

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
UNION COUNTY, FLORIDA
REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 20, 2023

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 ensure that a verbatim record is made.

PRESIDING: Ryan Perez, Chair

RECORDING: Kellie Hendricks Rhoades, Clerk of Courts & Comptroller

ATTENDING: Commissioner Willie Croft; Commissioner Channing Dobbs; Commissioner Mac Johns; Commissioner James A. Tallman; James Williams, County Coordinator; Dianne Hannon, Board Secretary; Russ Wade, County Attorney; Pamela Woodington, Finance Director

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Chair Perez called the meeting to order at 6:14 pm.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Shane Bennett approached the Board about an issue with property that adjoins his father's property in Raiford. He stated that the neighboring landowner was creating a nuisance and public health hazard by dumping garbage on his property. There was discussion about the issue among the Board members and Mr. Bennett. **Commissioner Dobbs moved to direct Mr. Williams to reach out to the Health Department, the Sheriff's Office and the Department of Environment Protection and report back to the Board. Commissioner Croft seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.** Additional discussion ensued regarding code enforcement, and Chairman Perez stated that a workshop on the issue should be held at a later date.

Cindy North presented a letter to the Board to John Trowell from the Suwannee River Water Management District regarding dumping in the wetlands on his property, and expressed concerns about the hazardous waste on his property on CR-796. She also asked about EMS services for the Boat Races for the City of Lake Butler, expressing that obligating an ambulance for this event would remove an ambulance from service for the public. Toby Witt, EMS Director, stated that for special event, we would charge the organization the cost of adding an additional ambulance for that event.

David Ward asked about the Fire Station in Providence, and expressed that he would like to see construction start. There was discussion about the sales tax that was passed, and Attorney Wade answered that the tax was not eligible to be enacted due to the lack of the County having an OPPAGA study done. Commissioner Johns answered that he was not in favor of the fire station originally, but that he has met with designers and money has been appropriated from the State. He said the designed has had a survey done and should have building plans back in another week. Commissioner Johns said he is hoping to put out bids in the next Board meeting. Mr. Ward asked if it will be staffed 24/7, and Commissioner Johns answered that it will not be at this time.

Ralph Douglas approached the Board with Jim Harrell regarding the Board stopping maintenance of cemeteries. Mr. Harrell said that he is the Vice President of Elzey Chapel cemetery, and they can't manage it without the County's help, and that Elzey Chapel has paid \$2,000 a year. Chairman Perez said in a previous meeting that the County is struggling to maintain roadways due to inmate labor shortage, and Commissioner Tallman said if we were to get inmate labor back, we could go back to maintaining cemeteries. He personally volunteered to help clean Elzey Chapel Cemetery. He agreed that this is a service the County would like to provide, but can't without the inmate labor force. Chairman Perez said he is no longer a teacher, but offered the idea that cleaning cemeteries be a program for high school students to receive community service hours, and he would be willing to facilitate this.

Hearing no further requests to speak, Chairman Perez close the floor to public comments.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Tallman moved to approve the consent agenda presented by Clerk Rhoades, which included the Finance Report with additional bills and minutes. Commissioner Johns seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

SUWANNEE RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

Mary Diaz, an engineer with the SRWMD informed the commission about meetings being held this week regarding the Flood Risk Map Review, and advised that this is important as it can effect Flood Zone Designations and homeowners insurance. Chairman Perez asked Ms. Diaz about flooding issues previously discussed in the Hidden Oaks subdivision, and Ms. Diaz answered that she doesn't know the outcome. Chairman Perez asked her to please find a solution, and she said she will ask someone to reach out to the County.

RESOLUTION 2023-01

Commissioner Dobbs moved to adopt Resolution 2023-01, regarding accepting SCOP funding for the CR-229 project, including bridge replacement. Commissioner Tallman seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION 2023-02

Commissioner Dobbs moved to adopt Resolution 2023-02, regarding additional SCOP funding for the CR-229 project. Commissioner Croft seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION 2023-03

Commissioner Dobbs moved to adopt Resolution 2023-03, declaring support of Union County being designated as a Rural Area of Opportunity. Commissioner Croft seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION 2023-04

Attorney Wade indicated that the purpose of this resolution is to flush out the authorities of the County Coordinator, adding this resolution would allow that contracts approved by the Board would be able to be signed by the County Coordinator, and that documents regarding road projects could be signed by the County Coordinator if there is no additional expense incurred by the County. Commissioner Tallman said that he doesn't foresee any road projects that are not 100% grant funded, and would like to see that in the language. Commissioner Johns questioned why the change is needed. Mr. Williams answered that this would alleviate time constraints, by allowing him to sign the contract from a Board decision. Clerk Rhoades added that when the Board accepts a bid, a contract comes back from the winning contractor, and there should be someone designated to sign that contract so that it doesn't have to wait until the next month's Board meeting. Commissioner Tallman said there needs to be a way to move things forward. Melissa Hendrix suggested the chair be designated to sign off on these things. Additional discussion ensued, and Commissioner Johns moved to designate the chair to sign off on the items in the resolution. The motion died for a lack of second, and the consensus was made to table the matter until the workshop with Ginger Delegal.

LEASE WITH UNION COUNTY-LAKE BUTLER RIDING CLUB

Attorney Wade advised the Board that the Riding Club has asked for a new lease with the same terms because they have changed their name. **Commissioner Tallman moved to approve the new lease. Commissioner Croft seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.**

OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioner Johns moved, and Commissioner Croft seconded, to accept a Task Order for Engineering Services for Courthouse Security upgrades for \$35,000 from North Florida Professional Services. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Williams noted that NFPS is on the County's continuing services contract.

Mr. Williams presented a task order for courthouse parking design. Clerk Rhoades noted that this is not budgeted for, and the Board would need to make a budget amendment if accepting the task order. **Commissioner Johns moved, and Commissioner Croft seconded, to accept a Task Order for Engineering Services for Courthouse**

parking design for \$11,500 from North Florida Professional Services, and a budget amendment to decrease ending fund balance and increase courthouse repairs and maintenance. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Johns stated that he spoke to Murray Ford to move the process along to purchase the needed county vehicles. Purchase orders in the amount totaling \$313,316 were presented. **Commissioner Tallman moved to purchase the vehicles and make the appropriate budget amendment for the funds to be spent from the General Fund Special Account #2. Commissioner Johns seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

Commissioner Johns moved to pay Tom Jenkins Electric for work done at OJ Phillips in accordance with policy. Commissioner Tallman seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Mr. Williams stated that an additional \$75,000 is needed above the FRDP Grant amount of \$165,000 to complete the project due to price increases. He stated that \$30,000 was designated in May, and needs an additional \$45,000 now. Commissioner Johns clarified with Mr. Williams that the additional \$45,000 will complete the project. Mrs. Woodington indicated that each portion of the project has a budget for the grant funding, and Kimley-Horn has handled that reporting. **Commissioner Dobbs moved to amend the budget by appropriating \$45,000 from the General Fund Special Account #2 to the improvements at OJ Phillips Complex. Commissioner Johns seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

New extension agent "Mr. Jim" introduced himself, and will start April 3.

Mr. Williams said that he has met with representatives in Tallahassee, and is pushing for a recurring Payment in Lieu of Taxes for homes on state land.

He said a vulnerability study grant was awarded, and the Toxic Round-Up will be on March 18. He also introduced a new page on the County's website which is a status update of major projects.

Shelton Arnold, Road Superintendent, asked the Board when he should cut off maintenance to cemeteries, and a consensus was made for the end of March.

Mary Brown, Library Director, told the Board that the Library needs to close on March 10-11 for inventory.

Toby Witt, EMS Director, said the county was awarded a community paramedic grant, which will be a \$50,000 offset to salaries already budgeted, which is to service repeat callers such as fall risks, to alleviate the burden that they place on the service. He has sent a memo to staff regarding the training policy, and has also met with DOC, and found that the County has a revenue opportunity there and is going to work out a plan to look at those options to expand services and increase the bottom line. He said that Volunteer Fire Fighters have went above and beyond, and that Paul McDavid is working on grants for the fire department, is reforming the VFD's 501(c)(3), and is researching paying a stipend to volunteer responders.

Clerk Rhoades discussed the HVAC system of the courthouse, stating that the air handler in the finance department has been patched, but is 20 years old with an expected life of 15 years, and needs to be replaced. The cost estimate to replace it is \$30-40 thousand. There are twelve air handlers of the chilled water system throughout the courthouse, all with the same life expectancy and age. She stated that WW Gay advised that there are newer ways to handle it, and Mr. Williams stated he would put out an RFQ for re-engineering the air handling system in the courthouse.

Attorney Wade directed the Board's attention to the fact that he was asked to write a letter to the DEP regarding the continued testing of the old landfill. He found that the permit was issued, and it was accepted. There was much discussion among the Board with Tim Culley, the county's engineer. **Commissioner Tallman moved, and Commissioner Johns seconded to continue monitoring in compliance with the permit. The motion passed unanimously.**

February 20, 2023

Regular Meeting

Commissioner Dobbs moved, and Commissioner Croft seconded, to approve contracts submitted for a 911 Mapping Grant Acceptance and also a construction contract with Ajax for the new EOC building, not to exceed \$2.9 million. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Tallman announced the Union County Livestock Association would be hosting an agricultural fair on March 14-18, and invited all to attend.

Chairman Perez adjourned the meeting at 8:58 pm.

Adopted by vote of the Board, March 20, 2023 regular meeting