

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; Eric Musgrove, Deputy Clerk; Randy Harris, County Administrator; and James W. Prevatt, Jr., County Attorney, were also present.

Chairman White called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. and asked Commissioner Fleming 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 February 1, 2022 Regular meeting.

Commissioner Land noted a change of the Frier task order amount from \$95,000 to \$9,500.

Commissioner Fleming moved to approve the minutes of the February 1, 2022 Regular meeting, as corrected. Commissioner Land seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

CONSENT:

County Administrator Harris clarified that item seven was simply authorization to advertise.

The second item on the agenda was to approve payment of \$2,595,523.99 in processed invoices.

The third item on the agenda was approval of a SCOP agreement with the Florida Department of Transportation for the resurfacing design of 76th Street from US 90 to River Road, and adoption of an enabling resolution. **(Agreement No. 2022-44 and Resolution No. 2022-20)**

The fourth item on the agenda was approval to piggyback on Suwannee County School Board RFP 17-209 for replacement of roof shingles on the Health Department Building.

The fifth item on the agenda was to authorize County staff to execute Municipal SCOP grant applications.

The sixth item on the agenda was authorization to procure a Weiler TT600 Track Distributor for the Public Works Department construction crew.

The seventh item on the agenda was approval (authorization to advertise) of senior management classification for economic development.

The eighth item on the agenda was approval of a lease and enabling resolution for CAT 926 Wheel Loader for the Public Works Department construction crew. **(Resolution No. 2022-19, see Agreement No. 2022-41)**

Commissioner Stapleton moved to approve consent items 2-8. Commissioner Fleming seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

PROCLAMATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS:

The ninth item on the agenda was a presentation by Thomas Howell Ferguson, PA and CPAs.

Chairman White noted that he had met the company while in Tallahassee and asked them to speak to the Board about their work.

Steve Stephens, Director and CPA with Ferguson, discussed in detail his firm's work with the CARES Act, FEMA, and other Federal and State assistance that his firm could provide to Suwannee County. He also explained how the County could receive the most and best use of funding.

Some discussion ensued on county size, how it related to the amount of funding received, and the process for bidding out grant-related services.

After additional questions, Mr. Stephens noted that Thomas Howell Ferguson was on the State contract list, so their work had already been competitively bid.

The tenth item on the agenda was a presentation by Mike Grissom with Buchanan, Ingersoll, & Rooney.

Mr. Grissom stated that his firm's lobbyist work aligned with the work done by Thomas Howell Ferguson, especially as it dealt with rural counties. He then discussed specific work done or supported by his firm, noting that as a specialty service, their work did not need to go through competitive bidding. Mr. Grissom added that the State Legislature was more focused on rural projects at the present than usual, and the County needed to take advantage of it.

Discussion ensued on funding sources and opportunities for rural counties.

After questioning, Mr. Grissom stated that he would charge the County about \$5,000 per month.

COMMISSIONERS ITEMS:

Commissioner Hale stated that he had received some telephone calls about the increase in commercial dumpster rates, especially as it related to churches. He suggested a flat fee for churches.

Commissioner Stapleton stated that he had also received phone calls about the commercial dumpster rates for churches, which had gone from \$44.58 to \$140.08 per month. He suggested alleviating the issue, perhaps by setting the rate at ½ the normal rate.

Discussion ensued on the small number of church dumpsters serviced by the County (11), that their members were already paying much higher residential solid waste rates, and what would happen to them when the County exited the commercial dumpster business.

After questioning, County Attorney Prevatt noted that the County needed to provide two weeks' public notice and then approve the changes by resolution.

Discussion ensued on incorporating non-profit organizations within the proposal to fall within legal bounds and also to verify that the County would not lose money by reducing the rates.

County Administrator Harris noted that churches were not assessed residential solid waste rates.

The Board agreed by consensus to have the County Attorney review the possibility of advertising to reduce the monthly fee for commercial dumpster fees to ½ the assessed rate for non-profit entities (or whatever percentage would cover costs), and more specifically if possible, churches.

COUNTY ATTORNEY ITEMS:

There were none.

GENERAL BUSINESS:

The eleventh item on the agenda was to discuss, with possible Board action, surplus of County-owned properties.

County Administrator Harris stated that the County would first need to declare the properties as surplus and then establish a minimum price for each property.

Discussion ensued on the probability that most of the properties in question were in flood zones and could not be built upon.

County Attorney Prevatt clarified that the properties did legally allow for building, even if it meant that they had to be built upon stilts and follow other, more stringent, guidelines.

Mr. Ronald Meeks, Planning and Zoning Director, discussed the issues related to building structures on the lots in question, adding that construction was allowed, although there would be more stringent requirements due to their location in the flood plain.

County Attorney Prevatt discussed various ways of selling the properties, including a public sale on the Courthouse steps after advertising such in the newspaper.

Commissioner Hale moved to declare properties 1 through 8 as surplus to County needs. Commissioner Stapleton seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Land moved to adopt the statutory process for the sale of parcels 1 through 8, as is. Commissioner Hale seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

The twelfth item on the agenda was to discuss, with possible Board action, solid waste windshield permit stickers.

County Administrator Harris stated that it would cost approximately \$13,000 to purchase and mail out two permit stickers for each billable unit within the County.

Commissioner Fleming left the meeting at 6:14 p.m.

County Administrator Harris asked about those who did not currently pay the County household assessment (i.e., City of Live Oak residents) and if the County would allow the purchase of the permits at the same price as County residents.

Commissioner Fleming returned to the meeting at 6:15 p.m.

Discussion ensued on options to vehicle stickers and how to reduce out-of-county waste.

Mr. Maurice Perkins, 505 Lafayette Avenue, Live Oak, suggested simply using driver's licenses to determine whether they lived in Suwannee County. County Administrator Harris replied that it would take more time to show licenses, and some folks would not be willing to show them anyway.

There was further discussion as to how some Suwannee County citizens had listed addresses in Columbia County or Lafayette County.

Mr. Christian Peterson, 306 Merrimac Street, Live Oak, suggested having high school students design a new sticker every year.

County Administrator Harris agreed to research various options for solid waste disposal stickers and return them to the Board.

The thirteenth item on the agenda was to discuss, with possible Board action, advertising a Request for Qualifications for building inspections.

County Administrator Harris stated that although the new Building Official, Mack Hinkle, had been doing a good job since he began, there may be times when the Building Department was behind in their work and needed assistance. In such cases, the County would need to have already advertised for Requests for Qualifications. After questioning, County Administrator Harris stated that the decision to use additional inspections would be on an as-needed basis, subject to the needs of the Building Official.

Commissioner Land stated that there was currently no backlog at the Building Department, and he was hesitant to have contractors deal with out-of-town agencies with which there was no relationship.

Mr. Mack Hinkle, Building Official, noted that the Building Department was basically caught up and was well within the State timelines for handling permits. He discussed the loss of relationship due to third-party services and some issues related with it. Ultimately, the citizen wanted their project to be completed, but in his experience, they would rather deal with local officials than those from out of town. Mr. Hinkle suggested advertising for another building inspector instead, adding that there was a sufficient network in and around Suwannee County to handle the building inspections.

Further discussion ensued on the potential need for additional building inspection services.

County Administrator Harris noted that the County would not pay a retainer fee for services, and there would be no expense to the County unless the third-party inspection service was actually used.

Commissioner Stapleton suggested that the third-party building inspection services was a safety net to the County in times of great need, not something to undermine the Building Official or take away from his work. Mr. Hinkle would still have the authority to call in the third-party building inspection.

Commissioner Land reiterated his concerns with the Requests for Qualifications.

Mr. Wayne Hannaka, 11883 93rd Road, Live Oak, noted that Suwannee County's turnaround time was phenomenal, and in his nearly 50 years of construction experience, third-party inspectors only slowed down the turnaround time and were not popular with citizens.

Mr. Perkins stated that his dealings with third-party inspectors in his work had been negative and suggested allowing the in-place network of surrounding county building inspectors to continue as-is.

Further discussion ensued on how the intent of the agenda item had been altered to appear to be against Mr. Hinkle, which was not the truth.

The Board agreed to take no action at this time; it was further noted that another building inspector position was already scheduled to be advertised.

The fourteenth item on the agenda was to discuss, with possible Board action, contracted roadside litter pick up.

County Administrator Harris discussed the lower number of inmates available to pick up litter. He noted that a company contacted last year to perform the work no longer appeared to be in business and he asked if the Board wished to advertise for bids again. County Administrator Harris added that he would also work with the Sheriff to see if he could help out with inmate labor.

Much discussion ensued on options and issues with litter pick up, including hiring part-time staff, using temp labor services, or using jail inmate labor.

County Administrator Harris agreed to seek various options and return to the Board.

The fifteenth item on the agenda was Additional Agenda Items.

There were two additional agenda items:

The first additional agenda item was authorization to send certified notice of a public hearing to companies that provided residential garbage collection services within Suwannee County.

County Administrator Harris stated that a public hearing and certified notice of such was required by the Florida Statutes for residential garbage collection services.

Commissioner Land moved to approve sending a certified notice of a public hearing to companies that provided residential garbage collection services within Suwannee County. Commissioner Fleming seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

The second additional agenda item was authorization to bid construction of Fire Station No. 6 on north US Highway 129.

County Administrator Harris stated that the Board had authorized a design-build at the previous meeting but asked instead to authorize a standard bid construction to reduce the amount of time required to complete the project. He was not asking to approve a specific engineer at this time. After questioning, County Administrator Harris clarified that a task order for an engineer would be brought before the Board for approval, the building or project would be designed, and then the County would advertise the bid package to contractors. A design-build would require additional time-intensive steps.

Discussion ensued on designing the fire station and the lack of interest from the City concerning combined fire services.

Commissioner Hale moved to authorize bidding construction of Fire Station No. 6 on north US Highway 129. Commissioner Stapleton seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

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.

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

County Administrator Harris noted that having a lobbyist in Tallahassee would be beneficial.

February 15, 2022
Regular Board Meeting
Judicial Annex
Live Oak, Florida

Mr. Jimmy Norris, Economic Development Director, brought before the Board a contract for lobbying services from Mr. Grissom for review.

The Board agreed to have County Attorney Prevatt review the lobbyist contract for discussion at the following meeting.

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

Commissioner Fleming thanked the Chairman for contacting firms to come speak to the Board and briefly discussed the City Fire Department situation.

Commissioner Stapleton noted that there were strong personalities involved in discussions between the City and County that sometimes led to issues.

Chief Eddie Hand noted that he had spoken with Live Oak Fire Chief Chad Croft and wanted to make sure that politics did not get involved in their service to the community. He added that an interlocal agreement for automatic aid for fire services would be brought before the Board in the near future.

Commissioner Land stated that there had been no disrespect from the members of the City and the two entities would still work together on providing for the citizens.

Commissioner Hale echoed the sentiments of the other commissioners.

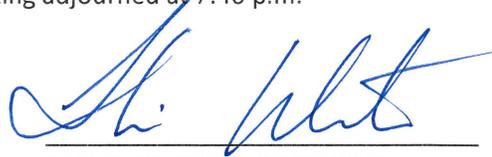
Chairman White thanked everyone for their work and discussed a recent conference.

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

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

ATTEST

 *Barry A. Baker*, DC
BARRY A. BAKER
CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT



FRANKLIN WHITE, CHAIRMAN
SUWANNEE COUNTY BOARD OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS