

Regular Meeting Minutes

Commission Board Room

Dixie County Courthouse

214 NE Hwy 351, Cross City, FL 32628

June 05, 2025 – 10:00 AM

The Board meetings are audio recorded. The public can hear and participate in the meeting via conference call by dialing 1(917)900-1022 and enter code 32628.

COMMISSIONERS

Jody Stephenson, District 1, Chairman

Daniel Wood, District 2

Mark Hatch, District 3, Vice Chairman

Jamie Storey, District 4,

David Osteen, District 5

STAFF

John Jenkins, County Manager

Roy Bass, Assistant County Manager

Martha McCaskill, Administrative Asst/Grant Coordinator

Chiana Watson, County Attorney

Barbie Higginbotham, Clerk of Court

Brenda Royal, Chief Financial Officer

Joannie Morse, Deputy Clerk

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Stephenson at 6:00 PM.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE TO THE AMERICAN FLAG

The Invocation and Pledge to the American Flag was led by Commissioner Hatch.

APPROVAL OF COMMISSION MINUTES

05-01-2025 Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the 05-01-2025 Regular Meeting Minutes made by Commissioner Osteen.

Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Board approved.

05-12-2025 TOHB/BOCC Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the 05-12-2025 TOHB/BOCC Meeting Minutes made by Commissioner Osteen.

Seconded by Commissioner Hatch. Board approved.

05-15-2025 Policies and Procedures Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the 05-15-2025 Policies and Procedures Meeting Minutes made by Commissioner Wood. Seconded by Commissioner Storey. Board approved.

05-15-2025 Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the 05-15-2025 Regular Meeting Minutes made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Board approved.

VOUCHER APPROVAL

Motion to approve the vouchers made by Commissioner Wood. Seconded by Commissioner Osteen. Board approved.

CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS

None

KATRINA VANAERMAM AND SHEILA FRIERSON, DIXIE COUNTY ANTI-DRUG COALITION

Mrs. Sheila Frierson presented to the Board and stated this month they are focusing on navigating mental health during difficult times and she provided a printout from IFAS on staying well while hurricanes approach.

Mrs. Frierson also introduced Mrs. Sharonda Wilson and said she is working to develop a youth advisory council for the community. She said they are looking for other churches and youth that wish to be part of the council because they are the ones that will help to spearhead the programs within the school this coming fall.

KAY MCCALLISTER, TOURISM DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Mrs. Kay McCallister stated the TDC (Tourism Development Council) is working on the program for the park's proposal.

Mayor of Cross City, Ryan Fulford recognized Mrs. McCallister and Mrs. Shelly Ross for the work they have done in the program.

Mrs. McCallister presented a slide show created by Mr. Jesse Samplify for TDC regarding the proposal for improvements to the County Park System.

She discussed:

Why tourism matters to Dixie County:

She said that \$160,000 in annual bed tax revenue equals 5.5 million in overnight visitors spending and an additional 4.5 million dollars spent in local restaurants, gas stations, and shopping. This supports at least 160 tourism-based jobs, with 26 overnight businesses in Dixie County.

Responsible use of funds:

Per Florida Statute 15 % of TDC funds can be used for improving facilities. Some of the past projects include docks, fishing piers, Dixie River Camp, pickle ball courts, campground facility improvements, and other projects.

Mrs. McCallister said there is an opportunity to improve Gornito Springs and Hinton Landing Parks while Horseshoe and Shired Beaches are closed due to repairs. She said they are requesting daytime park fees to remain free of charge and increase the overnight rental fees.

The proposed fee is \$32.00 a night, which matches neighboring and state park fees.

Also proposed online reservations through Campspot.com, which would be most accommodating to programs, no cost to the County, and only cost the camper (renter) a \$3.00 booking fee in addition to the camping fee.

Mrs. McCallister said this allows for advanced planning, clear expectations, accountability and better security.

Updated Park rules:

Reference previous Ordinance from 2017

Online reservations at visitdixie.com

Check in with host

Quiet hours 1PAM to 7 AM

No pets or alcohol allowed

Clearly posted safety and emergency information

Increased visitor education posted

Need Board Approval for the following:

Keep daytime free day use for all parks

Adjust overnight rates to \$32.00 night

Utilize campspot.com for overnight reservations

Commissioner Stephenson stated he recommended setting reservation limits to no more than three (3) months out.

Mrs. McCallister stated that they are working on including the community centers, but for now are just starting with the parks.

Clerk of Court Barbie Higginbotham asked if there would still be a fourteen-day limit and Mrs. McCallister answered yes, there would be.

Mrs. Holly Houton asked what the County would do about a refund for storms.

Commissioner Hatch said we have the numbers and would like the local citizens to be able to listen and have input in all of this before the Board votes.

Motion made by Commissioner Hatch to have a Workshop on June 19, 2025, at 4:00 PM to discuss park fees. Seconded by Commissioner Osteen. Board approved.

Mayor Ryan Fulford stated there should be benefits for local county residents.

Commissioner Stephenson asked if tents would be allowed. Mrs. McCallister stated yes.

Commissioner Hatch asked if there is any way to promote the private sector for camping. Mrs. McCallister stated that 85% of the TDC money goes to help the private sector. She also said they have been given the opportunity to have a \$1,200 video made for each private sector campground. The videographer discounted it to \$750 per campground. She said she would email the private sector campgrounds informing them about the upcoming workshop on June 19, 2025, at 4 PM.

FLORIDA COMMERCE

Jason Mahon of Deputy Secretary of Economic Development stated there is a 60-million-dollar Emergency Bridge Loan Program for hurricane impacted communities that had funding shortfalls, and they were able to make a 1.2-million-dollar loan to Dixie County. He thanked Commissioner Hatch, Mayor Fulford, Diane Schultz, Brenda Royal and Martha McCaskill for their great work with this and presented an actual check as well as a ceremonial check to the Board.

(Pictures were taken)

DREDGING

Mr. Aaron Bryant approached the Board to check on the status of the channel dredging in Suwannee.

Commissioner Hatch provided a copy of the Border Resource Development Act of 2024. He gave a little bit of background of prior dredging. He said this was done by the Army Corp of Engineers. He assured the Board that the County is working on getting something done about this. He said it is not on deaf ears.

Mr. Bryant said that if something bad happens the County could be responsible for that and expressed concern with people getting hurt.

Commissioner Hatch recommended everyone to call our Congress about this issue.

Mr. John Waynewright stated he is not here to argue, but at some point, in time, something must happen. He said his taxes increased \$800 and he contributes to the County and is asking nothing from the County other than to be able to use their boats. Recommended having funds within the County to help temporarily get it going while waiting on Army Corp of Engineers. He wants the problem fixed and wanted to know what we are going to do about it. He said he wants to fight with the Commissioners to get this done.

GREG BAILEY, NORTH FLORIDA PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Mr. Kellan Bailey updated the Board on several ongoing projects, these included:

Fire Station 6 (Horseshoe Beach). Submitted the waterline extension plans and permit application to DEP. Waiting to hear back.

Fire Station 3. Plans complete and started advertising today. The bid opening is scheduled for July 9th and Prebid meeting on June 18th.

Submitted all requested documents to Florida Commerce for 95th and 97th Streets and are waiting on authorization to award the contractor.

Commissioner Hatch asked if the problem with the helipads have been worked out.

Mr. Bailey said to his knowledge it has been worked out.

Attorney Watson said she hasn't received the signed document.

Chief Garner said Mr. Bussard (property owner) is reviewing it and trying to figure out where the powerline will enter the property.

JOHN LOCKLEAR, LOCKLEAR AND ASSOCIATES

Mr. Locklear updated the Board on several projects including:

Hal Chaires Road-Paving done, laying sod next week.

Dredging Projects-Working on it, waiting on the Army Corp of Engineers.

Cow Creek- May be able to do it in-house if we have the staff and materials to do it.

Mr. Locklear stated his company is creating a 501-C3 with a goal to give back to all the communities they work within by trying to facilitate their in-house grant writer to access grants for nonprofits and see if they can help foster improvements and needs.

CINDY BELLOT, LIBRARY DIRECTOR

Mrs. Bellot was not present at this meeting, but Mrs. Higginbotham stated that on June 04, 2025, the Library held the first Wednesday Summer Program, and they had a packed house. She said there were residents that complained that the parking lot was full, but she and Mark Hatch were there, and it was great.

Mrs. Kay McCallister also gave an update on the Suwannee Library. She said Mrs. Jane has been working with Russ and EMS (Emergency Management Services) to set up first aid and CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) classes.

DIANN JONES, SUWANNEE WATER AND SEWER

Commissioner Hatch stated that he and John Locklear went down Friday. He said they are working on improvements for their water plant as well as preparing budget and audits. He said it is going smoothly.

Mr. Pat Miles (Suwannee Water and Sewer Board member) stated the three (3) ladies that work down there at the office are working hard and he and the community are proud of what they are doing.

STEVE FREMEN, CODE ENFORCEMENT & VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER

Mr. Fremen had nothing to present today.

TIM JOHNSON, SOLID WASTE DIRECTOR

Mr. Johnson had nothing to present today.

LEON WRIGHT, BUILDING AND ZONING OFFICIAL

Mr. Wright had nothing to present today.

**SCOTT PENDARVIS, 911 COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR
& I.T. ADMINISTRATOR**

Mr. Pendarvis had nothing to present today.

DARIAN BROWN, DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

Chief Darian Brown gave some updates on ongoing projects within the county including:

The New Retirement Solution discussed at our last meeting: He said he presented this to his staff they voted unanimously to approve it. He said if the Commissioners are able to approve the policy he will come back to the Board for approval to allow his department to go forward with the policy.

Station 3: This station is out for bid.

Station 4: Coming along. The final date was supposed to be June 11th, now it's June 26th, money runs out June 30th.

He said station 4 has HMGB funding that is available and if the Board has any projects, they think they would qualify to let them know. He said they would like to submit for shutters on the windows if the Board approves and the deadline is July 29th.

Motion made by Commissioner Hatch to approve for submission for shutters for Station 4. Seconded by Commissioner Osteen. Board approved.

He also updated on the call status for Station 4. They have had a total of 166 calls as of today.

He reminded everyone that June 1st is the beginning of hurricane season.

He also informed everyone that they will be rerouting everyone to enter the EOC building around the back of the new building because they are removing the front door and windows of the old building.

He explained that a packet has been provided to each of the Commissioners and Staff regarding the 1.5-million-dollar loan, which includes payment confirmation and all PW's (project worksheets).

Chief Garner gave a further explanation of the packet and explained it was a breakdown of all the projects and amounts spent for each project along with the PWs for each project. -

GAIL CARTER, INDIGENT CARE

Mrs. Carter had nothing to present today.

HOLLY HOUGHTON, COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT

Mrs. Holly Houghton had nothing to present today.

ANGIE CROWLEY, HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATOR

Mrs. Angie Crowley had nothing to present today.

JOHN JENKINS, COUNTY MANAGER

Action Items:

1. Request Board approval of the Locklear TWO for the Horseshoe Beach Park Engineering in the amount of \$48,000.00.
Motion for approval of the Locklear TWO for the Horseshoe Beach Park Engineering in the amount of \$48,000.00 made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Board approved.
2. Request Board approval of Supplemental Agreement # 6 Oversight Funds Reduction for NE 592 St from US 19 to NE 272 Ave in the amount of \$3,610.00.
Motion for approval of Supplemental Agreement # 6 Oversight Funds Reduction for NE 592 St from US 19 to NE 272 Ave in the amount of \$3,610.00 made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Storey. Board approved.
3. Request Board approval of Resolution 2025-67 in support of Supplemental Agreement # 6 Oversight Funds Reduction for NE 592 St from US 19 to NE 272 Ave in the amount of \$3,610.00.
Motion for approval of Resolution 2025-67 in support of Supplemental Agreement # 6 Oversight Funds Reduction for NE 592 St from US 19 to NE 272 Ave in the amount of \$3,610.00 made by Commissioner Storey. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Board approved.
4. Request Board approval of the Florida Commerce Direct Payment Authorization request.
Motion for approval of the Florida Commerce Direct Payment Authorization request made by Commissioner Hatch. Seconded by Commissioner Storey. Board approved.
5. Request Board approval to renew the Mosquito Control Director agreement with Matt Weldon for 6 (six) months in the amount of \$1200.00 per month.
Motion for approval to renew the Mosquito Control Director agreement with Matt Weldon for 6 (six) months in the amount of \$1200.00 per month made by Commissioner Wood. Seconded by Commissioner Storey. Board approved.

6. Request Board approval to execute the Preliminary Rate Resolution 2025-72 for Fire Protection Services for FY 2025 as presented.

Motion for approval to execute the Preliminary Rate Resolution 2025-72 for Fire Protection Services for FY 2025 as presented made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Storey. Board approved.

7. Request Board approval to execute the Preliminary Rate Resolution 2025-73 for Solid Waste Collection and Disposal for FY 2025 as presented.

Motion for approval to execute the Preliminary Rate Resolution 2025-73 for Solid Waste Collection and Disposal for FY 2025 as presented made by Commissioner Storey. Seconded by Commissioner Hatch. Board approved.

8. Request Board approval for the distribution of \$49,869.00 of FY 2025 JAG (Justice Assistance Grant) Federal Funds to the Dixie County Sheriff's Office and Cross City Police Department for Law Enforcement Equipment.

Motion for approval for the distribution of \$49,869.00 of FY 2025 JAG (Justice Assistance Grant) Federal Funds to the Dixie County Sheriff's Office and Cross City Police Department for Law Enforcement Equipment. made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Storey. Board approved.

9. Request Board approval of the SHIP Rehab Down Payment Assistance for Keith Meyer in the amount of \$20,000.00.

Motion for approval of the SHIP Rehab Down Payment Assistance for Keith Meyer in the amount of \$20,000.00. made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Storey. Board approved.

Motion for approval to advertise for two mosquito control positions made by Commissioner Hatch. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Board approved.

Information Items:

1. Reminder of the FAC Conference Tuesday, June 24 – Friday June 27, 2025. Packets will be given out on June 19, 2025, BOCC meeting.
Commissioner Hatch stated he would like to get a plague and have dinner at the Trail Riders Club for Mr. Steve Hutchinson's (former Road Superintendent) departure.

Commissioner Stephenson also stated the County originally gave permission for the neighbors at Gronto Springs to come across county property when it flooded, but now they are using it all the time. He said there is a gate, but the neighbors have a key. Assistant County Manager Roy Bass said he will lock the gate with a county lock and open it only when it floods.

Commissioner Stephenson also asked about moving the chain-link fence and posts back to create more parking. Mr. Bass said he is looking into funding for that and that Mrs. McCallister may have funding through TDC.

Commissioner Hatch informed the Board that there are fence items on 55A they could use to repair the fence instead of replacing.

Mr. Bass said he is also looking into a Reverse Osmosis Water Treatment System to go on the well at Gronto Springs.

Motion for approval to get a plow and have dinner at the Trail-Riders Club for Mr. Steve Hutchinson's (former Road Superintendent) departure made by Commissioner Hatch. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Board approved.

Commissioner Hatch invited all commissioners to a meeting in Lake City tomorrow at 9 am.

CHANA WATSON, COUNTY ATTORNEY

Attorney Watson reminded the Board of a letter concerning Men's Health Month and Men's Health Week and read a Resolution 2025-74 concerning recognizing Men's Health Month for the entire month of June and Men's Health Week to be the week of June 9-15th.

Motion to approve Resolution 2025-74 declaring the month of June Men's Health Month and Men's Health Week June 9-15th made by Commissioner Hatch. Seconded by Commissioner Storey. Board approved.

Attorney Watson also presented Resolution 2025-71 stated we are in support of DOGE (Department of Government Efficiency).

Motion to approve Resolution 2025-71 regarding support of DOGE (Department of Government Efficiency) made by Commissioner Hatch. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Board approved.

First reading of Ordinance 2025-06 regarding code enforcement. She will bring for approval and signing at the June 19th BOCC meeting.

Attorney Watson stated that one of the subsidiaries for the Opiod Funding Lawsuit has filed for bankruptcy. She said she anticipates this will not change anything, but her contact was out of town and not available to talk to this week to find out for sure. She said she will update the Board when she finds out more information.

BARBIE HIGGINBOTHAM, CLERK OF COURT

Clerk of Court Barbie Higginbotham reminded everyone that Form 6 is due to be completed by July 1st - completed online.

Presented to the Board for approval for a \$2.00 raise for Brenda Royal.

Motion to approve a \$2.00 an hour raise for Financial Director Brenda Royal made by Commissioner Hatch. Seconded by Commissioner Osteen. Board approved.

COUNTY COMMISSION ITEMS

Commissioner Wood stated he had nothing to add.

Commissioner Hatch thanked everyone who helped with the Florida Commerce loan.

He also said they need a survey done for Mr. Darnan's property as soon as it becomes county property.

Commissioner Osteen thanked Mr. Bass for help with the roll-off attendants in Jena. He also asked Mrs. McCallister regarding the status of the playground equipment for D-Trac. Mrs. McCallister said the TC is allowed to spend 15% of their income on parks, but because the program has been around for 13 years this can be accumulative. She discussed doing a matching. She said D-Trac has collected \$12,000, and TDC could possibly offer a matching of \$15,000 to help. Commissioner Osteen also said he would get an update on the Johnsons Bakery coming to Cross City. He said he hooked up Mr. Sheffield with Mrs. Phillips of Career Source for a job fair.

Commissioner Storey thanked Mr. Jenkins, Mr. Bass, and Mrs. Martha for all their hard work and Commissioner Osteen for putting in extra hours.

He also thanked Commissioner Hatch for all his work with the Chamber of Commerce because he set his personal job aside to help. He also thanked Mrs. Karen VanAernam with Cross City Restore and Renew.

Commissioner Stephenson thanked those that helped with Gronto Springs and for those that prayed for his eye surgery and said he has 20/20 vision.

He also said that he planted ten (10) acres of garden with what was left of his daddy's seed and offered for everyone to come pick.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Horseshoe Beach City Council Member JD Nobles stated they prepared a letter for the Hurricane Debby HMGP Grant Funding, but Mr. Garner didn't get the letter submitted in time and wanted to know if it got sent.

Chief Garner said yes that evening and they will send him a copy.

He also asked if Chief Garner has set up the next LMS Meeting? Chief Garner said no.

Mr. Nobles also stated that he and other people have been slipping on the commercial dock next to the boat ramp and recommended placing a non-skip composite material on the surface to help prevent slipping.

Commissioner Osteen said they will get to work on that.

Mr. Nobles also stated it has been around 6 months since the County received funding for some of the projects and wanted to know why.

Commissioner Stephenson said it is a step-by-step process and some of the projects may be waiting for other items to be complete before going forward.

Chief Garner explained that once the County receives the funds it then goes through a process to the engineers, the Board and then to complete the work and then report to FEMA. There is also a BID process if it goes over a certain amount of money.

Mr. John Locklear said that he and Mrs. Martha are working on something related that will help. They are trying to bring all projects into new software and create a GIS database of present and future projects, then give access to the public.

Mrs. Karen VanAernam stated that new prospect Baptist Church donated some pews they weren't using to the Courthouse. She asked for suggestions on giving the old ones away. Feel they should be given away. Mrs. Sheila Frierson said there is a Church in town that contacted her regarding getting them.

Mr. Daman was on the phone and stated the need for removal of the old base of the crane and concrete berm around it and that he will donate that to the County if the county has a need for it. Commissioner Hatch said yes, they could use it, and he will go with him concerning this. He also said the County is working on building an access road to the transfer station.


Mrs. Kay McCallister reminded everyone that the Suwannee River Hideaway is having a Father's Day Weekend Concert on June 14th from 6-9 PM.

Mayor Ryan Fulford thanked the County for approving the Jag C and reminded everyone that the next BOCC and TOCC Meeting will be held at the Library on July 15th next BOCC and TOCC meeting at the library at 5PM.

ADJOURN

Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner Storey. Seconded by Commissioner Osteen. Board approved.




Jody Stephenson, Chairman


Barbie Higginbotham, Clerk-Auditor

PLEASE BE ADVISED that if a person decides to appeal any decision made by the Board with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearings, he/ she will need a record of the proceedings, and for such purpose, he/ she will need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

"Persons with disabilities requesting reasonable accommodations to participate in this proceeding should contact (352) 486-4931 (Voice & TDD) or via Florida Relay Service at (800) 955-8771."

The Board meets the first Thursday of each month at 10:00 AM and the third Thursday of each month at 6:00 PM. Individuals that would like to be placed on the agenda should call Barbie Higginbotham, Clerk of Court, by 4:00 PM on the Friday Preceding the Board meeting, at (352) 498-1200.