

Liberty County, FL

Liberty County Board of County Commissioners - Regular Monthly Meeting

Minutes

Thursday, May 8, 2025 at 6:00 pm

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

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89866094901?pwd=1uy6A1jbPetHmGjU6p0zvcmVScEcTq.1>

Dial by your location

- +1 305 224 1968 US

Meeting ID: 898 6609 4901

Passcode: 312841

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 and Deputy Clerk Kaly Barfield.

2. Invocation

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Minutes:

- Pledge of Allegiance was led by Sheriff Dusty Arnold.

4. Awards and Recognitions

Minutes:

- There are no awards and recognitions.

5. Audience Concerns

Minutes:

- Ms. Shannon Copeland appeared before the Board of County Commissioners to raise concerns regarding alleged misconduct and inaction by the Liberty County Sheriff's Office.
-

Ms. Patsy Saint addressed the Liberty County Board of County Commissioners regarding the preservation of native wildflowers along county rights-of-way.

- Keith Armondi concerned with septic tank, will wait for subject to be brought up later in meeting.
- Charles Steward with update with IT training. Mr. Steward is reminding the board they will be receiving emails for state mandate training that will be due the end of June. All employees that use computers will be assigned training by their level per the state.

COUNTY DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Monthly Department Briefing

- Brian Eddins – Fire Control Coordinator
- Marie Arick – Extension Director
 - Ms. Arick to update on park committee, since expanding the parks there has been a 47% increase in youth participation. Fishing derby will be first weekend in June at buttermilk pond.
- Tommy Duggar Jr – Recreation Director
- Melissa Peddie – Ambulance Director
- Cole Maloy – Solid Waste Director
- Boo Bryant – Road and Bridge Superintendent
 - Mr. Bryant has had phone calls about building driveways. He explains we are not equipt to do that. We are able to maintain their roads, etc. Also, road and bridge would like to get the F150 from Mr. Ben at Emergency Mangement. Ms. Renee is currently using an F350 to run errands, the F150 will be used for that and the F350 will be put back in the yard to haul equipment. Mr. Bryant is also wanting to burn items in clay pit. Firetrucks will be present.
- Monica Welles – Transit Director
- Katie Kellett – Housing Director
 - Mrs. Kellett provided a detailed timeline of interactions between Mr. Armondi, county officials, and regulatory agencies regarding his request to replace a rotted power pole on parcel 002-3S-8W-02-589-001. The initial permit application was reviewed, revealing the address was incorrect and that the power was intended for a camper. Mrs. Kellett informed Mr. Armondi that a permitted septic system is required for power service and that all septic permitting now falls under the jurisdiction of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).
 - Commissioner Brown also offered to assist Mr. Armondi at no cost and expressed his belief that the county cannot change the current rules, as they are mandated by the state.
- Ben Guthrie – Emergency Management Director
- Allison Maloy – Grants and Special Projects Coordinator
- Dewberry - County Engineers
- Jace Ford - Clerk
 - Clerk Ford has been submitting all contracts the board has to DOGE. While going through, there are contracts that we are actively working with, that are expired or expiring soon. EXP contact will be expiring soon, which we are currently working with on CR 12. SCE, CEI service for CR 67, their contract will be expiring soon. Both are 3-year contracts with provisions 2, 1-year optional extensions. Clerk Ford is asking to amend the agenda to add the contract with EXP and SCE.
 - Clerk Ford also ask to amend agenda for change order for pay request for Roberts and Roberts that was received today.

6. Motion to Amend Agenda

Minutes:

- Motion to amend the agenda to include EXP, SCE, and change order for Robert and Roberts. Motion by Commissioner Johnson, Second by Commissioner Causseaux. Motion Carried.

7. Adoption of the Agenda

Minutes:

- Motion to adopt the agenda made by Brown, second by Commissioner Arnold. Motion Carried.

8. Motion to approve consent items

Minutes:

- Motion to approve the consent items made by Commissioner Brown, second by Commissioner Causseaux. Motion Carried.

CONSENT ITEMS

9. Approve previous board minutes
10. Approve the Clerk to pay the bills
11. Letters of Support
12. Human Resource Management
13. Next month meeting schedule
14. Emergency Management - Ben Guthrie
15. Emergency Management - Ben Guthrie
16. CEI Task Order - Southeaster Consulting Engineers (SCE)
17. SCE - CR 67 C.O. #1
18. Transit - Monica Welles
19. Rural Area of Opportunity Resolution 2025 - 11
20. Budget Resolution 2025 - 12
21. FWC Agreement #21114 - Amendment #1
22. FBIP resolution amendments
23. Gold Star School Graduation - Civic Center Fees
24. Liberty Co. Sherrif's Office - Guardian Program

INDIVIDUAL ACTION ITEMS

25. CDBG 2nd Public Hearing

Minutes:

- Commissioner Branch open CDBG 2nd public hearing.

- County Attorney Ken Hosford swears Noah Byler in.
- With the CDBG application, the first public hearing was done last month. The second public hearing is necessary for the grant; it is due Friday May 16th. Pursuing grant funds of 1 million dollars including some admin and engineering fees for the Veterans Park which include, parking improvements, playground improvements, walking path improvements, lighting improvements, additional amenities and facilities. Take care of things that are falling apart from being 25 years old. Income surveys have been done, with approval, regional, got house address and did a random survey generator to do income surveys, showing that we do qualify even though our county LMI is under 50%, doing the random household surveys you capture a good general portion of it, little over 60%, so we would qualify.
- No public comments.
- No board comments.
- Commissioner Branch closed the public hearing, opened the regular meeting back up.
- Motion to approve Resolution 2025-13 made by Commissioner Causseaux, second by Commissioner Arnold. Motion Carried.

26. ARPC - Divina Lade

Minutes:

- Mrs. Divina Lade was not present.

Open Public Hearing

27. Planning & Zoning - Public Hearing - Justin Stiehl

Minutes:

- Commissioner Branch opens public hearing for Cassie Vickers school.
- County Attorney swears in Justin Stiehl and Cassie Vickers.
- Justin Stiehl from ARPC the contracted planner for Liberty County, this application is for a site plan review for property owners Donald Ray and Cassie Vickers. The agent is Cassie Vickers; she will be presenting tonight on behalf of the applicants. Tax Parcel ID number 019 1S 5W 00107 003. The current use of the property is timberline; the future category is agriculture. The area of the subject parcel is 13.5 acres. The applicant owns the property adjacent to the proposed site and would like to construct a non-residential building for homeschooling purposes that will be open to other families. The site will include a 40X50 building and a 16ft covered porch, along with a 20ft driveway and associated parking. The site plans meet requirements for Liberty County Land development code. Public notice was sent out to adjacent residence within 500ft of the proposed site informing owners of the time and date of public hearing. There are flood areas on the property, but the building would be nowhere near that.
- Mrs. Cassie Vickers is open to any questions.

- No public comments.
- No board comments.

28. Planning & Zoning - Public Hearing - Justin Stiehl

Minutes:

- Justin Stiehl explains that the applicant is requesting variance from 20ft required set back description on HWY 65 in order to build a pole barn to cover two RV units on parcel number 030 5S 7W 02196 000 in Sumatra. The property owner is Gordon Revell, the agent is William F. Rogers. The current use is vacant; the future category is rural village. The area of the subject property is .114. The applicant originally requested and received a variance from the department of transportation. Then applicant then applied variance with liberty county planning and zoning for the same variance to utilizes two storage containers as office space/other space, the review of the site determined that the storage containers had been placed on the site prior to receiving board approval for commercial structure on the site. After discussion with building official, they structures were removed and the site plan changed to RV units. The agent stated that the board previously approved the site for two RV units, however staff has not been able to locate any approval of this in recent years. The county shall grant the variance, or the county shall deem the variance unnecessary and deny the variance.
- County Attorney swears in Mr. William F. Rogers.
- Mr. Rogers explains that Mr. Revell moved the two shipping containers in before he got involved. Mr. Rogers was the prior owner to the property. Before he went to jail, he had come before the board and asked for approval for the RV site as well as an ice machine. Now, Mr. Revell is wanting to do the same.
- No public comments.
- Commissioner Johnson states he has no problem with it.
- Commissioner Branch closes the public hearing and enter back into the regular board meeting.

29. Planning & Zoning - Public Hearing - Justin Stiehl

Minutes:

- Mr. Stiehl wants to table this until July, when Mr. Meggit is able to attend the meeting.
- Motion to table item #29 made by Commissioner Johnson, second by Commissioner Brown. Motion Carried.

Close Public Hearing

30. Planning & Zoning - Justin Stiehl

Minutes:

- Motion to approve the site plan for Cassie Vickers school and #28 Mr. Revell's variance of 10ft made by Commissioner Johnson, second by Commissioner Arnold. Motion Carried.

31. Planning & Zoning - Justin Stiell

Minutes:

- Mr. Stiell explained that in previous board meetings the board has requested ARPC to look into possible funding for the updates to the plan. The CPTA grant are usually opened around this time, however they have not been announced at this point. ARPC is trying to get a head start and make sure they have permission to work on the application for the county, then the county will submit when the time is needed.
 - Letter of request, the ARPC will be looking at some regional projects, the one that was provided for the board was the site readiness proposal of Calhoun, Gadsen and Liberty. This will identify places that are ready for development whenever someone comes in looking for the right place to locate. Looking for a letter of support.
- A motion to approve ARPC to prepare application to update the county comprehensive made by Commissioner Johnson, Second by Commissioner Brown. Motion carried.
- Letter of support for the regional housing study. Mr. Stiell explains that this is for 9 counties in northwest Florida seeking funding through the Florida commerce community plan technical assistant program to conduct a regional workforce housing study. Different surveys and data will be collected to assist housing market affordability and unmet needs across the region. The report will provide actual recommendation for local governments to provide workforce housing projects, allowing future investments and pursue funding opportunities.
- One is regional study across all of the counties within the ARPC region to help understand the workforce housing needs. Just needing a letter of support.
- Commissioner Johnson questions Mr. Stiell asking what the motive is, are they trying to turn out county into a bigger place like Orlando. Mr. Stiell explains they are not trying to do that, they are trying to understand better what the housing condition is. This does not commit the county to increasing their density, adding more housing or anything related to that. Just a study to see what the needs of the county are.
- Motion to give letter of support for the housing study made by Commissioner Brown, second by Commissioner Causseaux. Commissioner Johnson is opposed. Motion carried.

32. BARNETT FRONCZAK BARLOWE & SHULER ARCHITECTS - Contract Extension

Minutes:

- Clerk Ford explains that typically see Doug Shuler here, he is a part of the rock bluff park design, the EMS building design. He is going to be working with Ms. Monica on the design for the new transit facility. We have a 3-year contract with him, that is expired.
- Motion to extend the contract for 1-year optional made by Commissioner Brown, second by Commissioner Causseaux. Motion Carried.

33. Dewberry Engineering - Contract Extension

Minutes:

- Clerk, Jace Ford explains the Dewberry Engineering services, it is a 3-year contract that expired on May 5th, with 2 optional 1-year extension.
- Motion to extend the contact 1-year optional made by Commissioner Causseaux, second by Commissioner Arnold. Motion Carried.

34. Dewberry CEI - Contract Extension

Minutes:

- Motion to extend the Dewberry CEI contract with 1-year optional made by Commissioner Arnold, second by Commissioner Brown. Motion Carried.

35. Torrey HealthCare - Building Lease Renewal

Minutes:

- Clerk Jace Ford announced that Stan Whittaker's lease expires at the end of May and requires a new contract for renewal. Mr. Whittaker updated the Board on his clinic, which now serves 2,400 active patients and contributes to the local economy. He requested a new 3-year lease, which was approved by motion from Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Arnold.
- Mr. Whittaker also raised concerns about Capital Health Plan (CHP) refusing to include his clinic in their provider panel, despite a citizen petition and board support. Commissioner Branch suggested sending another formal letter to CHP and the county's healthcare representative. Commissioner Causseaux confirmed PanCare is in-network with CHP.
- EXP Contract: Clerk Jace Ford informed the Board that the EXP contract expired on April 8, 2025. Commissioner Causseaux motioned to extend it for one year, retroactive to the expiration date. Second by Commissioner Johnson.
- Commissioner Branch expressed concern about one CEI firm's regional instability and suggested reviewing the contract.
- Commissioners Brown and Causseaux discussed whether to extend or re-bid, ultimately agreeing to extend current CEI contracts through the fiscal year and revisit before committing to a longer term.
- Motion carried.
- SCE Contract: Clerk Ford noted the SCE contract includes a 1-year extension option.
- Motion to extend by Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Causseaux.
- Motion carried.
- Roberts & Roberts Change Order: Clerk Ford presented a change order finalizing CR 12.
- Motion to approve by Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Brown.
- Motion carried.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

36. **Dewayne Branch, Chairman - District 1**
37. **Hannah Causseaux, Commissioner - District 2**
38. **Jim Johnson, Commissioner - District 3**
39. **Doyle Brown, Vice Chairman - District 4**
40. **Derrick Arnold, Commissioner - District 5**
41. **Ken Hosford, County Attorney**
42. **Dusty Arnold, Liberty County Sheriff**

Minutes:

- Sheriff Arnold states that because of Benny Jacobs we were given two free speed feedback signs for Chester Street. Sheriff explains the last sign they received for Sumatra, he had to address the board for approval, so he will be doing the same thing for this sign next month.

43. **Jace Ford, Liberty County Clerk of Court and Clerk to the Board**
44. **Motion to Adjourn**

Minutes:

- Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner Johnson, second by Commissioner Causseaux. Motion Carried.

45. **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."