

**Regular Meeting**  
**Commission Board Room**  
**Dixie County Courthouse**  
**214 NE Hwy 351, Cross City, FL 32628**  
**February 06, 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  
Jamie Storey, District 4,  
David Osteen, District 5

**STAFF**

John Jenkins, County Manager  
Roy Bass, Assistant County Manager  
Martha McCaskill, Administrative Asst/Grant Coordinator  
Chana Watson, County Attorney  
Barbie Higginbotham, Clerk of Court  
Verna Wilson, Chief Deputy Clerk  
Brenda Royal, Chief Financial Officer  
Joannie Morse, Deputy Clerk

**CALL TO ORDER**

Commissioner Jody Stephenson called the meeting to order.

**INVOCATION AND PLEDGE TO THE AMERICAN FLAG**

Commissioner Stephenson led the Invocation and the Pledge to the American Flag.

**CHIEF DARIAN BROWN**

Chief Brown had to attend a meeting, so he presented a few quick updates.

He stated that they had moved forward with the grant for the Paramedicine Program and will soon advertise for employment to get Mrs. Alison some help.

Chief Brown stated that sub walls are up inside the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and that they should be finished with the roof this week.

He informed the Board that Fire Station Four (4) should be done by the 28<sup>th</sup> of the month and that the land for Fire Station Three (3) has been approved and the title search is done.

He stated that they are waiting for the contract to be signed for the property for Horseshoe Beach.

Commissioner Stephenson asked about the condition of the ambulances?

Chief Brown informed Commissioner Stephenson that they are behind, but that once they get the ambulances that were wrecked back, that they will be in better shape.

**APPROVAL OF COMMISSION MINUTES**

01-15-2025 TOCC and BOCC Workshop

*Motion to approve the 01-15-2025 TOCC and BOCC Workshop Minutes made by Commissioner Storey. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Board approved.*

01-16-2025 Regular Meeting

*Motion to approve the 01-16-2025 Regular Meeting Minutes made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Board approved.*

01-21-2025 Emergency Meeting Winter Storm

*Motion to approve the 01-21-2025 Emergency Meeting Winter Storm Minutes made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Storey. Board approved.*

**VOUCHER APPROVAL**

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

**CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS**

There were none.

**KATRINA VANAERNAM AND SHEILA FRIERSON, DIXIE COUNTY ANTI-DRUG COALITION**

Mrs. Katrina VanAernam stated that they held a community wide town hall meeting at First Baptist Church and said that about 61 people attended. She stated that they had invited someone from each Coastal Community and received updates from them.

She stated that 12 students from the Dixie County High School Hospitality Track were invited and that they provided lunch for everybody at the meeting.

She informed the Board that they hold these meetings quarterly and invited everyone to attend.

Mrs. VanAernam stated that the Dixie County Anti-Drug Coalition had reached out to Florida Poison Control and Mr. Mike McCormick to speak to kids at the local schools about age-appropriate prevention education.

She stated that Mr. McCormick was impressed with the schools in the area and gave good feedback.

Mrs. Sheila Frierson thanked two of the County Commissioners for coming to their meeting.

She also stated that there is a new counseling center in Trenton, Florida called "A New Way Counseling" and encouraged the public to look into it.

**KAY MCCALLISTER, TOURISM DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL**

Mrs. Kay McCallister was not present at the meeting.

**GREG BAILEY, NORTH FLORIDA PROFESSIONAL SERVICES**

Mr. Greg Bailey had nothing to bring to the Board.

**JOHN LOCKLEAR, LOCKLEAR AND ASSOCIATES**

Mr. John Locklear had nothing to bring to the Board.

**CINDY BELLOT, LIBRARY DIRECTOR**

Mrs. Cindy Bellot let the Board know that the Suwannee Tech Center has officially reopened and everything looks great. She reminded the Board that the Lower Suwannee Art and Nature Festival will be held at the Glen Dyals Park on March 8<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM.

**SUWANNEE WATER AND SEWER**

Attorney Chana Watson stated that she had received a resignation from Michelle Bensen and wanted to make the Board aware.

**STEVE FREMEN, CODE ENFORCEMENT & VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER**

Mr. Steve Fremem had nothing to bring to the Board.

**STEVE HUTCHISON, COUNTY ROAD SUPERINTENDENT**

Mr. Steve Hutchison had nothing to bring to the Board.

**TIM JOHNSON, SOLID WASTE DIRECTOR**

Mr. James Carter stated that the citizens are still tearing down damage related to the storms and are asking to extend the roll off site or if the Board had issued a deadline.

Assistant County Manager: Roy Bass stated that at the last meeting, the Florida Department of Transportation had finished the cleanup of most roads and will have completed pick up by March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025.

He said however, there was nothing discussed about the local roll off sites.

**LEON WRIGHT, BUILDING AND ZONING OFFICIAL**

Mr. Leon Wright stated that he had identified multiple houses in Suwannee that need to be demolished and that he wanted to inform the Board that there will be more people who will need a demo permit, because they were waiting for their letters of substantial damage determinations.

He reminded the Board of the "Elevate Florida" program portal and stated that Dixie County was the first County in the State of Florida to turn in the Substantial Damage Estimate (SDE) reports.

He explained that Dixie County residents are the first ones who are eligible to submit their paperwork for Elevate Florida and that they will have to apply and do it online.

Mr. Wright stated that they will be hosting another meeting to discuss the Elevate Florida Program Portal at the Trail Riders Club on February 19, 2025.

He gave an update for the two upcoming meetings for the Local Planning Agency and stated that the next meeting will be on February 13<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 AM and the next meeting will be held the same day at 6:00 PM.

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

Mr. Scott Pendarvis had nothing to bring to the Board.

**DARIAN BROWN, DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY SERVICES**

Chief Brown presented earlier in the meeting.

**GAIL CARTER, INDIGENT CARE**

Mrs. Gail Carter had nothing to bring to the Board.

**HOLLY HOUGHTON, COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT**

Mrs. Holly Houghton had nothing to bring to the Board.

**ANGIE CROWLEY, HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATOR**

Mrs. Angie Crowley was not present at the meeting.

**JOHN JENKINS, COUNTY MANAGER**

Assistant County Manager Roy Bass presented for County Manager John Jenkins.

Action Items:

1. Request Board approval to order 4 -- four 54"x50' culverts for Hwy 358 (Old 19) based on SWTF recommendation.

*Motion to approve ordering 4 -- four 54"x50' culverts for Hwy 358 (Old 19) based on SWTF recommendation made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Storey. Board approved.*

2. Request Board approval to reallocate ARPA funds from the canal maintenance spraying to the Clerk Kofile fund in the amount of \$5000.00 based on SWTF recommendation.

*Motion to approve to reallocate ARPA funds from the canal maintenance spraying to the Clerk Kofile fund in the amount of \$5000.00 based on SWTF recommendation made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Storey. Board approved.*

3. Request Board approval to change the method of treatment from spraying to water dye for the canal for management control of the vegetation based on SWTF recommendation.

*Motion to approve to change the method of treatment from spraying to water dye for the canal for management control of the vegetation based on SWTF recommendation made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Board approved.*

4. Request Board approval for a PW to be submitted for the fifty-eight (58) miles of canal cleanout that the SWTF has previously cleaned pre-hurricanes based on SWTF recommendation.

**Changed to an informational item.**

5. Request Board approval for a CRS (Community Rating System) program to be established in Dixie County based on SWTF recommendation.

***Motion to approve a CRS (Community Rating System) program to be established in Dixie County based on SWTF recommendation made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Storey. Board approved.***

6. Request Board approval of the 3W011 Sheriff's Evidence Building Time Extension from Jun 30, 2025, to Jun 30, 2026.

***Motion to approve the 3W011 Sheriff's Evidence Building Time Extension from Jun 30, 2025, to Jun 30, 2026, made by Commissioner Storey. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Board approved.***

7. Request Board approval of the SHIP down payment assistance for Jeffery Bass II in the amount of \$20,000.00.

***Motion to approve the SHIP down payment assistance for Jeffery Bass II in the amount of \$20,000.00 made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Board approved.***

8. Request Board approval of the SHIP down payment assistance for Vincent Calli in the amount of \$25,000.00.

***Motion to approve the SHIP down payment assistance for Vincent Calli in the amount of \$25,000.00 made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Storey. Board approved.***

9. Request Board approval of the repair reimbursement for Shirley Davis in the amount of \$12,400.00.

***Motion to approve the repair reimbursement for Shirley Davis in the amount of \$12,400.00 made by Commissioner Wood. Seconded by Commissioner Osteen. Board approved.***

10. Request Board approval for the repair reimbursement for Nateshia Chapman in the amount of \$14,500.00.

***Motion to approve the repair reimbursement for Nateshia Chapman in the amount of \$14,500.00 made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Storey. Board approved.***

11. Request Board approval for Another Way to hold a candlelight vigil on Apr 30, 2025, from 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm on the Courthouse steps.

***Motion to approve for "Another Way" to hold a candlelight vigil on Apr 30, 2025, from 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm on the Courthouse steps made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Storey. Board approved.***

12. Request Board decision on a meeting date in February for the Board to meet with the Horseshoe Beach Town Council at Town Hall. Dates are as follows:

1. Feb 10, 11, 12, 17, 18, 24, 25, 2025 at 6:00 pm

***Motion to approve the Board to meet with the Horseshoe Beach Town Council at Town Hall on February 24, 2025, at 6:00 PM made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Board approved.***

13. Request Board approval for Mr. Jenkins, County Manager, to negotiate the price of the lease for the cell tower at Waldo Park.

***Motion to approve Mr. Jenkins, County Manager, to negotiate the price of the lease for the cell tower at Waldo Park made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Board approved.***

14. Request Board approval of the revised Annual Certified Budget for Arthropod Control.

***Motion to approve the revised Annual Certified Budget for Arthropod Control made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Storey. Board approved.***

15. Request Board approval of the D0304 NE 241 St Widening Engineering Design Grant Agreement in the amount of \$300,000.00.

***Motion to approve the D0304 NE 241 St Widening Engineering Design Grant Agreement in the amount of \$300,000.00 made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Storey. Board approved.***

16. Request Board approval of the Locklear TWO for the D0304 NE 241 St Widening Engineering Design Grant Agreement in the amount of \$285,000.00.

***Motion to approve the Locklear TWO for the D0304 NE 241 St Widening Engineering Design Grant Agreement in the amount of \$285,000.00 made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Storey. Board approved.***

17. Request Board approval of the Liberty Partners TWO for the administration of the D0304 NE 241 St Widening Engineering Design Grant Agreement in the amount of \$15,000.00.

***Motion to approve Liberty Partners TWO for the administration of the D0304 NE 241 St Widening Engineering Design Grant Agreement in the amount of \$15,000.00 made by Commissioner Storey. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Board approved.***

18. Request Board approval to seek a loan from a financial institution with the best interest rate for the purchase of a Knuckle Boom Loader for \$298,005.00 and a Packer Truck for \$369,160.50 for the Solid Waste Department in the total amount of \$667,165.50.

***Motion to approve and seek a loan from a financial institution with the best interest rate for the purchase of a Knuckle Boom Loader for \$298,005.00 and a Packer Truck for \$369,160.50 for the Solid Waste Department in the total amount of \$667,165.50 made by Commissioner Storey. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Board approved. 3 to 1, Commissioner Stephenson opposed.***

Commissioner Stephenson opposed the vote stating that instead of buying new equipment, the County would benefit from getting a track hoe instead.

#### Information Items:

1. We want to recognize Scott Pendarvis, our IT Director, for being a wonderful resource of information while attending the FAC Tech Summit Conference. Scott was able to help answer questions other counties had for IT Security during the meeting.
2. County offices will be closed Monday, Feb 17, 2025, in observance of Presidents Day.
3. Reminder the Cross City Crossroads Festival is on April 5, 2025, from 9:00 am – 2:00 pm located at City Hall.

#### **CHANA WATSON, COUNTY ATTORNEY**

Attorney Watson stated that she received an email inquiry on a property that the County has a code enforcement case against. She stated that the property went through foreclosure and that the original owners no longer live there.

She informed the Board that the bank now owns the property and had it cleaned up and is trying to remove the code enforcement lien.

She asked for permission from the Board to remove the lien and let the bank move forward with selling the property.

Mr. Fremen explained that the property was burned down and did get cleaned up and that the County did not put money into it other than taking it to court.

He stated the court cost would be roughly \$1,000.00 but that they also get charged for the lawyer's opinion and that it is around \$275.00 an hour.

Mrs. Barbie Higginbotham recommended rounding it up to \$1,500.00.

***Commissioner Storey made the motion to charge \$1,500.00 for the removal of the lien. Commissioner Wood seconded. Board approved.***

Attorney Watson received a request for the Board to enter into a proclamation declaring Hazardous Materials Awareness Week February 24 through March 2, 2025.

***Motion to approve holding the Hazardous Materials Awareness Week on February 24, 2025, through March 2, 2025, made by Commissioner Storey. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Board approved.***

Attorney Watson presented a resolution from the Tax collector, Michelle Cannon, and asked for it to be moved on and signed.

***Commissioner Storey made a motion to accept and sign the resolution for Mrs. Michelle Cannon. Commissioner Osteen seconded. Board approved.***

Attorney Watson stated that she would like to bring back an agreement before the Board regarding the RV Special Exception taxes.

She stated that there are greater than 700 RV Special Exceptions and that they would have to get an assessment together.

***Commissioner Storey made a motion to get started on the taxes for the RV Special Exceptions. Commissioner Wood seconded. Board approved.***

#### **BARBIE HIGGINBOTHAM, CLERK OF COURT**

Mrs. Higginbotham had nothing to bring to the Board.

Mrs. Brenda Royal stated that the clerks are preparing for the annual audit with Powell and Jones and that it should start the week after next.

She stated that she would like the audit done by June 30, 2025.

#### **COUNTY COMMISSION ITEMS**

Commissioner Wood stated that he got approached by the Dixie Bear Softball Team asking to renew their banner.

***Motion to renew the Dixie Bear Softball Team and the Dixie County Baseball Team banner made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Board approved.***

Commissioner Osteen spoke to Mrs. Higginbotham and stated that he is praying for her and her family and if she needed anything to call him.

He also asked Mr. Locklear to look at trying to get a walk-in clinic in Dixie County.

Commissioner Storey thanked Mr. Johnson and Mr. Hutchison for his hard work.

Commissioner Stephenson thanked everybody for their hard work.

## PUBLIC COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Mr. JD Nobles asked if the permitting documents were submitted for the dredging project.

Mr. Locklear stated that he received all the signatures from Chief Scott Garner this morning and that they will be submitted tomorrow.

Mr. Nobles asked if the intermediate resurvey had started yet.

Mr. Locklear stated that they had incorporated that into the design and surveyed all of those.

Commissioner Stephenson asked the Economic Council to start thinking about cleaning up the oil and gas cans from the storms that are off to the side and will go in the water.

Mr. Bass stated that the Florida Crown Program will roll out soon and that they have a meeting with Mrs. Phyliss Marty coming up.

He stated that the program provides jobs for people who had lost their jobs due to the hurricane and some of those jobs would be to clean up the debris in the coastal areas that Commissioner Stephenson was talking about.

Mrs. Karen VanAernam stated that Cross City Restore and Renew have a couple of cleanup dates on February 22<sup>nd</sup> from 9:00 AM to 11:30 AM and March 29<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 AM to 11:30 AM.

She explained that they will be cleaning up the City Park and the Women's Club on March 29<sup>th</sup>. She requested if the Board would be willing to provide a dumpster on those dates.

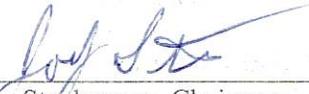
Commissioner Stephenson stated that he would ask if they had one available and let her know.

**ADJOURN**

*Commissioner Storey made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Osteen seconded. Board approved.*

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
DIXIE COUNTY, FLORIDA



  
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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.*