

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
UNION COUNTY, FLORIDA
BUDGET MEETING
AUGUST 28, 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; Donna Jackson, Vice-Chair

RECORDING: Reagan E. Robinson, Deputy Clerk

ATTENDING:

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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commissioner Willie Croft | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kellie Hendricks Rhoades, Clerk of Courts & Comptroller |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commissioner Channing Dobbs | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Russell A. Wade III, County Attorney |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commissioner Donna Jackson | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jimmy Williams, County Coordinator |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commissioner Mac Johns | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pamela Woodington, Finance Director |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commissioner Melissa McNeal | <input type="checkbox"/> Dianne Hannon, Board Secretary |

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Vice-Chair Jackson called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. She noted that Chair Dobbs would be present later in the meeting.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE

Commissioner McNeal offered the prayer and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Vice-Chair Jackson asked for Insurance Renewal to be added between Agenda Item No. 4 and 5. **Commissioner Croft moved to adopt the agenda, with the addition of Insurance Renewal between Agenda Item No. 4 and 5. Commissioner McNeal seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.**

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Hearing no requests to speak, Vice-Chair Jackson closed the floor to public comments.

INSURANCE RENEWAL

Clerk Rhoades questioned that Worker's Compensation Insurance will drop from 2025 to 2026. Mr. Williams noted that a mistake was made somewhere, but that he doesn't know where specifically. Discussion ensued regarding the mistake, as well as this year's payroll estimates with Worker's Compensation and the decrease. Clerk Rhoades stated she has no concerns, and just wanted to make sure the County is not overpaying as a result of previous inaccuracies. **Commissioner Johns moved to approve the renewal. Commissioner McNeal seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.**

CONSIDERATION OF BUDGET REQUEST, EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF FLORIDA'S GATEWAY, INC.

Mr. Williams read an email he received from Early Learning Coalition of Florida's Gateway requesting \$30,000. Vice-Chair Jackson stated that education is not the Board's purview, rather the school system's. She noted that the County's budget is constrained enough. The other Board Members agreed with Vice-Chair Jackson and opted to not fulfill the request.

DISCUSSION OF BUDGETS

Clerk Rhoades began by sharing that she dropped the Clerk's request for her own health insurance and updated other revenues from taxes (ex. fuel and surtax).

Mrs. Lisa B. Johnson, Tax Collector, shared with the Board as a County Official that she and the other Constitutional Officers feel the County is struggling in a way that they have never seen before. She noted how there are 14 or 15 employees which raises have been requested for. Mrs. Johnson emphasized her feelings her employees work non-stop when compared to some of the employees who are included in the budget for raises, which is a slap in the face. When asked, she noted that she included a 5% COLA increase for her staff in her 2025 budget request. She went on to say that if the County is truly struggling like the Board says, then raises need to be re-evaluated. The Board discussed that if staff are given a 3% COLA raise, Mrs. Johnson would be expected to lower her raise to 3%.

Vice-Chair Jackson passed the gavel to Chair Dobbs upon his arrival.

Discussion ensued regarding raise feasibility. Chair Dobbs stated his opinion that if the Board has to start making unpopular decisions if they want to support the County. He noted implementing the gas tax, which would not impact citizens, as an example. He emphasized that the Board has never done anything in their power to bring business, and in turn revenue, into the County. Chair Dobbs stated that if this is not rectified soon, the deficit will have to be paid for by the citizens. Commissioner McNeal echoed his sentiments before explaining that the citizens she has spoken to don't mind paying a bit more if everyone does so in order to protect the way of life in the County. Vice-Chair Jackson noted the importance of public information when considering increases that will impact constituents. The Board entered into discussion regarding projections and growth within the County, as well as code enforcement. Afterward, Mr. Williams shared he has been meeting with companies whose business would bring revenue into the County. Vice-Chair Jackson explained that the County must find more revenue sources or unwelcomed changes will need to be made. Mr. Williams suggested increasing special assessments, which hasn't been done in years and would generate approximately \$620,000 between Solid Waste and EMS. The Board went on to discuss County needs and possible solutions.

In closing, Vice-Chair Jackson suggested Clerk Rhoades reduce transfers by taking out raises and adjusting the revenue based on recent State estimates. Chair Dobbs requested that Clerk Rhoades take out COLA so the Board can compare the budget with and without their inclusion. Commissioner Croft agreed. He also asked that the skid steer purchase be spread over three years with no interest payment.

Clerk Rhoades shared that FEMA may cover the replacement of the County Commission Office's roof. She asked that the Board look into shingles versus metal roofing so they are prepared to make a decision if the option is presented.

Seeing no further business, Chair Dobbs adjourned the meeting by general consent at 7:08 p.m.

Adopted by vote of the Board of County Commissioners on September 15, 2025.