

WASHINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

August 17, 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	DISTRICT 4 Wesley Griffin	DISTRICT 5 David Corbin
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I. PROCLAMATION

- A. Call to Order - Chairman Hawkins
- B. Invocation - Pastor Lynn Sims, House of Healing
- C. Pledge

II. PUBLIC HEARING

- Major Development Review Application with Variance Request for Property Located on Main Street/State Road 77 - Dawn McDonald, Senior Planner presented the above-referenced application for Grease Pro, which is found next to the City of Chipley on Main Street. The property is approximately 27.76 acres. The building size is estimated at 23,043 square feet. The application is for automobile service and sales development for automobile sales, maintenance, and car wash. The board recently approved the property change to general commercial. The variance request requirements were met to notify property owners within 300 feet. A neighborhood meeting was not needed. The development review committee has no outstanding concerns or comments (this includes the county engineer). The county planning staff recommended approval and the planning commission recommended approval on August 7. The application is before the board today for final determination. – No comments.
- Major Development Review Application with Variance Request for Property Located on Highway 77 and Elkcam Boulevard - Dawn McDonald, Senior Planner presented the application request for a new Dollar General Market in Sunny Hills, which will be at the northwest intersection, with access from Elkcam. Several parcels will be combined for the development for a total of 1.77 acres. The store is about 12,480 square feet. The request is to reduce the landscape buffer to the north. It is within the Sunny Hills community; therefore, input was requested from Deltona. Deltona is the owner of two of the parcels. Directly to the north is general commercial land use classification. The underlying land use was reviewed, which would be equivalent to the county's general commercial. Those standards were applied to the properties. The public notice requirements were met to send notice to property owners within 300 feet. A neighborhood information meeting was not needed. The development review committee has no outstanding concerns or comments (this includes the county engineer). The county planning staff recommended approval and the planning commission recommended approval at their meeting.

Most of the certified return receipts were received.

There was no contact from the resident to the north of the property.

Troy Cunningham addressed the board about the meeting last week where it was mentioned about the main road was being destroyed/needs major repair. Could this affect the deterioration of the main road? Should someone be held accountable for making sure the main road is being taken care of before the facility is put there?

Commissioner Hawkins responded. The way the property lays, it is at the intersection of SR 77. It would be a short piece if any. Is Elkcam the road that is being referred to?

Troy Cunningham confirmed that this is correct.

Commissioner Hawkins said the impact fees can be used for it.

- Small Scale Future Land Use Map Amendment for Property Located on Greenhead Road, Chipley - Dawn McDonald, Senior Planner presented the amendment for property found in the southern part of the county. The proposal is a change from agriculture/silviculture to residential low to accommodate future residential development. The acreage is approximately 45.18 acres, which would be separated from 88 acres. Recently a part of the property found at the corner of Highway 77 and Greenhead Road was changed to general commercial. The public noticing requirements were met, and a neighborhood meeting was held on July 13, with no attendees. Notification of the amendment request was posted by signs, mailed certified letters, and newspaper advertisements. The county planning staff and the county planning commission recommended denial.

Timing is an issue. In the staff report, it was explained how the county is moving into larger developments. In the past, several units at a time in different locations were being approved. Now, if the county is looking at larger developments, there will be more impacts. The idea is to manage/control that in the best way and look at compact development and not spread out the development because it is a subdivision. The condition of the road was mentioned. There is no plan for improvements. That was a lot of what contributed to the recommendation.

Commissioner Hawkins asked how far off SR 77 is the proposed project on Greenhead Road.

Dawn McDonald said that it was more than a mile and a half.

Commissioner Hawkins said the subdivision would be on a mile of unimproved county dirt road.

Commissioner Corbin asked if the outcome may be different if the road was paved.

Dawn McDonald said that has been discussed but not at length because they have not had the level of development that they have had. It is always infrastructure and how they are going to accommodate the traffic. It would be one dwelling unit per acre on that site. It would not likely be 45 units. More than likely, it would be developed as a subdivision which requires internal roads, setbacks, stormwater, and a recreation area.

The neighbors mentioned drainage issues when they were previously discussing commercial change in the neighborhood. It would be a lot to bring the road up to current standards.

Commissioner Hawkins said that his concern would be putting a large subdivision on an unimproved county dirt road, knowing that issues would be caused with existing constituents with the road conditions with the number of trips being added to it.

Benita Crittendon said that she does not have any issues with a subdivision being built in there,

one-acre lots. It did not look like any of it was waterfront. When the subdivision that she lives on was developed off Greenhead Road years back it required 4.5 acres to be able to develop on the waterfront with a septic tank. That would be the only concern. There is a current subdivision in that area that has over 100 lots, with less than 20 of them being developed. Many of the lots are still undeveloped because of the road. Over 15 years the community has been promised there would be work toward getting the road paved. There have been multiple scenarios that have not been fulfilled, not picked up by legislation or other issues.

Dumajack was not on the radar to be paved but during the past legislation, the road became top priority over Greenhead Road, in which the county has invested \$330,000.00 over the last 10 years.

Commissioner Hawkins agreed with Mrs. Benita. There is no need to compound the issue.

- Small-Scale Future Land Use Map Amendment for Property Located at Crystal Lake Drive and Highway 77, Chipley - Dawn McDonald, Senior Planner told the board the 38.75-acre property is in the southern part of the county. The proposal is to change the parcel from residential-low to residential medium 1 with a small part of the property along Panther Trail to be named as neighborhood commercial. The authorized representative supplied added information/concept plan yesterday, which has been provided to the board. The park and ride are directly across the street and the airpark is directly north. They are proposing a parcel of less than an acre to be a neighborhood commercial designation. The residential medium category allows up to 4 dwelling units per acre in central facilities, which are not available.

The public noticing requirements were met, and the neighborhood meeting was held. Opposition was received from the 10 neighbors in attendance as well as by calls and letters. A major concern with land use changes, even with a small part proposed for neighborhood commercial is the uncertainty of how many units, and what type of commercial will be allowed on the site.

Added concerns are listed below.

- Water quality of the lake
- The effect of added septic tanks and wells on existing residents' wells.
- Drainage and runoff issues
- Access to the boat ramp. There is no parking there.
- Who would check the setbacks in the development?
- Traffic and speeding issues

Staff recommended approval and the planning commission recommended denial. The issue before the board today is for a final decision.

Doug Crook addressed the board. The site plan includes a dry retention system which will keep all the water on the property. From lots 7 – 14, stormwater areas are intended to be connected to serve as one connected system.

Commissioner Hawkins supplied a scenario for discussion. There can be 4 per acre if duplexes are chosen. With the lots provided of 111.5 x 96 feet, would that give adequate room for a well and septic tank per lot, or is the plan to install community water?

Doug Crook said duplexes would make that complicated but single-family homes are what is expected.

Commissioner Hawkins said even with a single-family home, with the setbacks required by Water Management and/or DEP who is over the septic tanks and water management of your wells. Would you have an adequate amount of space to install a well and septic tank on each property or would community water be installed?

Doug Crook said that they are not looking at supplying public utilities. It would be a well and septic tank.

Commissioner Hawkins expressed concern about approving a subdivision that would not have adequate space to include a well and septic tank to be a conducive lot. A community well has been shown not to work. It would be good to see the lots accommodate the well and septic service with the setbacks from the adjoining lots to allow the subdivision to be considered.

Doug Crook said the site plan is preliminary, conceptual at best. The request is for a land use change.

Commissioner Hawkins said once the land use is changed, there is no added control until the development order is issued before the board.

Doug Crook said the lot sizes and the lot count would be dependent on the setbacks, which would be implemented in the design process. The site plan was supplied to show how many could fit on half-acre lots in addition to including the widths for the roadway and the proper size for the stormwater management system. There has been no added engineering of the lot sizes. The lots may need to be resized to meet the setback, which would have an impact on the lot count. The plan was provided, per request to have something to view to enable the review and approval.

Commissioner Griffin said that he would deny it after confirming the recommendation for planning and zoning.

Doug Crook told the board that he was not given adequate time to supply information that would ease fears. A brief notice was given before the public information meeting; therefore, he did not attend. At the planning commission, he was not allowed to address the resident's concerns, as he was told.

Commissioner Hawkins asked the attorney if he could be allowed to go back before the planning commission.

County Attorney Fuqua responded as he recalls at the planning commission he was allowed to speak, the citizens spoke, and the meeting closed, therefore he did not rebut the citizens.

Commissioner Bush requested input from John Gay.

John Gay, Chairman of the Washington County Planning and Zoning addressed the board. Mr. Crook was given ample time to speak. He did ask to speak again, however, a motion was made and seconded to close the public comments, therefore, he was unable to rebut. It is unknown whether it would have made a difference. An estimated 25 residents spoke.

The planning commission did not have the site plan that was supplied yesterday. The concept site plan says it was prepared without the benefit of a topographic boundary survey, or percolation test, therefore, site layout and stormwater basin sizing are preliminary.

The planning commission likes to see things that are signed and sealed for accuracy. That allows for an informed decision. Based on the location, number of units, and proximity to Crystal Lake the planning commission did not find it proper, which was the cause for denial.

Commissioner Pettis said that he would like for everyone to realize that they are asking for a zone change or land use amendment. They are not asking for approval of that development. They must get the amendment approved before engineering can be done. A thought is one may not want to spend money on engineering if the amendment approval is unknown. This comment was for clarification of the process.

Commissioner Hawkins said once the land use amendment is made, it is done.

John Gay said that once the land use is changed, they will be presented with a development order, then it is out of their control when it meets the code. The planning commission tries to prevent a domino effect on the front end.

Dick Alt of Crystal Lake Drive told the board that he does not want to see trailers. If it is approved, it should be one home per acre. Per square foot in Washington County, no place pays more taxes than Crystal Lake. Two sides of the property are not dirt roads. That commercial piece of property is less than an acre. What can be done on a commercial property that size?

Ben Wertman of Crystal Lake Drive told the board that he is not opposed to the development and does not care what they put there.

On the county website, it says the goal for Chipley is to promote innovative housing design through the protection of environmental resources. One of the future land goals includes that Washington County shall be developed in a compact way that preserves nature and prevents the cost and physical impact of sprawl. Conservation goals with development include preserving, enhancing, and keeping natural resources, open space networks, and environmental amenities of Washington County. Goal 2 would be to mitigate the effects of growth and development on Washington County's environmental resources. Crystal Lake would be considered a resource. Goal three is to protect and keep the function of natural groundwater recharge area aquifer quality within the county.

It is concerning if the land is changed to residential medium 1. Once that is approved, there is a density up to 4 with water and sewer, which is not found there. There can be 2 units per acre, but it also says the purpose is to support single-family residential duplexes and two-unit townhomes along with an accessory structure. If everything is perfect, 30 acres would mean 60 units could be available. If a duplex is put on there, that would be 4 residences on that. There is a potential of 240 residences in that area. They are not saying this is going to happen, but once this is approved, they can do what they want.

There are 3 exits. If this is approved all the traffic will come out on Crystal Lake Drive.

This address of the board is not against development but suggests that they need to be smart in what needs to be there.

Benita Crittendon suggested that Commissioner Hawkins twisted a point that she was making earlier in the meeting. They are not necessarily against development in those areas. The point is that the county commission's lack of action and lack of pursuit of infrastructure in the south end of the county is hindering development that neighboring citizens are not objecting to. The infrastructure needs to be there. Favoritism must stop being applied to projects.

Doug Crook, Panhandle Engineering told the board the applicant is a homebuilder in 30 A, who builds high-end quality homes and that is what he is seeking to build here.

John Gay, Chairman of Planning and Zoning said that Washington County is not 30 A. It is unknown whether it is approved that is what will be put there. It was confirmed with County Attorney Fuqua that they have no control over what is put there.

Leslie Mathis said at no point has Mr. Henderson come to the community and shared his ideas. There is a lack of confidence in what would be built. The integrity of the community must remain in place.

III. ADOPT THE AGENDA

Additions – Discussion of 2024 workshops, item 15, Task Order HMGP EM Projects, FEMA Coordinator, Use of FEMA Acquired Property, Attorney, and Planning Commission Open Seat – District 5, 16, Commissioner Corbin

Commissioner Corbin offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Bush, and unanimously carried to approve the agenda as amended.

IV. ADOPT PREVIOUS MINUTES

- Board Meeting for July 13, 2023 – Commissioner Bush offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Corbin, and unanimously carried to adopt the minutes for 7/13/2023.

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. Prior to the time a meeting has been called to order, should an individual or group wish to address an item which 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.

Timothy Joyner, Ferguson Road told the board that he has code enforcement issues near him, such as neighbors living in RVs., junk cars, trash, and an aggressive dog. Code Enforcement, animal control, and the sheriff have already been contacted.

County Administrator Massey will meet with Timothy Joyner about his concern presented above.

Raymond Sheffield addressed the board about his son visiting the springs on August 6.

Commissioner Griffin and his wife harassed him to the point where he had to leave. They cussed him out and told him that the college he was going to/his career choice would not amount to anything.

In a separate incident, another friend was physically touched by the same crowd.

Beth Sheffield expressed concern about the irresponsibility that occurs at Holmes Creek, specifically Cypress Springs and Culpepper Landing. Tourism has increased over the years; however, tourists are not the issue. Sunday, August 6 her son and friends were visiting Cypress Springs. As they were going into Cypress Springs, three women approached the group of friends and questioned her son about whether he played baseball, where he went to school, what was he going to school for, and what his name was. He answered her questions respectfully even though she was not sober. He told her that he wanted to be a golf course manager. Mr. Griffin's wife told him that is not a manly sport. You should be a developer like me. The two boys tried to move on because they knew the women were not sober. When they walked away, one of the women yelled, are you all too good to talk to us? He replied you are drunk right now, and I do not want to talk to you. The three young women, leaning on the Jon boat removing reels and rods and casting them continued to cuss at the boys. The boys asked the women to stop removing things from the boat. The husbands of the three women began cussing at the boys. The boys continued to remove themselves from the situation. By this time, another friend of her son pulled up in his boat. The three women began bothering him. He asked them to move away from his boat. At that time, Wesley Griffin slammed a beer down on the back deck of the boat. The boy was sitting in the driver's seat of the boat. Wesley Griffin approached the boy and told him that he would not talk to his wife that way, because they are dealing with adults. The intoxicated male questioned the boys about why they did not want to talk to them. Then some of Wesley Griffin's friends came over and made him walk away. All the kids left the springs.

After they left, things escalated. Her son's friend went back to the spring with two other friends that he met. As they were coming back to the spring, another intoxicated male, Josh Peel stepped out in the middle of the spring. The boys stopped their boat. Josh Peel approached the boat and began yelling that he was driving too fast. He approached the side that he was sitting on and began threatening to pull him out of the boat. The young boy tried to leave, but the motor stalled out. The intoxicated male lunged toward him, grabbing him by the base of his neck. The young boy pushed him away. The intoxicated male's friends came and moved him away.

The young boy called 911 and they met at Culpepper Landing. Wesley Griffin told the young boy, you can call Kevin, he has already been notified and nothing will happen to me.

The police report is a public record.

This is unacceptable behavior by Commissioner Griffin, his wife, and their friends. This is not the first incident with him.

After becoming aware of the situation, she researched to find the names of the people involved, which turned out to be Commissioner Wesley Griffin, his wife Alesha Griffin, Amanda Peel, Josh Peel, and Diamond Taylor. Later that night, videos were sent to her, along with pictures of Commissioner Wesley Griffin cussing at people, telling people to move out of his way, dancing inappropriately, making sexual gestures, and a TikTok video where he is shot gunning a beer dancing to a song and it says on there, the "commiss" does as he wish.

As an elected official this behavior is unacceptable. Commissioner Griffin asked for this position

and was supposed to stand for this county to the best of his ability. Washington County citizens should feel better about a commissioner being at the local springs, looking out for the locals. Something must be done before someone is killed. Things could have gone wrong on August 6. Who handles enforcing DUI's and BUI's. Looking back at arrest reports for Washington County Sheriff's Office there is little for DUI's and none for BUI's. The jail could be filled up on a Saturday at Cypress Springs. Who will hold Wesley Griffin accountable for his drunken rage on August 6?

Beth Sheffield supplied the commissioners a picture of her 4-year-old nephew who was killed in 2019 in a car wreck due to her sister driving intoxicated. Nobody wakes up in the morning and says today I am going to get drunk and kill someone. Bad decisions come with consequences. Bringing this before the board is the first stop.

Steve Whittington went over the presentation that he brought before the board at the August 10 workshop. He asked that the drainage project at Crystal Lake be designed so that there is no discharge into Crystal Lake.

Darrel/Daryl Day asked about the further funding for the fire department that was mentioned at the workshop.

Benita Crittendon addressed the board. Per a public records request from other state agencies, there has been a \$500,000.00 reimbursement request to FEMA that they are requesting Washington County payback. Can this be explained? How long has the board known about that? Did commissioners on the board know about it before it was brought to their attention by a citizen?

Less than 2-months ago when the Wheeler and Wheeler contract was up for renewal, staff gave testimony about how they were doing their job, filing the deadlines, and doing everything correctly, and there had been no request for chargebacks from FEMA. This is a new development in public knowledge. Is this a new development?

Things are presented by certain members of the board to the public to present a certain narrative. As a mama and grandma that mama bear syndrome kicks in at times. The mama bear thing is understood. There are other elements to the theater occurring today. By the commissioner's own social media post, he regards Mr. Sheffield as a close friend. It is understood that Mr. Sheffield, Commissioner Hawkins, and Mr. Lagman work together in the community with the boy's baseball group. It is shown on Commissioner Hawkin's social media page where he wished Mr. Sheffield a happy birthday and went on to tell him how much he meant to him and how close they are; however, it has been erased.

Commissioner Hawkins said that it has not been erased.

Benita Crittendon said that Commissioner Bush has mentioned comments about personal vendettas in the past on different citizens who speak or different commissioners who speak. There is a different degree of political vendetta that is occurring.

There is a lady in the audience from FACT. It is unknown why she is here or who invited her. The chairman is on the board of FACT. It seems coincidental that there is a FACT representative on the board today. Questions that will be sought out by public records request. Why was the FACT representative here? Was she invited here? Who invited her here? If it was by way of Mr. Massy, another employee of the county, or the county attorney, who directed them and who discussed that. There is a lot of theater occurring today. Citizens need to see it for what it is.

There is a current lawsuit that the county is involved in that involves Mr. Griffin and there are many allegations that include Commissioner Hawkins and his brother-in-law for unethical and illegal activity. Whoever asked that FACT come and attend the meeting may not be aware of that. Depending on the answers to why FACT is here and who invited them, seeing that Commissioner Hawkins is on the board of FACT. Depending on the outcome of that it might be another request for resignation for Commissioner Hawkins for use of a political position for political and personal vendetta.

Sandra Copitch informed the board on July 30 her son was at the creek. During that visit to the creek, a kayaker's kayak overturned, and the individual was caught under a tree. Her son saved the individual from drowning. Tourism has increased over the years; however, it is concerning if adequate safety precautions are being taken.

Commissioner Griffin told her that he and County Administrator Massey had recently discussed trying to find funding that could be used to clean the creek out.

Sandra Copitch told the board after that incident, 7-days later there was one that occurred with her 18-year-old nephew. If Washington County commissioners do not hold standards and morals how can those visiting the local creeks be expected to? Speaking on the political thing, with commissioners being friends with those in the community. Most everyone is friends. It is a small community. Why would that be an issue? This is not political. The incident was an ethical violation. It does not have anything to do with who is friends.

Bennett Bramlet, Pine Ridge Drive addressed the board to discuss the lake that he lives on, which was a private lake when he bought the property. It has been brought to his attention that someone in the county annex or with the county has given someone written permission to cross property that the county got and is accessing the lake. In listening to what has been mentioned earlier in this meeting, he feels that is what he will be facing if this continues.

Commissioner Hawkins said that this item will be covered under the county attorney's section.

Priscilla Brown informed the board that she met with County Administrator Massey on July 5 about the rental fee and believes that he will come to a resolution that agrees with everyone. Projects start and are dropped along the way. Road conditions on the south end of the county are an issue. There is financing for infrastructure.

Recently her father got stuck in the road due to rain causing gullies through the road. If there is a time that EMS must come to them and cannot get through due to the road conditions, that will be another sad day. The location is Armstrong Mill to Charlie Brown and from there to Jackson Community. If the ditches could be cleaned out that would help until the road is fixed. Everyone needs to be cared about.

Commissioner Hawkins said that he would ask Johnny Evans and Danny Jackson to look at the ditches at the location she expressed concern about. He also told her that he would supply an update on the paving project.

Recess – 10:24 – 10:37

VI. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval to Make Updates to Planning Fee Schedule
2. Approval of RFP of Printed Guide for Tourist Development Council
3. Approval of FDOT Agreement
4. Approval of King Road B-SCOP Task Order
5. Approval of Resilient Florida Grant Application: Fanning Branch Culvert
6. Approval of Library Construction Grant for Sam Mitchell Public Library
7. Approval of Handbook Update Regarding FRS Eligibility for Temporary Employees
8. Approval of Resolution Regarding Consolidation of Judicial Circuits
9. Approval to Surplus 2020 Mack Dump Truck
10. 2022-25 Change Order #1 and Attachment A
11. Approval of HMB CEI Task Order for Road Zone 4.3
12. Approval of FTE for Deputy Building Inspector
13. Approval of Engagement Letter for FY 23 with Carr, Riggs, & Ingram
14. Approval of Resolution about PACE
15. Approval to Purchase Sound System and Live Streaming Equipment from Sole Source Provider for \$10,698.00

Commissioner Bush offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Corbin, and unanimously carried to approve the consent agenda listed above.

VII. AGENDA ITEMS

1. Major Development Review Application with Variance Request for Property Located on Main Street/State Road 77 - Dawn McDonald, Senior Planner – Commissioner Bush offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Corbin, and unanimously carried to approve agenda item 1.
2. Major Development Review Application with Variance Request for Property Located on Highway 77 and Elkcam Boulevard - Dawn McDonald, Senior Planner – Commissioner Bush offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Griffin, and unanimously carried to approve agenda item 2.
3. Small Scale Future Land Use Map Amendment for Property Located on Greenhead Road, Chipley - Dawn McDonald, Senior Planner – Commissioner Corbin offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Griffin, and unanimously carried to uphold the planning commission's recommendation of denial.
4. Small-Scale Future Land Use Map Amendment for Property Located at Crystal Lake Drive and Highway 77, Chipley - Dawn McDonald, Senior Planner – Commissioner Corbin offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Griffin, to uphold the planning commission's recommendation for denial.

Commissioner Griffin said until there is further infrastructure on the south end of the county such as septic tanks/sewer.

Commissioner Corbin said that he does not believe the developer has intentions of putting duplexes on the property. The concern is that it is approved as written. What if the economy fails and the new housing market decreases, being unable to sell homes?

The motion on the floor carried unanimously.

5. Recognition of Ted Everett for Years of Service – Tray Hawkins, Chairman said Ted Everett has served as the chamber director along with the economic development team for years. The board presented Ted Everett with a plaque for his years of dedication.

Ted Everett expressed his gratitude. The county is growing and is in a good place.

6. Audit Report – Tyler Dunaway, CPA Carr, Riggs, & Ingram, LLC presented some of the high points of the most recent audit. Everyone who took part in this audit was a pleasure to deal with and receptive to any information presented. Plans were put together to help with remediating earlier findings in 2021, which caused the findings to be cut in half. In 2021 there were 12 significant deficiencies and material weaknesses. In 2022 there were 6. Meetings have been held with staff at the clerk's office who have a plan to cut those.

Page 1 – Independent Auditor's Report – This is the only thing in the financials that is dictated by the auditor. Auditors issue an unqualified opinion, which is the highest level of opinion that they offer as a CPA. In previous years a qualified opinion was issued, specifically with the capital assets. An opinion could not be provided on the fixed assets because of a lack of records, which was related to infrastructure from years prior. Staff worked together to compile this information; therefore, an unqualified opinion was given.

Page 13 – Statement of Net Position – All funds are put together in one category which gives an overview of the county's finances. Liabilities are subtracted from the asset, which gives the net position. There is an unrestricted deficit of about \$4,000,000.00, which sounds concerning. Everybody in Florida that is a part of the FRS has this. It is due to the pension liability. Every year an amount is calculated to figure what amount would be owed to current or former employees. The deficit for Washington County is around \$13,000,000.00, which will be paid over the next 60 – years. It is a number that fluctuates significantly. This past year was a bad year for the market, causing that liability to increase by \$10,000,000.00.

Page 15 – Balance Sheet – This shows the general fund, which has the most discretion. Most of the other funds are restricted to things. The fund balance is generated by subtracting the liabilities from the assets of the general fund. The unrestricted fund balance should be 3 – 4 months of expenses. The county has 6 months as of 9/30/2022. That is a good sign of financial health.

Page 17 – The county had about \$38,000,000.00 in grants in 2022. In 2020 the amount was \$11,000,000.00. This has aided with improvements in the county.

Page 28 – The revenue that would cover 6-months of expenses in the general fund can be manipulated. If none is invested in infrastructure, that number will build up, however, the infrastructure of the county is deteriorating.

Page 48 – Capital Assets – Prior year capital assets compared to the fiscal year of the audit being discussed. The capital assets increased about \$20,000,000.00. \$19,000,000.00 was in roads and there was a significant investment in machinery/equipment and buildings, which is a good sign that infrastructure is not depleting.

If more than \$750,000.00 is spent in federal or state funding a single audit is needed. A process is used to select major programs. The federal government supplies a compliance detailed checklist. This past year ARPA Funding, FEMA Projects from Hurricane Michael, and Hazard Mitigation which was also linked to Hurricane Michael were selected for this audit. There were no unallowed costs found by the samples selected. The clerk's office, contractor, and the State of Florida have a process of validation for funding. There were no findings on the processes that are in place. SCOP was also looked at, which resulted in the same results.

7. Pine Bluff Community Road Conditions and Repairs - Danny Exum, Citizen supplied pictures of the road in the community to show the condition of the road, which is buckling in some places due to base failure. Safety cones have been put up. The county did some patching in 2021. In 2015 the residents spent around \$14,000.00 patching the road. A spillway was built on the west side due to runoff damaging the right of way. This year \$8,000.00 was spent on the east side. The last time a community representative was before the board was a year ago.

Jason Crenshaw told the board a bid was issued October 2022 for the reconstruction of the base in a specific area. The low bid was \$90,000.00. A bid was issued to resurface the entire subdivision, which resulted in a bid for \$134,000.00. The low bidder was Roberts and Roberts.

In response to Commissioner Hawkins, Attorney Fuqua said the bids would have to be redone.

Commissioner Hawkins requested to contact Roberts and Roberts to see if they would still honor the \$90,000.00 bid.

Jason responded that he would supply an update at the next meeting.

Commissioner Griffin commented that there is more emphasis on them getting an asphalt crew.

Commissioner Bush offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Corbin to reissue the bid (if Roberts and Roberts will not hold their bid) at County Administrator Massey's discretion if he feels there is a suitable amount of cash carried forward.

Commissioner Pettis asked if the road was a county or private road. The property appraiser's website shows it as a private road.

Commissioner Hawkins said that it was accepted by the county in 2021, which is an estimated year.

County Attorney Fuqua said that he provided the board with an opinion after reviewing the plat and minutes. The county accepted the roads. The plat does not say that the roads are private.

He figured out the roads were county roads.

Commissioner Pettis responded that no matter what all that said the county has taken responsibility for the roads.

County Attorney Fuqua said the determination was made because of what that said.

Commissioner Pettis confirmed the board motion is for the bid of \$90,000.00.

The motion carried unanimously.

8. Request for Approval of Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP)
Adoption/Resolution - Lynne Abel, Public Safety Director told the board the resolution before them for approval is for the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan. Under Chapter – 26 P – 6 Florida Administrative Code the Florida Division of Emergency Management has completed its review of the Washington County Comprehensive Emergency Management plan. The plan meets the CEMP compliance criteria. The board must adopt the resolution confirming that it is Washington County’s plan.

Commissioner Bush offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Corbin, and unanimously carried to approve the resolution. *Note – The resolution number is 2023-17.*

9. Request for Board Approval of State Aid to Libraries Grant Request, Agreement, and Certification of Hours - Renae Rountree, Library Director addressed the board. Approval is requested for the annual agreement and certification of hours to fulfill the requirements to receive the State Aid to Public Libraries Grant. It says that the county supplies free services to the residents of the county and one location is open 40 hours per week.

Commissioner Bush offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Pettis, and unanimously carried to approve the library agreement and certification of hours.

10. Request for Approval to Reject Bid for Ag Center Portico - Samantha Arroyo, Grants Coordinator presented the recommendation before the board to decline the sole bid for the construction of the Washington County Agriculture Center Improvements Project. The bid was over budget. The project is in good standing with the performance period. The project includes three 1-year renewals.

Travis Howell of Alday Howell told the board it was a qualified bid, but it was high.

Commissioner Griffin offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Corbin, and unanimously carried to reject the bid.

11. Request for Approval to Rebid for Ag Center Portico - Samantha Arroyo, Grants Coordinator –

Commissioner Griffin offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Corbin, and unanimously carried to readvertise the bid for the ag center.

12. Discussion Regarding Crystal Lake - Tray Hawkins, Chairman addressed the board. After discussion with Dewberry, they feel they can come up with a way to cut any discharge into Crystal Lake.

Jonathan Sims of Dewberry confirmed that they do feel like there are other avenues to design the project.

Commissioner Bush offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Griffin, and unanimously carried for Dewberry to continue with a design to end any discharge into Crystal Lake.

13. Discussion Regarding Fire Department - Tray Hawkins, Chairman said this item was added as a discussion item at the recent workshop. Per an earlier discussion with Randy Truette about the EMS budget request for the upcoming year, there is a request for an extraction vehicle on the south end of the county. There is one in the north. The reasoning for bringing it up currently is because it is budget time. If the board approves funding for an extraction team and there is a need for a full-time fire department the thought is that both departments can be helped at one time.

County Administrator Massey informed the board that there has been a couple of meetings with Randy Truette and his staff. There are paid firefighters five days per week at Sunny Hills that have extraction equipment. They could meet those needs. The conversation has leaned toward getting the correct extraction equipment on the ambulances to go ahead and allow them to respond as well.

Randy Truette, EMS addressed the board. In the EMS budget request, the largest part was to supply medical coverage for the county and the extraction inclusion was a small part of it. The original request was for a quick response vehicle to provide medical coverage along with extraction.

Since then, a 5-year plan has been created. The best plan is to have the Wausau station active, which will change the response dynamic in the county. Putting small combi tools back on the ambulances. Washington County Fire is a good department that responds to almost all things. The two safer contractual employees during the day are beneficial because daytime is a weak spot. 1,800 times annually for 2 – 2.5 hours ambulances are being used to transport outside of the county. On average, the out-of-county calls have increased by 300 per year. The immediate need is a 12-hour peak call transport truck, which will cost the same amount that was requested in the original budget request. There will not be one person on a truck responding, but two people 12 hours per day during the peak call time. That would give the county 3.5 ambulances.

Commissioner Hawkins said between the departments, administration, sheriff, EMS, and the fire coordinator; whatever money is allotted to first responders, every aspect of first responder needs to be taken care of. Whatever is done for the fire department needs to help the EMS department and vice versa.

A commitment was made to the fire chiefs a couple of months ago that the board would figure out a way to have something in place once the SAFER Grant is over to slowly move into a 24-hour system.

Commissioner Griffin said they have 4-years to decide how to keep them on full-time.

County Administrator Massey said there have been two meetings with EMS. The information is still being processed. This was not a prepared discussion for today. The information and his plan will be presented at the upcoming workshop.

Commissioner Hawkins asked to have a meeting with Randy Truette, Sheriff Crews, and County Administrator Massey.

Randy Truette said that anything he has asked for is a need. The growth on Highway 77 is concerning.

Commissioner Hawkins said that the decision to put the SAFER employees at Sunny Hills was made by fire and rescue.

Randy Truette said it was a good decision. The growth is going to occur in Sunny Hills.

Commissioner Hawkins said that Kevan Parker of Wheeler Emergency has been waiting for a letter of occupancy.

Randy Truette said that he had not seen a request for that letter. The first knowledge of it was when Commissioner Hawkins brought it up during a meeting. The building was never occupied by EMS; therefore, the letter cannot be issued.

Commissioner Hawkins said that a funding mechanism will need to be found for the Wausau location.

Justin Leach said that fire and EMS have needs. A meeting needs to be held with everyone. Sunny Hills is growing fast. If there is a fire there, it will likely connect with other houses because the houses are so close. By the time a fire department takes 15 – 20 minutes to reach the station, a whole block would burn down. Using the needs of both departments, it would be nice to create a plan for to work together.

The SAFER contracted employees should be responding to all medical calls in the Sunny Hills area because that is where they are found.

First responders need funding. The fire department is working with worn-out equipment and there is little money available. Something needs to occur soon or eventually; it will take someone's life.

County Administrator Massey suggested scheduling a workshop solely for this item.

A first responders' workshop will be held before the budget workshop on August 31. This may help with the budget.

Commissioner Bush asked how the SAFER funds are being spent. Where are the employees being placed? Is there extrication equipment in Sunny Hills?

Justin Leach said two people are being housed at the Sunny Hills location from 8 – 4, Monday – Friday receiving \$120.00 per day. The station is the most centrally found for unincorporated Washington County, which is what the grant is for. It does not include the cities. There is a specific amount of funds for gear, training, and advertising.

There is new extrication equipment in Sunny Hills, which is on the Sunny Hills chief's truck, who normally runs every call with them. Another truck is needed.

The Sunny Hills Fire Budget has been funding items for the SAFER employees.

Some of the volunteers spend their own money and they also raise money. The board needs to do more to help them. A paid department helps volunteers not to have to leave work each time a

call comes out.

Troy Cunningham, Chief of Country Oaks Fire told the board that more is needed in fire services. Certain departments are being left out of being paged. Country Oaks has increased its manpower, and training, and got a new tanker that will be in service this month. The department is looking at buying a newer engine through their 501c3. The current engine being used is a loaner from the forestry department. Testing and procedures are being updated so that they are more readily available to respond. The community is getting back involved. The board should not forget what each volunteer does.

Al Gothard, Chief of Sunny Hills since 2009. The SAFER employees have been a help. Once they leave, the volunteers pick up. Younger people need to get involved. There are EMT's and paramedics working for SAFER and volunteering for the Sunny Hills Fire Department. They can be put on the rapid response truck, cover fire, and use the extrication equipment. The emergency transport to the south end of the county by ambulance is long.

Randy Truette said the Wausau station and cutting Vernon's district will improve that.

14. Request for Approval of Updated Public Participation Policy – Tray Hawkins, Chairman addressed County Attorney Fuqua. From the last public participation policy presented the only change is that the board will adhere to a 3-minute public speaking and not allow any remarks...

County Attorney Fuqua said the 3-minute public speaking was already there. It was not enforced.

Commissioner Hawkins asked if it is the board's pleasure to adhere to the 3-minute public speaking.

Commissioner Pettis responded yes.

County Attorney Fuqua said that the consensus at the workshop was to accept the shorter version that was provided.

Commissioner Bush offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Pettis to approve the shorter update of the public participation policy.

Commissioner Corbin said that in the policy the following wording is included: all public comments before the board shall be directed to the chairperson.

Commissioner Hawkins said the chairperson leads the meeting, but it would not be at the direction of the chairperson.

Commissioner Bush said that is technically correct. That is how it should work. For example, the commissioners speak openly but should be recognized by the chairman before speaking.

Commissioner Hawkins said that he wants it how the board feels they want it.

Commissioner Griffin said that he likes the wording of the board.

Darrel Day said this is one of the few opportunities that the public can stand before the board. It is a route the board is encouraged not to take.

Commissioner Hawkins said the citizens can address the board. The inclusion in the policy is about employees who are not employed by the county commission. The county attorney and county administrator are the only ones who are employed by the commissioners. Employee concerns should be directed to the human resources department and the county administrator. If the problem is not resolved by either of those avenues, then bring it before the board because it is an administrative issue.

County Attorney Fuqua said county commissioners can be called about anything. Personnel items should be addressed to the human resources department. This addresses what occurs in the open forum in the county meeting.

Darrel Day reiterated to tread carefully on this item.

Commissioner Bush asked County Attorney Fuqua if the county adheres to Roberts Rules of Order.

County Attorney Fuqua said that is normally followed but the board has not adopted that. No state statute says that Roberts Rules of Order must be followed. That is generally where this came from. The chairperson normally directs the conduct of the people, such as recognizing the people.

Benita Crittendon brought up the statement that was added in there. It is a subjective statement. It can be interpreted differently by different people, which is why it should be addressed to the board and not the chairman.

There was a personal event that occurred that happened as Randy Truette and Justin Leach were explaining in the south end county about not having ambulance support in the south end of the county with people going to different places. With this public speaking policy, the good experience could not be shared before the board. It says that nobody is to be commended or say anything derogatory.

Commissioner Hawkins read the first sentence of the last paragraph. Public comments before the board shall be directed to the chairperson of the board. That does not mean asking for permission. In most cases, the chairman will initially recognize the person at the podium such as asking would you please say your name for the record.

Benita Crittendon said that it is a subjective power grab that could be made in the future, based on whoever the chairperson is.

Troy Cunningham asked how a person would inform the board of dissatisfaction if a department or name cannot be mentioned.

Commissioner Hawkins said that the citizen would be addressing the board with County Administrator Massey's shortfall. State that you are having an issue with a department that

has not been handled and from there a meeting can be scheduled with a commissioner. From there County Administrator Massey will be addressed in a public forum.

Darrell Day asked what caused the change. No further rules and regulations are needed. Little changes add up for the citizens. It is not understood why it needs to be changed. Things worked fine this morning.

Commissioner Hawkins said what occurred this morning can still happen. It was not employee related.

County Attorney Fuqua said preferably the first step should be with the district's commissioner. If the commissioner does not want to address it, come before the board to let them know there is a situation of concern with County Administrator Massey. What should not occur is come to the board saying that Mr. Massey did not handle a situation with a specific employee's name.

Darrell Day asked what event caused this to be addressed this morning.

Commissioner Hawkins responded there was an employee situation brought before the board that should have been handled by the human resources department and administration.

Al Gothard said that he had been the recipient of false information in the board meeting which he had to come before the board the next month to straighten out. The issue was before things could be corrected the information was already out there. Problems should be taken to County Administrator Massey.

The motion to approve the short version of the public participation policy carried 4 to 1, with Commissioner Griffin opposed. *Note – This leaves the chairperson wording that was discussed earlier as is.*

15. 2024 Workshop Schedule Discussion – Wendy White, Human Resources said staff needed direction if the board wanted to move the night workshops to the day since live-streaming is about to begin.

Commissioners Griffin and Pettis said they would like to continue the night workshop.

16. Planning Commission Appointment – Commissioner Corbin said that he would like to appoint Jerry Pigott to the Planning Commission Board.

Commissioner Griffin offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Corbin, and unanimously carried to appoint Jerry Pigott to the Planning Commission Board.

Recess 12:02 – 12:14

- VIII. FEMA COORDINATOR - Jason Gilmore, Wheeler Emergency Management staff spoke on how the community is cash-flowing an operation 10 times the size of its annual budget without borrowing money or a local match and how the county helped when COVID-19 occurred. The FEMA Public Assistance Program has three sections, which are 403, 404, and 406. Washington County was the first community to have a mitigation measure of paving dirt roads in a project

worksheet across the country.

The \$500,000.00 mentioned earlier was not FEMA funds. It went to FDEM. The governor had funds appropriated after the storm and Washington County was awarded those funds for a possible evacuation route. FEMA does not allow a duplication of benefits. Washington County avoided duplication of benefits and gave the money back to the State of Florida.

- Williams Road Bridge – Approval is requested to bid Williams Road Bridge.
- Johns Way (Bush Road) – Approval is requested to bid Johns Way Bridge.
- Task Order – Approval is requested for approval of a task order to continue helping with grants from Hurricane Ian for Hazard Mitigation measures.

Commissioner Hawkins asked if the bid for Williams Road is due to the age of the bid.

Jason Crenshaw said that is his understanding. Those jobs were handled by Dewberry.

It is not believed that the bids were accepted.

Commissioner Corbin offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Pettis, and unanimously carried to approve issuing a bid for Williams Road Bridge.

Commissioner Griffin offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Corbin, and unanimously carried to reject the bid for Williams Road Bridge.

Benita Crittendon said in the back of the room earlier Jason Gilmore attacked her and Mr. Brooks aggressively because she misstated the name of the company Wheeler and Wheeler instead of Wheeler EMC. He went on to say that she was not smart.

Commissioner Griffin said that he saw the attack.

The point of the \$500,000.00 is it was money the county was given, and they have been requested to return it. Whose responsibility, is it? There is a significant problem if the public cannot speak to the commissioners about employees but allows your contractors and vendors to attack citizens in a meeting.

Commissioner Hawkins said that he did not see it, but Commissioner Griffin said he did, therefore, it will be addressed.

The motion on the floor unanimously carried.

Wendy White informed the board that a bid has not been accepted on John's Way (Bush Road).

Commissioner Griffin offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Corbin, and unanimously carried to accept advertising for John's Way (Bush Road).

- FEMA UPDATE – Jason Gilmore supplied an update.
 - 39 roads are complete.
 - 77 Roads are under contract.
 - 64.3 miles have been paved.

- Rebids will be received on the 22 on the next group of roads to include Jewell, Kent, Pond, and Porter Roads.
- \$77.9 Million Hurricane Michael Projects.
- \$76.8 Million has been received.
- \$1.1 is being confirmed by the State of Florida.
- \$1.1 is a payable about to be received.

The public assistance program, Hazard Mitigation flows through the State of Florida. The state allocated \$1.7 Million to Washington County with a 25% match for eligible mitigation. Discussion of which roads, ditches, and bridges need to be named. FDEM has asked for the buyout of the remaining homes. The 2-month task order is not to exceed \$33,000.00.

Commissioner Griffin asked with Wheeler's continuing contract do they take over Ian instead of bidding it out.

Jason Gilmore said they are a pre-event contractor.

Commissioner Hawkins confirmed the answer is yes.

Commissioner Bush offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Corbin, and unanimously carried to approve the task order for 2 months not to exceed \$35,000.00.

IX. PUBLIC WORKS SUPERVISOR – None

- X. PARKS UPDATE – George Swauger informed the board the park updates are continuing. Brayden Brooks of Eagle Scout Troop #39 made repair updates at Daniels Lake. A presentation was shown of the updates.

XI. ENGINEERING PROJECTS UPDATE – Jason Crenshaw addressed the board.

- ITB 2023-12 County-Wide Pavement Markings Continuing Services Contract – One bid was received from Guettler and Guettler. During the bid advertisement, three other vendors were contacted. The recommendation is to award the project to Guettler and Guettler.

Commissioner Corbin offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Pettis to award the contract to Guettler and Guettler.

Commissioner Bush asked with that being a sole bid, does it suffice that other contractors were contacted.

County Administrator Massey said yes.

Jason Crenshaw said that it is not FEMA-related. They intentionally tried to ask for more contractors to bid on it.

The motion carried unanimously.

Pine Bluff – There is a continuing service paving and maintenance rehabilitation bid opening next week. Before the other contractor is contacted the most cost effective will be looked at.

Road Zone 4.3 – Approval is requested to advertise six projects in Road Zone 4.3. Gilberts Mill, Kent Mill, and Pike Pond Roads will be advertised in September with bids being due in October. Rudd Roars, Wes Nelson, and Overpass will be advertised in November, with bids due in December. The bid for Holmes Valley Road in Road Zone 4.2 bid schedule is to issue in November with bids being due in December.

Commissioner Corbin offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Griffin, and unanimously carried to issue bids for the above-mentioned roads as presented.

Travis Howell, Alday Howell Engineering said that the contractors have been working on CR 273/South Boulevard since May. They have not been on the road. They will be paving Tuesday – Thursday, which will be the first lift on the road and everything else will be finished in a couple of months. They have restrictions to refrain from being on the road during peak school times. The school board and EOC is being contacted so that notification can be made about the lane closure.

XII. COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR - None

XIII. CLERK

- July Vouchers Totaling \$6,631,469.49
- Courthouse Lawn – The grass has been an issue since moving into the courthouse. The grass has been sprayed for weeds, with no avail. There are funds available on the state side that can be used to remove and replace the sod. Legendary and Fresh Cut have been contacted and Legendary will be used. The county currently has contracts with both companies.

This item is for informational purposes.

XIV. COUNTY ATTORNEY – County Attorney Fuqua addressed the board.

- Use of FEMA-Acquired Property – It has been brought up that there has been an issue with someone accessing Pine Lake through one of the properties the county got through the FEMA Buyout Program. After reviewing the guidance from FEMA and the provisions from the FEMA Buyout it says it must be an open space, which does not interfere with hazard mitigation projects. Open space does not mean it is open to the public. All the deeds go to the center of the lake. It is suggested to post a No Trespassing sign and notify the sheriff that it is not property that should be accessed by the public.

Commissioner Griffin offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Corbin, and unanimously carried to post a No Trespassing sign on the property and notify the sheriff of the determination.

XV. ADJOURN