

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
UNION COUNTY, FLORIDA
REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 21, 2022

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: James Tallman, Chair

RECORDING: Kellie Hendricks Rhoades, Clerk of Courts & Comptroller

ATTENDING: Commissioner Lacey Cannon; Commissioner Willie Croft; Commissioner Channing Dobbs; Commissioner Ryan Perez; Dianne Hannon, Board Secretary; Russ Wade, County Attorney; Jimmy Williams, County Coordinator; Pamela Woodington, Finance Director

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Chair Tallman called the meeting to order 6:01 pm. Commissioner Perez offered the invocation and led Pledge of Allegiance.

MEETING RECESSED

Chair Tallman recessed the meeting to convene as the Board of Adjustments, and immediately reconvened the meeting after the adjournment of the Board of Adjustments.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chair Tallman welcomed the public and called for public comments.

Randall Woodard and Kenneth Marshall approached the Board and explained that the own property at the end of Light Plant Road, and each own a side of an established County easement that they are requesting to be closed and vacated by the County. Mr. Williams explained that the right of way goes only to a wooded area, and was deeded to the County years ago for a purpose that is unknown today. He sees no reason that the County should not vacate the easement. Attorney Wade stated that it would need to be surveyed and properly advertised. Mr. Williams advised Mr. Woodard and Mr. Marshall that the County cannot incur any costs, and they indicated that they would be willing to pay for a survey. The Board members agreed by general consensus that they would be willing to vacate the right of way if the proper legal steps were followed and the issue is brought back to the Board.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

Commissioner Perez provided employee service pins to employees celebrating milestone anniversaries of service to Union County during February, and all of those that celebrated their anniversaries during 2020 and 2021. The employees were Denise Clemons, Karen Elixson, Lamar Griffis, Donna Newsome and Renee Crews each with five years of service, Pam Toney, Tennille Brannen and Matthew Horler each with ten years of service, Janell Graham with 15 years, Jeff Foerman with 20 years and Shelton Arnold, Jr with 30 years of service.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Dobbs moved to approve the consent agenda presented by Clerk Rhoades, which included minutes from the December 27, 2021 Regular Meeting, January 18, 2022 Planning and Zoning Public Hearing, February 7, 2022 Board of Adjustments Public Hearing and Budget Amendment 2022-03, and the Finance Report. Commissioner Croft seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION 2022-01: BUILDING FEE SCHEDULE

Chair Tallman turned the floor over to Mr. Williams to discuss proposed increases to the Building Fee Schedule. Mr. Williams stated that culvert permits have been added to this schedule, as the road department installing doesn't even come close to covering the hard costs, and therefore the County will no longer be installing culverts. He also said that the 911 Address Fee has increased to cover increased costs, and noted that Union County's fees are still the lowest in the state. Commissioner Cannon noted a scrivener's error on Items 5 & 6, that it is written "six dollars (\$5.00)". Mr. Williams clarified that it should be six dollars. **Commissioner Cannon moved, and**

Commissioner Perez seconded, to approve Resolution 22-01 with the correction of the scrivener's error to be six dollars in Items 5 & 6. The motion passed unanimously.

AGREEMENT WITH UF-IFAS

Chair Tallman asked Mr. Williams to explain the item. Mr. Williams answered that UF has proposed the 4H Program Assistant be filled with an Extension Agent. Commissioner Cannon expressed disagreement with the decision and concerns that requiring a bachelor's degree removes many good candidates from qualification, and would rather hire someone with better work experience than a bachelor's degree. He also stated that the County would make final hiring decisions. Clerk Rhoades asked if there was an updated agreement, and Dr. Simonne answered that there is no agreement, but simply a change to the County's cost share to be \$12,000 for the current extension agent, and \$14,000 for the 4-H Program Agent. **Commissioner Dobbs moved, and Commissioner Perez seconded, to accept the proposed funding amounts, effective March 15, 2022. The motion passed unanimously.** Commissioner Cannon reiterated that adding a 4-H Agent isn't the same as the current situation, and expressed that if a good candidate isn't found with the current requirements, he will insist that it be readdressed.

RESOLUTION 22-02: CLOSING JIM STREET

Commissioner Cannon moved to adopt Resolution 22-02, closing Jim Street, and Commissioner Croft seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

AGREEMENT WITH FLORIDA CROWN WORKFORCE

Commissioner Perez stated that he and other members of the Florida Crown Board are in agreement that Union County is not getting good service from this organization, and recommended not passing the agreement at this time. The Board agreed by general consent to table the matter.

REPORT FROM COUNTY COORDINATOR

ORDINANCE 22-02: EMERGENCY FIRE SURTAX

It was noted that the Ordinance was properly advertised, and Attorney Wade read the header of the Ordinance, and noted that it had been sent to the Department of Revenue and their recommended changes were incorporated. Mr. Williams noted that passing this ordinance is necessary for the study required from the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA). **Commissioner Dobbs moved to pass Ordinance 22-02, and Commissioner Croft seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.**

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Williams reported the Board appointed North Florida Professional Services for design services, and asked for approval of the Task Work Order. **Commissioner Dobbs moved to approve the Task Work Order, and Commissioner Perez seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.**

Mr. Williams provided an update on Rural County Days. Commissioner Perez said it was a successful event, and was beneficial to make face-to-face connections. Mr. Williams announced that both of the County's appropriations requests are still moving.

JR Davis approached the Board and asked about a full-time health officer, that the state has moved septic permit applications from the Department of Health to the Environmental Protection Agency, and it has caused severe backlog. Mr. Williams advised that he has spoken with Senator Bradley, and that she is aware of the issue, and is working to get a resolution. Mr. Davis also inquired about the status of implementing a Special Assessment for commercial properties. Mr. Williams answered that he has provided the data the Board requested, and said any changes are the pleasure of the Board. Commissioner Cannon said that it is currently \$50 for residential and \$0 for commercial. He acknowledged that it is a difficult issue, and no one likes to raise fees, but the bigger picture suggested \$70 for both residential and commercial would be appropriate. Commissioner Dobbs stated that he sees a need for businesses to pay, but would like to see residential not increase. Chair Tallman added that if the

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1-cent surtax passes, they would both be eliminated, and noted that it hasn't increased since 1989. Commissioner Cannon said that an approximate number of 260 businesses would yield \$18,000, and the increase of \$20 for residential would yield \$30,000-\$35,000. Chair Tallman reiterated that it has been underfunded for years, and agreed with \$70 for all property owners, and Commissioner Perez also agreed. Mr. Williams noted that even at \$70, it is still lower than all surrounding counties. Commissioner Dobbs expressed that businesses should be more than residential. **Commissioner Cannon moved to change the amount of the Special Assessment for Rescue to \$70 for both residential and commercial, and directed Attorney Wade to draft Resolution 22-03 to codify this change. Commissioner Croft seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

Kim Hayes, Solid Waste and Animal Control Director, presented the Board with a new fee schedule for Animal Control, and indicated that the costs are increasing and she needs to cover the costs. **Commissioner Cannon moved to adopt the new fee schedule as presented, and Commissioner Dobbs seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.** Mrs. Hayes also added that mosquito control chemicals have been pushed back, and she's having to use ready-to-use chemicals, which is all that is available, but more expensive. Chair Tallman told her that the fish that eat mosquito larvae will be delivered the following week.

Shelton Arnold, Jr., Road Superintendent, approached the Board that a new motor grader is needed, as the lease is up for renewal. **Commissioner Dobbs moved to approve the requested motor grader lease. Commissioner Croft seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

Toby Witt, EMS Director, announced that he has applied for a grant for a new ambulance, with a 10% county match, and that he will be attending a workshop at the state office regarding the needs of rural counties. Mr. Witt also informed the Board that the Interlocal Agreement with Bradford County is hindering the operations of the department, and recommends it be terminated.

Luke Harlow, Extension Agent, said a Goat Show was held and was a great success, that a pesticide program is being held on the following night, that Promised Land Ministries is holding a family event in April that he will participate in, and he will also be participating in the LBES Career Day. He also noted that the Union County Livestock Fair is coming up in March. Mr. Harlow also thanked Mr. Arnold for the work the road department employees did on the retention pond at the Ag Building.

Mary Brown, Library Director, thanked Mr. Harlow for the program he held at the library for seniors.

REPORT FROM RUSSELL A. WADE, III, COUNTY ATTORNEY:

Mr. Wade announced that the distribution methodology from the State regarding the opioid case is in the Governor's Office.

Chair Tallman asked Attorney Wade for any update regarding the HPS Case, and has answered that a date for mediation has been set for April 20.

Commissioner Cannon inquired about the Burkel case, and Attorney Wade answered that John Dickinson's office is handling the case. Mr. Williams added that information is needed from some individuals, but they are not cooperating, and Mr. Dickinson will need to take depositions to get the needed information.

REPORT FROM COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Perez said Mr. Arnold does a great job. He also said he's getting calls regarding code enforcement, and also noted someone that lives next to the new bridge on CR-231 has called saying she cannot see oncoming traffic when turning onto CR-231. He also asked Mr. Williams about the status of a turn lane on CR-237 South on SR-100. Mr. Williams answered that the issue is on the radar for the next safety meeting with DOT.

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Commissioner Dobbs also gave positive reviews of Mr. Arnold, and noted new facilities at the Raiford Collection Site.

Commissioner Cannon discussed that proposed redistricting would mean Union County is losing Representative Payne, and gaining Representative Brannen. He said he believes Representative Brannen will serve Union County well.

Commissioner Cannon also suggested that savings from the new Extension funding share be used to add a position at the Recreation Department. Chair Tallman inquired about the structure of the Recreation Department, and inquired of the Board their thoughts of keeping the current structure with a paid position. He expressed that the department needs to generate money by holding tournaments, and would like to hire a quality person to help improve the facilities and make the program grow. Commissioner Cannon asked if this position is added, what would the employee do with down time, and suggested that he or she monitor and help maintain all county parks. The meeting adjourned by general consent at 7:17 pm.

Adopted by vote of the Board of County Commissioners on April 18, 2022.