



MINUTES
WASHINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Thursday, July 16, 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	Joey Brock	Wesley	David Corbin
Vice-Chairwoman	Pettis Jr.	Chairman	Griffin	
	Chairman			

1. PROCLAMATION

- 1.1 Call to Order - Chairman Pettis
- 1.2 Invocation - Tim Lanham, Live Oak Baptist Church
- 1.3 Pledge

2. ADOPT THE AGENDA

Amendments

- Recognize the Chipley AU Allstars following the adoption of the agenda.
- Consent Agenda Item 6.6 - 7/28/2026 meeting listed as a workshop needs to be a special meeting to set the tentative millage rate.
- Agenda Item 7.11 - Request to close Pioneer Road for the 2026 Possum Trott

Motion to approve 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

The Board recognized the Dixie Chipley Softball 8U Softball Florida State Championship Team, coached by Tim and Linsey Boon, Justin Burnham, and Eric Lockhart. The team maintained a perfect record of 8-0 throughout the district and state tournaments, outscoring their opponents 135 to 29. They have the opportunity to represent Washington County and the State of Florida in the 2026 Dixie Softball World Series, beginning July 31 in Bellview, Florida.

Players - Isabella Burnham, Georgia Kate Brown, Lyla Boon, Bexley Lockhart, Meredith Crawford, Brexley Buchanon, Emma Carter, Julianne Hammond, Hayven Brannon, Jamya McKinnie, Lillyanna Guettler, and Kerri Hartkins.

3. PUBLIC HEARING

- 3.1 Segment of 4th Street Right of Way Abandonment/Road Closure-Dawn McDonald, Senior Planner
Dawn McDonald presented a road closure and right-of-way abandonment request, which are brought directly before the Board without having to go through the Planning Commission. Mr. Langworthy, the property owner, requested the road closure of 4th Street where it ends. The segment of 4th Street begins at Brickyard Road and ends in front of his property. It is around 89 feet and is between 933 and 926 4th Street. The adjoining neighbor favors the closure. The public notice requirements were met. Staff recommends approval. The road closure will not prevent access to any of the four property owners that were notified.

Rosemary Sycz, 1233 Harrison Avenue, located off that segment of 4th Street, suggested restricting the road to not being a through street instead of closing it. Once the clarification was made below, the citizen was okay with the closure.

Chairman Pettis clarified that it is closing the last 89 feet of 4th Street.

Motion to accept staff's approval.

Moved by: David Corbin; 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 adopt the minutes listed as item 4.1.

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 Sunny Hills Special Meeting for June 15, 2026

5. NON-AGENDA AUDIENCE/PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- John Williamson, Panhandle Search and Rescue, addressed the Board regarding being listed as a private contractor instead of a 501 (c)(3) mutual aid, which prevents them from being eligible for grants. Being listed as a contractor makes the county liable for reimbursing their expenses. The interest of the attorneys and the leadership of the county was referenced.

County Attorney Milton informed the Board that they are independent contractors operating independently of the county. One of the biggest issues was insurance, which is why they were intentionally listed that way.

He went on to inform the Board that his interest is for the county.

Commissioner Marquez confirmed that the terms included were what he and the sheriff agreed upon and felt that the sheriff should be involved in this discussion.

- Elizabeth Wilhelm informed the Board that she runs an online Mom's group that covers Walton County to Jackson County. The group consists of over 1,300 moms who don't want a data center in the community due to effects on natural resources and effects on the quality of light.
- Benita Crittendon, Long Lake Ridge Drive, spoke on concerns regarding the legal representation of the county and suggested, due to conflicts of interest, inconsistencies in addressing bids, bid procedures, applicants, applicant procedures, and guiding by the omission of information, a vote should be taken to terminate the county attorney. It is an auto-renewal contract with a 30-day out by either party.
- Marie Cunningham informed the Board that Country Oaks will be hosting a Firefighter Kids Day Camp on Saturday. The Bloodmobile will be present, along with the sheriff's office, and food will be sold.

6. **CONSENT AGENDA**

6.7 - Approval to Advertise for Data Center Moratorium - County Attorney Fuqua addressed the Board regarding the Moratorium Ordinance provided to the Board a couple of months ago for review. The purpose of the moratorium is to stop data centers from coming to the county. At this point, one would require a land-use change. The comprehensive plan is what drives a moratorium. It doesn't seem to currently be a method where one could be done at this time. Along with the moratorium, another proposed ordinance was included which restricted data centers extremely. The purpose of the moratorium is to allow time for the comprehensive plan to be adopted the way the Board wants it regarding data centers or any high usage that will impact the water and electrical system, or the environment. It is advertised to be addressed next month.

Motion to approve the consent agenda.

Moved by: Wesley Griffin; seconded by: Ashlynn Marquez

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

Carried 5-0

- 6.1 Approval of Purchase of Two Vehicles for Building Department from Building Department Budget
- 6.2 Approval of Behavioral Transportation Plan for 2026-2029
- 6.3 Approval of Amendment #5 for Hazard Mitigation Grant Subrecipient Agreement
- 6.4 Approval of Committee Recommendation and Enter Contract for Generator Services with Integrated Power Services (IPS)
- 6.5 Approval of Ready-Mix USA, LLC Agreement
- 6.6 Approval of Dates for Special Meeting (7/28/26 at 9:00 a.m.), Tentative Budget Hearing (9/15/26 at 5:05 p.m.), and Final Budget Hearing (9/28/26 at 5:05 p.m.)

7. AGENDA ITEMS

- 7.1 Recognition of Vice-Chairman Ashlynn Marquez for Graduation from the Institute for County Government (ICG) Certified County Commissioner Program-Denise Vogelgesang, Insurance Manager for FAC/FACT - The program required 47 credit hours of coursework, mostly completed online. Topics included growth management, financial management and budgeting, ethics, along with others.
- 7.2 Recognition of Chairman David Pettis, Jr. for Graduation from the Institute for County Government (ICG) Advanced County Commissioner Program-Denise Vogelgesang, Insurance Manager for FAC/FACT - The program required 27 additional hours of in-person instruction where Commissioner Pettis traveled to Alachua County and participated with commissioners statewide on a focus that is advanced in policy, governance, and innovation.

Commissioner Pettis previously graduated with his Certified County Commissioner Status.

- 7.3 Approval to Opt-In to the Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance Estuary Program Steering Council Membership Adoption Agreement-Melinda Gates, Interim Executive Director, Choctawhatchee Bay Estuary Coalition
- They are looking at the transformation of the program to the Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance Estuary Program, which is an existing program. The same counties will participate. Termination of the inter-local is requested. Approval of the opt-in agreement allows the transformation into the new program title. The transition will help facilitate additional advanced efforts for watershed protection. Representative appointments are also required.

Commissioner Brock added that he would like to step down. He is the representative, and Commissioner Marquez is the alternate.

Motion to terminate the inter-local agreement, opt into the new steering committee, and appoint Commissioner Griffin as the primary representative and Commissioner Marquez as the alternate.

Moved by: Wesley Griffin; seconded by: David Corbin

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

Carried 5-0

- 7.4 Appointment of a Representative, Alternative Representative, and Staff Contact to the Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance Estuary Program Steering Council-Melinda Gates, Interim Executive Director, Choctawhatchee Bay Estuary Coalition
- This was included in the motion above.
- 7.5 Update to SHIP Local Housing Assistance Plan (LHAP)-Vacari Stevenson, Program Coordinator for Emerald Coast Regional Council

Carol Underwood, Grants/Procurement Specialist, presented a renewal agreement between Emerald Coast Regional Council and Washington County for the management of the SHIP Program, reflecting no changes.

Motion to approve the agreement with Emerald Coast Regional Planning Council for the management of the SHIP Program.

Moved by: Wesley Griffin; seconded by: Joey Brock

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

Carried 5-0

- 7.6 .Rollover of Library Construction Grant Application for Sam Mitchell Public Library- Renae Rountree, Library Director

The grant is \$500,000.00 and doesn't include a match. If funding is approved and accepted, the facility must remain a library for the next 20 years, unless a higher level of service can be provided.

Motion to approve to roll over the grant application for the Sam Mitchell Public Library.

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 .Sale of County Owned Properties-Andrew S. Fleener, County Administrator

Little John Drive Parcel 00-0997-0020 - Offers of \$6,000.00 and \$6,200.00 were received, with the recommendation to accept the highest offer. The admin fee is \$1,240.00.

Dumajack Road – 19-0281-0015 - Offers for \$2,900.00 and \$6,001.00 were received, with the recommendation to accept the highest offer. The admin fee is \$1,200.20.

County Attorney Milton went over the process of buying county property.

Motion to accept the high bid for \$6,200.00 for parcel 00000000-00-0997-0020.

Moved by: Joey Brock; seconded by: Wesley Griffin

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

Carried 5-0

Motion to accept the high bid for \$6,001.00 for parcel 00000000-19-0281-0015.

Moved by: Wesley Griffin; seconded by: David Corbin

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

Carried 5-0

- 7.8 .Purchase Approval of Library Shelving & Furniture for Chipley Library Expansion- Renae Rountree, Library Director

A national contract will be used to purchase the shelving and furniture, funded through the Florida Commerce Grant. Prevailing wages will be paid for installation, as required for projects

supported by federal grants in compliance with the Davis-Bacon Act. The provider is operating under a federal contract and will utilize an independent contractor to perform the installation.

Motion to approve the purchase for library shelving and furniture totaling \$94,596.52.

Moved by: Wesley Griffin; seconded by: David Corbin

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

Carried 5-0

7.9 .Submission Approval of Library Services & Technology Act Grant Application- Renae Rountree, Library Director

Approval is requested to apply for a \$10,000 grant to purchase 145 Wonder Books, which include built-in audiobooks and cost \$54.00 each. The grant will be submitted through the Division of Library and Information Services.

Motion to approve the grant submission for audiobooks.

Moved by: Joey Brock; seconded by: Wesley Griffin

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

Carried 5-0

7.10 .Insurance Renewal Approval-Aaron Dudley, Human Resources Specialist

The renewal rate has decreased from 18% to 7.5% as of this morning. The total amount is \$309,000. Some options are listed below.

- \$309,000 – The Board covers the full increase. Funding is available to cover the increase.
- 80/20 – The Board would cover an estimated \$248,000.
- 90/10 – The Board would cover an estimated \$280,000.

Under this plan, if claim dollars aren't spent, they are returned to the county. The surplus fund was depleted last year.

County Administrator Fleener addressed the Board, noting that it is a difficult budget year. Although it is still early in the budgeting process, raises are not anticipated at this time. He stated that if any action is going to be taken, this should be the item, as it represents a bottom-line increase rather than additional dollars in individual paychecks. The adjustment would apply not only to BOCC employees but to all county employees, including those under constitutional officers, ensuring fairness across the organization. Preliminary estimates from additional ad valorem revenue indicate roughly \$1 million in available funding. He emphasized that the increase

cannot be provided to only one constitutional officer, as occurred in previous years; it must be applied countywide.

Motion to approve the county covering the full increase.

Moved by: Ashlynn Marquez; seconded by: Wesley Griffin

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

Carried 5-0

7.11 .Recognition of Chipley 8U All-Stars for upcoming trip to the Dixie Youth Softball World Series-David Pettis, Jr., Chairman - This was addressed earlier in the meeting.

7.12 .Request to close Pioneer Road for the 2026 Possum Trot-Lynn Gothard, Wausau Town Clerk

On behalf of the Town of Wausau and the Wausau Community Development Club, a request is presented to the Board to close a portion of Pioneer Road—from Highway 77 east to Ledger—for the Possum Trott 5K Race. The road closure will last for approximately two hours, with the roadway reopened by 8:00 a.m.

Motion to approve the road closure for the Possum Trott.

Moved by: Wesley Griffin; seconded by: David Corbin

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

Carried 5-0

8. CLERK

8.1 .June Vouchers Totaling \$2,989,714.48 - Clerk Bell

9. OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioner Griffin requested the following.

Motion to leave the current lobbying service in place until a decision is made on a newly issued RFQ for lobbying services.

Moved by: Wesley Griffin; seconded by: Ashlynn Marquez

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

Carried 5-0

10. OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioner Griffin brought up discussion regarding the Wheeler Emergency Management contract, which is up for renewal in November.

Commissioner Corbin said that three are coming up for renewal.

County Attorney Milton will review the terms of the current PA contracts.

Motion to issue an RFQ for PA Contracting as soon as possible with the stipulation that they aren't in violation of any contract.

Moved by: Wesley Griffin; seconded by: Ashlynn Marquez

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

Carried 5-0

11. OTHER BUSINESS

Motion to issue an RFQ for legal services with the stipulations of their 30-day to continue in place until new applicants for attorney services.

Moved by: Wesley Griffin; seconded by: Ashlynn Marquez

Commissioner Marquez added that she hasn't had any issues with the attorneys; however, she is okay with issuing an RFQ.

County Administrator Fleener added that he hasn't had any issues with them.

Commissioner Griffin added that he would like to see what the options are and ensure they are receiving the best price. He went on to say that he would like the Board to interview them.

County Attorney Milton responded that it was done that way previously and is open to the public as well as the bidders.

Commissioner Marquez asked if any commissioners have had issues with the attorneys.

Commissioner Griffin responded that he has had issues; however, they have gotten better. He has made two motions in the past to rebid the services.

Commissioner Corbin clarified that Commissioner Griffin had a case against the county at that time and they were the county attorneys. He went on to say that he was fine with putting the services out for bid.

Benita Crittendon suggested that a motion should be made to terminate the attorneys, hire an interim, and put it out for bid.

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

Carried 5-0

12. OTHER BUSINESS

Motion to terminate the attorney with a 30-day notice per the contract.

Moved by: Joey Brock; seconded by: Wesley Griffin

Denied

Discussion following the motion before finalizing.

Commissioner Corbin questioned the grounds for termination. He went on to say that he is okay with putting it out for a bid; however, he is not okay with termination. That sends a different message.

Following the motion, Benita Crittendon addressed the Board regarding concerns that members had been misled about the reasons behind FEMA halting reimbursements, which was coordinated by the previous chairman, attorneys, and the prior administrator. She referenced multiple concerns, including omissions of information and instances of information being misrepresented. Additional issues mentioned included the hiring of a department head without the Board's knowledge, noting that the Board has the authority to review department head appointments. She also referenced documented conflicts of interest involving several of the attorneys' clients.

County Administrator Fleener recommended that the attorneys not be terminated at this time and that the Board proceed with the RFQ process. He noted that daily communication with legal counsel is essential, and a lapse in that support would be irresponsible.

Roll call vote requested by Commissioner Brock.

Commissioner Griffin - Yes

Commissioner Corbin - No

Commissioner Pettis - An RFQ should be put out for legal services. Terminating puts the county in a vulnerable place until the transition can be made. - No

Commissioner Marquez - No

Commissioner Brock - Yes

Commissioner Griffin added that his decision was not for votes. His past feelings are on record.

13. ADJOURN

Summary of Minutes Prepared by Risha Brantley