips.

George Clayton Owens, an adjacent landowner told the board that he is concerned about septic systems and stormwater runoff on the creek.

Chairman Hawkins commented the creek being referenced is Gum Creek.

Steve Michael, an adjacent landowner, expressed concern about the future of the location. They plan to use one parcel but submitted the request for all three parcels. The road is very small, which causes the question of how the RVs will get down there.

- Public Nuisance Ordinance Section 50-164 Definitions - Janet Riedel, Code Enforcement Officer informed the board this is a formality. The definitions are attached to the public nuisance ordinance that has already been looked at. The section needed a separate public hearing and vote for record purposes.

Attorney Milton read Ordinance 2023-10 by title.

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- Public Nuisance Ordinance - Janet Riedel, Code Enforcement Officer informed the Board the ordinance is for final approval and all requirements have been met.

Commissioner Hawkins confirmed with Janet Riedel that this is the same ordinance as listed above.

It was confirmed with Attorney Milton that it does not need to be read again.

- Annual Rate Resolution for the Sunny Hills/Oak Municipal Service Benefit Unit Assessments – Attorney Milton advised the public hearing was advertised. The preliminary rate resolution was adopted in May which essentially established this public hearing for adopting the annual rate resolution. The only change from the prior year is the annual adjustment increase of 5%, which was planned for when the ordinance was adopted three years ago.

The public noticing requirements were met and will be attached to the resolution at a later date.

Additions – Cascade System for the Fire Department – Jeff Massey

Execute Documents for Purchasing the Property on I-10 – Attorney Fuqua (Note – This item was confirmed to be approved in a previous meeting.)

Discussion on a Canning Center – Item 12 - Commissioner Hawkins

Discussion of the Minute Taking, Records Custodian, and Advertising for Meetings for the SR 79 Corridor – Item 13 – Commissioner Hawkins

- III. **ADOPT THE AGENDA** – Commissioner Corbin offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Griffin, and unanimously carried to adopt the agenda as amended.

IV. **ADOPT PREVIOUS MINUTES**

- Emergency Meeting March 29, 2023 (Correction)
- Workshop for May 11, 2023
- Board Meeting for May 18, 2023
- Special Board Meeting for May 30, 2023

Commissioner Griffin offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Corbin, and unanimously carried to adopt the above-listed minutes.

- V. **NON-AGENDA AUDIENCE** - Effective October 1, 2013, Florida Statute 286.0114 mandates that “members of the public shall be given a reasonable opportunity to be heard on a proposition before a Board or Commission.” Each individual shall have three (3) minutes to speak on the proposition before the Board. Before the time a meeting has been called to order, should an individual or group wish to address an item that is on the agenda for consideration, the individual or group may obtain, from the Commission Secretary or Clerk, a public comment form and may write on the form their name and the agenda matter which they wish to address. The completed form(s) shall be returned to the Commission Secretary/Clerk who shall provide the form(s) to the Chairperson. Should a particular group wish to address an item, they shall nominate a spokesperson to voice their ideas, comments, and concerns. In the event an individual wishes to speak on an item and has not signed up in advance, those who have signed shall be given priority and those who have not signed up may be allowed to speak at the sole discretion of the Board Chair. – Attorney Fuqua

- Nan Thompson addressed the board as a resident of the Country Oaks area informing them that she desires to join the fire department. It has been found out that between 3 – 5 years ago an engine

was purchased by Country Oaks from Orange Hill, which could not pass state testing and does not have paperwork to show a history of testing. Who purchased the engine? Why was it purchased? Is there any paperwork to show that the engine was tested?

4 – 6 months ago an engine was brought in as a replacement. It also has no paperwork, cannot pass the pump test, the lights do not work and it is currently out of service in Orange Hill.

Approximately 2 weeks ago a second loaner/forestry-owned engine from Compass Lake was brought in. It too cannot pass the state testing, there is no paperwork, and is sitting at Country Oaks.

Who is doing this? Why? As a resident, she expressed concern about what would the residents do in the area if there were a structure fire, which a brush truck cannot be used for. They would be in trouble. Daily fires are being set/burning trash.

County Oaks Fire Department does not get called out, however, the surrounding fire departments do. The department needs working equipment.

Chairman Hawkins requested County Administrator Massey meet with Nan Thompson on the issue that she has brought before the board today.

- Troy Cunningham, Country Oaks Fire Department addressed the board regarding an email that was sent to the commissioners and County Administrator Massey about the truck situation mentioned above. A truck was purchased several years ago, which did not pass pump tests. A new pump is supposed to be installed in it. They were sent a loaner truck, which was located at EOC for a minimum of three months. The truck was then sent to Sunny Hills to be pump tested and then sent to Country Oaks where they were advised to put the truck in service. The lights do not work correctly and the truck was not marked.

The issue was brought up at a meeting before Chief Johns who expressed that he does not have time to deal with it. They both decided that he would take over the task and contact Justin regarding it. Record books should follow the truck. After Justin was updated about the truck he gave directions to immediately remove the truck from service and use their first attack brush truck as their interior truck. According to NIPA, that cannot be done. The report on the truck was never received. The next day a technician was working on the truck and it was taken for pump testing again, which it did not pass. The truck was brought back to the station with no engine in it.

How does the budget work? If Country Oaks purchased the truck, with their budgeted funds, the truck belongs to Country Oaks. Where does the contingency money go and how does it work? The money should not be given back at the end of the year.

The board has been provided a demand letter from the chief for an apology from Justin and the board for the actions that were taken by county staff.

- Marie Cunningham, a Vernon resident addressed the board to follow up on what she brought before them last month regarding protocol for communications with the fire departments. The last meeting was on May 18, and Lynne Abel made contact with her on May 24. The board's direction

for discussion between Justin, Lynne, and herself did not occur. Lynne Abel said there was a verbal agreement, however, they do have something in writing, which she emailed with the attached Fire Services Radio Communication Disruption Protocol for Washington County. The board was also copied on the email. As a member of the fire department, she took the protocol as a joke. It is not written up as an SOP or SOG. It is written on a napkin and signed by two people. If this occurs again, the delay that would happen would be unacceptable. If the phone calls were done as specified in the new protocol the following people would have to be called: the fire services coordinator, if he is unavailable the administrator under him should be called next, public communications, and then EOC. Then they have to get to EOC. The contact process is at least 5 minutes. The person that has to drive to the EOC would be 5 – 10 minutes depending on where they live. 25 – 30 minutes for Justin Leach, Fire Services Coordinator who lives in Bay County. The new protocol could take up to an hour for somebody to respond to a call which is not acceptable or efficient. The protocol does not address the loss of power, which was brought up last month.

Satellite phones or CB radios with linear with long-distance reach could be used as communication for each fire department. An SOP or SOG could be in effect that directs everyone to report to their respective spaces for a specific time after a disaster for a faster response time.

In response to a question Lynne Abel was asked, regarding the Mud Hill Tower, Lynne Abel's response was there is a second emergency communications tower in Chipley, that only covers traffic in that area, omitting the rest of the county. There is a new tower on Holmes Valley that is being equipped which may help with communications on the west side of the county. There is little to no radio service west of New Hope.

Regarding the SOP/SOG that was asked about at the last meeting that Lynne and Justin would follow up about it. She and Lynne spoke on May 24, which resulted in her following up with Justin, which she did. Tiffany advised that Justin was unavailable and that was where it ended.

- Benita Crittendon addressed the board about invoice 21-0620 under task order 21-0611, The American Rescue Plan Administrative Cost. The invoice is understood to have been incurred by using Wheeler services for housekeeping and janitorial management. The invoice includes Kevan Parker for 16 hours, totaling \$2,560.00, Lucas Mayo, Grant Manager for 19.25 hours, totaling \$2,502.50, and Kristina Basford, Administrative Assistant (the one acting as the janitorial employee) for 96 hours, totaling \$4,800.00. The invoice totaled \$9,862.50 for April 1 – 30. The janitor for some of the county buildings separated on or around April 5, and the invoice was to make up for that. The issue is that the expense was paid under the American Rescue Act, which is the COVID FEMA Fund.

Kevan Parker, the project manager oversees the project, the grant manager keeps up with the necessary reports that the federal government requires to obtain FEMA funds, and the administrative assistant, who was doing the housekeeping work is described as a field-level support to include disinfection of facilities (cleaning, sheltering, and redirecting of resources – including personnel and supplies. We are passed COVID. Why would the county process an ancillary service that they are trying to provide the interim service for until they can hire a new person through an emergency management firm and collect FEMA Funds; COVID FEMA Funds?

This task order was initiated for August, May, and June, and was signed by Tray Hawkins. The service was utilized at the beginning of April for housekeeping services. The task order was signed a few weeks before the county did not have housekeeping services.

Using COVID/FEMA Funds to staff an ancillary position temporarily has the appearance of fraud, at the maximum, or FEMA abuse, at the minimum.

The task order was signed on March 15 by Commissioner Hawkins. This was not discussed or voted on. The complete task order for three months of oversight, grant writing, and housekeeping services was for an amount of up to \$163,000.00. Thus far the county has paid one invoice under the task order, which was in April. There is the potential for the county to pay \$163,000.00 for housekeeping support and oversight.

This goes back to a pattern of behavior where the chairman is taking care of day-to-day operation services and making big decisions without the knowledge of other board commissioners.

It is not known if Mr. Massey is aware of it. It is part of the county administrator's duties to provide oversight of the county employees. The county administrator is over the county employees and the commissioners are over the county administrator. The commissioners do not handle staffing issues.

It is concerning if the county administrator was aware of how this was being funded, which would be a complicit issue, and if it was not known, that is an ethics issue. There are many issues here. This is another example of a pattern of behavior.

Commissioner Griffin questioned the process asking the chairman how he gets to sign stuff.

Commissioner Hawkins responded we sign task orders. The board assigned the responsibility to the chairman halfway; first on; halfway through COVID they signed task orders every month which has been done since Hurricane Michael. It is work that is done up to a specific amount. It is not only for housekeeping. It is for all services rendered. Every bill being brought before the board is an option.

Commissioner Griffin agreed with every bill being brought before the board.

Benita Crittendon added the task order that she mentioned is just for this specific purpose, which causes the validity of other task orders that have been signed and not discussed with other board members. That goes back to a pattern of behavior because it is another example of a unilateral decision that Commissioner Hawkins has signed as chairman. The question is, why does the chairman feel he has the authority to do that?

Commissioner Hawkins responded the board gave the authority to sign task orders to the chairman.

Benita Crittendon questioned when that decision was made. The issue is that unilateral
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decisions are being made and there are three new commissioners on the board. The board and the chairman need oversight. David Corbin should be aware of what the checks are for that he signs monthly.

Commissioner Griffin said that he would like to be aware of every task order that is signed that represents the board as Washington County Board of County Commissioners from this point forward.

The task order process will be listed as agenda item 14.

- James Brown complained to the board about the road that is being worked on in the St. Joseph area (a sign has been put up that says Orange Hill). The road is too narrow and there is room to expand it. Most of the roads are 20 feet, however, this one is 14 feet. 20 feet is state/county specifications for a road to be installed. How can emergency vehicles come, if the road is not done properly? A 16-foot road is being put on Gainer Road.

Donald Stanley addressed the board. When the roads are designed, a full survey is done where the apparent main right-of-way and obstructions are picked up. The roads are being designed as wide as can fit by what the county owns and maintains and shoulders and drainage. They are matching what is there, as widely as they can. 14 feet is a single-lane two-way road. It is not meant for people to pass on but meant for people to pull over on the shoulder and let people by.

James Brown responded that there is a 20-foot easement, which he can prove. The engineers are not familiar with the community. There is an easement off of Joe Neel, back around on it. Water is being redirected incorrectly. The dirt and gravel in the ditch to stop it from washing is a waste.

The board's direction is for Donald Stanley and Johnny Evans to follow up with James Brown regarding the concern that he presented before the board.

- Skyla Jones provided the board with documents regarding the information that she presented. The first document is an employment application. Due to the nature of the incident, the individual's name will not be mentioned due to respect for the victims. The second tabbed page includes where the applicant marked yes to the question of have you been convicted, or pled no contest to a crime. On March 27, 2007, a verbal altercation in Bay County, Florida – Misdemeanor – 6 months probation. The offense occurred when I was 18 years old. I was involved in a verbal confrontation with my now ex-wife.

The applicant was selected and hired for the position that he now holds.

A verbal altercation is defined as any argument involving inappropriate language, or threats of violence and may include minor physical contact.

The next packet shows adjudicated guilty on the front. It will have a detailed summary and the individual's name. Domestic Violence Battery – Adjudicated Guilty. That does not sound like a verbal altercation.

The affidavit of the verbal altercation was read. The above-named defendant willfully and intentionally touched the victim in front of their 2-year-old son. The defendant at approximately 3:00 a.m. on March 28, 2007, grabbed the victim by the hair, pulled on her ear, slapped his hand hard across her mouth to keep her from screaming, pulled and squeezed both arms, pulling her into his face where he then grabbed her by the throat, grabbed her hair again, pulling her onto the tiled floor onto her tailbone and grabbed her in her vaginal area and pulled.

That was the verbal altercation that the county employee referenced on his application. He may have had one on March 27, but on March 28 he did this and was arrested. He was adjudicated guilty and had to pay a rape crisis surcharge. He was sentenced to one-year probation (the paperwork is attached).

On the next tab, there was a domestic violence situation that took place on November 8, 2013. This is for extending a temporary 1-year injunction. The next tabbed area included domestic battery by strangulation, which took place on August 23, 2018. His current wife dropped those charges, even though the state's attorney said there was probable cause for the arrest.

His victim from March 27 obtained an order of protection on behalf of their minor children after the August 23 incident.

This is the man that has been hired to represent the county.

This information took 5 minutes to find on the Bay County Clerk of Court because the individual resides in Bay County.

It is understood that the county only does background checks in Washington County. With a full schedule, this was found, however, the HR Department could not find this.

There is a decision to be made. Will a blind eye be turned, to the overwhelming evidence that has been presented? Will the right thing be done? The best thing the individual can do is resign. 18 is an adult and he made an adult decision.

Commissioner Griffin questioned how background checks are done.

Wendy White, Human Resources responded FDLE background checks are done. The information was on it but not to that degree. The HR Department did not receive all the information that was presented today. The FDLE background check is in the applicant's personnel file.

Commissioner Griffin questioned the selection process. How do you make a selection with that information? How do you choose an employee?

County Administrator Massey said they look at the applicant, the interviewing committee and panel, and the recommendations for the best-qualified candidates based on the information they have. From that, a decision is made.

Commissioner Griffin asked if he was the best-qualified candidate with the
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information/background.

County Administrator Massey responded, at that time, that is correct.

Commissioner Griffin responded, at this time it needs to be looked at it again.

Commissioner Hawkins responded that is under County Administrator Massey's purview. He does the hiring for the county.

County Administrator Massey commented that he will get legal advice.

Commissioner Griffin asked Attorney Fuqua what are his thoughts. If that slipped through, the hiring process needs to be looked at.

County Attorney Fuqua commented this is his first knowledge of this. This is not the way for it to be handled.

VI. AGENDA ITEMS

1. Recognition of Chipley High School 1A Baseball State Champions – This item was done at the beginning of the meeting.

2. Request for Approval for Future Land Use Map (FLUM) Amendment for One Parcel of 8.09 total acres from Agriculture/Silviculture to General Commercial

Commissioner Corbin offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Griffin, and unanimously carried to approve the FLUM amendment listed as item 2.

2. Request for a Recreational Vehicle (RV) Park within the Agriculture/Silviculture and Conservation Future Land Use Map categories – Commissioner Hawkins confirmed that the recommendation from the planning commission is to deny the request.

Commissioner Griffin offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Corbin, and unanimously carried to deny the request for the RV Park.

3. Public Nuisance Ordinance Section 50-164 Definitions – Commissioner Corbin offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Griffin, and unanimously carried to add the definition to the ordinance.

Commissioner Corbin confirmed that this is the final version.

4. Public Nuisance Ordinance – Commissioner Corbin offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Pettis, and unanimously carried to approve the public nuisance ordinance.

5. Final Rate MSBU Rate Resolution – Commissioner Corbin offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Griffin, and unanimously carried to approve the annual rate resolution for the Sunny Hills Oaks Hills MSBU assessment.

6. Recognition of Washington County Library for NACo Achievement Award - Renae Rountree, Library Director informed the board that they have been recognized by the National Association of Counties for an achievement award for 2023 for the Dolly Pardon Imagination Library Program. NACo honors innovative effective county government counties that strengthen services for residents. The program began with funds from the state library through the American Rescue Plan Act funds. The board has continued to fund the line item in the library budget. 533 kids are receiving a book monthly at no cost to them. The program is for birth to 5 years of age. 89 kids have aged out of the program.

Renae Rountree recognized the board for their funding and also Tracy Andrews, Florida Power and Light for their donation for youth services. 180 people attended the Doc Magic Funtime Variety Show, which was funded by donations from Florida Power and Light.

7. Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Emergency Preparedness and Assistance Grant (EMPA) - Lynne Abel, Public Safety Director requested approval of the annual Emergency Management Preparedness and Assistance Grant agreement between the Florida Division of Emergency Management and the counties of the state. The grant funding is for the support of local programs. Local grant funds are used as match funding for the grant.

Commissioner Griffin offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Corbin, and unanimously carried to approve the grant as requested by Lynne Abel.

8. Request to move funds from Fire Operations Grant Funds Line Item of \$78,252.75 back to its original contingency line item - Justin Leach, Fire Coordinator addressed the board. Fire Fighter Assistance Grant funds for expenses for the equipment were reimbursed and were put in the grant fund. The funds need to be transferred to the line item it was in.

Commissioner Pettis offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Corbin to approve transferring the funds as requested by the fire coordinator.

Justin Leach explained there is a contingency fund where funds are put in annually for the fire departments. Those funds were used to pay for the equipment. It was 100% reimbursed from the state and was put in a grant fund instead of being applied to the contingency line item.

The motion carried unanimously.

9. Request for approval to write Firefighters Assistance Grant - Justin Leach, Fire Coordinator addressed the board. The grant is the same as last year, which was used to purchase equipment. If approved, he will write the grant.

Commissioner Pettis offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Corbin, and unanimously carried to authorize Justin Leach to apply for the Firefighters Assistance Grant.

10. Request for approval for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Policy Update - Samantha Arroyo, Grants Procurement Specialist recommended approval to update the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) policies. To secure and maintain CDBG grant

products it is vital that the county consistently review and update the policies presented before the board for approval. The synopsis provided to the board included the following: 504 and Transition Plan, Affirmative Action Plan, Anti-Displacement, and Relocation. Citizens Participation Plan, Internal Controls Monitoring and Oversight Policy, Nondiscrimination Policy and Plan, and Prohibition of Excessive Force.

Commissioner Corbin offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Griffin, and unanimously carried to approve the policy updates as requested by Samantha Arroyo, Grants Procurement Specialist.

11. Project Gantry Resolution for EDA Grant Application - David Melvin, President of Melvin Engineering addressed the board. The CDBG Grant for \$3.4 million was applied for and is in the fundable range. A site visit has been scheduled within the next two weeks. A Rural Infrastructure Grant was applied for, which was not approved. Per Greg Vaday, Economic Development, due to Hurricane Ian affecting the entire state, grant funds are available for that. \$4.2 million will be applied through that. The application is currently being worked on. When the grant is submitted a commitment of funds has to be included. The commitment of the matching funds from CDBG will not be received for a couple of months. The resolution supporting the grant includes the county pledging \$3 million so the application can be submitted. The pledge in the resolution at this time is a placeholder. This is only until the CDBG funds become available. EDA requires a joint applicant for this. The county is the lead applicant and the city passed a resolution supporting the application on Tuesday.

There is no commitment to a grant until the money is taken from it.

Commissioner Hawkins confirmed that if the CDBG grant is not received, they do not continue with the grant from EDA.

County Administrator Massey confirmed there is no cost to the county.

Commissioner Griffin offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Corbin, and unanimously carried to approve the resolution as presented by David Melvin.

The board held a recess.

12. Canning Center – Commissioner Hawkins asked if the board would support him in researching with the state and the health department bringing a canning center to the area. There have been people in the community that have expressed interest in it.

Commissioner Corbin commented that he had seen the support expressed on his Facebook post.

Commissioner Hawkins informed the board that he intends to attend the city council meeting Tuesday and ask if they would be willing to donate property for a canning center and be a partner in providing water and sewer.

Priscilla Brown said the center would be a blessing. She went on to say that her mother worked at the canning center in Vernon for 20 + years. Would that same location be an option to use?

Commissioner Hawkins responded that it is not suitable. He does not want something problematic, and the building is not privately owned.

Benita Crittendon informed the board that someone had brought the post to her attention. She expressed her interest in a canning center, however, would like to see it done through a legitimate grant and not through any grant that can be questioned.

Benita Crittendon told Commissioner Hawkins that she is not able to see those types of county comment discussions or county issues on his Facebook page because she has been blocked. The county has another historical case where a citizen made some unpleasant and harassing remarks and one of the elected officials shut down their Facebook page for that, which is understandable.

There have never been any previous unpleasanties on Facebook between the two of them. If the personal Facebook page is going to be used as a county communicator it should be open to the public.

Commissioner Hawkins said that it is his personal Facebook page, however, he does appreciate the offer.

13. Discussion of the Minute Taking for the State Road 79 Corridor – Holmes and Washington County contributions for the FY 2023-2024 will be about \$75,000.00 each. The City of Bonifay put a proposal together for \$3,500.00 for minute taking and \$1,000.00 per month (placeholder) continued use contract. U.S. Water took on some additional tasks at no additional cost. The remaining items were someone to take the minutes and transcribe them, be a custodian of records, and prepare the advertisement. The advertisements would be paid for by the Corridor, prepared by the attorney, and sent out by staff.

A suggestion is to see if Clerk Bell would take over and assist with it or assign it to staff for the minutes and send the advertisements, which would save over \$30,000.00 annually, but possibly more. A special meeting would be \$3,500.00.

Commissioner Corbin commented that he would support being able to do the service for less.

Chairman Hawkins added that Holmes County and the City of Bonifay are going to present it before their boards.

The direction is for County Administrator Massey to bring a recommendation before the board at the next meeting.

Commissioner Pettis commented that is a lot of money for what they are doing. Some time back this was brought before the board and it was thought that it would be an extra task on the staff.

Commissioner Hawkins responded that it was more than the three tasks before.

County Attorney Milton addressed the board. The City of Bonifay issued a proposal that had more tasks than what the chairman is asking. U.S. Water has taken over all the budgetary issues, which was a large part of what was being asked for in the RFP. Carr Riggs has taken over some of the tasks as well. This left the three items the chairman has mentioned.

Chairman Hawkins told the board the reason for suggesting a Washington County staff is because the meetings are held in Washington County.

County Attorney Milton told the board the budgetary line item that was brought into question was the \$30,000.00 contract with the City of Bonifay that was not previously budgeted for and would have to be split between Washington and Holmes County for an additional \$15,000.00 contribution.

Chairman Hawkins included that is \$15,000.00 each for 6 meetings and anything above that is an additional \$3,500.00.

County Attorney Milton told the board that it is his understanding that the board member from Holmes County's motion was to approve the contract through October 1.

Commissioner Corbin questioned the City of Bonifay mentioning that they may want to pull away from the grant/dissolve the entire thing.

Chairman Hawkins responded that they sent a letter to DEO asking what would be their stance on it. They have not replied, which is likely due to the secretary position not being filled. DOT has to approve their release.

County Administrator Massey will present options before the board at the July meeting.

14. Task Order Authority – Commissioner Griffin offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Pettis, and unanimously carried that any task order assigned to anyone will come before the board at the normally scheduled meeting.

VII. FEMA COORDINATOR – Kevan Parker addressed the board.

- Worley Road Mitigation Project ITB 2023-08 - Worley Road Mitigation Project – Bids were received on the 31st. The low bid for the base bid, which is the box culverts is \$939,905.25 from Premier Paving. The low bid on the alternate bid, which was going back with what is there was \$544,635.40. FEMA policy allows for doubling the amount if it is mitigated, which would be \$1,088,000.00 to do that project. The bid was \$939,000.00, which would be under the 100% cost. The final package was sent on the 1st to the state and FEMA for approval of the amendment.

At this time a suggestion will not be made.

Commissioner Hawkins requested that each board member reach out regarding the project to let them know how long the project has been going on and ask for help.

- ITB 2023-04 Rebid: Asbestos & Lead Paint Testing for Acquisition & Demolition of Flood

Prone Structures

- ITB 2023-05 Rebid: Property Appraisals for Acquisition & Demolition of Flood Prone Structures FEMA Projects Update

No bids were received. Approval is requested to issue the bids for the project for a third time. If there are no bids after that point FEMA will allow negotiation for request proposals without going through the formal bid process. The process takes about 30 days.

Commissioner Corbin offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Pettis to readvertise the bid for Asbestos and Lead Paint Testing for the Acquisition and Demolition of Flood Prone Structures.

Commissioner Hawkins asked Attorney Fuqua if it was okay to give Mr. Parker and his team approval to make calls if there are no bids received for a third time.

Commissioner Corbin agreed to amend his motion to add the above. The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Corbin offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Pettis, and unanimously carried to reissue the bid for Property Appraisals for the Acquisition & Demolition of Flood Prone Structures FEMA Projects. This motion also includes approval for Mr. Parker and his team to make calls if there are no bids received for a third time.

- FEMA Update – \$69,337,000.00 has been submitted and of that, \$68,708,000.00 has been approved. \$628,000.00 is in validation.

The clerk's office now receives the transfer memos upfront. \$3,700,000.00, advance funds were moved over last month. The advance for next month is \$5,000,000.00. The same process can be done with this advance. One advance has to be satisfied before a second one can be received. The goal is to get advances that can be satisfied monthly. This prevents the loan funds from having to be accessed.

Jewel, Kent Mill, and Porter Roads are currently out for bid. The bids will be accepted next Thursday.

The notice to proceed has been issued for the last group which includes Mattox Springs, Bright Bay, Union Hill, Yates Settlement, and Leavins Road.

US Fish has pushed Williams Road to the end of June. Johns Way Bridge is behind that one.

Commissioner Pettis confirmed that Mr. Parker was referring to the bridge only on Williams Road.

- VIII. BROADBAND UPDATE – Keith Pegues updated the board. 549 people are signed up and 140 have been hooked up. The other 409 are waiting for their area to be done or they are waiting on equipment. Whitehead and Caryville are active. Ebro has been started. Four more towers remain after Ebro, which will be followed by the colocations. The timeline is not solidified with Contini

and Dupree.

County Administrator Massey told the board the first phase is done. Ebro was stuck in the first phase. The Department of Economic Opportunity has said the grant money is secured for Washington County, however, the first grant for \$1,500,000.00 needs to be completed and closed out. The second part of the money is for areas in the county that do not have the same signal access as others.

Keith Pegues told the board all three phases of the project has been worked on at the same time which was based on when the equipment was received.

County Administrator Massey told the board that it will be completed by the end of the year because the first part of the grant ends in February 2024.

- IX. MSBU COORDINATOR – Steve Healis informed the board there is a vacancy on the committee, which is the District 1 representative. The vacant position is due to the previous committee member selling their property.

The weather has affected the paving process, however, it is almost complete.

County Administrator Massey informed the board Mr. Healis, Hometown Hero Project Representatives, and himself will meet to identify 8 – 10 lots that will work for that program. The board will be updated on the properties that were identified for the project and the remaining properties can be released for sale.

Per Jane Dellwo, Commissioner Bush requested that the vacancy advertisement be advertised on the message sign at the entrance of Sunny Hills.

- X. PARKS UPDATE – None
- XI. PUBLIC WORKS UPDATE – None
- XII. ENGINEERING PROJECTS UPDATE – None
- XIII. COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR – Jeff Massey addressed the board.
- Asset Survey and Premiums for 2023-2024 – The tentative renewal amount was an increase of \$200,000.00. Due to some properties being over-insured, the renewal rate will now be lower than the premium for 2022 – 2023.

Jane Dellwo was commended for her work on the premium renewal.

- Cascade System for the Fire Departments – The chiefs unanimously decided to request the purchase of a cascade machine for \$40,982.00 for Washington County. The volunteers are currently driving to Jackson County to use theirs. Vernon has a portable one. The machine is the apparatus that replaces clean air in their air tanks if they have to go into a structure fire.

The machine would be kept in Sunny Hills since that is where it is predicted to have the most growth in the future for the county. Designated training funds in the SAFER Grant can be used

for the purchase.

Commissioner Corbin offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Pettis to approve the purchase of the cascade machine for \$40,982.00 as presented by County Administrator Massey.

Commissioner Corbin clarified that the machine will be available for all the departments to use.

County Administrator Massey confirmed that this is correct. The city and the municipalities can use it.

With the portable machine, if it is on scene and there is smoke in the air that can show up in their tanks and breathing apparatus.

The motion on the floor carried unanimously.

Commissioner Griffin requested an update on the live streaming.

Wendy White, Human Resources informed the board that they are working with Diligent weekly. Everyone that will utilize the software is going through their video recordings. The encoder has been received and the IT department is working on the new microphones and the camera. Testing will be done before going live, which will hopefully be in August.

XIV. CLERK

- May Vouchers Totaling \$5,550,247.37

XV. COUNTY ATTORNEY – Attorney Milton updated the board on the property purchase from PAEC/Washington County School Board. The resolution was approved in May. The chairman needs to sign the remaining documents and have the clerk issue a check.

Chairman Hawkins responded the check is done.

XVI. ADJOURN