

February 4, 2025
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, Wilmer Stafford, Mitch Johnson, Brandon Newsom and Commissioner Earl Stafford, 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 Stafford called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.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 posted agenda:

- Commissioner Item D) Rum Road Paving – deleted
- County Coordinator Item B) Administrative Leave Approval – added
- County Attorney Item A) Lake Cassidy Update – moved to Agenda Item G

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

Commissioner Erickson offered a motion to adopt the minutes from the January 7, 2025 Workshop and the January 7, 2025 Regular Session. Commissioner Newsom offered a second and the motion passed unanimously.

Demetrius Branca, Florida Hands-Free Coalition, urged the Board to support the proposed Hands-Free Law limiting cell phone use while operating a motor vehicle. He discussed the current cell phone laws and how the new proposed legislation will better protect drivers. The Board agreed by consensus for County Attorney Nate Nolin to review the resolution giving support of the proposed legislation and bring it back to the next meeting for approval.

Michael Richter, Boyd Insurance & Investments Services, invited the Board to attend a free seminar on February 25th to learn the advantages of contracting with Preferred Governmental Insurance Trust for the County's property and casualty insurance needs.

Commissioner Erickson discussed the efforts and funds used to balance the County's annual budget for the past several fiscal years. Discussion included that CARES Act and ARPA money are no longer available to balance next year's budget and that proceeds from the sale of the Decon Road (Deacon Road) property must be greater than \$400,000 to avoid a shortfall this budget year. Commissioner Erickson cautioned the Board about spending trends for the rest of this fiscal year.

(Funds Used to Balance Budget Spreadsheet)

Joe Rone, Development Commission, advised of a potential buyer for the Decon Road (Deacon Road) property if sewer services are made accessible to the property. He stated that the Development Commission is willing to find and apply for any grants available to provide sewer to the property.

Joe Rone, Development Commission, advised that the Development Commission closed on the sale of the Project Gateway property. He presented two checks to the Board. A check in the amount of \$33,362.20 to reimburse the Board's expenses for clearing the Project Gateway property and a check for \$28,976.43 to go towards reimbursement of the loan interest payments. Discussion of this matter included the following:

- Reimbursement of the remaining loan interest paid by the County
- Agreement for reimbursement versus pursuing litigation
- Disqualification from the expected \$800,000 New Market Tax Credit due to the multiple extensions on closing the property sale
- Terms of the Joint Venture Agreement
- Development Commission does not want any revenue from this project until the County is reimbursed in full

The following citizen discussed this matter:

- Attorney Kayla Platt Rady, Rumberger & Kirk

The Board agreed by consensus for the Project Gateway Committee along with Attorney Kayla Platt Rady to work out a settlement agreement for the reimbursement to the County.

Paul Graves, Opportunity Zone USA, advised that his company is willing to purchase the County's Decon Road (Deacon Road) property if sewer services are made available to the property. The Board advised Mr. Graves to place his terms for purchasing the property in a sealed bid by the February 17th deadline. Discussion included that the property would need to be sold "as is" since the proceeds are budgeted this fiscal year.

Betty Slay, Country Realty, questioned why other realtors within the County were not given an opportunity to list the County's Decon Road (Deacon Road) property. Nate Nolin, County Attorney, advised that Performance Realty was selected to list the property on the MLS for expediency. Ms. Slay advised that the property is not listed on the MLS.

Sam Bailey, Holmes County Clerk, presented First Federal Bank's line of credit terms for the County's road improvement projects. He stated that the line of credit would have an interest rate of prime plus one which would be somewhere around 7.5%. The line of credit would be on a project-by-project basis with interest due within 45-60 days. Discussion included the advanced funding process available for Florida Department of Transportation (DOT) road improvement projects. Mr. Bailey recommended continuing with the use of LOGT funds for the road projects. The Board accepted the recommendation by consensus but agreed to set up a conference call with DOT to discuss the advance funding process.

David Corbin, Project Director, presented the following proposed projects for the County's DOT 2025 SCRAP/SCOP application:

- SCRAP projects – County Road 179 Phase 2 and Phase 3
- SCOP projects – County Road 10A and Bonifay Chipley Road Phase 2
- BSCOP projects – Adolph Whitaker Road Bridge and Johnson Road Bridge

Commissioner Erickson offered a motion approving the proposed projects with Commissioner Newsom offering a second. The motion passed unanimously.

Tim Parson, Liberty Partners, discussed presenting the Holmes County Jail expansion and park improvements as the County's 2025 legislative appropriations project requests. He recommended applying for projects around \$1 million due to the lean appropriations budget. Discussion of this matter included the following:

- Jail expansion is an estimated \$5 million project which would install 64 beds in a 128-bed facility with the remainder to be constructed later
- State and Federal money available for jail expansions due to the need to house illegal immigrants
- Requesting design and engineering funds for of the jail expansion

The following citizens discussed this matter:

- John Tate, Holmes County Sheriff

Commissioner Erickson offered a motion to request \$1 million appropriations for the jail expansion design and \$250,000 for improvements to the County's parks. Commissioner Newsom offered a second and the motion passed unanimously.

Tim Parson, Liberty Partners, presented an update on the Government Efficiency Center and stated that the Ag Center metal building should be delivered this Friday. Commissioner Erickson offered a motion to make Project Director David Corbin the point of contact for the new EMS building project. Commissioner Newsom offered a second and the motion passed unanimously.

Attorney Kayla Platt Rady, Rumberger & Kirk, discussed the history of the Lake Cassidy lawsuit filed against the County by the Fountain of Youth Ranch and the mediated settlement agreement reached. Discussion of this matter included the following:

- Mediated agreement allows the County to purchase the half acre that includes three boat ramps and a swimming area
- Judge awarded the County ownership of the road to the lake in the lawsuit
- Parties from the County and the Fountain of Youth Ranch met and agreed to the boundaries in the official survey which increased the property available to the County from 0.515 acres to 0.56 acres
- Sanctions threatened by the Judge if the mediated agreement is not executed by February 13th
- Property lines of the parcel being purchased by the County

- Past and future County maintenance of the road to Lake Cassidy
- Retention pond will not be required due to historical flow
- County agreed to provide dirt to the Fountain of Youth property and install a restricted-access gate across the entrance road to the lake
- Restricted access includes charging at least a \$5.00 fee per vehicle to enter the property

Attorney Kayla Platt Rady and County Attorney Nate Nolin recommended approval of the new survey and the purchase agreement. Commissioner Wilmer Stafford offered a motion approving the new survey and the purchase settlement agreement with Commissioner Johnson offering a second. Commissioners Wilmer Stafford, Johnson and Earl Stafford voted yes with Commissioners Erickson and Newsom voting no. The motion passed. A voluntary dismissal will be filed with the Court upon the plaintiffs' approval of the agreement.

(Purchase and Sale Agreement)

(Survey)

David Corbin, Project Director, presented a Medical Examiner Commission recommendation to reappoint the District 14 Medical Examiner Jay Radtke, M.D. Commissioner Erickson offered a motion for Mr. Corbin to sign the recommendation for reappointment with Commissioner Newsom offering a second. The motion passed unanimously.

(Recommendation)

David Corbin, Project Director, requested approval of the Administrative Leave given to the County's employees for their regularly scheduled work hours from January 21st to January 24th due to the winter snowstorm. Commissioner Erickson offered a motion approving the administrative leave with Commissioner Newsom offering a second. The motion passed unanimously.

John Feeney, Contracted Planner, presented a proposed Affidavit of Acknowledgement for Exemption of Second Residential Structure for Kevin and Rhonda McClanahan, the property owners, and Donna Jenkins, the affiant, to execute. Mr. Feeney stated that the affidavit acknowledges that the Board has granted an exemption for a second residential structure to be placed on the property for an immediate family member. He advised the updated Land Development Regulations (LDR) will make provisions for immediate family members. Mr. Feeney recommended approval of the exemption. Commissioner Newsom offered a motion approving the exemption for the second residence with Commissioner Johnson offering a second. The motion passed unanimously.

(Proposed Affidavit)

John Feeney, Contracted Planner, present a minor replat application for the Pilot Travel Center in Ponce de Leon. He advised that the replat involves shifting the interior boundaries of five parcels while leaving the cumulative acreage unchanged. Discussion included that the stormwater pond for the Pilot Travel Center is to be maintained by the County. Mr. Feeney recommended approval of the minor replat.

Commissioner Erickson offered a motion approving the application with Commissioner Newsom offering a second. The motion passed unanimously.

(Minor Replat Application)

Rod Adams, Melvin Engineering presented the Pilot Infrastructure Improvement design plans. Discussion included the construction estimate, that the stormwater ponds are being designed by Pilot engineers and that the project is ready to advertise for construction bids. Commissioner Newsom offered a motion to advertise the construction bids for the project. Commissioner Erickson offered a second and the motion passed unanimously.

(Design)

Commissioner Wilmer Stafford offered a motion to work with Dewberry Engineer Jon Sims to prepare a Florida Boating Improvement Grant application for design of a new boat ramp off Boat Ramp Road. Commissioner Newsom offered a second and the motion passed unanimously.

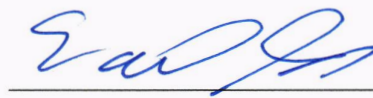
Commissioner Newsom presented a recorded letter for a property at 1363 Myrtle Road stating that the County maintains the easement leading to the property on an as-needed basis. The property owner is selling the parcel and the title company is requesting an updated letter. Commissioner Newsom offered a motion for Project Director David Corbin to sign the updated letter. Commissioner Johnson offered a second and the motion passed unanimously.

(Letter)

Commissioner Newsom offered a motion for the Board to send a letter to the Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) requesting an appeals process for fiscally constrained counties due to several local schools having to cut the junior varsity basketball season short. Commissioner Johnson offered a second and the motion passed unanimously.

There being no further business at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 7:51 p.m.


Clerk


Chairman