



**BALDWIN COUNTY
WORK SESSION**

**March 1, 2022
1601 N Columbia St, Suite 220
5:00 PM**

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Henry Craig
John Westmoreland
Kendrick Butts
Emily Davis
Sammy Hall

ALSO PRESENT

David McRee
Carlos Tobar
Dawn Hudson
Cindy Cunningham

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Craig called the Work Session to order at 5:00 p.m.

ADMINISTRATIVE / FISCAL MATTERS

Current Legislation

Chairman Craig stated the Work Session is being held to discuss proposed legislation, the effect of such legislation on the County and whether to support or oppose certain proposed legislation. Commissioners discussed the following bills:

HB 1013 – significant bill about mental health changes and policies of the State. The bill would provide more flexibility for probate judges and sheriffs to cause mental health evaluations, require mental health insurance support, provide more beds for mental health evaluations and encourage more mental health providers in the State. Chairman Craig stated he feels this is a good first step in addressing mental health issues of our state and anything that can be done to support mental health is worthwhile. **SUPPORT**

HB 1329 – mandates an increase in coroners' pay and benefits, authorizes coroner to set deputy coroner's salary, makes coroner's position full-time job with same employment benefits provided to other constitutional officers. If passed, this bill would increase costs to counties. **OPPOSE**

HB 975 – allows Probate Judges who serve as election superintendents to terminate their election responsibilities, mandates full-time election responsibilities to an established Board of Elections. Commissioners feel this should be local decision. **OPPOSE**

HB 1360 – repeals intangible recording tax which would mean less revenue for the County. **OPPOSE**

HB 1321- prohibits local government lawsuits against opioid manufacturers, distributors, marketers and retailers when such companies enter into a statewide settlement agreement with Attorney General. State has registration process, and Baldwin County is already registered if any money is distributed. Commissioners previously agreed to participate in settlements. **NO POSITION** since County currently participates.

HB 1093 and SB 494 - prohibits local governments from regulating or restricting corporately owned new-built rental only subdivisions. Feels should be local government decision. OPPOSE.

HB 1301 - prohibits local governments from regulating gas powered leaf blowers. SUPPORT

HB 997 – exempts ad valorem tax on timber equipment and HR 686 seeks to reduce the rate of ad valorem tax on timber for sale or harvest. Would mean loss of revenue to County. OPPOSE

HB 1372 – Additional requirements to Call Before You Dig Law; good safety issue that will close loopholes. SUPPORT

HB 1461 – revises annexation dispute resolution / arbitration process to include extending time period counties may object to annexation, splitting arbitration costs with city; authorizes notification requirements to be delivered by hand or email as long as it is verifiable, authorizes arbitration panels to postpone period by which they make findings. Bill improves county opportunity to protest. Good and bad aspects in bill. ACCG Supports. SUPPORT

HB 1439 – makes process, protections and other conditions same for both annexation and de-annexation. Currently property owners can annex into a city without the county's authorization; however, they cannot de-annex from city without the city's authorization. Applies to 100% method of de-annexation requiring written and signed applications of 100% of owners of all property to be de-annexed. SUPPORT

HR 845 - limits size of county districts to 50,000 residents. NO POSITION

HB 830 – mandates additional salary supplement for sheriffs of \$4,630.80 for each trial court they serve. This increase will be used as part of the funding formula for future cost of living adjustments to determine sheriffs' salaries. Unfunded mandate. OPPOSE

HB 496 – increases logging truck weight. Our highways cannot support the increased truck weight. OPPOSE

HB 1421 – dedicates hazardous waste management fee and hazardous substance reporting fee to Hazardous Waste Trust Fund (HWTF). Ensures that all fees that contribute to the HWTF are dedicated. If money is collected for specific purpose, it should go to designated fund. SUPPORT

HB 1394 – preemption bill on vaccine and mask mandates prohibiting local governments from establishing regulating regarding proof of vaccination or requiring face mask coverings. Feels this should be local decision. OPPOSE

SB 350 – makes it easier for local elections to be non-partisan. Local legislators could choose. Feel should be a decision by Commissioners. SUPPORT

SB 331 – allows local governments to limit / dictate work hours of private businesses. OPPOSE.

HB 75 – continues effort to change when tax payer notification requirements are required. Clarification of tax payer bill. SUPPORT

HB 992 – exempts state tax for all in law enforcement. NO POSITION

SB 361 – gives tax credit for financial support to law enforcement. NO POSITION

HB 1443 – regulates food trucks by requiring a license in only one county in state. SUPPORT

HR 756 – creates another special class for taxation of low-income housing for developers. Potentially another tax reduction for counties. More information needed. NO POSITION

Hb 1290 – Gives County opportunity to exempt food sold at recreation centers from sales tax. SUPPORT

Staggered Elections

Chairman Craig stated this matter has been discussed previously by the Board and warrants further discussion. He reported changing to staggered terms would remove the possibility of having all five commission seats change at the same time leaving the county government with a full slate of new leadership. Commissioner Davis stated even with staggered elections there is no guarantee it wouldn't happen. Chairman Craig proposed staggered elections for the Board of Commissioners following terms uniform with the school board. He stated it would be best if Commissioners' terms coincided with those of the school board so as not to further complicate the election process. In 2024 if school board terms are followed, County Commission districts 2, 3, and 4 would be up for re-election for two-year terms. Chairman Craig asked Commissioners to think about this, discuss it and be prepared to decide at a later date. Chairman Craig stated he favors staggered terms and hopes the County would request legislation in 2023 to become effective for the 2024 elections. Vice Chairman John Westmoreland stated he is also in favor of staggered elections. Commissioner Sammy Hall stated he has not been in favor of changing terms in the past; however, he now feels it would serve the County best if terms were staggered. Commissioner Kendrick Butts stated since this is his first term he is just becoming accustomed to the Board and feels it is good the way it is.

Chairman Craig stated he hopes the County will move forward in 2023 with legislative action to accomplish this for the 2024 election.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Kendrick Butts made a motion to adjourn the Work Session at 5:57 p.m. Commissioner Sammy Hall seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Henry R. Craig
Chairman

Cynthia K. Cunningham
County Clerk