

**FEBRUARY 6, 2024
JASPER, FLORIDA**

REGULAR SESSION

The Board of County Commissioners, Hamilton County, Florida, met in regular session on Tuesday, February 6, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. in the Board Room, 207 Northeast First Street, Jasper, Florida. Present were Commissioners Travis Erixton, Jimmy Murphy, Robert Brown, Robbie Roberson and Richie McCoy, a full Board being present. Also present were County Attorney Andy Decker and County Coordinator Gary Godwin.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman McCoy and led in prayer by Commissioner Erixton with the Pledge of Allegiance being led by Chairman McCoy.

CONSENT AGENDA

- Motion by Commissioner Roberson to approve the consent agenda. Second was made by Commissioner Murphy, motion carried with a unanimous vote.

SALARY ADJUSTMENT – COUNTY AGENT

County Extension Agent Greg Hicks provided the Board with a proposal from the University of Florida recommending a salary adjustment for himself and 4H Director Beth Kerr due to years of compression. Mr. Hicks reviewed the proposal and explained the reasons for the adjustment and how the percentages of the salary are calculated with sixty-seven (67) % being the University and thirty-three (33)% being the county.

- Motion by Commissioner Roberson, to approve the salary adjustment for Greg Hicks and Beth Kerr as recommended by the University of Florida. Second was made by Commissioner Brown, motion carried with a unanimous vote.

CORONAVIRUS STATE AND LOCAL FISCAL RECOVERY FUND PROGRAM (AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN) – THOMAS HOWELL FERGUSON P.A, - STATUS REPORT AND UPDATES

Brittany Bechtel, with Thomas Howell Ferguson, provided the Board with a status report for the American Rescue Plan grant expenditures and the future projects. Ms. Bechtel also discussed the Broadband project and stated that she is still waiting on approved deliverables from Windstream.

SHIP / CDBG PROGRAM / CDBG-CV – STATUS REPORT

Ship Administrator Spencer Nabors provided the Board with a status report for the Ship, CDBG, CDBG-CV and HHRP grants. Mr. Nabors requested that the Board approve the following purchase assistance applications: Breunna Jordan and Deanna Owens - \$20,000 and Willaim and Kimberly Hunter - \$12,000.

- Motion by Commissioner Brown to approve the Purchase Assistance applications as recommended by Mr. Nabors. Second was made by Commissioner Erixton, motion carried with a unanimous vote.

Mr. Nabors also provided the Board with an update on the Selph home demolition and asbestos removal. Loranel Thomas addressed the Board and shared her concerns as to the asbestos removal. Ms. Thomas requested documentation showing the proper asbestos disposal and removal. Ms. Thomas stated that she along with other neighbors are concerned with the environmental issues due to the asbestos. Mr. Nabors assured Ms. Thomas that she would be provided with the documentation. Mr. Nabors advised the Board that the CDBG program's ERR phase two (2) site specifics are in progress with ten (10) homes having been walked and being let for bids which will be due on March 24, 2024. Mr. Nabors announced that he has received approval from the Florida Commerce for the CDBG-CV grant. In regard to the HHRP grant program, Mr. Nabors advised that six (6) homes have been walked and let for bid with the bids being due on March 24, 2024. Lastly, Mr. Nabors reviewed with the Board the Housing grants currently active in the county.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS – STATUS REPORT AND REQUESTS

Economic Development Director Chadd Mathis provided the Board with an update on the current economic development projects. Mr. Mathis announced that the Development Authority has been approved for the utility extension grant from Florida Commerce in the amount of \$400,000 for the Jennings I-75 interchange. Mr. Mathis discussed the removal of the satellite dishes that are owned by Comcast and also the negotiations with the owner of the Fireworks building. After a lengthy discussion, County Attorney Andy Decker advised the Board and Code Enforcement Officer Paul Quintana that the letter from Mr. Mathis dated February 5, 2024 stating issues with parcel 7340-005 could serve as a sufficient complaint to initiate a Code Enforcement case.

County Attorney Andy Decker provided the Board with an addendum to the Development Agreement with Green Point Research. Mr. Decker explained the addendum and provided a brief history of the Development Agreement. Mr. Decker stated that Scott Carmel, with Green Point Research, agreed to the addendum which will set aside the Development Agreement.

- Motion by Commissioner Erixton to approve the addendum to the Green Point Research Development Agreement as recommended by County Attorney Andy Decker. Second was made by Commissioner Roberson, motion carried with a unanimous vote. Commissioner Murphy abstained from voting due a previous relationship with Green Point Research.

The Board briefly discussed a letter provided by Jack Levine, with Dimension Funding Corporation, which was presented to the Board during the Pre-Agenda meeting. In the letter Mr. Levine thanked the Board for their prompt attention and focus on their development request. County Attorney Andy Decker presented the Board with a letter from the Board in support of the development proposal and looked forward to an opportunity to further discuss the project in the future.

- Motion by Commissioner Roberson to accept the letter from Mr. Levine into the record and to direct Mr. Decker to send the letter from the Board to Mr. Levine. Second was made by Commissioner Erixton, motion carried with a unanimous vote.

The Board reviewed the deed for the Wolf property and easement for the placement of a lift station.

- Motion by Commissioner Brown to accept the deed as recommended by County Attorney Andy Decker for the Wolf property. Second was made by Commissioner Roberson, motion carried with a unanimous vote.

ROAD PAVING PROJECTS – STATUS EREPORT

Greg Bailey, with North Florida Professional Services, provided the Board with a status report on the current road projects.

LAKE BAISDEN LOOP – Mr. Bailey provided the Board with an update on the Lake Baisden Loop paving project and advised that the project is nearing completion with a punch list to be created by the end of the month.

GIBSON PARK BOAT RAMP – Mr. Bailey advised the Board that he is still waiting for the final approval from FWC.

CROSSROADS FIRE DEPARTMENT – Mr. Bailey stated that the final plans have been submitted to staff for review and approval.

JOBS GROWTH GRANT – Mr. Bailey advised the Board that his staff is continuing to work on the project.

5 HOLE BOAT RAMP – Mr. Bailey stated that he is still waiting on the SRWMD and Army Corp. of Engineers comments for the final permit approval.

CR 25A – Mr. Bailey advised that his staff are in the process of responding to final comments from FDOT and that the White Springs First Baptist cross-walk will be added to the plans for the resurfacing project.

JOBS GROWTH GRANT – Mr. Bailey advised the Board that his staff is preparing the SRWMD permit and working with the Busy Bee owner for road access.

SR 6/I-75 WATER AND SEWER PLANT – The Board discussed the issues at the Water and Sewer plant. Mr. Bailey stated that two (2) units from the Wastewater Treatment plant would possibly need to be replaced with an estimated cost of \$30,000 each. County Coordinator Gary Godwin stated that per his conversation that the units may be able to be repaired rather than replaced.

FDOT PLANNING MEETING – Mr. Bailey announced that the FDOT planning meeting to discuss the Jennings I-75 interchange will be held at the Courthouse Annex on Friday, February 9th at 10:00 a.m.

CR 137 CAUTION LIGHT – The Board discussed relocating the caution light located at the old entrance to the Suwannee River Chemical Plant on CR 137. Mr. Bailey stated that an estimated cost to relocate the caution light would be \$100,000. The Board directed County Coordinator Gary Godwin to discuss the issue with Nutrien.

DISCUSSION OF LAND USE AT I-75 INTERCHANGE

Land Use Administrator Mathew Morgan discussed with the Board CS/SB 102 which will make various changes and additions to the affordable housing related programs. Mr. Morgan explained how the legislation would affect Hamilton County. Mr. Morgan also provided the Board with photos of the type of housing being constructed in other communities.

DISCUSSION OF CODE ENFORCEMENT

County Coordinator Gary Godwin discussed with the Board the need to make the Code Enforcement Officer a full-time position due to the recent acquisition of Code Enforcement for the Town of White Springs and Town of Jennings. Mr. Godwin also requested that the Board consider allowing Mr. Quintana to drive the county vehicle home. Mr. Quintana was present and discussed the changes to the position and the increased workload. Mr. Quintana also stated that he would like the Board to consider additional compensation.

- Motion by Commissioner Erixton to approve the request and change the Code Enforcement Officer from a part-time position to a full-time position and allow the use of the county vehicle. Second was made by Commissioner Murph, motion carried with a unanimous vote.

The Board discussed the Code Enforcement Interlocal Agreement with the Town of White Springs. County Attorney Andy Decker requested that the Board table the discussion until additional information can be obtained from Mr. Quintana.

BOARD APPOINTMENT – SUWANNEE RIVER ECONOMIC COUNCIL, INC. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board agreed by unanimous consent to allow Commissioner Roberson to continue to serve on the Suwannee River Economic Council.

STORM RELATED ISSUES – DISCUSSION AND REQUESTS

County Coordinator Gary Godwin provided the Board with a storm related issues status report. Mr. Godwin discussed the issue now with FEMA regarding buildings or structures that are currently not covered by insurance being repaired or replaced using FEMA funds would require the structures to have insurance. The Board also discussed the continuation of the lease for a Gradall.

- Motion by Commissioner Roberson to lease the Gradall for another month until the county owned Gradall can be repaired. Second was made by Commissioner Erixton, motion carried with a unanimous vote.

APPROVE BILLS

- Motion by Commissioner Brown to approve the bills (vouchers 165058 – 165344 and checks 072701 - 072822). Second was made by Commissioner Murphy, motion carried with a unanimous vote.

HAMILTON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Interim Health Department Director Diane Deque introduced herself to the Board and explained her experience with the Department of Health. Ms. Deque stated that she would like to meet with the Board members to better understand their health concerns for the county.

1ST QUARTER FINANCIAL REVIEW

Clerk of Court Greg Godwin and Finance Director Sheri Davis provided the Board with a review of the 1st quarter budget analysis.

ROOFING CONTRACT – PLUMB LEVEL CONSTRUCTION

- Motion by Commissioner Roberson to approve the contract between the Board and Plumb Level Construction for the replacement roof for Watson’s Healthcare Clinic. Second was made by Commissioner Erixton, motion carried with a unanimous vote.

CORRESPONDENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- County Coordinator Gary Godwin discussed with the Board a request from Jennifer Gissoni to have the tipping fees waived at the Landfill for the demolition of the old White’s Hardware store. The Board suggested Ms. Gissoni should check with the Development Authority for assistance.
- Commissioner Erixton discussed with the Board a request from a Church for assistance with drainage issues. The Board agreed for Commissioner Erixton to work with the Church.
- County Attorney Andy Decker advised the Board that he is currently drafting a trash ordinance for consideration of the Board in the near future.

There being no further business before the Board, Chairman McCoy adjourned the meeting at 12:05 p.m.

RICHIE MCCOY, CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

GREG GODWIN, EX-OFFICIO CLERK

