

Regular Meeting
Commission Board Room
Dixie County Courthouse
214 NE Hwy 351, Cross City, FL 32628
September 14, 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 – Not present
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 – Not present
Chana Watson, County Attorney
Barbie Higginbotham, Clerk of Court
Brenda Royal, Chief Financial Officer
Christie Zander, Deputy Clerk

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Hatch called the meeting to order.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE TO THE AMERICAN FLAG

Vice Chairman Storey led the Invocation and Commissioner Osteen led the Pledge to the American Flag.

APPROVAL OF COMMISSION MINUTES

08/31/2026 Emergency Budget Meeting, 09/02/2026 Emergency Budget Meeting, 09/03/2026 Emergency Budget Hearing

Motion to approve the 08/31/2026 Emergency Budget Meeting Minutes made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Vice-Chairman Storey. Board approved.

Motion to approve the 09/02/2026 Emergency Budget Meeting Minutes made by Vice-Chairman Storey. Seconded by Commissioner Osteen. Board approved.

Motion to approve the 09/3/2026 Emergency Budget Meeting Minutes made by Vice-Chairman Storey. Seconded by Commissioner Osteen. Board approved.

VOUCHER APPROVAL

Motion to approve the vouchers made by Commissioner Osteen. Seconded by Vice-Chairman Storey. Board approved.

CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS/CITY OFFICIALS

None present.

JERRY DANIELS – CROSS COUNTRY PUBLIC ADJUSTING

Jerry Daniels introduced Cross Country Public Adjusting as a veteran-owned company. He explained that public adjusters review insurance claims on behalf of policyholders and work with insurance carriers to help ensure claims are handled according to the terms of the policy. Mr. Daniels said his company works on a contingency basis, with no out-of-pocket cost to the policyholder.

Mr. Daniels said he previously worked as an insurance adjuster for carriers for more than 15 years. He noted that insurance policies can be difficult to interpret and offered to review claims related to Hurricanes Idalia and Helene while time remained to pursue them. The company could also review other insurance matters for the County, residents, businesses, and municipalities. He said the review could determine whether the carrier had paid the claim appropriately or whether additional benefits might be available. Mr. Daniels offered to provide contact information and answer questions about the company's services.

Chairman Hatch said he had previously met with Mr. Daniels and supported exploring the service. He asked Chana Watson to prepare an advertisement so the County could use the company's services if needed. Watson clarified that the advertisement would cover services available to the County and the public, including residents, businesses, and municipalities. Daniels confirmed that the company could review claims beyond those related to the hurricanes.

Attorney Watson requested Mr. Daniels' contact information to clarify the scope of services for the advertisement.

Motion made by Commissioner Osteen to advertise for public adjusting services, and Vice-Chairman Storey seconded. The motion was clarified as a motion to advertise for public adjusting services. The motion carried.

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

Not present.

NIKIE WAITS – ROAD 2 REDEMPTION

Not present.

KAY MCCALLISTER, TOURISM DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Mrs. McCallister reported that summer tourism numbers had returned to pre-hurricane levels. Labor Day activities included a golf cart parade and '80s-themed events in Horseshoe Beach, and a cardboard boat race in Suwannee. The race drew 16 entries, and organizers expected it to become an annual event.

The Dixie Tourism Board was scheduled to meet the following day at 4:00 p.m. at the County Manager's Office. The 14 County Natural North Florida Board was scheduled to meet Thursday at 10:00 a.m. at the public library. Both meetings were open to the public. The second annual Defenders of Dixie fishing tournament benefit was announced for September 26 at Suwannee Marina, with the Calcutta scheduled for the prior evening.

KAREN VANAERNAM, DIXIE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Not present.

SCOTT NIOLET, SAVINACIOUS

Scott Niolet reported that staff had reconciled the disaster accounts and budgets with the Clerk's Office, including work across the four storms and related project worksheets. Funding for Project 357 had been obligated, and the County was waiting for the State to release the funds before putting the project out to bid. The project scope includes blocks, pavement, and other items.

GREG BAILEY, NORTH FLORIDA PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Not present.

JOHN LOCKLEAR, LOCKLEAR AND ASSOCIATES

Not present.

CINDY BELLOT, LIBRARY DIRECTOR

Not present.

RAELYNN BROWNELL, SUWANNEE WATER AND SEWER

Not present.

STEVE FREMEN, CODE ENFORCEMENT & VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER

Not present.

MIKEL GAINEY, COUNTY ROAD SUPERINTENDENT

Mikel Gainey reported the county needed another grader and was down to three. Board members discussed the amount of road work waiting, including six road work orders received that morning and several more the previous week. They also discussed prioritizing the use of the county's stockpiled rock to address road conditions and vehicle damage. The speaker estimated that the county had approximately 300–350 loads of rock available and noted that a crusher could process roughly 10–15 loads per hour.

The board discussed soliciting bids for a crusher and clarified what the bid should cover: bringing a rock crusher to the county facility to process county-owned rock, up to 400 loads. A question was raised about whether the work could be done through an existing arrangement. The discussion then clarified that the county needed bids to establish the price. A rate of \$175 per hour was mentioned, but the board clarified that the bid—not a preset rate—would determine the price. The bid was to be advertised for 14 days.

Motion made by Commissioner Osteen to solicit bids for a rock crusher to come to the county facility and crush up to 400 loads of county-owned rock. Seconded by Vice-Chairman Storey. Board approved.

Grader staffing discussion: After the vote, the board returned to the grader shortage. Members clarified that the county had two joystick-operated graders and one older grader; Andy Baxley could operate the older grader, but additional operators needed training on the joystick controls. The board discussed finding two more operators and alternating 40-hour schedules, potentially operating six or seven days a week until the road backlog was reduced. A board member asked whether Jason could operate a joystick grader; the response was that he had not yet operated one. A staff member was asked to handle the training and agreed. No separate motion on grader staffing appears in the excerpt.

TIM JOHNSON, SOLID WASTE DIRECTOR

Tim Johnson outlined revised hours for the solid-waste sites. Coastal sites would operate from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., and inland sites from 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Pole Gap was identified as an exception. Johnson reported approximately 3,100 vehicles per week at the site.

Chairman Hatch asked Scotty Pendarvis to post the hours online and requested that Mr. Johnson provide a copy of the schedule to the County office, which receives calls about site hours. No motion was made.

LEON WRIGHT, BUILDING AND ZONING OFFICIAL

Not present.

SCOTTY PENDARVIS, CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER

Scott Pendarvis requested approval to sign for **\$105,652 in state appropriation funds** for the coming year. He said the funds would cover required services, including the 911 telephone bill, network infrastructure, and 911 mapping services. Pendarvis clarified that the funds were an appropriation, not a grant, and noted that the State had approved the funding for a second year to support rural and physically constrained counties.

Motion by Vice-Chairman to approve Mr. Pendarvis's request to sign for \$105,652 in state appropriation funds. Seconded by Commissioner Osteen. Board approved.

Attorney Watson confirmed that the motion authorized Pendarvis to sign the funding document, and the Board affirmed.

Mr. Pendarvis also reported that fiber service had been installed at the jail and that the telephone line was scheduled to be transferred the following day. He said a security camera requested by courthouse security had been received and would be installed in the Board meeting room before the next Board meeting.

DARIAN BROWN, DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY SERVICES - Not Present

Chief Garner reported that the new Station 3, located at 351 North, was scheduled to become operational on September 28, when its first shift would begin. No motion was made.

GAIL CARTER, INDIGENT CARE

Not present.

JESSICA COOPER, COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT

Not present.

ANGIE CROWLEY, HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATOR

Ms. Crowley reported that the County had issued a request for proposals for property, automobile, inland marine, and workers' compensation coverage. The County received proposals from its current provider, FMIT, and Boyd Insurance. A four-person panel reviewed and scored the proposals. FMIT scored 397 out of 400, and Boyd scored 336 out of 400. Boyd's proposal was \$28,876 less.

Vice-chairman Storey asked Ms. Crowley to repeat the scores. She confirmed the scores and said the panel members used the same scoring form. Clerk of the Court Barbie Higginbotham asked for the price difference, and Ms. Crowley confirmed that Boyd's proposal was \$28,876 less. Ms. Crowley recommended staying with FMIT, explaining that FMIT had reduced its cost to the County by more than \$300,000 from the prior year. She said both proposals had two-year rate terms. Board members observed that Boyd remained less expensive despite FMIT's reduction.

Ms. Crowley explained that the proposals were not identical in every respect. She said FMIT offered conferences, while Boyd's offerings appeared to be more roundtable-based. She also said the County needed coverage for inmates and volunteers, since inmates perform significant County work and volunteers assist at County parks. Ms. Crowley stated that FMIT covered both. A Boyd representative asked to review the score sheets and questioned how the proposals had been scored, including whether service concerns had been checked through references. He said Boyd's proposal improved coverage in several areas, including reducing the named-storm deductible from **10% to 5%**, and offered to provide a handout with further details. He asked

Michelle Fraley to discuss the services Boyd offered, particularly in relation to workers' compensation.

Michelle Fraleigh, a loss-control representative for Preferred, said her role was to provide member safety and loss-control training to help prevent claims and reduce losses. She also works with the claims department and participates in claims reviews to help resolve open claims, noting that claims can become more costly the longer they remain open. Fraley said she had previously served as the risk manager for Nassau County, which was insured by FMIT. She described the resources available through Preferred, including learning-management systems, in-person training and seminars, member education days, webinars, and an employee helpline. She said that, as a former risk manager, she had created safety and risk programs herself and valued the resources now available to members. She emphasized her interest in helping local governments and special districts use those resources.

Michael Richter, Boyd Insurance's vice president of the North Florida Division, introduced himself as a rural-county specialist based in Liberty County. He said he understood the challenges facing rural counties and wanted to partner with Dixie County. Risher said the competition had contributed to the reduction in the County's premium and that Boyd's proposal remained competitive while accounting for increased payroll costs. He described Boyd as offering the County a partnership and services to help manage future budget challenges. Risher provided a proposal handout and said it summarized the key coverage and cost information. He encouraged the County to expect strong service and a good partnership from its insurer, saying the County should be willing to change providers if those expectations were not met. Chana Watson asked whether Boyd also insured Liberty County, and Risher confirmed that it did.

Vice-chairman Storey asked Ms. Crowley whether the policies were generally comparable. Ms. Crowley said they were, for the most part. Board members again noted Boyd's lower price. Risher said Boyd's proposal was approximately 32% below the County's prior-year cost. The discussion also covered the deductible and named-storm terms. Ms. Crowley said the regular deductible was the same as the renewal, while the named-storm deductible was discussed as having been reduced by half, to 5%.

Mr. Richter clarified that Boyd's two-year provision was a rate cap, not a fixed rate. He said Boyd could negotiate a lower rate at renewal, but the rate would not increase during the two-year cap period. As an example, he described Boyd's work with Liberty County, saying the County had increased its total insured value, reduced its rate, and received a further reduction on its property renewal. He said insurance was difficult and that the County needed an advocate and partner.

Board members discussed the premium difference and potential savings over the two-year period. Jamie Storey noted that the proposals had been reviewed by all four panel members. He and other members discussed the savings achieved in the prior year and the potential benefit of the two-year cap. Clerk Higginbotham described Boyd's proposal as a "no brainer." Before the Board acted, Ms. Crowley asked that Tom Conley, representing FMIT, be given an opportunity to respond.

Mr. Conley said he represented the Florida League of Cities and FMIT, which administers the program in partnership with the Florida Association of Counties. He asked the Board to consider staff's recommendation and said he hoped FMIT could continue working with the County. Vice-Chairman Storey commented that he wished FMIT had sharpened its pencil earlier. A representative responded that insurance premiums had been changing significantly and that the reduction might not have been possible two years earlier.

Motion made by Commissioner Osteen to select **Boyd Insurance**. Seconded by Vice-chairman Storey. Board approved.

Staff were directed to coordinate the transition of the County's coverage to Boyd.

JOHN JENKINS, COUNTY MANAGER- SEE REPORT

1. Request Board approval of the SHIP Rehab Reimbursement for Candace Potter in the amount of \$23,170.50.

Motion by Commissioner Osteen to approve SHIP Rehab Reimbursement for Candace Potter in the amount of \$23,170.50. Seconded Vice-Chairman Storey. Board approved.

2. Request Board approval to purchase a CAT Skid Steer 275XE from Ring Power in the amount of \$137,647.10 using LPA0279 DCFSM Ph II funds based on SWTF recommendation.

Motion by Vice-Chairman Storey to purchase a CAT Skid Steer 275XE from Ring Power in the amount of \$137,647.10 using LPA0279 DCFSM Ph II funds. Seconded by Commissioner Osteen. Board approved.

3. Request Board approval to purchase a CAT 309 Excavator from Ring Power in the amount of \$154,240.00 using LPA0279 DCFSM Ph II funds based on SWTF recommendation.

Motion by Commissioner Osteen to purchase a CAT 309 Excavator from Ring Power in the amount of \$154,240.00 using LPA0279 DCFSM Ph II funds. Seconded Vice-Chairman Storey. Board approved.

4. Request Board approval to purchase a 60" Mulching Head from Quality Equipment & Parts being the lowest bidder in the amount of \$38,590.00 using LPA0279 DCFSM Ph II funds based on SWTF recommendation.

Motion by Vice-Chairman Storey to purchase a 60" Mulching Head from Quality Equipment & Parts being the lowest bidder in the amount of \$38,590.00 using LPA0279 DCFSM Ph II funds. Seconded by Commissioner Osteen. Board approved.

5. Request Board approval to purchase a 35" Vertical Mulching Head from Quality Equipment & Parts being the lowest bidder in the amount of \$31,485.00 using LPA0279 DCFSM Ph II funds based on SWTF recommendation.

Motion by Commissioner Osteen to purchase a 35" Vertical Mulching Head from Quality Equipment & Parts being the lowest bidder in the amount of \$31,485.00 using LPA0279 DCFSM Ph II funds. Seconded Vice-Chairman Storey. Board approved.

6. Request Board approval to purchase 2 (two) Pull Behind Solar Sign Boards from ABC Roadworks being the lowest bidder in the amount of \$37,900.00 using LPA0279 DCFSM Ph II funds based on SWTF recommendation.

Motion by Vice-Chairman Storey to purchase 2 (two) Pull Behind Solar Sign Boards from ABC Roadworks being the lowest bidder in the amount of \$37,900.00 using LPA0279 DCFSM Ph II funds. Seconded by Commissioner Osteen. Board approved.

7. Request Board approval to appoint Robert Watson as the attendant at Waldo Park.

Motion by Commissioner Osteen to appoint Robert Watson as the attendant at Waldo Park. Seconded Vice-Chairman Storey. Board approved.

The Board approved the appointment and emphasized that the park should be maintained to the County's standards.

Chairman Hatch scheduled a commissioner committee assignments workshop for October 1, 2026 at 1:00 p.m.

Motion made by Commissioner Osteen to approve Commissioner Assignment Meeting. Seconded by Vice-Chairman Storey. Board approved.

Information Items:

1. Reminder of the Value Adjustment Board meeting Thursday, Sep 24, 2026, at 9:00 am for those that may need to attend.
2. Reminder of the BOCC we will be back on schedule for BOCC meeting beginning Thursday, Oct 1, 2026, at 10:00 am at the BOCC meeting room.

Mr. Jenkins reported that work on the Shired Island bridges was expected to begin next month but might be delayed until November. The Board discussed seeking an extension for the related project worksheet because of delays involving the Florida Department of Transportation. Scott Niolet said staff was aware of the issue and would work through the extension process.

CHANA WATSON, COUNTY ATTORNEY

Attorney Watson reported that the Town of Cross City had sent another letter regarding the tipping fee, now referring to a rate resolution, and had requested a meeting. Watson recommended that the County Manager and Vice-Chairman Storey attend on September 21, 2026 at 4:30 p.m. at City Hall. The Board raised no objection. Attorney Watson said she would confirm the meeting with Attorney Landers.

Attorney Watson also reported that the lease for the Shired Island/Fishbone property had been returned. The property is being considered for primitive camping, and the County has 10 months to prepare a plan. The plan is expected to include educational signage. Chairman Hatch asked Commissioner Osteen, who oversees Parks and Recreation, to provide input on the signage. No motion was made.

BARBIE HIGGINBOTHAM, CLERK OF COURT

Mrs. Higginbotham thanked the Board for being mindful of the new budget. She had no further items to report.

BRENDA ROYAL, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

Ms. Royal reported that auditors were working in her office and that staff were meeting about the new Paycor and Clarion systems. The County hoped to have the payroll portion of the new system operating by January 1, 2027.

Ms. Royal said the October 1, 2026 payroll could be delayed because the prior year must be closed in Munis before payroll processing can begin. Employees might receive their pay on Friday or the following Monday. Mark Hatch asked John Jenkins and department heads to notify employees of the possible delay. Brenda said the County would work to complete the year-end closeout and noted that insurance information was needed that week.

Ms. Royal requested approval of the James Moore contract for additional assistance not covered by the regular audit. She also asked that the contract be signed, noting that invoices could exceed the County Manager's approval limit if billed together.

Motion by Commissioner Osteen to approve the contract with James Moore. Seconded by Vice-Chairman Storey. Board approved.

The Board asked about the amount budgeted for insurance. Ms. Royal said she would confirm the total the following morning. Chairman Hatch reminded staff and Board members to be mindful of County spending under the new budget.

COUNTY COMMISSION ITEMS

Vice-Chairman Storey thanked the County's new insurance representative and the public for attending.

Commissioner Osteen thanked Sarah Ross, Ms. Royal, and the Clerk's Office staff for their work.

Chairman Hatch also thanked Mrs. Ross, Ms. Royal, Mrs. Higginbotham, Tim Johnson, and Mikel Gainey, and emphasized the importance of careful spending.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

There were no public comments.

ADJOURN

Motion to Adjourn made by Vice Chairman Storey. Seconded by Commissioner Osteen. 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.