



MINUTES
WASHINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Thursday, June 18, 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.		Griffin	
	Chairman			

1. PROCLAMATION

- 1.1 Call to Order - Chairman Pettis
- 1.2 Invocation
Pastor Forrest Smith, Family Life Pastor, Shiloh Baptist Church
- 1.3 Pledge

2. ADOPT THE AGENDA

Additions and Amendments

- Regular Agenda Item 7.5 - Request to apply for a RIF Grant - David H. Melvin
- Regular Agenda Item 7.6 - Canvassing Board Appointment Discussion - Supervisor Pettis
- Amendments - Move agenda item 7.4 before the public hearing.
- Move agenda item 7.6 below 7.4.
Motion to adopt the agenda as amended.
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 Florida Department of Transportation District 3 Headquarters Major Development Review Application with Variance Request-Dawn McDonald, Senior Planner
FDOT will be redeveloping its District 3 headquarters found on Hwy. 90. The property is around 8.5 acres. The application requests the removal of two existing buildings and the construction of a three-story, 33,000-square-foot building. The variance request is to allow the use of the existing vegetation/buffers on the site, which would allow them to

retain their stormwater. The public noticing requirements were met; a neighborhood information meeting was held on May 14, which presented no opposition. Staff and the planning commission recommended approval.

Motion to approve item 3.1 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

- 3.2 Williams Small Scale Future Land Use Map Amendment-Dawn McDonald, Senior Planner
The application request is to change approximately 4.94 acres from general commercial to agriculture/silviculture to build a home on the site. The land use would be compatible with the surrounding land uses. Public noticing requirements were met. Staff and the planning commission recommended approval. There were no attendees at the neighborhood meeting.

Motion to approve item 3.2 as presented.

Moved by: Wesley Griffin; seconded by: Ashlynn Marquez

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

Carried 5-0

- 3.3 Hernandez Small Scale Future Land Use Map Amendment-Dawn McDonald, Senior Planner
The application request is to change approximately 5.96 acres from residential-low to general commercial with the intent of building a community event facility/wedding venue in the future. This is solely for the land use change. The public noticing requirements were met; the neighborhood information meeting was held on May 14 with several neighbors opposed due to uncertainty and traffic issues. Staff recommended approval. A major development review would have to be submitted for the future wedding venue, and the neighbors would be notified. They would review engineered and stamped plans. At that time, they would look at driveway access and traffic along with the Florida Department of Transportation. Stormwater, parking, and other issues would be looked at on the site. The planning commission recommended approval.

Following the closure of the hearing, a motion was made to approve item 3.3 as presented.

Moved by: Ashlynn Marquez; seconded by: David Pettis Jr.

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

Carried 5-0

- 3.4 Skyway Towers, LLC/Kowitz Tower Major Development Review Application-Dawn McDonald, Senior Planner

The request is to construct a 195-foot (self-supporting) wireless communication tower with associated wireless facility on 56 acres found on Old Bonifay Road. The land use is agriculture/silviculture. The tower will house future carriers to encourage colocation as well as space reserved for the county for public emergency communications. The public noticing requirements were met. The neighborhood information meeting was held on May 7, with all in attendance opposed to the tower. Reasons mentioned include visibility, lowered property values, health issues, and the lack of necessity for it since the service is already adequate. Staff recommended approval, in addition to the planning commission. The development review committee didn't have any issues.

Aaron Garnett, Baker Donelson, informed the board that the proposed tower meets the requirements of the ordinance. The area is a dead zone for T-Mobile. A Valuation Impact Study was done by a certified property appraiser, which reflected that the tower would not have any negative impact on the surrounding property values. Approval is requested as well as entering the staff report into the record.

Kristin Lopez, Walkerton Drive, Sunny Hills, questioned if health studies had been done.

Larry Zezula, Maple Street, commented that health issues aren't an issue.

Simon Sheffield, Jessie Way, questioned the ownership of the tower.

For record purposes regarding ex parte communications, Chairman Pettis added that he spoke to Mandy Longo via email.

Motion to approve item 3.4 as presented.

Moved by: Ashlynn Marquez; seconded by: David Corbin

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

Carried 5-0

3.5 The Towers, LLC/Bush Tower Major Development Review Application-Dawn McDonald, Senior Planner

The Towers, LLC is submitting on behalf of Verizon for a major development review application for around 75 acres. The request is to approve a major development application for one 190-foot self-supporting wireless communication tower and wireless facility. It is located south of Alford Road, west of Archie Sapp, and on Gilberts Mill Road. The tower proposal was presented last year. The tower will have open space for additional carriers, which includes emergency service communications for the county.

The public noticing requirements were met, and the neighborhood meeting was held on May 13, where 26 in attendance were opposed. Concerns were expressed about health, property value, visibility of the tower from all vantage points, the necessity, wildlife, environment, and whether the site was proper for the soil and drainage to accommodate a tower. Neighbors requested additional data and information regarding the tower, which was provided by the applicant's representative. The staff's recommendation is approval, and the development review committee didn't have any concerns or comments. The first vote of the planning commission was not to go ahead. The attendees at the meeting recommended that the applicant withdraw the application. After discussion, the planning commission had a failed motion to recommend denial. A motion was made and seconded to approve the tower, which failed 4 to 2. The final decision is before the board today.

Mattaniah Jahn, P.A., 935 Main Street, Suite C4, Safety Harbor, Florida, requested that he and Bill Compton address the board. Attorney Fuqua swore Mattaniah Jahn and Bill Compton at the same time.

Attorney Fuqua informed the board that Attorney Jahn has requested a more formal process for the determination of the development order. This is a quasi-judicial proceeding where the board receives testimony and competent substantial evidence to determine whether the development order should be approved or denied. Each commissioner has received a memo as it relates to the legal obligations as it relates to this issue/any planning issue where the development meets all the requirements of the comprehensive plan and land development code. The board's consideration is limited to the following: does this meet the requirements of the land development code and the comprehensive plan?

Commissioner Marquez clarified that is all they are allowed to consider.

Mattaniah Jahn requested approval of a 195-foot-tall monopole-style communication tower. In all maps for the presentation, up is north.

Presentation included the following:

- From the property appraiser's map. Parent parcel - The parent parcel includes a lot of vegetation. Previously, a variance was requested to use the existing vegetation on the parent parcel instead of removing additional vegetation and planting a landscape buffer, which has been withdrawn. It will have the planted buffer as required by code. There is no other variance with the application at this time.
- The site lines in the area are tight due to a lot of canopy.

- Zoning map. - The parent property is agriculture/silviculture, which has communication towers as a permitted use.
- Sheet C1.0 from the plans on file was displayed. Washington County's code requires a 100% tower height setback, which they exceed in all directions.
- A yellow circle displayed on the property; there is a diamond on the eastern side. The diamond area on the eastern side of the property is the landscape buffer. Inside that is the equipment compound, and inside that is a circle that is a monopole. A monopole is a type of communication tower that has a single support pole that has no guidewires or iron works extending out from it.
- Display of the equipment compound, which is a fenced area that has computers, equipment, and traffic signal-size cabinets. It will be designed to collocate multiple carriers, with Verizon being the anchor carrier. There will be available commercial collocation and the required county collocation.
- The way the driveway is aligned offsets the tower and the compound from the driveway.
- Sheet C1.4 shows the compound, which shows that it is designed to collocate. The code encourages the sharing of communication towers. Verizon provided an RF package showing there are no towers they can collocate on or any tall structures.
- After the community meeting, an additional tower location was suggested by a neighbor, which was taken to Verizon. They modeled it. It was not included in the original report due to its distance.
- Verizon has met the requirements of the county's code but also gone further to make sure the requirements were met and to try to put uncertainties to rest.
- The monopole will be completely dark at night.
- Locations were listed on Macedonia Road, Archie Sapp, Kent Mill Pond, and Oscar Lane regarding no visibility of the monopole or a minimal amount.
- Verizon is providing the tower for in-vehicle and in-building coverage.
- From a civics standpoint, the other tower that was suggested at the community meeting would not reach the gap in coverage area that Verizon is trying to solve.
- Verizon complies with all federal, state, and local requirements, including FCC safety requirements.
- FDOT traffic count for Alford Road is believed to be 1,600 people per day.
- A determination from the FAA shows there is no hazard to air navigation.
- Property value study letter from a certified property appraiser shows there is no impact to property values.
- The concern regarding the soil is a building permit issue. The final design of the monopole foundation will be based upon geotechnical analysis compiled from a sample of the earth. Using sound engineering practices, the foundation will be designed for the soils there.
- The tower is built to fold over on itself in the event of impacts from a storm.

The staff report, PowerPoint presentation, his testimony, and application packet are requested to be entered into evidence. Time is reserved for rebuttal.

The board agreed to accept the evidence into the record as requested by Attorney Jahn.

No comments from Mr. Compton at this point.

Public Comment

Each person was sworn in.

- Matt Costen, 170 Kent Mill Road, expressed his opposition to the tower and requested a petition representing those against the tower be entered into evidence. The tower is not needed because there is adequate coverage. There are neighbors with Verizon that have good coverage. The board approved entering the petition into the record.
- Alan Foran, 2029 Gilbert Mill Road, spoke on a paragraph out of the application regarding property values not being diminished. Nobody has questioned who the certified appraisers are. The board accepted the document into evidence.
- Janet Foran addressed the board. Janet Foran reported that DEP permits, environmental studies, and an environmental resource permit were not found. She noted protected species in the area and emphasized that water from Oak Hill flows into the Chipola River, which must be protected. A March 16, 2026, ruling states that fast-track wetlands permits are federal only, yet there is no evidence that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was contacted or that a Section 404 submission was made. Required documents under the Federal Communications Act of 1996 and the Clean Water Act were also missing, along with letters from the sheriff and fire marshal and a frequency coordination study. A right-to-farm document was not included. The landlord is using land code 005900 under the greenbelt exemption, but the posted sign listed code 006, which is not recorded, and signs were not placed on all required roads.
- Christine Lopez, Walkerton Drive, Sunny Hills, Christine Lopez of Walkerton Drive, Sunny Hills, asked for clarification on the planning commission's reasons for denial. She also expressed concern about potential long-term health effects for residents living near cell towers.
- Larry Zezulla, 835 Maple Street, spoke on towers being the only communication resource following a storm.
- Janice Nelson Wheeler, 168 Oscar Lane, spoke on the applicants' profiting, not the residents. They use Verizon and don't have trouble sending information. The tower is not needed.
- Rexann Bush Duren, 1883 Horne Place, property owner, concerning the cell tower, requested that the board's decision be based on the county's standard and

evidence presented. The board is being asked to apply the rules that Washington County has already adopted. The tower will help meet the growing demand for reliable communication in the area.

- Evelyn Zezulla, 835 Maple Street, spoke on opting to have a tower instead of a data center.
- Chuck Roberts, 1612, spoke on the construction location of the tower being close to the same area where the county Pike Pond Evaporation Field is, which could be used to lease for tower space.

Chairman Pettis clarified that the location is owned by the City of Chipley, not the county.

- Jackie Hill of 168 Oscar Lane stated that the property owner does not live on the land, unlike the surrounding residents. She expressed concern about the trend of acquiring rural land for projects such as monopolies, which she believes are unnecessary. She noted that she has never experienced connectivity issues at her parents' home on Oscar Lane and emphasized that the proposed tower is neither wanted nor needed.
- Beth Melvin, 2093 Gilberts Mill Road, spoke on having good service in their area. She felt this issue was over last year. They received over 100 signatures last year.
- Eddie Beckworth, 109 Alford Road, spoke in opposition to the tower. The sight of it would be in his backyard. His service is sufficient, and the tower isn't needed.
- Ashley Corbin, 15 Alford Road, spoke in opposition to the tower. The pictures shown are not current. She would not have selected to build her home next to a tower. She suggested health concerns are linked to towers.
- Helen Suggs, Archie Sapp Road, spoke on the county passing a Land Ordinance Act to allow this to slip through. The board was elected to represent the people. The parcel number is not there on the sign, which is the documentation the county needs to fight this.

Attorney Jahn went over a list of objections. Per Florida law, these hearings are for the purposes of determining facts for the board's decision based upon the land development code.

Benamina Nurseries Federal Case 170 F. Supp. 2d 1246 is in the application file. Florida law is that the purpose of this hearing is to discuss facts and law. (Request to include in the record).

Telecon Act of 1996, which states that local governments are not to make decisions based on RF admissions. That is codified as 47 U.S.C. § 332. (Request to include in the record).

Washington County's code encourages colocation of towers. They have exceeded the burden of proof with the application.

William Compton, 7701 East Telecom Parkway, Tampa, was sworn in at the beginning of the hearing. He is an art design engineer with Verizon Wireless for three years/in Telecom for over 27-years/one of the original design engineers for this area/Traffic Engineer for all of Florida. He and his team created all the search rings to solve capacity issues in the state; therefore, his name is on the original search ring for the site.

Attorney Jahn and William Compton presented and discussed the following:

- RF Propagation Map of the area

The site will provide coverage and offload the existing sites in the area.

Attorney Jahn confirmed with Mr. Compton that the need for the site is based upon Verizon monitoring its own network.

Attorney Jahn addressed concerns brought up during public speaking.

- Permits from FDAP and Environmental Resource Permits from Water Management Districts - This is a separate permitting process outside the scope of the county's review. Due to the small size of the facilities, they are often exempt from stormwater review.
- The tower isn't under the Army Corps of Engineers jurisdiction for them to require permitting.
- Florida Greenbelt Law is an agricultural exemption to protect agricultural properties to help keep the taxes at bay. It can apply to cattle fields, etc. There was testimony from Ms. Durham that her family worked the property, which would indicate that it is property that has been in productive use in the past.
- Why wasn't it located on SR 77? He spoke on zoning in multiple locations in the county.
- Limestone and Sinkholes - There is an engineered, signed, and sealed letter with their opinion on that.

The board agreed to enter the two items into evidence as requested by Attorney Jahn.

Commissioner Marquez requested the name of the certified property appraiser.

Attorney Jahn responded that it is David Tally.

Chairman Pettis addressed the incorrect parcel number on the sign.

Attorney Fuqua added that if there was an error, it was made by staff. People are here; they had notice. Under Florida law, the sign is not required. It is something extra that Washington County does to provide notice.

There was a presentation, closing argument, and rebuttal. This is a Quasi-judicial hearing, and the order of speaking has been followed.

Chairman Pettis closed the hearing at this point.

Commissioner Griffin requested a roll call vote.

County Attorney Fuqua addressed the board regarding the legal basis of what the board is doing and the obligations owed. When they took the oath as county commissioners, they swore to God to defend the Constitution of the United States and the laws of the State of Florida. That is the reason for rules and procedures.

Commissioner Marquez disclosed ex parte communication with Janet Foran by phone and with Matthew Coston last time the issue was set to come before the board but didn't. There was also the email received with communication between Attorney Jahn and Matthew Austin.

Commissioner Griffin disclosed ex parte communication with Janet Foran and Mr. Beckworth.

Commissioner Marquez addressed Ms. Foran's concern regarding 33 Pike Pond Road, which is where the City of Chipley's spray field is located. The City of Chipley has confirmed that the parcel is currently being used for its intent. However, they were unsure if anything could be added to it.

Commissioner Pettis disclosed ex parte communication with Matthew Coston via email and a phone call with Ms. Foran.

Commissioner Corbin disclosed ex parte communication with Matthew Coston at his store.

Motion to approve staff's recommendation for approval of the tower.

Moved by: David Corbin; seconded by: Ashlynn Marquez

Aye: David Corbin, David Pettis Jr., and Ashlynn Marquez

Nay: Wesley Griffin and Joey Brock

Carried 3-2

Following the vote, Chairman Pettis spoke regarding this being somewhat of an example of local control being taken away. If these Florida and federal statutes weren't in place, this board would have more flexibility to make these decisions.

Commissioner Marquex added that she would like to support the citizens; however, it meets the county's code. This case is no different than the case before it. They would be violating private property rights by doing the opposite, and those have laws too.

3.6 Chapter 14 Building Ordinance Update-County Attorney

Charles Vannatter, Building Official, explained the updates.

- Duties of the building official are defined on certain items.
- There is a section about disasters, which extends the time for citizens to build.
- There is a section about exemptions from permits.

Discussion was held regarding potable water.

Charles Vannatter confirmed that the county does not receive potable water samples.

Christine Lopez, Walkerton Drive, spoke about the contractor or the plumber being the one who checks the water. The builders need to step up and enforce the contractors to do what is recommended.

County Attorney Fuqua added that the building code says that it is connected to a potable water system. Not that the water is potable.

Chairman Pettis and Commissioner Griffin questioned whether a water quality test could be added.

Charles Vannatter addressed the board. DR. Horton Homes uses private providers. The county building inspector has no authority once that is done. He is not permitted on the jobsite without notifying them. State law says nothing can be put in place to say only the building official can look at all properties.

Ken Attard, a citizen, questioned accountability for the state statute that doesn't allow the county's building department to have a final look or an inspection process.

Cathy Balenger, a citizen who purchased a DR Horton home, informed the board that the water issue was not disclosed to her. Doesn't somebody have the responsibility to make DR Horton and the realtors tell potential residents about the water issue?

Benita Crittendon spoke on a family member's personal experience with the realtor and DR Horton's representative who responded to a question regarding the water issue by saying that the area on Gulliver was on a new well/new infrastructure system that was completely separate from the old well. The US Water representative said that it is all tied into the same system. The citizens need to hold the realtor and DR Horton's representative accountable to the ethics board.

Larry Zezula, 835 Maple Street, suggested a new filtration system could be funded by an increase in fees through the MSBU or a grant.

The public hearing was closed at this point.

Motion to approve Chapter 14 Building Ordinance Update.

Moved by: Wesley Griffin; seconded by: Ashlynn Marquez

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

Carried 5-0

- 3.7 .Final Rate Resolution to Impose and Provide for the Collection of Service Assessments in the Sunny Hills/Oak Hill Municipal Service Benefit Unit-County Attorney Milton addressed the board.

The annual rate resolution for the Sunny Hills MSBU includes a 5% annual increase that the board has followed in recent years. A preliminary rate resolution public hearing was previously held for public comment. The ordinance outlines how MSBU funds may be used, while the final rate resolution establishes the budget based on the assessed rate. The board must meet the ordinance's notice requirements, which have been understood that staff have done to be in compliance. Under the ordinance, "improved" property means facing a paved road, so unless a new home or new paved road is added, no new notice is issued. The ordinance also specifies allowable uses of funds, including paving, lighting, mowing, and garbage pickup—services not provided in other parts of the county.

Ken Attard, a citizen, questioned the appendix regarding the timeline for notifications to be mailed out. There are two other increases totaling \$52.00 annually that will not require any public forum. It is about three rate increases. There was not an affidavit in the resolution last year; however, there is one in this one that says that Mr. Fleener would mail first-class to all the citizens in Sunny Hills on a tax roll.

A petition has been provided to the board which includes about 200 signatures that want the MSBU to be abolished. The packet is requested to be entered into the official record.

He objected to the proposed rate resolution for the MSBU and asked the board to reject the rate, reject the reimposition of the assessment, and begin the process of abolishing the Sunny Hills Oak MSBU due to trust, accountability, proper notice, unauthorized spending, and questionable benefit. Many property owners no longer believe the benefit is direct, fair, or properly accounted for.

The annual rate resolution includes an affidavit of mailing from Mr. Fleener stating that all required notices were prepared and mailed first-class to affected property owners on or before May 28, 2026. These notices were meant to inform owners of the proposed assessment, parcel-level amounts, measurement method, expected revenue, hearing date, and their right to appear or submit written objections within 20 days. This notice process is essential because it allows property owners to inspect the assessment roll, prepare objections, and address the board before final action.

Nearly 50 residents and property owners were contacted, and many reported they never received the first-class mailing. The board is urged to address these notice concerns and not proceed with final adoption while notice issues, spending questions, benefit concerns, and a growing petition to abolish the MSBU remain unresolved. The petition includes a proposed outline for dissolving the MSBU and requests a forensic audit of the MSBU account. Residents also expressed concern that funds are being directed toward areas benefiting builders, while issues like the long-neglected condition of Cavalier Road continue.

Chairman Pettis asked if it was the board's pleasure to add to the record the original packet stamped yesterday.

The consensus of the board was yes.

Larry Lomax of 3887 Country Club Boulevard stated that residents paying into the MSBU no longer have confidence in the system. He said accountability has failed, information is difficult to obtain, and many do not see a fair or direct benefit from the assessment. He noted that the petition to abolish the MSBU shows that residents no longer consent to how it operates. He emphasized that the issues go beyond paperwork, citing notice failures, spending concerns, lack of transparency, questionable benefit, and growing public opposition. He urged the board not to continue the assessment simply because it is convenient for the county and requested that the board reject the annual rate resolution and begin the process of abolishing the Sunny Hills and Oak Hill MSBU.

Benita Crittendon addressed the board regarding information included in contracts and resolutions that were not brought to attention. She noted multiple contracts with auto renewals, which have been an issue at times. By Ken's explanation, things were added to this resolution that were not in previous resolutions. If the board was not made aware of the auto-renewal, that is an issue. Omitting information is misleading. The attorney's position should be bid out. Per state statute, an MSBU can be created by the board without anything, or the board can require and order a citizen referendum, which was not done to create the current MSBU; however, it can be done to dissolve it.

Jolene Attard, 1386 Butterfield Court, informed the board that the petition that has been provided to them requests that the Sunny Hills Oak Hill MSBU be abolished. It outlines the process to do so. The MSBU has lost public trust. The request before the board is to accept the petition as the voice of the affected residents and property owners and begin the process of abolishing the Sunny Hills Oak Hill MSBU.

Christine Lopez, Walkerton Drive, is challenging the fairness and legality of the overall management of the Sunny Hills Oak Hill MSBU. A special assessment is only legal if the properties paying it received a unique, direct, and special benefit. 80% of the MSBU budget is consumed by road replacement, which is a basic county infrastructure duty. By forcing Sunny Hills residents to tax themselves to have drivable roads, the board is violating the legal principle of supplement versus supplant. The residents are being subjected to double taxation while the standard ad valorem taxes are spent elsewhere. The operational structure of the MSBU creates a massive conflict of interest. The MSBU coordinator is paid from resident funds, yet that position answers directly to the BOCC rather than advocating for the taxpayers. Under Ordinance 17-3, the advisory committee is appointed by the WCBOCC, stripping residents of democratic control of how their/our money is spent. The WCBOCC continues to approve development and draw land survey lines to expand the MSBU tax base while Sunny Hills suffocates under a severe infrastructure and water crisis. There are reported ongoing issues with frequent water main breaks, low water pressure, and discolored water. They stated that it is a failure of government to levy a special assessment for community improvements while allowing developers to connect new homes to an already failing infrastructure system. The people of Sunny Hills are demanding transparency, proper alignment of how MSBU funds are used, and immediate accountability for the condition of their infrastructure.

Janine Heath, 4086 Concord Boulevard, spoke in support of the MSBU in addition to the need for more investment. Living on a dirt road in her younger years led her to understand what communities need and what limited funding can provide. Sunny Hills needs more investment, instead of less. Many residents oppose paying more while continuing to complain about the issues that require investment. Some of the same individuals are pushing to abolish the MSBU, believing that Washington County will take over their responsibilities; however, the county struggles to fund basic services. If the

MSBU disappears, many of those improvements and services Sunny Hills relies on could disappear as well. Abolishing the MSBU will not solve the concerns and could leave their community with fewer resources to address the future needs of their community. Discussions should be about how to strengthen the MSBU. A responsible increase in assessment could pave more roads, improve maintenance, enhance infrastructure, and increase property values. Communities improve because residents are willing to invest in them.

Larry Zezula addressed the board regarding change being inevitable, such as an increase in taxes and cell towers. Money must be spent to make money. He spoke on the MSBU tax being a good thing.

Lucy Mikutis, 1768 Quintar Court, spoke on a system that continues to take money from Sunny Hills and Oak Hills property owners without resolving the deeper objectives. The resolution reimposes the assessment, approves the assessment role, declares special benefit, creates liens against property, and sets future maximum rates that can be imposed later. The people paying money deserve accountability: whether every assessed parcel is actually receiving a direct and special benefit, why so many property owners say they didn't receive notice, why the county should keep the MSBU alive when the people have submitted a petition asking for abolishment. The problem is the continued existence of a system that many property owners believe no longer serves its proper purpose. The request before the board is to reject the annual rate resolution and begin the process of abolishing the Sunny Hills Oak Hills MSBU.

Patsy Broome, 1635 Velvet Drive, Sunny Hills, addressed the board regarding the special benefit being used to benefit the builders. She spoke on a road being paved following houses being built. The MSBU is a failing system. The request before the board is to reject the annual rate resolution and begin the process of abolishing the MSBU. If not abolished, restructured. Allow the residents to vote.

Chuck Roberts spoke on Sunny Hills not having any lesser representation than the rest of the county. They should have the same representation. The MSBU fund takes more of the board's power away from controlling it.

Beth Roberts read the following passage from August 7, 2024, MSBU meeting minutes: The MSBU Coordinator openly expressed frustration regarding conversations occurring behind closed doors that bypassed the citizen committee. The coordinator said there were things in the works out of his control between a BOCC member and DR Horton. This directly documented the early stages of the county negotiating with private corporate builders to expand housing in Sunny Hills despite the committee trying to manage the infrastructure budget. Over the years, there has been mismanagement of the MSBU budget on all levels. A forensic audit should be done.

Rick Yander, 3651 Country Club Boulevard, Sunny Hills, spoke in support of the MSBU, which supports lighting, mowing, and other features that improve the community.

Jim Futch, 1781 July Court, Sunny Hills, suggested that the MSBU should be restructured centered on all residents. The money should be used in a way that benefits everyone, such as repaving Sunny Hills Boulevard or Elkcarn. More accountability is needed. The request before the board is to restructure the MSBU and not abolish it. Assistance is requested from the county to help with cleaning up dump spots in the area.

Mr. Futch also volunteered to help the MSBU coordinator to identify road problems. The main roads need to be addressed. If they are not, they won't last another 10 years.

Nancy Yanter, 3651 Country Club Boulevard, spoke on behalf of herself and her neighbors, who would like the MSBU and its services to continue. Some of the other residents have expressed the desire to remove their name from the list. It would be good to see the MSBU do more.

Andrea Norris, 4047 Lynnwood Drive, Sunny Hills, wanted to make sure the letter that Tony from Deltona sent to the commissioners is part of the record. He fully supports the MSBU. His number of properties outweighs the 200 signatures from the group that would like to abolish the MSBU.

Scott Parrish, MSBU Coordinator, offered to answer any questions.

Chairman Pettis closed the public hearing.

Motion to approve the final MSBU rate resolution. Commissioner Corbin. Seconded by Commissioner Marquez.

Commissioner Griffin suggested that before the board decides, have the Supervisor of Elections hold a special election in Sunny Hills regarding the MSBU assessment. Instead of the board appointing a member to represent each district, let the citizens do that themselves. If it is dissolved, Washington County can't pick up the services that the funding provides.

Chairman Pettis asked the county attorney how the board moves forward with letting the people decide.

County Attorney Milton spoke on the rate resolution. A referendum is done by the SOE. That is a vote of the electors, but the MSBU is for the benefit of all of the property owners. The MSBU funds not only benefit those individuals that are voting but those that are out of state, LLC's, corporations in and out of the state.

Commissioner Marquez clarified that only the voters of Washington County would be able to vote on that. People that own property there but don't live there and are paying the assessment would not be able to vote on it.

Scott Parrish, MSBU, added that four years ago, 14,000 envelopes were sent to all the property owners. Deltona owns 10,000 properties, which is why there were 14,000 sent instead of 28,900+. The vote has already occurred to establish the ordinance, which is for 10 years.

County Attorney Milton added that when the notice was adopted, notice was sent out as Scott mentioned above. The ordinance has the notice requirements in it. The rate resolution can't be ignored without looking at the ordinance. The affidavit of mailing says the ordinance has been complied with. The only time that additional mailings have to be done is if certain conditions are met, which are identified in the ordinance. The original ordinance included a maximum amount of the assessment where it could not be increased by more than 5% annually; however, if it did, the notice would have to be sent out. Changing the ordinance will require an additional mail-out. The ordinance clarifies how the board members are appointed.

Commissioner Marquez added to the record forty letters/emails representing 4,378 assessed parcels in Sunny Hills that are for the MSBU assessment. Some signed the petition who didn't understand what they were signing.

Scott Parrish spoke regarding the maximum of \$665,000.00 for the MSBU budget that could be collected this year. Of that, Deltona pays \$200,000.00+/-, the residents that live in Sunny Hills pay around \$40,000.00, and the rest of it is made up of outside investors. The investors see the MSBU assessment as insurance on their investment. The lighting budget is \$40,000.00; road paving is around \$400,000.00; mowing is \$70,000.00 on contract/\$109,000.00 this year to go throughout Sunny Hills.

County Administrator Fleener spoke. Mr. Attard's package and Commissioner Marquez's package are part of the public document.

The county administrator's role is not to tell Scott what to do but to support the MSBU and the people of Sunny Hills. What the MSBU wants is what the county wants. What is

coming from the committee is important. The meetings are open to the public, and they want input.

Scott Parrish, MSBU Coordinator, added that, like the commissioners, the MSBU advisory board cannot talk to one another outside of the public meetings. For updating purposes, many documents have been put on the MSBU webpage. Volunteers on the board have been rare.

Commissioner Griffin added that he doesn't see a way to get rid of the MSBU with the amount of money that it generates for Sunny Hills. More transparency is needed, as well as community involvement.

Chairman Pettis addressed the board. He supports addressing the rate resolution at the July meeting. The second part of the discussion is to look for a path forward to abolish or restructure the MSBU.

Commissioner Corbin added that it is just putting it off as far as what is at hand today, which is the rate resolution. Everything else they can come back to as a new item.

County Administrator Fleener spoke on receiving input and revisiting the issue.

The motion carried 3 to 2, with Commissioners Griffin and Brock opposed.

4. ADOPT PREVIOUS MINUTES

Motion to approve the minutes listed below.

Moved by: Wesley Griffin; seconded by: Ashlynn Marquez

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

Carried 5-0

- 4.1 Board Workshop for May 7, 2026
- 4.2 Special Board Meeting for May 7, 2026
- 4.3 Board Meeting for May 14, 2026

5. NON-AGENDA AUDIENCE/PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- Nan Thompson, Reindeer Road, addressed the board regarding Washington County being the only one that hasn't set up anything to block the data centers. Bitcoin mining is equally as bad. The request before the board is to strengthen the planning codes and consider a moratorium for at least one year.

County Administrator Fleener added that there have been discussions with people, and they don't want it. There has been discussion with legal to ensure that things are done right, and the state is also doing things.

Commissioner Corbin added that Water Management will not issue a permit for a mega center because Washington County doesn't have the water that they require.

Benita Crittendon addressed the board about redistricting, noting that it was last completed in 2001 and should occur after every census under state statute and the Florida Constitution. She stated that Washington County has been out of compliance for 15 years and that redistricting can be ordered at any time, especially when population ratios exceed acceptable limits. She explained that no district should differ by more than 10% in population and that districts must be drawn impartially, without favoring any candidate or incumbent. Population growth from 2000 to 2026 is about 29%, and current registered voter numbers show significant imbalance, with District 2 being the smallest and District 5 the largest. Four of the five districts cross Chipley's city limits, even though the city has roughly 3,700 residents, which could be under one commissioner.

Hiring an outside consultant is the most professional option; however, it is the costliest. Then there is a citizen advisory committee appointed by commissioners, which could be politically motivated. There is also the option for the commissioners to do it, which could include political motives and self-interest. The most common process is the hybrid approach, which is the use of a professional consultant with an appointed citizen oversight committee. The request before the board today is an immediate discussion and implementation by the board to explore this process with serious consideration of the hybrid approach.

County Administrator Fleener added that they are already looking at this.

Kenneth Attard spoke on the approval of the rate resolution being mind-boggling when there are financial concerns and close to 200 petitions showing that people don't want it.

Christine Lopez spoke on how the commissioners are supposed to be for Washington County citizens.

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 Bid Award to Roberts and Roberts for Crystal Lake Paving Improvements from Tricia Trail to Amethyst Lane
Approved program through the Department of Transportation.
- 6.2 Approval of Spanish Trail Playhouse Local Arts Agency Letter and Resolution
- 6.3 Approval of Crystal Lake Drive Improvements CEI Services Task Order for \$127,100.
Approved program through the Department of Transportation.
- 6.4 Approval of FDOT SCOP (G3M77) Holmes Valley Road from SR 79 to East of Fanning Branch Road
- 6.5 Approval of Agreement Between Washington County and David H. Melvin, Inc. for Engineering Services totaling \$60,898.00-RIF D0331 Holmes Valley Gateway Project
- 6.6 Approval of Motion Correction from 1/15/26
- 6.7 Approval of Bay/Washington County Interlocal Agreement for Singer Road

7. AGENDA ITEMS

- 7.1 State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP)-Local Housing Assistance Plan (LHAP): Certification and Resolution Approval-Carol Underwood, Grants/Procurement Specialist
Vacari Stevenson, Emerald Coast Regional Council, addressed the board. The State Housing Plan must be renewed every three years, which is done under the scope of their contract and is presented to the board for review. It is presented to the board as a renewal since there were not really any changes necessary. It is due by June 30. If it is not submitted on time, it will delay funding to Washington County.

Due to recent legislation Florida passed related to manufactured mobile homes, she may have to come back before the board with a technical revision.

Motion to approve the LHAP: Certification and resolution.

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 Request for Payment to Elite Building Group Totaling \$146,459.60-Brent Melvin, DHM Melvin Engineering
Approval to move forward with paying the two outstanding pay applications to the contractor. There are two requests for funds submitted to Florida Commerce. The request for payment from last month has been reimbursed.
Motion to approve the payments to Elite Building Group for \$146,459.60.
Moved by: Wesley Griffin; seconded by: Joey Brock

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

Carried 5-0

- 7.3 .Request for Approval of Douglas Ferry Final Close-Out Documents-Brent Melvin, DHM Melvin Engineering

Motion to approve the close-out documents for Douglas Ferry.

Moved by: Ashlynn Marquez; seconded by: Joey Brock

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

Carried 5-0

- 7.4 .Survival Flight Lease Agreement-Andrew Fleener, County Administrator
Randy Truette spoke to the board about fulfilling the need for medical flight transport, which will be located in Wausau at the EOC building. Before the board is a lease agreement and a COPCN to allow them to operate in Washington County.

Chairman Pettis requested the date be corrected on the Ground Lease, which references 2020.

Motion to approve the Ground Lease 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

Motion to approve the Certificate of Public Necessity and Convenience.

Moved by: Wesley Griffin; seconded by: Joey Brock

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

Carried 5-0

- 7.5 .Request to apply for RIF Grant-Brent Melvin, DHM Melvin Engineering

Approval is requested to proceed with the application for additional funding to complete the entire Holmes Valley Construction and for the chairman to sign the grant application.

Motion to approve the submittal of the grant for the additional portion of Holmes Valley Road and authorization for the chairman to sign the grant application.

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 Canvassing Board Appointee Discussion-Deidra Pettis, Supervisor of Elections
Motion to appoint Commissioner Marquez as the Canvassing Board appointee and
Commissioner Corbin as the alternate.

Moved by: Wesley Griffin; seconded by: Joey Brock

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

Carried 5-0

8. CLERK

- 8.1 May Vouchers Totaling \$3,362,634.89 - Clerk Bell

9. OTHER BUSINESS

County Administrator Fleener informed the board that DEP has committed to run chlorine tests on certain addresses, which were requested from Mr. Attard, Scott Parrish, and the citizen who spoke at the community meeting regarding her health.

10. ADJOURN

Summary of Minutes Prepared by Risha Brantley