



MINUTES
WASHINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
**Thursday, August 21, 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 - Pastor Dallas Pettis, Grace Assembly, Chipley
- 1.3 Pledge

2. ADOPT THE AGENDA

Additions

- Agenda Item - 7.10 - State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP) Annual Report and Local Housing Incentive Certification
- Clerk - 15.4 - Correct Minutes from July - Tentative Date from 9/10 to 9/15
- County Administrator will speak after the agenda adoption, before the public hearing.

Motion to approve the agenda.

Moved by: David Corbin

Seconded by: Wesley Griffin

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

Carried 5-0

County Administrator Massey submitted his resignation from his position effective January 30, 2026.

Motion to accept Jeff Massey's resignation from the county administrator position effective January 30, 2026.

Moved by: Wesley Griffin

Seconded by: David Corbin

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

Carried 5-0

The advertisement for the position will be discussed later in the meeting.

3. PUBLIC HEARING

3.1 Vertical Bridge/Bush Tower Special Exception and Major Development Review Application-Dawn McDonald, Senior Planner

The consideration before the board today is the use of the tower in agriculture/silviculture, the engineering plans, and the plans that were submitted for the major development review application. The location is on Gilberts Mill Road for a parcel that is approximately 75 acres, with plans for the tower to be located in the northern portion. The wireless facility would have expansion for two additional carriers, which would encourage colocation. The tower is a self-supporting tower. Public noticing requirements were met, and a neighborhood meeting was held on July 17, where neighbors expressed opposition to the tower. Concerns were related to health, the visual of the tower, and natural resource protection.

County planning staff recommended approval. The planning commission was unable to make a recommendation due to a tie vote for denial.

Since the planning commission meeting, the applicant's authorized representative recommended that the decision be tabled due to the opposition. This would allow new legal counsel to review the case.

James McNickel, the applicant's representative, requested a 90-day continuance to be able to gather additional data to satisfy citizens' concerns.

Chairman Pettis said they would need to specify a date instead of 90 days. November's meeting date is November 20.

Motion for continuance of the case to November 20, at 9:00 a.m.

Moved by: Joey Brock

Seconded by: Ashlynn Marquez

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

Carried 5-0

- Brian Trammel expressed concern that another notice not being sent out could cause citizens to forget. Health issues and property values being affected are a concern.
- Gabriel Beckworth questioned why the meetings are being held if the citizens cannot do anything about them. He went on to say that he intends to start flying a small plane from his property, which is next to the proposed tower location, which would cause a hazard. For record purposes, he expressed opposition to the tower being built.
- Matt Coston informed the board that he has obtained a list of signatures in opposition to the tower. Cellphone service in the area is not an issue. The county has the opportunity to have an engineer monitor the tower.

- Jeanette Forehand informed the board that they were elected to protect them, and not a developer. She expressed opposition to the tower.
- Dewayne Carter questioned the purpose of the cell tower. He went on to encourage the board to listen to the people's request.
- Rexann Bush Duren encouraged the board to take a fair look at the request.
- Alan Forehand spoke on the different presentations for the placement of the tower. They would like to preserve the location; it is about heritage.

4. ADOPT PREVIOUS MINUTES

Motion to adopt the minutes for 7/10 and 7/17.

Moved by: Wesley Griffin

Seconded by: Joey Brock

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

Carried 5-0

4.1 Workshop for July 10, 2025

4.2 Board Meeting for July 17, 2025

5. NON-AGENDA AUDIENCE/PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Commissioner Pettis said there is not an agenda item at this meeting for the boathouse. It will be discussed at the September meeting.

- Brian Niquett questioned what the houseboat ordinance is about. Chairman Pettis commented that they are in the early stages of addressing a problem that has been identified on the creek with vessels that are not being maintained.

County Attorney Milton added that there is no agenda item or ordinance that has been proposed for adoption at this point. At the last meeting, the

next step mentioned was to schedule a public hearing for further discussion.

Commissioner Griffin added that this subject stemmed from two houseboats/vessels in Spring Run. There should not be any type of houseboat or floating vessel in any kind of fossil waterway/spring. The board is not against the houseboats. There has to be some accountability regarding the identification of the ownership of the boats.

- Phillip Kahle questioned who legally controls the waterway?
- Cody Corbin added that houseboats should be identifiable and should not be located in the springs.
- Benita Crittendon said the administrator contract should have been addressed in April. Contract renewals should be brought before the board by the attorney and the chairman. The board should issue an advertisement for the county administrator position, and once the individual has been hired, the current administrator should be relieved of his duties. The board should consider the possibility of a manager versus an administrator.
- Jackie Snowden spoke regarding being reprimanded as a previous employee for not bringing a WM contract before the board. She went on to suggest that a new county administrator should take over on October 1. The board is encouraged to hold a workshop regarding the houseboat issue.
- Kenneth Attard spoke regarding the MSBU needing responsible leadership. The board is encouraged to recognize the inequity in the MSBU and that it is time to end it.
- Travis Reckerd informed the board that he has the houseboat that is in Spring Run, which is registered and is covered by insurance. Permission was obtained to tie it up, and FWC didn't see an issue with it.

- Priscilla Brown questioned who is deciding how to appropriate the opioid funds, and how much the county has received.

6. **CONSENT AGENDA**

Motion to approve the consent agenda.

Moved by: Wesley Griffin

Seconded by: Joey Brock

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

Carried 5-0

- 6.1 Approval for Sheriff to Utilize \$32,100 from the Law Enforcement Trust Fund
- 6.2 Approval to Submit Application to Water Management for Water Infrastructure Grant
- 6.3 Approval of TDT Lodging Tax Referendum on Ballot
- 6.4 Approval of TDC 250 Grant Application Submittal
- 6.5 Approval of Washington County Public Library Long Range Plan
- 6.6 Approval of MOU Between Washington County Public Library and Panhandle Access Network
- 6.7 Approval of Resolution Defining Communication Protocol for Planning Activities
- 6.8 Approval of Resolution for Resilient Infrastructure Grant for Holmes Valley Road
- 6.9 Approval for Resilient Florida Application for Keen Kutter Road Box Culverts
- 6.10 Approval Contact DOT Regarding Funding Update for Full Length of Pavement on SCOP Project for Holmes Valley Road

7. AGENDA ITEMS

Brent Melvin presented quotes for the ag center gutter work from Kent Roofing, for the base repair, and adding downspout collectors and a canopy for \$22,222.26. A second quote was received from Johnson Roofing for \$23,656.00. Both quotes are within the procurement policy for the field quotes. The existing gutter system will be removed from the lower part of the ag center. The ones on the barrel roof were not included. The expense will be covered by the Hurricane Sally small project funds.

Motion to proceed with the low bidder, Kent Roofing, for \$22,222.26 for the ag center gutter repair.

Moved by: Wesley Griffin

Seconded by: Joey Brock

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

Carried 5-0

Recess 10:08 - 10:26

- 7.1 Resilient Florida Program: Florida Fiscal Year 2025-2026
Funding-Jon Sims, PE, and Hannah Hart, PMP with Dewberry
Engineers, Inc.

Hannah Hart informed the board that the grant application is to renew and update the existing vulnerability assessment that was completed in early 2024. The grant will be able to get funding for prioritizing projects based on the flood study results, and also to get money for the initial design for flood mitigation projects if they are identified as part of the updated flood study. The grant is no match.

Motion to approve the grant application for the Vulnerability Assessment.

Moved by: Wesley Griffin

Seconded by: David Corbin

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

Carried 5-0

7.2 Annual Audit Presentation-Tyler Dunaway, CPA with Carr, Riggs, & Ingram

Highlights from the financial statement audit for the year-end September 30, 2024.

- Carr, Riggs, & Ingram provided an unqualified opinion, meaning they believe that everything is materially correct in the financial statements.
- The audit was issued on June 12, with the deadline being June 30.
- The audit includes the Supervisor of Elections, Tax Collector, Property Appraiser, Sheriff, Clerk, and the Board.
- The fund balance should have 3 - 6 months of expenses at all times. Taking into account the funds due from Hurricane Michael, the county would be at 1 - 2 months. As of 9/30/2025, there will be a clearer picture, taking into account that some of the funds have been received.
- As of 9/30/2024, the depreciation on the capital assets exceeded the investment in those by about \$3.5 million. Investment in capital assets isn't a linear increase.
- Roll Forward of Long-Term Debt increased by around \$2.5 million. Around \$6.5 million was taken out due to the uncertainty regarding the FEMA funding. Around \$3.5 million was paid before year's end. More has been paid since then, per Clerk Bell.
- A single audit is required when \$750,000.00 or more is spent in federal or state funding. FEMA, ARPA, Fiscally Constrained Salary Assistance that the sheriff received, FEMA, ARPA, SCRAP, and some of the local transportation projects were looked at. There were no issues identified with unallowable costs, no question costs were reported, and no findings related to how money was spent. There was one finding related to suspension and debarment, which refers to a vendor being on a suspended and debarred list for the federal government. No money was expended to a vendor on that list. As part of the audit, controls

are required to be tested for that. There was a contract where verification was done for it; however, it was not documented. The contract was signed in 2021/2022. Controls have been put in place since.

- From the audit 2023 to 2024, two findings fell off. The Tax Collector got rid of the separation of duties material weakness, and Mrs. Bell and her staff put into place a process for suspension and debarment, which will remediate that finding once that contract drops off.

The audit was issued on time and with an unqualified opinion, which is a good testament to how the county is run.

Motion to approve the audit ending 9/30/2024.

Moved by: David Corbin

Seconded by: Ashlynn Marquez

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

Carried 5-0

Recess from 10:40 - 10:51 due to livestream technical difficulties.

7.3 Request for Approval of Washington County Health
Department Contracts and Fee Schedule-Traci Corbin,
Administrator/Health Officer

Motion to approve the annual health department contract
and fee schedules.

Moved by: Wesley Griffin

Seconded by: Joey Brock

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

Carried 5-0

7.4 Retirement Recognition of Fred McSwain-David Pettis, Jr., Chairman

Fred McSwain was recognized for his retirement on July 10, 2025, with 19 years of service with the county.

7.5 Alternative Funding Method for the FEMA Arbitration with Historical Background-Benita Crittendon, Citizen, addressed the board. The following are highlights.

- Jason Wheeler, CEO founder of Wheeler Emergency Management, has a work history from being the Chief of the Recovery Bureau of DEM to being a managing officer of Wheeler Emergency Management. The Recovery Bureau is responsible for overseeing federal disaster aid through the FEMA public assistance program. During the time that he brought many of his employees with him from Wheeler Emergency Management.
- DeSantis appointed Jarrod Moscovitz as DEM Director. Before that position, he was the general counsel for Ashbritt, which is a nationally recognized emergency management company that did a lot of work in Bay County, mainly with debris hauling. Bay County has received a \$26/27 million-dollar clawback for road paving. Mr. Moscovitz's next position was US Congressman for the 23rd Congressional District in Florida in November 2022.
- There were multiple ex-Wheeler employees employed at the Recovery of DEM during Washington County's recovery efforts and through the DE obligation. Jarrod Moskovitz was the DEM director during the Hurricane Michael recovery efforts for 2.5 years and during the COVID recovery efforts. The clawbacks that northwest Florida is currently experiencing are a direct result of awards mistakenly given under his leadership.
- The Florida Department of Emergency Management owns the fiasco of clawbacks just as equally as FEMA

does. DEM owning a part of the fiasco has never been part of the narrative. The narrative is that it is FEMA's fault. It has reverberated from local officials, state officials, national representatives, Jay Trumbell, Shane Abbott, Jimmy Patronis, Kevin Guthrey, Stephanie Hoop, Governor Ron DeSantis, and Congressman Dunn.

It is exhausting to see Washington County being the sacrificial lamb of mistakes made at a level beyond it.

1. It is requested that the commissioners evaluate why they are in their current position.
2. It is requested of the board to request by resolution a formal inquiry by Governor Ron DeSantis into the failures of DEM that resulted in clawbacks throughout northwest Florida, with assistance and oversight by Homeland Security Investigations in partnership with the public integrity of the FBI.
3. It is requested of the board to draft a resolution to formally ask Governor Ron DeSantis and other state officials for financial assistance allocated to the legal fees incurred in this arbitration.

7.6 EDC Update-Tony Daniels, EDC Director

\$25,000.00 is requested from the funds earmarked for economic development for a Hotel Economic Development Study. The funds will be earmarked and accountable for review.

Commissioner Griffin confirmed that the study was needed before any type of hotel chain, restaurant, or development was set up in Washington County.

Tony Daniels confirmed that it is correct. The study is taken to the bank when a business owner wants to borrow money. A contact has specifically asked for the study.

Chairman Pettis added that prior boards earmarked the money that is paid from the hospital for economic development.

Motion to transfer \$25,000.00 to EDC for an Economic Development Study.

Moved by: Wesley Griffin

Seconded by: David Corbin

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

Carried 5-0

7.7 Emergency Preparedness and Assistance Grant-Connie Welch, EM Coordinator

The state grant for \$105,806.00 is used to run the emergency management office. The agreement will be retroactive to July 1.

Motion to approve the EMPA grant.

Moved by: Wesley Griffin

Seconded by: Joey Brock

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

Carried 5-0

7.8 Memorandum of Understanding for Panhandle Search and Rescue-County Attorney Milton

John Williamson of Panhandle Search and Rescue informed the board that the sheriff is listed on the insurance policy for the search and rescue part. The county is listed in the policy

regarding things that are related to the fire department, storm cleanup, etc. They would answer to both.

County Attorney Milton said that everything would flow through the emergency management department; therefore, the Emergency Management Director would be the one who requests the services.

Motion to approve Chairman Pettis' signing of the Memorandum of Understanding, contingent upon the attorney's approval and verification.

Moved by: Ashlynn Marquez

Seconded by: Joey Brock

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

Carried 5-0

7.9 Brickyard Market Funds Donation Discussion-Ashlynn
Marquez, Commissioner

A discussion was held regarding funds that were donated by Rick Treadwill during the COVID-19 pandemic for utility assistance for residents. There is around \$13,000.00 remaining in the fund. Tri-County has requested to be able to use the funds for other services in the community outside of utility assistance.

County Attorney Milton advised that the letter was specific to the uses of the funds. A representative from the Treadwell family should be contacted to authorize the change in the usage of the funds.

Commissioner Marquez requested approval to give the Tri-County Community Council \$3,000.00 from the funds. The stipulations will not be changed at this time.

Clerk Bell informed the board that the funds are held by Tri-County Community Council.

Motion to allow Tri-County Community Council to utilize \$3,000.00 from funds previously donated by Rick Treadwell; however, before the fund utilization can occur, clarification needs to be received from the original donor.

Moved by: Joey Brock

Seconded by: David Corbin

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

Carried 5-0

- 7.10 State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP) Program Annual Report and Local Housing Initiatives Incentives Certification - Carol Underwood, Grants/Procurement Specialist

The reports and certifications are for fiscal years 2022 -2023 and 2023 - 2024.

Motion to approve the annual SHIP reports and certifications for 2022 - 2024.

Moved by: Wesley Griffin

Seconded by: Ashlynn Marquez

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

Carried 5-0

- 7.11 Advertisement for Administrator Position and Advertisement Discussion

- The consensus of the board was to advertise for 30 days.
- The county has a county administrator job position description, but does not have a county manager job position description. The latter would have to be created.
- County Manager Qualifications: Graduation from an accredited college or university with a bachelor's degree in public administration, business administration, or a closely related field, and/or five years of progressively responsible professional experience in business or government management or administration.
- The requirement of Washington County residency at the time of application or the time of job acceptance will be verified.
- The rate will change with the 2026 updated pay plan; however, the current range is \$77,75040 - \$114,44160. The median is around \$94,000.00.

Motion to advertise the county administrator position for 30 days.

Moved by: Ashlynn Marquez

Seconded by: Joey Brock

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

Carried 5-0

Benita Crittendon suggested that the board look at all the applications instead of using a hiring committee.

Donna Kent suggested looking at how future applicants ran previous counties.

8. FEMA COORDINATOR

Mason Wheeler updated the board.

- The Hurricane Sally Road project is complete. Once the park projects and ag center are complete, the close-out process can begin.
- Melissa Foggy and Melissa Shirah provided the update on funds being held when asked. The Department of Homeland Security secretary requested that payments be halted across the country. Anything over \$100,000.00 would go directly through her.

Motion to authorize Chairman Pettis to sign the final arbitration submission after each commissioner reviews the document and corresponds with Charles Schexnaildre.

Moved by: Wesley Griffin

Seconded by: Ashlynn Marquez

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

Carried 5-0

9. BUILDING OFFICIAL

10. MSBU ADVISORY COMMITTEE UPDATE

Scott Parrish, MSBU Coordinator, updated the board.

- The asphalt project is complete. Minor issues on the right-of-ways will be addressed by the contractor.

11. PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

Trey Barbee updated the board.

- On Monday, crews will be on Creek Road and Pine Bluff to pave the cut-out sections. The French drain has been installed on Pine Bluff.
- Four mowers and five/six crews with inmates will be mowing the upcoming weekend to catch up on the rights-of-way.

County Attorney Milton informed the board that he has met with the sheriff, Trey, and George regarding the questions of using labor from the private organization mentioned in a previous meeting. There is the

question of whether the work is that of volunteers or whether they are expecting to be paid. Continued research is being done.

- In response to Commissioner Griffin informing him that a citizen contacted him regarding the condition of the road. The cost to pave it was obtained. 665 feet would cost \$32,255.00.

County Administrator Massey added that the road looked good after public works worked on it. However, the county is not grading anywhere around that road. A grader is being driven to maintain 600 feet. There are several roads like that in the county.

The consensus of the board is to evaluate and get prices for paving small sections of roads that are far away from other dirt roads.

12. PARKS UPDATE

George Swauger updated the board.

- Blue Lake is being damaged, and it is also a location where certain activities are occurring.

County Administrator Massey advised that he would contact the sheriff regarding the concerns.

13. ENGINEERING PROJECTS UPDATE

14. COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

15. CLERK

15.1 VAB Citizen Homestead Appointment of Gary Hartman - Deputy Clerk Brantley

Gary Hartman accepted the appointment.

Motion to reappoint Gary Hartman to the VAB.

Moved by: Wesley Griffin

Seconded by: Joey Brock

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

Carried 5-0

- 15.2 911 Grant Revenue Receivable Transfer to Line Item in 911
Budget - Deputy Clerk Brantley
Deputy Clerk Brantley requested approval to increase 911's
budget by \$168,013.94 due to incoming grant funds.
Motion to transfer \$168,013.94 into the 911 budget.

Moved by: Joey Brock

Seconded by: Ashlynn Marquez

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

Carried 5-0

- 15.3 July Vouchers Totaling \$5,434,217.10
Motion to approve July vouchers.

Moved by: Ashlynn Marquez

Seconded by: Wesley Griffin

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

Carried 5-0

- 15.4 Motion Correction
Correction on the motion for the tentative budget hearing
date. The correct date is 9/15 instead of 9/10. The correct
dates were advertised.
Motion to correct the motion for the tentative budget hearing
date.

Moved by: Joey Brock

Seconded by: Ashlynn Marquez

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

Carried 5-0

16. COUNTY ATTORNEY

17. OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioner Marquez informed the board that she provided them with information related to a grant through the state from FWC to remove derelict vessels.

18. ADJOURN

Motion to adjourn.

Moved by: Wesley Griffin

Seconded by: Ashlynn Marquez

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

Carried 5-0

Summary of Minutes Prepared by Risha Brantley