

JEFFERSON COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Regular Session

Thursday, June 5th, 2025

9 AM

The Board met on this date in Regular Session. Chairman Austin Hosford, Commissioners JT Surlis, Jessica Gramling, Ben White, and Gene Hall were present. Clerk Trey Hightower, County Manager Shannon Metty, Budget Officer Gus Rojas, Sheriff Mac McNeill, County Attorney Evan Rosenthal, and Assistant County Attorney Kirsten Mood were also present.

At the June 5th meeting, the board convened with formalities before approving the agenda and consent items. County Manager Shannon Metty addressed a publication error regarding retirement contributions and disorganization within the Tourist Development Council, prompting discussions about invoice procedures and the Monticello Opera House grant. Several general business items were handled: a legislative tracking service proposal was declined, the A Building Grant extension was approved 4-1, request to waive procurement was passed, and the sheriff's interlocal agreement was amended and ratified. Road bond funds were allocated to a new paving project, a Jefferson Express bus program extension was delayed, and a trade-in deal for new road department tractors was approved pending legal review. The board also approved a 911 system MOU and reviewed surplus equipment. Updates were provided on courthouse funding, highway projects, and upcoming RFPs. Commissioner Hall requested updates on gym demolition and Commissioner Gramling proposed public evaluations of the County Manager's office. Other commissioners raised issues concerning property sales, road safety, and emergency access. The meeting concluded with a unanimous vote to adjourn.

1. 9 AM Call to Order, Invocation, Pledge of Allegiance

2. Approval of the Agenda

- **Commissioner White motions to approve the agenda, seconded by Commissioner Hall and unanimously passed by the board.**

3. Public Announcement, Presentations, and Awards

- County Manager Shannon Metty
 - Apologizes for an error in the publication of an advertisement regarding retirement contributions, promising full compliance moving forward.
- Rose Marie – Agrotourism Operator
 - Tourist Development Council carries a fund balance in excess of \$250,000– a portion of which is county funds. The funds are just sitting there – she suggests a review of old invoices to correct coding errors.
 - The \$5,000 grant to the Monticello Opera House Agenda Item has not come before the TDC for approval and review.
 - Commissioner Gramling asks how to proceed.
 - County Manager Metty states that there has been disorganization regarding TDC, emphasizing the need for proper documentation and approval processes for invoices. She introduces the new TDC Coordinator.

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- Chairman asks whether the board is supposed to make ultimate decisions regarding the TDC Director.
- Counsel Kirsten Mood clarifies that bylaws provide that the TDC Director can be appointed by the County Manager.
- Commissioner Surles would like to see the Opera House funds approved.
- Commissioner Hall asks that any entity that receives a mini grant from the Jefferson County Board of Commissioners shows some accountability as to how the money has been spent. Shannon Metty responds that procedure is already in place.

4. Citizens Request & Input on Non-Agenda Items

5. Consent Agenda

- **Commissioner Surles motions to approve the Consent Agenda, seconded by Commissioner White and unanimously passed by the board.**
- Chairman Hosford discusses the Tyson Boeing Award, noting that he prefers to keep businesses local. He requests a board consensus to insert a local option into all procurement processes.
- Counsel engages in logistical discussion regarding the nature of this request.

6. General Business

a. NGN Legislative Tracking

- Evan Rosenthal explains that at a prior meeting, the board requested that NGN provide a proposal to provide legislative tracking services. He presents a proposal to provide those services for a fee of \$9,400. It would begin with the 2026 legislative session, and it would include a weekly memo to the county starting two weeks prior to legislative session starting. After session ends, it will detail any pending legislation that may impact the county. Finally, they would provide a comprehensive presentation to the board on anything that has passed that impacts the county. He clarifies that they are not lobbyists.
- Chairman Hosford notes that some of these services are already provided to the board, and he would like to see the board pass on this item.
- Commissioner Hall asks counsel to reiterate the cost and comments that this service is not cost efficient.
- **No motion is made; item does not pass.**

b. A Building Grant

- Shannon Metty states that the Division of State regarding historical grants has allowed us one more extension. She has met with JJ, and he will be at the next board meeting to present.

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- **Commissioner Surles motions to extend the grant, seconded by Commissioner Gramling. Chairman Hosford votes to deny. Motion passes 4-1.**
 - Commissioner Hall inquires if there will be a match. Shannon Metty responds that there will not be a match.
- c. Request to Waive Procurement**
- **Commissioner Surles motions to approve Item C, seconded by Commissioner White and unanimously passed by the board.**
- d. ILA Sheriff & City JAGC**
- Sheriff Mac McNeill
 - Every year, we receive a federal grant that passes through FDLE, anywhere from high 30k to low 40k. He requests that they allow each individual agency to have access to those pool funds on alternating years. The City would get odd years and the County will receive the funds on the even years.
 - **Commissioner Surles motions to approve Item D, seconded by Commissioner Gramling. It is not brought to a vote.**
 - Kirsten Mood states that before the board votes, the county signature has already been placed on the document, but it was not ratified by a full vote of the board. The commissioners should amend their motion to make that change. In addition to approving the Interlocal, they should also ratify that signature on the award.
 - **Commissioner Surles amends his motion as Counsel stated, seconded by Commissioner Gramling, and unanimously passed by the board.**
- e. CSA with Peavy and Sons Related to the Road Bond**
- County Manager Shannon Metty
 - This is the last bit of our road bond funds, which will go up to North Gilly. She requests the total amount for this project, approximately 1.2 miles, which is \$546,171.96.
 - **Commissioner Gramling motions to approve Item E, seconded by Commissioner Surles and unanimously passed by the board.**
- f. Jefferson Express Development Grant**
- County Manager Shannon Metty
 - FDOT gave us funds to assist with Jefferson Express, where we installed three or four bus stops and people were able to ride for a dollar. The state will not fund this grant program going forward so

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if we were to continue our agreement, then the cost would be on the county, and it would be approximately \$150,000. On average, the cost per month is between \$12,000 to \$13,000 for these riders.

- Chairman Hosford would like this item to be extended to one more meeting to reexamine the costs.

g. **Resolution Crystal Tractor Deal for Road Department**

- County Manager Shannon Metty
 - Reminds the board that the Road Department needs more tractors. We now have the deal ready: they are going to take one of our older tractors, the extra Mack Truck, and a couple batwings that are no longer feasible to use. We are trading those, which leaves us about \$22,000 out of pocket for two new tractors. There is a caveat: we do not have the actual contract to be signed at this meeting, but it is a time-sensitive issue before we lose the tractors. Metty asks the board, pending legal review of the contract, to authorize the Chairman to sign off on it.
 - Evan Rosenthal reiterates that Counsel strongly encourages against doing this but is willing to make an exception because this should be a basic agreement. If he runs into any issues negotiating, it will need to come back to the board.
 - **Commissioner White motions to approve, seconded by Commissioner Gramling and unanimously passed by the board.**

h. **MOU for the Regional Next Generation 911 Systems and Services Interoperability Project**

- Kirsten Mood
 - Clarifies the nature and purpose of the document.
 - **Commissioner Hall motions to approve, seconded by Commissioner Surles and unanimously passed by the board.**

i. **Surplus Road Department Equipment and Purchase**

- This was covered in item g.

7. **Clerk of Courts**

- a. Updates the board on the courthouse funding. The original \$1.3 million asked for our courthouse funding on the House side was cut in half on all the courthouse funding requests across the state. We are down to \$680,000; it is not on the Senate side. The Clerks have a meeting with Senator Corey Simon this afternoon at 1:30 to discuss the Clerk budget.

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8. County Engineer

- a. Boston Highway—90% plans are almost complete and turned into DOT. We are working on closeout documents for Waukeelah Highway; he believes the pay request was signed at today's meeting. He requests a copy from Shannon Metty.
- b. Chris Morris states that road bonds have just got approved, and he will reach out to a contractor. Wolf Creek is ready to go out to bid. For Boston Culvert, we are still doing some modifications and sub-grants. On Old Lloyd Road, we just got bids in, but we have not selected a contractor.

9. County Attorney

10. County Manager

- a. RFPs have gone out for the pickleball court, as well as the Continuing Services Road Contract. Provides update on kennels, noting that they have a bid out for fencing quotes. They are putting lime rock down in between one of the kennels.
- b. The insurance company on our contract usually does a presentation every July. She confirms that the board is willing to waive the presentation. June 19 will be a large agenda—they will be hearing the constitutional budgets. The Clerk of Court will be traveling that week.

11. County Commissioners

- a. Commissioner Hall
 - Requests an update on the demolition of the old gymnasium. There is none. Shannon Metty has looked at some grant opportunities, and she plans to provide a grant rundown to the board. She has been approached by someone suggesting saving some of the bricks as a memorial/fundraiser.
 - Shannon Metty will not be attending the conference in June due to expensive hotel costs.
- b. Commissioner Gramling
 - Proposes the implementation of an evaluation of the County Manager being held in an open forum. It is an opportunity for the County Manager to receive feedback. She would like it to be conducted at the end of our fiscal year.
 - Evan Rosenthal mentions an issue from a procedural standpoint, noting the Florida Sunshine Law. Each board member must complete their written evaluations and submit them and host discussions in an open public meeting.
 - Commissioner Hall approves of the idea.
 - Commissioner Surlles asks for clarification regarding evaluations. It will only be for the County Manager.

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- Shannon Metty encourages the feedback, emphasizing that it is necessary for improvement.
 - Counsel directs the board to vote to put this item on the next meeting agenda, and then they will tailor the form and return with a proposed form for adoption at the following meeting.
 - Chairman highlights that this is standard practice with taxpayer money. Board consensus is implied.
- c. Commissioner White
- Asks for an update on the private road deal for Deer Run. Shannon Metty responds that she was not given a timeline.
 - The Jefferson County Country Club is selling a property that is close to our rec park. They have 22 acres for sale—there is a sliver that is not included in the sale property; they would be interested in adjoining that part of the sale.
 - Chairman verifies with counsel that the consortium funds can be used for land acquisition.
 - Counsel adds that those funds must be approved, which is approximately a year long process.
 - Commissioner Surles reminds the board that they are starting with Chief Burrus' lifesaving equipment with the restitution funds but perhaps they can also be used to help finance this.
 - Shannon Metty states that one of the parcels belongs to a private citizen.
- d. Commissioner Surles
- Requests an update on Old Lloyd, our version, the North side Deadman curve. The property owner that lives there has a right to protect their property. They have gotten an approved guardrail, which will be placed just off the shoulder of the road. It will not cost the county anything: it is coming at the expense of the property owner.
 - The Chairman asks who will replace the guardrail when it inevitably gets smashed into.
 - Requests consensus from the board to fix up a couple bad spots on Vista Road, which serves as emergency access for the sheriff's office in the jail.
 - Chairman Hosford asks if he may send whatever excess there is to Shady Bridge. He has three signatures that he can get today to get it done.
 - Counsel Evan Rosenthal asks if there is time for that contract to expire. There needs to be clear direction from the board if it would like to begin implementing these changes today. Alternatively, staff could bring this

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topic back to the June 19th meeting. If it gets approved at that meeting, there will be 11 days to get the work done.

- Gus Rojas states that we can ask for an extension.
- Counsel Evan Rosenthal expresses that it is problematic to use the county road department for a private road.
- Chairman Hosford asks for board consensus to do both items with whatever funds are leftover. Board consensus is granted.

e. Chairman Hosford

- Asks for an update regarding Jefferson Water Community. They are supposed to meet with Shannon soon—their issue is that some of the old roads were built up nine feet over water valves, and no one from the county contacted them and told them what was going to happen to the roads when they were rebuilt.
- Chairman responds that the board may have to step in and help the situation if they do not have the money.
- He asks for an update on the T-Mobile RFQ/RFP. Shannon responds that there is a meeting set up for next week.
- He asks the board to be aware of a TDC item in which they are attempting to enter a contract with gas station TV and put some advertisements in for Monticello's local markets and events.
- Commissioner Surles expressed concern about encouraging increased visitation to the area, noting that it could lead to unwanted development pressures on local land. He also shared his opinion that the Tourist Development Council (TDC) has had a minimal impact on the county so far. In response, Chairman Hosford noted that the recently completed mural project has had a positive effect and brought visibility to the community.
- Chairman requests an update on guardrails. Shannon Metty responds that they were on the Consent Agenda, and they should be finished in October.

12. Adjourn

- a. Commissioner Surles motions to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Gramling and unanimously passed by the board.**