

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
UNION COUNTY, FLORIDA
REGULAR MEETING
JULY 20, 2020

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, Chair

RECORDING: Kellie Hendricks Connell, Clerk of Courts & Comptroller

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

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Chair Cossey called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. Commissioner Croft offered the invocation and led Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chair Cossey welcomed the public and called for public comments.

George Dyal approached the Board, and expressed a need for maintenance and mowing at the Recreation Complex. He stated that he is being told that the County does not have the staff due to COVID. Commissioner Dobbs responded that he understands his frustrations, and added that the County has went from thousands of dollars a day in inmate labor to none, and the County depends on that labor.

Commissioner Cannon informed Mr. Dyal that with the lack of inmate labor, he and his family are doing what they can to meet the demands caused by the labor shortage by mowing the parks in Providence themselves.

Commissioner Tallman told Mr. Dyal that he has himself cleaned feces off of the bathroom walls, and then received complaints about it being back. He added that he had children that played there, and he worked to keep the grounds clean, and now gives his time to the school athletics where his children play, and expects parents with children who play out there to give their time to help keep up the facilities. Commissioner Tallman added that the Recreation Department was his original drive to seek being a County Commissioner, and realizes its importance. The Florida Crown Workforce was supposed to provide an employee, but has not been able to, and the inmates are not working, both due to the pandemic.

County Coordinator James Williams stated that last fall before baseball, he had a successful working schedule with the Department of Corrections, and the fall season went well. He had a discussion with the Recreation Board, and the County supplied equipment, and agreed that volunteers with the Rec Board would man the equipment. Commissioner Tallman asked Mr. Williams if we have a finish mower, and Shelton Arnold answered that we do have one available. Mr. Dyal suggested that the County hire a new position for the maintenance of the complex, and Clerk Connell responded that we simply did not have the funds. She added that the Coronavirus Pandemic has created a significant financial impact, and that most Counties have already furloughed or laid off employees, and that Union County is trying to maintain the employees that we have.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Chair Cossey called for Board action regarding the Consent Agenda. **Commissioner Tallman moved to approve the consent agenda, and Commissioner Dobbs seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.**

REPORT OF DISCOUNTS, ERRORS, DOUBLE ASSESSMENTS AND INSOLVENCIES

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Chair Cossey called for Board action regarding the report of discounts, errors, double assessments and insolvencies from Tax Collector Lisa Johnson. **Commissioner Tallman moved to accept and approve the report as presented, and Commissioner Cannon seconded the motion. All commissioners voted for the motion.**

CITY OF LAKE BUTLER WASTE WATER TREATMENT FACILITY

Sara Owen, City of Lake Butler, approached the Board and explained that the City's waste water treatment facility is at capacity and needs expansion. They have obtained a grant for construction of a new facility, and have worked with the Department of Corrections to build the new facility on the land next to the RMC West Unit. The Department has relayed that it owns the land with a deed restriction from the County, as the County granted it to the Department for the purpose of building the institution, and can only revert it back to the County. Mrs. Owen asked that the County exercise the right of reversion and enter into a 99-year lease for \$100 per year. Mrs. Owen further explained the process if the County agreed to the proposal.

Clerk Connell asked that Chair Cossey call for a recess, as the broadcast of the meeting had failed, and it needed to be restarted so the public could participate. Chair Cossey called for a recess.

Chair Cossey reconvened the meeting.

Mrs. Owen clarified to the Board that the City is not asking for formal adoption of the proposal, but a consensus that the Board is willing to move in that direction. Commissioner Tallman expressed that he would like more time to read the document, as it was only provided just before the meeting, and suggested a workshop to discuss the issue. Chair Cossey asked the Board secretary to schedule a workshop.

CEI RECOMMENDATION FOR GILMAN ROAD

Mr. Williams recommended TRC from Alachua. Commissioner Cannon asked Mr. Williams if they were qualified, and verified that it was legal to use this company. Mr. Williams confirmed that they have been approved by the Board on a continuing services basis, and that he has verified their availability and qualifications. **Commissioner Cannon moved to engage with TRC as CEI for resurfacing Gilman Road. Commissioner Tallman seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.**

CARES ACT UPDATE

Mr. Williams informed the Board that the CARES Act Advisory Team (CAAT) is meeting regularly, and also that the Florida Association of Counties has recommended a broad plan for adoption, the Union County's CAAT is working to fit to our County. The Florida Department of Emergency Management is giving some push back on eligibility of items that large Counties that receive direct federal assistance have used the funds for, and advised that he is working with FAC to resolve the issues. He advised that he has met with the municipalities in the County regarding their needs, and that Economic Stabilization Grants for small businesses is part of the plan.

Mr. Williams further advised the the SHIP program received CARES Act funds directly, and turned the floor over to Clerk Connell for further information. She informed the Board that \$175,000 was funded for rent and mortgage assistance and related expenditures, but that it was in lieu of the normal annual funding of \$350,000. She also advised that she had just received the agreement with Florida Housing to accept the funds, and advised that the Board accept it. **Commissioner Tallman moved to accept the SHIP CARES Act Funding Agreement, and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Croft. It passed unanimously.**

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Commissioner Tallman stated that he believed professional help was needed, and Mr. Williams responded that the Team was already utilizing the services of Traci Buzbee of The Management Group, which the County already has contracts with. Commissioner Tallman agreed this was a good idea.

REPORT FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS

Tim Allen, Emergency Management Director, reported that he is gathering as much free PPE as possible.

REPORT FROM KELLIE HENDRICKS CONNELL, CLERK OF COURTS & COMPTROLLER

Clerk Connell reminded the Board that the time for budget meetings is approaching. This year, given the pandemic, that the Department of Revenue has allowed budget meetings to be held virtually. The County has the capabilities, the numbers of positive cases are increasing, and that we don't know what the situation will be in September but a decision regarding the tentative hearing is needed to advertise on the TRIM notices now. She advised that the tentative hearing be held virtually, and a decision regarding the final hearing can be made later. She asked the Board for dates for both hearings, and a consensus was reached to hold the tentative hearing virtually on September 14, 2020 at 5:30 pm, and the final hearing on September 21, 2020 with a time to be determined.

Clerk Connell was happy to report that Gallagher Insurance has delivered health insurance rates for next year, and there is no change, for the second year. Currently, health insurance rates are increasing by 5-8%, and is extremely pleased that our rate will hold steady for three years. Additionally, Florida Blue provided a 15% rebate for the month of July as part of the response to the COVID-19 crisis.

REPORT FROM RUSSELL A. WADE, III, COUNTY ATTORNEY

Attorney Wade announced there had been no movement on the Bert J. Harris Claim.

REPORT FROM COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Chair Cossey relayed to other commissioners that a policy regarding employees wearing facemasks in the workplace is being drafted.

Commissioner Tallman expressed concerns with the City of Lake Butler that have arisen from their request regarding the land request for the waste water treatment facility. Specifically, he asked Clerk Connell to research the Community Redevelopment Area and the money it diverts from the County. He also addressed the Recreation Department needs, expressing that he feels the City and the School Board should both contribute.

Commissioner Cannon sadly reported that Mr. Carl Bielling passed away, and asked that all keep the family in their prayers.

REPORT FROM COUNTY COORDINATOR

Mr. Williams provided an update on the County's grants. He is working with the Department of Corrections to revert 8 acres back to the County for the construction of four baseball fields for the FRDP Grant, which is for \$165,000. He relayed that these fields, along with perimeter fencing, will enable the complex to host tournaments, which will result in revenue for the Recreation Board. Rec Board members have been active in performing their responsibilities, and that department is working well given the virus situation. He is also working on a mitigation grant with Mr. Allen, which would fund an evacuation shelter and better construction of roads that repeatedly flood.

Mr. Williams provided an update on road projects. The CR-231 bridge replacement is now under construction, and he has not heard back from Anderson-Columbia regarding closing the bridge during construction. 63rd Avenue is near completion, and the permit from Suwannee River Water Management District for 150th Loop has been obtained, but the project will need an extension due to delays resulting

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from right-of-way issues. 238-North bid documents are being prepared, and it has been built into the bid for the County to retain the millings. CR-229 is still in the design phase, and he is working with the Department of Transportation's safety team for improvements at the intersection of SR-121.

Mr. Eugene Dukes, a citizen and representative of Florida Crown Workforce, was asked if Florida Crown was ready to proceed with an employee, and he answered that they are.

Mr. Williams announced that additional water testing is needed at the retired landfill, and suggested that Jones-Edmunds continue, as they had the contract before. The Board agreed by consensus.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

With no further business, Chair Cossey adjourned the meeting at 7:15 pm.

Adopted by vote of the Board of County Commissioners on August 17, 2020.