

Liberty County, FL

Liberty County Board of County Commissioners - Regular Meeting

Minutes

Thursday, April 10, 2025 at 6:00 pm

1. Call to Order

Minutes:

- Chairman Dewayne Branch called the regular meeting to order in person and via zoom at 6:00 P.M. Present at the meeting were Commissioners Hannah Causseaux, Jim Johnson, Doyle Brown, Derrick Arnold, County Attorney Ken Hosford, Clerk Jace Ford, Finance Director Shaula Jerkins, HR Director Ranza Taylor, Accounts Payable Clerk Jessica Conyers, and Deputy Clerk Kaly Barfield.

2. Invocation

Minutes:

- Invocation led by Commissioner Causseaux.

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Minutes:

- Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Johnson.

4. Awards and Recognitions

Minutes:

- There were no awards and recognitions.

5. Audience Concerns

Minutes:

- There were no audience concerns.

COUNTY DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Monthly Department Briefing

- Brian Eddins – Fire Control Coordinator
- Marie Arick – Extension Director
- Tommy Duggar Jr – Recreation Director
- Melissa Peddie – Ambulance Director
- Cole Maloy – Solid Waste Director
- Boo Bryant – Road and Bridge Superintendent
- Monica Welles – Transit Director
- Katie Kellett – Housing Director
- Ben Guthrie – Emergency Management Director
- Teresa Stossel – Grants and Special Projects Coordinator

- County Engineer - Dewberry

6. Motion to Amend Agenda

Minutes:

- A motion to amend the agenda to add change order #1 to the service builders, Mr. Ben with EMS generators, add public hearing #2 to the agenda for next meeting, May 8th. Add 1st Public hearing tonight. Then I need to move Mrs. Marie Goodman #25 and Brian Eddins #31 to the beginning. Motion made by Commissioner Johnson, second by Commissioner Arnold, motion carried.
- EM Director Ben Guthrie with EMS generators
 - Ben to address the board requesting time extension to close out grant on generators. Motion made by Commissioner Brown, second by Commissioner Johnson, motion carried.
- Change order for Voting precinct - Teresa Stossel
 - Last month the board approved the voting precinct change order.
 - After reviewing the figures, they were a few hundred over budget. Teresa met with Noah and Doug, who decided to delete the density testing from sidewalk which brought them back in budget.
 - Requesting change order to be approved to get started.
 - Motion to approve change order Certus of \$750, by Commissioner Johnson, Second by Commissioner Causseaux, motion carried.

7. Adoption of the Agenda

Minutes:

- Motion made to adopt the agenda made by Commissioner Johnson, second by Commissioner Arnold, motion carried.

CONSENT ITEMS

8. Motion to Approve Board Minutes

Minutes:

- Motion to approve the Board minutes made Commissioner Causseaux, second by Commissioner Brown, motion carried.

9. Motion for the Clerk to pay the bills

10. Letters of Support

11. Human Resource Management

12. Next month meeting schedule

13. Sheriff's Office - 5k route

14. Transit - Monica Welles

15. Transit - Monica Welles

16. Road Dept. - Boo Bryant

17. Road Dept. - Boo Bryant

18. Extension - Marie Arick

19. Emergency Management - Ben Guthrie

20. Emergency Management - Ben Guthrie

Minutes:

- Motion to approve the consent agenda made by Commissioner Causseaux, second by Commissioner Johnson, motion carried.

INDIVIDUAL ACTION ITEMS

21. NWF Health Network - Bibi Ramos

Minutes:

- Brett Phillips introduced Bibi Ramos.
- Community Resource expo event at the civic center - Nonprofit organization, contract with DCF as a lead management agency for DCF Behavioral in 18 counties and child protective services in 16 counties. 3 Judicial. The expo is for all organizations to come together and explain resources they have available for our county and surrounding.
- Motion to allow use of Civic Center made by Commissioner Johnson, second by Commissioner Arnold., Motion carried.

22. CR 67 phases 1 & 2 bid award

Minutes:

- Clerk Ford announced, Noah was unable to be there.
- Phase's one and two were opened on Tuesday.
- CWR was the lowest bid. All documents have been submitted to DOT, which they approved.
- Motion to award the bid to CWR by Commissioner Johnson, second by Commissioner Causseaux. Motion Carried.

23. Ochlocknee bridge repair bid award

Minutes:

- Clerk Ford announced
- These bids were opened Tuesday. DOT has not approved. They questioned only receiving one Bid.
- Noah is in communication with DOT explaining who came to get the bids. '
- Motion to approve the award to Webber, contingent on DOT approval, by Commissioner Johnson, second by Commissioner Causseaux. Motion Carried.

24. Budget Resolution - Clerk Ford

Minutes:

- Clerk Ford to discuss budget resolution 2028-08. We received two checks for unanticipated revenue. We need to pass this budget resolution to be able to have spending authority.
- \$9,911.36 related to the Bristol boat ramp that was damaged. We paid for the repairs up front. Insurance has come back and given us these dollars.
- \$31,671 due to final installment payment to our previous county insurance carrier. They have given us a refund check in the amount we over paid.
- Motion to approve the budget resolution by Commissioner Causseaux, second by Commissioner Johnson.

- Clerk Ford announced we did receive insurance on the dock that was damaged in Telogia. We should receive the check from insurance soon.

25. Tax Collector's Office Budget Resolution - Marie Goodman

Minutes:

- #25 Marie Goodman moved to the beginning.
- Employee got married.
- Increase insurance, \$5720 the rest of the budget year.
- Motion to approve the budget resolution by Commissioner Causseaux, second by Commissioner Johnson, motion carried.

26. DOGE Resolution - Clerk Ford

Minutes:

- Clerk Ford to discuss Resolution 2025 DOGE - Governor's efforts to introduce a state level DOGE. Department of Government Efficiency.
- Received a letter weeks ago with a series of financial questions, asking about our history and future finances, if we foresee any issues. The questions were answered in a very positive for Liberty County.
- This language that was drafted by the governor's office, for all counties in the state of Florida, a resolution showing support from each board, to have the governors DOGE team to come into our county review our process and finances.
- Motion to approve resolution 2025-10 by Commissioner Causseaux, second by Commissioner Johnson. Motion Carried.

27. Tri-County Advisory Council - Yearly Donation

Minutes:

- Clerk Ford states this should not have been on the agenda. Turns out the board already approved this \$5,000.00 donation back in November.

28. Florida's Great Northwest dues

Minutes:

- Mike Stewart was not in attendance; Clerk Ford presents for him.
- Last meeting Mike Stewart requested for the Board to participate alongside the chamber. Economic collation for this area of Florida, vary levels of participation. The understand our situation, small county, they have offered to reduce our fees and split with the chamber. Half of the \$1500 is \$750.
- Motion to approve the county portion of \$750 by Commissioner Brown, Second by Commissioner Causseaux. Motion Carried.

29. Small County Coalition Annual Participation Fees

Minutes:

- Commissioner Causseaux explains the small county Coalition, has lobby and efforts in Tallahassee.
- Motion to approve the Annual participation fees by Commissioner Johnson, second by Commissioner Causseaux. Motion Carried.

30. Jail project line of credit

Minutes:

- Clerk Jace Ford has spoken with several banks about this project.
- Going through the next several months, looking at the pay schedule from Culpepper, we are looking at 1.7 million next month, 1.8 million the following and then goes back to 1.7 million in addition to all of the material expenses which are not captured in the contract with Culpeper because of DPO arrangement. Looking a minimum of 2 million dollars a month. The project is scheduled to be finished in October.
- Just award 5 million worth of road project grants.
- 3 different options. Peoplesouth seems to be the best fit. As a county we do our everyday banking with them. This will be a 6-million-dollar revolving line of credit. We have the option where we can use this to pay the invoices, once we submit for our reimbursement request, we can immediately pay that back off and then we have the full 6 million back available to us. It is at a 5% rate.
- If we are able to keep our money with us. We can move our money into our investments which are a 4.4% return right now. Thats variable. Counteracts that 5%. We can park our money here and earn a little off of it and have to pay the 5%, little over half a percent.
- Need an influx of cash for the county to be able to pay bills, pay payroll, fuel, road project. Too much going on for a county that brings in 3.2 million and got more than 40 million in grant projects. Every bit of this will come back to us with these grants. Not able to cash flow.
- Commissioner Branch explains the process of submitting invoices and receiving payments. The process that it takes to get the money is difficult.
- Tied to the jail funding, has a maturity date of 12/31/2025. It gives security that this will not get out of control. Discussed using this line of credit to strictly pay the contractors, continue to make the payment towards the materials. Limiting/restrictions on this line of credit for what it is used for. May change as the needs change. Use as little as possible. Use as backup.
- Commissioner Johnson ask if all other banks would charge the \$4500 organization fee. Regions bank would be \$40-50 thousand,

*Motion to approve the Peoplesouth terms sheet and allow to proceed, by commissioner Johnson, second by Arnold.

- Commissioner Brown ask the County Attorney his thoughts.
- Attorney has looked over. Helps to keep up with paying bills. Everything is good, has low interest rates. No liability to the county.
- Motion carried
- Opened public hearing.
- Taylor Perkins addressed the board for the CDBG park improvement grant. First public hearing. Closed the cycle back in October, Liberty County applied for it. They have announced and launched a new cycle, the \$40 million they didn't spend that they want to spend, special cycle is due May 16th. Waived the cap of \$700,000 for Liberty County. Four categories for the CDBG program. Liberty County had a citizen advisory task force meeting

on March 19th to discuss areas of concern on the projects in the county. that task force made the official recommendation to apply for Veteran Memorial Park improvements which would intel repairing/resurfacing the asphalt walking track, the playground, upgrading the lights to LED for energy.

- Commissioner Brown ask about paving the parking lot around the civic center.
- Mrs. Perkins states the board does not need to decide on the project they are applying for at this stage.
- No public comments
- Closed the public hearing. Closed public comment.

31. Position structure - Brian Edins

Minutes:

- #31 Brian Edins moved to the beginning.
- Brian thanked the board for reaching out when his mother passed.
- 80 hours at \$31.25 as an employee.
- Ranza explained the worksheet - Total cost to the Board \$3032.
- Currently the board pays Brian \$2000.00 a month. He is asking to move a W2 employee, no longer 1099. Include benefits.
- Motion to go with Brian's request, W2 80 hours weekly, \$31.25 an hour, made by Commissioner Brown, second Commissioner Arnold. Opposed by Commissioner Causseaux, also opposed by Commissioner Johnson. Chairman votes, motion carried.
- Effective immediately.
- Have not changed Job titles and duties yet.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

32. Dewayne Branch, Chairman - District 1

Minutes:

- No comments

33. Hannah Causseaux, Commissioner - District 2

Minutes:

- Commissioner Causseaux received a call, when does the board start the review for the comp plan?
- Clerk Ford received a high-level time frame of things, will forward to Commissioner Causseaux. Do not have to submit a renewal until 2027.

34. Jim Johnson, Commissioner - District 3

Minutes:

- Commissioner Johnson received a call from Mr. Hall regarding the turn lane before Henry Keever. The turning lane was put in right in front of his driveway. Mr. Hall is wanting to move his driveway back north at the edge of the property line to get out of that turning lane.

35. Doyle Brown, Vice Chairman - District 4

Minutes:

- Commissioner Brown request that the board sends a letter to the family of Davis

Stoutamire, expressing our appreciation for his service. Mr. Stoutamire passed a few weeks before meeting, Commissioner Brown was not notified until after the service.

36. Derrick Arnold, Commissioner - District 5

Minutes:

- No comments
- Chairman Branch forgot to bring up the comp plan, whether the board wanted to move forward or change comp plan. to allow the service of alcohol at restaurants. Also, Twin Oks has put a book nook in Sumatra for the community. Give or exchange books. It is located at the precinct.
- Commissioner Brown ask how if the citizens would vote for the change of the comp plan.
- County Attorney explains that you would have to make a ballet for public to vote or at least two public hearings for the change.

37. Ken Hosford, County Attorney

Minutes:

- No comments

38. Dusty Arnold, Liberty County Sheriff

Minutes:

- Sheriff has invited DOGE to go through the sheriff's office, document everything and fix things if needed.
- Sheriff invites the commissioner to the service for the inmates next Friday.

39. Jace Ford, Liberty County Clerk of Court and Clerk to the Board

Minutes:

- Small County Coalition has asked to have 3 members from each county. Two commissioners and One staff. Clerk Ford, Commissioner Branch and Commissioner Arnold to attend.
- Mr. Llyod from Waste Pro wants to come do a large BBQ for employees. Two dates May 21st or May 28th.

40. Motion to Adjourn

Minutes:

- Chairman Branch explains we have an executive session, after meeting is adjourned, for everyone to please exit.
- Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Johnson, Second by Causseaux. Motion Carried.

41. Signature

Florida Statute 125.001 requires that due public notice be given of all regular meetings of the Board of County Commissioners of a County in the State of Florida. Florida Statute 286.0105 requires that notices of any meeting or hearing, if a meeting or hearing is required, must include the following language, "if a person decides to appeal any decision made by the board, agency or commission with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or

hearing he will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purpose, he may need to insure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based."

Contact: Jace Ford (jford@libertyclerk.com (850) 643-2215) | Minutes published on 05/14/2025, adopted on 05/08/2025