

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. Barry Baker, Clerk of Court; Keith Gentry, Chief Finance Director; Logan Woods, Deputy Clerk; Randy Harris, County Administrator; and James W. Prevatt, Jr., County Attorney, were also present.

Chairman White called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m. and asked Commissioner Land to lead the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

Economic Development Director Jimmy Norris discussed a project with Tide Water that had been under development for nearly two years and introduced the owners who were present.

Travis Alcorn, Tide Water owner, mentioned the upcoming grand opening of the business and discussed what kinds of farm equipment and brands were sold.

**MINUTES:**

**The first item on the agenda** was to approve the minutes of the January 18, 2022 Regular meeting.

County Attorney Prevatt noted a spelling correction for Dana Berman under item seventeen.

**Commissioner Stapleton moved to approve the minutes of the January 18, 2022 Regular meeting, as corrected. Commissioner Fleming seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.**

**CONSENT:**

Items four and eight were pulled for discussion.

**The second item on the agenda** was to approve payment of \$3,388,679.15 in processed invoices.

**The third item on the agenda** was authorization to purchase IT backup system technology in the amount of \$14,740.82 for the BOCC network. Budgeted item.

**The fourth item on the agenda** was authorization to advertise for bids for design-build of Fire Station No. 6 on north US Highway 129.

This item was pulled for discussion.

**The fifth item on the agenda** was authorization to advertise for bids for design-build of a scale house located at the County mine. Budgeted item.

**The sixth item on the agenda** was approval of a Site Preparedness Grant Agreement with Enterprise Florida and authorization for staff to execute the same. **(Agreement No. 2022-33)**

**The seventh item on the agenda** was approval of a construction and maintenance agreement with Tri-Party and associated resolution, an Interlocal Agreement (with Columbia County) and Duke Energy Trail License Agreement for the Suwannee River Greenway SunTrail project (FDOT #442872-1) between the Florida Department of Transportation, Duke Energy, Columbia County, and Suwannee County, and to authorize staff to sign all necessary documents. Funded by FDOT. **(Agreement No. 2022-34 and Resolution No. 2022-18; Agreement No. 2022-35 and 2022-36)**

**The eighth item on the agenda** was approval of Change Order No. 7 with Salser Construction for the water transmission line installation project. Funded by grant funds.

This item was pulled for discussion.

**Commissioner Land moved to approve consent items 2-3 and 5-7. Commissioner Stapleton seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.**

**The fourth item on the agenda** was authorization to advertise for bids for design-build of Fire Station No. 6 on north US Highway 129.

Commissioner Land stated that at the previous meeting the Board had approved a task order with North Florida Professional Services for a topographical map for the new fire station; however, the County already had a contract with local surveying company J. Sherman Frier and Associates that could do the

work for less at \$9,500. He asked whether the Board would consider rescinding the previous approval and allowing J. Sherman Frier and Associates to complete the work at the cheaper price.

Discussion ensued on having Frier and Associates complete the topographical map.

**Commissioner Land moved to rescind the previous approval for a task order with North Florida Professional Services for topographical mapping (see Agreement No. 2022-31). Commissioner Fleming seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.**

**Commissioner Land moved to approve a task order with J. Sherman Frier and Associates to complete the topographical map for \$9,500. Commissioner Hale seconded, and the motion carried unanimously (Agreement No. 2022-37).**

Commissioner Land discussed conversations he had held with the City of Live Oak regarding a merger of the City and County fire departments to save costs and improve service to residents. He added that since the City was now under new leadership, they seemed opened to a merger. Commissioner Land asked whether the Board would like for him to continue discussions.

Chairman White suggested discussing the item after the regular agenda items.

**Commissioner Hale moved to authorize advertisement of bids for design-build of Fire Station No. 6 on north US Highway 129. Commissioner Land seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.**

**The eighth item on the agenda** was approval of Change Order No. 7 with Salser Construction for the water transmission line installation project. Funded by grant funds.

Commissioner Land had several concerns about the hauling of the debris related to the project.

Discussion ensued on what kind of debris would be moved, where it would be taken, whether County trucks would be used, and that much of the debris would be taken to specified landfills.

**Commissioner Fleming moved to approve Change Order No. 7 with Salser Construction for the water transmission line installation project. Funded by grant funds. Commissioner Land seconded, and the motion carried unanimously. (Agreement No. 2020-48-07)**

**CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICER ITEMS:**

**The ninth item on the agenda** was to discuss, with possible Board action, ADG Finance Software and return of excess funds.

Clerk of Court Barry Baker stated that he had met with County Attorney Prevatt and the auditor, and that they felt the financial software qualified as a sole source purchase. He added that the final cost of the system was under the amount originally budgeted, but that the conversion of information would have its own minimal cost due to the outdated nature of the current system. Clerk Baker also requested that the remainder of the funds that were budgeted for the software be used for the conversion costs.

Discussion ensued on the modules included in the final cost of the software, what was taken out, and how the system would work between offices.

Clerk Baker asked for Board approval to proceed with the purchase of the ADG software and to use the remaining funding for the data transfer.

County Attorney Prevatt stated that he was fine with the sole source purchase and use of the remaining funds for conversation costs.

**The Board agreed by consensus to allow Clerk Baker to purchase the ADG Financial Software as a sole source and to use the remaining budgeted funds for information conversion costs.**

Clerk Baker discussed the excess funds that were typically returned to the Board at the end of each fiscal year and asked if \$85,158.30 could be retained to purchase a backup system and servers for the Clerk's and Sheriff's Offices.

Discussion ensued on the backup servers and what the roughly \$85,000 covered.

Chairman White asked if the \$85,000 was for someone to do the work or for the equipment only.

Clerk IT Director Vicky Schnepf addressed the Chairman's questions, explained what the funding would be used for specifically, and further discussed the need for a backup system, noting that increased server size would be needed to maintain the backup and that Clerk IT staff would do the installation.

Clerk Baker stated that the remaining \$107,527.95 in excess funds would return to the Board.

**Commissioner Stapleton moved to approve the Clerk's request to retain roughly \$85,158.30 from excess funds to be returned to the Board for backup servers for the Clerk's and Sheriff's Offices. Commissioner Fleming seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.**

**COMMISSIONERS ITEMS:**

There were none.

**COUNTY ATTORNEY ITEMS:**

**The tenth item on the agenda** was consideration of acceptance and participation in a statewide settlement with Endo (Endo Health Solutions, Inc. and Endo Pharmaceuticals, Inc.), a manufacturer of opioid drugs.

County Attorney Prevatt discussed the settlement, recommended the Board participate, and asked for Board authorization to allow him to sign all necessary documents.

**Commissioner Land moved to approve acceptance of and participation in a statewide settlement with Endo (Endo Health Solutions, Inc. and Endo Pharmaceuticals, Inc.), a manufacturer of opioid drugs. Commissioner Hale seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.**

**Commissioner Land moved to allow County Attorney Prevatt to execute associated documents for the settlement. Commissioner Stapleton seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.**

**GENERAL BUSINESS:**

**The eleventh item on the agenda** was to discuss, with possible Board action, award of bid and execution of a contract for CR 137 Collection and Transmission Utility Extensions (Bid No. 2022-05; bids were opened January 25, 2022)

County Administrator Harris briefly discussed the bid information and tabulation sheet, noting the project would be funded by both Trulieve Suwannee and American Rescue Plan Act funding. He further discussed project timelines and that the Board needed to approve a contractor to move forward.

Discussion ensued on the different bidders and that despite the range in bid prices, the bid specifications were the same for each respondent.

Chairman White did not wish to approve the lowest bidder only to have several change orders come back for approval that would raise the total costs.

County Administrator Harris noted that several people involved in a project had to sign off on a change order and agree it was necessary before it was submitted to the Board for approval, adding that change orders were typically for items or issues that were unexpected.

Discussion ensued on inspection of work, how change orders were handled, and what kind of issues would result in a change order.

County Administrator Harris noted that he did not foresee any change orders that would arise, unless for unanticipated things such as he just discussed. He reiterated that ARPA funding would be used for the project, so there was plenty of funding to cover unanticipated costs.

Greg Bailey, North Florida Professional Services, discussed the licensed contractors that had bid on the project, noting they were all qualified contractors and he had no issues with any of them.

Much discussion ensued on the price range of the bids received and that each submitted a bid based on the same specifications and materials.

**Commissioner Land moved to approve award of a bid and execution of a contract with the lowest bidder, Music Construction, for CR 137 Collection and Transmission Utility Extensions (Bid No. 2022-05; bids were opened January 25, 2022). Commissioner Stapleton seconded, and the motion carried unanimously. (Agreement No. 2022-38)**

**The twelfth item on the agenda** was to discuss, with possible Board action, offers on surplus property Parcel ID No. 15-02S-12E-09944-008001.

County Administrator Harris discussed the new offers from the two previously tied bidders and recommended approval of offer number 20, which was the higher offer.

**Commissioner Hale moved to approve offer number 20 on surplus property Parcel ID No. 15-02S-12E-09944-008001. Commissioner Land seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.**

**The thirteenth item on the agenda** was to discuss, with possible Board action, award of bid and execution of a contract for timber harvesting at the Fire Station No. 6 site on north US Highway 129 (Bid No. 2022-08; bids were opened January 25, 2022).

County Administrator Harris discussed the offers received.

Commissioner Land commented on the two companies that bid, noting the prices were good and each company had local offices.

**Commissioner Land moved to approve award of bid and execution of a contract with Shade Timber for timber harvesting at the Fire Station No. 6 site on north US Highway 129 (Bid No. 2022-08; bids were opened January 25, 2022). Commissioner Stapleton seconded, and the motion carried unanimously. (Agreement No. 2022-39)**

**The fourteenth item on the agenda** was to discuss, with possible Board action, award of bid and execution of a contract (with Creative Concrete Design of Columbia County) for clearing and grubbing at the Fire Station No. 6 site on north US Highway 129 (Bid No. 2022-09; bids were opened January 25, 2022).

County Administrator Harris stated only one bid had been received.

Chairman White asked if the work could be done in house. County Administrator Harris replied that although the work could be done by County crews, they did not have the manpower to complete the work in a timely manner due to already being overextended with other projects.

Discussion ensued on where bids were posted and advertised to receive offers, whether to readvertise the project for another 30 days, and what all was included in the bid specification.

**Commissioner Fleming moved to award a bid and execute a contract with Creative Concrete Design of Columbia County for clearing and grubbing at the Fire Station No. 6 site on north US Highway 129 (Bid No. 2022-09; bids were opened January 25, 2022). Commissioner Stapleton seconded, and the motion carried unanimously. (Agreement No. 2022-40)**

**The fifteenth item on the agenda** was Additional Agenda Items.

There were none.

**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].

There were none.

Commissioner Land returned to a discussion regarding merger of the City of Live Oak and County fire departments and explained that although there had been issues in the past, he did not wish for new City administration to be bound by previous political issues under old management. Commissioner Land discussed the City's interest in merging the fire departments to save money, as the department was losing revenue. He felt it could be a win-win solution for both the County and City with the sharing of equipment and increased services for residents. Commissioner Land then discussed in much detail budget figures on

various facets of a merger of the departments and revenue that would be collected with the increased square footage to be serviced by the County under the County's current fire assessment rate. He added that the City charged residents a fire assessment through their water bills, but that if those residents had to pay the County's fire assessment rate, it would only be a few dollars more than what they already paid.

Discussion ensued on the City's current operating budget for the fire station, cost to the County, and sharing of equipment, and potentially leasing the City's fire station building.

Commissioner Fleming commented on previous failed attempts at a fire department merger and that although he was in favor of continued discussions, he did not want to interfere with progress of the new fire station.

Much discussion ensued on combining the County and City fire departments and improved service it would provide to residents.

The Board noted their interest in continued merger discussions.

County Attorney Prevatt recommended setting specific agenda topics to discuss in a workshop.

Discussion ensued on a workshop and the different issues to discuss with the City.

Bo Hancock, 6135 Wiggins Road, had several issues with Commissioner Land discussing a merger with the City and felt specific topics should be set before pursuing further discussions.

Commissioner Land noted that the City had wanted him to ask whether the County Commission would be interested in a merger.

Much discussion ensued on the issue, previous attempts at a merger, having discussion topics ready for a workshop, and whether it was the City who had approached Commissioner Land or vice-versa.

**The Board agreed by consensus for Commissioner Land to continue discussions with the City of Live Oak regarding merger of fire departments.**

More discussion continued over a possible merger.

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

County Administrator Harris had nothing to discuss.

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

Commissioner Fleming commented on the various challenges throughout the month.

Commissioners Stapleton, Hale, and Land commented on County employee Mandy Frederickson's loss and Clerk employee Neena Funicelli's loss.

Economic Development Director Norris gave an update on a legislative conference he had attended and representatives with whom he had spoken.

The Board commended Director Norris for his work and effort to represent the county.

Chairman White had nothing further to discuss.

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

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 6:43 p.m.

ATTEST:

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

*Franklin White*  
FRANKLIN WHITE, CHAIRMAN  
SUWANNEE COUNTY BOARD OF  
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS