

**Regular Meeting  
Commission Board Room  
Dixie County Courthouse  
214 NE Hwy 351, Cross City, FL 32628  
April 16, 2026 – 6:00 PM**

**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 908-825-494#**

**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 – Not Present

**STAFF**

John Jenkins, County Manager  
Roy Bass, Assistant County Manager – Not present  
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**

04/02/2026 BOCC RM Minutes

**Motion to approve the 04/02/2026 BOCC Regular Meeting Minutes made by Commissioner Storey. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Board approved.**

**VOUCHER APPROVAL**

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

## **CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS/ CITY OFFICIALS**

### **Constitutional Officers – Supervisor of Elections Darbi Chaires (Precinct 4 Relocation & Agreement)**

- Precinct 4 Polling Location Update
  - Speaker (Supervisor of Elections) reported that Precinct 4, Place 4 will be moving to Suwannee River Baptist Church.
  - An agreement with the church is required before the move can be finalized.
  - Approximately 3,500 letters must be mailed to affected voters, representing about 30% of the county, so timely execution of the agreement is important.
  - Supervisor noted she had not yet received an email draft of the agreement and asked when it would be available.
- Draft Agreement Timing
  - Commissioner Hatch stated he should have the draft by Monday and would try to have staff send her a copy as early as the next day, even though he would be out of the office.
  - Supervisor asked if the agreement could be signed before a board meeting.
  - Commissioner Hatch responded yes, and directed that a motion be made for approval contingent upon:
    - County Attorney approval, and
    - Supervisor of Elections' approval,after which Commissioner Hatch would come in and sign.

### **Motion to approve the Agreement for Precinct 4 at Suwannee River Baptist Church made by Commissioner Storey. Seconded by Commissioner Wood.**

- **Discussion:**
  - Commissioner Hatch confirmed that everyone understood the action: using Suwannee River Baptist Church as the voting location for Precinct No. 4.

## **BRONZELL FOWLER – USE OF OLD JAIL FOR WOMENS SHELTER**

Speaker: Mr. Bronzell Fowler

- Mr. Fowler commended the Board of County Commissioners for working together in unity and improving county roads and conditions over the last two years.
- Mr. Fowler described work of a coordinator formerly running a homeless shelter in Pasco County, who organized a successful program for homeless women with children, helping them:

- Obtain training and employment,
  - Rebuild businesses,
  - Reintegrate into society, and
  - Experience strong spiritual support, including numerous baptisms.
- Proposed establishing a similar homeless shelter / program in Dixie County, focused on homeless women and children, under the “Crisis Dixie Church of Christ”, which is in the process of obtaining a 501(c)(3).
- Requested that the County allow use of the old county jail building (described as unused for ~40 years) for this shelter/program.
- Reported they have potential financial support from contacts in Gainesville who are looking for charitable projects to fund.
- He noted that once their nonprofit status is finalized, interested parties will come to inspect the building (photos have already been sent).
- Emphasized:
  - The building still has significant structural value and could cost over \$1 million to replace.
  - With proper organization and support, they believe the building can be rehabilitated within approximately 3 years.
  - The project would help “many people” and be a source of community pride.
- **Board Discussion – Old Jail / Surplus Land**
  - Commissioner Hatch
  - Noted the timing was appropriate, as County Manager John Jenkins already had the old jail on a list of county surplus lands under review, including property “back on the Pack Road.”
  - Acknowledged that the jail structure sits on county-owned land being evaluated as surplus.
  - Expressed openness to the concept of a homeless shelter for women with a Christian mission, stating he was confident all board members, including the two absent commissioners, would support the idea in principle.
- Requested that Mr. Fowler:
  - Prepare a written “plan of action” / plan of direction, outlining how the jail would be converted and used as a shelter/program.
  - Coordinate with Leon Wright to work through details, including:
    - Program structure and operations,
    - Any required rezoning or land use changes, and
    - Any issues related to the site.

- Noted that:
  - The back side of the city area has a drainage problem, which must be taken into account for any redevelopment.
  - The City Mayor Ryan Fulford would be installing chain-link fencing (6–8 feet) as part of a flood-mitigation project on city property adjacent to or involving part of the area the county donated to the city for flood control.
- Mr. Fowler
  - Agreed to:
    - Work with Commissioner Leon and John to identify needed zoning changes and other regulatory steps.
    - Develop and document a detailed program plan for Board consideration.
  - Mr. Fowler reiterated his confidence that within 3–4 years the rehabilitated building would be functioning well, and the community would be proud of the project.
- General Board sentiment was supportive of exploring the proposal, subject to:
  - Receipt and review of a formal written plan, and
  - Coordination with County staff on zoning, drainage, and surplus land considerations.

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

Not present

**NIKIE WAITS – ROAD TO REDEMPTION**

**Presentation – Sexual Assault & Child Abuse Awareness**

- Awareness Months & Purpose
  - Noted that April is:
    - Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month, and
    - Child Abuse Prevention Month.
  - Reported she organized a social media awareness campaign on sexual assault.
- Key Statistics – Sexual Violence
  - 1 in 5 women and 1 in 6 men experience sexual violence in their lifetime.
  - Every 68 seconds someone in the U.S. is sexually assaulted.
  - Most survivors know their attackers.
  - Many do not report due to fear, shame, and stigma.
  - Emphasized that:
    - Sexual assault is never the survivor’s fault.
    - Myths about clothing or being “in the wrong place” are harmful and false.

- Survivors have a right to be heard; their voices and stories matter.
- Key Statistics – Child Abuse & Child Sexual Abuse
  - 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 13 boys experience sexual abuse before age 18.
  - 1 in 7 children experience abuse or neglect each year in the U.S.
  - Over 600,000 children are confirmed victims of abuse/neglect each year.
  - 90% of abused children know their abusers (family member, caregiver, trusted adult).
  - Children in poverty are five times more likely to experience abuse.
- Impact of Childhood Trauma
  - Childhood abuse increases risk of:
    - Substance use disorders,
    - Depression and anxiety,
    - Suicide attempts,
    - Chronic health conditions.
  - Adults with multiple childhood traumas are:
    - 12 times more likely to attempt suicide, and
    - 7 times more likely to struggle with alcoholism or drug addiction.
- Prevention & Protective Factors
  - Supportive adults are the number one protective factor.
  - Children with at least one safe, stable adult are more likely to recover.
  - Prevention programs and education:
    - Strengthen families,
    - Teach boundaries and safety,
    - Reduce risk and harm.
  - Stressed importance of educating children and the community.

### **Personal Survivor Testimony (Prepared Statement)**

I was a child with a voice that learned silence before I ever learned truth. Little hands that should have held crayons was gripping secrets too heavy for a body that small. I learned early how to leave my own skin, how to disappear while still breathing. They took pieces of me I didn't even know had names yet, stole innocence like it was nothing, like I was nothing, and the world kept spinning like nothing happened.

But something did. Everything did.

I grew up with invisible bruises and a heart that flinched at love. Trust felt like a trick, safety felt like a lie, and my worth buried somewhere beneath shame that was never mine to carry. I wore masks like armor, smile stitched together over a soul unraveling, and somewhere along the way, that pain turned into change. Choices I made from broken places led me down roads that almost swallowed me whole.

But here's what they didn't destroy, what they couldn't reach, what they couldn't touch: that part of me that still whispered, "There has to be more," that part of me that cried out, even when I didn't have words for God. And He heard me — even in the silence, even in the anger, even when I didn't believe He would.

I wasn't rescued in a moment. I was rebuilt in pieces — in tears that finally fell, in truth that finally surfaced, in rooms where I said out loud, "This happened to me, but it does not own me."

Recovery wasn't pretty. It was messy, raw, real, but it was mine. I learned how to feel again without running, how to look in the mirror without turning away. I learned that survival isn't the end of the story; it's the beginning of strength. Today I stand not as what was done to me, but as who I choose to become: a voice for the silence, a light in dark places, a living, breathing testimony that broken does not mean finished.

I am not the shame.

I am not the abuse.

I am not the chains.

I am the survivor who became the fighter, who became the healer, who became the hope. And every step I take now, every life I touch, every truth I speak is proof they didn't win.

I'm still here.

I'm still rising.

And I am finally fully free.

- Board Response
  - Commissioner Hatch requested a copy of Nikki's written piece so it could be:
    - Placed into the official minutes of this board meeting, and
    - Properly preserved (noting that shorthand minutes alone would not capture it).
  - Commissioners and audience members expressed appreciation and support (e.g., "Thank you, Miss Nikie," "Bless you").

### **City Officials' Comments**

- Commissioner Hatch noted he had neglected to formally call for city officials earlier and corrected that.
- Mayor Fulford's Update (Cross City)
  - Mayor Fulford announced the next City–County joint meeting:
    - Date: May 12, 2026
    - Location: City Hall
    - Time: 5:00 p.m. (noted as a Tuesday, consistent with usual practice)
  - Board members confirmed the time and place and that 5:00 p.m. typically works with staff schedules.

### **Commissioner/Chair Comments – Strategic Priorities & "We Love Our Kids" Shirts**

- Commissioner Hatch
  - Commented on matching shirts worn by several commissioners and staff, noting the wording:
    - "Dixie County – We Love Our Kids – Sporting Complex."
  - Explained the shirts tie into the County's strategic planning effort:
    - The Board intends to adopt a strategic plan with three top priority projects:

- 1. New/Improved County Sporting Complex
  - For youth sports and tournaments (softball, baseball, soccer, etc.).
  - Goal is to host travel ball and other tournaments to bring visitors and generate economic development for local small businesses.
- 2. Horsemen’s Association Arena
  - A proper arena facility for equine and roping events.
  - Also envisioned as a large animal shelter site during hurricanes or other emergencies.
- 3. Library Improvements/Replacement
  - Modernization or replacement of the county library as a central community resource.
  - Stated these three projects are all high priority (“all top threes are 1, 2, 3, and they all have priority”).
- Reported preliminary discussions with Florida Commerce about grant opportunities that may help fund the sporting complex, emphasizing:
  - These projects are in early stages, but
  - The County intends to “push this pretty hard” as a top priority.
- Noted that John Locklear
- has prepared a brief write-up supporting the sporting complex initiative and would be speaking later in the meeting.

**KAY MCCALLISTER, TOURISM DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL**

**Tourism Report – Fishing Tournaments & Parks**

- **Upcoming Fishing Tournaments**
  - Mrs. McCallister announced start of fishing tournament season:
    - Horseshoe Beach Tournament – scheduled for April 25, 2026.
    - Suwannee Tournament – scheduled for the following weekend, May 2, 2026.
  - Noted each event will include a Friday night “Calcutta” dinner:
    - Used for captain registration and socializing.
    - Opportunity to meet captains and teams participating in the tournament.
  - Invited commissioners and the public to attend if possible.
- **Parks & Camping Operations**
  - Mrs. McCallister reported that park bookings are coming in well.
  - Recognized Shelly Ross for working very hard managing reservations and operations, noting there is still some “growing knowledge” as new processes are refined.
  - Stated they are very happy to have camp hosts back at Gornto Springs Park:
    - Camp hosts are doing well and are a great help in getting the current program running smoothly.

- **Overnight Use Confirmation**
  - Attorney Watson referenced an email confirming overnight use at the park (“saying it was a go on the overnight”).
  - Mrs. McCallister confirmed: “Yes, yes,” indicating overnight stays are approved, and thanked the Board/staff.

**KAREN VANAERNAM, DIXIE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**Economic Development – Opportunity Zone 2.0 & Nomination Letter**

- Program Overview
  - Described Opportunity Zone 2.0, a federal incentive program (created by Congress, administered by the U.S. Treasury).
  - Noted that Dixie County has three eligible Opportunity Zone census tracts (large parcels).
  - Explained that final selection of tracts is made by the Governor, with input from Florida Commerce and legislative partners.
  - Emphasized that not all counties will receive Opportunity Zone designations, but rural areas are targeted for about 30% of the available zones, giving Dixie County a good chance of receiving at least one.
- **Local Benefits & Target Areas**
  - Stated that Opportunity Zones:
    - Attract wealthy investors who need tax deferrals/reductions.
    - Bring infrastructure, people, and jobs to the area.
  - Reported that one eligible tract includes the County Industrial Park, which currently contains the youth sporting complex.
  - Explained the County’s vision:
    - Use investment and grant funds to build a state-of-the-art sporting complex for children at a more suitable location, and
    - Redevelop the Industrial Park area into a stronger economic development/jobs center (housing, infrastructure, employment).
- Nomination Letter to Governor DeSantis
  - Read key paragraph from a draft letter to Governor Ron DeSantis, stating:
    - At the April 16, 2026, meeting, the Board of County Commissioners voted unanimously to nominate two of the three eligible census tracts (including one near Hudson Field) for Opportunity Zone designation.
    - The County understands the limited number of new Opportunity Zones but asks the Governor to recognize the “incredible value” such a designation would provide for Dixie County through 2036 (10-year cycle).

- If the County receives one designation now, it could seek another tract in a future cycle.

**Motion to approve the Opportunity Zone nomination letter as read and authorize the Chairman to sign and submit it to Governor DeSantis made by Commissioner Storey. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Board approved**

- Additional Comment: Mrs. VanAernam noted that prior work with Victor Leotta / Leotta Location Design Group and the existing Circularity 2 project (35–40 jobs and significant private investment) strengthen the County’s application; an online application with supporting data will accompany the letter.

**Visit of Lieutenant Governor – April 29**

- Mrs. VanAernam announced that the Lieutenant Governor will visit on April 29, 2026.
- Schedule/Focus:
  - Start in Suwannee around 8:00–8:30 a.m.
  - Focus on the McGriff Pass project, described as:
    - A major economic opportunity for the County.
    - Strongly desired by residents, the County, and other influential stakeholders.
- Mrs. VanAernam noted that staff have been in ongoing discussions with state representatives regarding this project and emphasized that the County “is not quitting” on it.

**“For the Love of Dixie” – Countywide Cleanup (Dixie County Anniversary)**

- Announced a countywide cleanup event on Saturday, April 25, 2026:
  - Tied to the Dixie County anniversary (“birthday”) celebration.
  - Branded as “For the Love of Dixie”.
  - Focus is on community cleanup across all major recognized communities rather than a single concentrated location.
- Commissioner Participation & Locations
  - Each Commissioner was asked to participate in or help host a cleanup in their district:
- Commissioner Daniel Wood (Old Town):
  - Meeting at the old Old Town School.
  - Cleanup areas likely include Cemetery Road/Old Town School Road and potentially down toward Suwannee.
  - Supervisor of Elections Darbi Chaires will also help in Old Town.

- Commissioner Hatch (Suwannee):
  - Meeting at Glen Dyals Park in Suwannee or Old Community Center Pavillion.
- Commissioner Jamie Storey (Cross City):
  - Meeting in Cross City, City Hall (county seat).
  - Mayor Fulford and City Manager Jogn Jenkins have committed to participate; expected good turnout.
- Commissioner David Osteen (Jena area):
  - Meeting at the DTRAC in Jena.
- Commissioner Jody Stephenson:
  - Excused due to health; Mrs. VanAernam noted he effectively has a “bye,” but may attend voluntarily if able.
- Additional site planned on SR 349 near Two Sisters Store (community center area), with local leaders to be identified.
- Supplies & Support
  - Hardware store in Suwannee has committed to donate garbage bags and gloves.
  - Other hardware stores may be asked to donate supplies; if not, the storm/waste management team will provide bags.
  - Plan for each community group:
    - Meet around 9:00 a.m. for a group photo.
    - Conduct cleanup work afterward.
    - Submit photos and head counts to Kellan for documentation.
    - Mentioned a fun competition between communities:
      - Each group to take a group photo.
      - A “winning” community may receive a nice garbage can as an informal prize.

**GREG BAILEY, NORTH FLORIDA PROFESSIONAL SERVICES**

**Kellan Bailey - Presenter**

**1. Fire Station Projects**

- Fire Station 3
  - Building is “dried in” and being painted.
  - Current work includes:
    - Electrical,
    - Sprinkler system, and
    - Ceiling grid installation.
  - Additional site work (shot rock work) underway.
- Fire Station 6
  - Building structure has been erected.

- Contractor is working on siding and related exterior work.
  - Project is now moving forward since the building has been delivered and set.
2. Sheriff's Evidence Building – Grounding Project
- Reported the ground work contract for the Sheriff's Evidence Building has been:
    - Executed this week.
    - Pre-construction meeting scheduled for next Tuesday.
    - Notice to Proceed effective Monday the 27th (this month).
  - Contract time: 60 days from the Notice to Proceed.
3. 95th and 97th Road Project
- Work on 95th and 97th is “basically done.”
  - Remaining items:
    - Signs have been installed but some were placed incorrectly.
    - Corrections to signage are being made.
  - Road paving is complete; project is in punch-list/closeout phase.

**Board Questions & Direction – Evidence Building Grounding Costs**

- **Commissioner Hatch**
  - Expressed concern about the high bid for grounding at the Evidence Building:
    - Commissioner Hatch noted the bid amount was approximately \$565,000.
    - Stated that while the County doesn't have “sinkholes,” it must ensure it does not over-spend on this work.
  - Asked Kellan to closely monitor quantities and costs.
- **Kellan Bailey's response**
  - He confirmed that:
    - A contract inspector will be on site to track quantities of materials placed.
    - As soon as the ground improvement area is sealed and passes required testing, work will stop, and remaining quantities will not be installed unnecessarily.
    - Any reduction in quantities will be processed via change order, thereby reducing final cost.
  - Commissioner Hatch reiterated that is exactly what the Board wants; engineer agreed.

### **Additional Question – Horseshoe Beach Water Line**

- **John Jenkins & Commissioner Storey**
  - Asked for any updates on the water line to Horseshoe Beach.
- **Kellan Bailey**
  - Reported no current update.
  - Committed to obtain an update the next day and call Commissioner Storey with the information.
- **Board**
  - Thanked the engineer for the report.

### **JOHN LOCKLEAR, LOCKLEAR AND ASSOCIATES**

Nothing to present at this time.

### **CINDY BELLOT, LIBRARY DIRECTOR**

Not present

### **RAELYNN BROWNELL, SUWANNEE WATER AND SEWER**

Not present – John Jenkins Spoke on her behalf

1. Resignation – Ben West
  - Mr. Jenkins reported that Mr. Ben West:
    - Moved from Suwannee to Fanning Springs, and resigned his position on the Suwannee Water & Sewer District Board effective April 1, 2026.
  - Action – Acceptance of Resignation

Motion to accept the resignation of Mr. Ben West from the Suwannee Water & Sewer District Board made by Commissioner Storey . Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Board approved

2. Appointment – Edward Duggar
  - John stated that the Suwannee Water & Sewer Board recommended Mr. Edward (Ed) Duggar to fill the vacancy:
    - Mr. Duggar is a resident of the Suwannee area and is very interested in serving.
  - Commissioner Hatch confirmed that he knows Mr. Duggar and that the Suwannee Water & Sewer Board has officially recommended him.
  - Action – Appointment to Fill Vacancy

Motion to appoint Mr. Edward Duggar to fill the vacant Suwannee Water & Sewer District Board seat previously held by Mr. Ben West made by Commissioner Jamie Storey. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Board approved.

- Follow-up Direction:

- Commissioner Hatch asked Mr. Jenkins to contact Mr. Duggar the next day, and direct him to Darbi Chaires to complete any required paperwork and candidate filing, noting that the seat would need to be filed for by June 12, 2026.

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

- **Recent Code Enforcement Hearing**
  - Mr. Fremen reported a code enforcement hearing was held the previous Friday afternoon.
  - The judge ruled in favor of the County on all cases presented.
  - Daily fine amounts imposed in those cases ranged from approximately \$175 per day to \$900 per day, depending on the violation.
- **Methodist Church Property**
  - Informed the Board that the Methodist Church property was also brought back before the judge.
  - Once the judge’s order is signed, the County will have the legal right to abate the violations on that property.
- **Board Response**
  - Commissioner Hatch thanked Mr. Freeman for the update; no Board action was required on this item.

**MICHAEL GAINEY, COUNTY ROAD SUPERINTENDENT**

Not present

**TIM JOHNSON, SOLID WASTE DIRECTOR**

Not present

**LEON WRIGHT, BUILDING AND ZONING OFFICIAL**

ORDINANCE NO. 2026-01 – **SECOND READING by Attorney Watson**  
 AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF DIXIE COUNTY, FLORIDA, AMENDING ORDINANCE NO. 90-04, THE DIXIE COUNTY LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS, AS AMENDED; AMENDING SECTION 4.3.5 ENTITLED “SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS”; AMENDING SECTION 4.4.5 ENTITLED “SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS”; AMENDING SECTION 4.7.5 ENTITLED “SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS”; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR REPEAL OF CONFLICTING PROVISIONS; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

- Attorney Watson clarified this is primarily the **RV special exception** ordinance, although it includes related special exception provisions.

## **Public Comment – RV Use After Hurricanes**

- **Public Comment: Joey Lander**

- Voiced concern about the restrictions on RV special exceptions, particularly for:
- Long-time property owners in coastal areas whose homes were destroyed by hurricanes,
- Owners who previously received FEMA assistance, now ineligible for further FEMA help or unsuccessful with Elevate Florida, leaving them with vacant lots.
- Argued that such owners should be able to place an RV on their own property for ongoing use (especially on the coast where RVs can be moved in advance of storms), rather than having no practicable use of the land without building a new permanent home.
- Urged the Board to consider permanent, reasonable allowances for limited RV use in appropriate areas, rather than relying only on temporary or workaround provisions.

## **Staff Response – Temporary Shelter Provisions**

- **Mr. Wright** responded:

- The County recently adopted a temporary shelter provision allowing qualifying residents to place RVs for up to 24 months after hurricane-related loss.
- This provision is currently being used to accommodate people in the exact situation described (loss of coastal homes, prior FEMA aid, etc.).
- The temporary shelter program is structured almost identically to the RV special exception, but limited to 24 months.
- At the end of that period, the County will reassess affected cases and consider next steps, noting additional assistance programs may still be forthcoming.

- **Follow-up Comment by Joey Lander**

- Acknowledged the temporary provision but reiterated the desire for a long-term solution, so people are not forced into loopholes or short-term fixes.
- Encouraged the Board to continue exploring options that balance legitimate RV use with neighborhood protections.

**Motion to adopt Ordinance No. 2026-01 as read (RV and special exceptions amendments) made by Commissioner Storey. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Board approved.**

## **APPLICATIONS for SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS**

20260282 A petition by **Andrew Quincoses** requesting a Special Exception to be granted, as provided in Section 4.4.5 Special Exceptions: number ( 9 ) Campgrounds, of the Dixie County Land Development Regulations "A" AGRICULTURAL, in accordance with the petition dated 09/10/2026 to be located on the property as described as follows: Dixie County Parcel #10-09-13-0000-3997-0301 343 NE 558 AVE, OLD TOWN, FL 32680; 10.11 Acres. COMMISSION DISTRICT 1 JODY STEPHENSON - *LPA RECOMMENDED APPROVAL WITH THE DOCUMENTATION OF 8 PRIMITIVE SITES FOR THE 10 ACRES*. NO RECORDED OPPOSITION – 8 CITIZENS IN AUDIENCE FOR SUPPORT OF APPLICANT

- LPA Recommendation:
  - Recommended approval with documentation of eight (8) primitive sites on 10 acres.
  - No recorded opposition at LPA; eight citizens present in support.
- Board Discussion:
  - Commissioner Hatch requested a show of hands from supporters in the audience; multiple hands were raised.
  - Asked if anyone in the audience opposed; no opposition came forward.
  - Commissioner Hatch noted he had not been able to speak with Commissioner Stephenson (district commissioner) due to the Commissioner's health issues and stated he was reluctant to act without district input.
  - Mr. Wright and staff:
    - Confirmed there had been access questions at the LPA meeting but clarified the access is via a private street connected to a collector (not arterial) road.
    - Showed the parcel map:
      - Mr. Quincoses owns multiple parcels in the area.
      - Ownership is partly in his personal name and partly in Novel Holdings.
      - The request applies only to the rear parcel; the front parcel(s) are also owned by him but are not part of this special exception.
    - Noted most nearby neighbors present had expressed support (approximately 7–8 supporters) and the site is “way out of everybody’s way”, with light expected traffic due to the small scale.
  - Applicant’s Statement (Andrew Quincoses):
    - Introduced himself as Andrew King (“King Cobra”) after Commissioner Hatch gave him the nickname; resident of Dixie County for about four years.
  - **Described:**
    - Operating a 52-acre farm (cows, goats, rabbits, chickens) in the area.
    - Family history: first-generation American, parents emigrated from Cuba, father ran a fruit grove in Homestead near the Everglades until Hurricane Andrew (1992).
    - Personal background in fishing and hunting, and current work in spear-fishing, with strong attachment to local springs and coastal waters.
  - **Emphasized:**
    - He is not proposing an RV park and will have no RVs on the site.

- The proposal is for only eight (8) primitive camping/glamping sites on 52 acres (10 acres under the exception).
- Goal is a small, conservation-oriented retreat, not a high-density campground.
- Intends to preserve ecosystems and the hardwood hammock, working with natural topography.
- Plans to partner with nonprofits such as Operation Freedom Beard to host veterans and disabled children.
- Stated he is not in it for the money with only eight sites; his purpose is to:
  - Connect visitors with the land and what makes Florida special,
  - Promote conservation and God’s Word,
  - Bring the right kind of visitors who will appreciate and help protect Dixie County.
- Confirmed in response to Commissioner Hatch’s question:
  - The use is tent/primitive “glamping” camping only,
  - No RVs at all.
- Board Action – Tabled:

**Motion to table Special Exception 20260282 for Andrew Quincoses made by Commissioner Storey. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Board approved.**

Commissioner Hatch explained to Mr. Quincoses:

- The Board will wait until Commissioner Stephenson (district commissioner) returns and can provide input.
- Due to the calendar, the next night meeting will likely be about a month away.
- Encouraged Mr. Quincoses to contact Commissioner Stephenson by phone, leave a message, and discuss the project with him prior to the next meeting.
- Apologized for the delay, citing Commissioner Stephenson’s serious health issues.

### **APPLICATIONS FOR VARIANCES**

20260344 A petition by **Ashley & Lisa Cisco** requesting a variance for a reduction of side & rear setbacks from 15' to 5' for the construction of detached garage to be granted, as provided in 4.7.7 RSF/MH subparagraph (2) of the Dixie County Land Development Regulations in accordance with section 12.3 VARIANCE PROCEDURES., in accordance with the petition dated 03/02/2026 to be located on the property as described as follows: Dixie County Parcel # 30-09-10-0000-0354-0000 138 SW 805 ST; .00. COMMISSION DISTRICT 5 DAVID OSTEEEN - **LPA Recommended Approval (4-0) No opposition present or on the phone**

**Motion to approve Variance 2026-0344 for Ashley & Lisa Cisco Commissioner made by Commissioner Wood. Seconded Commissioner Storey. Board approved.**

20260370 A petition by **SCOTT RIGSBEE** requesting a variance for a reduction of the front setback from 25' to 5' for the construction of a new home that was lost in hurricane Helene to be granted, as provided in 4.7.7 RSF/MH subparagraph (2) of the Dixie County Land Development Regulations in accordance with section 12.3 VARIANCE PROCEDURES., in accordance with the petition dated 03/11/2026 to be located on the property as described as follows: Dixie County Parcel # 19-13-12-0000-3410-0000 23026 SE 349 HWY ; .19. COMMISSION DISTRICT 3 MARK HATCH - **LPA Recommended Approval (4-0) No opposition present or on the phone**

**Motion to approve Variance 20260370 for Scott Rigsbee made by Commissioner Storey. Seconded Commissioner Wood. Board approved.**

### **Horseshoe Beach Park – Electrical & RV Infrastructure**

- Status Report – Horseshoe Beach Park
  - Elevated platform for electrical service has been constructed.
  - Switchgear equipment has been delivered; installation was anticipated the following day.
  - Trenches for RV sites were dug on the day of the meeting; crews are:
    - Setting pedestals and
    - Installing underground electrical lines.
  - To minimize disruption:
    - Road cutting within the park (which requires temporary closure) will be delayed until the last necessary phase.
  - Encouraged commissioners and residents to visit Horseshoe Beach Park to see ongoing improvements.

### **Community Planning Technical Assistance (CPTA) Grant – LDR & Map Updates**

#### Background

- Mr. Wright previously applied for a Community Planning Technical Assistance (CPTA) grant:
  - Purpose: Assist with Land Development Regulations (LDR) updates and future land use map updates.
  - Last year's application was not funded.
- For this year, the County Manager's office is also preparing a CPTA grant application for a separate project.
- Request to Board
  - Asked if it would be acceptable for the Building Department to submit its own CPTA application this year in addition to the County Manager's application.
  - Explained:
    - Planning/Zoning receives few grant opportunities,
    - Future land use maps will be out of compliance next year without updates, and

- The CPTA program is one of the only tools available to fund that work.
- Board Discussion & Direction
  - Commissioners indicated they saw no problem with submitting two separate CPTA applications, one from:
    - The County Manager’s office, and
    - The Building Department.
  - Mr. Wright confirmed the Building Department’s application would focus on:
    - Future land use map updates, and
    - LDR cleanup/updates, including scanning and preserving historical records.
- Closing Remarks
  - Mr. Wright thanked:
    - The Board for supporting his efforts, and
    - The local newspaper for a recent interview and coverage of building department work.
  - Expressed appreciation for the opportunity to help many residents and to continue improving County planning documents.

**SCOTT PENDARVIS, CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER**

**IT / 911 – Jail Network & Grant Award**

- Presenter: Scott (IT / 911 – Speaker 17)
- Jail Network / Fiber Upgrade
- Mr. Pendarvis reported that orders have been finalized for a new network solution at the jail.
- The County selected Unity as the provider.
- Primary reason: Fiber-based service, providing higher reliability and less susceptibility to outages during storms.
- The cost is comparable to or slightly higher than the current solution, but:
  - Gives a fully fiber connection for the jail and 911 center, which is critical for maintaining:
    - 911 operations,
    - Dispatch, and
    - Evidence / jail systems during severe weather.
- 911 Spring Grant Award
  - Advised the Board that at the 911 Board meeting earlier that day, the County’s annual 911 “spring grant” application was approved and awarded.

- Funds will support ongoing 911 system upgrades/maintenance (details to be implemented in the coming months).
- Board Response
  - Commissioner Hatch and Board thanked Scott for the update.

**DARIAN BROWN, DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY SERVICES**

**Presenter: Chief Matt Furgeson**

1. Wildfire – Horseshoe Highway past Shired Island Route
  - Gave an update on a recent wildfire:
    - As of the prior day, the fire was about 60% contained.
    - Revised size estimate: approximately 550 acres (initial estimate had been 1,000 acres until drone assessment refined the numbers).
  - Reported there were:
    - No significant escapes or major flareups, and
    - Strike teams were still working the incident, but it was fairly under control.
2. Other Fire Reports
  - Martha McCaskill asked about a fire on Old 358 observed earlier that day.
  - Fire representative stated:
    - They had not been dispatched to any new major fire there.
    - It may have been a controlled burn or a minor incident that did not require County fire response.
    - Noted that Fire Chief Garner monitors radio traffic closely and would have reported if there were a significant new incident.
- Board Response
  - Commissioners thanked the fire department for their work.

**GAIL CARTER, INDIGENT CARE**

Nothing to present at this time.

**HOLLY HOUGHTON, COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT**

Not present

**ANGIE CROWLEY, HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATOR**

Nothing to present at this time.

- Commissioner Hatch asked about a prior request to the retirement system:
  - Goal: arrange a retirement/benefits class for County employees, to be coordinated with Tim.

- **Response:**
  - Ms. Crowley confirmed they are working on scheduling dates for the retirement class.
  - Chairman requested that staff email him back once dates are firm.
- No Board action required; informational follow-up item only.

**JOHN JENKINS, COUNTY MANAGER**

1. Request Board approval of the Notice of Intent to Renew from Career Source for the Lease Agreement which expires Sept 30, 2026, for additional 1 (one) year.

**Motion to approve Notice of Intent to Renew from Career Source for the Lease Agreement which expires Sept 30, 2026, for additional 1 (one) year made by Commissioner Storey. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Board approved**

2. Request Board approval of the Locklear TWO for Shired Island Beach Hurricane Repair Project from \$198,000.00 to \$218,000.00 due to the required ACOE CRAS Survey.

**Motion to approve Locklear TWO for Shired Island Beach Hurricane Repair Project from \$198,000.00 to \$218,000.00 made by Commissioner Wood. Seconded by Commissioner Storey. Board approved**

3. Request Board approval of the Circularity2 Lease Agreement Amendment # 1 Name Change to C2Carbon.

**Motion to approve the Circularity2 Lease Agreement Amendment # 1 Name Change to C2Carbon made by Commissioner Storey. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Board approved**

4. Request Board approval to execute the NE 592<sup>nd</sup> St from US 19 to 272<sup>nd</sup> Ave Construction Maintenance Agreement (CMA).

**Motion to execute the NE 592<sup>nd</sup> St from US 19 to 272<sup>nd</sup> Ave Construction Maintenance Agreement (CMA) made by Commissioner Storey. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Board approved**

5. Request Board approval to execute Resolution 2026-20 in support of the NE 592<sup>nd</sup> St from US 19 to 272<sup>nd</sup> Ave Construction Maintenance Agreement (CMA).

**Motion to execute Resolution 2026-20 in support of the NE 592<sup>nd</sup> St from US 19 to 272<sup>nd</sup> Ave Construction Maintenance Agreement (CMA) made by Commissioner Storey. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Board approved**

6. Request Board approval of the SHIP HHRP Demo Reconstruction Reimbursement for Susan Sowards in the amount of \$11,670.50.

**Motion to approve the SHIP HHRP Demo Reconstruction Reimbursement for Susan Sowards in the amount of \$11,670.50 made by Commissioner Storey. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Board approved**

7. Request Board approval of the SHIP HHRP Demo Reconstruction Reimbursement for Darlene Powell in the amount of \$11,952.60.

**Motion to approve the SHIP HHRP Demo Reconstruction Reimbursement for Darlene Powell in the amount of \$11,952.60 made by Commissioner Wood. Seconded by Commissioner Storey. Board approved**

8. Request Board approval of the Time Extension for G2W40 CTY Generator for the Airport Terminal from Sept 30, 2026, to June 30, 2027.

**Motion to approve the Time Extension for G2W40 CTY Generator for the Airport Terminal from Sept 30, 2026, to June 30, 2027, made by Commissioner Wood. Seconded by Commissioner Storey. Board approved**

#### **Surplus County Properties – Preparation for Review**

- Mr. Jenkins reported the County has been approached by a gentleman interested in purchasing county property next to Lee Cemetery on Kirby Road.
- Noted the County owns multiple surplus parcels, including:
  - The old jail / Lee Cemetery area property,
  - Property in Jena near Thurman Corbin's,
  - Property purchased years ago for a parking ramp,
  - Several lots behind the courthouse in Central Court subdivision,
  - Five acres on East 188th Avenue (cleared and likely to bring a premium price),
  - A parcel in Forest Park Hills, and
  - Additional acreage around Lee Cemetery/Kirby Road (to be surveyed).
- Commissioner Hatch stated:
  - He is generally in favor of putting surplus county property back on the tax roll.
  - The old jail parcel is “questionable” because of the proposed homeless shelter reuse, but that interest also “puts a fire under” moving that project forward.
  - Recommended that, for the next Board meeting, John:
    - Provide each commissioner with maps and written information on all surplus parcels for review.
- Attorney Watson reminded the Board that in prior sales:
  - The County aimed to obtain an appraised price and set minimums, rather than taking any open bid.
- Board consensus:

- For each parcel, the County will:
  - Consider minimum/appraised values, and
  - Incorporate Leon’s zoning information (residential, commercial, etc.) so:
    - Advertisements clearly state zoning and allowable uses, and
    - Prospective buyers are referred to Building & Zoning to ensure they understand what they can do with the property.

**Public Comment – Kirby Road / Lee Cemetery Parcel**

- **Speaker: Ms. Gail Carter**, Indigent Health Care Agent and resident on Kirby Road
- Stated she was speaking as a resident who lives off Kirby Road.
- Expressed concern that residents do not yet know what the County or a buyer intends to do with the small parcel between Lee Cemetery and the adjacent peanut field.
- Ms. Carter recalled that:
  - At one time there was mention that the area might be used as a “dump”, and as a result some people started using it as a dump.
- Commissioner Hatch:
  - Clarified that the County does not operate open dumps:
    - The County uses roll-off sites and a transfer station, not dumps.
  - Emphasized that any future proposal or sale would be properly advertised, including intended use, so residents understand what is planned for the property.

**Health Department – Septic System Quote & Procurement**

- Mr. Jenkins reported septic tank issues at the Health Department and presented a quote obtained by Natalie McPhillips to replace the entire system:
  - 1,050-gallon septic tank,
  - 375 sq. ft. drain field,
  - Abandonment of existing tank,
  - Disconnect/reconnect to building.
  - Quote amount: \$5,525.00.
- Initial Motion:
  - Motion: Commissioner Jamie moved to approve the quote.
  - Second: Commissioner Daniel.
- Procurement Concern:
  - Commissioner Hatch raised the question whether this exceeded the \$5,000 purchasing threshold and whether it was properly advertised/quoted.
  - Attorney Watson advised that over \$5,000 generally requires at least two quotes under County policy.

- To avoid any compliance issue, the Board withdrew the motion and agreed to revisit after additional quotes are obtained.

**Mullet Road Agreement – Payment Structure & Funding**

- Presenter: John Jenkins; Finance Brenda Royal; Board
- Mr. Jenkins reported the Mullet Road agreement was revised as previously directed:
  - Down payment due when work begins.
  - Subsequent payments scheduled for:
    - January 1, 2027 and July 1, 2027.
- Funding Discussion:
  - Ms. Royal asked how the County will fund the payments.
  - Mr. Jenkins stated:
    - There is some money in a special projects line.
    - The down payment will be made when work starts.
    - The first scheduled payment after that will not be due until January 1, 2027, giving time to include it in future budgets.
  - Additional comment: possible future cash flow from towers and CareerSource lease may assist.
- Board Action – Approve Mullet Road Agreement:

Motion to approve the Mullet Road agreement with the revised payment schedule, contingent upon the Finance/Clerk’s office confirming the funding plan is workable; if not, the Board will revisit made by Commissioner Storey. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Board approved.

- Commissioner Hatch later confirmed for clarification purposes:
  - The earlier vote on the septic tank was rescinded.
  - The motion just approved pertains only to Mullet Road.

**Health Department Septic – Final Direction (Two Quotes & Administrator Authority)**

- After the Mullet Road vote, the Board returned to the septic issue:
  - It was clarified that:
    - The earlier vote to accept the single septic quote was rescinded.
    - County policy requires two quotes.

**Motion Authorize the County Manager/Administrator to accept the most cost-effective quote to replace the septic tank system made by Commissioner Storey. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Board approved.**

- Conditions of approval: Require staff to obtain at least two quotes for the Health Department septic replacement.
- Chairman thanked staff for ensuring the County stayed within procurement rules.

**Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board – Volunteer Members Needed**

- Presenter: John Jenkins

- Reported that the North Florida Regional Planning Council is seeking two persons to serve on the Dixie County Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board.
- Board description:
  - Oversees transportation services for:
    - Older adults,
    - Persons with disabilities, and
    - Persons with low income.
  - Positions are volunteer and unpaid.
  - Applicants must be residents of Dixie County.
- Interested individuals:
  - May contact John's office; he will connect them with Lynn at the Planning Council for applications and more information.
- Clarification in discussion:
  - These are board membership positions, not van/transport driver jobs.
  - The board typically meets once a month, generally mid-day.
- No formal Board action required; informational item.

**CHANA WATSON, COUNTY ATTORNEY**

**Attorney's Report – Library Parking Coordination Agreement**

- **Presenter:** County Attorney Watson; with Commissioner Hatch & Board
1. **Library / Adjacent Business Parking Conflict**
    - Attorney reported on a negotiated agreement between:
      - The Board of County Commissioners (for the public library), and
      - The adjacent business/property owner, Ms. Chaires,
    - Intended to address parking congestion and conflicts in the shared parking area in front of the library and neighboring business.
  2. **Key Terms of the 90-Day Trial Agreement**
    - Event Scheduling at the Library
      - Large events (more than 30 participants):
        - During June and July:
          - May not be scheduled before 1:30 p.m.
        - All other months:
          - May not be scheduled before 5:00 p.m.
      - Small events (30 participants or fewer):
        - May be scheduled at any time.
      - No back-to-back events:
        - There must be at least 30 minutes between events.

- County will make reasonable efforts to schedule events to minimize disruption to the neighboring business.
- Parking Lot Improvements
  - County agrees to:
    - Obtain quotes for striping and sealing the County-owned portion of the parking lot.
    - Configure striping to allow:
      - Ingress from the east entrance, and
      - Egress from the west entrance, improving circulation.
  - Implementation of improvements is subject to:
    - Board approval,
    - Funding availability, and
    - Procurement requirements.
- Reserved Spaces for Business Customers (Limited Hours)
  - County agrees that five (5) parking spaces, designated by Ms. Chaires and mutually agreed by both parties, will be reserved for business customers:
    - Monday–Friday until 5:00 p.m., except:
      - During June and July, reservations apply until 1:30 p.m. instead of 5:00.
  - After the applicable time (after 1:30 p.m. in June/July, or after 5:00 p.m. the rest of the year), those spaces become available for general public/library use.
- Owner’s Obligations
  - Ms. Chaires agrees to:
    - Remove planters, barriers, or any obstructions that block through-traffic or circulation between the two parking areas.
    - Allow shared use of the five reserved spots after 1:30 p.m. (June/July) and after 5:00 p.m. (all other months).
  - Both parties acknowledge the goal of a cooperative, shared parking arrangement.
- Term & Nature of Agreement
  - Agreement effective for 90 days from execution.
  - After 90 days, both parties will re-evaluate:
    - Success or problems with scheduling and shared parking, and
    - Potential transition to a more permanent arrangement.
  - The agreement:
    - Does not create any leasehold interest, permanent easement, or ownership interest in either party’s property.
    - Is expressly revocable and limited to coordinated use.
  - Includes standard provisions regarding:
    - Sovereign immunity and limited liability for the County,

- Each party being responsible for its own acts and omissions, and
- Governing law/venue (State of Florida; Dixie County).

### 3. Board Discussion & Rationale

- Commissioner Hatch:
  - Noted the library is a core priority (included among the top three strategic projects).
  - Stated that growing population and increased library programming require operational changes, including:
    - Adjusted event times, and
    - Better parking management.
  - Recognized this agreement represents a compromise but is necessary to:
    - Keep library programs functioning, and
    - Protect access for both library patrons and the neighboring business.
  - Acknowledged the work of:
    - Library staff
    - Economic Development/Chamber (Karen), and
    - County staff and Ms. Chaires, in negotiating the arrangement.
- Commissioner Hatch commented that:
  - Many people have worked hard to find a fair solution.
  - There will be growing pains, but the 90-day trial allows for adjustments later.

### 4. Board Action – Approval of Library Parking Agreement

**Motion to approve the 90-day parking coordination agreement made by Commissioner Storey. Seconded Commissioner Wood. Board approved.**

#### Decision:

- Approve the 90-day parking coordination agreement with Ms. Chaires as presented and authorize the Commissioner Hatch (Chairman) to sign on behalf of the County.
  - Follow-up:
    - Commissioner Hatch directed that once the agreement is signed:
      - He will meet with the library staff (together with Mrs. VanAernam) to:
        - Explain the new event scheduling rules and
        - Communicate the parking changes to patrons.
          - A signed copy is to be provided to Ms. Chaires.

## Water Resources – Resolution Opposing “Water First North Florida Aquifer Recharge Project”

- **Presenter:** County Attorney Watson; Commissioner Hatch

### 1. Resolution 2026-21 – Summary

- Attorney presented Resolution No. 2026-21, titled:
  - *“A Resolution of the Board of County Commissioners of Dixie County, Florida, Opposing the Water First North Florida Aquifer Recharge Project and Recommending Implementation of an Alternative Water Desalinization Project.”*
- Key points in the whereas clauses:
  - The Board is responsible for health, safety, welfare, and natural resources of Dixie County residents.
  - The quality of freshwater springs, rivers, and the Floridan aquifer is crucial for:
    - Drinking water, and
    - Ecotourism and recreation in north-central Florida, including Dixie County.
  - Existing drawdowns of the aquifer (by users outside the region) have contributed to:
    - Lower flows and levels in the Lower Suwannee River, Lower Santa Fe River, and Ichetucknee River basins.
  - The State’s “local water sources first” policy says:
    - Users outside the region should develop alternative water supplies (e.g., desalinization) rather than relying on North Florida aquifers.
  - The Water First North Florida Aquifer Recharge Project proposes to:
    - Discharge 40 million gallons per day of treated reclaimed wastewater from outside the region into the Floridan Aquifer via a natural wetlands filtration system.
  - The Board is concerned:
    - This project does not eliminate risks that reclaimed wastewater could affect aquifer quality used for drinking water in Dixie and downstream communities.
  - Projected project cost exceeds \$1 billion, creating:
    - A substantial taxpayer burden on current and future generations.
    - While desalinization might be more expensive, it better supports:
      - The local water sources first policy and
      - Protection of the Floridan aquifer.

- Dixie County, located downstream of the project area, would be directly impacted by any harm to aquifer or springs/ivers.

2. Resolving Clauses

- The resolution:
  - Formally opposes the Water First North Florida Aquifer Recharge Project.
  - Requests the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Suwannee River Water Management District, and St. Johns River Water Management District to:
    - Rescind or reevaluate approval of the project.
  - Recommends that:
    - The Florida Legislature, DEP, Suwannee River WMD, and St. Johns River WMD:
      - Pursue desalinization-based alternative water supply projects for users outside the North Central Florida region, consistent with local sources first.
  - Directs the County Administrator to:
    - Transmit certified copies of the resolution to the appropriate agencies and legislative bodies.

**Motion to adopt Resolution 2026-21 Water First North Florida Aquifer Recharge Project as read, made by Commissioner Storey. Seconded by Commissioner Wood. Board approved.**

**BARBIE HIGGINBOTHAM, CLERK OF COURT/BRENDA ROYAL, FINANCE**

- Mrs. Higginbotham reported that a recent insurance payment issue:
- Was not due to any finance/Clerk error.
- Circumstances:
  - The County’s insurance payment was mailed on time to the usual address.
  - The insurer changed its mailing address without proper notice.
  - The payment was returned, and the insurer demanded immediate payment and suggested potential impact on appointments.
- **Resolution:**
  - Finance/Clerk contacted the insurer, resolved the address issue, and ensured coverage remained in effect.
- Board thanked staff for their diligence.

**COUNTY COMMISSION ITEMS**

- **Commissioner Daniel Wood**
  - Stated he had nothing additional to bring before the Board.
  - Commented it had been a really good meeting with much accomplished.
  - Wished everyone a good weekend and asked all to pray for rain.

- **Commissioner Jamie Storey**
  - Noted there was a wonderful crowd and a good meeting with a lot accomplished.
  - Expressed hope that Mr. Fowler can follow through with his plan for the old jail, noting:
    - The building has been there a long time.
    - If investors and zoning (Leon) support the project, the County is open to it, even if it ultimately requires demolition and rebuild.
  - Rejected the idea that “we’re dead” as a county; said:
    - Economic development efforts are ongoing, though progress may be slower than some would like.
    - Leon is talking with several prospects about bringing businesses to Dixie County.
  - Spoke about drought and water cycles:
    - Emphasized that droughts and floods are cyclical, not caused by farmers or well drillers.
    - Pointed to past years when the County was flooded rather than dry.
    - Defended farmers and well drillers, and stressed reliance on God’s timing.
  - Asked citizens to:
    - Pray for rain,
    - Keep residents who have recently lost loved ones in their prayers, and
    - Especially pray for Commissioner Jody, who needs to remain still to heal and is “hard headed” about resting.

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**Commissioner Hatch Closing Remarks & Actions**

- Fishing Tournament Sponsorship – Suwannee
  - Commissioner Hatch reported that Carrie Miles requested the County’s usual \$250 sponsorship for a fishing tournament in Suwannee (Chamber/Suwannee event).
  - Board agreed to sponsor by splitting the amount personally among commissioners.

Motion to approve a \$250 sponsorship made by Commissioner Storey moved to be paid out of commissioners’ own pockets rather than County funds. Seconded Commissioner Wood. Board approved..

- Clarified for a member of the public that:
  - This is a fishing tournament organized with the Chamber/Suwannee,
  - The Board will sponsor it at \$250, paid personally.
- City–County Joint Meeting Reminder
  - Commissioner Hatch reminded commissioners and public:

- Date: May 12, 2026
  - Time: 5:00 p.m.
  - Location: City Hall
- Hoped Commissioners Osteen and Stephenson would be able to attend by then.
- Library Restrooms / Sewer Solution
  - Thanked everyone who has worked on the library parking issues, emphasizing:
    - Operational changes are necessary to maintain programs.
  - Addressed library restroom issues:
    - The County is currently paying \$2,500–\$2,800 per month for temporary restrooms at the library.
    - He believes within the coming week they may be able to finalize a permanent solution:
      - Install a hard-wired pump.
      - Run sewer piping across adjacent property, with the County:
        - Taking ownership/liability for the line on its side, and
        - Paying a small fee for use of the portion on private property.
      - Structure as a three-year lease/agreement on the property.
    - Within three years, the County expects either:
      - A new library, or
      - City sewer service at that location.
    - At that point:
      - The temporary installation can be removed.
      - The site can receive a clean bill of health again from the Health Department.
- Noted:
  - The building (original library structure) was built as one continuous building in the 1970s.
  - Later subdivision of spaces contributed to the current sewer alignment/debacle.
- Indicated:
  - If needed, he may call a short emergency/special meeting so the Board can vote on the final restroom/sewer solution and discontinue the monthly rental.
  - He will keep John and the Board informed as details are finalized.

### **Board Workshop Reminder**

- Public Question – Workshop Date/Time
  - Deputy Clerk Christie Zander asked for verification that the Board would be holding a 1:00 p.m. workshop on the 7th.
  - Chairman confirmed:
    - Yes, the workshop is set for 1:00 p.m. on the 7th.
    - It has been advertised for the public.
  - Chairman directed Mr. Jenkins to:
    - Remind Board members of the date/time, and
    - Note that the workshop is part of the public meeting advertisement schedule.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS AND CONCERNS**

**Barbara Cummings**, congratulations board, most of you finally agreed with many of the residents that have requested for years to get rid of the RV special exception. Prior to a recent workshop, Commissioner Wood started to say that the residents should decide about RV's, but in August, he made a motion to approve one that had nine objections, and Commissioner Osteen complained about RV's, but he seconded the motion with nine objections. Commissioner Hatch explained to a would be applicant that objections would mean a denial, but when the application came before the board, he had nothing to say in over 15 years of attending these meetings, I have never witnessed such a blatant abuse of power. You should ride by the ugliness you approve that ruins the neighborhood. But why bother you? Don't care. It's not your neighborhood.

**Barbara Cummings**: I've defended this board more times than I can count, but I was wrong. You do not represent your constituents.

**Barbara Cummings**: The person you represented has not lived in Dixie County long enough to vote for any of you. You must have been representing somebody else. You're going to need his vote, because you've lost all of ours, and we will campaign against you.

**Daniel Wood**: I'll sleep well.

**Barbara Cummings**: The relevance here, in spite of our objections, you approve. Man has been living on the property for two and a half months with no water.

**Barbara Cummings**: Leon's (Wright) letter to him states the presence of a permitted well on the property is a necessary condition for full compliance and to maintain the validity of the special exception approval.

**Barbara Cummings:** He is not in compliance. He has never been in compliance. Maybe you should listen to your constituents.

**Barbara Cummings:** I request that my remarks be included in the minutes in their entirety, since I can't get a letter to the editor published in the paper.

### **ADJOURN**

**Commissioner Wood made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Commissioner Storey. Board approved.**

**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.**