

Liberty County, FL

Liberty County Board of County Commissioners Executive Session

Minutes

Thursday, April 10, 2025 at 8:00 pm

**AGENDAS ARE POSTED ON THE BOARD'S WEBSITE AT
WWW.LIBERTYBOCC.COM; ATTACHMENTS ARE PROVIDED TO THE
BOARD MEMBERS ONLY AND ARE AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC UPON
REQUEST.**

1. Call to Order
2. Adoption of the Agenda

ACTION ITEMS

3. Federal contract - Dusty Arnold

Minutes:

- The Governor and the President have issued a directive regarding immigration detainees. Commissioner Branch, the Clerk, and the Judge met to discuss the matter. The primary concern raised was the public housing of these detainees. The directive leaves no discretion for the County; compliance is mandatory. The Governor stated that failure to comply could result in the removal of the Sheriff from office.
- It was noted that under a contract with ICE, the County could receive approximately up to \$160.00 per bed for ICE detainees who have gone through immigration processing. For detainees processed through the state, the compensation would be \$25.00 per person per day.
- Representatives from ICE, including the agency's second-in-command, visited and toured the new facility. They expressed satisfaction with the location and indicated detainees would be coming and going through this facility.
- The Sheriff is expected to receive a call from Washington, D.C., regarding the potential allocation of \$14 million to expand the jail to house detainees. This expansion would increase capacity from 128 beds to 256 beds, with the back half designated strictly for U.S. Marshals Service detainees and ICE detainees.
- Commissioner Johnson questioned whether the expanded jail would be used exclusively for ICE or for all detainees and suggested that using one facility for both could reduce staffing costs compared to operating multiple locations such as Crosby.
- Commissioner Johnson asked about the medical aspect. The county will not be responsible for ICE detainees.
- Big time criminals, the Sheriff has the right to refuse them. They have prisons for

them; ICE detainees will be housed separately than the locals.

- Commissioner Branch asked what the County receives for inmates sent to Bay County and Calhoun County; the rate is \$52 per inmate. Brett Phillips noted it costs approximately \$44 to house each inmate.
- Commissioner Brown asked what the County clears per inmate per day; it was noted there are too many factors to determine a specific amount.
- Clerk Ford stated that in the near future, the county needs to discuss what will be done with all of the extra facilities.

*The Sheriff provided an update on a \$3 million funding request for the jail. The Sheriff's Office and Clerk Jace submitted the request before the deadline; however, the County's representative and senator missed their internal deadline and did not submit it. The senator attempted to submit an amended request, but because it exceeded \$2.5 million, the Chief rejected it. Commissioner Simpson assured the Sheriff he would work to ensure the \$3 million is allocated.

- Brett Phillips had got the GED program set up in the jail.
- Commissioner Branch thanked the Sheriff's office for all they have done.

4. Potential litigation - Ken Hosford

Minutes:

- County Attorney Ken Hosford, address the board about adding the addendum to the MOU. They wanted to county to enter into the memorandum understanding to apply for a grant to purchase this property. Under 125-35 it is clear that the county cannot get out of competitive bid process.
- Clerk, Ford asked Attorney, Hosford how the county sold the property to Talquin Eletric without a competitive bid process. There is an exception in 125-35 for 501 C3 organizations, Talquin Eletric is one of those non-profit 501C3 as is the Board as commissioners. That is the only exception.
- Brett Melvin admitted Holmes County does not own the industrial development site that he used as an example when approaching the board. Attorney Hosford asked Mr. Melvin if Holmes County acquire the property and then convert it to an industrial site and he admitted they had not.
- Richard Williams told Attorney Hosford that he would not be applying for the grant if the 3rd party buys the property.
- Attorney Hosford explains why it violates the law, if the Industrial site buys the land, the county would have participated in inducing them into buying 3 quarters of a million dollars' worth of property.
- Attorney had done some research on this company who intends to purchase the land, they are out of Marland. They do not have a company operating anywhere in the world. They are in the process of constructing a pellet mill in GA, trying to close out their financial arrangements.
- If the company comes here and the County has not vetted them, then the County tells them no on a permit, they have already spent 3 quarters of million dollars on this property, that company can sue the county for damages for the amount of \$750,000.
- Attorney Hosford recommends to board that the way to cure this is through

adding to the memorandum explaining that this memorandum shall not construe as preapproval of a permit for any entity or business. Amended the memorandum by adding text.

- Chairman Branch, explains that the amended memorandum is needed to protect the County regardless if you are for or against the business coming in.
- Add this addition to the MOU and have a special meeting due to time.

5. Motion Adjourn

Minutes:

Chairman Branch, executive session adjourned.

6. 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."