

**FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
COURTHOUSE ANNEX, COMMISSION MEETING ROOM
OCTOBER 1, 2024
9:00 AM
MINUTES**

Commissioners Present: Ricky Jones-Chairman, Jessica Ward-Vice-Chairman, Cheryl Sanders, Office Amison, and Anthony Croom, Jr.

Others Present: Michele Maxwell-Clerk of Court, Michael Shuler-County Attorney, Michael Moron-County Coordinator, Erin Griffith-Fiscal Manager/Grants Coordinator, Steve Paterson-Building Official and Jessica Gay-Clerk to the Board

Call to Order

Chairman Jones called the meeting to order.

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Jones led the Board in prayer followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Moron noted that Mrs. Griffith added an item to her agenda. Mrs. Griffith noted that the Property Appraiser had an additional request for capital outlay, to purchase a new desk and install flooring. Chairman Jones noted that it will be adding a #6 to her report. Mrs. Griffith confirmed. Chairman Jones called for public comments and there were none.

On a motion by Commissioner Amison, seconded by Commissioner Ward and Commissioner Croom, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the agenda as presented with an addition to Mrs. Griffith's report. Motion carried 5-0.

Approval of Minutes and Payment of County Bills

1. Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Commissioner Amison, seconded by Commissioner Sanders, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the minutes from the FCBCC Budget Hearing 9/3/2024 and Special Meeting 9/17/2024. Motion carried 5-0.

2. County Bill List for Payment

On a motion by Commissioner Sanders, seconded by Commissioner Amison and Commissioner Ward, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the Payment of County Bills for outstanding invoices for the last fiscal year. Motion carried 5-0. Commissioner Sanders said she is requesting the Board release the \$175k to Roberts and Roberts. The owner came down and spoke to her and she feels better about it. Mr. Moron asked if that would require pay application. Mrs. Griffith noted that it will require invoicing, and they have not received it yet. Once you all make the decision on the striping, we will move forward and get that buttoned up. **On a motion by Commissioner Sanders, seconded by Commissioner Ward, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the Payment of County Bills for the current billing cycle. Motion carried 5-0.**

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Constitutional Officers Department Directors Reports

3. Jennifer Daniels – Emergency Management Director

1. Request the board of County Commissioners approval and retroactive signing of the LSE for Hurricane Helene on September 23, 2024, and extension on September 30, 2024.

STATE OF EMERGENCY PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, emergency conditions exist or are anticipated due to the effects of "Potential Tropical Cyclone Nine", and,

WHEREAS, the Franklin County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan is hereby activated and the Franklin County Board of County Commissioners (the Board") and their representatives shall have the power, authorities and

duties to take any and all action under the plan necessary for the preservation of the health, welfare and safety of the people and property of Franklin County; and,

WHEREAS, Florida Statutes 252.38 provides authority and responsibility for safeguarding the life and property of the citizens of Franklin County; and

WHEREAS, Florida Statutes 252.38 provides authority for the waiver by the Board of procedures and formalities otherwise required of Franklin County under the circumstance of a Local State of Emergency; and,

WHEREAS, there is necessity for a prompt and efficient response and recovery in order to safeguard lives and property affected by the emergency and/or disaster.

NOW, THEREFORE, pursuant to Florida Statutes, Section 252.38, the Franklin County Board of County Commissioners issues a State of Local Emergency for Franklin County, Florida, beginning this 23rd day of September 2023 at 8:00am ET. Any person not abiding by this Order is guilty of a misdemeanor of the second degree and subject to penalties established under Section 252.50, F.S. and/or any other portion(s) of Florida Statutes.

DONE this 23rd day of September 2024 at 8 :00am ET.

STATE OF EMERGENCY PROCLAMATION-EXTENSION

WHEREAS, emergency conditions exist or are anticipated due to the effects of "Hurricane Helene", and,

WHEREAS, the Franklin County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan is hereby activated and the Franklin County Board of County Commissioners (the Board") and their representatives shall have the power, authorities and duties to take any and all action under the plan necessary for the preservation of the health, welfare and safety of the people and property of Franklin County; and,

WHEREAS, Florida Statutes 252.38 provides authority and responsibility for safeguarding the life and property of the citizens of Franklin County; and

WHEREAS, Florida Statutes 252.38 provides authority for the waiver by the Board of procedures and formalities otherwise required of Franklin County under the circumstance of a Local State of Emergency; and,

WHEREAS, there is necessity for a prompt and efficient response and recovery in order to safeguard lives and property affected by the emergency and/or disaster.

NOW, THEREFORE, pursuant to Florida Statutes, Section 252.38, the Franklin County Board of County Commissioners issued a State of Local Emergency for Franklin County, Florida, beginning this 23rd day of September 2023 at 8:00am ET. Any person not abiding by this Order is guilty of a misdemeanor of the second degree and subject to penalties established under Section 252.50, F.S. and/or any other portion(s) of Florida Statutes.

DONE this 30th day of September 2024 at 8:00am ET.

On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Amison, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board retroactively approved the Local State of Emergency Proclamation for Hurricane Helene. Motion carried 5-0.

2. Request the board of County Commissioners approval to proceed with an urgent repair of the EOC's sewer system.

Thursday evening, we had approximately 35 people from a wide range of agencies trying to bunk at the Emergency Operations Center. We had bedding, food, and floor space for them, but for the second recent activation our sewer system failed, backing sewage into our restrooms. This is not a clogged line, but a failure to accommodate the number of people involved in an activation. We had no toilets, basins, or our one shower. We resorted to using a camping protocol for human waste. The current EOC was designed as a weather station with a staff of about six. It had two restrooms and no shower and fed into a septic tank and drain field. More recently our sewage has been connected to the Apalachicola wastewater system. That system is dependent on local power and is not able to handle the huge influx of street water during a storm. We are working with Apalachicola to find a solution before our next storm. The expected proposal is that we empty and crush the original septic tank, connect the EOC directly to the grinder pump with PVC pipe, and assure that the pump is powered from the EOC so that it will be on our generator during a power outage. This solution should cost in the low thousands of dollars. The obvious long-term solution is construction of our new EOC. In the meantime, we have to function. We ask the Commission's understanding of our situation, and for speedy consideration of our plan as soon as we can supply details and an expected cost.

Mrs. Daniels reported that there were issues with the EOC restrooms during the recent activation. We need to pump and crush the tank. She noted the rain is filling up our tank. We need to wire the lift station to our generator or to our building, so that when we lose power the generator will run the lift station. Chairman Jones asked if she had received a quote on this. Mrs. Daniels noted that Tim has been in contact with Johnny Collins to get a quote. He is going to contact him again today and have him come out to the site. Chairman Jones noted that he does not think we will need a grinder if it is gravity fed. Chairman Jones asked Mrs. Daniels if she need permission to get quotes. **Commissioner Ward made a motion to obtain quotes to fix the sanitary situation, seconded by Commissioner Amison and Commissioner Croom.** Mrs. Daniels noted that she would like to get this corrected as soon as possible especially since we have a storm in the gulf. Commissioner Sanders asked if we could approve it contingent on an amount so that we can get it done asap. Chairman Jones noted that we need to make sure we have trailers ordered should we have

another storm. Mrs. Daniels noted that we will do that, however, they cannot bring them in until after the storm. Commissioner Amison noted that several types of contractors may be needed for this repair and possibly each would not be over \$10k. Mrs. Griffith noted that for \$10-25k three written quotes are required, but anything under 10k does not. Commissioner Amison noted that if you get a few contractors in place to do this, you could have them split up the jobs so that each of them are under \$10k. Commissioner Ward so hypothetically we can approve something retroactively. Chairman Jones noted that the way the policy is now, up to \$10k can be approved by staff, and anything \$10-25k can be approved with staff and three quotes. Mr. Moron noted that he and Erin will work with Jennifer to get this taken care of. **Motion carried 5-0.**

Mrs. Daniels noted that we have had an issue in Lanark Village with flooding and we had to call someone in to pump. North Florida Water Management has come in. Chairman Jones noted that he is glad NFWM has stepped in because they have more jurisdiction. Mrs. Daniels noted that we have had 20-24 inches of rain before Helene, does not have the totals from Helene at this time. Chairman Jones said he thinks our water table has changed since Hurricane Michael. He noted that there are several places we need to address for drainage. He noted that he talked to someone about the FEMA buyback property program to use for water management. Mrs. Daniels noted that we have NFWM coming to help on Bay City Road also. Commissioner Ward thanked Mrs. Daniels for everything her staff did. Hate it for our friends on the east and north of us. Also say, I do not know what emails you are getting. If you start to get redundant information, please let me know. Mrs. Daniels noted that she would rather you share than not to get it at all. Commissioner Sanders said this problem that is going on at Lanark, has happened several times. I brought the subject up at the last meeting about us having problems with. I met with St. Joe Company because we felt it may be something they have done. They said they would put berms out there. I have asked everybody can we pump that water and was told no. Commissioner Sanders expressed her thoughts on how some citizens viewed her response to the flooding issues in Lanark. Chairman Jones noted that it is fair to say that all of us have been on an emotional roller coastal these past few days. He noted there are areas all over the county that are holding water where they never had. Mrs. Daniels noted that we have a LMS meeting coming up this month. One of the things that opened up some doors, is that we did have Helene. If there are projects out in the county that need mitigation, we need to get the projects on the LMS list so that if money does come available, we can push forward. Mr. Moron noted that Commissioner Sanders did exactly what we need to do, she called the engineer. We can then seek funding . He noted we do not have staff to maintain or create the ditches that we may need. Mr. Moron said you could hire a company to work under him. Mr. Moron noted that this is the best way to get this process started. Commissioner Sanders noted that John Crowe with NWFL Management said that would probably more than likely be mitigation. He noted that the one good thing I did was get the engineer on it. He noted that we are going to work together. He noted the engineers we have are the same engineers working with NWFL Management. She noted that she wanted to add this to the mitigation list. She noted that there is another property on Hwy 67 that also needs to be added, the natural drain has been messed up. First time ever in my 69 plus years that I have ever saw the water over 67. We need to all work together. Mrs. Daniels noted that through this we have all worked together to get things done. Commissioner Ward noted that after Hurricane Michael a lot of trees were lost and that has attributed to the flooding. We have to work together as a team. The public has to understand that we can only do so much, and we do need help from the state and federal government. Chairman Jones said so we are going to continue engaging with the engineers, as commissioners we need to come up with the two to five areas really problem areas in our districts that need to be addressed and to get those on the LMS list. In saying that some of these things could be resolved by agreements with property owners, by easements or dedications. Some of these issues could be handled without putting them on the LMS list. Mr. Moron said each of get your list and take to Caleb. Let him give you the estimated cost for the projects and then make your decision to put on the LMS. Commissioner Ward asked were not we are looking at engaging ARPC to help us out with the stormwater drainage project. Chairman Jones noted that we have discussed it but have not engaged them. Commissioner Ward noted that we are definitely going to have to move forward with it. Mrs. Daniels noted that the LMS list that we have is a living document. Please anytime you see something send it to me that way we can get something started. Chairman Jones said there are also going to be areas that we may do not have ditches and ditches need to be added. We are not going to get complaints about water when the county right of way is being taken up by the residents. Commissioner Sanders said you have to have a culvert pipe in those ditches. You see the amount of rain that we have, there is something going on. She noted that not every lot in Franklin County is buildable. Commissioner Ward noted that she rides her district and is taking notes of culverts. We have an ordinance in place about all of that.

Mr. Moron presented item #1 on his report at this time.

Chairman Jones inquired if we issue emergency permits and the board decides to waive the cost, is there a way the board can get this money back through FEMA? Mrs. Daniels noted that she believes so it just has to be tracked very carefully.

Mr. Paterson presented Emergency Repair Permits item from Mr. Moron's report at this time.

1. Action Item: Emergency Repair Permits

The Building Department will issue emergency repair permits for damages related to Hurricane Helene. In the past, the County has reduced or waived the associated fee for emergency repair permits. The Building Official is responsible for determining if the repairs are hurricane related and is here to speak on this matter. As a reminder, all repairs and development to properties require a permit from the Building Department. Board action to reduce or waive permit fees for damages related to Hurricane Helene as determined by the County's Building Official.

Chairman Jones said anyone who is having to do any repairs, needs to use a license insured contractor. There is no reason not to. If you are having to build or do something, get someone who is licensed and insured. Mr. Patterson noted that a lot of people who come in from out of town, there are a lot of predatory contractors who take advantage of people in their weakened state. The Board discussed the damages reported around the county. Mr. Patterson noted that safety is priority too. If you cannot physically, do it, there are resources. Mrs. Daniels noted that the county did get approved for individual assistance and they will be coming to town. Mr. Moron noted that it should be out behind the old jail, like where the driver's license used to come and the blood bank. Chairman Jones asked if the Board wanted to discuss waiving or reducing the permit fee. The Board consensus was to waive the fees. Mr. Patterson suggested giving residents 60-90 days to get on the list for approved permits at no charge. **Commissioner Ward made a motion to waive the permit fees for damage received by Hurricane Helene, seconded by Commissioner Amison and Commissioner Croom. Motion carried 5-0.** Commissioner Sanders asked if we are going to have any kind of debris pick up around Alligator Point. Mrs. Daniels noted that we put out some information about how to sort your debris. We put it out all year long. If the debris is not sorted property, it will not be picked up. We plan to start pick up on Monday. Chairman Jones said we probably all talked to Mr. Benny Jacobs from Webber. He noted that they are wanting to wait and do one push on Hwy 98 due to the storm out there now. Chairman Jones noted that the residents need to know this. Mrs. Daniels noted that she has asked them to do this push through now because of debris that could potentially float and fly in a future storm. Commissioner Ward noted that some people have taken things to the landfill. She said she understood the whole waiting thing, understanding both sides. Commissioner Sanders noted that it is a shame that we have to wait post storm to do things. Commissioner Amison said you mentioned something about giving nonresidents a weekend to get down here. He noted that a lot of people north of us have a lot of other things going on. Mrs. Daniels noted that unfortunately after they run the debris contractors pick up, the homeowners would have to take it themselves or take it on amnesty day. That is the only way we can get reimbursed through FEMA. Commissioner Ward asked if there was a certain criteria that we have to meet in order to have the debris contractors come. Mrs. Daniels noted there is not except for anything you activate after a storm the county is responsible for payment. If it is not a big storm up to a certain category the county would not be reimbursed. Commissioner Croom thanked Mrs. Daniels and the volunteers for their work. Commissioner Croom asked if in the future, can we have a meeting before an LSE, either remote or in person, including our department heads, so that we make sure all areas are covered. Noted that he believes it would be beneficial. Commissioner Ward noted that she agrees and that she called all of the department heads to make sure they had everything they needed to do their jobs effectively. Mr. Moron noted that the reason we do not have emergency meetings, is because the Board has delegated the Chairman and EOC to take charge in the event of an emergency. He noted that we cannot have a virtual meeting. You are either in the meeting in person or you do not have it. Mr. Moron said he will try to schedule an emergency meeting, basically the Chairman and EOC are in charge during an LSE. This storm was very different. The window was very short. Decisions were made and the storm was here. Mr. Moron noted that like with payroll, the bank requires three days for direct deposit. If the desire of the board is to have an emergency meeting, he will go forward with that. Commissioner Sanders noted that it was also the end of the year, and it had to be reconciled. She noted that we can not give money to evacuate on. Chairman Jones noted that we have never even had that conversation. That has never come up. Chairman Jones noted that you do not have a mandatory evacuation because it is coming to you, but they need to lookup photos from Horseshoe Beach. Mrs. Daniels noted that if we would have received the 20-foot storm surge that was predicted, it would have been unsurvivable. Mr. Moron said for the next storm, he will get with Chairman Jones to see if he wants to call a meeting. Mrs. Daniels noted that if there were specific questions the Board would like answers to before each storm, just compile the list and send it to her. Chairman Jones noted during a state of emergency, he may not have all the answers, but you should be looking at the EOC. Once a state of emergency is issued, they are the ones coordinating all functions of the county.

Commissioner Sanders noted that as soon as we are getting ready to call a state of emergency, we need to schedule the meeting. She noted that it takes all of the departments working together to make things happen. At the point that you all feel we need to call an LSE, we need to hold a meeting. Chairman Jones asked if we have to provide a certain amount of notice for emergency meetings. Attorney Shuler noted that there are no time restraints for noticing emergency meetings. Clerk Maxwell noted that she reached out to the auditor about issuing payroll early, and it was really frowned upon by them. She did not feel comfortable in going against the auditor's opinion. Also, we have to provide information to the bank within a certain amount of time in order to process direct deposit. Commissioner Croom noted that he brought this up because he received several calls. Commissioner Croom said word got out that the school board was paid early. Commissioner Sanders noted that we used to do it every time we had a storm. She noted that she thinks it was during the time we had so many storms back-to-back that this process was changed.

Commissioner Ward noted that we also need to come up with a way to communicate if we get cut off from communication. Commissioner Ward gave praise to the county employees for their work during this time. Chairman Jones noted some of the coastal counties did nonresident evacuations first. They staged it like four to six hours in between. He noted that he would like to consider this for our county. He noted that we may be wrong a couple times, but safety is priority. Mrs. Daniels noted that she agrees, and she will add that to our hotwash today. Mr. Moron noted that we also need to work on the Weems Hospital, and how they operate during an emergency. Commissioner Sanders asked that they add the nursing home to this discussion also. Chairman Jones noted that we will add that to the hotwash. Mrs. Daniels said we are going to come before the Board and ask about charging for reviewing plans. We will do the original review free of charge, other subsequent reviews she would like to charge for. Other counties do the same thing, they actually charge for the initial review. Mrs. Daniels noted that she is so proud of her county and how everyone comes together.

The Board recessed at 10:30 a.m. and reconvened at 10:43 a.m.

Chairman Jones noted that he has been in discussion to create a special needs shelter in Gadsden County that would assist Gadsden, Calhoun, Liberty, and Franklin counties. He noted that during Hurricane Helene there was some discussion about whether there was going to be one opened in Leon County or not. He said he thinks it would be beneficial to see how we could support this in Gadsden County. Mrs. Daniels noted that we need to bring in the department of health on this discussion because they help staff these facilities. Mrs. Daniels noted that Franklin County does not have a certified shelter because we are in a surge area. We have two programs to get you out of this county, disadvantaged transportation, and special needs. If you qualify for special needs program, we will bus you to a special needs shelter. Anyone who thinks they might need this service, please register, and sign up for the program. It does not obligate you to use the services, it just means that you are going to get a phone call to see if you need assistance. Chairman Jones noted that this may be something we bring back to the board for support financially, etc.

4. Howard Nabors – Superintendent of Roads and Bridges

Mr. Nabors gave a report of the roads damaged and under water during Hurricane Helene.

1. Advertise for Mechanic – In house and Newspaper

On a motion by Commissioner Amison, seconded by Commissioner Croom, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board authorized Mr. Nabors to advertise for the mechanic position. Motion carried 5-0.

Mr. Nabors noted that we are going to get more water from the river, will not be surprised if 67 goes under water. Chairman Jones noted the Board's conversation earlier in the meeting regarding hiring a firm to help with adding ditches and culverts, etc. to alleviate some of the water issues. We are talking about hiring someone to do this in order to do something to help your department. Mr. Nabors noted on Oak, Kentucky, and Delaware, there is no drainage. He noted this is a serious problem there. Commissioner Ward said the county does have an ordinance enacted in 1995 regarding culverts. They have to have a driveway connection permit. She would like Mr. Howard's department to get with the planning and zoning department, look at this ordinance and come up with revisions. She would like to see this proves moving forward, this ordinance has been on the books since 1995 but has not been adhered to. We need to figure out a plan for the houses that do not have culverts. Commissioner Ward noted the building inspector needs to inspect new construction culverts and not issue CO until it is correct. Mr. Moron noted per the ordinance the building department will require a letter from the road department on what is needed. Commissioner Ward thanked Virginia for pointing out the ordinance on the books. Mr. Moron noted that he will ask Steve to have his department follow this procedure moving forward. If tweaks are needed, we will bring it before the board. Commissioner Sanders noted that we have always said that you cannot put your stormwater on someone else's property. Chairman Jones said he spoke with someone yesterday and noted the property owner would need to give an easement in order for the county to go on their property. Commissioner Ward noted that when we do the FEMA mitigation, no one knows any better than what Mr. Howard and his employee do. Commissioner Amison noted that the main problem in the past we have allowed the residents to dictate how we maintain our right of ways. We have to quit allowing it. He noted that he is going to coordinate a meeting with railroad official regarding the ditches. They need to maintain them or turn them over. He noted that Mr. Nabors department has done a wonderful job out in his district. We as a county have to have their back if they say something needs to be cleared or maintained in the right of ways. Commissioner Croom noted that a lot of his district is in city limits but whenever he calls you show up. Chairman Jones said as we start to do debris cleanup, lets have a discussion between y'all of what plan we can enact to make best use of what we are bringing in, to make it county wide. Maybe we put the debris contractors in the worst areas, and the county employees in the less affected areas. Commissioner Amison noted that he needs to take Friday, Saturday, and Sunday off. Mr. Nabors noted that its according to what this storm out there does. Commissioner Sanders noted that Mr. Howard has always been good at what he does, all of them have.

5. Fonda Davis – Solid Waste Director

Mr. Davis had no action items. He noted they are getting ready to start the debris cleanup. Hopefully, on Monday we will start picking it up. Commissioner Sanders thanked Mr. Davis for picking up the swings on Island View. She noted

that she wanted them removed in the event we did not get the weather, people could go back out and swing. Commissioner Ward asked if the electrical issue at Carrabelle Wayside Park was resolved. Mr. Davis noted that Cates went out and put the wiring in, we just have to put the pole back up. Commissioner Ward asked Mr. Davis to keep us updated on the number of debris picked up. Mr. Davis noted that Waste One at Springhill contacted them and said they would help out in anyway they could. Commissioner Amison noted that county right of ways need to be cracked down on. We have got to get control of the county right of ways. It hinders the services we can provide. Thanked Mr. Davis for his work during the storm. Commissioner Croom thanked Mr. Davis for his response during the storm. He noted that he concurs with Commissioner Amison, and we have to do something regarding the right of ways. Mr. Davis noted that he appreciates the Board supporting the supervisors and employees.

6. Dewitt Polous – Mosquito Control Director

Mr. Polous had no action items. He noted that they had department of health reach out to them. Continue spraying, we have been hitting the Lanark area hard where the water is collected. We are doing all we can do with what we have to do. Appreciate the calls received with your support. Commissioner Sanders noted that she has a yard full of mosquito hawks and the spray does not seem to bother them. I appreciate your time and doubling up on it. I think we would be in worse shape if you had not done so. Chairman Jones noted that on the west side of Gilbert Street it is not draining, if there is any area we can get to. I know stuff is flowing at Indian Creek, but I think we need to get a permit to dredge it. If that is an area, we can look at. Mr. Polous noted that he has looked at it and something he has spoken to Howard about. It definitely needs a better drainage. Thank y'all for looking at that. Commissioner Croom asked how many trucks he has running. Mr. Polous noted that he has four trucks running now. Mr. Polous noted hopefully next year they will have the new trucks and equipment and things will run more consistently. Mr. Polous noted that they are getting three new trucks, sprayers, and new software. Mr. Moron said knowing how much you are going to have to spray because of the last storm. When will you know how much the cost of the additional spraying with cost? Mr. Polous noted that he tries to order in the middle of the season. He said right now he has about 1000 gallons on site. He said he had previously ordered three totes. Commissioner Amison thanked Mr. Polous for taking care of the ball field several weeks ago. Mr. Polous thanked the Board for their support.

7. Erik Lovestrand – Extension Office Director

Informational report only. Mr. Lovestrand was not present.

8. Whitney Roundtree – Library Director

No action items.

Ms. Roundtree reported that the Franklin County Public Library's 23-24 Florida State Aid to Libraries grant application was not going to be applied for by the county. It would be applied for by Wilderness Coast our cooperative library system and the governing board for all of our libraries. Ms. Roundtree noted she is not certain on the amount of funds. The normal amount is around \$72K. Chairman Jones asked Ms. Roundtree to keep the Board informed on the situation.

RFP/RFQ/Bid Opening

9. Request for Proposal -- Financial and Grant Administration

Franklin County Board of County Commissioners will be receiving proposals until September 30, 2024, to obtain a Consulting Firm for Financial and Grant Administration for State and Federal Grant Opportunities. Any proposals received after September 30th, at 4:30 PM EST, will not be considered by the review committee.

Mrs. Griffith noted that this is for auxiliary support – actually services provided by Traci Buzbee, her contract had a time period, and we are required to go out for proposal for services. Services provided would include things such as legislative appropriations, assisting in those processes, Triumph grant, any sort of lingering issues, EOC generator grants, that is the type of services this RFP provides for.

The Board announced the submissions as follows:

- The Management Experts, LLC 2514 Manassas Way, Tallahassee, FL 32312
- Answer Advisory 3800 Esplanade Way, #100, Tallahassee, FL 32311
- Metric Consulting, LLC 2616 Jenks Avenue, Panama City, FL 32405

On a motion by Commissioner Sanders, seconded by Commissioner Amison, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board authorized staff to release the proposals to the review committee for ranking and recommendation. Motion carried 5-0.

County Staff & Attorney Reports

10. Erin Griffith – Fiscal Manager/Grants Coordinator

1. BOARD ACTION: CR67 PHASE II STRIPING DECISION

At the last meeting, the Board approved a no-cost time extension for CR67 Phase II to allow for a decision to be made regarding the striping mishap. The county has checked with FDOT, the CEI engineers (Southeastern) and the original design engineers (Dewberry) for the project and all have said although the road is now not completed as originally designed, it is up to the county to either leave the striping on the widened road in the same spot as is or to go ahead and require a correction. Commissioner Sanders has since talked with Chuck Roberts with contractor Roberts and Roberts and Roberts will correct the mistake by painting black over the current white sidelines and will re-stripe the road at the correct 12' travel lane width. Roberts and Roberts have said that if and when the black paint wears through, they will come back and paint over the mishap again at their expense. Board action to approve the correction to the striping as mentioned above.

On a motion by Commissioner Amison, seconded by Commissioner Ward, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the correction to the striping as mentioned above. Commissioner Sanders noted that she met with Mr. Chuck Roberts. He noted that he will come back and paint black for nothing. It needs to be the 12' for the trucks. **Motion carried 5-0.**

2. BOARD ACTION: COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT CORE CONTRACT

At the start of each new fiscal year, after adoption of the county's budget, the Florida Department of Health submits their core contract for approval. There are no changes in the new core contract from last year's contract. The fee schedule for the health department is also attached for reference. Board action to approve the 2024/2025 core contract for the Franklin County Health Department.

On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Sanders, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the 2024/2025 core contract for the Franklin County Health Department. Motion carried 5-0.

3. BOARD ACTION: TRIUMPH FIRST RESPONDER COMMUNICATION SYSTEM PHASE I GRANT AWARD AGREEMENT

The attached Phase I Grant Award Agreement is scheduled for approval by the Triumph Board at their next quarterly meeting on October 15th in Pensacola. The Triumph Board approved the county's grant application at their May 29th meeting in Milton and the terms sheet at their August 22nd meeting in Panama City. In past events, state agencies and local law enforcement relied upon a handheld VHF radio from local first responders to ensure interoperability with communications with dispatch serving as the bridge between the two systems. The existing system is vulnerable as there are no redundancies should one part of the existing system become disrupted or damaged, there is a lack of connectivity due to remote and heavily forested areas (approximately 85% of Franklin County is publicly owned state or federal forestry lands with the population density concentrated along the coastline), the communications are not secure and encrypted, and first responders are not able to directly communicate from all agencies. This delay in information or no access to direct information during an emergency jeopardizes the safety of personnel, visitors, and residents. The phase I award of \$750,000 with a cash match requirement of \$25,000 will provide funding to procure a professional consultant to evaluate the current system, identify options for the upgrade and assist with the procurement and vendor selection process. This same consultant will also oversee the installation of the equipment and the training of the first responders during the later construction and implementation phase of the system which will also include the construction of multiple radio communication towers. Board action to approve and authorize the chairman to sign the attached grant award agreement and to authorize staff to travel to Pensacola to accept the award on the county's behalf.

On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Amison, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved and authorized the Chairman to sign the attached grant award agreement and authorized staff to travel to Pensacola to accept the award on the county's behalf. Motion carried 5-0.

4: BOARD ACTION: SHERIFF'S BYRNE JAG GRANT AGREEMENT

The Sheriff's Department has sent the attached award agreement for the Byrne JAG Grant for the drug investigations unit. This award is for \$42,490 and funds a portion of the salary and benefits for a drug investigations officer. Board action to approve and authorize the chairman to sign the attached grant award agreement.

On a motion by Commissioner Sanders, seconded by Commissioner Croom, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved and authorized the Chairman to sign the attached grant award agreement. Motion carried 5-0.

5. BOARD INFORMATION: MISCELLANEOUS PROJECT UPDATES

- SGI Storm Water Improvements Project construction bid solicitation advertised beginning this week
- Batting Cages for DW Wilson & Kendrick Sports Arenas advertised beginning next week
- Lanark EMS Station – mandatory pre-bid meeting rescheduled to Friday, October 4th at 9:00
- SGI Beach Park Facilities Upgrades – mandatory pre-bid meeting rescheduled to Friday, October 4th at 10:30
- Airport Apron Rehab Phase II – bid due date changed to Friday, October 11th
- CEI Services for SGI Storm Water – bid due date changed to Monday, October 14th
- SGI Fishing Pier and Boat Ramp Access Road is temporarily closed due to additional damages from Hurricane Helene

6. LATE ADD: BOARD ACTION: PROPERTY APPRAISER CAPITAL OUTLAY REQUEST

At the budget workshop it was noted that the property appraiser's office was going to request funding from their budgeted line item in the capital outlay fund for one additional new workstation and additional flooring not being paid by courthouse maintenance. The estimate for the new workstation based upon state contract pricing is \$1,903 and the additional flooring replacement will be \$6,836.30. Board action to approve the attached quotes for the Property Appraiser's Office to be paid by the Property Appraiser's funds in the Capital Outlay Budget.

Chairman Jones called for public comments and there were none. **On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Croom, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved the attached quotes for the Property Appraiser's Office to be paid by the Property Appraiser's funds in the Capital Outlay Budget. Motion carried 5-0.**

Mrs. Griffith announced the auction to be held at the Fly-In event at the airport. She noted there will be other entities involved and it should be a good event. Commissioner Ward inquired about the upgrades at Kendrick Park. Mrs. Griffith noted that the scoreboards and bleachers will not be as costly so they will not be required to go out for bids. She noted that they also plan to put in pickle ball courts, but we are waiting for bids from the St. George Island Park. Chairman Jones noted that we need to dredge Indian Creek. Also discussed historic information about the road on the island to boat ramp. Every time we have submitted to FEMA, they have denied fixing that road. If you would, if you do not hear from her, get in touch with her. Commissioner Amison asked for clarification, the road to boat ramp, it goes back to Hurricane Michael? It was my understanding the state has stamped it all the way up to FEMA. That is where we hit the wall. Mrs. Griffith noted that any sort of political pressure the Board could imply would be helpful. Chairman Jones said Senator Scott gave his number and told him to call him with any FEMA issues, noted he will call him this afternoon. Commissioner Sanders asked him to also ask about C30 East washout.

11. Michael Morón – County Coordinator

Mr. Moron noted that he sent a link to the website where Cortni has been uploading some of the ordinances. Chairman Jones noted that he is good with it but would like for it to be where you do not have to download the image in order to view it. Commissioner Croom and Commissioner Amison agreed. Chairman Jones noted that ADA compliance is coming and suggested as the ordinances are scanned, they are done in compliance with the ADA regulations.

1. Action Item: Emergency Repair Permits

The Building Department will issue emergency repair permits for damages related to Hurricane Helene. In the past, the County has reduced or waived the associated fee for emergency repair permits. The Building Official is responsible for determining if the repairs are hurricane related and is here to speak on this matter. As a reminder, all repairs and development to properties require a permit from the Building Department. Board action to reduce or waive permit fees for damages related to Hurricane Helene as determined by the County's Building Official.

Item addressed earlier in the meeting.

2. Discussion/Action Item: Alligator Point Repeater Relocation

At you last meeting, I reported that the Alligator Point Volunteer Fire Department was experiencing communication issues. Hurricane Helene made those issue worse. The tower, located on Bay North, that suffered from damaged guide wires, fell during the hurricane. Attorney Shuler and Mr. George Varn (APVFD) is working with SBA Towers III LLC on finalizing the lease for tower space. Attached to my report is an email from Mr. Varn with a breakdown of what it will cost to co-locate the repeater on the tower owned by SBA and demolish the tower at Bay North. The APVFD is asking for financial assistance from the County to relocate the repeater to this tower. Board discussion and action regarding financial assistance for relocating the Alligator Point VFD's communication repeater.

Attorney Shuler noted that when he reviewed the lease, he was told about the discount if signed early. One of my points was back to SBA is what is up with this deadline. They are telling us one thing, but the lease says another. Commissioner Ward asked where these funds would come from. Mr. Moron said you know we paid for the City of Apalachicola's repeater out of the funds from the CRA. I was considering asking the board if we could use those funds if the board decided to help fund that. Commissioner Sanders noted that the county has always partnered with the fire departments but is the fire department able to finance some of the cost. Mr. Moron noted that is his understanding. The Board discussed as to what amount was the Board willing to fund. Commissioner Sanders noted the importance of getting the system back up but would also like to preserve the relationship with City of Apalachicola. She suggested committing \$68k. Commissioner Amison noted that he has been in communication with the city regarding the CRA funds. They have in mind to use that at the Mill Pond. Chairman Jones noted that was CRA money, however, it is county dollars. It is an excess fund of money. None of these monies belong to the City of Apalachicola. I just do not want us to think that we have hold these funds for the city.

On a motion by Commissioner Sanders, seconded by Commissioner Ward, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board approved financial assistance for relocating the Alligator Point VFD's communication repeater up to \$60K. Motion carried 5-0.

Commissioner Ward noted that in the meantime we have to have something in place. Mr. Moron noted that they have the repeater, and it should not take as long to get in place. Chairman Jones noted that they cannot respond back to dispatch. There is no two way. Commissioner Sanders asked if Attorney Shuler had any issues with this. Attorney Shuler said he does not believe there is anything in it to keep it from moving forward. Commissioner Ward said she just wanted to make sure there is no delay in getting these people emergency funds.

3. Action Item: FDLE Grant

The Sheriff's Department submitted the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) for the Board's approval and Chairman's Signature. This is an annual grant, 10/01/24 – 19/30/25, used by the Sheriff's Department for drug enforcement. Board action to authorize the Chairman's signature on the 2024-25 Justice Assistance Grant. *Item addressed earlier in the meeting.*

4. Action Item: EPWSD LOS

Attached to my report are copies of a Florida Commerce application for funding and a letter of support from Eastpoint Water and Sewer District Board. Both documents relate to The Team Franklin Project which seeks to address the workforce housing problem in Franklin County with the creation of a Private/Public partnership. Commissioner Ward is the Board's appointee on this committee and may have additional comments regarding this project. Board action to authorize the Chairman's signature on the EPWSD letter of support for The Team Franklin Project.

On a motion by Commissioner Amison, seconded by Commissioner Croom, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board authorized the Chairman's signature on the EPWSD letter of support for the Team Franklin Project. Motion carried 5-0.

5. Action Item: FCS Homecoming Parade

Franklin County School submitted a request to close Highway 98 on Friday, October 25th for the 2024 Homecoming Parade at 1:30 p.m. The parade route will begin on Highway 98 in Eastpoint at the intersection of CA Gillespie Street onto Highway 98 and end with a left turn onto Jefferson Street. School staff will work with the Sheriff's Department. Board action to close Highway 98 for the 2024 Homecoming Franklin County School Parade route, as presented.

On a motion by Commissioner Croom, seconded by Commissioner Amison, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board authorized closing Highway 98 for the 2024 Homecoming Franklin County School Parade route, as presented. Motion carried 5-0.

6. Action Item: Compliance/Business Tax Certificate Application

At a previous meeting, I informed the Board that we were in discussions with Cloudpermit for an online compliance and business tax certificate application with a public portal. Attorney Shuler reviewed the agreement and approved the final draft. Board action to authorize the Chairman's signature on the Cloudpermit agreement.

On a motion by Commissioner Amison, seconded by Commissioner Ward, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board authorized the Chairman's signature on the Cloudpermit agreement. Motion carried 5-0.

7. Informational Item: Next Meeting Date

Your next regular meeting date is scheduled on Tuesday, October 15, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. (ET).

12. Michael Shuler – County Attorney

1. Request Board Action to Authorize Code Enforcement - 1863 Lighthouse Road, Carrabelle, Florida - Travel Trailer Violation

County staff has determined that the owner of property located at 1864 Lighthouse Road, Carrabelle, Florida, is renting it out to a person who is living in a travel trailer. This is in violation of the county code, including, but not necessarily limited to, the travel trailer ordinance 81-6. I am informed that staff has undertaken letter enforcement in an attempt to bring the property into compliance, but that the violation persists after the deadline for compliance has passed. Board Action Requested: Board discussion and action whether to authorize the issuance of a code violation citation and schedule a hearing before the special magistrate and/or file a lawsuit against all necessary and property persons.

On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Sanders, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board authorized the issuance of a code violation citation and schedule a hearing before the special magistrate and/or file a lawsuit against all necessary and property persons. Motion carried 5-0.

2. Request Board Action to Authorize Code Enforcement - 263 Patton Drive, Eastpoint, Florida - Travel Trailer Violation

County staff has determined that the owner of property located at 263 Patton Drive, Eastpoint, Florida, is renting several travel trailers as short-term rentals. This is in violation of the county code, including, but not necessarily limited to, the travel trailer ordinance 81-6. I am informed that staff has undertaken letter enforcement in an attempt to bring the property into compliance, but that the violation persists after the deadline for compliance has passed.

I had commenced steps to file a lawsuit to enforce the code earlier this year, but the property owner indicated that they were going to attempt to bring the property into compliance. To date, the property remains out of compliance.

On a motion by Commissioner Ward, seconded by Commissioner Sanders, and by a unanimous vote of the Board present, the Board authorized the issuance of a code violation citation and schedule a hearing before the special magistrate and/or file a lawsuit against all necessary and property persons. Motion carried 5-0.

Attorney Shuler noted that he will give the property owners one more chance to remedy the violation. Commissioner Ward expressed that she would like to begin enforcing our ordinances. She noted that we have to do something. Chairman Jones asked if there is an issue with how the timeline progresses. Attorney Shuler noted that staff is overworked and understaffed. Attorney Shuler noted that this is a structural change that the county is going through. Chairman Jones asked if there is something that needs to change in the structural. Commissioner Ward noted that they get two certified letters and then it is supposed to go to both attorneys. Then after that it seems like the ball is dropped. We have to start making a point to let people know we are not going to put up with this anymore. Mrs. Bankston noted that other than sending to Attorney Shuler we do not know anything else to do. Staff needs direction, if they have gotten their second notice of violation, do we need to bring that to the Board for you to decide how to move forward? Commissioner Ward noted that another issue is contacting the property owner when they do not live on property. Commissioner Ward noted that she wants to make sure staff has what they need. She noted that she is okay with giving three letters if we need to. Then if they do not comply, we need to send it to the magistrate. Mrs. Bankston noted that she can send the commissioners a list of all properties. Attorney Shuler noted that Michael and he are working on a proposal to bring back to the board which would be along the lines of what you are talking about. Mrs. Bankston noted that the third letter should specify the fines and when they will begin. Commissioner Ward noted that she thinks if they do not pay the fines, we need to put lien on their property. Commissioner Ward asked that they get the process together, have Cortni get with Attorney Shuler to review, so we can vote on it at the next meeting.

Commissioners' Comments

Commissioner Sanders noted we need to be committed to water management. We have to get these local mitigation projects going. She noted she wanted to affirm, she is only one commissioner, but we need to commit, water management you come up with a project and we will support you however we can. Our call is to help the people out. We need to be behind the water management.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned.

Ricky Jones – Chairman

Attest:

Michele Maxwell – Clerk of Courts

The audio is available upon request. Please e-mail jgay@franklinclerk.com, call 850-653-8861 to speak with the Administrative Assistant, or submit a request in writing to obtain audio of this meeting.