

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
UNION COUNTY, FLORIDA  
REGULAR MEETING  
NOVEMBER 15, 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: 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 at 6:00 pm. Commissioner Croft offered the invocation and led Pledge of Allegiance.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Chair Tallman welcomed the public and called for public comments.

JR Davis approached the Board to discuss the disparity between individual and business special assessments, and asked that the Board resolve to institute special assessments for businesses. Chair Tallman asked Mr. Williams to elaborate on the history of the topic, and added that as a business owner, he is in favor of a commercial special assessment. Mr. Williams said it has been discussed in several meetings over the past year. Attorney Wade said that an ordinance is not necessary, that the original ordinance allows for the rate to be set by resolution. Mr. Williams agreed that the item needs to be reviewed and action taken by the end of the year, so that it can be put in place for next year. The Board agreed to hold a workshop on the matter on November 23 at noon.

**AWARDS & RECOGNITION**

Chair Tallman turned the floor over to Commissioner Cannon and Toby Witt, EMS Director. Mr. Witt read a letter from Kevin Steverson, the UCHS JROTC instructor, giving praise and appreciation to Mark Macha and Tita Mungia-Velazquez for their volunteered time attending a rappelling trip with the JROTC at Camp Blanding.

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

**Commissioner Dobbs moved to approve a the consent agenda presented by Clerk Rhoades, which included minutes from the August 16, 2021 Local Planning Agency Public Hearing, August 16, 2021 Regular Meeting, August 17, 2021 Adjourned Meeting, August 19, 2021 Emergency Meeting, August 31, 2021 Budget Workshop, August 31, 2021 Emergency Meeting, September 9, 2021 Tentative Budget Hearing, September 20, 2021 Final Budget Hearing, September 20, 2021 Regular Meeting, October 18, 2021 Planning & Zoning Meeting and October 18, 2021 Regular Meeting and Budget Amendments 2021-06 and 2022-01. Commissioner Cannon seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.**

**APPOINTMENT OF DESIGN FOR 92<sup>ND</sup> STREET**

Chair Tallman asked Mr. Williams to explain the item. Mr. Williams answered that North Florida Professional Services provided the cost estimate for the three-road project, and he recommended them for the design portion of the project, and added that the have a continuing service contract with the County. **Commissioner Dobbs moved, and Commissioner Perez seconded, to appoint North Florida Professional Services as the design engineer for 92<sup>nd</sup> Street.** Commissioner Cannon asked, and Mr. Williams confirmed, that this included the other two roads that were grouped together in the agreement with DOT, 146<sup>th</sup> Lane and 152<sup>nd</sup> Court.

**ADVERTISE FOR RFP FOR ROAD PROJECTS**

Mr. Williams advised the Board that the CR-18 and CR 238-N road projects will exceed the amount that can be done on a continuing services contract, and that we must advertise for bids. **Commissioner Dobbs moved to**

**advertise to seek bids for CR-18. Commissioner Perez seconded the motion, and all commissioners voted for the motion.**

**Commissioner Dobbs moved to advertise to seek bids for CR-238-N. Commissioner Perez seconded the motion, and all commissioners voted for the motion.**

**DOT GRANT FOR CR-18 AND RESOLUTION 2021-13**

**Commissioner Dobbs moved to accept the agreement and pass Resolution 2021-13, and Commissioner Perez seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.**

**CONTRACT WITH MERIDIAN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH**

**Commissioner Dobbs moved to accept the contract as presented with Meridian Behavioral Health, and Commissioner Perez seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.**

**CULVERT PERMIT APPLICATION**

Chair Tallman asked Mr. Williams to elaborate on the proposed culvert permit application. Mr. Williams responded that there is an overload on culvert permits, and the County crew is backed up for installation. He added that no other county that he is aware of installs permits, and recommends that Union County follow their lead. The permit costs \$80, but the County bears a much higher cost to install a culvert. Commissioner Dobbs expressed that he believes that mandating mitered ends will be in the best interest of the County for maintenance purposes. Mr. Williams answered him, saying that requirement is on the application. Chair Tallman told everyone that the County should honor the permits that have already been approved and install those. **Commissioner Dobbs moved, and Commissioner Perez seconded, to approve the Culvert Permit Application. It passed unanimously.**

**CREDIT CARD PROCESSING AGREEMENT**

Chair Tallman asked Clerk Rhoades to provide more information. She answered that Florida law now requires that collecting payments electronically be allowed for building permit. She said that she and Mr. Williams have worked out that anyone wishing to pay with a credit card could pay in the Clerk's office and those fees be sent from the Clerk to the County until a credit card processing system could be implemented. The company that is being proposed is CiviTek, which is the same that is used in the Clerk's office, and they are very happy with the system and customer service. The system will implement a 3.5% convenience fee that will be added on to the customer, and that CiviTek will keep that fee and remit the portion to the County that is the actual amount due for permits and fees. She also said there are normally some equipment costs and implementation charges that CiviTek is waiving, so there is no cost to the County. **Commissioner Cannon moved, and Commissioner Croft seconded, to approve Credit Card Processing Agreement with CiviTek. The motion passed unanimously.**

**REPORT FROM COUNTY COORDINATOR**

Mr. Williams reported that Tim Allen and Mark Hughes submitted a grant application for new fire gear, and it was approved at 100% funding for \$15,267. He also said that the Tire Amnesty program has been approved again, for up to \$25,000, and dates for that need to be set. He further reported he applied for a grant for the Ag Facility. Sixteen were selected, and Union County's was ranked fifth. The award amount is \$750,000, and is only pending funding in the State budget.

Mr. Williams communicated to the Board that he met with Luke Harlow and UF Health regarding UF Health's desire to place a station to provide residents to receive telehealth services for four hours once per week. UF Health will send personnel and equipment for it. Commissioner Dobbs said that he likes the idea of working with Suwannee River Economic Council to locate the service there. Mr. Williams answered that he has already spoken with Matt Pearson of SREC regarding moving the Veterans Service officer there to better serve the needs of the people, so he believes that is a possible option.

Mr. Williams then presented a proposed policy for criteria for Premium Pay for workers that have worked through the pandemic to provide essential government services, with funding from American Rescue Plan Act funding. **Commissioner Dobbs moved to adopt the policy as presented, and Commissioner Perez seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.** Chair Tallman asked when employees will receive the money. Mr. Williams answered that he has communicated with the Clerk regarding the timing. Clerk Rhoades answered that finance will have it processed by the end of the week, and will submit to the bank by Monday.

Mr. Williams then addressed an issue regarding road projects, stating that there is a time crunch for DOT deadlines on 150<sup>th</sup> Loop and CR-238-N, and asked that the Board grant permission to pay bills presented weekly, with the total project not payments not to exceed the agreement amount. **Commissioner Cannon moved for the Clerk to release payments on these roads weekly, with the total to be kept within the grant agreement. Commissioner Croft seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.** Mr. Williams announced that Rural County Days will be on January 26-27, that rooms have been reserved, and he needs to know who is attending to make lodging arrangements.

Shelton Arnold, Jr., Road Superintendent, reminded commissioners that the crews would not be working in the districts during holiday weeks, and expressed appreciation to the Board on behalf of all road department employees for the premium pay.

Mary Brown, Library Director, echoed Mr. Arnold's appreciation, and announced that the library is hosting second graders at the library and issuing them all a library card. Mrs. Brown also announced a "Toys for Fines" program, where someone can receive up to \$20 in forgiveness of fines for the donation of any new toy.

Toby Witt, EMS Director, updated the Board regarding staffing the department, stating that as of November 22, they will be fully staffed for the two primary trucks, are partially staffed for the third truck, and are continuing to hire to be fully staffed soon. He said he would be getting new signage for the director's truck, and also expressed appreciation for the premium pay. Commissioner Cannon asked if any EMT's were becoming Paramedics, and Mr. Witt answered that one has recently completed school and is in the process of being cleared, and three are currently enrolled in Paramedic school.

Luke Harlow, Extension Agent, updated the Board on 4-H enrollment, stating that we have almost as many as Duval County and have an increased enrollment over the last two years. There are currently 151 kids enrolled. He also invited everyone to Farm City celebration, which will be a luncheon on November 23, from 11 am to 1 pm.

#### **REPORT FROM KELLIE HENDRICKS RHOADES, CLERK & COMPTROLLER**

Clerk Rhoades announced that she will be creating a digital presentation for Board meetings, asked that departments include her in submitting reports so that they can be compiled for the meeting.

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

Mr. Wade brought forward Ordinance 21-01, and read the header and stated that this was recommended to be passed in the previous meeting when the Board was sitting as the Planning and Zoning Board. **Commissioner Cannon moved to pass Ordinance 21-01, and Commissioner Dobbs seconded it. It passed unanimously.**

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

Commissioner Perez praised the Road Department, stating that he has received many positive calls from citizens. Commissioner Dobbs asked Chris Towne, from Kimley-Horn, the status of CR-229. Mr. Towne answered that it is still in the review stage with DOT. Commissioner Dobbs also praised Mr. Witt for his accomplishment in getting fully staffed, adding that it takes a load off of him knowing that the EMS Department is functioning well. He also said he appreciated everyone's participation in the Employee Appreciation luncheon.

November 15, 2021

Regular Meeting

Commissioner Cannon expressed appreciation for the staff of the county, and also said he appreciates the job that Mr. Witt is doing. He asked that everyone be mindful of citizens in need, and wished everyone a safe and happy Thanksgiving.

The meeting adjourned by general consent at 6:51.

*Adopted by vote of the Board of County Commissioners on December 27, 2021.*