

October 18, 2022
Regular Session
Bonifay, Florida

The Holmes County Board of Commissioners met for a Regular Session on the above date with the following members present: Commissioners Clint Erickson, Phillip Music (tardy), Jeff Good, Brandon Newsom and Commissioner Earl Stafford, Chairman of the Board.

David Corbin, Project Director, and Nathan Nolin, County Attorney, were also present.

Angie Purvee, Finance Director, was present and kept the minutes.

Chairman Stafford called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. David Corbin, Project Director, led the prayer and pledge.

The first item of business was Agenda Additions and Deletions. The following changes were made to the agenda:

- Commissioner Item B: Longevity Pay Increase – added
- Commissioner Item C: RMT and HEO Base Pay Increase – added
- Commissioner Item D: Removal of Dirt at School – added
- Commissioner Item E: Letter from Principal Rod Jones– added
- County Attorney Item B: Ag Center Purchase Agreement - deleted
- County Coordinator Item D: Pine Log Fire Department – added

Commissioner Good offered the motion to accept the amended agenda. Commissioner Newsom offered the second and the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Good offered the motion to adopt the minutes from the October 4, 2022 Regular Session with Commissioner Newsom offering the second. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board recognized Road Department employee, Ashley Register, as the October Employee of the Month.

Commissioner Newsom read a letter from Rod Jones, Principal at the Ponce de Leon Elementary School, commending the Road Department employees for the maintenance of the dirt roads in his school district and their timely response to requests for assistance.

(Letter)

Angie Purvee, Finance Director, presented a proposal from the Florida League of Cities, Inc. to provide actuarial calculations required by the Government Accounting Standards Board Statement No. 75 (GASB 75) for a fee of \$7,200.00. Ms. Purvee explained that this service examines the costs to the County for post-employment benefits and is a budgeted expense. Commissioner Erickson offered a motion to accept the proposal. Commissioner Good offered the second and the motion passed unanimously.

(Proposal)

David Corbin, Project Director, presented a letter from the Tri-County Airport Authority recommending Greg Cloud replace Fred Provost for Seat #2 on the Airport Authority Board. Discussion included that the

Commissioners' previous appointee, Joe Rone, has determined that he does not have the time to fulfill the obligation. Commissioner Newsom offered a motion to retract his former nomination of Joe Rone and nominated Greg Cloud to fill the vacant seat. Commissioner Music offered a second and the motion passed unanimously.

(Letter)

David Corbin, Project Director, presented a recommendation to amend the hours of operation of the Holmes County Library to Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Mr. Corbin stated that the Library would remain open to the public during the new hours. Discussion also included that Extension Director Kalyn Waters has agreed to allow the 4-H Director to help with the home school activities and Chipola Work Force has been contacted about providing volunteers to help with the Library services. Commissioner Erickson offered a motion to adopt the recommendation from Mr. Corbin and change the Library's hours of operation. Commissioner Music offered a second and the motion passed unanimously.

Steve Connell, EMS Director, presented a request from Pine Log Fire Department for additional funding due to an outstanding \$1,500 bill and needed repairs to the department's fire engine. Mr. Connell advised that Noma Fire Department has been placed on hold by the city council and he recommended using the \$2,000 allocated to the Noma Fire Department plus \$1,000 allocated to the Holmes County Fire Association to assist Pine Log Fire Department. Discussion of this matter included the following:

- Financial needs of the fire departments within the County
- Using call volume to determine a fire department's designated funds in the future
- ARPA funds requested by the fire departments
- Funds needed if Noma Fire Department is re-instated

The following citizens discussed this matter:

- Douglas Rimmel, Ponce de Leon Fire Chief
- Coy Mixon, Noma Town Council

Commissioner Newsom offered a motion to accept Mr. Connell's recommendation with the understanding that Mr. Connell will reach out to all the fire departments for funding needs. Commissioner Music offered a second. Commissioners Good, Music, Newsom and Stafford voted yes with Commissioner Erickson voting no. The motion passed.

Keith Bennett, Building Inspector, presented a salary study of the surrounding counties and proposed creating two Certified Tech positions within the Building Department. He explained that, once an employee completes a probationary period, his department will pay for the employee to complete an 11-hour course and, upon passing a test, the employee will become a Certified Tech with a pay increase to \$15.47 per hour. Commissioner Erickson offered a motion to accept the proposal with Commissioner Music offering a second. Commissioners Erickson and Music voted yes with Commissioners Good, Newsom and Stafford voting no. The motion failed. Further discussion of this matter included the following:

- Building Department's source of revenue and restricted use of funds
- Incentive to keep a certified tech with the County
- Florida minimum wage law requiring \$15 per hour by 2026
- Impact on other County employees with degrees and certificates

- Pay increase for employees who cross-train for Building Department functions

The following citizen discusses this matter:

- Becky Marsh, Library Director

Commissioner Newsom offered a motion to create the two Certified Tech Positions within the Building Department with a base rate of \$15 per hour with Commissioner Erickson offering a second. Commissioners Erickson, Music and Newsom voted yes with Commissioners Good and Stafford voting no. The motion passed.

(Salary Study)

Allara Mills Guther, The Planning Collaborative, presented a \$72,300 proposal to update the Holmes County Comprehensive Plan. She advised that the update will be completed in four tasks which could be finished by the end of the fiscal year and that the involvement of the four municipalities within the County is optional. Discussion included delaying the timeline so that the payment will be split between two fiscal years, using Building Department funds to help with the cost and finding grants for the project. Commissioner Newsom offered a motion to move \$36,150 from the County Attorney line item to cover half of the expense for updating the comp plan contingent on the County Attorney researching to see if Building Department funds can be used to assist with the costs or if a grant can be obtained. The motion also included delaying the timeline to complete the project to December 1, 2023. Commissioner Good offered a second. Commissioners Erickson, Good, Music and Newsom voted yes with Chairman Stafford voting no. The motion passed.

(Proposal)

Cliff Knauer, Dewberry Engineering, stated that DOT had reviewed the County's request for additional funding for the CR 181C SCRAP project and has requested that the County reduce the scope of the project and put County money into the project. Mr. Knauer recommended eliminating three items from the project list involving paving the turnouts and paving materials for the driveways which would reduce the project by \$78,680. The reduction will revise the total cost of the project to \$1,230,110.50. Discussion included that the lowest bid submitted was over \$1.3 million, the DOT grant amount is just over \$1 million, and that DOT will take the increased costs of paving projects into consideration. Commissioner Good offered a motion to reduce the scope of the project as recommended by Mr. Knauer and to resubmit the request to DOT for more funding. Commissioner Newsom offered a second and the motion passed unanimously. Commissioner Newsom offered a motion to award the \$1,230,110.50 project to the contractor contingent on DOT approving the reduced scope of the project and awarding more funding. Commissioner Music offered a second and the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Newsom discussed the CR 185 submission for a SCRAP project. Discussed also included the effect of skyrocketing costs of materials on all projects.

Cliff Knauer, Dewberry Engineering, advised that DOT has ruled that the alternate bid item on the CR 181C SCRAP project to replace the failing cross drain before the Walton County line is an ineligible cost. The estimated cost of repairing the cross drain is \$42,000. The Board tabled this item for discussion at a later meeting.

Cliff Knauer, Dewberry Engineering, gave the following update on their other projects:

- Bonifay-Chipley Road – the archaeological determination from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHIPO) has been received and will be submitted to DOT with all permits
- Bonifay-Gritney Road – comments from FWC are currently being addressed and Dewberry is still working to obtain all the property releases
- Ammons Road – FEMA is currently reviewing the report from the hydraulic study and the plan to put it a box culvert with a low water crossing

Nate Nolin, County Attorney, presented Resolution 22-35 approving the Chairman to execute the SCOP agreement for improvements on John Clark Road in the amount of \$144,500. Discussion included putting the project out for bid and requesting more money if needed. Commissioner Music offered a motion to adopt Resolution 22-35 with Commissioner Newsom offering a second. The motion passed unanimously.

(Resolution 22-35 and Agreement)

Nate Nolin, County Attorney, discussed creating a Rec Center Rental Policy to include rental fee, deposits, person to coordinate the schedule and person responsible for inspecting the center before returning the deposit. Discussion also included creating a Rec Center Committee, putting a County employee on the Rec Center Board, renting out for recurring events and possible damage to the fields caused by renters. The Board directed Attorney Nolin and Project Director David Corbin to create a proposed policy to bring back for the Board's approval.

Commissioner Erickson discussed the garbage franchise fee and the reason the fee is not being paid by all garbage companies. Discussion included sending a letter to Waste Pro and Waste Management to discontinue waste pick-up in the County and enforcement options if fee is not paid. Coy Mixon, Northwest Sanitation, discussed the need to enforce the franchise agreements and discontinuing all waste pickup contracts private citizens have with companies who have not paid the franchise fee. County Attorney Nate Nolin will review the ordinance to see what enforcement options are mentioned.

Commissioner Newsom presented a proposed change to the County's Longevity Pay Scale to increase the fixed amount for each pay grade. Discussion included using a percentage increase in lieu of a fixed amount. The Board requested that the Finance Director calculate the cost of giving a 1.5% increase in longevity pay for the qualifying employees this fiscal year and next.

(Proposed Longevity Increase)

Commissioner Newsom proposed increasing the Road Department's Road Maintenance Techs (RMT) and Heavy Equipment Operators (HEO) base pay to \$14.80 per hour using LOGT funds. Discussion of this matter included the following:

- Job duties for RMTs, HEOs and Grader Operators
- County's CDL requirement
- Need for pay increase
- Tracking employees with CDLs

- Other County departments in need of pay increase
- Failure to grant pay increase to EMS employees has resulted in an inability to bill Medicaid

The following employees discussed this matter:

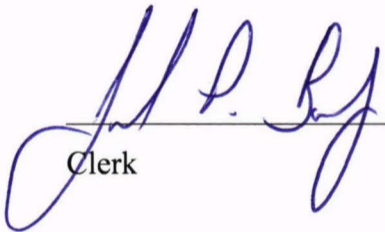
- Greg Gordon
- John Thomas
- EMS Director Steve Connell

Commissioner Erickson offered a motion that, effective October 27th, the base rate for RMTs and HEOs with CDLs will increase to \$14.80 per hour while keeping those employees without CDLs at the current rate of pay and LOGT funds will be used for the approximately \$36,000 cost of the increase. Commissioner Newsom offered a second and the motion passed unanimously.

(Cost of Pay Increase)

Commissioner Erickson advised that dirt needed to be removed from the old elementary school site and requested assistance from the other Road Department districts. The Board agreed by consensus to have Project Director David Corbin arrange to have the work done on a Friday.

Having no further business at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 11:41a.m.


Clerk


Chairman