

**FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR MEETING  
FRANKLIN COUNTY COURTHOUSE ANNEX  
JANUARY 5, 2016  
9:00 AM**

**MINUTES**

**Commissioners Present: William Massey – Chairman, Joseph Parrish – Vice Chairman, Noah Lockley, Cheryl Sanders, Rick Watson**

**Others Present: Alan Pierce – Director of Administrative Services, Michael Shuler – County Attorney, Marcia M. Johnson-Clerk of Court, Lori P. Hines-Deputy Clerk to the Board.**

**Call to Order**

Chairman Massey called the meeting to Order.

**Prayer and Pledge**

There was a prayer followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Approval of the Minutes**

**On motion by Commissioner Lockley, seconded by Commissioner Sanders, and by unanimous vote of the Board present, it was agreed to approve the minutes from the meeting held on December 15, 2015.**

**Payment of County Bills**

**On motion by Commissioner Sanders, seconded by Commissioner Lockley, and by unanimous vote of the Board present, it was agreed to approve payment of the County's bills.**

**Department Directors Report**

**Howard Nabors – Superintendent of Public Works**

Mr. Nabors reported they are receiving calls but cannot work on the roads as they are full of water from the rain. He stated three roads are probably going to have damage and the roads are Gardner's Landing, Bloody Bluff and Pine Log Road (Abercrombie Boat Landing).

Commissioner Sanders asked about Sand Beach Road. Mr. Nabors said that road is good. Mr. Nabors explained most of the damage is wash outs around the pipes. Mr. Pierce stated there is

not enough damage in the area for the Governor to make a declaration so the damage will be the responsibility of the County. Mr. Nabors said they will work on the roads when the water is gone.

#### **Fonda Davis – Solid Waste Director**

Mr. Davis appeared before the Board but did not have a report at this time.

#### **Pam Brownell – Emergency Management Director**

Mrs. Brownell said there is one action item even though her report says none. Mr. Pierce informed the Board a state of emergency was declared by Mrs. Brownell because of the flooding. He explained Mrs. Brownell has the authority to issue the declaration and on small emergencies you need to let the public know about the warnings being received from various agencies. He explained this declaration started on December 31<sup>st</sup> and the Board needs to approve this notice. **On motion by Commissioner Lockley, seconded by Commissioner Watson, and by unanimous vote of the Board present, it was agreed to approve the state of emergency notice that started on December 31, 2015.** Mrs. Brownell stated the water at Blountstown is still holding at 24 feet and it may be Monday or Tuesday of next week before the water level drops below flood stage. Chairman Massey said another front is coming through soon. Mrs. Brownell said the area is experiencing El Niño so there will be a rainy season which will cause flooding. She explained there are some areas on Bluff Road where water is in the garages of homes and it will be awhile before the water recedes. Commissioner Watson asked if there are other areas that have sustained damage. Mrs. Brownell said Melanie Lane is flooded but the houses are on stilts so their only problem is getting in and out. She reported they knocked on the doors in this area and told homeowners the water was coming so they needed to move their vehicles to higher ground. Commissioner Sanders said the Franklin County side of the Ochlocknee River has not risen very much but it might. Mrs. Brownell reported they are watching the gauges in this area. Commissioner Sanders said it is odd the Ochlocknee River is not up as there has been flooding in Gadsden County. Mrs. Brownell reported the gauge at Blountstown was showing 25 but the Liberty County Emergency Management Director said her gauge is showing 26 feet. Commissioner Sanders explained the east end of the county is affected by the amount of water released at the Corn Hydro Dam at Lake Talquin. Mrs. Brownell stated the State notified her they were dropping the Corn Hydro Dam in anticipation of the rain.

#### Action Items:

None at this time

#### Information Items:

1. Franklin County performed Point of Distribution Exercise on Dec 14<sup>th</sup> at the Carrabelle City Complex.
2. Franklin County Emergency Management conducted a Local Mitigation Strategy meeting on 12/15/2015.
3. Jennifer Daniels attended G393 Class in December 19<sup>th</sup> 2015.
4. Jennifer Daniels has completed the course work for her Advanced Professional Development Series and now is awaiting her certificate.

#### **Erik Lovstrand – Extension Office Director**

Mr. Lovstrand appeared before the Board but said there are no additional items to his report.

#### **Franklin County Extension Activities December 16, 2015 – January 5, 2016**

UF/IFAS Extension Faculty have been involved in the following Extension activities during this period.

Short report due to staff utilizing leave during this period.

#### **General Extension Activities:**

- Extension Director completed University Workload Reporting.
- Extension Director participated in first County Restore Council meeting.

#### **Sea Grant Extension:**

- Next order of turtle lighting equipment has been made for lighting retrofits.
- Staff continuing to complete lighting survey work on properties for this year's work.
- Staff submitted sea turtle lighting project poster abstract for consideration as a presentation at the annual Association for Natural Resource Extension Professionals meeting in 2016.
- Extension Director working on Sea Grant annual reporting (OARS) for 2015.

#### **4-H Youth Development:**

- Franklin County Making Strides 4-H Club continues to meet.

#### **Agriculture/Horticulture:**

- Extension Director met with St Teresa homeowners on-site regarding eradication of cogon grass infestation. Met with private contractor regarding plan and costs.

#### **Delores Croom – Resolution of Recognition**

Mr. Pierce read a Resolution of Excellence for Dr. Frederick S. Humphries. **On motion by Commissioner Lockley, seconded by Commissioner Watson, and by unanimous vote of the Board present, it was agreed to adopt the Resolution of Excellence, as follows:**

RESOLUTION OF EXCELLENCE  
FRANKLIN COUNTY  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

WHEREAS, Dr. Frederick S. Humphries is a native son of Apalachicola, Florida, and proudly exclaims of his 7<sup>th</sup> Street residency in The Hill community; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Frederick S. Humphries completed his formative education in Apalachicola, attending both Holy Family Catholic School and Quinn High School, graduating in 1953; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Frederick S. Humphries was so impacted by the excellent and caring education he received in his hometown he adopted the motto of “excellence with caring,” an adage that successfully steered him through his college years at Florida Agriculture & Mechanical University in Tallahassee, Florida, where he graduated Magna Cum Laude in 1957; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Frederick S. Humphries, who chose education as his profession, continuously distinguished himself in this field, fulfilling and excelling in roles on the college level as teaching assistant, professor, and later president, first at Tennessee State University from 1974-1985, and later, at his alma mater, Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University, from 1985-2001, where his dynamic and expert leadership led the acclaimed university in tremendous growth; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Frederick S. Humphries has been and continues to be a champion of education for the students of his hometown of Apalachicola, the county of Franklin, all across the United States of America, and abroad.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, that we tender this resolution in honor of Dr. Frederick S. Humphries as a symbol of our appreciation in recognition of this native son’s many years of dedicated service to humanity, a true reflection of “excellence in caring.”

This RESOLUTION adopted by the Franklin County Board of County Commissioners this 5<sup>th</sup> Day of January, 2016.

s/William Massey  
William Massey, Chairman

ATTEST:

s/Marcia M. Johnson  
Marcia M. Johnson

Mr. Pierce read a Resolution of Excellence for Mrs. Betty Jean Croom-Wright. **On motion by**

**Commissioner Lockley, seconded by Commissioner Watson, and by unanimous vote of the Board present, it was agreed to adopt the Resolution of Excellence, as follows:**

**RESOLUTION  
OF  
EXCELLENCE  
FRANKLIN COUNTY  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

WHEREAS, Betty Jean Croom-Wright is a native and asset of Franklin County, Florida, the daughter of Granville Croom, Sr. and Lillie Mae Croom and the sister of eight siblings, and

WHEREAS, Betty attended and graduated from Quinn High School in 1959, and

WHEREAS, Betty attended and graduated from Florida A & M University in 1963 and taught for forty-four years in schools in Mainz, Germany; Tulsa, Lawson and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; and

WHEREAS, Betty has served as a specialist in math and science to schools across the state and nation and trained thousands of teachers in effective teaching strategies; and

WHEREAS, in 1979 Betty was recognized by Lawson, Oklahoma's Chamber of Commerce for the system of teaching economic principals she had developed at Crosby Elementary School, and

WHEREAS, in 1993 Betty received the National Donald J. Quigg Award by the United States Patent and Trademark Office Society of which only one is presented in the Library of Congress in Washington, DC each year; and

WHEREAS, in 1996 Former President George H.W. Bush presented Betty with the Presidential Award for Math and Science Teaching at the White House in the Rose Garden; and

WHEREAS, on August 1, 2014, Betty was inducted into the Oklahoma Education Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, the goal of the Oklahoma Educators Hall of Fame foundation is to identify and honor persons in Oklahoma education who have exemplified the ideals of leadership, service and research in the field of education; and

WHEREAS, each year the Oklahoma Educators Hall of Fame's Board convene to review nominations received from across the state; only educators with the highest lifetime achievement are eligible for the induction and to be selected for induction is among the highest honors in Oklahoma education.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS acknowledges the many outstanding contributions to students and teachers

of the United States of America, as well as accomplishments of this native daughter of Franklin County, Mrs. Betty Jean Croom-Wright.

This RESOLUTION ADOPTED on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2016.

s/William Massey  
William Massey, Chairman, Franklin  
County Board of County Commissioners

ATTEST:

s/Marcia M. Johnson  
Marcia M. Johnson, Clerk of Court

Mrs. Delores Hayward-Croom thanked Mr. Moron and Mr. Pierce for being so gracious in helping her get the Resolutions together. She presented a personal invitation to the Commissioners to attend the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Franklin County Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration on January 18, 2016 at 11:00 a.m. at the Chapman Auditorium. She requested all the Commissioners attend this celebration. She reported on January 19, 2016 Franklin County will have their first district wide Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration at the High School at 10:00 a.m. She invited the Commissioners to attend this celebration also. Mrs. Hayward-Croom said there has never been a mass march in Franklin County that she is aware of for anything and immediately after the celebration on January 18<sup>th</sup>, everyone will leave and travel down Highway 98 to the Courthouse. She stated Dr. King's dream has not been realized so it will be a "Still Dreaming March" all the way to the steps of the Courthouse.

#### **Jason Puckett – Airport Manager – Update**

Mr. Pierce reported Mr. Puckett is not present so he will explain about an accident that happened at the airport. He explained Dr. Randy Randolph's plane had just cleared the hanger when the heavy bi-fold door dropped off. He reported if it had happened a few minutes earlier it would have crushed the plane and possibly resulted in loss of life. He stated repairs are being completed and they are looking to modify the design so there are not cables holding the doors.

#### **Marcia Johnson – Clerk of Courts – Report**

Mrs. Johnson did not have a report at this time.

#### **Alan Pierce – RESTORE Coordinator – Report**

Mr. Pierce appeared before Board and presented the following report:

The first meeting of the re-organized RESTORE Act Committee (RAC) was held on Dec. 15, at 5 PM, in the Courthouse Annex in Apalachicola. All of the appointed RAC members were in attendance. The members received an over-view of their role as RAC members by the county RESTORE Coordinator, Alan Pierce, and by Ms. Stella Wilson, Dewberry Consultants. The meeting lasted a little over an hour.

The RAC members were advised that the committee falls under the Sunshine laws so they are not to discuss RAC business with each other outside of the meeting. At the meeting it was discussed about whether there was a need for a Chairman and at this time Mr. Pierce and Ms. Wilson will set the agenda and will run the meetings.

Ms. Wilson provided a handout which covered a great deal of information about the RESTORE Act and how Franklin County's Direct Component funds will flow to the county. Very briefly, the RAC was told it is their job to make a recommendation to the county commission on a Multi-Year Implementation Plan (MYIP). The MYIP is the document that the county must submit to US Treasury in order to access Direct Component funds. At this time there is \$3.5M in the Direct Component fund for Franklin County, but after all of the BP funds are distributed, which is over a 15 year period, there will be approximately \$23M in Direct Component for the county. The RAC will develop criteria which will be used to evaluate and rank projects. It will be some time before the RAC is ready to receive projects, but one of the criteria that Mr. Pierce and Ms. Wilson encouraged the RAC and the public to utilize is the power of leveraging funds. Projects that benefit the community and come in with other funds are most likely going to rank higher than projects that do not have outside funds. Mr. Pierce reiterated what Mr. Bryon Griffith has said to the county commission previously. The goal of the county should be to turn the \$23M of Direct Component funds into \$50M of work in the county by encouraging matching funds for every project.

Mr. Pierce said the next meeting should be the end of January or the beginning of February. Commissioner Lockley questioned if they are meeting once a month. Mr. Pierce answered no more than once a month but the next meeting may be in February. Commissioner Watson asked about the timeframe for receiving applications if there is \$3.5 million in the fund. Mr. Pierce said the RAC will make a recommendation on how to score the proposals and when the Board agrees to the scoring mechanism then the County can begin to receive applications. He estimated the timeframe to receive applications to be 3-6 months. Commissioner Lockley questioned if there are only certain things the \$3.5 million can be spent on. Mr. Pierce reported this component is for certain and does not go away but the federal government does keep all the interest. He explained there are no guidelines beyond what the U.S. Treasury has set up under the Restore Act. He said Dewberry advised them there are no special percentages in the direct component money but in other funds there are categories with specific percentages. Mr. Pierce stated according to Dewberry the direct component money is not bound by those percentages but there are still requirements for how the money is spent. Commissioner Lockley asked when the guidelines will be out. Mr. Pierce said the guidelines have been out for some time and are broad based in 8 general areas. He advised the Board the

Restore funds cannot be used for operating expenses for existing programs. Mr. Pierce went on to say if the County starts a program with Restore funds then Treasury may want to know how the program will be run after the money ends. Mr. Pierce said it will be a challenge to get projects through the Treasury. He stated in the spring they will have a better idea of how to proceed. Mr. Pierce said even though the County did not get started early we will catch up quickly because no County has gotten the MYIP approved, received any money or had any projects approved. Mr. Pierce reported on 1/11/16 he will attend the second meeting with the 8 counties about the Triumph fund. He said they do not know when the money will be received but the 8 counties will work together because they are trying to show unity and keep all the Triumph funds directed and retained by Northwest Florida. Mr. Pierce explained because the Judge has not approved the funds yet, there is no action in the legislature. He informed the Board he asked about a Resolution opposing a change to the Triumph fund but the 8 counties do not want it sent unless the Triumph fund is on the legislative agenda. Mr. Pierce stated the 8 counties are trying to come up with a plan to submit to the Triumph Board of Directors showing an eagerness to work together and dedication to improve the area.

#### **Michael Morón – County Coordinator – Report**

Mr. Moron was not present at the meeting.

Chairman Massey reported the boat that was submerged at the boat ramp has been pulled onto the landing and the motor has been removed so the knuckle boom truck can move the boat. Mr. Pierce agreed to contact Mr. Nabors to get the boat moved.

Mr. Pierce reported notice has been received that the U.S. Forest Service will be doing some thinning in the Apalachicola National Forest. He read the notice for the Board. Commissioner Sanders said to make sure they keep the County roads up when they are doing this work. Mr. Pierce stated the only county roads in this area are a portion of Fort Gadsden Road and Brickyard Road. Commissioner Sanders asked if there is a policy of providing a bond for the roads to make sure they are maintained. Mr. Pierce agreed to contact the U.S. Forest Service. Commissioner Sanders suggested Mr. Pierce contact Mr. Nabors to make sure there are no other county roads involved in this area. Mr. Pierce agreed to contact Mr. Nabors.

Mr. Pierce presented a Resolution opposing the proposed change to the TDC funds. He explained the main objection was some of the funds generated locally by the TDC tax were required to be sent to Tallahassee. Mr. Pierce said the senator has dropped the proposal but not the whole idea so a Resolution has been prepared. **On motion by Commissioner Sanders, seconded by Commissioner Watson, and by unanimous vote of the Board present, it was agreed to adopt the Resolution, as follows:**



**RESOLUTION  
OF  
OPPOSITION  
FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD  
OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF FRANKLIN COUNTY FLORIDA IN OPPOSITION TO LEGISLATION CHANGING THE USE OF TOURIST DEVELOPMENT TAXES AND REMOVING LOCAL CONTROL OF THE APPOINTMENT OF A SUPER-MAJORITY OF TDC BOARD MEMBERS, ALL OF WHICH WOULD HAVE A CATESTROPHIC EFFECT ON THE TOURISM INDUSTRY IN FRANKLIN COUNTY, FLORIDA AND WHICH FUTHER UNDERMINES THE HOME RULE POWERS GUARANTEED TO FRANKLIN COUNTY BY THE FLORIDA CONSTITUTION.

**WHEREAS:** Franklin County, Florida currently levies a 2% tourist tax on transient rentals which generates approximately \$1.1 million in revenue to promote tourism in Franklin County, and

**WHEREAS:** tourism in Franklin County represents an industry worth over \$100 million to the local economy, and

**WHEREAS:** the tourism industry represents approximately 60% of the economy of Franklin County, Florida, and

**WHEREAS:** the Apalachicola Bay is a world heritage site and the damage to its world famous oysters caused by the State of Georgia's increasing restrictions on downstream fresh water flows has made Franklin County disproportionately reliant on tourism as the primary engine for the local economy.

**WHEREAS:** the residents of Franklin have experienced numerous natural and man-made events that have negatively impacted the local economy including: hurricanes, floods, the BP oil spill, the demise of portions of its fishing industry, the man-made reductions in fresh water flows down the Apalachicola River, and the national economic crisis, from which the county is just now beginning to recover, and

**WHEREAS:** the Florida House of Representatives Finance and Tax Committee is considering filing a proposed committee bill during the 2016 session which would make modifications to the purposes and uses of local tourist tax revenues, and

**WHEREAS:** any modification to existing tourist tax legislation mandating the use of collected tourist tax funds would unduly hamper the work of the Franklin County Tourist Development in its duty to promote the county's tourism industry, and

**WHEREAS:** any modification to the existing tourist tax legislation that would mandate changes in the board appointment process would serve to minimize the local control over the use of a locally imposed tax, and

**WHEREAS:** any provision possible proposed legislation that would require unnecessary administrative review and legal remedies would further add to the reduction of the funds available for the purposes for which the tourist development taxes have been assessed, and

**WHEREAS:** the proposed amendments further undermine the Home Rule powers guaranteed to Franklin County without sufficient cause or public good.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF FRANKLIN COUNTY THAT:**

1. The preamble to this resolution is approved and incorporated herein by this reference and is effective immediately upon adoption.

2. The Commission objects in the strongest way possible to any changes to the tourist development legislation that would mandate the use of funds collected by the tax for purposes other than local promotion.

3. The Commission also strongly objects to any proposed revisions that would change the method of the appointment of the local Tourism Development Council members including specifically any and all efforts to remove local control of the appointment of TDC members who make decisions on the use of a tax approved by local residents.

4. The Commission objects to any proposed provisions that would unnecessarily increase the administrative overhead of the tourist development program, currently limited to a maximum of 9% of total collections, by the addition of costly and unnecessary bureaucratic provisions.

5. The Commission specifically requests that the Florida Legislature not consider or approve any of the possible changes to existing tourist development tax legislation set forth herein.

6. That this **RESOLUTION** be conveyed to the Franklin County Legislative Delegation and also be distributed to the Florida Association of Counties, the Florida Association of Destination Marketing Organizations and the Florida Tourist Development Tax Association with a request of support.

**DONE AND ADOPTED** by the Franklin County Board of County Commissioners this the 5th day of January, 2016.

**FRANKLIN COUNTY, a political  
subdivision of the  
STATE OF FLORIDA**

BY: s/William Massey  
William Massey, its Chairman

**ATTEST:**

Marcia M. Johnson

Marcia M. Johnson, Clerk of Courts

Approved as to form and content:

s/Thomas M. Shuler

Thomas M. Shuler, Franklin County Attorney

Commissioner Sanders informed the Board she received a call from one of the members of the Northwest Florida Transportation Corridor Authority asking if the County would be willing to be dropped out of the Corridor. Commissioner Sanders reported one of the reasons the Corridor was founded in 2005 was to include the 8 counties from Escambia County to Wakulla County. She said her understanding is the Secretary of the Department of Transportation thinks the Northwest Corridor is too bulky and needs to be streamlined so they were asking if any counties want to opt out of the Corridor. Commissioner Sanders stated she suggested to the member that they need to review the legislative intent of the Corridor. Commissioner Sanders stated she is one of the longest standing members and the only representative Franklin County has ever had on the Corridor. She reported if one of the Counties is not a part of the Corridor then it should lose it's authority to exist. Commissioner Sanders said the person who called her represented Escambia County and now represents Santa Rosa County. She informed the Board she told him they need to review the legislation establishing the Corridor because she does not think the Secretary of the Department of Transportation can change the Corridor. Commissioner Sanders reported there is a move to get rid of Wakulla County and Franklin County. She went on to say, according to the person who called, Wakulla County does not have a problem with being removed from the Corridor. Mr. Pierce agreed the County does not want to lose their position on this Corridor as it shows solidarity for the other funds they are looking at but there may also be a need in the future to have a road replaced if there is storm damage. He stated the County may need to use this Corridor to assist with getting help with this road. Commissioner Sanders said she informed them the County wants to stay in the Corridor and if they tried to remove the County, they will oppose that suggestion. Mr. Pierce reported Franklin County has been compliant by letting all the 5 counties and Authority get the start up money and do some planning and designing because we did not have immediate needs for another highway but at some point we may need assistance. Commissioner Sanders stated we do not have big bypasses but do have highways subject to hurricane damage. She said she will convey to the Corridor that things need to be left alone.

Mr. Pierce reminded the Board FAC Legislative Days are coming up soon and they need to know what days the Commissioners want to attend. He explained the Board may need to talk with the delegation about this change to the Corridor. Commissioner Watson questioned why the Department of Transportation would not contact the County about changes. Commissioner

Sanders said they may be contacting the members of the Corridor as DOT meets regularly with the Corridor. She explained if the Corridor ceases to exist for Wakulla County and Franklin County, then it needs to cease to exist for the other 6 counties.

Mr. Puckett presented an update on the airport rehabilitation project. He explained a pre-construction conference was held on 12/15/15 and the Notice to Proceed date is 1/11/16. He stated it includes the replacement of concrete joints on Runway 1432, pipe replacement under Taxiway B2 and beacon tower replacement and the contract amount for this project \$854,000.

Mr. Puckett said work is being done on the commercial access road and infrastructure on a potential small industrial park. He reported the additional survey and environmental work is complete and they are working on the grading and stormwater improvements associated with the road and industrial park. He stated Avcon is working to get some finalized plans. He reported total DOT funding for this project is \$3.4 million.

Mr. Puckett stated the 90% design plans are complete for the airfield lighting upgrade project. He reported they are working on the 100% design plans and this project should be released for bids in April. Mr. Puckett said construction will start in late July and the total DOT funding for this project is \$1.1 million.

Mr. Puckett said a grant was approved by DOT for an economic development study. He explained the grant will be released around July 1<sup>st</sup> but the study has already been started. He said hopefully when the study is completed the money will be ready. Commissioner Lockley asked who is completing the study. Mr. Puckett answered Avcon. Mr. Pierce said Ms. Beth Kirkland is completing this work for Avcon. Mr. Puckett reminded the Board Ms. Kirkland was present with Mr. Lee Lewis when he gave a presentation for Avcon. Mr. Pierce reported Ms. Kirkland is also tied to the Triumph Fund.

Commissioner Lockley asked when the road to the Industrial Park will be ready. Mr. Puckett estimated the plans will be about 90% complete by August. He reported the project will start the end of 2016 or the beginning of 2017 but the funds are coming for this project. Commissioner Lockley questioned when someone can build. Mr. Pierce said there is access but it is not good at this time as you would have to drive in the taxiway. Mr. Puckett reported they are trying to create a safety zone and do not want tenants driving on the taxiways to their hangers. He said the access road to the hangers will also have a road to the industrial park. Mr. Pierce stated the land is pretty clear so they could provide access if someone wanted to build but the access would have to change when the road was established. Mr. Puckett agreed they will accommodate anyone who wants to build.

### **T. Michael Shuler – County Attorney – Report**

Attorney Shuler said at the December 15<sup>th</sup> meeting the Board approved his review of the contract for the purchase of the trash compactor at the landfill but did not authorize the

Chairman to sign the contract if they should finalize the contract terms. **Commissioner Parrish made a motion to authorize the Chairman to sign the contract for the purchase of the trash compactor. Commissioner Lockley seconded the motion. Motion carried; 5-0.**

### **Commissioners' & Public Comments**

Commissioner Lockley stated 2-3 months ago when the SHIP program said money had come in, he sent someone out to try and get down payment assistance. He explained there was something misinterpreted and she did not get the funding because she purchased a foreclosed house and thought the house had to be new. **On motion by Commissioner Lockley, seconded by Commissioner Sanders, and by unanimous vote of the Board present, it was agreed to ask staff to review whether or not this down payment assistance can be provided at this time.**

Mr. Clay Kennedy, Preble-Rish, said a Notice to Proceed needs to be issued to C.W. Roberts for the Road Paving Project. Commissioner Parrish questioned how long it will take to get started with the paving. Mr. Kennedy estimated 2 weeks from today. Chairman Massey requested they start paving on the east side of the County in Carrabelle. Mr. Kennedy reported he did not ask what District the contractor will start with but Mr. Smallwood may have talked with the contractor. Chairman Massey explained Avenue F is in bad shape. Commissioner Parrish stated it will not take long to complete all of the paving since they did not have much money to do paving.

Mr. Alan Feifer, Concerned Citizens of Franklin County, stated Weems Health Systems is the largest program the County oversees and has direct control over and some people do not know what happened last week. He said at the special meeting an additional \$640,000 was approved in addition to the \$280,000 provided the first part of December for a total of \$920,000 in the month of December. Chairman Massey explained it is three payments to pay the employees and \$100,000. Mr. Feifer reported there is not enough discussion about this issue but some of the Commissioners are very concerned. He said the meeting last week was about cash flow but it is not the totality of the issue. Mr. Feifer reported half of the indigent care, about \$1 million a year, is going to Sacred Heart and he questioned if they would return if Weems could match the services provided. Mr. Feifer stated if Sacred Heart is losing money with all their services and affiliations, what chance does Weems have. He stated they need a public discussion of the Weems finances and a mechanism needs to be created to handle issues related to cash flow without the necessity of an emergency meeting. Commissioner Sanders stated she has brought up the same facts and the internal problems need to be fixed. Commissioner Sanders reported she does not know what the problem is but she keeps asking so they can try to fix the problem. Mr. Feifer stated the County can't talk about an addition or renovation when they do not know what is being proposed. He requested a workshop with the public to create a mechanism so if there are cash flow problems they don't have to wait until it becomes an emergency situation. Commissioner Sanders reported Mr. Brian Robinson at the special meeting discussed a line of credit for the hospital but the Commission initiated getting the Health Care Tax and they have

always overseen it. She reported she is scared this burden will be back on the people. She said she does not feel good discussing this issue without the hospital representatives present. She stated this will be an issue until there is adequate cash flow which will be accomplished with long term providers. She explained she has no problem with a meeting but she is not sure what it will accomplish. Mr. Feifer expressed concern that the Commissioners did not know the expenses at the hospital were up to \$932,000 last year. He said there is distance between the operations at the Hospital and the County Commission and yet the County Commission has total authority and responsibility over what happens at the Hospital. Mr. Feifer said they are approaching taking half of the HCTF money reserved for the capital side. He reported the HCTF balance left for capital is down to \$1.3 million and asked if the Clerk would verify this balance. Mrs. Johnson estimated the balance to be \$1.2 million. Commissioner Watson reported the advance from the HCTF was a loan. Mr. Feifer stated 8 years ago they were loaned \$1.5 million and the money was not repaid. He said historically over the last 11-12 years the money does not come back. Commissioner Watson stated this comment is not correct. Mr. Pierce explained in December, 2005 the leaseholder walked in and said they could not make payroll so the Board did finance payroll for 2-3 months. He said the Board had to incur this debt to keep the Hospital open but the current management cannot be held responsible for that group. Mr. Pierce said the money was an infusion of cash that will probably not come back and was not specifically a loan. Commissioner Sanders reported she made the decision because there was a little over \$1 million to do paving at Alligator Point but the Board had to face the Hospital closing so the money was given to the hospital. She said they then applied for and received a \$1.5 million grant for the paving at Alligator Point Road and the road was paved. She said the money given to the Hospital was never paid back. She stated they still can't make payroll. She reported if the County has the Hospital then they will have to expect this kind of thing. Commissioner Lockley said all of this is blown out of proportion and these things happened before the HCTF was in place. He explained the money is now coming out of the HCTF and not out of ad valorem taxes. Mr. Feifer said the intent of the HCTF was to use 50% for capital and 50% for operations. He explained they are not able to run the Hospital with 50% of the HCTF so now every year they are taking out of the capital side. He requested a public discussion on this matter. He stated if the capital money is used up then the cost will be funded with ad valorem taxes. Commissioner Lockley reported the HCTF is not going to run out as they will put the money back. He explained months ago they knew this was coming with the federal government going into a new program and it will take time to get things straightened out. Commissioner Lockley said if things get straightened out with the federal government and then the money is not paid back then there may be an issue to discuss.

### **Adjourn**

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 10:04 a.m.

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William Massey - Chairman

Attest:

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Marcia M. Johnson - Clerk of Courts