

**REGULAR MEETING
LEVY COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
JULY 22, 2025**

The Regular Meeting of the Board of County Commissioners was held on July 22, 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. Hiers

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:**
 - Amendments: Added Emergency Procurement Item to Replace Judicial Wing Courthouse AC. Add as item #5 to be presented by County Manager Mary-Ellen Harper.
 - Motion Kennedy
 - Second Hodge
 - Vote Outcome 5-0

ELECTED OFFICIALS:*(Audio 4:07)*

Property Appraiser Jason Whistler addresses BoCC and public regarding a recently written article criticizing his office's spending and staffing levels.

- Defended the qualifications and experience of staff, noting nine employees with over 173 years of collective experience.
- Clarified budget and salary concerns, including a temporary salary increase for Assistant Property Appraiser Randy Rutter, approved by the state after the passing of previous Property Appraiser Oz Barker.
- Explained the purchase of four new vehicles using funds from a lost position, replacing 12-year-old trucks to reduce repair costs.
- Noted return of \$150,000 to the county last year and operation at 88% of budget two years prior.
- Invited commissioners to discuss budget concerns directly, emphasizing transparency.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

Business or Informational Items

1. Madam Chair Desiree Mills, Requesting Legislative Update from Liberty Partners LLC. (Audio 10:28)

- **Presenter:** Jennifer Green & Tim Parson, Liberty Partners LLC
- **Discussion:** Overview of the 2025 Florida Legislative Session
 - Highlighted significant political changes, including appointments of Attorney General Ashley Moody to the U.S. Senate and CFO Jimmy Petronis resigning to run for Congress, leading to new appointments.
 - Noted a shift in the Florida Senate with Senator Jason Pizzo becoming an independent, impacting the 2026 gubernatorial race.
 - Discussed Republican supermajority in the House and Senate but noted gridlock due to disagreements between the House, Senate, and Governor, particularly on immigration reform.
 - Session extended to 105 days, with the budget signed on the last day of the fiscal year (June 30, 2025), totaling \$113.786 billion, a decrease from previous years due to reduced federal funds.
 - Governor vetoed 11 bills, signed 255, and allowed three to become law without signature, a rare occurrence.
 - Highlighted rural county advocacy, including Levy County's participation in Rural County Days.

was Speaker of House. Sheriff McCallum was Florida Sheriff's Association President at the time of the creation of this fund.

- **Action Taken:**
 - Motion Comm. Meeks
 - Second Comm. Kennedy
 - Vote Outcome 5-0
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AMENDED AGENDA ITEM

5. Request for Emergency Procurement for Courthouse Air Conditioner on Judicial Wing (Audio 35:20)

- **Presenter:** Mary-Ellen Harper, County Manager
 - **Discussion:** Request to approve emergency purchase of a new air conditioner from Brooks Building Solutions for \$153,839 due to failure of one of two courthouse units. Lead time of 6-8 weeks, with a four-year warranty. Brooks Building Solutions is also the company that currently services existing courthouse units.
 - **Action Taken:**
 - Motion Comm. Kennedy
 - Second Comm. Hiers
 - Vote Outcome 5-0
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6. Requesting appointment of Devyn Chorvat to the Planning Commission. (Audio 38:15)

- **Presenter:** Mary-Ellen Harper, County Manager
 - **Discussion:** Term set to expire April 2027
 - **Action Taken:**
 - Motion Comm. Kennedy
 - Second Comm. Hiers
 - Vote Outcome 5-0
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7. Requesting Re-Appointment of Tamar Jones to the Board of Adjustments (Audio 38:42)

- **Presenter:** Mary-Ellen Harper, County Manager
- **Discussion:** Term set to expire March 2028
- **Action Taken:**
 - Motion Comm. Hiers
 - Second Comm. Meeks
 - Vote Outcome 5-0

8. Requesting Approval of Budget Amendment to Cover Expenses in General Operations *(Audio 39:04)*

- **Presenter:** Mary-Ellen Harper, County Manager
- **Discussion:** Request for a \$30,700 budget amendment to cover IT consultant, lobbyist, and auditor expenses for the 2024-2025 fiscal year, using general fund reserves.
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- **Action Taken:**
 - Motion Comm. Hodge
 - Second Comm. Meeks
 - Vote Outcome 5-0

9. Requesting First Amendment to J. Brown Professional Group Agreement *(Audio 39:50)*

- **Presenter:** Bo Cox, Development Director
- **Discussion:** Request to approve the first amendment to the agreement for acting zoning official services, correcting transposed fee schedule figures for site plans.
- **Action Taken:**
 - Motion Comm. Kennedy
 - Second Comm. Hiers
 - Vote Outcome 5-0

10. Requesting Approval of Amendment to Task Assignment 2025-01 *(Audio 41:08)*

- **Presenter:** Bo Cox, Development Director
- **Discussion:** Request to approve amendment for engineering review of development plans, subdivisions, and plats at a fixed rate.
- **Action Taken:**
 - Motion Comm. Hiers
 - Second Comm. Hodge
 - Vote Outcome 5-0

11. Requesting Approval and Chair's Signature for RFP NO. 2025_003-EMS Billing and Initial Collections Services *(Audio 41:45)*

- **Presenter:** Mitch Harrell, Public Safety Director

14. Request to Approve Resolution 2025-43 *(Audio 47:47)*

- **Presenter:** Alice LaLonde, Administrative Coordinator, Road Department
- **Discussion:** Request to adopt Resolution 2025-43, approving a construction maintenance agreement with FDOT for transportation improvements at Northwest 30th Avenue and US 129/State 49, including turn lanes for safety, at no cost to the county.
- **Action Taken:**
 - Motion Comm. Hiers
 - Second Comm. Kennedy
 - Vote Outcome 5-0

15. Request to Approve Resolution 2025-38 *(Audio 49:41)*

- **Presenter:** Travis Newsome, Assistant Director, Levy County Solid Waste
- **Discussion:** Request to adopt Resolution 2025-38, updating solid waste disposal fees, charges, and regulations.
- **Action Taken:**
 - Motion Comm. Meeks
 - Second Comm. Kennedy
 - Vote Outcome 5-0

16. Requesting Approval of Retention Letter with GrayRobinson, P.A. *(Audio 50:58)*

- **Presenter:** Nicolle Shalley, County Attorney
- **Discussion:** Request to approve a retention letter with Gray Robinson (Gainesville) for labor and employment law services, complementing existing firms for specialized legal support.
- **Action Taken:**
 - Motion Comm. Hodge
 - Second Comm. Kennedy
 - Vote Outcome 5-0

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

Commissioner Reports

- **Commissioner Meeks:**
 - Raised concerns about FEMA flood maps and DEP septic system regulations, noting a lawsuit delayed implementation for two years. New regulations could impose \$10,000-\$12,000 costs for septic repairs, impacting residents, particularly in the Rainbow River watershed.
 - Urged the board to monitor this issue for the 2026 legislative session and seek relief for residents.
 - **Commissioner Kennedy:**
 - Discussed DEP septic regulations affecting Bronson, particularly sandy areas unlikely to flood. Plans to coordinate with the Suwannee River Water Management District for public meetings to address resident concerns.
 - Proposed moving forward with finding a new location for animal control, as the current facility is inadequate. Noted County Manager Harper and staff are exploring options.
 - **Commissioner Hiers:**
 - Expressed concern about DEP septic regulations and their financial burden on residents.
 - Cited a constituent's distress over inability to subdivide land due to zoning changes on a 10 acre parcel. Suggested exploring legal or comp plan solutions to address resident hardships.
 - **Chair Mills:**
 - Noted ongoing efforts to relocate the Guardian ad Litem program to the courthouse, saving \$25,000 annually.
 - Announced upcoming meeting with Liberty Partners in Tallahassee to discuss 2026 legislative priorities and requested commissioners submit priorities to County Manager Harper.
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Requesting Approval of Expenditures:

- Madam Chair Mills requested approval of expenditures in the amount of **\$2,743,928.42** .
- **Action Taken:**
 - Motion Comm. Hodge
 - Second Comm. Meeks
 - Vote Outcome 5-0

CHECK NUMBER	155848-155995
FUND	AMOUNT
GENERAL REVENUE	321,464.76
ROAD	68,477.22
SHIP	13,811.55
MOSQUITO CONTROL	5,169.32
TRANSPORTATION	10,022.02
COURT FACILITIES	10,047.68
MISC GRANTS	2,888.61
EMS	68,071.50
FIRE	348,232.00
TOURIST DEVELOPMENT	1,336.35
UTILITIES	5,569.57
BLDG INSPECT & SAFETY	3,445.43
CAPITAL PROJECTS	1,067,522.85
ROAD IMPRV & RESTORE	784,652.70
LANDFILL	33,216.86
TOTAL	\$ 2,743,928.42
EFT/ACH PAYMENT	\$ 2,096.61

Requesting Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

- **Date of Previous Meeting:** April 22, 2025 and May 6, 2025
- **Action Taken:**
 - Motion Comm. Hodge
 - Second Comm. Meeks
 - Vote Outcome 5-0

Madam Chair Mills Recessed Meeting Until 1:00 pm Budget Hearing

Minutes Submitted by: Matt Brooks, Clerk of Court & Comptroller
Date Submitted: 7/22/2025