



MINUTES
WASHINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Thursday, July 17, 2025, 9:00 AM, Commission Board Room
1331 South Blvd., Chipley, FL 32428

DISTRICT 1	DISTRICT 2	DISTRICT 3	DISTRICT 4	DISTRICT 5
Ashlynn Marquez	David	Joey Brock	Wesley	David Corbin
	Pettis Jr., Chairman		Griffin	Vice-Chairman

1. PROCLAMATION

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

2. ADOPT THE AGENDA

Agenda Updates

- Remove agenda item 7.5.
- Remove agenda item 7.8.
- Add HMGP Grant Application for EOC Roof.

Motion to approve the agenda as amended.

Moved by: Wesley Griffin

Seconded by: David Corbin

Aye David Corbin, Wesley Griffin, David Pettis Jr.,
Ashlynn Marquez, and Joey Brock

Carried 5-0

3. PUBLIC HEARING

4. ADOPT PREVIOUS MINUTES

4.1 Board Workshop for June 12, 2025

4.2 Board Meeting for June 19, 2025

Motion to approve the minutes listed above.

Moved by: Joey Brock

Seconded by: Wesley Griffin

Aye David Corbin, Wesley Griffin, David Pettis Jr.,
Ashlynn Marquez, and Joey Brock

Carried 5-0

5. NON-AGENDA AUDIENCE/PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- James Brooks, a citizen, addressed the board regarding a public record that he submitted and was charged \$60.00 for. The request was for the roads that were approved related to Hurricane Sally. The question was asked if a county employee makes \$60.00 an hour.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

6.1 Approval of Building Department Building Inspector Job Description

6.2 Approval of Addition of Building Inspector to Pay Grade 110
Consent agenda items 6.1 and 6.2 were approved.

Moved by: Wesley Griffin

Seconded by: Ashlynn Marquez

Aye David Corbin, Wesley Griffin, David Pettis Jr.,
Ashlynn Marquez, and Joey Brock

Carried 5-0

7. AGENDA ITEMS

7.1 Introduction of Tony Daniels, New Economic Development Director-Tracy Andrews, EDC Chairperson – n/a

7.2 Mailbox Numbering Awareness-Tom Sznura, Fire Services

Washington County's mailbox numbers requirement is a three-inch minimum, with contrast in colors posted on both sides of the mailbox. The lack of mailboxes in the county that do not meet those requirements was presented, which can affect emergency services' ability to find people. Mr. Sznura requested the board's help with promoting awareness.

7.3 Request for Approval of an Update to the Building Official Position to Exempt Status-Aaron Dudley, Human Resources Specialist

Up until a couple of years ago, when the board approved to change the position to non-exempt, it had been exempt. The salary meets the Fair Labor Standards Act for the minimum salary for an exempt position, as well as the responsibility it carries. The position will not earn comp time.

Approval to change the building official position to exempt status.

Moved by: David Corbin

Seconded by: Joey Brock

Aye David Corbin, Wesley Griffin, David Pettis Jr.,
Ashlynn Marquez, and Joey Brock

Carried 5-0

7.4 Insurance Renewal Approval-Aaron Dudley, Human Resources Specialist, and Ashlynn Marquez, Commissioner
Aaron Dudley provided the board with an added insurance plan design option, which was listed as 3-0. There is still an increase in the employee contribution for the dependent tiers and the employee-only contribution for the gold and silver plans. The choice remains for employees to have employee-only coverage at no cost to them. The county's cost for this option would be \$720,000.00. If the county has a year of good claims, funds will be returned to Washington County's surplus fund.

The board discussed the different plan options.

Commissioner Griffin added that they need to look at pay increases for employees. One example is a 20 + year employee making \$20.00 per hour.

Motion to select plan 3 - 0.

Moved by: David Corbin

Seconded by: Ashlynn Marquez

Aye David Corbin, Wesley Griffin, David Pettis Jr.,
Ashlynn Marquez, and Joey Brock

Carried 5-0

Motion to utilize the entire \$377,000.00 in the surplus account to offset the health insurance cost.

Moved by: David Corbin

Seconded by: Ashlynn Marquez

Aye David Corbin, Wesley Griffin, David Pettis Jr.,
Ashlynn Marquez, and Joey Brock

Carried 5-0

Aaron Dudley presented the board with the following insurance provider change request.

Motion to change from the provider, Ameritas, for dental and vision to Principle due to a 25% increase from Ameritas. There is a 2.9% increase in dental coverage and a 10 - 11% decrease in vision coverage.

There is an annual increase of \$237.00 for the portion of Minnesota Life insurance that is covered by the county.

Motion to change dental and vision coverage provider from Ameritas to Principle and to proceed with the annual increase of \$237.00 for Minnesota Life.

Moved by: David Corbin

Seconded by: Wesley Griffin

Aye David Corbin, Wesley Griffin, David Pettis Jr.,
Ashlynn Marquez, and Joey Brock

Carried 5-0

- 7.5 Ag Center Budget Amendment Request-Julie P. Dillard,
County Extension Director - This item was removed.
- 7.6 New Process for Subdivision Approval-County Attorney Fuqua
informed the board that the Florida Legislature changed the
process of how plats are approved. They must be approved
by an administrative person without the approval of the
Board of County Commissioners.

The suggestion before the board is to assign that approval
authority to the planning official.

Commissioner Corbin clarified that all land use changes will
continue to come before the planning commission and the
WCB OCC.

Motion to appoint the position of senior planner for the
administrative review and approval of subdivision plats.

Moved by: Ashlynn Marquez

Seconded by: Joey Brock

Aye David Corbin, Wesley Griffin, David Pettis Jr.,
Ashlynn Marquez, and Joey Brock

Carried 5-0

- 7.7 Request for Approval of Resolution Defining Communication
Protocol for Planning Activities - County Attorney – This item
was omitted in error.

7.8 Lobbyist Discussion-Ashlynn Marquez, Commissioner - This item was removed.

7.9 Emergency Management Discussion-County Attorney Milton addressed the board.

Highlights of Transition Resolution

- The sheriff would act as the direct supervisor of emergency management employees up to the end of the budget year.
- As of October 1, they would become employees of the sheriff.
- The budget would be transferred as of October 1.
- The authority for State of Emergency declarations would not change.

Motion to approve the resolution supporting the transition of Washington County Emergency Management under the direction of the Washington County Sheriff.

Moved by: Wesley Griffin

Seconded by: Joey Brock

Aye David Corbin, Wesley Griffin, David Pettis Jr.,
Ashlynn Marquez, and Joey Brock

Carried 5-0

7.10 Animal Control Discussion-County Attorney

The contract for animal control services would be administered for the county until the time of renewal. When the contract expires, the sheriff will renew the contract. The funding for the contract is included in the animal control budget.

Motion to approve the resolution to support the transition of Washington County Animal Control under the direction of the Washington County Sheriff. Section 4 Implementation will be updated to mirror Section 4 of the resolution for the transfer of Washington County Emergency Management.

Moved by: Ashlynn Marquez

Seconded by: Wesley Griffin

Aye David Corbin, Wesley Griffin, David Pettis Jr.,
Ashlynn Marquez, and Joey Brock

Carried 5-0

7.11 Reappointment of Danny Exum to the Tri-County Airport
Board-David Pettis, Jr., Chairman

The Tri-County Airport Board has asked that Danny Exums be
reappointed to serve on the Tri-County Airport Board.

Motion to approve the renewal of Danny Exum's term on the
Tri-County Airport Board.

Moved by: Wesley Griffin

Seconded by: Joey Brock

Aye David Corbin, Wesley Griffin, David Pettis Jr.,
Ashlynn Marquez, and Joey Brock

Carried 5-0

7.12 Public Participation

Highlights

- The format will be simpler and uniform with other policies.
- Clarifying how to request a standalone item on the agenda.
- Updated sign-in sheet has been renamed.

Motion to approve the updated public participation
documents.

Moved by: Ashlynn Marquez

Seconded by: David Corbin

Aye David Corbin, Wesley Griffin, David Pettis Jr.,
Ashlynn Marquez, and Joey Brock

Carried 5-0

7.13 HMGP Grant Application for EOC Roof-Jane Dellwo,
Administrative Secretary

Permission is requested to proceed with an HMGP Grant to address the leaking and ventilation issues related to the EOC roof. It is first on the LMS list, which is one of the requirements. The application is due next Friday.

Motion to proceed with the HMGP Grant application for the EOC roof.

Moved by: Wesley Griffin

Seconded by: David Corbin

Aye David Corbin, Wesley Griffin, David Pettis Jr.,
Ashlynn Marquez, and Joey Brock

Carried 5-0

8. FEMA COORDINATOR

8.1 Update from Congressman Neil Dunn's Office - Nicole Smith spoke on the FEMA claw-back situation. The commission has no fault in the current situation, which is a situation that has occurred in multiple counties. In each of those instances, the projects were approved by FEMA at multiple levels. When they made it to a final type of review, someone saw the project differently, which has resulted in this situation. This has led to Congressman Dunn introducing a piece of legislation that would prevent this type of situation from happening in the future. The bill is retroactive.

8.2 UPDATES

- \$721,000.00 that was approved on the 9th is in step 6.
- Helene's funding is in the payable step.

8.3 Arbitration Discussion

- The appeal was \$30,000.00 and arbitration would be up to \$150,000.00. The appeal was a stepping stone to arbitration.

- The roads in the county that were left with fabric cannot be properly taken care of. They cannot be properly graded and have the ditches cleaned out. The only way to get a resolution on the 17 roads is to proceed with arbitration.

Motion to proceed to arbitration not to exceed \$150,000.00; if so, it should come back before the board for approval.

Moved by: Wesley Griffin

Seconded by: David Corbin

Aye David Corbin, Wesley Griffin, David Pettis Jr.,
Ashlynn Marquez, and Joey Brock

Carried 5-0

9. BUILDING OFFICIAL

10. MSBU ADVISORY COMMITTEE UPDATE -

Scott Parrish addressed the board.

- FPL provided a proposal to update 139 lights in Sunny Hills. The advisory committee voted unanimously to accept the proposal.

Motion to approve the proposal provided by FPL to update 139 lights in Sunny Hills.

Moved by: David Corbin

Seconded by: Wesley Griffin

Aye David Corbin, Wesley Griffin, David Pettis Jr.,
Ashlynn Marquez, and Joey Brock

Carried 5-0

11. PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

12. PARKS UPDATE

13. ENGINEERING PROJECTS UPDATE

13.1 Upcoming Grant Opportunities-Brent Melvin, Melvin Engineering

- Upcoming grant opportunities will be presented at the August board meeting.
- The gutter system on the ag center building is not in good shape, which is causing a lot of overflows. Current estimates for repairs to replace all the gutters and downspouts on the building range from \$25,000.00 - \$27,000.00. Those items are not eligible under the original Hurricane Sally drainage project. There is Hurricane Sally funding still available to cover the repair. Approval is requested to go out for quotes for the repair at the ag center.
- Mason Garrett informed the board that the project is considered a small project, which means the funds can be used across other small projects. Once they are all complete, the small projects will be closed out as a whole. Hurricane Sally Road projects are way under.

Motion to put the ag center drainage repair out for bid to obtain quotes.

Moved by: Wesley Griffin

Seconded by: Joey Brock

Aye David Corbin, Wesley Griffin, David Pettis Jr.,
Ashlynn Marquez, and Joey Brock

Carried 5-0

14. COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

14.1 County-Owned Property

Jeff Massey presented a property sale offer for \$17,000.00, which is the assessed value. The admin fee is \$3,500.00. The property is approximately .514 acres. Adjacent property owners were notified by letter, and there were no counteroffers submitted.

Approval to proceed is requested.

Motion to approve the above-requested property sale. *The attachment referenced parcel number 00-5456-0024 – 3943 Okchia Circle.*

Moved by: Ashlynn Marquez

Seconded by: Joey Brock

Aye David Corbin, Wesley Griffin, David Pettis Jr.,
Ashlynn Marquez, and Joey Brock

Carried 5-0

15. CLERK

15.1 Millage Rate Discussion

Deputy Clerk Brantley informed the board that the motion needed is to approve the tentative millage rate and first hearing date of September 10 at 5:05 p.m.

Motion to leave the millage rate at 8.5 and set the tentative budget hearing as 9/10.

Moved by: Ashlynn Marquez

Seconded by: David Corbin

Aye David Corbin, Wesley Griffin, David Pettis Jr.,
Ashlynn Marquez, and Joey Brock

Carried 5-0

15.2 June Vouchers Totaling \$2,593,381.25

Motion to approve June's vouchers.

Moved by: Joey Brock

Seconded by: David Corbin

Aye David Corbin, Wesley Griffin, David Pettis Jr.,
Ashlynn Marquez, and Joey Brock

Carried 5-0

16. COUNTY ATTORNEY

- 16.1 Resolution of Peel vs. Washington County - Attorney Fuqua informed the board the case brought by Joshua Peel and Northwest Florida Contracting against the County, Panhandle Excavation, and Wheeler Emergency Management was dismissed for the County by virtue of a Motion for Summary Judgement. On January 24, 2025, the court granted the County's Motion for Sanction as the court found the action to be frivolous against the County. The next step would normally be to determine the amount of attorney's fees that were taxable. The fees would be equally split between Mr. Peel and Attorney Marie Mattox. The amount of attorney fees from the point of when the Motion for Sanction was filed is \$6,000.00. The insurance company would like to resolve the case by accepting \$2,000.00 in fees, which would be paid to them since the deductible was met and that the Peel's not appeal the dismissal of the case and the award of sanctions, then the case would be over.

The recommendation is to accept the recommendation of the insurance company and have the Peel's pay \$2,000.00 and the agreement that there would be no further appeal or attorney fees required by the county attorney defending the appeal.

Motion to accept the attorney's recommendation to accept the \$2,000.00 from the Peel's and there would be no appeal.

Moved by: Ashlynn Marquez

Seconded by: David Corbin

Aye David Corbin, Wesley Griffin, David Pettis Jr.,
Ashlynn Marquez, and Joey Brock

Carried 5-0

- 16.2 Boat Ramp Case Update

Attorney Fuqua informed the board that they made the offer to both parties that if they dropped the appeal, the County would not seek sanctions; however, they appealed and lost.

The appellate court awarded sanctions. A hearing will be scheduled to determine the amount of fees due.

16.3 Municipality Draft Interlocal Agreement

Attorney Milton addressed the board. An interlocal agreement would be prepared for each municipality. During an emergency where the county debris contractors have been activated, the municipalities have their own municipal limits. The state is requiring an interlocal agreement that says the municipalities have the authority to use the county contractors. If a municipality uses the county contractors there is a local portion that the municipality handles, which the county would initially pay and then request reimbursement from FEMA or whether it is their local share. The county pays it and then requests reimbursement from the municipalities. The interlocal agreement says the county is agreeing to allow the cities to use their contractors if requested by the city and if the contractors are available to remove debris in the municipalities.

Approval is requested to send the interlocal agreements to the municipalities on the county's behalf. The consensus of the board is for Attorney Milton to proceed.

17. **OTHER BUSINESS**

Houseboats

Commissioner Griffin informed the board that he is working with Mr. Massey on a resolution to address the problem with houseboats. Owners should be responsible for their structures.

County Administrator Massey informed the board that he has been in contact with FWC and has obtained a copy of St. John's county ordinance. The floating structures do not require numbering like boats. This makes it difficult for FWC to enforce them. There is a problem with houseboats being abandoned.

Attorney Fuqua requested a copy of the ordinance and advised that he would prepare one for the next meeting.

Commissioner Brock added that there are seventeen new ones at Hinson Crossroads. Houseboats are a big issue. There should not be any houseboats in Spring Run, which should be enforced.

Raises

Commissioner Marquez revisited the subject of raises. With the raise, there are some employees who still will not be where they should be. Once the budget is balanced, the board should give Mr. Massey the authority to research those who need to have pay increases. Looking at the pay scale, how do you give a road grader more responsibility?

Commissioner Griffin added that the frequency of raises inside does not match those outside. This needs to be addressed.

County Administrator Massey informed the board that the pay study is almost complete. Once the budget is complete, pay issues can be combined with it and a plan can be made for Washington County.

Trey Barbee added that a non CDL HE01 pay begins at \$13.74 which is not a livable wage. The department gets younger workers, but they normally leave after a few months. The pay needs to be addressed.

Commissioner Marquez commented that the board will need to authorize the pay scale to be set aside and allow Mr. Massey to look at each department.

18. ADJOURN

Summary of Minutes Prepared by Risha Brantley