

5:00 p.m.

The Suwannee County Board of County Commissioners met on the above date and time for a regular meeting and the following were present: Chairman Franklin White; Commissioner Don Hale; Commissioner Clyde Fleming; Commissioner Travis Land; and Commissioner Len Stapleton. Keith Gentry, Chief Finance Director; Logan Woods and Eric Musgrove, Deputy Clerks; Randy Harris, County Administrator; and James W. Prevatt, Jr., County Attorney, were also present.

Chairman White called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m. and asked Commissioner Stapleton to lead the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

MINUTES:

The first item on the agenda was to approve the minutes of the November 15, 2021 Regular Meeting.

Commissioner Land moved to approve the minutes of the November 15, 2021 Regular meeting as written. Commissioner Fleming seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

CONSENT:

Item eight was pulled for discussion.

The second item on the agenda was to approve payment of \$5,541,057.78 in processed invoices.

The third item on the agenda was approval of Change Order No. 2 with Music Construction, Inc. for the CR 136/I-75 Wastewater Treatment Plant project. Budget impact: cost decrease in the amount of \$703.34. **(Agreement No. 2020-47-02)**

The fourth item on the agenda was approval of a Marketing and Training Grant Agreement with Enterprise Florida and authorize staff to execute the same. **(Agreement No. 2022-16)**

The fifth item on the agenda was approval of a Consulting Grant Agreement with Enterprise Florida and authorize staff to execute the same. **(Agreement No. 2022-17)**

The sixth item on the agenda was approval of the Tourist Development Council's recommendation to allow the Tourist Development Council to retain the 3rd cent for promotion of tourism rather than capital improvements.

The seventh item on the agenda was reappointment of James Cornett and Dick Calvitt to serve another term on the Tourist Development Council.

The eighth item on the agenda was authorization to bid clearing and grubbing of Fire Station site.

The ninth item on the agenda was to declare as surplus a +- 0.08-acre parcel located on US 90 and authorize sale of the same. Parcel ID No. 16-02S-13E-05188-000000.

Commissioner Hale moved to approve consent items 2-7, and 9. Commissioner Stapleton seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

The eighth item on the agenda was authorization to bid clearing and grubbing of Fire Station site.

Commissioner Land clarified that the property was the US 129 fire station site and questioned the sale of the timber instead of bidding out clearing and grubbing. County Administrator Harris agreed that it was the US 129 property and that the bids would help to obtain values for the property and timber.

Discussion ensued on getting a request for proposals to get a value on the timber and the reasoning behind obtaining RFPs, as well as whether to bid existing timber or obtain the RFPs and appraisals before a company was hired to clear the land.

County Administrator Harris stated that the undercutting of the brush would be done in-house by the County.

Much discussion continued over what portion of the work would be done by the County and what would be done by a potential company, as well as selling of the timber.

County Administrator Harris clarified that he only intended to remove trees on the portion that would affect the new fire station.

Discussion ensued on obtaining a proposal for the timber and time frame to get an appraisal.

Commissioner Stapleton recommended obtaining an appraisal for the entire property versus just clearing the areas where the fire station would be.

The Commissioners agreed by consensus to obtain a timber proposal for the entire property.

TIME-SPECIFIC ITEMS:

The tenth item on the agenda was at 5:05 p.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter could be heard, to hold a public hearing to consider adoption of a resolution pertaining to Special Permit Request No. SP-21-12-01 by Tower Engineering Professionals, authorized agent for Emeis Investments, LLC, to be granted a special permit under Section 14.11 of the Suwannee County Land Development Regulations for an essential service (150-foot monopole communications tower and associated equipment) on property zoned Agriculture-1.

Chairman White opened the public hearing.

County Attorney Prevatt swore in all those wishing to speak.

Planning and Zoning Director Ron Meeks briefly discussed the application, noting the property was located in an Agricultural-1 zoning district and that the Land Development Regulations (LDRs) did allow for a communication tower to be constructed under that zoning classification. He further discussed the proposed communication tower, area coverage, and that the proposed resolution included similar language as other previously approved communication tower-related resolutions. Mr. Meeks noted that the tower met the minimum 90-foot height requirement and then entered the file into the record, which County Attorney Prevatt accepted as Composite Exhibit 1.

Chairman White opened the floor to public comments.

Harold Timmons, on behalf of Verizon Wireless, 906 James Doak Parkway, North Carolina, stated that the tower would be 155-foot pole and noted that it would result in improved service.

Discussion ensued over increasing the number of communication towers in the County and Verizon's process behind how communication improvement needs were determined for an area.

Gwendolyn Johnson, 14614 61st Place, felt that the tower would be a good addition for the area, noting her work in healthcare and the difficulty in reaching clients due to limited communication service.

There being no further public comments, Chairman White closed the floor to public comments.

Commissioner Fleming moved to approve a resolution pertaining to Special Permit Request No. SP-21-12-01 by Tower Engineering Professionals, authorized agent for Emeis Investments, LLC, to be granted a special permit under Section 14.11 of the Suwannee County Land Development Regulations for an essential service (150-foot monopole communications tower and associated equipment) on property zoned Agriculture-1. Commissioner Stapleton seconded, and the motion carried unanimously. (Resolution No. 2022-15)

Chairman White closed the public hearing.

PROCLAMATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS:

The eleventh item on the agenda was a presentation by Maintenance Director Mark Durham.

Mr. Durham commended his custodial staff for their work throughout the pandemic and presented awards.

COMMISSIONERS ITEMS:

There were none.

COUNTY ATTORNEY ITEMS:

There were none.

GENERAL BUSINESS:

The twelfth item on the agenda was to discuss, with possible Board action, preliminary plat approval of Mark's Pointe subdivision.

Mr. Meeks discussed the 22.10-acre subdivision located at the intersection of CR 150 and 217th Road in Section 3, Township 3, Range 11, noting that it contained 4 lots of roughly 5.5 acres each. The access would be off 217th Road, with shared driveways. Mr. Meeks added that the plat complied with LDRs and mentioned a language discrepancy that had since been corrected. He then entered the file into the record, which County Attorney Prevatt accepted as Composite Exhibit 1.

Commissioner Land moved to approve the preliminary plat of Mark's Pointe subdivision.

Commissioner Stapleton seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

The thirteenth item on the agenda was to discuss, with possible Board action, renewal of Liability Insurance for the Airport.

County Administrator Harris discussed the previous fixed premium of roughly \$4,600 a year. He discussed in detail the new figures for both single- and third-year coverages, as well as optional war coverage. As there had been no claims filed, County Administrator Harris stated he had asked the insurance company the reason behind the raise in premiums, to which they responded it was simply due to economic pressures and lack of profitability for the company at the current rates. County Administrator Harris read into the record the response of the liability company as to why the increases had occurred and asked the Board which of the coverages they wished to proceed.

Much discussion ensued on the different insurance coverages, rates, and whether to include terrorism and war coverages.

Chairman White asked whether there would be a legal issue with not including terrorism coverage for the airport. County Attorney Prevatt replied that it was fine to not have include that coverage, although the FAA preferred that airports had it.

Further discussion ensued on the 3-year coverage being a better option in the long run so they would have a fixed rate and that the County did not need the war coverage.

It was noted that the County currently only had terrorism coverage, as this was the first year that war coverage was being offered.

Commissioner Fleming asked County Attorney Prevatt to research information on the war coverage and whether it was necessary.

Chairman White expressed that he wished to keep terrorism coverage, but not include war coverage.

Commissioner Land moved to approve renewal of Liability Insurance for the Airport at the 3-year premium, to include terrorism coverage, but exclude the war coverage. Commissioner Stapleton seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

The fourteenth item on the agenda was to discuss, with possible Board action, surplus and sale of a +-6.3-acre parcel located on SR 51.

County Administrator Harris discussed the appraisal report and appraisal value of \$58,000 for the property, adding that the Commissioners needed to approve both the surplus of the property and setting of the sale price.

Discussion ensued on a prior appraisal of the 15-acres adjacent to the property and sale of the parcel.

Chairman White discussed complaints he had received that the 60-day advertisement period for receipt of bids for surplus property was too long.

Discussion ensued on a 30- to 60-day advertisement period for sales of surplus property, that the properties currently being sold as surplus had actually been advertised for 90 days, as well as the bid process for receipt and opening of bids related to surplus property sales.

Chairman White clarified for the public both the bid process and standard 90-day advertisement period for the sale of surplus properties.

Commissioner Stapleton moved to approve the surplus and sale of a +-6.3-acre parcel located on SR 51, with a minimum asking price of \$63,000 or highest offer above the minimum. Commissioner Land seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

The fifteenth item on the agenda was Additional Agenda Items.

There was one additional agenda item:

The first additional agenda item was to discuss and consider a request for a Satisfaction of Lien under the State of Florida Housing Initiatives Partnership Program (SHIP) for Kevin and Patricia Mercer.

County Attorney Prevatt discussed the Satisfaction of Lien and change of language that had been requested by one of the title companies.

Commissioner Land moved to approve a Satisfaction of Lien under the State of Florida Housing Initiatives Partnership Program (SHIP) for Kevin and Patricia Mercer. Commissioner Hale seconded, and the motion carried unanimously. (Agreement No. 2022-18)

The sixteenth item on the agenda was public concerns and comments. [Filling Comment Card required and forwarded to Chairman or County Administrator. Individual speakers from audience allowed three (3) minutes and a single representative or spokesperson allowed seven (7) minutes to speak following recognition by Chairman and must speak from the podium – one (1) trip to podium].

Commissioner Stapleton asked Wayne Hannaka to give an update on internet cafes. Mr. Hannaka stated that Columbia County had recently banned the cafes, but the City of Live Oak still had not done so, possibly resulting in those businesses moving to Live Oak.

Discussion ensued on internet cafes.

Commissioner Land discussed the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) SCRAP/SCOP funding and January deadline for road project applications, noting that North Florida Professional Services was still working on submittals. He added that a portion of County Road 250 was approved for funding but would not be completed until 2025. Commissioner Land further discussed the roads previously suggested by the Board for funding applications and suggested adding another road for submittal to replace the application just approved.

Discussion ensued on funding for CR 49 repairs, submitting of roads for SCRAP/SCOP projects, whether submitting certain roads would impede receipt of other grant funding, submitting CR 136, and issues with repairing the portion of CR 136 within city limits until the City's utility repairs were completed.

County Administrator Harris further discussed submitting CR 136 for SCRAP/SCOP funding.

Discussion ensued on CR 250 repairs, that the project date could be pushed later than 2025 due to uncertainty over increased expenses, and road repairs in school zones.

Commissioner Land noted he would like to submit the remaining portion of CR 250 for the grants.

Commissioner Fleming was in support of submitting the rest of CR 250

County Administrator Harris recommended submitting 184th Street, CR 137, and the remaining portions of CR 49, CR 250, and CR 136.

Discussion ensued on the order in which to submit the roads.

The Board agreed by consensus to submit 184th Street, CR 137, and the remaining portions of CR 49, CR 250, and CR 136 for SCRAP/SCOP funding.

Due to many public inquiries, Commissioner Land asked County Administrator Harris to give an update on the work being done at the Supervisor of Elections building. County Administrator Harris replied that it was repair work due to a water leak and mold issue associated with the Jail.

Hillary Cannon, Chamber of Commerce Executive Director, thanked various County Departments and the Commissioners for their assistance during Christmas on the Square.

Kerry Waldron, Suwannee County Health Department Director, gave an update on COVID-19 cases in the County, the average number of two positive cases per day, vaccination boosters, the lessening of school cases, vaccination rates in the County, and the new Omicron variant. He also discussed issues with lack of sufficient staff at the Environmental Health Protection office and need for more employees.

Discussion ensued on staffing issues.

Bo Hancock, 6135 Wiggins Road, asked for an update on a date for the salary wage compression workshop. County Administrator Harris replied that it would be after the holidays. Mr. Hancock also discussed the purchase of property on 112th for the convention center, and loss of money due to unrealized plans, and the delay in relocating the lime rock storage to a different area as opposed to storing it at the airport. He questioned why the County did not use the 112th property for lime rock to save costs since convention center plans had not moved forward.

Much discussion ensued on dumping of lime rock at the 112th property.

Commissioner Land discussed his concern with dumping lime rock at the 112th property since it was a residential area and that he would rather dump it at the landfill.

Mr. Hancock felt that if the Board had no intention of using the property any time soon that they should go ahead and sell it to recoup the expense.

Discussion ensued on the 112th property and selling it for a higher amount than it was purchased.

Mr. Hancock was further concerned how the Board expected taxpayers to pay for the property, yet the Commission had no immediate plans to use it.

Commissioner Stapleton stated he would move to sell the 112th property; however, County Attorney Prevatt interjected that the property first had to be approved as surplus and an appraisal completed before the property could be sold.

Commissioner Stapleton moved to surplus the County property on 112th Street and have an appraisal completed (amended to include the stipulation that revenue from the sale would go in a line item by itself). Commissioner Land seconded. Commissioner Fleming discussed his opposition to sell the property and felt it was a step backward instead of moving the County forward. Much discussion ensued on the desire of the Commissioners to surplus the property or not and that plans for the County would change as the Board's composition changed. County Administrator Harris stated that during initial discussions of the convention center, several different locations had been considered and the 112th property had not been the original location. **After much discussion, the motion to surplus and appraise the 112th property carried 4-1, with Commissioner Fleming opposed.**

Moses Clepper, 14581 102nd Path, suggested camouflaging the communication tower and discussed the airport insurance. Mr. Clepper also had many concerns with the push for vaccinations, especially for young children, despite the survival rate for COVID-19.

Fire Chief Eddie Hand thanked his staff for their work on Christmas on the Square and acknowledged the Honor Guard.

Greg Scott, Parks and Recreation Director, discussed soccer sign-ups, a statewide study on the economic impact of airports that had a highlight on Suwannee County, and increases in Jet-A fuel sales.

Discussion ensued on the number of Christmas on the Square attendees.

The seventeenth item on the agenda was Administrator's comments and information.

December 7, 2021
Regular Board Meeting
Judicial Annex
Live Oak, Florida

County Administrator Harris noted that at the next Board meeting, he would discuss the possibility of buying a paving machine since State funding did not cover the number of roads needing repair, and if the County had a paving machine it could help cover future repair costs.

The eighteenth item on the agenda was Board Members' inquiries, requests, and comments.

Commissioner Fleming discussed Commissioner Land's father.

Commissioner Stapleton thanked the Chamber for their work and how encouraging Christmas on the Square was to him and citizens. He also wished for good health for Commissioner White's mother.

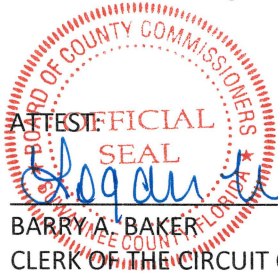
Commissioner Land echoed the other Commissioner's comments, thanked Mr. Durham and custodial staff, and thanked Commissioner Fleming for his effort on the 112th property purchase.

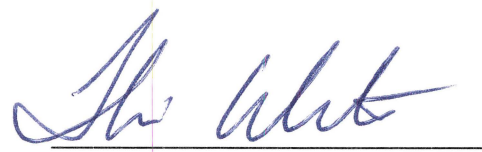
Commissioner Hale also commented on Christmas on the Square and the Board's work together.

Chairman White thanked everyone for their comments.

Commissioner Hale moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Stapleton seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 7:16 p.m.

ATTEST:  *Logan Woods*, DC
BARRY A. BAKER
CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT


FRANKLIN WHITE, CHAIRMAN
SUWANNEE COUNTY BOARD OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS