

**Workshop**  
**Policies and Procedures**  
**Commission Board Room**  
**Dixie County Courthouse**  
**214 NE Hwy 351, Cross City, FL 32628**  
**May 15, 2025 – 4:30 PM**

*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  
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 Mark Hatch led the Invocation and the Pledge to the American Flag.

**DISCUSSION**

Mrs. Angie Crowley presented Bencor to the Board to speak on the annual leave payouts.

Mr. Kurt Miller of US Bencor MidAmerica presented a program and provided a flyer for the Board to review called The Bencor Special Pay Plan.

He stated rather than the County paying out unused sick or vacation time as a direct payment through payroll, he recommended that payment go directly into a qualified retirement plan.

With this program he stated that the money is not subjected to social security or Medicare tax and that it puts more money into the employees' pocket as well as the County's.

The Special Pay Plan represents a significant retirement benefit for governmental and school district employees with accumulated vacation, sick or other leave pay, collectively referred to as "Special Pay".

Through this mandatory plan, all eligible employees will have the contributions automatically made to the Plan by their employer.

By making the contributions in this manner, the employees defer any income tax on the contributions until they are withdrawn and permanently avoid Social Security and Medicare taxes (7.65%) On those contributions.

He explained that it does not cost the County nor the employee anything to use this program.

He stated that Lincoln Financial is who they use for the stable value fund and can also host a mutual fund that the individual can choose to use, it is entirely up to the Board.

Commissioner Hatch stated that he would like the employees to have the option to do this program if they wanted it, that it is there money and they worked hard for it.

He stated he would like to hold a meeting with the employees to hear about this program as well.

Attorney Chana Watson said that it sounds like there is no loss for the employees and that it is a win for the County.

Mrs. Barbie Higginbotham stated that she thinks that Mr. Miller should have a meeting with the employees.

Mrs. Holly Houghton presented the Dixie BOCC Employee Handbook Workshop for the Boards review. She stated that the Krizner Group came in last Thursday for the annual audit and presented the Board with a 65-page document on a review of the policies and procedures that the County has in place. She stated that they had 17 specific areas that they looked at which included:

### **1. General Provisions**

1. **Consistent Enforcement of Policies** – Summarize the policies and offer consistent enforcement of our policy.
2. **Inclusion, Diversity, Access and Equity** – On January 21, 2025, President Trump issued the **Executive Order 14173** titled “Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity” (The Order) She stated that it is strongly suggested to remove the current language from the manual and add this Executive Order.
3. **Americans with Disabilities Act** – The Krizner Group recommended adding Exhibit 4 A which is a form to assist in the assessment of a requested accommodation to determine if the claim of undue hardship may be properly supported.
4. **Animals in the workplace** – She stated that The Krizner Group is recommending to put into the handbook.
5. **A summary of your rights under the Fair Credit Reporting Act** – She stated that Krizner is recommending to add this to the group so that the employees know this law.

### **2. Employment and Employee Development**

6. **Resign-To-Run Law** – She stated that this question was asked at the 10-17/2024 Policy and Procedure Workshop and that they stated that was a question for the Florida Association of Counties Trust (FACT)

7. **Annual Training** – This question was asked on 10-17-2024 Policy and Procedure Workshop and The Krizner Group's feedback was to have consistency across all departments and to have a series of videos on XYZ topics at least quarterly.
8. **Employment Classifications Temporary and Part Time Employees** – She stated that the County is offering pay for part time employees for the day the County shuts down due to the storm.
9. **Job Hazard Analysis** – Krizner provided an example JHA form and stated that OSHA believes that JHA are a best practice and should be a part of the Standard Operating Procedures.
10. **Filling Vacancies (Hiring Process)** – They recommended changing the word reference check to the word screening.
11. **Pre Employment Screening/Paperwork/Orientation** – They recommended a clause for emergency contact information.
12. **New Hire Orientation** – They are Recommending to add "equal employment opportunity" (See handbook)
13. **Effective Management of Weak Employees** – Krizner recommending a performance improvement/corrective action plan.
14. **Employee separation** – Krizner recommended a risk termination checklist. (see handbook)

### **3. Employee Policies and Personal Conduct**

15. **Consensual Romantic Relationships** – Krizner recommended adding the law that Joe Biden signed on March 3, 2022, called "The Act". The Act is a law ending forced arbitration of sexual assault and sexual harassment Act of 2021. (see handbook)
16. **Children in the workplace** – Assistant County Manager Roy Bass is working on a policy.
17. **Workplace Violence (replacement of current language)**
18. **No Unauthorized Recording in the Workplace Policy** – They suggested to add this policy in the handbook.
19. **Expected Attire, Grooming and Uniforms Standard** – They suggested removing "dress code" and add the words expected attire and grooming. (see handbook)

### **4. Employee Health & Safety**

20. **Workplace Conflict Policy** – They suggested adding this policy into the handbook. (see handbook)

### **5. Employee Attendance and Work Sites**

21. **Sameness VS. Consistency Policy** – They suggested adding this policy into the handbook. (see handbook)

## **6. Employee Hours and Compensation**

22. **Wage and Hour Policies and Procedures (Compliance)** – The Krizner Group had no corrections.
23. **Fair Labor Standards Act Status** – The Krizner Group recommended adding the verbiage in the Policy for start and stop times (all employees should be required to wait in their cars or at a designated space in which no compensable work can occur.) They also provided examples of improper docking of salaried exempt employees. (see handbook)

## **7. Employee Benefits**

24. **Emergency Related Closings** – The Krizner Group is working on the wording for this policy. (see handbook)
25. **Leave time Policies and Procedures** – The Krizner Group suggested striking out the verbiage due to State FRS not allowing it.
26. **Pregnancy Workers Fairness Act (PWFA)** – The question was asked in the 10-17-2024 Policy and Procedure Workshop and the Board recommended setting a time limit for PWFA. The Krizner Group stated that the County cannot set a leave time limit.
27. **Pregnancy & Breastfeeding Accommodations** – The Krizner Group recommended moving this from Section 1 General Provision to Section 7 Employee Benefits. (see handbook)

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS AND CONCERNS**

There were none.

**ADJOURN**

*Commissioner Mark Hatch made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Jamie Storey 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) 49*