

September 16, 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 and 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. Project Director David Corbin led the prayer and pledge.

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

- County Coordinator Item) Grader Leases – added and moved to first agenda item
- County Engineer Item) Dewberry Task Order – deleted
- County Attorney Item) Joint Resolution with the HCDC – added
- Commissioner Item) County Attorney Contract – added
- Commissioner Item) County Coordinator Job Description - added

Commissioner Johnson offered a motion to adopt the amended agenda with Commissioner Wilmer Stafford offering the second. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Erickson offered a motion to adopt the minutes from the September 2, 2025 Regular Session and the September 4, 2025 Special Session. Commissioner Johnson offered a second and the motion passed unanimously.

Becky Marsh, Holmes County Library Director, presented the State Aid to Libraries Grant Agreement and Certification for approval. Commissioner Erickson offered a motion for the Chairman to sign the agreement and the certification. Commissioner Johnson offered a second and the motion passed unanimously.

(Agreement and Certification)

Harry Bell, Holmes County Tax Collector, presented a letter requesting additional funding for the 2024-2025 fiscal year in the amount of \$7,674.66. He advised that the request was for employee insurance costs. Additionally, Mr. Bell requested reinstatement of \$53,716 for 2025-2026 employee insurance costs which was removed from the County's 2025-2026 budget. Commissioner Erickson offered a motion to pay the \$7,674.66 funding request for the 2024-25 fiscal year using Board Contingencies. Commissioner Johnson offered a second and the motion passed unanimously. The Board agreed by consensus to consider reinstatement of the 2025-2026 funding request at the September 22nd budget hearing.

(Letter)

Vacari Dickerson, Emerald Coast Regional Council (ECRC), advised that ECRC's professional services agreement with the County needed to be extended. She also advised that several SHIP satisfactions of mortgages needed the Chairman's signature. The Board advised Ms. Dickerson to present the extension as well as the satisfactions at the next Board meeting.

Richard Willsey, a private citizen, requested Board action against the active members of the Holmes County Development Commission Board that have been formally charged with misdemeanors. The Board took no action on this request.

Andy Tharp, Road Department Shop Foreman, discussed the eight grader leases that end early in 2026. Discussion included the repairs, mileage, and condition of the graders. Dobbs Equipment has advised that extending the current grader leases would cost an additional 3% to 4% with new leases being significantly higher. Mr. Tharp discussed the warranty work on the graders and advised that extending the leases on the current graders may exclude any warranty. The Board requested that Mr. Tharp present the grader options for next year at the September 22nd budget meeting.

Andy Tharp, Road Department Shop Foreman, discussed the repairs, mileage, and condition of the County's dump trucks. Discussion including selling the current trucks and obtaining new leases next fiscal year. The Board requested that Mr. Tharp find out the amount the dump trucks will likely bring at auction. Discussion also included the excavator lease that is expiring early in 2026.

Clint Bruner, Florida Forest Service Senior Ranger, presented the 2024-2025 annual Florida Forest Service report. Discussion included the number of fires worked and the current fire threat in the County. Donnie Sellers, Florida Forest Service, discussed the County's burn ban process and did not recommend a burn ban at this time.

(Report)

Larry Cook, City of Bonifay Mayor, presented a proposal for the City to accept ownership of the old Sheriff's Building in exchange for waiving the impact fees and water hookup fees on the Government Efficiency Center Ag Center and EMS building. He requested that the City and the County trade checks on the exchange. Discussion included the City's plans for the property. Commissioner Wilmer Stafford offered a motion for the County to exchange checks with the City for the old Sheriff's building property and the impact fees. Commissioner Johnson offered a second and the motion passed unanimously. County Attorney Nate Nolin will work with the City's attorney to draw up the paperwork for the exchange.

Larry Cook, City of Bonifay Mayor, expressed his appreciation of the County's assistance with the Veteran's Park project.

Melinda Gates, Interim Executive Director of the Choctawhatchee Bay Estuary Program, requested approval of Resolution 25-23 designating the week of September 21 through September 27, 2025 as “National Estuaries Week” locally. She discussed the history and activities of the Estuary Board. County Attorney Nate Nolin read the resolution onto the record. Commissioner Johnson offered a motion to adopt Resolution 25-23 with Commissioner Wilmer Stafford offering a second. The motion passed unanimously.

(Resolution 25-23)

Vacari Dickerson, Emerald Coast Regional Council, presented the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 SHIP Annual Report Certification for approval. She advised that there are no additional changes required for the housing projects completed within that time frame. Commissioner Wilmer Stafford offered a motion for the Chairman to sign the SHIP Annual Report Certification. Commissioner Johnson offered a second and the motion passed unanimously.

(Annual Report Certification)

Brooke Powell, Early Learning Coalition of Northwest Florida, presented a proposed proclamation declaring September 16th as *Early Learning Coalition of Northwest Florida Day*. County Attorney Nate Nolin read the proclamation heading onto the record. Commissioner Erickson offered a motion to adopt the proclamation with Commissioner Wilmer Stafford offering a second. The motion passed unanimously.

(Proclamation)

Kalyn Waters, Extension Service Director, presented a proposed Use/Lease Agreement for citizens to rent the new George Gainer Government Efficiency Center (GEC) Ag Center. Discussion included the following rental policies:

- Rental rates
- Fee waivers are not allowed
- Full weekend rentals only
- No long-term rentals
- Insurance requirements
- Rental to only one party at a time

Changes to the rental policies will require Board action. Commissioner Erickson offered a motion to adopt the proposed agreement as policy. Commissioner Johnson offered a second and the motion passed unanimously.

(Proposed Lease)

Rita Banhunyadi, SEH, Inc., delivered a presentation of SEH's team members and their qualifications in an effort to be considered for a continuing services engineering contract. The presentation included their successful projects, available services, and charges for their services.

David Corbin, Project Director, presented an email from the County's insurance company recommending that the current uniform policy requiring long pants for County employees remain in place. Discussion included allowing the employees who work outside to wear shorts, that the shorts would be at the employees' cost and the departments that would be affected by the new policy. Private citizens, Danielle Dubin and Richard Willsey, recommended the Board adopt a specific policy on the types of shorts allowed. Commissioner Erickson offered a motion to allow County employees that work outside to wear knee-length, cargo-style shorts effective immediately. Commissioner Wilmer Stafford offered a second and the motion passed unanimously.

(Email)

Traci Corbin, Health Department Director, presented the 2025-2026 Health Department Contract and Fee Schedule for approval. She advised that no changes were made from the previous contract. Commissioner Erickson offered a motion for the Chairman to sign the contract and fee schedule with Commissioner Wilmer Stafford offering a second. The motion passed unanimously.

(Contract and Fee Schedule)

Ashley Helmes, E911 Director, requested approval of the two grants awarded by the Florida Department of Management Services to upgrade and maintain Holmes County's 911 system. Commissioner Erickson offered a motion approving the Chairman to sign the grant agreement with Commissioner Wilmer Stafford offering a second. The motion passed unanimously.

(Agreement)

John Feeney, Contracted Planner, advised that Powell Productions submitted an Outdoor Event Application for the Bonifay Rodeo Dance to be held on October 3rd, 4th, and 5th. Mr. Feeney advised that the Board would need to approve a variance since the time of the outdoor event goes beyond midnight. He advised that all other requirements have been satisfied and that a permit could be issued upon approval of the variance to allow the event to go up to 4:00 a.m. Jason Powell, Powell Productions owner, advised that the dance should end around 2:00 a.m. Commissioner Erickson offered a motion approving the variance to the outdoor event permit with Commissioner Johnson offering a second. The motion passed unanimously.

Tim Parson, Liberty Partners, stated that the ribbon cutting for the new GEC Ag Center is scheduled for October 2nd at 2:30 p.m. Mr. Parson also requested the 2026 legislative priorities that the

Board would like to present at the Delegation Meeting on September 30th. Commissioner Erickson offered a motion to request legislative appropriations for the following projects:

- Two skid steers, portable generators, and pump for emergency response use
- Additional funding for the Holmes County Jail expansion project

Commissioner Wilmer Stafford offered a second and the motion passed unanimously.

Rod Adams, Melvin Engineering, presented an update on the Busy Bee infrastructure project. He advised that the permit applications have all been submitted and that a request has been submitted to Florida Commerce to advertise the bids. Mr. Adams stated that, contingent on approval, the bid opening should be held in November with construction starting in January. He also advised that the surveyor is working on the deeds and easements needed for the project.

Rod Adams, Melvin Engineering, presented an update on the Pilot Travel Center project. He stated that work has started on the water main extension, the retention pond, and the road. Mr. Adams advised that Arthur Luebano, an adjacent property owner, has stated that the road for the Pilot project crosses his property. Mr. Adams presented a survey completed by Melvin Engineering showing no encroachment. Discussion of this matter included the following:

- Shifting the road to avoid the property in dispute and resolve later
- Purchasing the property in question from Mr. Luebano
- Requesting a third-party survey
- Proceeding with the project under the assumption that Melvin's survey is correct
- Potential for issue to delay the Pilot project

Upon approval from County Attorney Nate Nolin, the Board agreed by consensus to proceed with the project.

(Survey Available Upon Request)

David Corbin, Project Director, advised that the Bonifay Chipley Road paving project has an issue with possible gaps in the fencing designed by Dewberry Engineers. Rod Adams, Melvin Engineering, will investigate the issue and return to the next meeting to discuss the matter further.

John Feeney, Alday Howell Engineers, continued the Dogwood Lakes siphon project agenda item until the next meeting.

Nate Nolin, County Attorney, presented proposed Joint Resolution 25-1 between the Board and the Holmes County Development Commission (HCDC). The resolution states HCDC will pay \$288,779.02 as reimbursement for the interest paid on the Project Gateway loan. In exchange, the Board agrees to give the HCDC an annual appropriation in the amount of \$100,000 beginning in fiscal year 2027-2028. Discussion included that the actual agreement was to begin the payment one year after the Busy Bee starts operation. Commissioner Erickson offered a motion to approve Joint Resolution 25-1 with the correction about the start of the annual appropriations. Commissioner Johnson offered a second and the

motion passed unanimously. Joe Rone, HCDC Executive Director, presented a check in the amount of \$288,779.02

(Proposed Joint Resolution 2025-1)

Nate Nolin, County Attorney, presented an e-mail from the attorney for the Highway 79 Corridor Authority advising that any lapse in Holmes County's funding to the corridor could cause an interruption in the utilities system. The Highway 79 Corridor Authority requested a 2025-26 amount of \$47,895. Discussion included that funding the corridor was cut from the County's 2025-26 budget and that the City of Bonifay will eventually take over the corridor property. Commissioner Erickson requested Board action on the funding request so he would know how to proceed at the Highway 79 Corridor meeting the next day. Commissioner Johnson offered a motion to pay the requested amount for the 2025-26 fiscal year and to discuss how to budget the payment at the September 22nd final budget hearing. Commissioner Wilmer Stafford offered a second. Commissioners Johnson, Wilmer Stafford and Erickson voted yes with Chairman Stafford voting no. The motion passed.

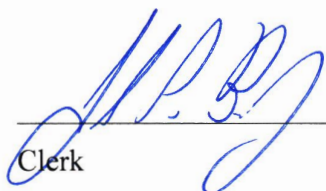
(Email)

Commissioner Erickson requested the status of the legal services contract with County Attorney Nate Nolin. Attorney Nolin requested whether the Board desired a flat rate or a billable hours contract. Attorney Nolin will present the requested flat rate legal services contract at the next Board meeting.

Commissioner Erickson requested amending the County Coordinator's job description to allow for emergency purchases without Board approval. Discussion included that Mr. Corbin has the authority to approve purchases if the Board has approved the project and the money has been budgeted.

Commissioner Wilmer Stafford discussed using a portion of the District 1 Road Materials budget to hire Great Rate Tree Service to remove tree limbs hanging over roads in his district.

There being no further business at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m.


Clerk


Chairman