

**NOVEMBER 19, 2024
JASPER, FLORIDA**

REGULAR SESSION

The Board of County Commissioners, Hamilton County, Florida, met in regular session on Tuesday, November 19, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. in the Board Room, 207 Northeast First Street, Jasper, Florida. Present were Commissioners Travis Erixton, Jimmy Murphy, Robbie Roberson, Richie McCoy and James Howell, 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 Roberson with the Pledge of Allegiance being led by Chairman McCoy.

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN

- Motion by Commissioner Murphy, to nominate Commissioner McCoy as the Chairman and Commissioner Roberson as the Vice-Chairman for the 2024-2025 fiscal year. Second was made by Commissioner Erixton, motion carried with a unanimous vote.

PUBLIC HEARING – PETITION BY CYNTHIA WALKER FOR A SPECIAL EXCEPTION BE GRANTED AS PROVIDED FOR IN SECTION 4.5 OF THE LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS TO ALLOW FOR A BED AND BREAKFAST IN AN AGRICULTURE – 4 (AG-4) ZONING DISTRICT ON PROPERTY LOCATED IN HAMILTON COUNTY, FLORIDA

Chairman McCoy recessed the Board meeting and called the public hearing to order at 6:05 p.m.

County Attorney Andy Decker provided the Board with an overview of the petition filed by Cynthia Walker requesting a special exception to allow a “Bed and Breakfast” on AG-4 property. Mr. Decker advised the Board that the Planning and Zoning Board unanimously approved the petition. Ms. Walker was present and provided the Board with a brief explanation of her plans.

There being no further questions from the Board or public, Chairman McCoy reconvened the Board meeting at 6:11 p.m.

- Motion by Commissioner Roberson to approve the Special Exception as requested by Cynthia Walker for a Bed and Breakfast to be located in an AG-4 zoning district as recommended by the Planning and Zoning Board. Second was made by Commissioner Erixton, motion carried with a unanimous vote.

SHIP / CDBG PROGRAM / CDBG-CV – STATUS REPORT

Ship Administrator Spencer Nabors provided the Board with a written report of the Ship, CDBG, CDBG-CV and HHRP programs. Mr. Nabors requested that the Board consider changing the minimum threshold for Ship rehabilitation projects from \$25,000 to \$35,000 due to inflation and rising cost of building materials.

- Motion by Commissioner Erixton to approve the change to the minimum amount for Ship rehabs from \$25,000 to \$35,000 as recommended by Mr. Nabors. Second was made by Commissioner Murphy, motion carried with a unanimous vote.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS – STATUS REPORT AND REQUESTS

Economic Development Director Chadd Mathis was unable to be in attendance for the Board meeting; therefore, County Coordinator Gary Godwin provided the Board with a status report on the current economic development projects. Mr. Godwin announced that staff will be meeting with Maverick on Monday, November 25, 2024, at the Courthouse Annex with the Board advising that they will be in attendance only.

ROAD PAVING PROJECTS – STATUS EREPORT

Megan Carter, with North Florida Professional Services, provided the Board with a status report on the current road projects. Allen Fischer, with Locklear & Associates, was present and provided the Board with a status report on the SR 6 Logistics Park construction.

**SUWANNEE RIVER HEIGHTS / SUWANNEE RIVER OAKS
SUBDIVISIONS – LIMITED MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT**

County Attorney Andy Decker advised the Board that he has been unsuccessful in making contact with the proper individual from SRWMD to resolve the right of way ownership issue. Mr. Decker explained the process for a Limited Maintenance Agreement and suggested that the Board consider allowing the homeowner's association to provide the legal easement from the SRWMD.

- Motion by Commissioner Erixton to authorize the homeowner's association for Suwannee River Heights and Suwannee River Oaks to provide the legal easement or right of way from the Suwannee River Water Management District with the Board to then provide a Limited Maintenance Agreement for the subdivision roads. Second was made by Commissioner Murphy, motion carried with a unanimous vote.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

**DISCUSSION OF PROCEDURE TO BILL FOR NUISANCE FIRE
ALARM CALLS**

Fire Coordinator Henry Land addressed the Board and requested the Board to consider approving an ordinance that would establish a nuisance fire alarm fee due to the number of false alarms having to be responded to. After a lengthy discussion as to the proper way to handle the request, the Board took the following action:

- Motion by Commissioner Roberson to direct County Attorney Andy Decker to draft an Ordinance establishing a fee for nuisance fire alarm calls. Second was made by Commissioner Howell, motion carried with a unanimous vote.

Mr. Land then advised the Board that the County Fire Department has responded to 431 fire calls thus far with an average response time of 12.4 minutes. Mr. Land also discussed with the Board a request for certified county Fire Fighters to be allowed to provide fire plan reviews rather than contract for the service.

- Motion by Commissioner Murphy to allow certified County Firefighters to provide the fire plans inspections as requested by Fire Coordinator Henry Land. Second was made by Commissioner Roberson, motion carried with a unanimous vote.

PORTABLE RESTROOM RENTAL FOR JASPER CHRISTMAS PARADE

County Coordinator Gary Godwin explained the request for portable restrooms to be provided for the Jasper Christmas Parade. Mr. Godwin advised the Board that an eight (8) stall restroom rental would cost approximately \$1,950 for the event.

- Motion by Commissioner Roberson to allow the rental of the portable restrooms for the Jasper Christmas parade in the amount of \$1,950.00. Second was made by Commissioner Erixton, motion carried with a unanimous vote.

DISCUSSION OF PART-TIME CUSTODIAN / FLOATER POSITION

County Coordinator Gary Godwin discussed with the Board a request from the Custodial Department to hire a part-time custodial employee due to safety concerns with only one employee being in county buildings during off hours. Mr. Godwin also stated that the employee could be utilized as a floater for other departments if needed.

- Motion by Commissioner Roberson to allow the part-time / floater position to be hired for the Custodial Department as requested. Second was made by Commissioner Howell, motion carried with a unanimous vote.

TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL – BOARD APPOINTMENT – LOCAL GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE

County Attorney Andy Decker discussed the resolution approving for the Jasper City Manager Mark Myers to be appointed to the TDC as a local government representative.

- Motion by Commissioner Erixton to approve the resolution as presented. Second was made by Commissioner Murphy, motion carried with a unanimous vote.

BOARD APPOINTMENT – JUVENILE JUSTICE CIRCUIT ADVISORY BOARD (CAB)

The Board discussed the appointment and requested that the item be placed on the agenda for the December 3rd meeting to allow the Board to review all appointments.

The Board move the remaining portion of the meeting to the Courtroom due to the crowd size.

STORM RELATED ISSUES – DISCUSSION AND REQUESTS

Emergency Management Director Pam Allen provided the Board with a post Helene status report on the debris pickup and announced the Farmers Recovery meeting with FEMA on December 5th from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Jasper Civic Center. Ms. Allen explained the Local Match Waiver and recommended that the Board approve the waiver.

- Motion by Commissioner Roberson to approve the Local Match Waiver as recommended by Emergency Management Director Pam Allen. Second was made by Commissioner Murphy, motion carried with a unanimous vote.

Ms. Allen provided the Board and public with the details of the FEMA emergency housing project and the need to provide assistance to the residents of Hamilton County. Ms. Allen explained that there were twenty-one (21) homes with major damage from Hurricane Helene in the county. David Gause, a nearby resident, addressed the Board as to the close proximity of the housing project to the water plant and past issues with water quality.

Angela Wise addressed the Board and public in support of the housing project. John Saul also addressed the Board in support of the project and explained his situation and need of housing due to significant storm damage received during Helene. Jennifer Gissoni thanked Emergency Management Director Pam Allen for her hard work and spoke in favor of the housing project and encouraged everyone to work together and concentrate on the positives in the community. Ms. Gissoni gave examples of individuals in the county that are in need of housing due to damage from Hurricane Helene. Veterans Service Officer Jonathan Law addressed the Board and public in support of the project and provided the Board and public photos of a veteran's home that was destroyed during Hurricane Helene that is now having to live in his automobile. Josh Smith discussed the project with the Board and suggested that the property be posted for public comments with a possible advisory board to be appointed for future decisions. Chairman McCoy explained the previous action taken by the Board and stated that the Board advertises all meetings whether special called meetings or regular monthly meetings. County Attorney Andy Decker explained the legal authority of the Board per the action taken in approving the housing project.

APPROVE BILLS

- Motion by Commissioner Erixton to approve the bills (vouchers 169543 – 169787 and checks 074772 - 074958). Second was made by Commissioner Murphy, motion carried with a unanimous vote.

FIREWORKS BUILDING

County Attorney Andy Decker advised the Board that the owner of the Fireworks building refuses to correspond with the county or Development Authority as to his intentions for the property or being willing to negotiate a sell for the property. Mr. Decker explained the eminent domain filing process and stated that the Florida Statute requires due diligence. Mr. Decker recommended that the Board authorize him to draft a finding of fault prior to making a final decision to file an eminent domain case.

- Motion by Commissioner Murphy to allow County Attorney Andy Decker to draft a finding of fault and suggestive need for the Fireworks property as previously discussed. Second was made by Commissioner Roberson, motion carried with a unanimous vote.

CORRESPONDENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- County Coordinator Gary Godwin advised the Board that EMS is performing a trial period with a 3rd ambulance that is being utilized for transports.
- Chairman McCoy advised the Board that he has had individuals compliment certain debris removal companies and also announced that the debris has been removed from Gibson Park with the Park now open to the public.
- The Board discussed the Department of Health advisory for the Withlacoochee River due to another sewer spill in Lowndes County. Emergency Management Director Pam Allen stated that the current tests show a decrease in the E-coli bacteria and will allow for the advisory to be lifted.

There being no further business before the Board, Chairman McCoy adjourned the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

RICHEL MCCOY, CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

GREG GODWIN, EX-OFFICIO CLERK

