

## WASHINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Location: Commission Board Room

1331 South Blvd., Chipley, FL 32428

DISTRICT 1	DISTRICT 2	DISTRICT 3	DISTRICT 4	DISTRICT
Alan T Bush	David Pettis, Jr.	Tray Hawkins	Wesley Griffin	David Corbin

## 1. PROCLAMATION

- 1.1 Call to Order – Chairman Pettis
- 1.2 Invocation – Chairman Pettis
- 1.3 Pledge

Present – Commissioners Bush (via phone), Pettis, Hawkins, Griffin, and Corbin. Also attending – Deputy Clerk Brantley, Clerk of Court, Lora Bell, County Administrator, Jeff Massey, and County Attorney, Fuqua & Milton, P.A.

## 2. AGENDA ITEMS

## 2.1 Presentations for RFQ 2024-01 State Lobbying Services

1. Gray Robinson, P.A. – Speaking Chris Carmody, Chris Dawson, Carlecia Collins, and Kylee Anzueto.

Highlights are as follows.

- Legal lobbying firm.
- Background in law and politics.
- Many appropriation and policy successes, and aid with the broadband project with the Department of Commerce.
- Policy – Ex. Matching Funds for Rural Infrastructure Grants
- Statewide Reach.
- Relationships within the Florida State Senator’s Office, Jay Trumbull, and his office, and Senator Gainer
- Close relationship with agency heads

Commissioner Hawkins asked how familiar the firm is working with rural counties in becoming a part of the BMAP?

Chris Dawson responded that they have a wealth of experience in working with rural counties. They also represent Gulf County and other rural counties in the central part of the state. From a policy side for rural economically disadvantaged counties there has been an effort in Tallahassee

to break down some of the walls, particularly on matching funding. We know that is critical when competing for grants and other aid. The legislature and governor's office has been receptive to that message.

Commissioner Hawkins said two years ago the legislature found it important to put money for law enforcement into the base budget, which should be protected for fiscally constrained counties. It would be nice to see funding for fire fighters worked in the base for fiscally constrained counties. Washington County struggles with daytime coverage.

Chris Carmody responded. Representative Abbott understands the issue and has been a strong advocate. He broke down many of the barriers a year ago. Fiscally constrained counties fall behind due to funding. It would be viewed as a two-year project. The next contact that would be made would be to Senator Trumbull. Ed Hooper worked in local government and is a former fireman/fire marshal. Ben Allbritton is an ally with Washington County.

2. JEJ & Associates, Inc. – Speaking - Lena Juarez

Highlights are as follows.

- Been in the legislative process lobbying the state legislature and the state agencies for twenty-five years.
- Located in Tallahassee.
- Small firm.
- No conflicts of interest.
- History of success with the appropriations process.
- Represented many state agencies.
- Concern regarding the formula for fiscally constrained counties.
- Understands the challenge of local sales tax collection.
- Relationships with Chris Dulin, Small Counties Coalition and David Suggs, Florida Association of Counties, and the Florida League of Cities.
- Involvements in Agricultural, Healthcare, Infrastructure, Economic Development, to name a few.
- Early worker.
- Historic Preservation, Cultural Organization funding.
- Runs an Agri-Tourism business.

Commissioner Hawkins asked the same questions regarding BMAP to all the lobbying firms.

Lena Juarez said working with the Department of Environmental Protection is the key. Regulatory information would be needed for understanding of the direction. A grant should be applied for through the Department and ask Representative Abbott and Senator Trumbull to

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file an appropriations request.

Commissioner Hawkins asked the same question regarding funding to offset cost for fire services to all the lobbying firms.

Lena Juarez said that she would speak to Jimmy Patronis, Chief Financial Officer, work with the Small Counties Coalition and other counties to make that happen.

3. Pinpoint Results, LLC. – Speaking – Marty Coley, Jason Maine, and Vance Coley  
Highlights are as follows.

- Strong work ethic, depth of knowledge, and deep relationships.
- Clients' engagement is 365-days/Full-service agency approach.
- Focus on client communication.
- Marty and Vance are from the Panhandle.
- Jason Maine currently practices law and is a lobbyist.
- Understand funding needs.
- Rewrote Senate Bill 644 on Rural Emergency Hospitals, which passed and is critical for rural communities.
- Marty Coley previously worked in Legislative Service.
- Involved in getting funding approved that gave rural hospitals an opportunity to access money for infrastructure which is now reoccurring.
- Knows how to watch things and get them moving.
- Watches the backend of grants.
- Familiar with Washington County.

Commissioner Hawkins asked the same questions regarding BMAP to all the lobbying firms.

Vance Coley responded. Pinpoint has a strong relationship with the Water Management District, which is typically where the conversation begins. Including Representative Abbott and Senator Trumbull is key. From there they would go to Tallahassee and meet with the agencies.

Commissioner Hawkins asked the same question to all the lobbying firms regarding funding to offset cost for fire services.

Marty Coley said that she was present when the decision was made to ensure fiscally constrained funding for small counties. They would also get a clear understanding of what the county wants and meet with the

people that can make those changes happen.

Vance Coley said the legislatures are the ones leading the processes, however, they look to their agencies. In this case, the agency is Patronis', who they have deep relationships with.

County Administrator Massey said he understands that funding is readily available if you are in a B-Map. Sunny Hills is growing rapidly and there is a need for water and sewer. What would be a plan of action to get that moving.

Vince Coley said they would submit grant applications while making Washington Counties priority clear. There is short- and long-term aspects.

4. The Southern Group of Florida, Inc. – Speaking – Brian McManus  
Highlights are as follows.

- Largest lobbying firm in the state.
- Been in business for twenty-five years.
- Over sixty lobbyists throughout Florida with nineteen being in Tallahassee.
- Top fundraisers in senate leadership and house leadership.
- Brought in over \$700 million into Tallahassee.
- \$34 million over the years for Crystal River.
- \$135,000 for Apalachicola.
- Partner with a grant writing management company.
- Regular communication.

Commissioner Hawkins said Holmes Creek and Econfina run through Washington County. What steps would the firm take if Washington County become a B-Map if they chose too?

Brian McManus said they work closely with DEP and have deep relationships. They also have deep relationships with the Water Management District. A lot of what goes into the process is capitalizing on the relationships that they have built, and making sure they understand the project, and what has occurred.

Commissioner Hawkins asked the same question about a funding mechanism for fire fighters for fiscally constrained counties to each of the lobbying firms.

Brian McManus said a direct appropriation would be a starting point. The funding may begin as non-reoccurring; however, they could work toward it becoming reoccurring.

Recess 10:10 a.m. – 10:18 a.m.

- 2.2 Amendment No. 2 to Agreement No. 23PLN71 Between FDEP and Washington County – Candace Thames, Grants/Procurement Specialist presented an amendment for the Vulnerability Assessment Grant to revise the scope of work and the new task order. The only change is the inclusion of a line item to include project administration. This item will be listed on the consent agenda.
- 2.3 Small County Consolidated Solid Waste Management Agreement – Candace Thames, Grants/Procurement Specialist presented the annual recycling agreement between the county and DEP for \$93,750.00. This item will be listed on the consent agenda.
- 2.4 Exempt/Non-Exempt Status Update – Public Works Supervisors – Wendy White, Human Resources Director requested approval of an update to the public works supervisor position from exempt to non-exempt. All county positions are designated as either exempt or non-exempt pursuant to the Fair Labor Standards Act. After reviewing the job description and speaking with the county’s employment law attorney, the recommendation before the board is to update the status moving forward. This update is requested to be listed on the consent agenda.

Attorney Fuqua added that it would mean they would qualify for overtime and compensatory time. Item 2.4 will be listed on the consent agenda.

Commissioner Griffin asked if everyone was on overtime or is comp time still done.

Wendy White responded that comp time is done in non-emergency situations. For example, comp time would be earned when going to a training. If an employee is called out during the middle of the night, overtime would be paid if the employee has physically worked over forty-hours in that pay period.

This item will be listed on the consent agenda.

3. FEMA COORDINATOR – Kevan Parker updated the board.
  1. DEO Agreement – Amendment 2 is being presented before the board for approval for the Buyout Program. The name will be updated, which is moving from the Department of Commerce to the Department of Economic Development. The final date has been extended to 9/30/2025. This item will be listed on the consent agenda.
  2. Hurricane Sally – The majority of the funding for Hurricane Sally Roads have been

received. Work has been progressing for an estimated three weekends. The roads will be put at pre-disaster conditions. The loads are being tracked and transmittal sheets will be done to reimburse the public works budget as things move along. Cost for equipment, labor, and material will be captured.

3. Hurricane Michael - \$1.9 million of the funds that were being held have been received. The funds are mainly from one work zone and for one contractor. Those same items are in other road zones. There has been no answer as to why the approval has not corresponded across for the same work. They are pushing back on the cost of the asphalt. They have been pulling PWs from the Legacy Project and each one of them had rock, dirt, and mixing. They are using the older sheets to determine the difference between those projects and the current projects.
4. Loan Interest – 50%+/- has been agreed upon for reimbursement. Legal and bonding cost are around \$290,000.00. Interest cost is moving through the process.
5. Worley Road – The project is progressing, and the funds have been received for it.
6. Williams Road – Reimbursement has been received up to this point.

Commissioner Griffin questioned the push back on the asphalt.

Kevan Parker responded that he does not know.

Commissioner Hawkins asked County Attorney Fuqua when the legal side of things begins.

County Attorney Fuqua responded that a formal denial is needed to go through the appeals process.

Kevan Parker said he believes they are working through what they will de-obligate. Asphalt has been their issue.

Commissioner Griffin questioned the de-obligation amount.

County Administrator Massey said it is a moving target. They are going through a process to determine eligibility. The conversations now are that things that were eligible before are not eligible now. The number originally started at \$79 million.

Kevan Parker said it is hard to say what the number is. In the beginning, it was all mitigation, which would be \$79 million. The last number that was seen was \$29 million.

Commissioner Hawkins said that was prior to the sod, filter fabric, and rock being approved.

Kevan Parker said five hundred thousand of the \$10 million +/- that was being held up was

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asphalt.

Commissioner Corbin spoke on a call that he and County Administrator Massey had listened in on with FEMA. They seem to be doing what they can to help them. When discussing the reimbursements they omitted the rock. It seemed they thought that the rock was part of the asphalt process. They continued to say they were sorry they informed them wrong. There is no mechanism for them to fix it. They do not have a policy, which is why they keep saying if they go to arbitration.

County Administrator Massey said they required them to have filter fabric, which dirt cannot be put over and grade the roads. There must be a base. In the scope of work for 2016, they were to add rock to the road after the flood.

Commissioner Hawkins added that with the Legacy Projects it was three to six inches of rock. They went with granite, which was approved because they could not get enough limestone at that time.

Kevan Parker said they are trying to close out the buyout program with FDEM. They are waiting on DEO to pay their 25% and DEM will come back and pick up the balance. It has been a tough process.

Commissioner Hawkins began a conversation about the roads that have been prepped for paving that have the filter fabric down, and silk fence has turned into a maintenance nightmare. Public Works is doing their best to grade it. What have they said about that?

County Administrator Massey responded they have not received an answer from anybody.

Commissioner Hawkins said they took the road out of the maintenance plan. There is no maintenance for a road that has filter fabric underneath it.

County Administrator Massey said there is no difference from the road zones they just approved and sent money than those unfinished roads. It is going to be the same roads minus asphalt. It seems they could go ahead and get those considered eligible and finish the roads with rock. There is nothing there that will not be eligible. The issues concerning the asphalt part are going to be addressed in appeal/arbitration and at that point if they win the appeal there would be no more issues.

Commissioner Pettis said the question has been asked if they could go ahead and grade some of the roads to make them better for travel without anything going on with FEMA, but there has been no answer received.

County Administrator Massey said the ditches are silted in. They have not touched those

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for fear of getting in trouble for it. They have not received clear guidance.

Commissioner Hawkins said they cannot remove the silk fence because it is an ongoing construction project as well as environmental concerns. Somebody must answer that question.

County Administrator Massey said they are at a point where they need to complete what they can with the roads with the rock, etc. and get the ditches fixed and track their time, just like it was FEMA time/reimbursable time ensuring documentation. The work should be eligible for reimbursement. They cannot expect the county to have unpassable roads passable for residents.

Commissioner Hawkins asked Kevan Parker if they end the road contracts, could they rebuild the road, track their time, close it out and ask for reimbursement as a non-hard surface road.

Kevan Parker said yes. They must be able to document what they have done. They keep hanging their head regarding the scope of work.

Commissioner Hawkins responded the scope of work is ineligible.

Kevan Parker said that he is more concerned with the ten to thirteen roads that are under construction/not complete. There are miles of roads that are incomplete that have no sod or one strip of sod instead of two. When they were paving, they stopped on a particular day to get the sod in to protect the pavement and that is not in. There are areas where the road base has been done, ready to pave, road base was started and they have not been able to grade, asphalt down that does not have sod; There are so many variables on the incomplete roads.

Commissioner Hawkins mentioned capturing everything they have that is left incomplete and present the information to FEMA showing what is still left to close certain PW's out and ask for their direction.

Kevan Parker said that County Administrator Massey has done that. There are roads with no sod. Now the sod is approved. What needs to be done? Do they task the contractor to finish it? They have the rate. Would the contractor do it now.

Commissioner Hawkins clarified with Kevan Parker that they are concerned with them performing the scope of work to close out the PW's. Their scope of work is considered ineligible. If the PW is closed out the way that they want it done, it is ineligible. How do you combat that?



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Kevan Parker said the only way you can get to them is for them to issue the determination memo and to change the scope of work. That is where they are trying to get to.

Commissioner Griffin suggested going to FEMA and let them provide a scope of work giving direction on how to finish the unfinished road projects. They cannot sod lime rock roads or maintain them. The workers cannot grade without rolling the sod up. Alton Road is an example.

Kevan Parker said the ones that public works did and brought up to grade and hydroseeded they were going to come back and pave it and sod it. One of the questions the state was bombarded with is they were not doing the scope of work because they were hydroseeding. The response was they were exceeding the scope of work because they were initially doing hydroseeding. The intention was when they finished the project, they were going to put down sod. The hydroseed was to maintain it until they reached that point.

Commissioner Hawkins asked if that was a FEMA question to the state.

Kevan Parker responded that it was a public records request.

Commissioner Griffin suggested to go back to FEMA and ask them how they would like them to finish the unfinished road projects that are unpaved. Are they going to reimburse for rock. Clean the ditches out and get them back up to standard and omit the asphalt and finish it out that way since they are doing it on Hurricane Sally.

Kevan Parker said that was a six-month question that County Administrator Massey asked FEMA. At that time, it was one of the first storm events that was coming.

County Administrator Massey said the only reason that sod is in the equation is that they told them to put asphalt down. Sod would not have been included in a rock road. They were trying to follow their scope of work, but their scope of work is not in order based on their direction.

Commissioner Griffin said there is sod on lime rock roads now.

Commissioner Hawkins and County Administrator Massey said they were going to be paved.

Commissioner Griffin asked why sod was put down before paving. Why would sod be put on roads before they were paved.

Kevan Parker said the pavement was pulled from those roads. They went ahead and put

sod down. There was not a line item to put hydroseed. They probably could have changed it and put hydroseed.

Commissioner Griffin questioned how they would maintain it. You cannot pull or clean ditches. How are you going to pave it with sod on the side? That is ridiculous.

Commissioner Hawkins said they intended to pave the road.

Kevan Parker said they intended to come back sooner.

Commissioner Griffin asked how it would be paved with sod on the side. That is ridiculous.

Kevan Parker said they did the task order type contract for paving in the county, and they were going to come back. They felt like they could get a better price to come in and pave it than what the contractors were doing.

Commissioner Griffin asked if the best solution would be to go to FEMA and let them give them a scope of work to finish the road projects. They are not going to reimburse or pay for asphalt. Why not fix the roads and be done with FEMA because they are not going to approve them for asphalt.

County Administrator Massey said they should reimburse them for what has been done and what must be done to get the roads back up.

Commissioner Hawkins said that Kevan Parker has said a list has been compiled and submitted to FEMA of what remains to finish roads without hard surface.

Commissioner Griffin asked how lime rock roads being maintained with sod on the side without ripping it up. How are the roads being graded. It is a maintenance nightmare.

County Administrator Massey said the sod goes away. You cannot maintain the road with sod. Not if you are pulling ditches.

Kevan Parker said there may be ten like that.

## 7. MSBU ADVISORY COMMITTEE UPDATE

- 7.1 Sunny Hills Mowing Contract, Addendum No. 1 – Steve Healis, MSBU Coordinator addressed the board regarding the mowing contract, which was originally for \$55,286.00. Due to changes, the contract amount will be \$69,103.50. The invitation to bid included mowing the front two fields on Sunny Hills Boulevard as well as the roads that were identified. Since then, Deltona has agreed to take over

the two fields, which is a savings of \$4,900.00. Country Club Boulevard was left off the initial bid. The amendment includes adding it in with an eighteen-foot max cut for the summer. The committee changed Deltona Boulevard from seven mowings to eleven mowings. Wilder Park and the helipad were also added. An approved format will be brought before the board. The new contract versus the old one is a savings of around \$86,000.00. This item will be added to the consent agenda.

Gary Hartman told the board the committee voted four to one for the amendment.

8. PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR – Trey Barbee told the board the first estimate from Easy Docks for the floating dock at Culpepper is \$50,000.00 - \$70,000.00. There was no action needed on this item. Contact will be made with Cliff Knauer for more information.
9. PARKS UPDATE – Steve Healis updated the board about Wilder Park. The new park equipment will be delivered next Monday around 12:00, with the contractor there to receive it and begin installation. It is asked of the board to have cones put at the park showing that the park is closed as of Sunday.
10. ENGINEERING PROJECTS UPDATE – None
11. COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR – Jeff Massey
  - 11.1 Washington County School Board Firing Range Property Lease Agreement – No action is needed. Renewal requires a letter expressing the desire to do so from the Superintendent of Schools which has been received.
12. CLERK
  - 12.1 Lora C. Bell addressed the board about a recent question for spending \$2.7+/- million ARPA Funds and what the qualification expenses include. The board was provided a document from the Department of Treasury. Several partners have been contacted about recommendations, with the county auditor being one of those. A plan is due for the use of the funds by the end of the year. Direction says the funds can be used for government services. The discussion has been to reimburse within the current budget year for government services payroll, which would alleviate funds for the upcoming budget. The funds can be used in the upcoming budget for non-reoccurring expenses, which is the direction that those involved have agreed upon. That has been the direction received from those contacted as well.

County Administrator Massey added they have spoken with the county auditors that have dealt with the funds in other locations. They suggested the funds be used in this budget year in the way that has been mentioned by Clerk Bell. John Hamilton has given the same direction. Holding on to the funds after October impacts lowering the millage rate.

Clerk Bell said this would close out the funds.

Commissioners Hawkins and Corbin agreed with listed this item on the consent agenda.

Commissioner Griffin requested to look at the information more before making his decision, commenting that the funds can be used for each item listed on the document provided to them.

Clerk Bell said everyone that has gone through said that reimbursing government services payroll was the cleanest and easiest option. There have been previous projects approved and funded by the funds. A plan is due for the funds by the end of the year. It has been recommended to use the funds within this budget year ending 9/30/2024. Funds are being freed up that have been paid out.

Commissioner Griffin requested this item be listed on the regular agenda.

Wendy White, Human Resources confirmed the board would like the lobbyist listed as a regular agenda item.

### 13. COUNTY ATTORNEY

10.1 Highway 79 Corridor Grant Reassignment Discussion – Attorney Milton addressed the board. The board has previously moved forward with transferring the Florida Commerce Grant for which the county was the grantee of that paid for the improvements made in the Corridor Authority Overlay for the water and sewer infrastructure. For the reassignment, the state requires a letter requesting that the state approve or consider the assignment, which is before the board today. The City of Bonifay must send a letter as well. This does not mean the state will approve the reassignment. Holmes County mentioned that they were hesitant on continuous funding of the Corridor Authority. Reassignment would mean no further obligations on the return on investment on the grant. This item will be listed on the consent agenda.

10.2 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Center Bed Tax Ordinance – Attorney Fuqua informed the board after this has been run twice it will be before the board in September. The ordinance directs that if the tax is vote for, they will impose it.

### 14. ADJOURN