

JEFFERSON COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Regular Session

Tuesday, April 28, 2026

6:00 PM

The Board met on this date in Regular Session. Commissioners Jessica Gramling, JT Surles, Austin Hosford, and Gene Hall were present, and Chairman Ben White attended via Zoom. County Manager Ron Russo, Clerk of Court Trey Hightower, and County Attorney Evan Rosenthal were also present.

The meeting was called to order at 6 PM and the agenda was unanimously approved, including allowing Commissioner White to attend via Zoom. During general business, the board held a public hearing on a \$2.2 million Small Cities CDBG Grant for an emergency shelter and basketball court, which was approved unanimously, with applications due May 20 and a draft available for public review. A substantial portion of the meeting focused on the Trulieve facility, where county officials, company representatives, and residents engaged in extensive discussion regarding odor control, stormwater management, and environmental concerns. While Trulieve representatives outlined mitigation measures and emphasized compliance, commissioners and citizens expressed ongoing concerns about impacts to air and water quality, with suggestions including independent water testing and further review. Public comment was heavily featured, and Trulieve representatives agreed to return with additional information at a future meeting. Additional updates included progress on the County Manager recruitment, with applicant information expected in May, and the meeting concluded with brief commissioner remarks and adjournment.

- 1. 6PM Call to Order, Invocation, Pledge of Allegiance (00:00:01)**
- 2. Approval of the Agenda (00:02:51)**
 - a. Commissioner Surles motions to allow Commissioner White to attend via Zoom, seconded by Commissioner Hall and unanimously approved by the board.**
 - b. Commissioner Hall motions to approve the agenda, seconded by Commissioner Surles and unanimously approved by the board.**
- 3. Public Announcements, Presentations and Awards (00:04:34)**
- 4. Citizens Request and Input on Non-Agenda Items (00:04:43)**
- 5. Consent Agenda**
- 6. General Business (00:04:54)**
 - a. Public Hearing Small Cities CDBG Grant (00:04:54)**
 - i. Ron Russo introduces the item, which is at \$2.2 million and will be utilized for an emergency shelter and basketball court.**
 - ii. Pam explains that applications are due May 20, and the draft is available for public viewing.**
 - iii. Commissioner Surles motions to approve the resolution authorizing the CDBG Grant, seconded by Commissioner Hosford and unanimously approved by the board.**
 - b. Trulieve (00:07:20)**

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- i.** Commissioner Gramling highlights updates to the chamber, including a time clock. A three-minute speaking limit will be enforced. All public comments are encouraged.
- ii.** Ron Russo details the county's involvement with the Trulieve facility. He explains the duties of the Planning Department as they relate to the Trulieve project.
- iii.** Commissioner Hosford thanks the Trulieve representatives for showing up. The residents of Jefferson County value clean air and water, and the board intends to protect those values. Jefferson County will not accept a business model that comes at the expense of its residents. He asks the representatives of Trulieve to place themselves in the shoes of Jefferson County residents.
- iv.** Christine Hersey provides a brief history of Trulieve, noting that they are the largest employer in Jefferson County. Their main purpose is to expand access to cannabis to patients and consumers who rely on safe, regulated products.
- v.** Kyle Landry details Trulieve's campus and history in Jefferson County. He details various protocols, including odor mitigation measures and the stormwater management system.
- vi.** Brett Stephens shows the site design for the stormwater system and explains the changes it has undergone. He also shows the stormwater dissipation system and ongoing maintenance to improve its performance. He reinforces that Trulieve is being a good neighbor and has not committed any compliance issues.
- vii.** Commissioner Hosford maintains that he did not hear any concrete answers to odor or stormwater issues. He raises further concern about the legality of dumping water onto neighboring property.
- viii.** Citizens to be Heard: Clayton Tolbert, Kay Curtis, Brent Will, Jabre Knight, Gebhard, Dave Avery, Jennifer Tyler, Norman Fralick, Steve Bentz, Jeremy Wilson, Elise Jones, Bob Jones, Blaine Tatum
- ix.** Open discussion between citizens, board, and Trulieve representatives regarding facility operative and regulatory concerns.
- x.** Residents expressed strong frustration over persistent odor issues, saying there has been no clear or immediate plan to fix the problem and calling for continuous filtration or stronger mitigation measures.
- xi.** Many citizens raised concerns about stormwater runoff, including fears that water is being discharged onto neighboring properties and that the system design and maintenance are inadequate.

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- xii. There was significant worry about water quality and potential contamination, particularly regarding nitrate levels and possible impacts to private wells and the local aquifer.
- xiii. Several speakers criticized Trulieve for a perceived lack of accountability and responsiveness, noting delays in addressing complaints and dissatisfaction with the absence of concrete solutions or apologies for past impacts.
- xiv. Citizens emphasized the need for independent oversight, including third-party water testing and unbiased evaluation, to ensure environmental safety and restore public trust.
- xv. Ron Russo reads questions from Zoom attendees.
- xvi. Sean Marstin explains the allowable predevelopment discharge rate.
- xvii. Christine Hersey offers to revisit with a potential timeline in an upcoming May meeting.
- xviii. Commissioner Gramling asks Ron Russo about the possibility of hiring an independent contractor to conduct water quality testing.

7. Clerk of Court (01:46:40)

8. County Engineer (01:46:48)

9. County Attorney (01:46:53)

- a. Evan Rosenthal provides an update on the County Manager recruitment search: a list of applicants will be provided in May.

10. County Manager (01:47:42)

11. County Commissioners (01:47:48)

- a. Commissioner Hosford thanks Ron Russo for his assistance at the Lloyd Bus Stop.

12. Adjourn (01:48:03)

- a. **Commissioner Hosford motions to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Surles.**



ATTEST

Benjamin White, Chairman



ATTEST

Cecil "Trey" Hightower, Clerk of Court