



MINUTES
WASHINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Thursday, April 16, 2026, 9:00 AM, Commission Board Room
1331 South Blvd., Chipley, FL 32428

DISTRICT 1
Ashlynn Marquez,
Vice-Chairwoman

DISTRICT 2
David
Pettis Jr.,
Vice-Chairman

DISTRICT 3
Joey Brock

DISTRICT 4
Wesley
Griffin

DISTRICT 5
David Corbin

1. PROCLAMATION

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

2. ADOPT THE AGENDA

Amendments

- 3.1 - Flood Ordinance Public Hearing – Due to advertising requirements, this item will be moved to 5/14/2026.
- 7.1 - Recognition of Mr. Massey – This item will be moved between the adoption of the agenda and public hearings.
- Additions
 - 7.10 - Recycling Grant
 - 7.11 - Legendary Lawn Contract Extension
 - 7.12 - CDBG Grant - Brent Melvin
 - 7.13 - Lease Agreement for American Civil Incorporated - Tony Daniels
 - 7.14 - Budget Amendment - Clerk Bell

Motion to adopt the 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

3. PUBLIC HEARING

- 3.1 .Flood Ordinance-County Attorney, Fuqua & Milton, PA
This item was moved to the meeting on 5/14/2026.
- 3.2 .Burn Ban Ordinance-County Attorney, Fuqua & Milton, PA
Clay Milton read the ordinance by title.

Chairman Pettis questioned whether the verbiage in section 3, which the Florida Forestry requested under exemptions remain in the ordinance. It was confirmed with them that the provision doesn't necessarily mean they will issue permits under a burn ban.

County Attorney Milton advised to leave the verbiage.

Motion to approve the Burn Ban Ordinance.

Moved by: Wesley Griffin; seconded by: Joey Brock.

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

Carried 5-0

- 3.3 .Brannen Small Scale Future Land Use Map Amendment-Dawn McDonald, Senior Planner
The proposal is to change the future land use map category from general-commercial to agriculture-silviculture. A portion of the property will remain in general-commercial, which will be a future construction business. The portion that will be voted on today is 8.95 acres. Staff recommended approval, and the planning commission recommended approval 4 - 0 at their meeting on April 6. The public noticing requirements were met.

Motion to approve the Brannen Small Scale FLUM amendment.

Moved by: Ashlynn Marquez; seconded 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 for 3/12/2026.

Moved by: Ashlynn Marquez; seconded by: Joey Brock.

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

Carried 5-0

- 4.1 .Regular Board Meeting for March 12, 2026

5. NON-AGENDA AUDIENCE/PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- Dixie Newbry, resident of Fox Pond Road, addressed the board regarding the unfavorable road grading job that is being done on Fox Pond Road, which is located off Greenhead Road. She also asked if Greenhead Road would be paved in the future.
- Jack Kerrigan, Kerrigan Marketing Associates, addressed the board regarding their website proposal for Washington County BOCC. He went over some of their resume.
- Troy Cunningham, Country Oaks Fire Department, updated the board on their recent Easter Event, blood drive, and grants they are applying for.
- Tony Brannen thanked the board for the approval of the Brannen land use change.

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 of E911 Transfer Totaling \$29,550
- 6.2 Approval of Procurement Updates for F-ROC Compliance
- 6.3 Approval to Move Forward with 5% Rate Resolution Increase for MSBU Assessment
- 6.4 Approval to Buy Property Certificates Valued at \$5,000 and Greater per Florida Statute 197.502 (3)

7. AGENDA ITEMS

- 7.1 Recognition of the Late Allen Jeff Massey, County Administrator, David Pettis, Jr., Chairman
Chairman Pettis read the memoir acknowledging Allen J. Massey's 9 years of service with Washington County, which was accepted by Chad Massey. (This item was heard following the approval of the agenda.)
- 7.2 U. S. Water-Troy Rendell, Vice President
 - Kenneth Attard, a citizen, addressed the board. He spoke on the failing water system in Sunny Hills that poses safety and health issues to citizens. Although the system is run by a private company, the board is not powerless, while hundreds of new homes continue to connect to a failing system. Why hasn't there been a pause on new connections in Sunny Hills until the utility issues are addressed?
 - Rick Yenter, 3651 Country Club Boulevard, spoke on the need for a more reliable water system. He went on to say that if it were not for deed restrictions, he would have a private well.
 - Les Lumpkin suggested that the water issue that has been ongoing for years needs to be fixed. Building should be suspended.

Troy Rendell, U.S. Water Services Corporation Vice-President, addressed the board regarding the water system in Sunny Hills. Highlights are listed below:

-Sunny Hills Utility is not owned by U.S. Water. It is part of North Water Community Water Services, which has separate shareholders. The Public Service Commission in Tallahassee has exclusive jurisdiction according to F.S. Chapter 367. Neither the county nor the court system has jurisdiction.

-Main breaks have been occurring with the system that was installed in the 1970's. When the pressure drops, the PVC lines contract and the sediment within the lines gets stirred up, which causes the system to have to be repaired and then flushed, in turn causing boil water notices. The release of boil water notices is a process set by the Florida DEP. A meeting was recently held with county representatives, where better communication was discussed and revamping the boil water notices.

-If they retain ownership, they could replace the mains, which would be millions of dollars, which could result in increased water rates. They are only allowed to recover 10 - 15% of their investment per the Public Service Commission. The government buying it is an option.

-The water leaves the plant clear and meets all DEP standards for testing. They do directional flushing. After flushing, sediments can affect people who were not on a boil water notice. Flushing records are going to be looked into.

Chairman Pettis said the board wants to work on the citizens' behalf in any way they can to get the situation rectified.

Kenneth Attard, a citizen, asked about credits for the people affected by the water system. It may be a good idea for the county to buy the company out.

Patsy Broom said that U.S. Water seems to be concerned with the loss of revenue. They will lose money if wells are put in. What needs to be done to change the option to be able to install a private well when the water service is not meeting requirements? If there is a ruling that says they cannot have a private well if U.S. Water has a private hookup, it is requested that the board do something about it.

Attorney Milton added that when a city has a municipal water system, DEP requires that an ordinance be passed that prohibits private wells if public water is available. This is not to say that one exists. More research would have to be done on the county side.

The franchise agreement that was mentioned at the workshop is a traditional franchise agreement. It gives the utility provider permission to operate a utility within the county. There is a buyout provision in the agreement that gives the county the option under certain parameters. The county does not have a utility department or the manpower. The private utility owner is unable to get grants; however, the county would be able to get grants, but it would not be a short process. 75 miles of lines is a big undertaking.

County Administrator Fleener requested that U.S. Water and the private company provide the water quality reports and DEP standards.

Jim Futch, a citizen, expressed concerns about the safety of their water supply, stating they haven't used it for over a year due to uncertainty. Upon returning from vacation, they discovered that their laundry turned orange, prompting them to connect their well to the washing machine. Mr. Futch inquired if U.S. Water could permit residents to make a minimum monthly payment for well usage, as this would be more economical than their current water expenses.

The board will proceed with seeking a resolution.

7.3 Memorandum of Agreement with Florida Department of Corrections-Justin Barron, Fire Chief

Per the State, the Florida Department of Corrections is required to have an active MOA with the fire department. The outline of the agreement is that if there is a fire at the prison, the fire department will respond.

Motion to approve the authorization of Justin Barron to sign the agreement with the Florida Department of Corrections.

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 Road Grader Lease Discussion-Trey Barbee, Public Works Director

Board approval is requested for a one-year lease extension for three graders, totaling \$6,123.60 monthly.

County Administrator Fleener added that the intent is to buy the machine out or upgrade it in the future.

Trey Barbee confirmed that the money that has been paid will go toward a buyout.

Motion to approve the lease extension for the graders as presented.

Moved by: Joey Brock; seconded by Wesley Griffin.

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

Carried 5-0

7.5 Hard Labor Creek Bridge Redesign Task Order-Carol Underwood, Grants/Procurement Specialist

The task order for \$20,250.00 is for the design and surveying of the project. The county has already been awarded \$170,484.00.

Motion to approve the task order for Hard Labor Creek Bridge.

Moved by: Ashlynn Marquez; seconded by: David Corbin

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

Carried 5-0

7.6 Employee Handbook Updates-Wendy White, Human Resources Director

The updates will help raise the score for the Florida Recovery Obligation Calculation abatement. The higher score would make funding more seamless. The law attorney provided suggestions as well.

The summary of updates is listed below.

- Update the date on the cover page.
- Table of Contents
- Section 5.12 - Paycheck Errors and Prohibitions of Improper Deductions
- Section 5.15 - FROC Recommendations for Employee Activation Compensation Policy
- Section 2.02 - Equal Employment Opportunity
- Section 12 - Passwords and Utilization of Handheld Devices when an Employee separates from the county.
- Section 14.08 - Mobile Communication Device Usage Policy
- Section 14.08 - Subsection c. Text Messaging and Public Record Retention
- Subsection d. Under the same section - Handheld devices at work. Motion to accept the updates to the Employee Handbook to comply with FROC recommendations and the Employee Law updates.

Moved by: David Corbin; seconded by: Ashlynn Marquez

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

Recess from 10:08 a.m. to 10:23 a.m.

- 7.7 Chipley Library Expansion Request-Brent Melvin, DHM Melvin Engineering
Florida Commerce executed an advanced payment agreement with Washington County; however, they have been behind on those payments this year. The January reimbursement has recently been received. The third request for funds is currently being submitted, which includes the first and second payouts for the contractor, which totals \$72,401.20. Due to the contractor not being paid for the first two payouts, approval is requested to go ahead and pay that portion of the request for funds. The grant manager has assured reimbursement within 30-days of the third request. The contractor has the option to request interest charges for the delay in payment.

Clerk Bell advised the board that the payment is feasible.

Motion to pay the contractor for the first and second payout for the library project.

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

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

Carried 5-0

- 7.8 Website Selection-Andrew Fleener, County Administrator
The low bid is \$16,400.00, two in the middle at \$35,300.00, 37,995.00 and the high bid at \$75,800.00.

Motion to approve Kerrigan for the website selection.

Moved by: Wesley Griffin; seconded by: Ashlynn Marquez.

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

Carried 5-0

- 7.9 Sale of County-Owned Property-Andrew Fleener, County Administrator
Felicia M. O'Neal-Thigpen offered \$5,000.00 for parcel 00-1154-0000, located on 5th Avenue. The property size is .413 acres and is assessed at \$4,750.00. An admin fee of \$1,000.00 will be added to the offer. Letters were sent to the adjacent property owners, and no counteroffers were submitted.

Motion to approve the sale of parcel 00-1154-0000 for \$6,000.00, which includes an admin fee for \$1,000.00.

Moved by: David Corbin; seconded by: Ashlynn Marquez

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

Carried 5-0

- 7.10 . Recycling Grant-David Pettis, Jr., Chairman
This grant is used for the Recycling Program.

Motion to authorize the authority to sign for the Recycling Grant.

Moved by: Joey Brock; seconded by: Ashlynn Marquez

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

Carried 5-0

- 7.11 . Legendary Lawn Contract Extension-David Pettis, Jr., Chairman
Legendary Lawn is the contractor for the county annex and some other county properties. This is the second and final extension.

Motion to approve the extension of the Legendary Lawn contract.

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

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

Carried 5-0

- 7.12 . CDBG Grant-Brent Melvin, Melvin Engineering
For informational purposes, the CDBG grant cycle is open. The CDBG grant is targeted toward low- and moderate-income areas. It can be used for a wide range of projects such as roadways, stormwater utilities, community park improvements, and economic development.

- 7.13 . Lease Agreement for American Civil Contractors, Inc.-Tony Daniels, Economic Development Director

A lease agreement for American Civil and Civil Contractors, Inc. was presented. A two-part lease with two different sites with legal descriptions is presented for approval. By November 15, one of the locations will be provided to them. This was needed for the contractor to proceed with additional planning and finances. The occupancy date is November 15, and the contractor intends to be operational within 30-days of that. There is language in the contract that allows up to 6 months to be operational. This lease will activate the grants with the job requirement that is in there. It is set up for right-of-way, not to be required from one project to another.

Motion to approve the lease agreement for American Civil Contractors, Inc.

Moved by: Joey Brock; seconded by: Wesley Griffin.

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

Carried 5-0

7.14 Budget Amendment-Lora Bell, Clerk of Court

Last year, approximately 50 + tax deeds were filed, and this year it is close to 400. It has caused a revenue and expenditure increase. The budget would increase from \$580,000.00 to \$667,000.00 for the remainder of the fiscal year. The expense increase is \$87,178.54, and a projected revenue increase of \$93,000.00.

Motion to approve the budget amendment for the Clerk of Court as presented.

Moved by: David Corbin; seconded by: Ashlynn Marquez

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

Carried 5-0

8. OTHER BUSINESS

- Arbitration - Discussion has continued with the Florida Division of Emergency Management. There have been no discussions with FEMA due to their being on furlough. - Chairman Pettis
- Boathouse updated request. - Commissioner Griffin
Attorney Milton - Additional direction is needed from the board on what is being prohibited/restricted.

Chairman Pettis clarified that the pleasure of the board is to look for a future date for an evening meeting, possibly in the Vernon community.

Motion to adjourn.

Moved by: David Corbin; seconded by: Wesley Griffin

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

Carried 5-0

9. ADJOURN

Summary of Minutes Prepared by Risha Brantley