

# **JEFFERSON COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

## **Regular Session Agenda Thursday, March 6th, 2025 9 AM**

The Board met on this date in Regular Session. Chairman Austin Hosford, Commissioners Ben White, JT Surles, Jessica Gramling, and Gene Hall were present. Clerk Trey Hightower, County Manager Shannon Metty, HR Director Renee Long, Assistant County Attorney Evan Rosenthal, and County Budget Officer Gus Rojas were also present.

The meeting opened with agenda adjustments, including updates on Aucilla Shores and the Fulford Scholarship, which were approved unanimously. Presentations included a mural project in Monticello and the Florida Wildlife Corridor's work in Jefferson County. Citizens shared concerns, such as building renovations at the Senior Citizen Center and mental health services through the Holistic Plan of Care. The Consent Agenda was approved, and several grants were awarded to local non-profits. Discussions followed about a lighting plan for the Rec Park, an over-budget building bid, and a Letter of Support. The Aucilla Shores project was addressed, along with a proposed donation to the Fulford Scholarship, which was also approved. Updates were provided on the DOT project and the Comprehensive Plan, with discussions on traffic mitigation. The meeting concluded with the proposal to present the Fulford Scholarship award at a future meeting before adjournment.

### **1. Call to Order, Invocation, Pledge of Allegiance**

### **2. Approval of Agenda**

- Commissioner Gramling asks that we add Aucilla Shores Updates at the end of General Business (Item F).
- Commissioner Hall notices that Item 1 says 6 PM instead of 9 AM.
- Commissioner Surles mentions the loss of former Commissioner Fulford's son. He wants the scholarship fund in his name to be added to the General Business (Item G).
- **Commissioner Surles motions to approve the agenda, seconded by Commissioner White and unanimously passed by the board.**

### **3. Public Announcements, Presentations, Awards**

- Mason Gravley – Florida Wildlife Corridor Foundation
  - Mural project in Monticello. Allyn Childress provides background context about the mission of the Florida Wildlife Corridor Foundation. She provides definition of “irreplaceable gaps.”

### **4. Citizens Request & Input on Non-Agenda Items**

- Maisey Glenn—Jefferson County Senior Citizen Center
  - Expressed her thanks to the board for all it did for the center in 2024. She worked for the state in social and general services, where she learned how to look for problems in buildings. She is looking for people to come in and view what has transpired in the last few years—she is requesting further help for building renovations. She requests a sit-down meeting with the board.
- Leslie Ballinger – Tall Timbers

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- Ecological research station in the Big Bend area of North Florida. Strong advocate for Florida Wildlife Corridor. Jefferson County is an important part of this—2/3 of the county is included in the Corridor.
  - Teresa Sterling
    - Provides context regarding grant for wildlife mural, which will highlight the importance of Jefferson County in the Wildlife Corridor. Grant has increased to \$15,000 from the initial \$10,000 that was requested. Contribution is \$5,000.
  - Melanie Mays
    - Speaking on behalf of Jefferson Arts Gallery.
  - Raymond Carolla
    - Volunteers at the Senior Center. If the Arts Gallery is closed, businesses and other centers will be closed.
    - Commissioner Hosford clarifies that the Arts Gallery will not be closed, it is just a change in lease agreement.
  - Tom Connoley
    - He enjoys the Jefferson Arts Gallery and is here to show his support. He hopes a solution will be beneficial to all.
  - Barbara Thomas—CEO Holistic Plan of Care
    - Mental health counseling, grief and loss, and other various services. She is hoping to be considered for grant. How can we continue to serve people that are newly released from prison/reentering the world. Requests help from the board. Thanks Commissioner Hall and Judge Plaines.
  - Susan Rissman
    - Clarifies the state of the building, which was dilapidated. The school board gave them the building with a 25-year lease, with the promise that if it was repaired after the lease, they would only have to pay \$1 a year. The reason they never had a power bill is because they were never asked to pay one. Concludes that this was handled very poorly.
    - Open discussion between Mrs. Rissman and the board.
5. **Consent Agenda**
- **Commissioner Hall motions to approve the Consent Agenda, seconded by Commissioner Surles and unanimously passed by the board.**
6. **General Business**
- a. **Grants Schedule – Theresa Sterling**
- Lighting plan throughout the Rec Park. Maximum amount is \$1.5 million. The due date is May 2, 2025.
  - County Manager Shannon Metty explains we are trying to find other ways to pay for pickleball.

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- Board provides input regarding any grants related to the county (roads, infrastructure, parks and recreation).
- Commissioner Surles suggests reaching out to Duke Energy.

#### **b. Small Non-Profit Grants**

- Applicants provide presentations about their non-profit organizations. Budgeted \$15,000 for the entire fund, which will be divided amongst the awarded organizations.
- Citizens to be Heard: Tiffany Wilkie, Ryan Rains, Melanie Mays, Barbara Thomas, Mike Karen
- **Commissioner Surles motions to approve Dirty Pecan, seconded by Commissioner White and unanimously passed by the board.**
- **Commissioner Surles motions to approve MacCloud, seconded by Commissioner Gramling and unanimously passed by the board.**
- **Commissioner Hall motioned to approve North Florida Wildlife Center, seconded by Commissioner Gramling and unanimously passed by the board.**
- **Commissioner Surles motions to approve MadCo, seconded by Commissioner Hall and unanimously passed by the board.**
- **Commissioner Surles motions to approve Holistic Plan of Care, seconded by Commissioner White and unanimously passed by the board.**
- **Commissioner Surles motions to approve Opera House, seconded by Commissioner White and unanimously passed by the board.**

#### **c. A Building Update Discussion**

- County Manager received a bid that was way over budget. Requests input from the board as to what should be done; it will require several million dollars.

#### **d. Letter of Support**

- Shannon Metty explains the contents of the letter, which includes how co-ops are the ones that brought electricity to the rural communities. They seem to be the best solution to bring broadband to our rural communities.
- **Commissioner Surles motions to approve the Letter of Support, seconded by Commissioner White and unanimously passed by the board.**

#### **e. SCOP/SCRAP**

- Shannon Metty recalls that after that last BCC meeting, the board confirmed which projects it would like to have submitted to the state.
- **Commissioner White motions to approve, seconded by Commissioner Gramling and unanimously passed by the board.**

#### **f. Aucilla Shores**

- Discrepancy between the legal name of one of the roads that was spelled incorrectly in the packet versus its correct legal spelling (East First Way vs. East First Street).

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- Map from the contractor showing which roads can be stabilized. The contractor should receive it this afternoon.
- Whether or not the grading will continue while this project is being done.
- Citizen to be Heard: Dorothy Bonds, BJ Nelson

### **g. Fulford Scholarship**

- Commissioner Surles suggests that the board comes up with a figure to donate to the Fulford Scholarship. Will require a budget amendment.
- Shannon Metty explains that the total amount for the small nonprofit grant is \$15,000 rather than \$11,500. They have an extra \$3,200 they could put toward the Fulford scholarship.
- Commissioner Gramling asks that it be made an even number.
- Commissioner White states that he will put in \$800 from his business to make it an even \$4,000.
- **Commissioner Surles motions to approve the budget amendment, seconded by Commissioner Hall and unanimously passed by the board.**

### **7. Clerk of Court**

- Thanked the board for compliance with adopted policies.

### **8. County Engineer**

- Provides an update on the DOT project.
- Commissioner Surles says that the big, slow curve on Waukeelah Highway is slowly deteriorating, and we need a permanent solution.

### **9. County Attorney**

- Asks if the board would like to delegate to Shannon the ability to execute the Non-Profit Agreements.
- No motion is necessary. Board consensus is granted.

### **10. County Manager**

- David Wheeler is present to get some direction regarding the Comprehensive Plan. He offers to prepare an RFQ requesting services of an outside consultant. Within that request, he will incorporate our mission statement and list priorities.
- Commissioner Gramling requests clarification regarding Mr. Wheeler's request.
- David Wheeler explains that if the board would like him to move forward with the request, he can bring a draft to the next meeting.
- Counsel clarifies that it can work with David to create a draft. It does not have the jurisdiction to assist with additional changes such as planning and technical expertise, and in that case an outside planning consultant will be necessary.
- Commissioner Surles suggests traffic mitigating devices in the Comp Plan. Counsel says that it does not function as a transportation planning entity and a planning consultant will be necessary in this instance.

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- Commissioner Gramling inquires what statutory changes are needed.
- David Wheeler replies that there are some elements that are required to be there, such as property rights. There are some things that are required now that were not required when the document was initially written. This will require help from a consultant.
- Commissioner Hall asks if there has been any discussion regarding impact fees.
- Shannon Metty responds that they will pick those back up. She has all of their inventory lists and has to submit it to the impact fee group so they can restart the impact fee study.

### **11. County Commissioners**

- Commissioner Surles recircles the Fulford Scholarship. He wants to present the award at a Commission meeting.

### **12. Adjourn**

- **Commissioner Surles motions to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner White and unanimously approved by the board.**