

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
UNION COUNTY, FLORIDA
REGULAR MEETING
JULY 21, 2025

NOTE: If any person decides to appeal any decision made with respect to any matter considered at this meeting or hearing, he or she will need a record of the proceedings and may need to ensure that a verbatim record is made.

PRESIDING: Channing Dobbs, Chair

RECORDING: Reagan E. Robinson, Deputy Clerk

ATTENDING: Commissioner Mac Johns; Commissioner Donna Jackson; Commissioner Willie Croft; Commissioner Melissa McNeal; Kellie Hendricks Rhoades, Clerk of Courts and Comptroller; James Williams, County Coordinator; Russell A. Wade III, County Attorney

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Chairman Dobbs called the meeting to order at 7:28 p.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Chair Dobbs requested that the appointment of Ross Peugh to the Recreational Board be moved to after Public Comments, and the discussion of the Florida DOGE request be moved behind the audit presentation by James Moore. **Commissioner Jackson moved to adopt the agenda with the modifications proposed by Chair Dobbs. Commissioner Croft seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.**

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Hearing no requests to speak, Chair Dobbs closed the floor to public comments.

CONSIDERATION OF APPOINTMENT OF ROSS PEUGH TO RECREATIONAL BOARD

Mr. Ross Peugh provided a brief introduction, including that he has been a part of Babe Ruth for nine years, serving both as a coach and part of the Babe Ruth Board for two years. Chair Dobbs stated that he has a lot of respect for Mr. Peugh and his wife. **Commissioner Johns moved to appoint Mr. Ross Peugh to the Recreation Board. Commissioner McNeal seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.**

Mr. Williams then shared that he received a resignation from someone on the Recreation Board and is looking for a replacement of the position.

APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

Chair Dobbs read the list of minutes to be considered. **Commissioner Jackson moved to adopt the Consent Agenda, which includes the Finance Report, minutes from the May 15, 2025 Public Hearing, June 16, 2025 Regular Meeting, and July 7, 2025 Regular Business Meeting and Budget Amendment 2025-11 and corresponding Resolution BA25-06. Commissioner Croft seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.**

Clerk Rhoades shared that she had one additional bill to be considered. She noted that Clay Electric sent a bill for \$138.39 directly to the Recreation Board rather than to the Finance Department first. Because of this the bill was never paid. Commissioner Johns noted that it is a new power account, and Clerk Rhoades said that would explain why it was overlooked. **Commissioner Jackson moved to approve the finance report, including the three bills for OJ Phillips due to Clay Electric in the upcoming week. Commissioner Croft seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.**

COUNTY AUDIT PRESENTATION

Zach Chalifour, partner at James Moore and Co., thanked the Clerk's Office and other Constitutional Officers for their cooperation during the audit process. He then provided an overview of the audit. He stated that the County's financial statements were given an unqualified opinion, which is the highest ranking the firm can offer. He noted that it is a single audit that is compliance focused. Mr. Chalifour noted that overall there were no red flags or modifications. Commissioner Jackson then brought up the recommendation regarding fixed assets needing to be tracked more properly, and noted that the auditors did not perform any fixed asset inventory. She also brought to attention the notation in the letter that the Allowance for Doubtful Accounts on the EMS fund. Mr. Chalifour noted that this was not a major concern. Clerk Rhoades noted that it is a recommended adjustment to an estimated amount, and in no way affects funds that are received or disbursed by the county.

DISCUSSION/REPORT FROM CLERK REGARDING DOGE REQUEST

Clerk Rhoades noted that the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) gave the County six business days to reorganize information that has already been provided to the state in some way. She expressed appreciation to Mr. Williams for reaching out and having the deadline extended but noted that he was only given until August 4. She reviewed her answers to the DOGE's questions with the Board, which includes population, budget and revenue inquiries. She also posed questions she wants insight on. Mr. Williams asked her to forward all questions to him, and he will provide them to the Florida Association of Counties for direction. Clerk Rhoades noted that she will work diligently, but unless additional staff is added, she will not be able to complete this by the deadline but believed she could do most of it. She continued that she is not asking for more funds, as she believes this to be the very definition of inefficiency, but wanted to ensure that the Board does not hold the expectation for the deadline to be fully met. Commissioner Johns offered that the Board is not aiming for total completion, rather it being completed the best it can be. A consensus was reached to provide completed information by the August 4 deadline, and the balance be completed as soon as possible. She thanked the Board for their understanding.

CONSIDERATION OF MILLAGE RATES AND TENTATIVE BUDGET HEARING

Clerk Rhoades presented the 2025-26 Fiscal Year's proposed TRIM information, including the prior year millage rate of 10.000, the rolled back rate of 9.7167 and the proposed millage rate of 10.000. She also suggested September 8 and September 15 at 5:45 p.m. for the Tentative and Final Budget Hearings. **Commissioner Johns moved to hold the Tentative and Final Budget Hearings on September 8 and 15, respectively, both at 5:45 p.m. Commissioner Jackson seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.**

DISCUSSION/CONSIDERATION OF AWARD FOR 238N PROJECT

Mr. Williams requested that this item be tabled due to a funding shortage. **Commissioner Johns moved to table the item of business. Commissioner Jackson seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.**

CONSIDERATION OF EMS FEE SCHEDULE

Mr. Brenton Allen, EMS Director, noted there is too long of a wait time at hospitals when transporting patients out of County. He proposed that the County update the fee schedule to charge the hospitals per minute while waiting with their patients when unnecessarily delayed. He shared that if implemented in the previous year, \$75,000 could have been accrued. He closed by stating that this is not a long-term revenue solution, rather an incentive to make the hospitals change their habits to get our ambulances back in the county, and if passed, his next step will be to coordinate with the billing company. **Commissioner Johns moved to approve the revised fee schedule. Commissioner Jackson seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.**

CONSIDERATION TO APPROVE PRELIMINARY PLAT AND CONSTRUCTION PLANS OF LIBERTY FARM

Mr. Pete Scerbo shared that the plans are similar to previous plans with additional edits made by the North Florida Regional Planning Council (NFRPC). He requested preliminary plat and road construction plan approval. Discussion ensued regarding land distribution and road construction. Commissioner Johns confirmed his thoughts that this development cannot be stopped and Attorney Wade confirmed that it can't because it isn't a land use issue, rather the land is just being platted out. Commissioner Johns stated that it is going to be a large burden on the County and he doesn't like it, calling it a "Swamp-division". **Commissioner Jackson moved to approve the preliminary plat and road construction plan with the understanding that all NFRPC recommendations have been met. Commissioner Johns seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.**

DISCUSSION OF HEALTH INSURANCE

Commissioner Jackson shared the Health Insurance Committee's recommendation that the County stay with United Healthcare. Commissioner Jackson explained the process in which the committee came to this recommendation. Discussion ensued regarding the positive and negatives of this choice, as well as RFQs for broker services. Mr. Williams noted the cost of the plan increased 24.9%, which comes out to roughly \$222 a month per employee. Commissioner Jackson asked the Board to consider who will pay for the cost of the increase: the Board, the employees, or shared by all. Discussion ensued regarding the rates and proposed cost sharing. Until such time as a final decision could be reached, a decision was needed to confirm the County's agreement to stay with United Healthcare. **Commissioner Johns moved to stay with United Healthcare's insurance. Commissioner Croft seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.**

REPORT FROM COUNTY COORDINATOR, JIMMY WILLIAMS AND REPORTS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS

Mr. Williams provided updates on the Providence Fire Station, FRDAP Grant, Agricultural Education Building Grant and the County Road 18 Project.

Mr. Lamar Griffis, Solid Waste Director, stated that the Solid Waste Department is killing mosquitos, saving dogs and providing recreation opportunities for youth. He also gave a big shout out to Mrs. Woodington for her help with mosquito control reports.

Mr. Chris Griffis, Road Superintendent, shared that everything is going good.

Mrs. Priti McNutt, Mary C. Brown Public Library Director, stated that their last program is coming up and thanked Mr. Lamar Griffis for trimming the trees at the library.

Mr. Brent Allen, EMS Director, shared that EMS is hosting their first community event in August.

Mr. Jim DeValerio, UF/IFAS County Extension Director, shared that everything is going well at the Extension Office.

REPORT FROM COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Jackson inquired as to the marked trees at O.J. Phillips. Mr. Williams shared that some have cankers while it looks like others may fall. She then asked for an update on ordinance codification. Clerk Rhoades stated that she sent Attorney Wade a draft for him to review.

Chair Dobbs noted that the County is losing Ms. Trisha Wylie as the New River Public Library Cooperative Director. He thanked her for her service and shared how much he was going to miss her. He then discussed plats and how

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they cannot be stopped if they are in accordance with LDRs. He stated that he is not personally thrilled about them.

Commissioner Johns stated that the AC unit at the Providence Community Center went out and will need to be replaced. He noted that Wilson's will put in a previously used County-owned unit and will only charge for labor.

Mr. Williams shared that Mrs. Hannon left quickly during the meeting due to her mother falling and asked that everyone keep them in their prayers.

Seeing no further business, Chair Dobbs adjourned the meeting by general consent at 9:27 p.m.

Adopted by vote of the Board of County Commissioners on August 18, 2025.

Amended by vote of the Board of County Commissioners on September 8, 2025.