

**REGULAR MEETING
LEVY COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
JULY 8, 2025**

MINUTES

The Regular Meeting of the Board of County Commissioners was held on July 8, 2025 at 9:00 A.M. in the BoCC Meeting Room at the Levy County Government Center.

CALL TO ORDER: Madam Chair Mills called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M.

INVOCATION: Given by Comm. Meeks.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Comm. Hodge.

ROLL CALL:

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Madam Chair, Comm. Desiree Mills
Vice Chair, Comm. Tim Hodge
Comm. Charlie Kennedy
Comm. Rock Meeks
Comm. Johnny Hiers

ALSO PRESENT:

County Attorney – Nicolle Shalley
County Manager – Mary-Ellen Harper

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

- **Action Taken:**
 - o Amendments Made to Agenda- Madam Chair Mills requested the zoning items #15-16 being presented by Tara Howell (Interim Zoning Official - JB Pro) to be moved to the front of the business agenda.
 - o Motion Comm. Kennedy
 - o Second Comm. Hodge
 - o Vote Outcome 5-0

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- **Speakers:**
 - o Brad Duff, Williston, discussed agricultural exemption issues for a property. Commissioners referred Mr Duff to the Property Appraiser to make application.
 - o Christine Switt, Announced 7/17/25, events being held nationwide to highlight John Lewis' voter's rights advocacy.
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Business or Informational Items

1. (Previously Item #15) Approval of Ordinance Number 2025-6 (Audio 18:00)

- **Presenter:** Tara Howell, JB Pro Interim Zoning Official, Levy County Planning & Zoning
 - **Discussion:** Amendment to Future Land Use Map for 17.5 acres from Urban Low Density Residential to Commercial. Mr Barnhill addressed Commissioners. Public hearing was opened; Mr Jeff Hardison commented on "Dead Man's Curve" safety and it is more visible now with the land clearing that has occurred.
 - **Action Taken:**
 - o Motion Comm. Hiers
 - o Second Comm. Kennedy
 - o Vote Outcome 5-0
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2. (Previously Item #16) Approval of Ordinance Number 2025-7 (Audio 28:18)

- **Presenter:** Tara Howell, JB Pro Interim Zoning Official, Levy County Planning & Zoning
 - **Discussion:** Rezoning of 17.5 acres from Urban Single-Family Residential to Neighborhood Commercial. Public hearing was opened; Mrs Renate Cannon asked for clarification of what Level-B service meant. Tara Howell of JB Pro mentioned that Level-B service means the roadway will accommodate future traffic growth in this area.
 - **Action Taken:**
 - o Motion Comm. Meeks
 - o Second Comm. Kennedy
 - o Vote Outcome 5-0
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3. Introduction of Kathleen Sullivan, Vice President of Benefits, World Risk Management (Audio 37:30)

- **Presenter:** Kathleen Sullivan, VP of Benefits, Work Risk Management
- **Discussion:** Presentation on Group Health Insurance Health Savings Accounts. Plan options were given for BoCC consideration.

4. Selection of Group Health Insurance Plans (*Audio 1:03:53*)

- **Presenter:** Jacqueline Martin, Director, Levy County Human Resources
- **Discussion:** Insurance plan options presented to BoCC. FY 25-26 increase to insurance is estimated to be 1.5%. Page 20 of the agenda packet shows plans and pricing provided by PRM. Director Martin reported if the county considered covering 100% of employee individual health insurance costs it would cost the county an estimated \$364,000.
- **Action Taken:**
 - o Board directed staff to return with more data on July 22, 2025 meeting.

5. Presentation of Fiscal Year 2024 Audited Financial Statements (*Audio 1:15:00*)

- **Presenter:** Brendan McKittrick, James Moore, Auditor,
 - o Rob Boschen, Senior Analyst, Levy County Clerk of Court & Comptroller
- **Discussion:** Power point presentation on BoCC audited financial statements FY 2023-24. Auditors provided an unmodified opinion. Deficiencies mentioned for improvement were SEFA preparation (Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards) & fixed assets expenditure tracking. A solution is in place for improvement for next fiscal year and remediation was completed for this fiscal year.

6. Presentation from Florida Rural Water Association (*Audio 1:25:10*)

- **Presenter:** Wayne Moore, Central Florida Circuit Rider, FRWA
 - **Discussion:** Manatee and University Oaks Water Systems: Mr. Moore provided a presentation on rate studies for both county water systems. Levy County is a member of the FRWA and can access resources, such as today's rate study presented, at no charge to the taxpayers. Manatee system was a 5-year study & Univ. Oaks system was a 10-year study. Last study for these systems was conducted in 2019 with no changes to water utility rates. Commissioners directed County Manager Harper to bring back the rate change process at the next meeting for consideration. Mr Wayne Moore recommended doing this rate study process on a yearly basis to spot trends and find issues with the water system. Commissioners agreed a yearly study would be a good idea and it's no cost to the county.
 - o Comm. Mills says the county doesn't need to be in the water business. Wants to hire a professional to come in to fix and manage the county water systems.
 - o Comm. Kennedy expresses displeasure with tax payer subsidies for county water systems and urges fellow Commissioners to address the long time issues the systems have faced.
 - o Comm. Meeks mentions Polk County Water & Wastewater Cooperative as an example of where the state is going for rural water and sewer. Mentions he and others may need to go down to that county and check out their cooperative.
 - o Comm. Hiers comments that with the addition of water and sewer anywhere comes a lot of other things with it.
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7. Rejection of Bids for ITB_2024_013, Courthouse Addition & Renovation (Audio 2:31:00)

- **Presenter:** Mary-Ellen Harper, County Manager
 - **Discussion:** Reasons for rejecting bids. Original bids were more than budgeted. County Manager Harper and Contractor agreed it would be best to reject all bids and start over.
 - **Action Taken:**
 - o Motion Comm. Kennedy
 - o Second Comm. Hiers
 - o Vote Outcome 5-0
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8. Approval of Amendment No. 2 to Task Assignment 2022-04 (Audio 2:34:00)

- **Presenter:** Mary-Ellen Harper, County Manager
 - **Discussion:** Amendment for Barnett, Fronczak, Barlowe & Shuler Architects for \$30,980. This will direct the architect to provide new drawings and scope for the project to go back out to bid.
 - **Action Taken:**
 - o Motion Comm. Kennedy
 - o Second Comm. Meeks
 - o Vote Outcome 5-0
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9. Appointment to College of Central Florida Jack Wilkinson Levy Campus Advisory Committee (Audio 2:35)

- **Presenter:** Mary-Ellen Harper, County Manager
 - **Discussion:** Board Appointment for 2025-2027 term. Appointee to serve as advisory to college administration on college programs and activities in Levy County. Appointee to advocate in matters related to advancing the mission of the college in Levy County. Madam Chair Mills expressed interest in being the appointee and requested the board to consider her for the appointment and possibly an alternate to serve in her absence. Comm. Hiers expressed interest in being the alternate. A consensus was reached by the Commissioners for Madam Chair Mills to be the appointee and Comm. Hiers to be the alternate.
 - **Action Taken:**
 - o Motion Comm. Kennedy
 - o Second Comm. Hodge
 - o Vote Outcome 5-0
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10. Approval of Contingency Reserves for Animal Services (Audio 2:36:17)

- **Presenter:** Brandy Cannon, Manager, Levy County Animal Services
- **Discussion:** Request for \$26,596 from General Fund for equipment and expenses to include; tough books, tough book charging towers, Wi-Fi cellular sim cards, aluminum dog boxes.
- **Action Taken:**
 - o Motion Comm. Meeks

- o Second Comm. Hodge
 - o Vote Outcome 5-0
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MADAM CHAIR MILLS CALLED FOR 10 MINUTE RECESS

11. Purchase of 2025 Chevrolet Silverado (Audio 2:37)

- **Presenter:** Bernard "Bo" Cox, Provisional Building Official, Levy County Development
 - **Discussion:** Request to purchase vehicle via Florida Sheriff's Association Contract FSA24-VEL32.0. Director Cox advised this vehicle will replace the final Toyota in the fleet and that vehicle will be transferred to another county department.
 - **Action Taken:**
 - o Motion Comm. Kennedy
 - o Second Comm. Hodge
 - o Vote Outcome 5-0
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12. Department of Public Safety Fiscal Year 2025 Second Quarter Report (Audio 2:39:05)

- **Presenter:** Mitch Harrell, Director, Levy County Department of Public Safety
 - **Discussion:** Chief Harrell presented report. See full report in Page 287 of agenda packet.
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13. EMS Write-Offs for First Half of FY2025 (Audio 2:46:29)

- **Presenter:** Mitch Harrell, Director, Levy County Department of Public Safety
 - **Discussion:** Proposed write-offs per Resolution 2012-27. Total write-offs \$711,165.89.
 - **Action Taken:**
 - o Motion Comm. Meeks
 - o Second Comm. Hodge
 - o Vote Outcome 5-0
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14. Purchase of Chassis via Florida Sheriffs Association Contract (Audio 3:00:23)

- **Presenter:** Mitch Harrell, Director, Levy County Department of Public Safety
- **Discussion:** Request to purchase chassis from Duval Ford for \$69,715. Purchasing the chassis and bidding out the upfitting separately will save the county \$50,000.
- **Action Taken:**
 - o Motion Comm. Meeks
 - o Second Comm. Hiers
 - o Vote Outcome 5-0

15. Approval of Work Order 25-12 with Passero Associates (Audio 3:01:45)

- **Presenter:** Brooke Smith, Grants-Legislative Liaison, Levy County Grants
- **Discussion:** Request for \$61,530 for design and bidding services at George T. Lewis Airport, funded by FDOT grant. Work to be bid out would be for construction of new restrooms and lighted kiosk. Florida DOT Financial Project No. 444410-1; Contract No. G2Q97 would fully fund this project. Brooke Smith made board aware that Passero communicated there's no deadline but 30 days would probably be fine. She also advised that FDOT doesn't like funding to sit long once it has been awarded.
- **Action Taken:**
 - o Motion Comm. Hiers motion to table for 30 days.
 - o Second Comm. Kennedy
 - o Vote Outcome 4-1 (Comm. Meeks votes no)

16. Approval of Task Assignment 2025-8 with Wright-Pierce, Inc. (Audio 3:09:25)

- **Presenter:** Matt Weldon, Director, Levy County Park and Recreation
- **Discussion:** Agreement for continuing professional services with Wright Pierce on construction and administrative services in the amount of \$36,227. This is an ongoing project at shell mound for channel and boat ramp improvements.
- **Action Taken:**
 - o Motion Comm. Meeks
 - o Second Comm. Hiers
 - o Vote Outcome 5-0

17. Award of Contract for ITB2025-14 - Solid Waste Transfer Station Tipping Floor (Audio 3:10:45)

- **Presenter:** Travis Newsome, Assistant Director, Levy County Solid Waste Department
- **Discussion:** Requesting board approval to award to Cornerstone Construction Service, Inc. for \$154,780. A previous contractor fell through bringing this item back to the board for approval again. AD Newsome is planning on the closure of the transfer station from August 8 - August 18. Commercial haulers will be directed to New River Solid Waste during the time of closure for repairs. Bringing this item back and making a few adjustments saved the county \$12,820.
- **Action Taken:**
 - o Motion Comm. Kennedy
 - o Second Comm. Hodge
 - o Vote Outcome 5-0

18. Requesting Approval of Resolution 2025-39; State Aid to Libraries Grant (Audio 3:12:41)

- **Presenter:** Connie Conley, Director, Levy County Community Services
 - **Discussion:** Budget amendment of \$9,261. This is additional grant revenue realized by the Levy County Library System from State Aid Grants
 - **Action Taken:**
 - o Motion Comm. Meeks
 - o Second Comm. Hodge
 - o Vote Outcome 5-0
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19. Requesting Approval of Resolution 2025-41 (*Audio 3:13:37*)

- **Presenter:** Connie Conley, Director, Levy County Community Services
 - **Discussion:** Budget amendment of \$125,000. This is additional operational revenue realized from a public transportation grant.
 - **Action Taken:**
 - o Motion Comm. Hiers
 - o Second Comm. Meeks
 - o Vote Outcome 5-0
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20. Requesting Approval of Resolution 2025-40 (*Audio 3:14:20*)

- **Presenter:** Connie Conley, Director, Levy County Community Services
 - **Discussion:** Budget amendment of \$488,234 to receive additional funds from a public transportation grant.
 - **Action Taken:**
 - o Motion Comm. Meeks
 - o Second Comm. Kennedy
 - o Vote Outcome 5-0
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21. Approval of Deferred Payment Loan Agreement for Charles Mark Vogel (*Audio 3:15:45*)

- **Presenter:** Marlon Gayle, Housing Manager, Levy County Housing Department
- **Discussion:** Agreement for purchasing residential unit in Bronson. 738 Pennsylvania Ave, Bronson, FL 32621. Agreement includes \$22,000 in down payment assistance from SHIP funds no home that is a cost of \$228,000
- **Action Taken:**

- o Motion Comm. Hiers
 - o Second Comm. Kennedy
 - o Vote Outcome 5-0
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22. Requesting Approval of First Amendment for HHRP-Hurricane Idalia Services (Audio 3:16:33)

- **Presenter:** Marlon Gayle, Housing Manager, Levy County Housing Department
 - **Discussion:** First Amendment with Rebuilding Together North Central Florida Inc. The organization has indicated they will be able to expend a greater amount of funds than was previously anticipated. Mr Gayle indicated the amount to be approximately \$1.26 million in funds to be spent.
 - **Action Taken:**
 - o Motion Comm. Hiers
 - o Second Comm. Meeks
 - o Vote Outcome 5-0
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Public Comments

- **Speakers:** Terry Witt inquired as to the county's status on hiring an Economic Development Director. County Manager Harper reported the advertising posting has closed and the HR process is taking place right now.
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Commissioners' Reports

- **Commissioner Charlie Kennedy:**
 - o Attended FEMA Flood Zone meeting in Bronson recently. Concerned about new mapping in Bronson and questioned Suwannee River Water Management and timeframe to receive public comments. Public Comments opened with SRWM District until October 1, 2025.
 - o Inquired as to where the county stands with the new EOC/911 construction project. County Manager Harper reported that contracted engineer from North Florida Professional Services, Ryan Asmus is in negotiations with top choice of architects chosen by county and presented them with alternate options and is awaiting updated pricing from the architect now.
 - o Asked about the Sheriff on animal control. CM Harper stated the Sheriff will only come when requested on animal control calls.
 - o County work order process was questioned and how do we know things are getting done. CM Harper wants to upgrade the antiquated process from the laborious paper process to a more streamlined online work order process. Hopes to see improvements in next 60-90 days.
 - o Are we staying with DemandStar (a free service) bid portal or changing to something different? CM Harper reported that Open.Gov (\$20-30k cost) is another option that may

provide better benefits and savings on time for county staff but the vendors would still need to be educated on how to use this system since it is online as well. CM Harper will bring back more information at a later date for a decision to be made.

- o A large oak tree was cut down at 337N and SR24. A local neighborhood has gotten together to decorate the leftover stump and possibly place an eagle atop the stump and add a plaque as well.
- o Attended the grand opening of Cedar Key Library and ribbon cutting.
- **Commissioner Rock Meeks:** Nothing to report.
- **Commissioner Desiree Mills:**
 - o Attended North Central Florida Regional Planning Council Meeting
 - o Reported there are 360,000 acres of areas within the Suwannee River Water Management District to visit and hike. If you are looking for that type of activity check out the maps available by SRWMD.
 - o Recognized Ryan Asmus, Engineer, for working diligently and quickly on consulting on potential engineering projects in Levy County.
 - o Visiting Cedar Key today on water issues.
 - o Pleased with the water system study conducted by Mr Wayne Moore.
- **Commissioner Tim Hodge:**
 - o Successful trip to Florida Association of Counties conference.
 - o Attended the July 4th parade in Williston.
- **Commissioner Johnny Hiers:**
 - o Attended Cedar Key golf cart parade.
 - o Asked if the sound system was noticeably improved in the board room. Comm. Hiers recognized Charlie Watson for giving of his time and expertise to come in and improve on the county's sound system.
 - o Williston Back Pack Give-A-Way coming up soon if anyone wants to be involved.

Requesting Approval of Expenditures

- Madam Chair Mills requested approval of expenditures in the amount of **\$4,608,360.43**.
- **Action Taken:**
 - o Motion Comm. Meeks
 - o Second Comm. Hodge
 - o Vote Outcome 5-0

EXPENDITURES BY FUND

CHECK NUMBERS

FUND

GENERAL REVENUE

ROAD

SHIP

MOSQUITO CONTROL

155659-155847

AMOUNT

2,189,414.21

347,962.46

98,071.02

227.50

TRANSPORTATION	137,695.33
911	19,054.83
COURT FACILITIES	11,842.57
MISC GRANTS	37,476.94
EMS	80,865.24
FIRE	142,225.16
TOURIST DEVELOPMENT	12,565.79
UTILITIES	1,565.42
BLDG INSPECT & SAFETY	54,069.67
CAPITAL PROJECTS	116,227.18
ROAD IMPRV & RESTORE	464,129.29
LANDFILL	103,977.85
MSBU'S	
TOTAL	\$3,817,370.46
EFT/ACH PAYMENT	\$790,989.97

Requesting Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

- **Date of Previous Meeting Minutes:** April 8, 2025
- **Action Taken:**
 - o Motion Comm. Kennedy
 - o Second Comm. Hodge
 - o Vote Outcome 5-0

Adjournment

- **Time:** 12:55pm

*Minutes Submitted by: Matt Brooks, Clerk of the Circuit Court & Comptroller
Date Submitted: 7/8/2025*