

Commission Board Room  
Dixie County Courthouse  
214 NE Hwy 351, Cross City, FL 32628  
April 02, 2026 – 10:00 AM

*The Board meetings are audio recorded. The public can hear and participate in the meeting via conference call by dialing 1 469-551-3616 and enter code 394317873#*

**COMMISSIONERS**

Mark Hatch, District 3, Chairman  
Jody Stephenson, District 1 – Not present  
Daniel Wood, District 2  
Jamie Storey, District 4, Vice Chairman  
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  
Christie Zander, Deputy Clerk

**CALL TO ORDER**

Commissioner Hatch called the meeting to order.

**INVOCATION AND PLEDGE TO THE AMERICAN FLAG**

Commissioner Storey led the Invocation and Commissioner Wood led the Pledge to the American Flag.

**APPROVAL OF COMMISSION MINUTES**

**03/19/2026 Regular BOCC Minutes**

**Motion to approve the vouchers made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Motion carried.**

**VOUCHER APPROVAL**

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

## **DOUG SANDERS – ANDY EASTON & ASSOC. CRA**

- Presenter/Organization: Doug Sanders, Andy Easton & Associates, Tallahassee.
- Purpose: Request that the Board consider participation in establishing a Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) for downtown Cross City and contribute a portion of future incremental ad valorem revenue.

### Key Points of Presentation:

- Over the past 14 months, his firm has worked with the Town of Cross City to create a downtown development/redevelopment district (CRA).
- A Finding of Necessity study was completed. Slides showed:
  - Deteriorated housing structures
  - Transportation inadequacies
  - Underutilized open space
- Proposed CRA area: 28 parcels in downtown Cross City:
  - South area: 15 parcels, base year value approx. \$3.4 million
  - Downtown: 12 parcels, base year value approx. \$2.5 million
  - North parcel: 1 parcel, approx. \$305,000
  - If established in FY 2024, total base value would have been about \$6.2 million.

### Tax Increment & Funding Mechanics:

- The current base-year revenue to the County is preserved.
- Each year, any increase in taxable value (increment) within the CRA could be shared:
  - By statute, the County may grant 50%–95% of this increment to the CRA trust fund; the County retains the remainder.
  - If there is no increase in value, the town receives no CRA funds that year.
- Example provided: A \$20,000 annual increment over 10 years could yield approximately \$200,000 for downtown projects.

### Use of CRA Funds / Governance:

- Draft ordinance and trust fund agreement between the County and the Town has been prepared; copies left with the Clerk, commissioners, County Attorney, and County Manager.
- CRA funds may be used for long-term capital improvements such as:
  - Medians
  - Street lighting
  - Parking
  - Brick sidewalks and other visible “bricks and mortar” downtown improvements.
- In the proposed structure, the Cross City Town Council would act as the CRA Board/administrator, and there would be no separate administrative fee for his firm; they were paid a flat \$3,000 to prepare the plan, and there are no ongoing consulting fees.

### Clarifications & Assurances:

- This is not an additional property tax; it reallocates a portion of future increases in value within the CRA.
- Only the 28 identified parcels would be included; federal, state, county, city, school board, and Suwannee River Water Management District properties would not be affected.
- The CRA term would likely be 10–20 years.
- Sanders referenced a similar CRA in Dade City, now more than 10 years old, generating about \$1 million per year for downtown improvements.
- He noted that the CRA area could be expanded in the future (e.g., to the whole town) if the County and Town desire.

Board / Public Discussion Highlights (on Sanders' item):

- Commissioner Storey questioned committing future increment to the city when the County is already struggling with needs such as dump site equipment and reduced hours; emphasized taking care of County operations first.
- Attorney Chana Watson recommended the Board:
  - Take the proposal under advisement,
  - Allow the attorneys and Board time to review the ordinance and documents,
  - Noted a typographical error in the draft ordinance heading (referencing Columbia County instead of Dixie County), indicating the need for further review.
- Public questions:
  - Joseph Lander (Dixie County Advocate) asked about CRA administrative costs and how Sanders' firm is paid; Sanders reiterated the flat \$3,000 fee and no ongoing administrative charges.
  - Questions about maintenance and liability for improvements (e.g., brick sidewalks) were raised; Sanders indicated maintenance and liability would rest with the City, similar to street maintenance, and cited long-lasting brick streets in Dade City.
  - Discussion referenced Columbia County's decision not to proceed with a CRA in Fort White, which Sanders attributed largely to charter-related issues and competing priorities (e.g., wastewater plant).

Board Disposition:

- No vote was taken on the CRA contribution percentage or adoption of the ordinance.
- Commissioner Hatch concluded the Board would take the matter under advisement, correct issues (such as the Columbia/Dixie error), allow legal review, and possibly bring it back at a future meeting. Sanders left the CRA booklet and draft ordinance with the Clerk's Office.

**LAURA MILFORD – SCSEP (SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM)**

**CSET Senior Employment Program – Laura Milford**

Laura Milford, job counselor for the Senior Community Service and Employment Program (SCSEP/CSET) serving Dixie, Levy, and Gilchrist counties, gave an overview of the program. Mrs. Milford stated the program is funded by a U.S. Department of Labor grant and serves seniors age 55 and older whose annual income is at or below 125% of the poverty level. Qualified participants are placed in on-the-job training positions at nonprofit or government host agencies, earning \$14/hour for up to 38 hours per week, at no cost to the host agency. Host agencies choose the job titles and duties for the trainees. The program is intended to help participants build employability skills and transition to unsubsidized employment, while also helping agencies complete needed projects they otherwise could not fund. For more information or to sign up as a host agency, she directed interested parties to email her at [lmilford@myncba.com](mailto:lmilford@myncba.com). Mrs. Milford concluded by noting the program supports local economic growth and asked if there were any questions.

### **CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS/CITY OFFICIALS**

#### **Constitutional Officer – Darbi Chaires - Supervisor of Elections**

##### Precinct 4 Relocation

- Former polling place at the old school cannot be used.
- Mrs. Chaires inspected Suwannee Baptist Church; the church agreed to allow use of its facility as the new Precinct 4 polling location.
- Facility is smaller than the old site but will be adequate.

##### Agreement and Notifications

- County Attorney Chana Watson will prepare an agreement with Suwannee Baptist Church.
- Agreement is expected by the next board meeting.
- Once approved, Mrs. Chaires will notify voters and the State of the Precinct location change.

##### Future Use of Former Precinct Building

- The Anderson family has purchased the former precinct facility.
- Mr. Joey Anderson would like Precinct 4 to return to that building when possible.
- The building has damage and cannot be used this year.
- Mrs. Chaires will stay in contact with Mr. Anderson with the goal of possibly returning there in 2028, noting it is a larger facility.

##### Wiring Repairs at Supervisor of Elections Building

- At a prior meeting, wiring problems in the old building were reported.
- Commissioner Osteen has coordinated with Bradley Hurst (Assistant Road Superintendent) to inspect and provide a repair quote.
- They are working on the quote; Mrs. Chaires asked who should be listed as the contact for follow-up.
- Mrs. Chaires stated she does not expect it to be a large project.

Judicial Qualifying Reminder: Judicial qualifying will be held from noon April 20 through noon April 24, 2026.

**Commissioner Hatch:** provided a brief update on Commissioner Stephenson’s condition, stating that, to the Board’s understanding, he is doing “pretty good” and requested that everyone continue to keep Jody and his family in their prayers.

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

Sheila Frierson with the Dixie County Anti-Drug Coalition, reported that April is recognized as a month focusing on alcohol misuse and its connection to mental and behavioral health. Mrs. Frierson stated that Dixie County trends higher than state averages in certain substance-use indicators, particularly among youth, which is the Coalition’s main concern. Mrs. Frierson also shared recent information from the Florida Drug Summit, noting that marijuana use in Dixie County is higher than the state average and that overdoses are increasingly linked to marijuana being contaminated or laced with other substances, including opiates. Mrs. Frierson referenced past overdose cases identified by local EMS that were associated with marijuana use and emphasized the importance of reducing youth exposure. Mrs. Frierson concluded by asking if there were any questions.

**NIKIE WAITS – ROAD TO REDEMPTION**

Ms. Waits spoke following Ms. Frierson’s report, stating that local youth are at high risk but emphasizing the need to address both youth and adults struggling with substance misuse in a comprehensive way. Ms. Waits announced that she will begin her first Moral Reconation Therapy (MRT) group for youth on Monday, with four participants currently enrolled, and noted that she began the adult MRT group approximately three weeks ago. Ms. Waits explained that MRT (the youth curriculum titled “Taking the High Road”) is an evidence-based program that helps participants make better choices, build strong character, and create a positive future, addressing issues such as peer pressure, social media influences, trauma, and unstable environments. The program teaches healthier responses to anger and social norms that often encourage poor decisions. Ms. Waits stated MRT has about a 30% success rate with both youth and adults and invited referrals, asking that anyone who knows a youth who may benefit from the class contact her for assistance.

**KAY MCCALLISTER, TOURISM DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL**

Mrs. McCallister announced that April and May will feature several fishing tournaments in Dixie County and encouraged anyone who enjoys fishing to participate. She noted the Horseshoe Beach Fishing Tournament scheduled for approximately April 25, 2026, and another

tournament in Suwannee on or about May 2, 2026, advising the public to check Facebook for exact dates and details. She added that these events are a lot of fun.

### **KAREN VANAERNAM, DIXIE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

- Lieutenant Governor Visit
  - Mrs. VanAernam reported that Lieutenant Governor Jay Collins will visit Dixie County on April 29, 2026.
  - Plans include a trip out to McGriff Pass in Suwannee so he can see conditions firsthand, followed by lunch and a brief tour of the town.
  - Upon returning to Cross City, the schedule will include tours of row crop farming operations (peanuts, watermelons, etc.), a timber operation, and a metal company, to showcase key commercial sectors in Dixie County and help him connect with the county.
- County Parks – Online Reservations
  - Online reservation capability is now live for county parks at Hinton and Gornto.
  - Horseshoe Beach County Park will be added to the online reservation system soon.
  - Mrs. VanAernam noted this is considered a major win for the county.
- Dixie County 105th Birthday – Countywide Cleanup
  - Dixie County will celebrate its 105th birthday on April 25, 2026.
  - The Restore & Renew team, in partnership with the county, is organizing a countywide cleanup that day from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
  - Each community (Horseshoe Beach, Jena, First District, Old Town, Cross City, Suwannee, etc.) is asked to head up its own local cleanup project, since staff cannot be everywhere.
  - Mrs. VanAernam will likely base in Cross City, focusing on NW 223rd Avenue (truck route); residents are also encouraged to clean along their own roads/frontages in honor of the county's birthday.
  - Mrs. VanAernam specifically asked commissioners and school board members to help lead teams in their areas (e.g., Old Town area led by Commissioner Daniel Wood, School Board Member Cheryl Pridgen, etc.).
  - Meetup locations listed on the flyer include:
    - Horseshoe Beach – cattle gap area
    - DTRAC / Jena
    - Old Old Town School (meetup only, not cleaning that site)
    - First District Community Center
    - Suwannee – Glen Dyals Park
    - Cross City – City Hall
  - Mrs. Chaires and Tara Beauchamp have agreed to help lead the Old Town team.

- Mrs. VanAernam noted that if a meetup building (such as First District) is rented on April 25, 2026, the location can be adjusted as needed.

**GREG BAILEY, NORTH FLORIDA PROFESSIONAL SERVICES**

Greg Bailey reported the following:

Project Updates (Fire Stations, 95th/97th, Working Waterfront, Permits)

- Staff reported that two fire station projects are continuing, with an additional building planned at the Horseshoe (fire station); this extra building is on the schedule but not yet fully confirmed.
- The 95th and 97th projects are practically complete; the contractor is awaiting installation of signs, after which final documentation will be completed.
- For the working waterfront project, the permit application has been submitted to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which is expected to be the longest lead-time permit.
- Staff is also working on the DEP permit, which is expected to be received within about a week so it can be submitted.
- It was noted that the Corps has no regulatory deadline to respond, while the State (DEP) does.
- Project 351 paving is complete from their side, pending permits and signage, and had nothing further to report.

**JOHN LOCKLEAR, LOCKLEAR AND ASSOCIATES**

- Mr. Locklear reported that a pre-construction meeting for dredging at Horseshoe Beach and Suwannee is scheduled for Tuesday, April 7, 2026.
- At that meeting they expect to receive the contractor's construction schedule, which will be brought back and reported to the Board.
- Commissioner Hatch requested a map of Suwannee to be texted to him (and possibly to another commissioner) to assist with the dredging discussion.

**CINDY BELLOT, LIBRARY DIRECTOR**

Not present.

**RAEYLYN BROWNELL, SUWANNEE WATER AND SEWER**

Not present.

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

Not present.

**MIKEL GAINEY, COUNTY ROAD SUPERINTENDENT**

- Mr. Gainey reported that water is receding in the pit, and they plan to move equipment back in and resume digging on Monday.

- A grader is being moved into District 4 to assist with road work, with an intent to rotate and cover all districts approximately once a month; commissioners have been helping identify problem areas.
- Commissioners praised the road department, stating the ditches and roads are in the best condition they have seen, due in part to the recent dry weather and staff efforts.
- Commissioner Osteen thanked staff for cleanup work at DTRAC and for looking into conditions at another site behind the gym.
- Sheila Frierson (Dixie County Anti-Drug Coalition) publicly thanked the county crew for their help placing coalition containers and ensuring they were properly located, noting their assistance has been extremely helpful.

### **TIM JOHNSON, SOLID WASTE DIRECTOR**

#### **Solid Waste – Quotes, Site Operations, and FRS Training**

- Mr. Johnson presented two quotes (Valentine/Cross City Machine Shop and Gray/Welding) for needed work and requested Board approval to proceed.
  - He noted there was little price difference and that both vendors do quality work.
  - Commissioner Hatch asked which he recommended, Mr. Johnson indicated they had used Valentine more recently but had not used Gray in a while and was agreeable to whichever could start the quickest.

#### **Motion to award the work to whichever vendor can begin soonest made by Commissioner Storey. Seconded by Commissioner Osteen. Motion carried.**

- Commissioner Hatch then asked HR Director Angie Crowley for an update on FRS employee training:
  - Ms. Crowley reported FRS had sent online training links so employees can view information individually, since each employee’s needs and questions differ.
  - Ms. Crowley will coordinate with Mr. Johnson on dates and a plan to ensure employees receive appropriate training.
- Solid Waste site hours and staffing/costs:
  - Mr. Johnson and commissioners discussed the ongoing plan to reduce operating costs at garbage sites:
    - Considering closing each site an additional day, operating 5 days per week instead of 7, with staggered closed days so not all sites are closed at once.
    - Commissioner Storey emphasized that while this is not popular, it is necessary because current spending on approximately 22–23 part-time attendants is not sustainable (“the math doesn’t work”).
    - Several attendants are considering retirement; the plan is not to replace them, but to reassign and shuffle remaining staff to improve efficiency.

- Commissioner Hatch suggested alternatives such as:
  - Partial-day closures (e.g., closing mornings or evenings instead of full days),
  - Preserving late-day hours (5:00–6:00 p.m.) because many residents work and rely on that hour.
- Mr. Johnson had conducted a traffic count at Site 55A on a Sunday from 5:00–6:00 p.m. and recorded over 70 cars, indicating high use during that hour.
  - Board discussed possibly backing Sunday closing from 6:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. but agreed they need more counts (especially on weekends) and data before changing hours.
- Commissioners reiterated that solid waste must be run like a business, with citizens as the revenue source, and all options remain on the table to balance service and cost.
- Transfer station concerns:
  - Mr. Johnson reported issues at the transfer station, including people coming back inside after hours and removing materials (“stealing”).
  - If they close certain sites more or remove metal collection from some sites, they may need to close the transfer station at least on Fridays or adjust operations further.
  - Mr. Johnson expressed frustration with ongoing misuse but stated he will continue evaluating options and bring back recommendations.

No additional motions were taken in this segment beyond the vendor approval.

### **LEON WRIGHT, BUILDING AND ZONING OFFICIAL**

- Mr. Wright requested to Abate Property Behind Methodist Church - 25559 SE Hwy 19, Old Town.
  - Mr. Wright reported on a long-standing code enforcement case involving a heavily cluttered property behind the Methodist Church, including large accumulations of tires (about three semi loads) and other debris, and ongoing complaints from the church and public.
  - He requested Board authorization to seek court permission to abate the property, explaining the County would:
    - Enter and clean the property,
    - Then place a lien for cleanup costs (estimated \$10,000–\$15,000),
    - And, if unpaid, foreclose on the property.
  - A neighboring resident, Mrs. Francis Roberts, addressed the Board, explaining:
    - The occupant “Ben Simmons” is mentally disabled, cannot read or write, and has limited means.
    - Mrs. Roberts has provided food and water for years and is concerned he has no other place to go.

- Mrs. Roberts noted others have dumped trailers and tires there so Ben can strip them for a few dollars.
- Commissioners and Mr. Wright responded:
  - Commissioner Hatch acknowledged Mrs. Roberts' compassion but emphasized the site has been a serious problem for many years and must be cleaned up for health, safety, and appearance.
  - Noted previous offers to help Ben clean up (including with equipment) were refused.
  - Stated the County cannot use taxpayer funds to fence or maintain private property and cannot continue to allow the site to operate like an informal dump/roll-off site.
  - Confirmed the lien will be placed against the property owner, not Ben personally, and that the owner can avoid a lien by cleaning the property themselves.
- Mr. Wright advised there is a code enforcement hearing next week, and typically the judge gives about 30 days to show improvement (not necessarily full cleanup) before further action.
- Mr. Wright also stated he will investigate allegations that a trailer mover is dumping old trailers on the site; he will identify who is bringing them and pursue enforcement as appropriate.

**Motion made by Commissioner Wood to authorize Mr. Wright to seek abatement authority from the court for this property; seconded by Commissioner Osteen. Motion carried.**

- Tire Recycling Option (Roy Bass comment)
  - It was noted that staff will speak with a recycling company next week that may be willing to take the tires at no charge, potentially reducing the County's cleanup costs.
- LDR Ordinance – Agenda Clarification (County Attorney Chana Watson)
- County Attorney Chana Watson advised the Board that an agenda item labeled as a *resolution* was actually an *ordinance*.
- Attorney Watson read the title of the ordinance into the record:

An ordinance of the Board of County Commissioners of Dixie County, Florida, amending Ordinance No. 90-16 (Dixie County Land Development Regulations), as amended; amending Section 4.3.5 entitled "Special Exceptions"; amending Section 4.4.5 entitled "Special Exceptions"; and amending Section 4.7.5 entitled "Special Exceptions"; providing for severability; providing for repeal of conflicting provisions; and providing an effective date.

- Attorney Watson stated the ordinance had been properly advertised in the newspaper for first reading, and that second reading and a vote would occur at the next Board meeting.

- Commissioner Hatch confirmed no Board action was required at this meeting and asked if there were any questions; no questions were raised.

**SCOTT PENDARVIS, CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER**

- Mr. Pendarvis reported that the County has been awarded Year 3 funding under the cybersecurity grant, for slightly less than prior years, and that some services have already been adopted.
- Noted an error in the award letter where a service he did not request was added; he has requested that item be removed and provided the corrected letter to the Board and County Attorney.
- Requested renewal of his authorization to sign the grant award letter, subject to the County Attorney’s review and approval, consistent with past practice.

**Motion made by Commissioner Storey to renew authorization for Mr. Pendarvis to sign the Year 3 cybersecurity grant award letter (with Attorneys review); Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Motion carried.**

**DARIAN BROWN, DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY SERVICES**

- Emergency Management / Grants Update – Hurricane Helene & Idalia; Tide Gage Installations (Chief Scott Garner)
- Hurricane Helene match waiver & extensions
  - Chief Scott Garner reported that waivers for the 12.5% local match for Hurricane Helene projects have been submitted to the Governor’s office and are under review.
  - Time extensions have been submitted for all Helene projects and new Idalia projects, extending deadlines to September 28, 2028.
  - Noted that Shired Island Road and park projects will require federal approval if work extends past 2028 because of the bridge and schedule constraints.
- HMGP – (Hazard Mitigation Grant Program) Old Town Hammock Drainage (Idalia)
  - Under the HMGP for Hurricane Idalia, the County submitted multiple projects and has received a phase award for the Old Town Hammock drainage project (design phase from Chavous Road to the river).
  - Chief Garner stated he would report the exact grant amount once the contract is received but confirmed the design phase has been approved.
- DEP / National Weather Service – Tide Gauge Partnerships
  - Scott presented a request from DEP and the National Weather Service to install tide gauges in Dixie County:
    - One at the Jena boat ramp on a pole-mounted structure to monitor the Steinhatchee River.

- A second proposed on the riverside in Suwannee at a seawall owned by Madison Avenue, LLC, to complement an existing gauge at the Salt Creek Restaurant.
- Motions and Board action:

**Motion by Commissioner Osteen to approve installation of the Jena boat ramp tide gage, second by Commissioner Wood. Motion carried**

**Motion by Commissioner Wood to authorize contacting the Madison Avenue, LLC landowner (by Chairman Hatch, County Manager Jenkins, or other designee) regarding placement of the Suwannee riverside tide gauge, seconded by Commissioner Storey. Motion carried.**

- Chief Garner emphasized there is no cost to the County for either installation; DEP/NWS will fund and perform all work. Data from these gauges will be available online similar to existing river gauges (e.g., Wilcox/Suwannee River).

**GAIL CARTER, INDIGENT CARE**

Not present.

**HOLLY HOUGHTON, COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT**

Nothing to present.

**ANGIE CROWLEY, HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATOR**

Nothing to present.

**JOHN JENKINS, COUNTY MANAGER**

**Action Items:**

1. Request Board approval of the SHIP HHRP Demo Reconstruction Reimbursement for Susan Sowards in the amount of \$169,336.15.

**Motion to approve SHIP/HRP demo reconstruction reimbursement for Susan Sowards in the amount of \$169,336.15 made by Commissioner Osteen seconded by Commissioner Wood. Motion carried.**

2. Request Board approval of the SHIP HHRP Demo Reconstruction Reimbursement for Darlene Powell in the amount of \$77,895.99.

**Motion to approve SHIP/HRP demo reconstruction reimbursement for Darlene Powell in the amount of \$77,895.99 made by Commissioner Storey. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Motion carried.**

3. Request Board approval of the SHIP HHRP Demo Reconstruction Reimbursement for Lou Watson in the amount of \$178,033.45.

**Motion to approve SHIP/HRP demo reconstruction reimbursement for Lou Watson in the amount of \$178,033.45 made by Commissioner Wood. Seconded by Commissioner Storey. Motion carried.**

4. Request Board approval of the Notice of Award for Foundation Professionals of Florida, Inc. for the Sheriff Evidence Building Grout Injection not to exceed the amount of \$560,750.00.

**Motion to approve the Notice of Award to Foundation Professionals of Florida, Inc. for grout injection at the Sheriff's evidence building, in an amount not to exceed \$560,750 made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Storey. Motion carried.**

5. Request Board approval of the Construction Agreement between Dixie County and Foundation Professionals, Inc. for the Sheriff Evidence Building Grout Injection not to exceed the amount of \$560,750.00.

**Motion to approve the Construction Agreement between Dixie County and Foundation Professionals of Florida, Inc. for grout injection at the Sheriff's evidence building in an amount not to exceed \$560,750 made by Commissioner Storey. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Motion carried.**

6. Request Board approval of the Notice to Proceed for Foundation Professionals of Florida, Inc. for the Sheriff Evidence Building Grout Injection to begin April 16, 2026.

**Motion to approve the Notice to Proceed for Foundation Professionals of Florida, Inc. for grout injection at the Sheriff's evidence building made by Commissioner Storey. Seconded by Commissioner Osteen. Motion carried.**

7. Request Board approval of the Mosquito Control Annual State Fund Budget Amendment # 1 to move all funds to operating expenses as requested by FDACS.

**Motion to approve the Mosquito Control Annual State Budget Amendment No. 1, moving all funds to Operating Expenses as required by FDACS made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Motion carried.**

8. Request Board approval of the Mosquito Control Annual Local Fund Budget Amendment # 1 to move all funds to operating expenses as requested by FDACS.

**Motion to approve the Mosquito Control Annual Local Fund Budget Amendment No. 1, moving all funds to Operating Expenses as required by FDACS made by Commissioner Storey. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Motion carried.**

9. Request Board approval of the Notice of Award for the PW Management Services to Savinacious LLC as the highest score.

**Motion to approve the Notice of Award naming Savinacious LLC as the highest-scoring proposer for PW Management Services made by Commissioner Wood. Seconded by Commissioner Storey. Motion carried.**

10. Request Board approval of the T-Hangar #11 & #12 Rental Agreements as presented.  
**Motion to approve Hangar 11 and Hangar 12 lease agreements at the Dixie County Airport by Commissioner Wood. Seconded by Commissioner Storey. Motion carried.**

11. Request Board approval of the contract with Ring Power Corporation for the Airport Terminal Backup Generator in the amount of \$133,143.99.  
**Motion to approve the contract with Ring Power Corporation for the airport terminal backup generator in the amount of \$133,103.99. made by Commissioner Wood. Seconded by Commissioner Osteen Motion carried.**

12. Request Board approval of the Airport Improvement presentation by Mary Jensen on Mar 19, 2026, at the BOCC meeting.  
**Motion to approve scheduling an Airport Improvement presentation by Mary Jensen for the March 19, 2026, BOCC meeting made by Commissioner Storey. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Motion carried.**

13. Request Board approval of the letters to DEP (Department of Environmental Protection), SRWMD (Suwannee River Water Management District) and SJRWMD (Saint Johns River Water Management District) Opposing the Water First Florida Aquifer Recharge Project.  
**Motion to rescind the prior motion approving only a letter regarding the First Florida Water aquifer recharge and to instead approve preparation of a Resolution opposing the aquifer recharge project in support of the previously approved letter made by Commissioner Storey. Seconded by Commissioner Osteen. Motion carried.**

The Board revisited its prior action regarding opposition to First Florida Water's aquifer recharge project involving FDEP, Suwannee River Water Management District, and St. Johns River Water Management District.

- It was clarified that the Board had already approved a letter of opposition at the last meeting but had not yet adopted a formal resolution.

The new motion for another letter was rescinded (motion by Commissioner Storey, seconded by Commissioner Osteen).

- The Board then approved a resolution supporting the previously approved letter and formally opposing the First Florida Water aquifer recharge project (motion by Jamie, second by David; motion carried).

14. Request Board approval for Locklear to apply for the Florida Commerce Community Planning Technical Assistance grant FY 2026-2027. This is for scanning and archiving documents for the County Manager office.

**Motion to approve applying for the FY 2026–2027 Florida Commerce Community Planning Technical Assistance Grant for scanning and archiving County Manager documents by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Motion carried.**

15. Request Board approval of the Locklear Task Work Order Change Order # 1 for LPA0279 DCFSM in the amount of \$60,000.00.

**Motion to approve Locklear Task Work Order Change Order No. 1 for LAP O-279 DCF-SM in the amount of \$60,000 made by Commissioner Wood. Second by Commissioner Storey. Motion carried.**

16. Request Board approval of the FY 2026-2027 TSMCA (Traffic Signal Maintenance Compensation Agreement) in the amount of \$19,236.00.

**Motion to approve the FY 2026–2027 Traffic Signal Maintenance Compensation Agreement in the amount of \$19,236 made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Wood . Motion carried.**

17. Request Board approval to apply for the FY 2027 SCCSW (Small County Consolidated Waste) Grant.

**Motion to approve applying for the FY 2027 Small County Consolidated Waste Grant by Commissioner Wood second by Commissioner Storey. Motion carried.**

18. Request Board approval of the Letter of Intent to enter into a New Lease Agreement for the CAT 120 Motor Grader with Ring Power.

**Motion to approve a Letter of Intent to enter into a new lease agreement with Ring Power for CAT 120 motor graders made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Storey. Motion carried.**

***(Mullet Road financing and Daddy–Daughter Dance discussion in this segment were discussion only; no formal motion was finalized.)***

- Mullet Road Paving – Financing Proposal (Discussion Only, No Action)
  - The County Manager John Jenkins presented a financing proposal from the paving contractor for Mullet Road:
    - Project cost approximately \$94,044.02 for about 0.4 miles of road (serving roughly 42–43 homes).
    - Proposed 10% down payment of \$9,404.40.

- Remaining balance approximately \$84,639.62 financed at 10% interest over 10 years, with two payments per year (July 1 and January 1) of about \$6,629.55 each (about \$13,000 per year, including interest).
    - Earlier option discussed was a 5-year term at 6% interest, with annual payments in the \$40,000+ range.
  - Board discussed:
    - Potential funding sources such as special projects line items or road maintenance.
    - Competing needs for funding, including equipment and solid waste/garbage operations.
    - The possibility of deferring payments until the next budget year and the affordability of \$13,000 per year versus higher 5-year payments.
  - Consensus: Commissioners were generally supportive of the project but concerned about financing in the current year; Mr. Jenkins was directed to review the proposal further with staff and the contractor and bring it back at a future meeting for possible action. No vote was taken.
- 
- Daddy-Daughter & Mother-Son Events – Board Sponsorship (Personal Funds)
    - The Board heard a request for sponsorship of the Daddy-Daughter Dance on May 2, 2026, and the Mother-Son Dance on May 16, 2026.
    - Sponsorship levels for both events combined were presented as:
      - \$200 – General Sponsor
      - \$375 – Table Sponsor
      - \$750 – Community Partner
      - \$1,000 – Gold Partner (includes 8 tickets, banner, newspaper/Facebook promotion, and other advertising).
    - It was noted that the Board’s BOCC discretionary account is depleted (largely due to the fair), so any sponsorship would need to come from individual commissioners’ personal funds.
    - Commissioners agreed to each contribute \$100 personally, and with an additional contribution from Attorney Watson, they will collectively fund a higher-level sponsorship (targeting the Community Partner level of \$750 for both events).
    - Funds will be brought in by April 16, 2026, and staff will apply them toward the agreed sponsorship package.

Information Items:

1. Reminder County Offices will be closed tomorrow Friday, April 3, 2026, in observance of Good Friday.

2. When does the Board want to set a commissioner assignment progress meeting?

Commissioner Hatch proposed a Committee Assignments Workshop – May 7, 1:00 p.m.

**Motion to schedule a workshop on committee assignments for May 7, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Commissioner Motion carried.**

**CHANA WATSON, COUNTY ATTORNEY**

- County Attorney Chana Watson reported there is a Fishbone Creek area property previously under a long-term lease to another entity. To exit that lease, the lessee had to send the property back through a state advertisement process; no other county or entity took it, so it is now available for Dixie County.
- She has provided information to Ms. McCallister regarding pursuing the property for a primitive camping site, which could help relieve pressure on Shired Island. The County would need to submit a \$300 application fee and meet an educational requirement associated with the lease. Attorney Watson stated she believes the County can meet that requirement and that the lease is likely to be approved. She anticipates bringing a formal item to the Board by the next meeting for approval to submit the application and fee, if the Board wishes to proceed.
- On other legal matters, she noted there has been no new movement in most pending cases, but one case may be close to settlement; she will update the Board once there is more information.

**BARBIE HIGGINBOTHAM, CLERK OF COURT**

**Park Camping Funds and Auditor Update**

- Mrs. Higginbotham asked about whether there is a required time frame for county park camping attendants to turn in collected funds, noting one instance where money had been held for approximately one year and was turned in in very poor condition. Staff responded that the issue would be addressed and corrected.
- Motor grader lease: Ms. Brenda Royal clarified that the existing motor grader lease is a three-year agreement that ends this budget year. The County must send a letter of intent to continue so the grader remains under lease; otherwise the County will lose one grader and drop from four to three units.
- New auditors: Ms. Royal reported the County is in the process of setting up with the new audit firm, including establishing accounts/portals so auditors can request documents. She noted it will be a significant process, but initial calls with the firm have gone well and she believes the change will be beneficial in the long run.

**COUNTY COMMISSION ITEMS**

- Commissioner Woods stated it was a good meeting, expressing satisfaction that the County is moving forward with cleanup efforts behind the church and in the handicapped area, noting progress is slow but steady.
- Commissioner Story praised Mr. Tim Johnson and the solid waste team for their work on garbage and site management, emphasizing they are trying new approaches to save money and will adjust if something does not work, encouraging openness to new ideas even if similar efforts failed in the past.
- Commissioner Hatch agreed, noting that although similar ideas have been tried before, times have changed, and the Board should not dismiss concepts solely because they were attempted years ago.
- Clerk/Finance and the Board discussed the transition to a cashless system for camping/park reservations (CampSpot), with Ms. Royal stating new auditors (James Moore) are very focused on cash controls. Ms. Royal explained the process: revenues will be collected into a holding account each month and then allocated back to the appropriate funds/locations (e.g., Gornto, Hinton Landing, Horseshoe). The Chairman and Clerk agreed the cashless approach reduces risk for attendants and improves internal controls.
- Commissioner Hatch suggested community buildings should also begin moving toward cashless operations in the future.
- Commissioner Osteen announced Easter events in Horseshoe Beach:
  - A Saturday daytime event at 10:00 a.m.
  - A Saturday evening “glow in the dark” egg hunt beginning with food at 6:30 p.m. and egg hunt at 8:00 p.m., split between the fire station and a local church.
  - He stated he will be absent from the next meeting due to being out of town.
- Commissioner Hatch: closing remarks:
  - Asked everyone to keep Commissioner Stephenson and his family in their prayers.
  - Commissioner Hatch wished everyone a Happy Easter and invited the public to a sunrise service at Old Town Baptist Church (by the Dollar Store in Old Town).
  - Commissioner Hatch addressed Ms. Francis Roberts directly, apologizing for striking the gavel during earlier discussion on the code enforcement/cleanup case near the Methodist Church, emphasizing respect for her and appreciation for her compassion toward Mr. Ben, while reiterating the Board’s responsibility to all citizens.
  - Commissioner Hatch clarified that Mrs. Roberts and Mr. Ben have 30 days to show meaningful improvement on the property; progress is required, even if the site is not fully cleaned within that time. Staff (code enforcement) will help guide them through the process.
- Commissioner Hatch then transitioned to public comment, acknowledging Mr. Roberts who was present to speak.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS AND CONCERNS**

### **Public Comment – Jim Roberts (Shepherds Avenue / Alley Closure)**

- Jim Roberts (son of Mrs. Francis Roberts) addressed the Board regarding two family parcels behind the Old Town Baptist Church (lots 37 – parents’ home, and 57 – brother’s home) and the alley/right-of-way between them, which he stated was closed in 1996.
- Attorney Watson summarized the history:
  - In 1996 the Board held a public hearing on a petition to close and vacate the south 16 feet of Shepherds Avenue (McQueen/Chaires Second Addition, Old Town) filed by Florence Chamberlain, Thomas McKinnon, and Phyllis Burst.
  - A resolution was adopted abating 16 feet to Ms. Chamberlain (affecting parcel 37), but subsequent research shows approximately 6,400 sq. ft. of right-of-way still appears in the County’s name, indicating not all affected parcels were properly addressed at that time, likely due to prior drafting error.
- Mr. Roberts requested that the remaining strip/right-of-way be placed entirely with the front lot (his parents’ parcel), subject to his brother’s consent.
- The Board and Attorney Watson explained that, under current practice, the family must:
  - Work through a title company/attorney to perform the necessary research and survey,
  - Prepare a proper legal description and petition for road/right-of-way closure, and
  - Then bring it back to the Board through the County Attorney for consideration under applicable statutes.
- The Chairman confirmed the property currently appears in the County’s name, and that any closure must follow statutory procedures.
- Mr. Roberts and Attorney Watson exchanged contact information; Attorney Watson will conduct further due diligence, and the family will obtain any needed survey/legal description before returning the matter to the Board.
- Commissioner Hatch also asked whether a camper parked in the right-of-way is occupied; Mr. Roberts confirmed it is an unoccupied travel trailer parked on the back side of the property.

### **Public Comment – Mary Goodrich (Hammock Drainage)**

- Ms. Goodrich requested an update on drainage work in the Hammock area, noting that even limited recent rainfall has washed out her driveway again and asking if the area will still be cleared before hurricane season.
- Commissioner Hatch responded that crews have been working hard with small equipment (mini-excavator/skid steer) on drainage throughout the county, emphasizing that flooding impacts were countywide, not limited to her area.

- Commissioner Hatch referenced Chief Garner’s earlier update on the Old Town Hammock canal/drainage project, stating that the newly approved work there should significantly improve drainage for that area and that the County will continue working on the problem.

**ADJOURN**

**Commissioner Storey made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Commissioner Osteen. Motion carried.**

**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.**