

**FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
FRANKLIN COUNTY COURTHOUSE ANNEX
JUNE 5, 2007
9:00 AM**

Minutes

Commissioners Present: Russell Crofton – Chairman, Noah Lockley – Vice Chairman, Cheryl Sanders, Joseph Parrish, Bevin Putnal

Staff Present: Marcia Johnson – Clerk of Courts, Alan Pierce – Director of Administrative Services, Michael Shuler – County Attorney, Michael Morón – Board Secretary

Call to Order (9:00 AM)

Chairman Crofton called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

Prayer and Pledge (9:01 am)

There was a Prayer followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes (9:02 AM)

Regular Meeting: May 15, 2007, Public Hearing: April 17, 2007

Motion by Putnal, seconded by Sanders, to approve the minutes for the Regular Meeting of May 15, 2007 and the Public Hearing of April 17, 2007; Motion carried 5-0.

Payment of County Bills(9:02 AM)

Motion by Lockley, seconded by Putnal, to approve payments of the County Bills as presented; Motion carried 5-0.

Department Supervisor Report

Hubert Chipman – Superintendent of Public Works (9:03 AM)

Mr. Chipman presented the following items for discussion and/or approval:

Item 1 – Hauled black dirt to the Will Kendrick Ball Park in Carrabelle

Item 2 – Started stocking lime rock on Alligator Point road for the parking lot

Item 3 – Cut cleaned and picked up litter from all cemeteries, the hospital, Highway 98 in Eastpoint and Lanark Village.

Commissioner Putnal asked Mr. Chipman to do some road maintenance on the corners of Highway 67 near the back-roads.

Van Johnson – Solid Waste Director (9:08 AM)

Fonda Davis presented the following items for discussion and/or approval:

Item 1 – The restrooms at the Carrabelle beach have been experiencing sewer problems and causing overflowing inside the restrooms. In the past couple of weeks we have had Collins to pump the septic twice a week to help prevent this situation, costing \$225.00 per pump. I asked Collins to give me an estimate on pumping twice a week from June 1st thru September 7th, our peak season for the beaches, and also an estimate for replacing the existing drain line. I have attached both estimates to your report, and after reviewing the attachments I ask that the board keep in mind that the City of Carrabelle will provide the sewer to the beach in the future.

Commissioner Sanders recommended that Mr. Davis contact Jason of the Health Department for some assistance with this problem.

Mayor Kelly stated that sewer will be available from the City of Carrabelle within the near future and the City is willing to help with solving this problem.

Motion by Sanders, seconded by Putnal, directing Mr. Davis to get with City of Carrabelle and the County’s Health Department to resolve this problem and to authorize payment for “pump out”; Motion carried 5-0.

Item 2 – In April we had some damages to occur to the Recycling Building, which at this time is causing the building to be unsecured. Repairs are estimated at \$5000.00.

Motion by Lockley, seconded by Putnal, to approve payment of \$5000 for repairs to the Recycling Building from Solid Waste repair and maintenance budget; Motion carried 5-0.

Commissioner Crofton stated that yard trash is piling up in Eastpoint and St. George Island, partly due to the burn ban and asked Mr. Davis to address this situation as soon as he can.

Commissioner Sanders asked Mr. Davis to contact VMS about yard trash pile up on US Highway 98.

Dan Rothwell – County Engineer (9:19 AM)

Mr. Rothwell presented the following items for discussion and/or approval:

Item 1 - Airport Access Road Observations:

Perform construction observations on the new Airport Access Road.

Item 2 - Road Department Maintenance Shop:

Work on the stormwater report and site construction plans is still in progress. Staff has contacted Florida Department of Natural Resources for permitting information.

Item 3 - Improve the West Side of Long Rd Drainage:

Staff has been working with Road Department to survey and complete plans for west side of Long Road drainage. Plans are completed and permissions are being sought from property owners to lower and/or replace drive way pipes to improve drainage and reduce standing water.

Mr. Rothwell updated Commissioner Putnal on the status of finding some sort of alternative use instead of limerock for road maintenance.

Mr. Rothwell informed Mayor Kelly, of Carrabelle, that the parking lot at Timber Island was still on his schedule to complete and he still has to purchase materials for the project.

Bill Mahan – County Extension Director (9:25 AM)

Mr. Mahan did not attend the meeting.

Mr. Pierce stated that Mr. Mahan informed him that he did check with State agencies but could not find anyone that was spraying chemicals upriver.

Alan Pierce – Director of Administrative Services (9:25 AM)

Mr. Pierce presented the following items for discussion and/or approval:

Item 3 - Board action to send letters to US Senators and Rep. Boyd regarding proposed rule changes proposed by the National Marine Fisheries Service which will drastically lower the fishing quotas for Red Snapper.

Motion by Lockley, seconded by Putnal, to send a letter opposing the proposed rule change that would lower the fishing quota for Red Snapper to the US Senators and Representative Boyd; Motion carried 5-0.

Item 6 - Board action to clarify who the Board will be sending to the ISSC meeting in August in Albuquerque.

Motion by Putnal, seconded by Lockley, to authorize payment for travel and expenses for the ISSC meeting in Albuquerque for 3 days in August for Commissioners Parrish and Lockley, Bill Mahan the County Extension Director, and Mr. Kevin Begos the Seafood Task Force Coordinator; Motion carried 5-0.

Citizen Advisory Committee – Update (9:33 AM)

Bill Calandra, of the CAC, gave an update of the recent actions of the CAC including the two newly formed committees, one for affordable housing and the other for seafood issues. These committees are working on an affordable housing ordinance and will also address water quality and enforcement, and inter-governmental coordination relations.

Commissioner Putnal stated that the water quality study is very important.

Commissioner Parrish expressed the importance of the inter-governmental coordination committee.

Public Hearing – Proposed Changes to Tourist Development Council Ordinance (9:48 AM)

Paul Parker, Vice-Chair of the TDC, asked that the Public Hearing be cancelled at this time to allow the TDC to review some of the proposed changes further.

Motion by Putnal to cancel the public hearing; Motion failed due to a lack of a second.

Commissioner Crofton suggested that the Board continue with the Public Hearing, take public comment and schedule a new public hearing whenever the TDC is prepared to go forward.

Chairman Crofton opened the floor for public comment.

Commissioner Parrish stated that he wanted the public fully aware of why the TDC was considering changing from a 60/40 infrastructure/promotion split to a 70/30 promotion/infrastructure split.

Mr. Parker stated that the TDC realized that public relations is better than advertising for Franklin County and it was the recommendation of the TDC to engage Gieger & Associates to handle the County's public relation

project. Mr. Parker also stated that \$50,000 of awarded grant funds was returned to the TDC which would offset the cost, which is \$6800 per month, of hiring Gieger & Associates, who would make at least 3 visits to the County with promotional writers.

Commissioner Parrish stated that his understanding is that this company will visit the County and their promotional writers will promote the County and all of its assets, especially the seafood industry, and paying this company would not affect the current 60/40 infrastructure/promotion split that is currently in place. Mr. Parker confirmed Commissioner Parrish's statements and added that the TDC can afford this project.

Motion by Lockley seconded by Putnal, to authorize the Chairman's signature on the Gieger & Associates contract for the promotion of Franklin County contingent on the County attorney's approval and provided that the 60/40 infrastructure/promotion split is not affected; Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Putnal, seconded by Lockley, to approve the reallocation of \$50,000 small grant funds to promotional relations; Motion carried 5-0.

Ray Rizner – North West Florida Transportation Corridor Authority –Presentation (10:15 AM)

Ray Rizner showed a power point presentation.

Mr. Rizner discussed NWFTCA intention to create a master plan which would include an alternate more inland Highway 98; a project that will probably take up to 7 or 8 years.

Commissioner Sanders had additional comments on master plan as it related to Franklin County and expressed her satisfaction of the plan.

Mr. Pierce discussed a Department of Transportation plan that also affects Highway 98, which is different from NWFTCA's plan.

Ken Osborne, of the Alligator Point Taxing Association, expressed his concerns of the plan including its affect on the summer camp housing project and expressed his dissatisfaction with the way the NWFTCA conducted its public hearings. Mr. Osborne also stated that there has to be realization of evacuations routes that run north to south not east to west, and expressed his objection to the Riverkeeper's filing an objection to an alternate route indifferent to the needs of the residents in Alligator Point.

Commissioner Sanders stated that a feasibility study will be done that will take into affect Mr. Osborne's concerns.

Anita Grove, of the Chamber of Commerce, stated that moving Highway 98 too far inland will affect the economy of the County especially the businesses that depend on the tourism generated from the scenic byway and asked if there could be a different name for the new road.

Mr. Rizner said the options for names and location is still open.

Ms. Grove stated more input is needed from local businesses and residents.

Commissioner Sanders asked Mr. Rizer to make sure that the authority will accept input from residents.

Ann Murzack, of Alligator Point, asked about funds that were vetoed by the Governor and how this action affects NWFTCA; Mr. Rizner replied.

David Butler, a Scenic Byway member, suggested that a meeting be held in Franklin County with the three major transportation planning agencies, and that these agencies consider an alternate route using Highway 22.

Commissioner Sanders stated that Highway 22 is in Liberty County and outside of the Authority's control.

Mrs. Marjorie Solomon, of Apalachicola, suggested that the Authority consider opening Bluff Road to Gulf County and Wewahitchka as an emergency route.

Commissioner Sanders stated that this option was in plan but the Riverkeepers raised objections to this plan so it was removed.

Bruce Ballister – Apalachee Regional Council (10:59 AM)
Funding Request for Florida Department of Transportation

Mr. Ballister discussed the state road improvement projects that will be submitted to the Florida Department of Transportation for funding.

The Board informed Mr. Ballister of the discussions with Mr. Rizer of the North West Florida Transportation Corridor Authority regarding an alternate route for Highway 98. The Board also discussed an alternate route to the new school, the State possibly assuming maintenance of CR 370 on Alligator Point, the growing congestion points in Eastpoint at Allan and Patton Drives and Bayshore, and the possible request for a lane improvement study.

Commissioner Sanders asked Mr. Ballister to inform the Board of the submittal deadline before September. Commissioner Crofton asked Mr. Ballister to investigate the suggestion made by Ms. Solomon to use Bluff Road as an evacuation route.

Mr. Ballister stated that he would be back in August to receive further recommendations.

Chuck Colvert – Hospital & Ambulance Service Update (11:06 AM)

Chuck Colvert introduced Barbara Law, the new EMS director, who has assisted in fully staffing two ambulances; Mr. Colvert stated that a third ambulance is staffed on some occasions.

Mr. Colvert gave an update on ambulance service that has been provided recently and requested funding for a new ambulance which would cost approximately \$130,000.00 and re-chassis another ambulance which would cost approximately \$60,000.00.

Motion by Lockley, seconded by Putnal, to authorize the release the \$200,000 that was on hold for the purchase of ambulances that would allow the Hospital Board to purchase a new ambulance for approximately \$130,000 and re-chassis another for approximately \$60,000; Motion carried 5-0.

Mr. Colvert stated that the Lanark ambulance service will be relocated to the volunteer fire department but \$5000 is required to modify the fire station.

Motion by Sanders, seconded by Lockley, to authorize \$5000 out of reserve for contingency to modify the fire station in Lanark Village so the ambulance service could move there; Motion carried 5-0.

Mr. Colvert stated that billing issues with Medicare is affecting the Hospital's cash flow, and the Department of Treasury is now stating that the Hospital owes over \$400,000. Mr. Colvert stated that he will investigate this issue and he is hoping that it is a mistake.

Mr. Colvert stated that the Hospital Board is recommending that the Hospital change its billing company to Assurance Health Care Financial Services, out of Panama City. Mr. Colvert also stated that this company would help establish a local business office for the hospital and assist with collections of old hospital debts.

Motion by Lockley, seconded by Parrish, to authorize the use of Assurance Health Care Financial Services to help with collection first of the outstanding account receivables and then the current account receivables, and also assist with Weems setting up its own business office; Motion carried 5-0.

Mr. Colvert stated that he would like to schedule a public workshop to discuss the long range plan of the hospital.

Motion by Lockley, seconded by Sanders, to schedule a public workshop as soon as possible to discuss the long range plan for the hospital with Mr. Colvert, the CEO/CFO, and the Hospital Board; Motion carried 5-0.

Commissioner Crofton directed Mr. Colvert to start submitting hospital financial reports on a timelier basis.

Mark Friedman, a Hospital Board member, stated that the Hospital Board was getting financial reports on a daily basis but cash flow was low due to the lack of billing from the billing company and lack of billing for the ambulance service.

Ms. Johnson stated that the County finance office was not regularly receiving financial reports, which both the Hospital Board and Mr. Colvert agreed to do at an earlier meeting.

Motion by Sanders, seconded by Lockley, to have the Hospital Board on the agenda of the first regular meeting every month; Motion carried 5-0.

Mark Friedman stated that the Hospital Board is currently assessing the Hospital's cash flow to make sure payroll can be met in the future.

Commissioner Sanders asked that the Hospital Board keep the County informed of any problems with the Hospital.

Chuck Colvert stated that this is one of the items that will be discussed at the workshop.

Department Supervisor Report (Continued)

Marcia Johnson – Clerk of Courts (11:45 AM)

Mrs. Johnson did not present any items for discussion and/or approval.

Alan Pierce – Director of Administrative Services (11:45 AM)

Mr. Pierce presented the following items for discussion and/or payroll:

Item 1 - Board action to sign Joint Participation Agreement for Alligator Point Road resurfacing. The DOT is providing \$2,399,268.00. DOT will then have to sign before county can begin expending funds.

Motion by Sanders, seconded by Lockley, to authorize the Chairman's signature on the Department of Transportation Joint Participation Agreement for the Alligator Point Road resurfacing project; Motion carried 5-0.

Item 2 - Board action to request Preble-Rish to submit proposal to design and bid Alligator Point project as this is a larger project than a County Engineer can perform by himself.

Motion by Sanders, seconded by Lockley, to request a proposal from Preble-Rish to design and bid the Alligator Point project; Motion carried 5-0.

Item 3 - Board action to send letters to US Senators and Rep. Boyd regarding proposed rule changes proposed by the National Marine Fisheries Service which will drastically lower the fishing quotas for Red Snapper.

This item was addressed earlier in the meeting.

Item 4 - Board action to approve Resolution of Appreciation to Major Watson at the Work Camp who is being promoted and transferred to Century Correctional Institute. All the commissioners are invited to a luncheon in his honor on June 7 at Bay City Work Camp. If you are interested in going, please let Amy in my office know.

Motion by Lockley, seconded by Sanders, to approve a Resolution of Appreciation for Major Watson who is being promoted and transferred to Century Correctional Institute; Motion carried 5-0.

Item 5 - In May the TDC approved a request from the county commission to fund \$30,000 of infrastructure improvements for the St. George Island Lighthouse Museum and Visitor's Center. Since the St. George Island Lighthouse Association is a 501(c)3 organization, and will oversee the construction of the Visitor Center, the Finance Office can tender the \$30,000 to the Association and let them handle all construction bills. I recommend the Board transfer the funds to the Association as that will save the Finance office from cutting separate checks for construction materials. Board action.

Motion by Sanders, seconded by Lockley, to transfer the \$30,000 award to the St. George Island Lighthouse Association who will oversee the construction of the Museum and the Visitor's Center; Motion carried 5-0.

Item 6 - Board action to clarify who the Board will be sending to the ISSC meeting in August in Albuquerque.

This item was addressed earlier in the meeting.

Item 7 - Board action to request the City of Carrabelle allow the county to retrieve items it purchased for Sands Field baseball fields since the City is going to demolish the fields for a parking lot and stormwater drainage facility. The items will be relocated to Kendrick Park. The county spent approximately \$25,000 on various backstops, bleachers, and other baseball equipment approximately 5 years.

Motion by Putnal, seconded by Sanders, to forward a request to the City of Carrabelle allowing the County to retrieve items it purchased for Sands Field before it is demolished; Motion carried 5-0.

Item 8 - Board action to advertise and open qualifications for a construction manager for the courthouse renovations on July 3 Board meeting; and, to appoint a committee to review the qualifications and make a recommendation to the Board. I recommend the Board appoint a committee of Mark Curenton, Marcia Johnson or her designee, and Robin Brinkley.

Motion by Sanders, seconded by Lockley, to advertise, open qualifications for a construction manager, and appoint a committee of Mark Curenton, Marcia Johnson or her designee, and Robin Brinkley to review the qualifications and make a recommendation to the Board, for the courthouse renovation project; Motion carried 5-0.

Item 9 - Inform the Board that DCA has sent a letter determining that the Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) has been found sufficient. The Board can now move forward with making amendments to the Comp Plan that were prescribed in the EAR.

Item 10 - Provide written copy to Board on the emergency ordinance banning outdoor fires. Opinion of County Attorney is that the ordinance as worded does ban private fireworks, because the only fireworks allowed are those supervised by fire departments.

Item 11 - Mr. Kevin Begos, Seafood Task Force Coordinator, would like to update the Board on Task Force issues.

Mr. Begos asked the Board to make sure there are provisions for water access for seafood workers and commercial fisherman whenever the Board is able to obtain more waterfront property.

Item 12 - For the Board's information, the Task Force did submit a budget request of \$20,000 which the Board will discuss at its budget workshops later in the summer.

Item 13 - Alligator Point Beach Renourishment update on four issues:

- A) Verification on whether the gap between the critically eroding sections of the beach will be cost shared by DEP. Provide Board with copy of letter. If DEP does not help fund gap, local share costs will rise. We should have an answer by June 30.
- B) Verification on whether the state Park Service will allow the county to build and maintain parking and bathroom facilities. Last week Mike Dombrowski and I met with Mr. Mike Bullock, Parks Director, and provided him with a proposed layout for a 100 car parking lot and bathroom on one of the southern most parcels of Bald Point State Park. Provide Board with copy of letter to Mr. Bullock. He was receptive to the idea and hopes to respond by June 30. The site selected by Mike maximizes the cost sharing by the state as well as minimizes the cost of construction. As soon as we get a commitment from the Park Service, it will be my recommendation that we start building the parking lots and bathrooms because DEP will not officially agree to a cost share until they actually see the parking and bathroom facilities.
- C) Status of beach renourishment permit. At this time the permit is under review. There are three unresolved issues associated with the permit: biological opinion of the impact of the project; protection of threatened and endangered species including sea turtles and nesting piping plovers; and resolution of the debris issues. The biological opinion is not controversial and should be submitted by August. The protection of endangered species does have some problems, as the turtle agencies want to see better enforcement of turtle lighting on Alligator Point. Nesting Piping plovers are only a problem if they show up, but working around nesting birds could be a big problem. I told the environmental representatives that if the county moves forward with code enforcement that turtle lighting issues could become part of that position, and that the county would be considering code enforcement most likely in July. In order to get the permit the county will most likely have to make some changes in enforcing the turtle code on Alligator Point. The last issue is debris, and that is where the money is. DEP has not internally decided what approach it will take with the county, so we are waiting to see what they want, but debris removal could be expensive. The costs are considered part of the project so DEP will cost share, but we are trying to keep the costs in line with what we have previously told the public.
- D) Schedule of events- Upon consultation with Camille Tharpe, and Doris Pendleton, we are moving the schedule for Board action back a month to try and settle these cost issues. This means the Board will be having to deal with Alligator Point MSBU approval during August, when it is also holding budget workshops. We will be providing the Board with final assessment information at the July 16th meeting.
We are still planning on a beach renourishment project being completed before June 2008. Once the Board sets the MSBU Mike and I will be asking permission to move ahead with advertising for bids, even before DEP issues the permit because we are on a very tight timeline. The bid would not be awarded until after we make sure DEP issues the permit.

Item 14 - Provide Board with copies of six month Humane Society update letter.

Item 15 - Inform Board that the Public Workshop on the MSBU scheduled for tomorrow June 6 at 1 pm has been cancelled and will be rescheduled at a later date.

County Attorney Report (12:03 PM)

T. Michael Shuler

Attorney Shuler did not present any items for discussion and/or approval.

Commissioners' & Public Comments (12:03 PM)

Commissioner Lockley stated his concerns for the need of jobs for the residents of Franklin County especially the recent graduates.

Mayor Kelly, of the City of Carrabelle, stated that the new factory that will be located in Carrabelle is seeking employees and applications can be picked up at City Hall in Carrabelle. Mayor Kelly invited the public to the ground breaking ceremony for the new factory that will be held on June 21 @ 10:30 am.

Commissioner Sanders stated that companies involved with the construction of the new school will also be seeking employees.

Commissioner Crofton discussed other possible opportunities for employment.

Board directed Mr. Pierce to research the option of hiring a consulting company that would help with creating new jobs in the county.

Commissioner Parrish stated the need to change speed limit from the Burger King area westward where there were a lot of seafood and commercial businesses.

Motion by Parrish, seconded by Sanders, to ask Florida Department of Transportation, based on public safety, to reduce speed limit from 55 mph to 45 mph from Burger King westward; Motion carried 5-0.

Commissioner Parrish stated that he would like to extend the no glass container on public beaches ordinance cover all public sand bars.

Motion by Parrish, seconded by Lockley, to start the process to amend Ordinance 2003-12 to include the no glass container on public sand bars; Motion carried 5-0.

Commissioner Sanders stated that the next North West Florida Transportation Corridor Authority meeting will be on June 21 in Wakulla County at the Senior Citizen Center.

Commissioner Crofton stated that if Progress Energy is allowed to put above ground high power lines around airport, it will restrict use of the airport.

Motion by Sanders, seconded by Parrish, to send a letter to Progress Energy objecting to above ground power lines and stating that the County will only accept underground power lines at the Apalachicola Airport; Motion carried 5-0.

Sherman Thomas asked the Board to consider his requests that were made during a previous meeting at the upcoming budget workshops, and asked what is being done about the Mediacom rate increase.

The Board and Mr. Pierce stated that Mediacom rates are controlled by another agency, not the County Commission.

The Board directed Mr. Pierce to send a letter to Mediacom regarding Mr. Thomas comments.

Commissioner Sanders read letter from the County's Property Appraiser stating that the County's taxable value as of June 1, 2007 is \$3,974,168,609.00.

Adjourn (12:25 PM)

There being no further business Chairman Crofton adjourned the regular meeting at 12:25 PM.

G. Russell Crofton, Chairman FCBCC

Attest:

Marcia M. Johnson, Clerk of Courts