



MINUTES  
WASHINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
Thursday, March 12, 2026, 9:00 AM, Commission Board Room  
1331 South Blvd., Chipley, FL 32428

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

**1. PROCLAMATION**

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

**2. ADOPT THE AGENDA**

Additions

- 6.7 - Request for approval to sign paperwork for Chipley Library Expansion Project - Renae Rountree, Library Director
- 6.8 - Request for permission for chairman to sign Chipley Library Expansion DB201 Grant Amendment - Renae Rountree, Library Director
- 6.5 - Lobbyist Discussion - Delete

Motion to approve the agenda.

Moved by: Joey Brock; seconded by: David Corbin.

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

**Carried 5-0**

**3. PUBLIC HEARING**

- 3.1 Hooper Small Scale Future Land Use Map Amendment- Dawn McDonald, Senior Planner  
The FLUM amendment application requests a change from general commercial to residential-low to allow a second dwelling unit on the site. The request involves 14.41 acres at 1323 Douglas Ferry Road. Public noticing requirements were met, and no opposition was received. Staff recommended approval, and the planning commission recommended approval 7 - 0 at their meeting on March 2.

Motion to approve the land use request at 1323 Douglas Ferry Road.

Moved by: Wesley Griffin; seconded by: Joey Brock

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

**Carried 5-0**

3.2 Summerwoods Subdivision Abandonment of Plat Request-Dawn McDonald, Senior Planner

Mr. Roop, Greenhead Road resident, requested the abandonment of an older four-lot subdivision that is in the agriculture-silviculture land use category. The request is to add a unit for a family member. Typically, a subdivision only allows one dwelling unit. Divisions of property or land use changes are not permitted in subdivisions. There was no opposition to the abandonment. The advertising requirements were met.

Motion to approve the recommendation of abandonment.

Moved by: David Corbin; seconded by: Wesley Griffin

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

**Carried 5-0**

3.3 Fire Ordinance-County Attorney Fuqua

The ordinance adds a section of the fire code as requested by the fire coordinator and building official.

Troy Cunningham, a citizen, questioned whether individuals will now be required to become licensed businesses in Florida. Is that what is being required of individuals with one rental?

Chairwoman Marquez responded if you are renting out a space commercially.

Walter Brown, a citizen, requested clarification.

County Attorney Fuqua clarified that it is all short-term rentals.

Motion to approve the fire ordinance.

Moved by: Ashlynn Marquez; seconded by: David Corbin

**Aye:** David Corbin, David Pettis Jr., Ashlynn Marquez, and Joey Brock

**Nay:** Wesley Griffin

**Carried 4-1**

3.4 Flood Ordinances-County Attorney

County Attorney Fuqua requested that the advertisement be continued until next month, pending input from the state.

Simon Sheffield addressed the board regarding flooding near his home. There is a backup located around Jessie Way.

This item will be stayed until the next meeting on April 16 at 9:00 a.m.

Moved by: Wesley Griffin; seconded by: Joey Brock

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

**Carried 5-0**

3.5 Burn Ban Ordinance - Attorney Fuqua

The ordinance gives authority to those who can start and stop a burn ban to prevent emergency meetings. Language is included that was requested by the Florida Forestry to address a certified burner being able to request approval from them during a burn ban.

He and the chairman may need to meet with the Florida Forestry Service regarding a misunderstanding about language pertaining to their authority.

Chairman Pettis addressed what Attorney Fuqua was referring to. Under the exemption, it says that the declaration issued prohibiting open burning pursuant to this ordinance shall not apply to the following:

Section A - Any burning done pursuant to a permit issued by the Florida Forestry Service or the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

Motion to stay the burn ban ordinance until April 16 at 9:00 a.m.

Moved by: Wesley Griffin

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

**Carried 5-0**

**4. ADOPT PREVIOUS MINUTES**

Motion to approve the minutes listed as 4.1 - 4.3.

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 February 12, 2026

4.2 Special Meeting for February 12, 2026

4.3 Board Meeting for February 19, 2026

**5. NON-AGENDA AUDIENCE/PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

- Keith Pegues, Wildstar Networks, informed the board that they need hosting tower sites to complete the grant for BB230. The tower site locations have been designated by Broadband and the FCC.

County Administrator Fleener added that maps and a press release will be issued. There are benefits to being a host site.

- Marie Cunningham, Country Oaks Fire Department, informed the board that they are hosting a Glow in the Dark Easter event from 6:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Country Oaks Fire Department was able to obtain pagers from a department in Ohio that was changing to a new system.

- Benita Crittendon, a citizen, told the board that from this point forward, the way things are handled regarding the FEMA project is their ownership and responsibility. She also spoke about the way things were done in the past, related to the FEMA Road project.
- Jeanette Forehand, a citizen, addressed the board regarding flooding that comes from Oak Hill on the east side, which extensively affects Jewell Road. In 2013, the county manager approached them with a solution to the problem, which led them to give the county an easement to give permission to dig a 20-foot drainage ditch from Gilberts Mill Road to Jewell Road. The solution worked for a while; however, the ditch has not been maintained since it was dug. After contacting public works on different occasions and the issue not being fixed, she hired a private contractor to clean out the trees last year to prevent flooding issues. A \$900.00 reimbursement is requested from the county for the contractor's work, as well as for the county to maintain the ditch.
- Daniel Lee, Acy Road, a citizen, spoke on the increase of four residents to twenty-six since 2004. The road is used by others as well. Their family has businesses that require additional trucks to travel the road. The request before the board is to pave their road from Highway 79 to the end of county maintenance. This request was supported by Mr. Lee's son-in-law, who was also present at the podium.

Motion to reimburse Jeanette Forehand \$900.00 for cleaning out a county ditch/easement because it is not her responsibility to do so.

County Attorney Fuqua advised the board that if this is done, they will set a precedent.

County Administrator Fleener told the board that they are working on a GIS function to identify county easements.

Troy Cunningham addressed the board regarding a road that he turned over to the county, which was not being maintained to the standards that he had previously maintained it. Supervisors should review the roads and make a determination on what needs to be done.

Benita Crittendon added that this brings attention to the failures of what was done before.

Moved by: Wesley Griffin; seconded by: Joey Brock

**Aye:** Wesley Griffin, Ashlynn Marquez, and Joey Brock

**Nay:** David Corbin and David Pettis Jr.

**Carried 3-2**

## **6. AGENDA ITEMS**

- 6.1 Resolution to Approve Applications to the Florida Department of Transportation for various transportation funding programs during the 2026 funding cycle-Carol Underwood, Grants Coordinator  
SCOP - Singer Road, and Crystal Lake  
SCRAP - Creek Road, Clayton Road Phase II, and III  
B-SCOP - Pioneer Road Bridge, and St. Mary's Road Bridge  
CIG-P - Hutchinson Road

Motion to approve the resolution to apply for the above-listed road projects.

Moved by: Joey Brock; seconded by: David Corbin

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

**Carried 5-0**

- 6.2 Request to Advertise RFQ for Holmes Valley Road Grant D0331-Carol Underwood, Grants/Procurement Specialist  
This has been referred to as the Holmes Valley Gateway Project. The firms selected under this solicitation shall not perform both design services and construction engineering services on the same project.

Motion to approve to issue the RFQ for Holmes Valley Road Grant.

Moved by: Joey Brock; seconded by: David Corbin

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

**Carried 5-0**

- 6.3 VFA Grant Approval-Justin Barron, Fire Services  
The grant is known as the Volunteer Assistance Grant, which will go toward the funding of an SCBA fill station for the county rescue truck, which will be used county-wide. SCBA bottles will be able to be filled on fire scenes. The grant is 50/50, with Washington County's share being \$12,879.01.

An Easter event will be held on March 28 at 10:00 a.m. at the Possum Palace in Wausau.

Motion to approve accepting the VFA Grant.

Moved by: David Corbin; seconded by: Wesley Griffin

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

**Carried 5-0**

Motion to authorize the fire account to be reimbursed once the funds are available.

Moved by: Ashlynn Marquez; seconded by: David Corbin

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

**Carried 5-0**

6.4 Updates to Community Center Facility Rental Policy-Wendy White, Human Resources Director

- Remove Sunny Hills from the listing because it is managed through Ms. Rountree's direction under the Sunny Hills Library.
- Hours of operation typo included the county hours instead of the hours the rental agreement covered.
- Correct formatting so the notary is on the same page as the signature line as the lessee.

Motion to approve of the updates to the rental facility agreement.

Moved by: Wesley Griffin; seconded by: Joey Brock

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

**Carried 5-0**

6.5 Lobbyist Discussion-Ashlynn Marquez, Vice-Chair (Removed)

6.6 Employee Appreciation Day 2026-David Pettis, Jr., Chairman

Approval is requested to host an Employee Appreciation Day on April 23 at Blue Lake from 12:00 - 2:00 p.m., with administrative leave given for the remainder of the afternoon. The meal will be provided by the county, and Grace Assembly will provide the service.

Motion to approve the Employee Appreciation Day on April 23, with an approval of administrative leave after 2:00 p.m.

Moved by: Wesley Griffin; seconded by: Joey Brock

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

**Carried 5-0**

6.7 Chipley Library Expansion Project - Renae Rountree, Library Director

Authorization is requested to sign off on payment paperwork. Being able to sign off on the payment will move the invoices faster, as Florida Commerce has requested, due to

the time that the Department of Financial Services is taking to pay. They would like everything to be invoiced by October 1.

Motion to give the chairman/his designee authority to approve the invoices for the library expansion project instead of bringing each one before the board.

Moved by: Wesley Griffin; seconded by: Joey Brock

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

**Carried 5-0**

6.8 .Request for permission for the chairman to sign Chipley Library Expansion DB201 Amendment - Renae Rountree, Library Director

The amendment is supposed to be available in the next couple of weeks. The amendment is so that the deliverables can be changed, allowing them to invoice faster and deal with the grant administration.

Motion to authorize the chairman to sign the Chipley Library Expansion DB201 amendment.

Benita Crittendon suggested that after it is signed off by the chairman, it should be reviewed by the commissioners at the next meeting.

The motion was amended to include the above suggestion from Benita Crittendon.

Renae Rountree added that she would send individual emails to the commissioners with the information.

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. FEMA COORDINATOR**

7.1 Arbitration Discussion

Mason Garrett, Wheeler Emergency Management, addressed the board. He read a portion of how the decision was made, which is as follows: Paving an unpaved road can qualify as hazard mitigation under FEMA's public assistance program if it is cost-effective. The panel accepted the engineer's testimony showing that paving helps prevent washouts and erosion during flooding. FEMA must allow the county to submit a benefit-cost analysis for each project. The original Section 428 funding, capped at \$160 M, remains available. Projects can be removed from the Section 428 agreement if they are not cost-effective and instead funded through the standard public assistance based on actual cost.

FEMA is currently on a partial shutdown; therefore, there has not been any discussion with them. A GIS is currently being worked on. Winning the CBCA's decision is the final say that can overrule FEMA.

County Administrator Fleener added that the money can only be used on the red line roads/the ones that were identified from the other. No new roads can be added.

**8. BUILDING OFFICIAL**

**9. MSBU ADVISORY COMMITTEE UPDATE**

Gary Hartman told the board that since they aren't meeting in May, they reorganized at the last meeting. Tray Donovan was elected the chairman and Betty Lee Weekley as the vice. The position updates will take effect at the June meeting.

The 30-yard dumpster project in collaboration with the Sunny Hills Civic Association was a success.

9.1 Mowing Contract Extension

Resolution for March 26-1 - The MSBU Advisory Board voted unanimously to add 40 hours weekly to the Sweet Bay Landscape Agreement. There is a cap of \$34,000.00 on the addendum.

Scott Parrish said the locations will vary based on areas that he identifies.

Motion to approve the modification to the Sunny Hills mowing contract as presented.

Benita Crittendon suggested that anytime the county has the opportunity to re-bid something, it should be done.

Moved by: David Corbin; seconded by: Ashlynn Marquez

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

**Carried 5-0**

**10. PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR**

**11. PARKS UPDATE**

**12. ENGINEERING PROJECTS UPDATE**

12.1 Strickland Landing Boat Ramp Resolution-W. Hunter Bailey, North Florida Professional Services, Grants Specialist

Resolution for approval for them and staff to submit an FBIP application for Strickland Landing on behalf of the county. \$60,500.00 for design, engineering, and permitting will be sought for the first cycle.

Motion to approve the resolution for the submittal of Strickland Landing on the FBIP application.

Moved by: Joey Brock; seconded by: Ashlynn Marquez

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

**Carried 5-0**

12.2 Dumajack Closeout-Travis Howell, Alday-Howell Engineering, Inc, PE

The project was completed at the end of last month. There is an emergency overflow spillway that is associated with the ditch bottom inlet at the bottom of the hill, which needs to be cleaned of debris in the future.

Approval for Dumajack closeout documents to be signed.

Moved by: Joey Brock; seconded by: David Corbin

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

**Carried 5-0**

### **13. COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

13.1 EDC Discussion

County Administrator Fleener informed the board that the discussion is a continuation from last month. Things didn't go as the board directed; therefore, the recommendation is to immediately cancel the MOU and bring that position under the county. The Florida Association of Counties attorney has cleared the county to move forward without having issues from not advertising or other things.

Commissioner Marquez addressed the board. Per the MOU, if the EDU terminated, the employee reverted to the county.

County Attorney Fuqua clarified that he was a county employee. The lease of the employee to them is over.

County Administrator Fleener added that the org chart will have to be updated. They would take the position, take control of what is going on, and have a series of meetings and input from the public to set up the EDC council in another way.

Commissioner Marquez provided a recap. There was an MOU between the county and the EDC. The MOU was for the county employee to be leased to them. The MOU still stands, but they have terminated the employee without cause. He remains a county

employee, and the county has no reason to terminate him. No matter if the EDC is brought under the county, a spot would have to be found for this employee.

County Administrator Fleener corrected that the MOU is not with the EDC but with the Executive Committee of the Chamber of Commerce.

Motion to terminate the MOU with the Executive Committee of the Chamber.

Moved by: David Corbin; seconded by: Wesley Griffin

Walter Brown, a citizen, commented on the discussion on whether he is a county employee, which is confusing. Additional research should be done before a decision is made.

Tracey Andrews, EDC Chairman, spoke on the process and went on to say that she supports whatever decision the board makes today. Someone must move forward with collaboration and partnership. It eventually needs to end to move forward.

Benita Crittendon suggested that it seems there is an employee maneuvering to benefit himself and members of the board/administration who are protecting that employee. Realtors need to be rotated on boards. Since the county was not involved in the hiring of the employee, it does not seem like the individual is a county employee.

County Attorney Fuqua read a section of the MOU relating to the employee. The county shall remain the formal employer of the leased employee. This will ensure compliance with employment laws, regulations, and policies. County employment will provide all applicable benefits. The county shall approve the qualified employee recommended through the EDC to be leased. The county will assess the skills and expertise of the employees to best match the needs of EDC. In the event of termination or expiration of the MOU, the county shall coordinate the transition of the leased employee back to EDC operations.

Once the MOU is no longer in place, the employee comes back to the county for EDC.

Cindy Birge said the executive board sent a letter ending the MOU as of March 26, when they terminated employment.

Commissioner Griffin recommended putting the employee on a six-month production evaluation. If there is no production, the county should terminate the employee.

Chairman Pettis added that the recommendation from the employment law attorney is to add the FTE and job description at this stage. It should have technically been done when the employee became a county employee.

Commissioner Corbin added that NDA's will be in place. The WCBOCC will not be privy of anything that they should not know.

Moved by: David Corbin; seconded: Wesley Griffin

Motion is amended to accept the termination of the MOU from the Executive Board of the Chamber.

Tracy Andrews addressed the board. To be fair to the next person who will take that position. There are projects in place that are hopeful to come to fruition in six months. In fairness to the person who is coming, they have to begin from nothing. EDC is not a quick process. A strong stipulation may not be helpful.

The amended motion carried.

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

**Carried 5-0**

Moved by: David Corbin; seconded: Ashlynn Marquez

Motion to approve the FTE for the economic developer position with the job description and update to the organizational chart.

Benita Crittendon, citizen, added that she would like to see a fresh start for the board, administrator, and attorney. A pattern of behavior that was previously seen was that the attorney is contacted for a recommendation but does not receive all the information. When FACT was asked whether a person remains in the position as a county employee, would they inherit that position? Was it a recommendation, or yes, they can be? Was FACT asked if the employee can be terminated/does the county have to inherit the employee? Is the board obligated to keep the employee?

County Administrator Fleener responded. The employee agreement was sent to the attorney. The attorney said he is a county employee.

Motion carried regarding the FTE and job description.

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

**Carried 5-0**

Clerk Bell confirmed that the remaining funds will no longer be sent each quarter.

Chairman Pettis confirmed that it is correct.

County Administrator Fleener told the board they need to make sure the newly created economic director is the contact person for all the state and regional programs; all those leads come to this position. It is the BOCC's call who gets those leads. For him to be successful, he needs to have those moving forward.

Motion for the county administrator to contact economic development agencies to provide Washington County as the point of contact for economic development purposes and the economic director's position is the point of contact.

Moved by: David Corbin; seconded by: Wesley Griffin

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

**Carried 5-0**

Motion that the county no longer funds the remaining balance of the \$75,000.00 from the general fund.

Moved by: Ashlynn Marquez; seconded by: David Corbin

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

**Carried 5-0**

### 13.2 Fire Discussion

The fire coordinator is already doing the duties of a fire chief. The PD would be updated and pay increase of around \$6,600.00 with benefits. Leave payouts that were previously done were around \$4,000.00/\$5,000.00. This update would change the status, which would mean no more payouts.

Motion to approve the job change from fire coordinator to fire chief.

Moved by: Ashlynn Marquez; seconded by: David Corbin

Troy Cunningham, a citizen, said that it states in the grant that there has to be a fire coordinator unless the entire county is under one fire department and one chief. If there is one extra department other than the county one, then a fire coordinator is required so that those entities work well together.

Justin Barron, fire coordinator, informed the board that he is not familiar with that. The grant says there must be someone who directly handles the grant.

Aaron Dudley, HR, addressed the board. The grant classifies that position as a recruitment and retention officer. Under the recruitment and retention office salary the county receives \$48,330.00 annually. The salary will fund the position of Washington County Fire Department's Recruitment and Retention Officer. The county does not have that position; however, the function is being carried out. \$26,670.00 annually is awarded fringe benefits for the Washington County Fire Department Recruitment and Retention Officer, which includes the required high-risk insurance coverage. The fire chief or coordinator is not listed. The function must be able to move the grant forward.

County Administrator Fleener addressed the board. Chief comes from a job description with the state.

Aaron Dudley, HR, addressed the board. The county had to apply to the state for the fire services coordinator position to be approved. The fire chief is already in there and is an approved job title.

The motion regarding the job title change carried.

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

**Carried 5-0**

13.1 - Motion to appoint the Economic Director for Washington County as the official designated economic development entity.

Moved by: Wesley Griffin; seconded: David Corbin

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

**Carried 5-0**

13.3 Request to Advertise an RFQ for Generator Contract

The RFQ is for generator maintenance.

Motion to advertise an RFQ for generator maintenance.

Moved by: Wesley Griffin; seconded by: Joey Brock

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

**Carried 5-0**

**14. CLERK**

14.1 Vouchers Totaling \$3,561,896.48

Clerk Bell added that the above voucher total is for February.

**15. COUNTY ATTORNEY**

**16. OTHER BUSINESS**

Chairman Pettis informed the board that Candace Blackmon has received her survey and is continuing to do what she agreed to.

Billy Lee Landing Discussion – Commissioner Marquez addressed the board about a conversation that she had with Lyle Seigler. The road to the boat ramp has always been maintained by the NW Florida Water Management District, but it cuts through a citizen's property, and he requested that they close it due to liability of people riding on the property. They were maintaining the road but didn't have an easement. The landing can be accessed by boat but not by land. It is a private property issue. The county maintained a certain part of the road; however, what NW Florida Water was maintaining went through his property.

Commissioner Brock added that the county has maintained the boat landing, and that is why the citizen had not closed it. It was a verbal agreement between the citizen and ex-Commissioner Charles Brock. If the county has maintained it for a certain number of years, there is a stipulation that it comes to the county. That is why it was never closed.

Commissioner Brock has requested that County Administrator Fleener check this.

**17. ADJOURN**

Summary of Minutes Prepared by Risha Brantley