

WASHINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Location: Commission Board Room

1331 South Blvd., Chipley, FL 32428

DISTRICT 1	DISTRICT 2	DISTRICT 3	DISTRICT 4	DISTRICT
Alan T Bush	David Pettis, Jr.	Tray Hawkins	Wesley Griffin	David Corbin

1. PROCLAMATION

- 1.1 Call to Order – Chairman Pettis
- 1.2 Invocation – Pastor David Woods, Yes Lord Deliverance Church
- 1.3 Pledge

Present – Commissioners Pettis, Hawkins, Griffin, and Corbin. Also attending – Deputy Clerk Brantley, Finance Director Johnnie Pettis, County Administrator, Jeff Massey, and Fuqua & Milton, P.A., Attorney Milton.

2. PUBLIC HEARING

Public Hearing for Adoption of the Sunny Hills Annual Rate Resolution – Attorney Milton ready the rate resolution by title. The annual rate resolution stays the same as in prior years except for a 5% increase.

Benita Crittendon questioned if the MSBU funds were used for drainage issues in Sunny Hills.

County Attorney Milton responded. The allowable usage is defined in the ordinance. What is included in their budget is not information that he has.

3. ADOPT THE AGENDA – Commissioner Hawkins said the mayor of Vernon is not present to speak on item 7.6. Item 7.6 will be removed from the agenda. – Commissioner Griffin offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Corbin, and unanimously carried to approve the agenda.

4. ADOPT THE MINUTES

- 4.1 Workshop for May 9, 2024
- 4.2 Board Meeting for May 16, 2024
- 4.3 Emergency/Special Meeting for May 29, 2024

Commissioner Hawkins offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Griffin, and unanimously carried to approve the above minutes.

5. NON-AGENDA AUDIENCE/PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - Effective October 1,

2013, Florida Statute 286.0114 mandates that “members of the public shall be given a reasonable opportunity to be heard on a proposition before a Board or Commission.”

- The Washington County Board of County Commissioners has expanded this provision to allow members of the community to speak on a topic which is not currently before the Board/Agenda. To do so the community members should, prior to the start of the meeting, sign the public participation form provided at the door of the commission room, and shall state their name and the topic on which they wish to speak. During the Non-Agenda Audience portion of the meeting, the individual shall be given up to three (3) minutes to speak.
- Each individual shall have three (3) minutes to speak about a proposition before the Board. Prior to the time a meeting has been called to order, should an individual or group wish to address an item which is on the agenda for consideration, the individual or group shall obtain, from the Commission Secretary or Clerk, a public comment form and may write on the form their name and the agenda matter which they wish to address. The completed form(s) shall be returned to the Commission Secretary/Clerk, who shall provide the form(s) to the Chairperson. Should a particular group wish to address an item, they shall nominate a spokesperson to voice their ideas, comments, and concerns. In the event an individual wishes to speak on an item and has not signed up in advance, those who have signed shall be given priority.
- Any public comment before the board shall be directed to the Chairperson of the Board. It is not a question-and-answer period. Public comments concerning individual employees (other than those hired directly by the Board (County Administrator/County Attorney) shall not be entertained. Any comment, pros, or cons, regarding a county employee who does not report directly to the Board shall be addressed to the Human Relations Department or the County Administrator.

Benita Crittendon asked if the county has received any communication from the FBI that the investigation on Wheeler Emergency Management have been concluded.

County Attorney Milton responded. That is not typical information that they would receive.

Benita Crittendon suggested the board lower the rental rates for the community rooms, which may increase the rental amount. This suggestion is based on Lynn Haven’s event center rental fee of \$150.00 deposit and \$150.00 daily rental fee.

James Brooks addressed the board about the rodeo/isolation park/equestrian park. Who owns it? Is there a policy? Who has authority over it? Who is the contact? It is his opinion CARES Funds were misappropriated to upgrade the rodeo. The facility belongs to the taxpayer. The sheriff’s office quoted someone \$4,500.00 to rent the facility for two days.

County Administrator Massey said the facility belongs to the county.

Troy Cunningham addressed the board. The Washington County Fire Fighters Association: it is specifically stated in every document the county sends out that it is a Fire Fighters Association. This is to include every man and woman that is included in any fire department in the county. It is not specifically a chief's association. 2.2 of the 2017 by-laws it states the reason for exist – to be median of cooperation in planning, training, and exchange of information in creating an effective delivery system for said fire protection and rescue services. Article 7.1 – The association has worked in harmony with/and at the direction and pleasure of Washington County BOCC. Article 8.1 – Adoption – The BOCC has to approve the by-laws.

Country Oaks has not received any information about new agreements for fire services. More stations in Sunny Hills because of growth. There is an 800-acre development planned for the west side. There were four citizens ready to join Country Oaks Fire Department and were told no by the fire coordinator because they are in Carville. Does the MSBU tax go toward the fire services? It did prior to Sunny Hills being taken over by the county, where did the MSBU tax go? If an MSBU tax will be implemented, this shows that it does not work because Sunny Hills is struggling to cover their services.

Commissioner Griffin suggested they find a place for the four that would like to join.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

- 6.1 Approval of 23PLN71 Washington County Vulnerability Assessment Change Order
- 6.2 Approval of Tourism Lodging Tax Increase Referendum on November 2024 Ballot
- 6.3 Approval of Appointment of Jonathan Barnett to the Tri-County Airport Authority
- 6.4 Approval of the Appointment of Gary Hartman to the Value Adjustment Board
- 6.5 Approval of Sunny Hills Meeting Room Policy Update
- 6.6 Approval to Accept Money and Public Works to Perform Work for Hurricane Sally Small Projects Repairs

Commissioner Hawkins offered a motion, which was seconded by Commissioner Corbin to approve the consent agenda.

Benita Crittendon addressed the board regarding a document from FEMA in reference to Washington County. The document shows where all of Hurricane Sally was initially denied for \$5,000.00/\$6000.00+/- . After two appeals it was approved for \$3.2 million. The remaining \$1.9 million

continued to be denied. The document repeatedly mentions the necessity for pre-disaster documentation to receive FEMA funds post-disaster. The Road and Bridge's maintenance records did not have visual proof of pre-disaster conditions. There should be a policy. It was said that GoPro's can be put on the graders 1 – 2 times per year and save the SD cards. During a discussion with Jeff Massey, Allison Blevins, DEM representative approached them and asked if they had received any FEMA results yet. She commented that Wheeler is your problem. You need to get rid of Wheeler. That is Washington County's biggest problem. Has there been a pre-disaster plan put in place?

County Administrator Massey commented that they have maintenance records.

Johnny Evans, Public Works said the worksheets they fill out after the 2013 – 2014 rain disasters, Debbie Riley adjusted the worksheets and FEMA expressed their pleasure with them. The employees complete those worksheets daily, which is uploaded into IWorqs. There is a camera in his truck, they are in the dump trucks, etc. The request to document right before a storm hit came up after Hurricane Sally.

County Administrator Massey included that the state recently had a company do all the roads in the county. It is done for this season.

Larry Zezula mentioned a previous job he worked at and that he owned a water erosion card. When there is two inches of rain and reports over those phones, you document those calls, which is enough proof. Three inches of rain versus ten inches of rain in a hurricane should be repaired easily. Regarding the continuous discrepancies with everything is annoying. They move from multiple topics and nothing is really being accomplished. He went on to suggest that people should be more active in researching, being helpful, and making contact with the commissioners instead of complaining about things.

Commissioner Hawkins requested clarification regarding a plan for monitoring.

Kevan Parker addressed the board. The documentation began before Hurricane Sally. They used GIS maps for Washington County and broke them down. The employees at road and bridge road the roads for a couple of days using a camera and map they picked up from the EOC. The information was downloaded.

Commissioner Hawkins said they did it for a storm that was not declared, which is when they questioned how often and when it should be done.

Kevan Parker addressed the board. Along with the county employees, they went out and documented damage, which is what was entered on the GIS map that was provided to FEMA and the State. They began a Submerge Road Policy that was effective January 1, 2016, which gives direction on what needs to be done prior to. It includes the requirement for survey and design which is not done on dirt roads but typically on paved roads. They have picture and video documentation. They have not received a true answer on how long the picture is good.

Commissioner Corbin asked if they should implement something. For example, every June.

Kevan Parker responded that could be done. When they know that one is developing, they would begin planning. They try to document two to three days before an event. They did this for Hurricane Sally and two other events that were not declared.

Approval of the consent agenda was carried unanimously.

7. AGENDA ITEMS

- 7.1 Recognition of Dana Whipple – David Pettis, Jr., Chairman
Dana Whipple addressed the board and thanked the board, his co-workers, and especially the building department staff.
- 7.2 Proclamation Recognizing Virena Harmon Brown – David Pettis, Jr., Chairman read the proclamation, which will be presented to her and her family.
- 7.3 WCBOCC Title VI/Nondiscrimination Policy and Plan – Aaron Dudley, Human Resources Specialist addressed the board. This is an update to the Title VI Nondiscrimination Policy and Plan that the county has in place and the county's policy and notice of nondiscrimination. Every five years the Washington County Emergency Management submits the EMPG Grant annually. Every five years they have to submit the policy's and plans referenced about to the Department of Homeland Security and they do a civil rights evaluation tool, which includes eight items. They submitted that in 2023, however, the Department of Homeland Security identified items for amendments. The items included clarification about the complaint process/procedure and items such as that. Staff worked with an attorney with the Krizner Group who assisted with the plan updates. The liaison has been updated to herself. Before the board for approval is the policy and notice of discrimination and the eight items that need to be submitted back to the Department of Homeland Security. They may have additional suggestions.

Commissioner Corbin offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner

Hawkins, and unanimously carried to accept the policy as written with the acceptance of any minor changes suggested from the Department of Homeland Security. Approve the policy contingent upon the Department of Homeland accepting it as written.

Aaron Dudley informed the board if there is a significant change, she would come back before the board.

Commissioner Hawkins offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Corbin, and unanimously carried to approve the proclamation for Virena Harmon Brown (item 7.2).

- 7.4 Discussion Regarding Sylvania Road Bridge Replacement – Tray Hawkins, Commissioner spoke on the road being recently paved, which has a bridge that has always been in a bad location. The location has a missing guard rail on one side, which is being replaced. Johnny Evans would like to replace the bridge with a box culvert.

Johnny Evans told the board he contacted Mr. Crenshaw for estimates, which were higher than he expected. The bridge is sixteen feet long and fifteen feet wide. The size of the box would be fifteen feet wide by twenty feet, which would be around \$800,000.00. Keenkutter would be bigger than this one. Due to the size of the bridge, it is not inspected by the state.

Commissioner Hawkins said that he and County Administrator Massey are working on something through Water Management regarding the one on Keenkutter.

County Administrator Massey said that one grant can be applied for before the end of the month and the other in the new budget year.

Commissioner Hawkins asked if the board would be okay with applying for the grants through Water Management for Keenkutter and Sylvania Road Bridge. They both go in the same basin and navigate back to Holmes Creek.

There was no opposition from the board to apply for the grants.

- 7.5 Discussion Regarding Keenkutter Culvert Replacement – Tray Hawkins, Commissioner (This was addressed with 7.4.)
- 7.6 *Vernon Recreation Field Discussion – This item was removed from the agenda.*

- 7.7 Request for Approval of Two Board Representatives to the Value Adjustment Board – David Pettis, Jr., Chairman – Commissioner Hawkins offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Griffin, to continue like prior years with the position of chairman and vice-chairman to be on the Value Adjustment Board, which would be Commissioner Pettis, Chairman and Commissioner Corbin, Vice-Chairman.
- 7.8 Powell (Vernon) Small Scale Future Land Use Map Amendment – Dawn McDonald, Senior Planner addressed the board. The case was tabled at the last meeting. It is a proposal to change approximately forty acres from agriculture/silviculture to general commercial to support a temporary lay down yard. The location is Highway 277 and Bruner Dairy Road. Staff recommended approval. On May 6, the planning commission recommended denial 3 to 2. There were potential safety issues, traffic impacts, and sight distance. At the previous meeting the board wanted additional information regarding the driveway permit, which would be issued by the Florida Department of Transportation.

Commissioner Pettis said that someone reached out to the Department of Transportation that did issue the permit. The Department of Transportation access permit has been applied for and approved for Mr. Powell on Highway 277. A traffic study is not needed for a category A permit, with less than twenty trips per day.

Are there any added questions about any environmental issues?

Commissioner Hawkins offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Corbin, for discussion to approve the land use change listed as item 7.8.

Tracey Andrews, External Affairs Manager for Florida Power and Light. It is understood that the site will be for parking and poles. There is no concern about transformers being there. Florida Power and Light has a team that handles environmental needs. There are other sites that are set up in other counties. Washington County is one of the communities where they are storm hardening their system to make it more resilient. Contractors employed by Florida Power and Light will access the site.

Commissioner Corbin confirmed that Florida Power and Light monitor the work, and everything would fall under them and not the private contractor.

Applicant Power addressed the board. There will be wire anchors, such as that on the site. There will not be any transformers.

Troy Cunningham reached out to Lisa Ward in the permitting department, who stated that the applicant said there would be up to fourteen loads daily.

Mr. Powell previously stated twenty-five daily loads. Which is it? According to the Department of Transportation there are up to twenty-five loads on the driveway.

It was previously said that the county does not allow leapfrogging. What is leapfrogging? If it is not allowed, why is it being done?

County Attorney Milton suggested it was scattered zoning.

Commissioner Hawkins asked if it is a policy.

Dawn McDonald, Senior Planner said leapfrogging is in the comprehensive plan. They would like to encourage compact growth but there are other policies in the plan where they want to encourage economic growth. They look at the surrounding land uses. General commercials have locational criteria where it must be on a major roadway/highway/intersection. For a long time, commercial uses were allowed in residential categories. Even in agricultural/silviculture, which also allows commercial uses. Some with the Board's approval. Due to the change in use and the new use in the area they determined general commercial would be proper. General commercial supports this type of activity. It is not certain that it is called leapfrogging, but they should try to encourage compact development when possible.

Commissioner Corbin said across from this parcel is commercial and the next two or three lots. There are two different canoe rentals.

Troy Cunningham said they were not given the full picture. Vernon was excluded. They were not given the full picture. Why have policies if they are not going to be followed. It is temporary. At the end of this, does it turn back to agriculture/silviculture?

Commissioner Hawkins said there is Oscar Ward's place. It has to start somewhere. The Ebro Dogtrack was the only commercial business for years, however, now there are a few businesses around it.

In response to the land use reverting, County Attorney Milton responded no.

County Attorney Milton made the board aware that the planning

commission recommended denial.

James Brooks said that it is on a bad curve, however, he does not want to give his support to a small business/contractor. If it is approved, signage needs to be put up for truck usage notification. The road is highly traveled.

Dawn McDonald said she did overlook providing the FLUM for the City of Vernon to show the other use, however, the other uses were discussed at the planning commission meeting. The map has been included in the board's documents today.

John Gay, Washington County Planning and Zoning Chairman. About leapfrogging. In agreeance with Commissioner Hawkins, it must begin somewhere. The planning board uses good judgment when they are considering approving commercial. It does not necessarily have to adjoin an adjacent commercial piece of property. It is uncertain if there is a clear definition of leapfrogging. Planning and Zoning does not like to see a parcel that is a mile away that has requested commercial in residential with commercial being a mile to a mile half away. Commercial does have to begin somewhere; however, he does not feel this is the correct location for a different reason. Leapfrogging is not a policy. It is not a defined policy with how far you go. It is a judgement call that the planner commissioners make. The main reason the planning commission voted 3 to 2 for denial is because it was on a curve and would create a hazard. It is a class A driveway permit, which only allows twenty daily trips. Lisa Ward said they would monitor it and if it exceeds twenty daily trips, Mr. Powell would have to submit a different application. The request before the board is not to overrule the planning commission's vote.

Commissioner Corbin said one of the biggest concerns is the curve. He went on to ask Mr. Powell if it would be possible to remove some of the trees in the curve along the fence line to increase the sight for pulling out.

Mr. Powell said the contractors will be asked to put signs up. They also plan to trim the right-of-way to clear the curve.

The motion to approve the land use change was carried 3 to 1, with Commissioner Griffin opposed.

- 7.9 Discussion of July 5, 2024, Holiday Contingent on Governor DeSantis Declaration – David Pettis, Jr., Chairman the board has encountered this a couple of years with the change being made by Governor DeSantis a few days before the holiday. The request before the board is to declare

July 5, 2024, a holiday contingent upon Governor DeSantis making that declaration. Commissioner Hawkins made the motion, which was seconded by Commissioner Corbin. The motion also included for all employees that fall under the BOCC's purview and offer to any constitutional officer. To prevent any disruption of staff that are mandated to work that day, staff will be offered a floating holiday. The motion carried unanimously.

8. MSBU ADVISORY COMMITTEE UPDATE – None

9. PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR – Trey Barbee

- 9.1 Bridge Culvert Replacement on CR 173 over Gum Creek No. 2 – The Department of Transportation would like to replace the bridge over Gum Creek, which has some deficiencies. County Attorney Milton read the resolutions by title/recitals.

Commissioner Corbin offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Hawkins, and unanimously carried to approve the resolution to support a temporary road closure pursuant to completion of a bridge replacement project.

Commissioner Hawkins offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Griffin, and unanimously carried to approve the agreement for the Gum Creek Bridge Culvert Replacement project.

Commissioner Hawkins offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Corbin, and unanimously carried to approve the resolution for right-of-way acquisition related to the Gum Creek Bridge Culvert Replacement Project.

10. PARKS UPDATE – None

11. ENGINEERING PROJECTS UPDATE – None

12. COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR – Jeff Massey

- 12.1 Recognition of George Swauger for St. Joseph Park Dedication – George Swauger was not present.

- 12.2 Proposed Building Department Plan Submittal – The building department would like to change the submittal fee from 10%/\$25.00 to 15%/\$35.00 (whichever one is greater) to offset administrative costs within the department.

Commissioner Hawkins offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Corbin, to amend the building department submittal fee as presented above.

Michael Gerald, Contractual Building Official addressed the board

regarding the proposal and went on to tell the board after reviewing the fee schedule they are losing money on certain inspections. Fee comparison will continue to be made with the surrounding counties. The intent for the residential is to try to ensure that the least amount of discomfort is felt in this area. There are plans that are reviewed that payment is not received for until they receive the permit. What occurs if the project does not go through? Washington County has the need for another inspector on staff.

Commissioner Hawkins said 2019 was the last plan review amendment.

John Gay said in planning and zoning the fees were low for land use changes and development orders. He requested Dawn McDonald to check the fees from Leon County to Escambia County, which is the range Washington County should check. Planning and zoning should be self-sustaining as well as the building department. The fee for submitting plans should be paid upfront. As a contractor, the recommendation before the board is to change that.

Commissioner Hawkins commented that growth pays for growth. You must be careful not to price someone out of a home or business in the county. A workshop to discuss the building fees would be beneficial.

The motion on the floor carried unanimously.

Commissioner Griffin requested an update on FEMA reimbursement. The paperwork is being reviewed. The information that he has been given this week is they are planning to have a call with the state, and they would be in touch next week.

Commissioner Pettis said he spoke with Mr. Fugate, the ex-director of FEMA, and said if FEMA approved that, Washington County is entitled to everything that was approved.

13. CLERK

13.1 May Vouchers Totaling \$3,039,396.34

14. COUNTY ATTORNEY

14.1 Adoption of the Sunny Hills Annual Rate Resolution – County Attorney Milton read the rate resolution by title.

Commissioner Hawkins offered a motion, seconded by Commissioner Corbin, and unanimously carried to approve the Sunny Hills Rate Resolution. (2024 – 12)

Update – Chairman Pettis

- New Jerusalem Road, Territory Road, and Ditches on Carter Circle – Response from the Department of Emergency Management staff has reviewed the county’s responses to request for more information about the three above referenced roads. The division has determined that the county has provided sufficient information in response to the request for additional information. Therefore, the division requires no other information to go ahead with processing these projects, however, final approval of the public assistance funding request does not end with the division. FEMA has the final authority to approve or deny the request for funds after reviewing all documentation submitted. Thus, in accordance with standard practice and procedure the entirety of the documentation related to each project including the county’s responses to the request for added information will be submitted to FEMA. As a result, it would be premature for the division to either sanction or oppose the county’s actions about the projects. The division appreciates the county’s response to the request for more information and maintain a clear line of communication should the need arise. The division remains available to provide the county with technical assistance with these or any other projects.
- Country Oaks Volunteer Fire Department – Firefighter Day Camp will be held June 29, 2024, from 8 a.m. – 2 p.m. at Country Oaks Volunteer Fire Department. One Blood bus donation will be at the event.
- Northwest Florida Community Hospital Community Event – They are collecting donations for Washington County students. All donations will be delivered to and distributed by Washington County Schools. This will be July 19, 2024, 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. at the specialty center. The county will partner with and will be collected supplies at the annex. Donations may also be made directly to the school.

Commissioner Corbin added that the event is different from years past where students walked around and received supplies. This is the donation process, which will be sent to the school.

15. ADJOURN