

Regular Meeting
Commission Board Room
Dixie County Courthouse
214 NE Hwy 351, Cross City, FL 32628
May 01, 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
Chana Watson, County Attorney
Barbie Higginbotham, Clerk of Court
Verna Wilson, Chief Deputy Clerk
Brenda Royal, Chief Financial Officer
Victoria Darkow, Deputy Clerk

CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Stephenson called the meeting to order.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE TO THE AMERICAN FLAG

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

APPROVAL OF COMMISSION MINUTES

04-16-2025 Workshop with the TOCC/BOCC Minutes

Motion to approve 04-16-2025 Workshop with the TOCC/BOCC Minutes made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Hatch. Board approved.

04-17-2025 Regular BOCC Minutes

Motion to approve 04-17-2025 Regular BOCC Minutes made by Commissioner Wood. Seconded by Commissioner Osteen. Board approved.

VOUCHER APPROVAL

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

CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS

None present.

HOWELL HODGE (RED)

Mr. Howell Hodge was not present for the meeting.
Commissioner Hatch stated that they spoke yesterday and worked it out.

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

Mrs. Sheila Frierson provided a flyer for the Board to review and gave a community youth update in regard to the recent data on Dixie County middle school girls involving the use of inhalants. She stated that they will be having a meeting on Wednesday May 28, 2025, from 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM with the local officials to talk about ways that they can help do better with the youth. Mrs. Frierson stated that the State of Florida contacted her and stated that they are willing to provide freestanding dispensers for Narcan around the county due to the increase in overdoses and deaths. She asked the Board if they would like to have some dispensers placed around the County and stated that she has to order them within three weeks to get them for free. Mrs. Barbie Higginbotham asked the Board to get with her to get together a list of how many dispensers to order and where to put them.

KAY MCCALLISTER, TOURISM DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Mrs. Kay McCallister was not present at the meeting.

GREG BAILEY, NORTH FLORIDA PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Mr. Kellen Bailey gave updates on a few ongoing projects which included:

Fire Station Six (6) – He stated that they are finalizing the plans for line extension and permit application. The building plans are complete and will be sending it to the County for final review and approval to advertise.

Fire Station Three (3) – He stated that they sent information to Chief Darian Brown and his staff of the layout and design and will be discussing it after this meeting. He stated that the building plans are complete and that the electrical work is needed for the helipad.

Fire Station Two (2) – He stated that the survey is scheduled and that they are gathering information.

CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) – He stated that they are still working on 95th and 97th on reducing the scope and will be working on a change order with the contractor to bring it to Grant funding.

JOHN LOCKLEAR, LOCKLEAR AND ASSOCIATES

Mr. John Locklear stated that the contractor started working on Hal Chaires and that they were at DOT (Department of Transportation) meeting in Live Oak and had conversations about getting Cow Creek Bridge repaired.

HANK WILLIAMS

Commissioner Stephenson stated that he went to Gornto Springs and noticed several dead trees hanging over the dock and parking area, so he asked Mr. Hank Williams to go and assess the area this morning.

Mr. Williams of "Good Ole Boys Tree Services LLC" presented a report on the dead trees over the dock and parking area in Gornto Springs.

He stated that his quote was for \$9,950.00 for the removal of 10 trees.

Mrs. Martha McCaskill stated that the County has to have three (3) quotes and then the Board can choose.

Assistant County Manager Roy Bass stated that he was speaking with two other tree companies to get quotes.

Attorney Watson recommended closing the Gornto Springs temporarily until the work is done.

Mrs. Higginbotham stated that the boards on the steps in the water were also lifted and if the Board closes the park, then that should get done as well.

Commissioner Hatch made a motion to temporarily close Gornto Springs until the trees are resolved. Commissioner Storey seconded. Board approved.

Commissioner Hatch made a motion to give Mr. John Jenkins authority to get the tree work done. Commissioner Storey seconded. Board approved.

CINDY BELLOT, LIBRARY DIRECTOR

Mrs. Cindy Bellot was not present at the meeting.

DIANN JONES, SUWANNEE WATER AND SEWER

Commissioner Hatch stated that everything was good in Suwannee and thanked Commissioner Jamie Storey for attending the Water and Sewer Board for him.

STEVE FREMEN, CODE ENFORCEMENT & VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER

Mr. Steve Fremem was not present at the meeting.

STEVE HUTCHISON, COUNTY ROAD SUPERINTENDENT

Mr. Steve Hutchison was not present at the meeting.

MICHAEL GAINY (MONK)

Mr. Michael Gainey informed the Board that there is no more rock at the rock pit and that they need to do something about it.

Commissioner Stephenson asked Mr. Jenkins about getting quotes or prices on rock being delivered and Mr. Jenkins stated that he would look into it.

Commissioner Storey recommended not to do away with the mining license.

Commissioner Hatch asked for Mr. Jenkins to look at both avenues and put all of the numbers together between purchasing land for rock or buying the rock outright.

TIM JOHNSON, SOLID WASTE DIRECTOR

Mr. Tim Johnson asked about the money that the County was awarded to get power for the Jena roll off site turned on.

Commissioner Stephenson stated that last he heard they were getting the right-of-way sorted out and that it was a substantial sum but that the County did not get awarded money, they spoke about finding the money.

Mr. Jenkins stated that he is looking in to moving the metal and debris to the county yard where Mr. Johnson can control it.

Commissioner Hatch asked if solar power would be acceptable

Mr. Bass stated the upkeep for solar is expensive and that the batteries are very expensive. He stated that the County would probably be on the cheaper end by putting power in which is \$19,500.00.

LEON WRIGHT, BUILDING AND ZONING OFFICIAL

Mr. Leon Wright stated that he has been talking to Attorney Watson about a code enforcement ordinance. He stated that he needs to go into the existing LDR's (Land Development Regulations) and amend the enforcement section, however he was not ready to bring the LDR's forward yet. He stated that he had a rough draft and needed permission to move forward with it and advertise once it is ready.

Commissioner Hatch made the motion to proceed. Commissioner Wood seconded. Board approved.

Mr. Wright presented Mr. Jaison Benoit of Savinacious to speak on a program that could help the County.

Mr. Benoit stated that they are working with the coastal communities and were made aware of a program the State of Florida has that could reduce or waive the local share of the 12/2% of public assistance. He stated that it's based on damage, demographics and financial distress. He stated that they are making applications that would be eligible for Hurricane Helene and Debby, but that Dixie County would not meet the qualifications to apply. He stated that it is limited funding by the State of Florida and if approved for a waiver you would have 100% funding.

Commissioner Stephenson asked what they needed to do to get that moving.

He stated that he would need more information and data which included but are not limited to, median income, population, unemployment, private worksheets and the most recent budget. He stated that he would email a list of everything required so they could get started on making the application.

Commissioner Hatch stated that some of the people that lost their homes or had damage spent their retirement and hard-earned money before the Elevate Florida program started and was wondering if there were any programs or any way to help those people.

Mr. Benoit stated that in the past during Hurricane Katrina there was a program in Louisiana that would reimburse up to \$100,000,000 for work that people had done whether it was insured or out of pocket costs.

He stated that it is an idea they can bring to the State of Florida Representatives and that he is unaware of a program to help at the moment.

**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 Darian Brown thanked Mr. Johnson and Mr. Gainey for getting the road in at Fire Station Six (6). He thanked the Board for all of their support and stated that a lot of positive things have happened in the last few years for Dixie County.

Chief Brown stated that Chief Scott Garner is out today doing site visits and surveys with FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) to try to get some of the last storms done.

He mentioned that on today's County Manager report the Board will need to make a motion on the opioid monies and stated that they understand whatever the Board decides to do with the split between EMS (Emergency Medical Services) and the Anti-Drug Coalition.

He said that Attorney Watson mentioned another pot of opioid monies a few weeks ago and stated that that is a very specific amount of money tied almost directly to EMS for projects.

Chief Brown informed the Board that unfortunately all of their life pack monitors are no longer serviceable due to their age and that he needed to replace them.

During a phone call with CORE, he mentioned to them that they are trying to buy ambulances and monitors for the County, and they offered to purchase the monitors.

He stated that Chief Matt Ferguson turned in the invoice request for \$428,000.00 and is waiting for approval.

He stated that they had their opening ceremony for Fire Station Four (4) and the first call went out this morning before the meeting.

Commissioner Hatch asked where the County was at with Family Medical Practice.

Chief Brown stated that he would reach out to them, but he has not heard anything else.

Chief Brown stated that Dr. Abid Chaudhry and Mrs. Sherry Barker (APRN) will be at the DOH (Department of Health) from 9:30 AM to 11:30 AM tomorrow May 2, 2025, and that the DOH is going back to primary care for the citizens.

Commissioner Hatch mentioned that May is skin cancer awareness month, and that Dr. Chuck Stone will be in Dixie County on May 24, 2025, from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM for a free skin cancer evaluation. He stated that he is a dermatologist out of Gainesville and has been in practice for 30 years.

Chief Brown asked to keep Mr. Golden in their prayers.

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 had nothing to bring to the Board.

JOHN JENKINS, COUNTY MANAGER

Action Items:

1. Request Board decision on the distribution of the \$91,115.00 of the Opioid monies for FY 2026 between EMS and Anti-Drug Coalition. The first year was split between both, year 2 was distributed to EMS, this will be year 3.

Commissioner Wood made the motion to split \$91,115.00 of the Opioid monies for FY 2026 between EMS and Anti-Drug Coalition. Commissioner Storey seconded. Board approved.

2. Request Board approval to extend the agreement between Dixie County and Mathew Weldon as Mosquito Control Director from July 2025 to December 2025.

Motion to approve and extend the agreement between Dixie County and Mathew Weldon as Mosquito Control Director from July 2025 to December 2025 made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Board approved.

3. Request Board approval to enter into a land lease agreement with Dan Riles for the 95 acres located off NE 225 Ave, Parcel 01-10-12-0000-1421-0000, for \$2.25 per acre for a yearly total of \$2,565.00.

Motion to approve to enter into a land lease agreement with Dan Riles for the 95 acres located off NE 225 Ave, Parcel 01-10-12-0000-1421-0000, for \$2.25 per acre for a yearly total of \$2,565.00 made by Commissioner Wood. Seconded by Commissioner Storey. Board approved.

Information Items:

1. DOH will have a Meet & Greet on Friday, May 2, 2025, from 9:30 am – 11:30 am.
2. LMS meeting will be held at the EOC on Wednesday, May 7, 2025, from 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm.
3. Mr. Jenkins stated that they had their first policy and procedures meeting yesterday and that it went really well. The next meeting is Monday, May 5, 2025, at 3:00 PM.

CHANA WATSON, COUNTY ATTORNEY

Attorney Watson gave an update on a criminal lawsuit with Dixie County being the victim. She stated that it appears that the suspect tried to pass a county check around Dunnellon and has been arrested in Hernando County. She explained that the check was \$1,800.00 and that it appears he got his hands on a vendor check somehow and tried to cash it at the bank but that the teller caught it beforehand.

Mrs. Brenda Royal explained that the vendor had already cashed the original check, and she is unsure how the suspect got ahold of the check.

BARBIE HIGGINBOTHAM, CLERK OF COURT

Mrs. Barbie Higginbotham asked who was in charge of replacing the flag on the flagpole in front of the Courthouse.

Commissioner Hatch asked Mr. Jenkins to get a flag for the pole.

Mrs. Royal mentioned that it's almost time for the budget again and needed some direction so that they can go ahead and start working on it.

She stated that the budgets for constitutional officers are due June 1, 2025, and TRIM starts June 1, 2025.

Commissioner Hatch stated that he would like to continue giving raises \$1 a year and \$2 for department heads.

COUNTY COMMISSION ITEMS

Commissioner Daniel Wood asked Mr. Jenkins to see about getting the canal at Hinton Landing cleaned out. He asked about speed limit signs on 312th in Old Town and also about putting rumble strips going into Suwannee Belle.

Mrs. Karen VanAernam informed the Board on the Horseshoe Beach Clean-up on May 10, 2025, from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM and invited everybody.

She also reminded everybody of the Cowboy Country Festival this weekend from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM and mentioned that the annual Central Florida Electric meeting is May 3, 2025, at the fairgrounds.

Commissioner Hatch mentioned that the football team is putting something on Saturday at 12:00 PM. He mentioned there is also the FFA banquet tonight as well.

Commissioner Osteen gave Mr. Jenkins appreciation for the Cow Creek Bridge and also stated that the dredging needed to be done down there.

Commissioner Storey thanked Mr. Bailey, Mr. Jenkins, Mr. Bass and Mrs. Martha McCaskill.

Commissioner Stephenson thanked everybody in the County.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

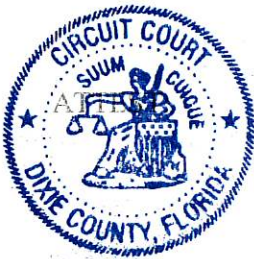
Mrs. Rhonda Nobles asked about the canal dredging in Horseshoe Beach.

Mr. Locklear stated that he submitted the permit application to DEP (Department of Environmental Protection) and the Army Corps, and he is waiting for approval.

ADJOURN

Commissioner Hatch made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Osteen seconded. Board approved.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
DIXIE COUNTY, FLORIDA




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.