

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
UNION COUNTY, FLORIDA  
REGULAR MEETING  
MAY 17, 2021

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: Pamela H. Woodington, Finance Director, Office of Clerk of Courts & Comptroller

ATTENDING: Commissioner Lacey Cannon; Commissioner Willie Croft; Commissioner Channing Dobbs; Commissioner Ryan Perez; James Williams, County Coordinator; Dianne Hannon, Board Secretary; Russ Wade, County Attorney

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

Chair Tallman called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm. Commissioner Cannon offered the invocation and led Pledge of Allegiance.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Chair Tallman welcomed the public and called for public comments. Seeing none, he closed the floor to public comments.

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

Chair Tallman asked the Board if all had time to review the consent agenda and had any questions regarding the Consent Agenda, which contained minutes from the March 2, 2021 Workshop, March 15, 2021 Regular Meeting, April 19, 2021 Regular Meeting, May 4, 2021 Workshop, Budget Amendment 2021-01, and finance report. **Commissioner Cannon moved to approve the consent agenda, and Commissioner Perez seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.**

**SPECIAL EXCEPTION 21-01SE**

Chair Tallman asked the pleasure of the Board regarding the consideration to adopt the recommendation of the Board of Adjustments and approve the Special Exception 21-01SE for an equine training center. **Commissioner Dobbs moved to approve Special Exception 21-01SE, Commissioner Croft seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.**

**RESOLUTION 21-06, TRAFFIC SIGNAL MAINTENANCE AND COMPENSATION AGREEMENT**

County Coordinator, James Williams stated that Resolution 21-06 is a renewal of the annual agreement with Florida Department of Transportation for inspection and maintenance of traffic signals, and there were not any changes from the previous year. **Commissioner Cannon moved to adopt Resolution 21-06, Traffic Signal Maintenance and Compensation Agreement with Florida Department of Transportation. Commissioner Dobbs seconded the motion. All commissioners voted for the motion.**

**RESOLUTION 21-07, A RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING BROADBAND ACCESS WEEK**

Chair Tallman turned the floor over to Commissioner Perez to explain. Commissioner Perez asked the Board to proclaim the week of May 31 thru June 4 2021 Broadband Access Week. This proclamation would be for the purpose of a media blitz to encourage citizens to participate in a broadband survey in an effort to datamine for speed testing information. Commissioner Perez stated that Madison County recently hosted this type of event, and suggested that Union County model their efforts after to Madison County. **Commissioner Perez moved to adopt Resolution 21-07, proclaiming May 31-June 4, 2021 Broadband Access Week. Commissioner Dobbs seconded motion. The motion passed by unanimous consent.**

**REQUEST OF SUPPORT FOR 5K EVENT**

Mr. Williams stated that Ms. Kelsey Reddish Lewis, in conjunction with the Florida Department of Health, has requested support from the board and the City of Lake Butler for a 5K Event to be held on June 26, 2021 with check in beginning at 7 a.m. Mr. Williams did not have specific details as to logistics or the route. Mr. Wade indicated that the Sheriff's Office should be involved, and Tim Allen answered that the Sheriff's Office is aware. The Board agreed by a general consensus to support efforts for this 5K Event for the SNAP through the Health Department.

**PURCHASE OF PROPERTY FOR FIRE-RESCUE STATION**

Chair Tallman asked Mr. Williams to give details regarding the recommendation to purchase property from Weyerhaeuser for a new fire-rescue station. Mr. Williams relayed that after discussion with Matt Donovan, Area Manager for Florida, Weyerhaeuser has offered to sell up to five acres for \$7,560 per acre. Mr. Williams recommended the Board include the installation of a Florida Department of Transportation culvert on SR-238 be included in the purchase of the property. He recommended the Board enter into a contract to purchase five acres property from Weyerhaeuser. **Commissioner Cannon moved to purchase five acres at \$7,560 per acre, including the culvert for access to SR-238. Commissioner Perez seconded motion, and it passed unanimously.**

**INVENTORY LISTING AND ASSETS OVER \$5,000**

Chair Tallman turned the floor over Mrs. Woodington to address changing the threshold of listing assets on inventory and insurance to items valued over \$5,000. Mrs. Woodington stated currently the inventory listing includes item purchased at \$1,000, that all items valued over \$1,000 are insured and the insurance deductible is \$1,000 per claim. She explained that the insurance agent made the recommendation, and the Clerk's Office agrees with the recommendation. She has discussed the matter with the County's external auditor, and they agree with the change. Moving the threshold to \$5,000 which would be a savings to the county for insurance premiums, and improve efficiency in tracking small items. Chair Tallman asked the pleasure of the Board. **Commissioner Perez move to increase the threshold to \$5,000 of a purchase price of to add items to fixed asset inventory and to a value of \$5,000 to insure county assets. Commissioner Cannon seconded motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

**APPOINT BOARD MEMBER TO CRA DISTRICT**

Chair Tallman asked if a Board member would like to volunteer to serve on this committee, and turned the floor over to Mr. Williams to give more information on the matter. Mr. Williams explained that when the CRA District (Community Redevelopment Agency) was created, a CRA Board was established and the current Interlocal Agreement allows one of the members be from the Board of County Commissioners. He further explained that the CRA District works by diverting ad-valorem taxes that are collected from the increase in value of the properties included in the district from the base year with the CRA was established. Those monies are disbursed to the CRA and can be used only for the certain improvements of property within the district. Mr. Williams stated the duty of the designated county board member is to verify that the tax monies are spent to improve the value of the designated district, which should in the long run benefit the county by improving values outside of the district. Mr. Williams also noted that the next scheduled meeting would be on Tuesday, May 18, 2021. Chair Tallman also added that the CRA was put in place by the city with assistance from the Florida League of Cities. Mr. Williams also stated that the property values within that district over the past 20 years has been steadily on the decline, and that it should be the reverse if the monies are used to improve the specific area. Chair Tallman questioned if funds have been used in the areas in which it is designated to improve. Mr. Williams also stated that if the monies are given back to the County we could use those dollars to improve county property within the specified area. Chair Tallman called for any other discussion. Commissioner Perez volunteered to be the appointed Board Member, and

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the Board agreed by consensus to appoint Commissioner Perez to the CRA Board. Mr. Williams will contact the City of Lake Butler to advise them of the County's appointed CRA Board Member.

**AWARD BID FOR 150<sup>TH</sup> LOOP PROJECT**

Mr. Williams informed the Board that the bid opening for the construction contract was held on Monday May 17<sup>th</sup> in the Boardroom at noon. Anderson Columbia was low bid at \$339,485.59, and other bids included Hipp Construction (\$345,796), VE Whitehurst (\$346,648), and Preferred Materials (\$402,488). Mr. Towne, the design engineer from Kimley-Horn was present for any questions from Board members. The Board was informed that an email had been sent to Mrs. Kim Evans, with Florida Department of Transportation, to inform her that Anderson Columbia submitted the lowest bid. **Commissioner Cannon moved to accept the bid from Anderson Columbia of \$339,485.59, and Commissioner Croft seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.**

**REPORT FROM COUNTY COORDINATOR**

Mr. Williams reported that a verbal approval was received for a \$7,000 grant for the Recreation Board for the purchase of a specialty piece of equipment to maintain ballfields, and that additional funds will be needed for purchase of the equipment.

Mr. Williams stated that each Commissioner should have received a call from Senator Jennifer Bradley to inform them of the approved state appropriation of the \$850,000 for a new fire station, to will be built on the property purchased from Weyerhaeuser.

Mr. Williams stated that he has reached out to Lake Butler Hospital for a response regarding the issue of transporting patients, and is waiting on a response at this time.

Regarding impact fees, Mr. Williams stated he met with County Attorney Wade and Mr. Scott Koons from the North Central Florida Regional Planning Council, and currently there is pending legislation in Tallahassee which will be decided by July 1, 2021, and therefore recommends that the County postpone discussion of impact fees until the outcome of the legislation is decided.

Mr. Williams provided an update on the bridge replacement on CR-231, stating on the north side all base is in place, and the bridge is complete except for railing and is expected to reopen the second week of June, which is a little ahead of schedule.

County staff is currently gathering data for the request for 50% of the funds from the American Rescue Plan Act, and that Union County's total allocation is \$2,959,609. Mr. Williams asked for approval from the Board to utilize the same committee members as for CARES ACT Plan, which would include Pam Woodington, Tim Allen, Michaela Clemons and himself. Mr. Williams recommended the committee adopt a spending plan following guidelines of the Act, for adoption by the Board. The Board approved by general consensus to appoint the committee.

Mr. Williams relayed to the Board that he spoke with a representative from the housing authority in reference to the payment in lieu of taxes, and found a contract was signed April 2, 1960 which states that the Housing Authority is to make their payment in lieu of taxes to the City of Lake Butler. Mr. Williams responded by email that County, City, and School are responsible for services provided to the Housing Authority, not just the City. Mr. Williams has requested a meeting to discuss further.

Mr. Williams asked Mr. Mac Johns, representing the Recreation Board, to address the Board. Mr. Johns stated that Babe Ruth had a successful season and are beginning to wrap up. Parents and children seem to have positive attitudes about the progress made at OJ Phillips. Pop Warner Football is expected to begin in June. Mr. Johns presented a vision of what the Recreation Board would like the football program to become. He presented an

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idea to the Board to dedicate the north side of the property and new facility in memory of Sheriff Jerry Whitehead, and added that it would be a first step in the beginning of the new facility for football. He also wanted to remind the Board of the budget request to have at least one paid position dedicated to the recreation department. He said that Warden Edwards and Mr. Arnold have been helpful, but a request has to be made each time cleanup is needed. **Commissioner Cannon moved to name the proposed football facility The Jerry Whitehead Youth Football Training Center. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dobbs, and was unanimously approved. Commissioner Perez moved to have a Memorial Resolution prepared by County Attorney Wade, Commissioner Cannon seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.**

Mr. Williams requested the Board to direct Attorney Wade to prepare an ordinance to readdress the Fire-Rescue Sales Surtax. He explained that under Florida Statutes, proper studies and workshops need to be conducted if the Board decides to place on the ballot again. **Commissioner Dobbs moved to direct Attorney Wade to draft the Fire-Rescue Sales Surtax Ordinance and Commissioner Croft seconded. The motion received unanimous approval.** Mr. Williams suggested having multiple workshops to discuss funding sources for Fire-Rescue along with the municipalities. Mr. Williams would recommended a committee consisting of a Board member, Mr. Wayne Clemons, Mr. Tim Allen and himself to be able to meet and research and lead workshops for ideas and concerns. **Commissioner Dobbs moved to appoint Commissioner Lacey Cannon, along with Mr. Clemons, Mr. Allen and Mr. Williams for Fire-Rescue Committee. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Croft, and approved by unanimous consent.**

#### **HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS**

**Ms. Margaret Regar**, Northeast Florida Regional Manager for Department of Financial Services, approached the Board and introduced herself as the liaison for Union County to assist in any way possible. Her duties include assistance before, during and after a storm or hurricane has impacted our area.

#### **REPORT FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS**

Mrs. Brown, Library Director, stated that a busy summer full of fun projects is planned at the library.

Mr. Allen, Emergency Management and 911 Director, stated the Sheriff's office is aware of the 5K run planned by the Health Department for the 100 year celebration.

Mr. Harlow, Ag Extension Agent announced that all activities are planned for 4-H summer camps.

#### **REPORT FROM COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

Commissioner Perez updated the Board regarding the 100 year celebration, stating that the first meeting was successful with several participants and lots of ideas. The dates have been set for Thursday, September 30 through Sunday, Oct 3, which will coincide with UCHS Homecoming. The Homecoming theme will be "100 years of Union County". Plans are underway for banners, fireworks, opening of the time capsule and showcase each of the three municipalities in the county.

Chair Tallman adjourned the meeting at 6:48 p.m.

*Adopted by vote of the Board of County Commissioners on July 19, 2021.*