

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
UNION COUNTY, FLORIDA  
REGULAR MEETING  
FEBRUARY 15, 2016**

*NOTE: If any person decides to appeal any decision made with respect to any matter considered at this meeting or hearing, he or she will need a record for the proceedings and may need to insure that a verbatim record is made.*

PRESIDING: Karen Cossey, Chairwoman

RECORDING: Jean Shuford, Finance Officer

ATTENDING: Commissioner Willie Croft; Commissioner Woody Kitler; Commissioner Jimmy Tallman; Dianne Hannon, Board Secretary; Kellie Connell, Clerk of Courts; Russ Wade, County Attorney

PRESS: Tracy Tate, Union County Times; Lauren Verno, WCJB-TV 20 ABC

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 PM by Chairwoman Cossey.

**2. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE**

Commissioner Tallman delivered the invocation and led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

Chairwoman Cossey announced that due to the large crowd and expected length of the additions to the agenda tonight, we will be going a little out of order due to agency representatives having to attend other County meetings.

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Commissioner Kitler made a motion to approve the December 21, 2015 Regular Meeting and January 18, 2015 Regular Meeting minutes as presented. Commissioner Tallman seconded the motion, with the motion passing unanimously.**

**4. FINANCE REPORT**

**Commissioner Tallman made a motion to approve payment of the bills presented, with a second by Commissioner Kitler. The motion carried with no opposition.**

Clerk Connell addressed the Board with a necessary amendment to the current Board Procurement and Purchasing Policy Resolution 2011-07. The changes presented are

necessary to align the Board Policy with the Federal Standards and Policies. These changes must be made in order for the County to continue to qualify for Federal and State Grant funding. **Commissioner Tallman made a motion to adopt the changes to the County Procurement and Purchasing policy to bring it to the Federal Standards and Policies. Commissioner Croft seconded the motion with the motion passing unanimously.**

## **5. UNION COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT PRESENTATION**

Joe Pietrangelo, Jim Lyons and Joy Johnson presented a Certificate of Recognition to the Union County Board of County Commissioners for all their hard work promoting Healthy Lifestyles for the residents of Union County.

## **6. COUNTY EXTENSION DIRECTOR**

Dr. Eric Simone, from the University of Florida gave a status report on the hiring of the County Extension Director. He stated that the position has been posted and applications are being accepted with a position closing date of February 26, 2016. There is a two (2) tier interview process with the first interview on the university campus on March 16, 2016 and the second interview with the County on March 24, 2016. Mr. Andy Toelle is coordinating the interviews. It is reasonable to expect that the candidate will be chosen by April. Chairwoman Cossey asked Dr. Simone to explain the contract funding and why it is being funded differently at this time. Dr. Simone said that it is a jointly funded position with the University being the majority employer, in the past the County's portion was 28%, but as these positions are becoming available the common practice is to fund the position at a 60% - 40% funding split. Clerk Connell stated that the funding in the budget is for the current amount and if the Board would like to table this she will research and let the Board know what she finds out at the next meeting. **Commissioner Tallman moved to table the issue, with a second by Commissioner Croft. Motion passed with none opposed.**

## **7. BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSION EMAIL**

Nathan Thornton, President/Creative Director of The NET Group, Inc., was before the Board to discuss establishing their own email server at Union County-fl.gov. Mr. Thornton recommends the Standard Service for \$350.00 a year which would include up to five (5) users. His recommends establishing email for Human Resources, Chairman, General Board Email, Solid Waste and Road Department. He also requested permission to contract services from Tyler Roddenberry to back up the old email and place it on the new for \$300.00. Chairwoman Cossey stated that the Board needs a more secure server due to the HR information exchanged and this new server will provide that need. **Commissioner Kitler made a motion to give permission to Mr. Thornton to shop for quotes for the IT services. Commissioner Tallman seconded, the motion carries unanimously.**

## **8. CITIZENS AGAINST PHOSPHATE MINING IN UNION AND BRADFORD COUNTIES**

County Attorney Russ Wade spoke on Phosphate Mining and stated that there is no application for permit on file at this time. He gave an explanation of the Land Development Resolution and the Comprehensive Plan currently in place. It was explained that the Board can amend changes to the map that would prohibit mining. He went over the application review process, the Board would make the decision to allow with provisions or deny. The process would include Public Hearings and multiple meetings. Mr. Wade explained that the Board would work as an unbiased body with open public meetings and are required by law to hear evidence in a court process, a quasi-judicial process. Unlike their current practice of being readily available and speaking to constituents, they must not participate in ex parte communications concerning the matter. They cannot talk to people outside of public meetings once such an application for permit is submitted. Chairwoman Cossey stated as a matter transparency she needed to disclose that she was asked to attend a meeting with Mr. Jon Pritchett, Mr. Hazen and a representative. She stated that the subject of the meeting was not disclosed in advance and when she attended, the meeting was about phosphate mining. She left the meeting. Commissioner Kitler also stated that he had been contacted to meet with Jon Pritchett, Phillip Pritchett, Mr. Hazen and a PR person. The subject of the meeting was not disclosed. Commissioner Tallman also disclosed that he attended a meeting with Phillip of the Pritchett family, Mr. Julian Hazen, Jon and Amanda a PR representative from Mr. Julian Hazen's company. Commissioner Tallman stated that when the subject of the meeting was revealed, he left with no comment. Commissioner Croft also disclosed that he was contacted to meet with Jon and Phillip Pritchett, Mr. Hazen and Amanda and had no knowledge of the subject matter. Attorney Wade explained again that there was no application for permit filed and suggested that the Board only address the subject of phosphate mining in public meetings moving forward.

Eric Thomas, 2003 Union County High School Graduate, B.S. Wildlife Ecology and Conservation, M.S. Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences. Mr. Thomas also stated that he was a former Fisheries Biologist for Wyoming Game and Fish and Florida FWC. He represented the group Citizens Against Phosphate Mining in Union and Bradford Counties and gave a presentation illustrating the negative effects that would occur if phosphate mining is allowed in the County. Mr. Thomas and Attorney Wade answered questions from the public. He spoke about permit process, impact statements and stated that boundaries must be defined. Chairwoman Cossey thanked Mr. Thomas for his presentation.

## **9. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Chairwoman Cossey opened the floor to public comments.

Mr. Patrick Juliano, Regional Manager, Office of Program Management representing Chief Financial Officer Jeff Atwater. He spoke about the Florida Bureau of Unclaimed Property and the Great Florida Treasure Hunt. Encouraged everyone to reference [FLTreasurehunt.org](http://FLTreasurehunt.org). He stated that since 2011 they have returned \$1.2 Billion and wanted everyone to be aware of the website and all of the unclaimed property listed. He again asked

everyone to go to the site and look to see if they have property that should be claimed. He left brochures and information with the Clerk for anyone interested. He thanked the Board for allowing him to speak.

Mr. Jim Tatum, Historian for Our Santa Fe River, White Springs, Florida, stated that he lives downstream of the proposed mining operation. He spoke of negative effects of the mining around New River so close to the Santa Fe. If disaster strikes with this operation all who gave approval will be responsible for the damages suffered.

Becky Parker stated that she has the petition with names of those opposed. She announced that she created a Facebook Page on Friday and it has been viewed by 15,000. They have been going door to door and since Saturday have obtained 300 signatures both on Facebook and in person.

Merrilee Malwitz-Jipson, Policy Director for Our Santa Fe River addressed the Board with her concerns of the effects of phosphate mining and our rivers and tributaries. She gave her appreciation and reminded the Board that she was present approximately a year ago addressing fracking in our county and was here again to voice concerns about the proposed mining and the impact on our waterways. She explained that this type of mining that creates fertilizers is not at all what the world wants today and that it is being banned all over the place. The information presented by Mr. Thomas is valid.

Frieda Kassetas, who has lived in The Groves for 4 ½ years, having moved here from Boca Raton, FL spoke. She stated that she moved here because she knew that this area is a place where her family could live and thrive. Good schools, good community and beautiful nature. She spoke about how upset she is after learning about a proposed mine. She spoke about the negative effects on the property, the loud noise and destruction that the mining would cause. She wants the Union County that was promised to her.

Chairwoman Cossey announced that there would be public hearings if this comes to an application. She stated that the Board always welcome comments and concerns, and the Clerk will make copies of the map for everyone.

**Commissioner Tallman made a motion to change the meeting time to 6:00 PM, with a second by Commissioner Croft. The motion carried unanimously.**

A question from the public prompted Commissioner Tallman and the County Attorney to clarify statements made by the Commissioners earlier in the meeting. The disclosures were made in order to protect their vote and for the Board to remain un-biased. He stated that he did not want his vote taken away. Attorney Wade stated that it is an attempt for the Board to follow the rules and retain its eligibility to be involved in the process.

Attorney Wade stated that the Board has the authority to change the map, LDR and Comprehensive Plan, Future land use plan. His recommendation was for the Board to involve the Regional Planning Council to advise the process to change. Mr. Wade also clarified that the gray areas are areas that a permit may be applied for, not necessarily

granted. The Board must listen to all information in a public meeting, to gather knowledge and follow all the rules and protocols. There is currently nothing to act on.

Chairwoman Cossey stated that she is listening to everything being said and the Board will take it into consideration, but cannot comment at this time. Regional Council meets the second Thursday of every month.

Mark Lyons from Baker County shared the process that they went through in order to address sand mining in Baker County.

Commissioner Tallman stated that it is a very emotional and the Board does not want to do anything in haste that could be overturned in the future.

**Commissioner Tallman made a motion to request help from the North Central Florida Regional Planning Council and Mr. Scott Koons regarding what the Board needs to do to explore options to change the Comprehensive Plan. Commissioner Kitler seconded the motion, with the motion passing with none opposed.**

Commissioner Kitler discussed the importance of every District being represented, and voiced his concern about the vacant Commission Seat.

**Commissioner Tallman made a motion to draft an Ordinance for a Moratorium on applications for mining permits for the time allowed by law. Commissioner Kitler seconded the motion with the motion passing unanimously.** This will allow the Board to revisit the Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Resolution. A Public Hearing will be advertised as required by law.

Chairwoman Cossey closed the Public Comments portion of the meeting.

**10. CDBG HOUSING GRANT CHANGE ORDER FOR SHELIA OLIN**

**Commissioner Kitler made a motion to approve the Shelia Olin \$3,256.00 Change Order for termite treatment, noting that the Board understands that the total amount exceeds the \$50,000.00 Rehab Max, with a second by Commissioner Croft. The motion carries with none opposed.**

**11. UNION COUNTY EXTENSION AND AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION CENTER**

**Commissioner Tallman made a motion to approve the Grant Agreement changes as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Croft. The motion carried unanimously.**

**12. REPORT FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS**

**Solid Waste Department – J. Beasley**

Absent

**Road Department – S. Arnold, Jr.**

Director Arnold asked for approval to advertise the acceptance of sealed bids for the Bat Wing Mower. **Commissioner Tallman made a motion approving the advertisement of acceptance of sealed bids for the Bat Wing Mower, with a second by Commissioner Kitler. The motion passed with none opposed.**

**Public Library – M. Brown**

Nothing to report at this time.

**EMS & Volunteer Fire Department - M. Andrews**

Director Andrews had nothing to report at this time.

**Emergency Management – J. Walker**

Absent

**County Extension Office – Vacant**

**13. REPORT FROM KELLIE HENDRICKS CONNELL, CLERK OF COURTS**

Nothing to report at this time.

**14. REPORT FROM RUSSELL A. WADE III, COUNTY ATTORNEY**

Nothing to report at this time.

**15. REPORT FROM THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

**District 1 – K. Cossey**

Chairwoman Cossey challenged the Directors to find 3% in their budget for raises and bring that information to the Board at the March meeting for discussion.

**District 2 – W. Kitler**

Commissioner Kitler wanted to clarify statement he made earlier about having a full Board to vote and he asked Mr. Wade to check on legal length of moratoriums.

**District 3 – J. Tallman**

Commissioner Tallman thanked the Board for their patience in hearing everyone. He expressed again the importance for him to not talk or show bias and urged all Commissioners to be diligent. He appreciates everything the Board has done.

Attorney Wade discussed and clarified the process to review and revisit the Comprehensive Plan. The Board can take everything in consideration and initiate the changes. The process is to prepare the correct documents and revise the Plan for the public health, safety and welfare of the citizens of the county.

**District 4 – Vacant**

No report at this time.


**District 5 – W. Croft**

Nothing to report at this time.

16. **ADJORNMENT**

**Commissioner Kitler moved to adjourn the meeting. Chairwoman Cossey adjourned the meeting at 6:35 PM.**

APPROVED:

  
Karen Cossey, Chairwoman

ATTEST:

  
Kellie H. Connell, Clerk of Courts