

January 16, 2024  
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, Earl Stafford, Brandon Newsom, Phillip Music and Commissioner Jeff Good, Chairman of the Board.

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

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

Chairman Good called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. David Corbin, Project Director, led the prayer and pledge.

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

- County Attorney Item C) Development Commission Timber – added
- Agenda Item E) Rural Infrastructure Grant – added
- County Attorney Item D) Engineering Services RFP for Grant – added

Commissioner Stafford offered the motion to accept the amended agenda with Commissioner Newsom offering the second. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Erickson offered a motion to adopt the minutes from the January 2, 2024 Workshop and the January 2, 2024 Regular Session. Commissioner Newsom offered a second and the motion passed unanimously.

Marie Bowman, Coursey Road resident, requested an update on reinstalling the speed bumps on Coursey Road. Discussion included the efforts to enforce the road's speed limit, making the road-width consistent for the entire length and striping the road. Nate Nolin, County Attorney, advised that he had no official legal recommendation. Jon Sims, Dewberry Engineers, stated that surrounding counties are adopting ordinances regarding speed bumps as a measure of protection. The Board directed Project Director David Corbin to make sure the road signage is posted correctly and to get quotes for striping the road. The Board also directed County Attorney Nate Nolin to move forward with drafting a proposed ordinance regarding speed bumps.

David Melvin, Melvin Engineering, discussed the February 15<sup>th</sup> *Hard Hats, Strong Minds* luncheon sponsored by Melvin Engineering bringing mental health awareness in the construction industry. Mr. Melvin invited the Commissioners and all County employees to attend the event.

Commissioner Erickson offered a motion to accept the resignation of Eric Marrell from the District 5 seat of the Planning Commission. Commissioner Stafford offered a second and the motion passed unanimously. Commissioner Erickson offered a motion to appoint Eddie Dixon to the vacant District 5

seat on the Planning Commission. Commissioner Newsom offered a second and the motion passed unanimously.

Lesley Hatfield, Tourist Development Council, requested appointment renewals of Tourist Development Council (TDC) board members Michael Glynn, Jason Powell, and Zach Williams. Commissioner Erickson offered a motion approving the request with Commissioner Newsom offering a second. The motion passed unanimously. Ms. Hatfield also requested approval of Ben Tew to fill the TDC seat left vacant by the departure of Fred Provost. Commissioner Erickson offered a motion approving the new board member request with Commissioner Stafford offering a second. The motion passed unanimously.

(TDC Board Request)

Steve Connell, EMS Director, advised that Pine Log Fire Department donated a 2009 Ford Expedition to the County and that the Ponce de Leon Fire Department has requested the vehicle. PDL Fire Department intends to convert the Expedition into a Quick Response Vehicle (QRV) to lessen the milage on the fire truck. Commissioner Erickson offered a motion to declare the Expedition surplus equipment with Commissioner Newsom offering a second. The motion passed unanimously. Commissioner Erickson offered a motion to donate the Expedition to the PDL Fire Department with Commissioner Stafford offering a second. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Good discussed using the \$4.6 million rural infrastructure grant that was awarded for the failed Ponce de Leon lumber project elsewhere in Ponce de Leon. Discussion included that the Board previously agreed to request permission to use the grant funding for Project Gateway and that property ownership by the County is a grant requirement. David Melvin, Melvin Engineering, advised that there is time to decide on the use of the grant funds as an agreement has not yet been received and that the Board can request to move the funds to multiple sites. The Board agreed by consensus to recommend sites suitable for the grant funds for Melvin Engineering to review.

Harry Bell, Holmes County Tax Collector, presented a list a county certificates from the 2016 tax roll that are eligible for tax deeds. Discussion included the County taking ownership of the listed properties to re-sale and that historically the County has never taken ownership by tax deed. Commissioner Stafford offered a motion to take no action towards initiating an application for tax deeds on the certificates. Commissioner Erickson offered a second and the motion passed unanimously.

(List)

David Corbin, Project Director, stated that the Courthouse has been given Friday, July 5<sup>th</sup> as a holiday and requested direction from the Board about adding the day to the County's holiday schedule. The Board agreed by consensus to discuss this at the next Board meeting.

Bob Stinebaugh, Integrity Group, advised that the FEMA #4564 Ammons Road culvert project is still under review by FEMA.

Tim Parson, Liberty Partners, discussed the 2024 legislative session and the appropriations requests submitted by the County. The Board discussed concerns over the legislation to grant an additional \$25,000 in homestead exemption and the effect this will have on the County's ad valorem tax revenue. Discussion included that Property Appraiser Bryan Bell was monitoring the proposed bill's effect on the County's ad valorem and that fiscally constrained counties may be eligible for more State funding if the new bill is passed.

Tim Parson, Liberty Partners, stated that the Holmes County Agricultural Center-Government Efficiency Complex building contract will be available soon for Board approval.

Jon Sims, Dewberry Engineers, advised that the last easement for the Bonifay/Gritney Road paving project has been received. Commissioner Erickson offered a motion to advertise the project contingent on final clearance from the Florida Department of Transportation (DOT). Commissioner Stafford offered a second and the motion passed unanimously.

Jon Sims, Dewberry Engineers, stated that DOT is still reviewing the Bonifay/Chipley Road paving project since all the bids submitted exceeded the grant amount. Discussion included the possibility of moving funds from the Bonifay/Gritney Road paving project to cover the shortfall in the Bonifay/Chipley Road project.

Jon Sims, Dewberry Engineers, advised that he is still reviewing Highway 10A to see if it will be a suitable project to submit for SCRAP/SCOP funding.

Rod Jones, Melvin Engineering, gave the following updates on their projects:

- CR 181 Phase 1 – Currently waiting for utilities coordination; design will be completed by April with construction funding scheduled for June
- CR 181 Phase 2 – Currently responding to DOT comments; design will be completed by February with a request submitted to move construction funding from FY2026 to FY2025
- Busy Bee – traffic study is 90% complete and discussed recommendations for turning lanes; Highway 79 design is 50% complete with Geotech to begin soon

Ryan Hughes, Melvin Engineering, presented the findings from the North State Road 79 Corridor Drainage Study. The findings included the following:

- Study included SR 79 from County Road 173 to County Road 177
- Wetlands and drainage patterns were documented
- Need to re-grade ditches and repair culverts identified
- Improvements will impact properties downstream to Holmes Creek

- Application for construction funds to upgrade culverts can be submitted in October/November

The Board agreed by consensus to apply for grant funding when the application cycle is open.

(Presentation)

John Feeney, Alday-Howell Engineers, presented Resolution 24-03 in support of the DOT SCOP application to improve CR 179 Phase 2 from Pheil Lane to Dooger Clark Drive. Commissioner Erickson offered a motion to adopt Resolution 24-03 with Commissioner Stafford offering a second. The motion passed unanimously.

(Resolution 24-03)

Nate Nolin, County Attorney, advised that he has not received the official opinion from the Ethics Commission on requiring the Planning Commission and the Tourist Development Commission (TDC) to file Form 1. The Board agreed by consensus to table the Form 1 matter until the next meeting.

Nate Nolin, County Attorney, presented Resolution 24-01 authorizing the County to apply for a grant to improve and expand Emergency Medical Services. Steve Connell, EMS Director, advised that the intent is to apply for matching grants to purchase ambulances. Commissioner Erickson offered a motion to adopt Resolution 24-01 with Commissioner Newsom offering a second. The motion passed unanimously.

(Resolution 24-01)

Nate Nolin, County Attorney, presented the outcome of the Joint Venture meeting with the Development Commission to discuss clearing timber from the Project Gateway property. The outcome of the meeting included the following:

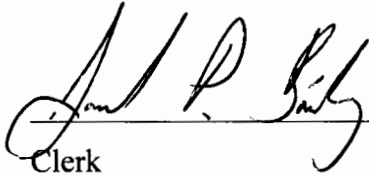
- Little value in timber
- Proceeds would go towards the property loan
- Grant restrictions on environmental impact of clearing land
- Advertising an RFP for clearing timber from property
- County excavator clearing the property
- Cost to remove timber will fall under \$30,000 so procurement threshold requires three quotes

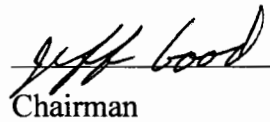
Commissioner Stafford offered a motion for Attorney Nolin and Project Director David Corbin to obtain three quotes to remove timber from the Project Gateway property. Commissioner Newsom offered a second and the motion passed unanimously.

Nate Nolin, County Attorney, stated that an RFQ for engineering services will be needed for the \$4.6 million rural infrastructure grant that was awarded for the failed Ponce de Leon lumber project. Discussion included that the engineering amount will exceed what is allowed through the continuing

services contracts with the local engineers, the grant agreement has not been received to date and that the Board previously voted to request the State move the grant funding to the Project Gateway project. Doyle Majors, Development Commission, requested that the Development Commission be informed of all Board's actions concerning Project Gateway. Commissioner Newsom offered a motion to advertise an RFQ for engineering services for the rural infrastructure grant. Commissioner Music offered a second and the motion passed unanimously.

There being no further business at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 10:31 a.m.

  
Clerk

  
Chairman