



MINUTES
WASHINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
BOARD WORKSHOP
Thursday, August 14, 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 Pettis Jr. Chairman	Joey Brock	Wesley Griffin	David Corbin Vice-Chairman

1. PROCLAMATION

- 1.1 Call to Order - Chairman Pettis
- 1.2 Invocation - Chairman Pettis
- 1.3 Pledge
 - Move agenda item 11.1, Wausau Fire Department, to the Special Meeting that is scheduled following this meeting.

2. AGENDA ITEMS

- 2.1 Request to Utilize Funds from the Law Enforcement Trust Fund-Kevin Crews, Sheriff

Chairman Pettis addressed the board. Forfeitures fund the Law Enforcement Trust Fund, which has stipulations on how it can be used. The cooking trailer and tactical camera meet those stipulations in that one gives back to the community, and the other aids in the safety and security of citizens. – Approval of \$32,100.00 to be taken from the Law Enforcement Trust will be listed on the consent agenda. The request meets the criteria of Florida Statute 932.7055, subsection three.

2.2 Water Management Update

Caitlin Brongel, District Chief of Staff, informed the board that the district has released a notice of funding availability for a new grant program, the Pilot District Wastewater Program. Grant funds of \$2 million are focused on impaired bodies of water in the Panhandle. The focus of the grant is to demonstrate the benefits of alternatives to wastewater treatment in areas where a central sewer is not cost-effective. The application period is through September 22 at 11:59 p.m.

Approval to apply for the grant will be listed on the consent agenda.

2.3 TDT Lodging Tax Referendum-Heather Lopez, TDC Director

Heather Lopez requested approval of a referendum in November 2026 to increase the lodging tax from 3% to 5%, with 5% being the maximum rate. An ordinance will be required as well as sample ballots through the SOE.

Ted Everett added that the fee is paid at places such as an RV park or hotel.

Approval of the referendum for November 2026 will be listed on the consent agenda.

2.4 TDC America 250 Grant Application-Heather Lopez, TDC Director

\$50,000.00 was applied for, which does not require a match. An interpretive driving tour will be conducted to educate visitors on how the American Revolution and the Constitution are integral to Washington County's history.

Approval to apply for the TDC America 250 Grant will be listed on the consent agenda.

2.5 Washington County Public Library Long Range Plan-Renae Rountree, Library Director

The long-range plan must be updated every three years to comply with the State Aid to Public Libraries Grant.

The long-range library plan will be listed on the consent agenda.

2.6 MOU Between Washington County Public Library & Panhandle Library Access Network-Renae Rountree, Library Director

Due to the dissolution of the Institute of Museum of Library Services at the federal level, they are facing a \$200,000.00 shortfall, which has caused the staff to work from home. They have a post office box; however, they require a principal address to register with the Division of Corporations. They have requested the use of the Sam Mitchell Public Library address. There is no cost associated with the request.

The MOU will be listed on the consent agenda.

2.7 Request for Approval of Resolution Defining Communication Protocol for Planning Activities-County Attorney

This item was omitted in error at the last meeting. It pertains to the ex-parte communications for the planning and zoning meetings.

This item will be listed for approval by resolution on the consent agenda.

2.8 Memorandum of Understanding for Panhandle Search and Rescue-County Attorney

Attorney Milton told the board that a benefit of having the MOU would be that they may be able to do certain things that

the county cannot, being that they are independent. However, if they become an agent for the county, the county is responsible for what they do. A concern is that they provide proof of insurance with the county named as an added insured on their policy. The MOU would authorize them to provide services.

John Williamson, of Panhandle Search and Rescue, spoke about the difficulty of obtaining insurance as a private contractor for the county due to the nature of their work. Along with search and rescue, they provide storm cleanup and aid to the county and fire departments.

Sheriff Crews spoke on liability and insurance.

This item will be placed on the regular agenda.

3. FEMA COORDINATOR

Mason Garrett provided the following updates.

- Payables are still in step 6, which is a statewide issue.
- The Buyout Funds have not been received.
- The \$208,000.00 in Helene Funding has not been received.
- Hurricane Sally roads were completed this week. Verification of the park's completion and the condition of the culverts needs to be done. Following this, the account can be closed.
- Arbitration is due by August 31.

The board's consensus is to schedule a special meeting before sending the arbitration documents.

4. BUILDING OFFICIAL

None

5. MSBU ADVISORY COMMITTEE UPDATE

Gary Hartman informed the board that the committee did not meet this month.

6. PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

None

7. PARKS UPDATE

None

8. ENGINEERING PROJECTS UPDATE

David H. Melvin, Melvin Engineering, addressed the board.

- RIF application is due September 5. The recommendation is to submit the full paving of Holmes Valley Road. There is a SCOP application for a part of Holmes Valley Road. It is suggested to contact DOT to request the award to the full extent. A resolution will be presented to the board.

Consent Agenda - Resolution for Holmes Valley Road and approval to contact DOT about paving the full extent of Holmes Valley Road.

- Resilient Florida application is due September 1. King Kutter with box culverts was submitted for the last time, and the suggestion before the board is to resubmit for the same project. A resolution will be presented to the board.

This item will be listed on the consent agenda.

- FRDAP applications are due at the end of September. A series of public hearings is required. Approval to submit Blue Lake Park is requested.

This item will be listed on the consent agenda.

9. COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

None

10. CLERK

None

11. COUNTY ATTORNEY

11.1 Wausau Fire Department (This item was transferred to the special meeting following this meeting.)

11.2 Boathouse Ordinance

Attorney Milton requested board directions. Regulations will give FWC something to enforce.

A discussion was held about this matter, with some of the concerns listed below.

- No houseboats or structures in a spring/mouth of a spring/creek
- Specifying a distance from a spring or pristine waterway
- Abandoned structures.
- Providing notice.
- Scheduling a public hearing for the citizens to have input.
- Raw sewage.

Scheduling it for a public hearing, for discussion only at the next meeting in September, was the final thought on this item.

After this section, the engineering section was addressed, which was followed by item 12.

12. OTHER BUSINESS

- Roadside Mowing Options- Commissioner Marquez asked if issuing an RFP for mowing would be a possibility. Staff have had an issue with obtaining inmate labor.
- Commissioner Griffin said that employee pay is an issue linked to keeping employees.

- County Administrator Massey suggested having discussions about future funding for the next budget cycle once this budget cycle is complete.
- Commissioner Brock informed the board that he was contacted about using labor by individuals at the Caryville Work Center.

County Attorney Milton informed the board that he needs more information about the Caryville Work Center option.

13. ADJOURN