



MINUTES
WASHINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
BOARD WORKSHOP
Thursday, August 13, 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	David Pettis Jr.	Joey Brock	Wesley Griffin	David Corbin
Vice-Chairwoman	Chairman			

1. PROCLAMATION

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

Agenda Addition - Washington County Sheriff Year-End Review - Kevin Crews, Washington County Sheriff

2. AGENDA ITEMS

- 2.1 Audit Presentation-Tyler Dunaway, CPA for Carr, Riggs, & Ingram
Financial Statement Audit for the Year-End 9/30/2025

- Page 2 - Independent Auditors' Report - The opinion the auditors give is an unqualified opinion, which means that they believe everything is materially correct.
- The audit process takes over 1,000 hours.
- The audit begins with the elected officials and is followed by the board.
- Page 16 - Balance Sheet for Governmental Funds - The most discretion is in the general fund. In a governmental entity, outside agencies look at the unassigned fund balance, which is composed of assets minus liabilities. They want to see between 3 - 6 months of expenses set aside in the fund balance. The number reflects 6 months; however, around 4 of those months are related to Hurricane Michael funds that are tied up.
- Page 46- Capital Asset Roll Forward - There was around \$1.3M more in depreciation than additions. Which means less was invested than the assets depreciated.
- Page 48 - Debt Roll Forward - Around \$6.6M was paid down at year-end 9/30/2025.
- Page 97 - Compliance Statement - If more than \$1M is spent on federal awards and projects, a federal single audit is required. On the federal and state side, which was spent; therefore, a single audit was required for both. The federal government

provides a list of compliance requirements that they are required to go through and test to issue an opinion. On the auditor's side, this triggers an unaffiliated office to look at the audit. The FEMA projects, two road-building projects, the fire service grant, and the SHIP program were all reviewed, and no findings were identified. It also triggers the corporate team to review the audit.

- There was one finding on the financial statement side related to entries that had to be made at the Board level to bring them into compliance with GAAP.

A finding from 2024 related to suspension and debarment dropped off. The Tax Collector got rid of the separation of duties finding. Two other offices continue to work on that same finding.

2.2 Agreement with Washington County and Allstate Construction, Inc. for Jail Repairs (General Appropriations-\$672,770)-Carol Underwood, Grants and Procurement Specialist

Washington County was approved for general appropriation funds totaling \$672,770.00 for jail repairs and rehabilitation. Approval is requested of the contract with Allstate Construction, which will be responsible for detention and security upgrades, HVAC renovations, and electrical work. - This item will be listed on the consent agenda.

2.3 Requesting Approval: Satisfaction of Mortgage-Carol Underwood, Grants and Procurement Specialist

The mortgage of \$10,000.00 has been satisfied, and the 10-year lien requirement under the SHIP program has been met. Commissioner Corbin noted that the document lists a date of February 6, 2015, and a recording date of February 13, 2005, and questioned whether the recording date should instead be 2025. This item will be added to the consent agenda pending correction of the date.

2.4 Washington County Industrial Park-Approval for Construction Bids for CDBG and EDA Grant Work-Tony Daniels, Director of Economic Development and David Melvin, President of DHM Melvin Engineering

Approval is requested to begin the bid process as soon as CDBG issues its approval, which is expected to occur between Board meetings. The project will be funded through EDA and Florida Commerce. An updated certification was requested for a previously existing diesel tank. Approval to issue the bid, pending Florida Commerce's authorization, will be placed on the consent agenda.

Commissioner Griffin requested an update on the weld and fab shop and the other investor chart.

Mr. Daniels informed Mr. Griffin that they encountered unexpected loan-related issues. They handled their business with the landowner and have received a two-month extension. They still intend to proceed.

2.5 Ag Center Contract Agreement - Julie Dillard, County Extension Director

Mrs. Brantley contacted the Florida Department of Revenue a couple of months ago and found out that the ag center rentals are considered commercial rentals; therefore, they were not subject to tax. - Approval of the updated ag center agreement will be listed on the consent agenda.

2.6 Washington County Sheriff Year-End Review-Kevin Crews, Sheriff

Sheriff Crews updated the Board.

- Law enforcement presence has increased at local springs, boat landings, and campsites, with one reason being the increase in visitors.
- Limited parking at Wilford Springs has resulted in the road becoming one lane.
- Pitt Springs will be closing for one year, which will likely shift visitors to Cypress and Wilford Springs.
- Spring Run is accessible only by boat.
- Law enforcement presence at campsites has increased.
- Since 2021, EMS has responded to 18 trauma-related calls, three of which required life-flight transport.
- Calls at Cotton Landing have increased due to vehicles blocking the landing, and trash accumulation has also risen.
- Parking availability in the area has decreased.
- Cypress Springs has become increasingly dangerous for law enforcement.
- Issues at campsites have continued to increase.
 - Updated data from the 2021 budget year ending June 2026.
 - Dispatch calls for the Sheriff's Office have increased by just under 1,900.
 - Dispatch calls for EMS reached 700.
 - 800 more, and EMS is 1,200
 - Statutorily required documents served have increased by 200 people annually over the three years ending June 2026.
 - In most years, the Washington County Sheriff's Office has doubled or tripled the state and national average on the clearance rate.
 - The call center is operating with 10 full-time positions, which is becoming challenging due to the number of calls.
 - Current discussion regarding animal control complaints being routed through dispatch instead of the EOC.
 - EMS operates three 24-hour trucks and one 15-hour truck.
 - There are currently 20 patrol deputies; the recommended number is 25 – 26.

- There are 9 school resource deputies.
- Speeding remains a county-wide issue.
- New developments and incoming industries are expected to affect public safety demand.
- The jail is being run with 22-23 staff, though staffing should be approximately 25-26.

There is no way to sustain the level of growth coming into the county with the current number of ambulances and patrol deputies. Implementing a five-year plan to increase staff was discussed, similar to the proposal brought before the Board following Hurricane Michael.

Commissioner Marquez asked about the number of dispatch and road deputies in 2021. Sheriff Crews provided an estimate but was unable to confirm the exact numbers. Commissioner Marquez commended the Sheriff for successfully operating the jail as he has for the past 25 years. County Administrator Fleener added that the funds loaned to the Sheriff by the Board are expected to arrive within the next few days.

3. FEMA COORDINATOR

- 3.1 Requesting Approval: Amendment #5 To the Federally Funded CDBG Disaster Recovery - Hazard Mitigation Grant; M0132-Anthony Gratz, Wheeler Emergency Management Consulting

This item will be listed on the consent agenda.

4. BUILDING OFFICIAL

5. MSBU ADVISORY COMMITTEE UPDATE

Gary Hartman updated the Board on the following items.

- The next MSBU meeting is Wednesday, September 2 at 6:00 at the Sunny Hills Community Center.
- They are working toward finalizing the 26/27 assessment roll and budget.
- 362 commercial lots in Sunny Hills are designated that way.
- Deltona's deed restrictions don't include utility sites. He and Scott Parrish spent 30+ hours going through each commercial lot and determined that quite a few were not correct. Some of them are being assessed as residential. The PA advised that for it to be changed, evidence had to be provided, which they provided; therefore, the updates were made.
- There are approximately 24,500 lots in Sunny Hills. Eventually, the land designation will have to be checked on each one. GSG was paid to do this in 2020; however, it was not done correctly.
- Ongoing paving presentations will be discussed for road repairs. They are looking into chip sealing and have four separate proposals for different parts of Sunny Hills.
- The streetlight project for Deltona Boulevard and Country Club Boulevard will be presented.

- The 16 new lights have been added to Elkcarn, which was previously approved by the Board.
- The electric sign repair is ongoing.
- Bids for dumpsites will be received. Community dumpster days at Boat Lake will be discussed.

6. FIRE CHIEF

Justin Barron commended the Sheriff's Office Dispatch for managing a significant increase in fire calls, which have nearly doubled/tripled.

Also, the 3rd Annual Washington County Fire Games are being held on September 5 at 6:00 p.m. at the Possum Palace.

7. PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

8. PARKS UPDATE

8.1 Wilder Park Playground Equipment Request

Byron Western presented a letter before the Board from Debbie Williams, Pastor of Grace and Glory, requesting a donation of playground equipment that is no longer being used.

Commissioner Marquez clarified that the equipment is from Wilder Park.

The consent agenda item will be to surplus the playground equipment and donate it to Grace & Glory with a liability release.

Byron Western acknowledged the Public Works employees for their hard work, noting that they are doing the best they can with the resources available.

9. ENGINEERING PROJECTS UPDATE

9.1 Holmes Valley Road Gateway Project, Design Options-Rod Adams, DHM Melvin Engineering

Brent Melvin, Melvin provided the history of applying for funding for Holmes Valley Road. He informed the Board that a community meeting has been advertised for September 3.

Rod Adams updated the Board on the Holmes Valley Road Project. As of yesterday, the design for 30% was submitted to DOT.

- It will meet the criteria to be more than a low-volume road.

- Option 1 - Recommend - This option meets all the design criteria.
- Option 2 - This option doesn't meet the minimum lane width or shoulder requirements. It does allow for some roadside drainage.
- Option 3 - This would result in the least amount of right-of-way impact. The road would have to be raised to prevent washout, which will push water onto private property. It is an option if right-of-way can't be obtained.
- Design for the entire project is being done.

County Attorney Milton clarified that the project has approved funding for Phase 1 Construction. He went on to question if letters were sent to all property owners or just the ones affected in Phase 1.

Brent Melvin responded that letters were sent out for the entire corridor to back up the two grants the county has. One is from DOT through SCOP, and the other is from the Florida Commerce Department, which is a Rural Infrastructure Fund Grant.

Commissioner Marquez questioned if Cravey Cemetery off of Fanning Branch had been taken into consideration during the design process.

Rod Adams responded that he was unaware of the cemetery but would visit the site and make any necessary adjustments.

9.2 Washington County Chipley Library Expansion Project to Consider Change Order No. 2 Wood Trusses-Brent Melvin, DHM-Melvin Engineering

During the original construction of the library there was an option for metal or wood trusses. Wood trusses are being selected for the expansion. The change would mean a deduction of \$3,140.00. The contractors requested an additional five days of contract time to coordinate the shop time. - This item will be listed on the consent agenda.

10. COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

10.1 RFP Update

The legal services RFP was published yesterday, which is a 67-day procurement process. The question deadline is 9/1, responses to questions are due 9/3, bids are due 9/15, and the board meeting is on 9/24. FACT attorneys are reviewing the legal service RFP.

The state lobbying service will be advertised second, which is 80 days. The workshop will be on 10/8.

The emergency contract services will follow, which is 77 days. The date for this one is 10/1.

10.2 Budget Update

General revenue is approximately \$2.5 million below the level it should be. According to the auditor, reserves are \$1 million lower than it should be. Therefore, an additional \$1 million would be needed to get ahead of the issue. A 10% budget reduction had originally been requested from all departments along with a status-quo budget, but the status-quo approach is unlikely to be feasible. This will likely be a year in which reductions are necessary to offset shortfalls caused by using non-recurring funds for recurring expenses. As the budget process continues, the deficit is beginning to close.

Discussion was held among the Board on implementing a plan for the future and some of the reasons why the deficit exists.

County Administrator Fleener added that the first seven BCAs are in with only three questions from the state, which is a really good sign. Things are moving, but there are no hard deadlines. There is money allocated to Washington County, which is with DEM and the State of Florida, and it is obligated to the county. It is ridiculous that the county cannot fix the roads with the black mats on them the way they need to.

A budget workshop in the future will be set.

11. CLERK

11.1 Value Adjustment Board (VAB) Reappointment Request for Gary Hartman

Deputy Clerk Brantley requested the reappointment of Gary Hartman to the Value Adjustment Board as the citizen homestead member. He has been on the VAB Board for 15 years.

This item will be added to the consent agenda.

12. COUNTY ATTORNEY

13. OTHER BUSINESS

14. ADJOURN