

March 18, 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 9:00 a.m. David Corbin, Project Director, led the prayer and pledge.

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

- Commissioner Item C) Striping on Highway 163
- County Coordinator Item B) Lake Cassidy Update
- County Coordinator Item C) Highway 160 Emergency Repair in District 3
- Commissioner Item D) Policy Handbook

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

Commissioner Newsom offered a motion to adopt the minutes from the March 4, 2025 Regular Session. Commissioner Johnson offered a second and the motion passed unanimously.

Richard Willsey, a private citizen, requested an update on the Development Commission's reimbursement of the Project Gateway loan interest paid by the Board. David Corbin, Project Director, advised that Joe Rone, Executive Director for the Development Commission, was to present a proposal to the Board concerning the reimbursement soon.

Robin Phillips, CDBG Administrator, advised that she was originally on the agenda to request prepayment of an October invoice from Simpson Environmental for asbestos removal at the Holmes County Council on Aging. However, she stated that the Department of Commerce has approved an extension for the CDBG project, so the prepayment is no longer needed. Ms. Phillips stated that the State's decision concerning the \$600,000 grant shortfall is still pending.

Robin Phillips, CDBG Administrator, requested that the Board submit a letter requesting a one-year extension on the CDBG Housing grant. Commissioner Erickson offered a motion for Project Director David Corbin to sign a letter requesting the extension. Commissioner Wilmer Stafford offered a second and the motion passed unanimously.

Ashley Helmes, 911 Coordinator, requested renewal of the Converge One grant in the amount of \$58,578.58. She stated that the grant is for 911 system maintenance. Commissioner Erickson offered a

motion for the Chairman to sign the grant renewal application with Commissioner Newsom offering a second. The motion passed unanimously.

(Agreement)

Ashley Helmes, 911 Coordinator, requested renewal of the Converge One grant in the amount of \$38,596.26. She stated that the grant is for 911 migration services in support of the technology upgrade. Commissioner Erickson offered a motion for the Chairman to sign the grant renewal application with Commissioner Newsom offering a second. The motion passed unanimously.

(Agreement)

Ashley Helmes, 911 Coordinator, requested renewal of the Esri grant in the amount of \$2,100. She stated that the grant is for 911 mapping maintenance. Commissioner Erickson offered a motion for the Chairman to sign the grant renewal application with Commissioner Newsom offering a second. The motion passed unanimously.

(Agreement)

Ashley Helmes, 911 Coordinator, requested approval of the Mission Critical Partners grant in the amount of \$50,301. She stated that the grant is for GIS and location accuracy. Commissioner Erickson offered a motion for the Chairman to sign the grant application with Commissioner Newsom offering a second. The motion passed unanimously.

(Agreement)

Ashley Helmes, 911 Coordinator, requested approval of the SHI grant in the amount of \$11,947.85. She stated that the grant is for firewall and cyber security protection. Commissioner Newsom offered a motion for the Chairman to sign the grant application with Commissioner Erickson offering a second. The motion passed unanimously.

(Agreement)

David Corbin, Project Director, recommended placing the management of the Holmes County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Department with the Sheriff's Department. John Tate, Holmes County Sheriff, advised he will accept the department and discussed his following ideas for the transition:

- Current EMS employees are in favor of the transfer
- Plans to reduce the budget and using State contracts to purchase items
- Sheriff will accept a maximum of 240 hours PTO for each EMS employee, any remaining leave balance will be converted to sick leave or must be paid out by the Board
- New Hope Station 24-hour coverage will be revisited in October

- Auto and property insurance will remain with the Board until October
- The Board's Finance office will continue to issue EMS purchase orders under the Sheriff's procurement policy and pay the recurring monthly invoices
- Sheriff's Office will requisition payroll money from the Board each month
- Sheriff Tate has received guidance from Washington County EMS
- Plans to increase revenue through more active collections

Steve Connell, EMS Director, stated that the transfer would be a positive move forward for the County. Commissioner Wilmer Stafford offered a motion to transfer management of the Holmes County EMS Department to the Holmes County Sheriff's Office effective April 1st with the transfer to be approved by a resolution at the next Board meeting. Commissioner Johnson offered a second and the motion passed unanimously. Commissioner Erickson offered a motion to payout PTO to the four employees with more than 240 hours of unused leave with Opioid Settlement Funds. The approximate amount of the PTO payout will be \$37,600. Commissioner Newsom offered a second and the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Newsom discussed private entities requesting Opioid settlement funds. Sheriff Tate advised that the County's Opioid funds are encumbered by the Sheriff and the EMS Departments for approved expenditures related to battling the opioid crisis.

David Corbin, Project Director, presented a \$7,075 quote from Home Oil Company to place a fluid control system on each of the Road Department foremen's truck to monitor fuel pumped from the transfer tanks. Andy Tharp, Road Department Shop Foreman, stated that the Road Department foremen will use the control system on the pumps to fill their transfer tanks and then paper logs will have to be used for the fuel pumped from the transfer tanks to road equipment unless the system is approved. Commissioner Newsom offered a motion to table this matter indefinitely with Commissioner Wilmer Stafford offering a second. Commissioners Wilmer Stafford, Johnson, Newsom, and Chairman Stafford voted yes with Commissioner Erickson voting no. The motion passed.

(Quote)

John Tate, Holmes County Sheriff, discussed the EMS vehicles utilizing the Road Department's fluid secure system.

David Corbin, Project Director, presented quotes for two types of gates that could be used to restrict access to the Lake Cassidy property. The \$805.15 quote is for a standard 16-foot gate with a solar panel opener and the \$1,192.15 is for a heavy duty 16-foot gate with a solar panel opener. Mr. Corbin also presented a quote for \$225.00 per month to rent a handicap-accessible portable toilet for the property. Discussion included the following:

- Terms of the mediated agreement that must be satisfied
- Time frame covered by the \$5 fee is not specified
- Using a fob system versus a windshield sticker to restrict access

- Using cameras to monitor access
- Enforcement of restrictions and Ordinance 19-01
- Implementing an annual sticker system with posted signs without installing a gate
- Charging out-of-state residents more for an annual sticker
- Pricing system for the access stickers

The Board agreed by consensus to bring this matter back at the next Regular Session to discuss further.

David Corbin, Project Director, advised that a portion of County Road 160 had to be closed for an emergency repair due to culvert failure. He stated that the culvert cost over \$5,400 and asphalt is still needed for the road repair. The cost of the repair will impact the District 3 Road Materials budget significantly. Discussion included hiring a contractor to complete the repair and the materials needed to complete the repairs. Commissioner Erickson offered a motion to transfer \$20,000 from Road Department Contingencies to the District 3 Road Materials budget to complete the repairs. Commissioner Newsom offered a second and the motion passed unanimously.

Tim Parson, Liberty Partners, discussed the itinerary for the *Rural Counties Days in the Legislature* event to be held on March 19th and 20th. Discussion included the Wednesday night reception and meeting with legislators to discuss the jail expansion appropriations request.

Tim Parson, Liberty Partners, advised that the new term limits legislation has passed the first committee and is still moving through the legislation. The proposed law would limit county commissioners and school board members to a maximum of eight years of service.

Brent Melvin and Ryan Hughes, Melvin Engineering, presented the design plans addressing the drainage issues found in the Northdale Subdivision during the Highway 79 Drainage Study. The plans included the following:

- Regrading ditches and installing new culverts in the Northdale Subdivision
- Focusing drainage in Northdale to a large drainage ditch rather than State Road 79
- Improving drainage around the blueberry farm and surrounding homes
- Upsizing the culverts on SR 79 would have negative downstream impacts
- Possible grants available for the estimated \$1.3 million project
- Design will improve normal drainage problems, but will not alleviate issues during a flood event

Commissioner Erickson offered a motion to accept the proposed plans and close out the Highway 79 Drainage Study grant. Commissioner Newsom offered a second and the motion passed unanimously.

(Plans Available Upon Request)

Jake Mathis, Melvin Engineering, stated that the Bonifay Chipley Road paving project construction has been delayed due to rain. Issues with existing utilities have also delayed the project but a solution is in progress.

Commissioner Newsom discussed the motion approved at the last Board meeting that eliminated the Road Department's Rain Time and gave Project Director David Corbin the authority to grant Administrative Leave when needed for rain, weather events or emergencies. Discussion of this matter included the following:

- Need for an Administrative Leave policy
- Mr. Corbin's authority over each district separately
- Alerting employees when Administrative Leave is granted
- History of giving Rain Time to the Road Department employees
- Reinstating the Rain Time Leave until an Administrative Leave Policy can be approved

Commissioner Newsom offered a motion to convert the Rain Time Leave balance left on the employee's record to Paid Time Off (PTO) with the Administrative Leave Policy to be implemented on October 1st. Commissioner Erickson offered a second. Commissioners Newsom and Erickson voted yes with Commissioners Wilmer Stafford, Johnson, and Chairman Stafford voting no. The motion did not pass. Commissioner Erickson offered a motion to rescind his second to the motion from the last meeting eliminating Rain Time. He motioned to move the unused Rain Time balance for each Road Department employee to PTO with a new Administrative Leave policy to be implemented by October 1st. Commissioner Newsom offered a second. Commissioners Erickson, Johnson, and Newsom voted yes with Commissioner Wilmer Stafford and Chairman Stafford voting no. The motion passed.

Commissioner Erickson discussed lowering the maximum amount of PTO an employee is allowed to accrue. He suggested that the County convert PTO to Vacation and Sick Leave. Discussion included that the current policy allows employees to accrue a maximum amount of PTO based on their years of employment with the County. Also discussed, was the expense for paying PTO when employees terminate employment or accrue more unused leave than can be carried forward to the next year. The Board agreed by consensus to discuss this policy change during the budgeting process.

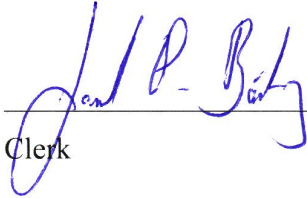
Commissioner Newsom offered a motion to stripe County Road 163 using LOGT funds contingent on the cost of the project. Commissioner Newsom rescinded his motion. Discussion included the following priority list for roads in need of striping provided by the Road Department foremen from each district:

- District 1 – CR 179 (Pheil Drive to Alabama line)
- District 2 – CR 179A, CR 185 and CR 181
- District 3 – CR 160 and CR 162
- District 4 – to be announced
- District 5 – CR 177A

The Board agreed by consensus to further discuss this matter at the next Board meeting.

Commissioner Erickson offered a motion for an Employee's Handbook to be made available to all employees each time any policy changes. The employee must sign to acknowledge receipt of the handbook. Commissioner Newsom offered a second and the motion passed unanimously.

There being no further business at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 11:42 a.m.


Clerk


Chairman