

County Attorney's Office  
Five-Year Strategic Plan  
FY 2026-2031

## **HISTORY AND AUTHORITY**

The county has had an in-house county attorney since 1977, including Irvin S. Cowie (First Full-Time County Attorney)(1977/78-1990), Mark F. Carpanini (1990-November 2002), Linda L. McKinley (Interim-November 2002-March 2003), Joe G. Jarret (March 2003- October 2007), Linda L. McKinley (Interim-October 2007-January 2008), Michael S. Craig (January 2008-August 2021), Randy M. Mink (August 2021-Present). Section 4.3 of the Polk County Charter provides that there shall be a department of legal services directed by an attorney appointed by the Board of County Commissioners. Pursuant to this section, the county attorney is responsible to the Board of County Commissioners. As part of that responsibility, the County Attorney's Office provides legal advice to the Board of Commissioners, the County Manager and employees of the county regarding county matters. In addition, the County Attorney's Office may provide legal advice to constitutional officers on an as-needed basis.

## **VISION**

To be a County Attorney's Office that works with the County Manager's office and county staff to legally and efficiently carry out public policy as directed by the Board of County Commissioners.

## **MISSION**

Our mission is to provide timely, ethical, and professional legal services to the Board of County Commissioners and County Staff in a courteous, zealous, and prudent manner.

## **VALUES**

The County Attorney's Office values honesty, personal accountability and teamwork. It is committed to ethical conduct, providing sound legal advice and working with the County Manager's Office and County staff to carry out the policy of the Board of County Commissioners in a legal and efficient manner.

## Recent Accomplishments

### 2022: Environmental Lands Referendum Ordinance

AVTE Ordinance approved (14-AVTE=825 new high-wage full-time jobs)

Assisting in resolving waste hauler issues: Demand Letters and State of Local Emergency

Assisting in resolving issues with construction of the NE Government Center: Demand Letter

### 2023: \$35+ million in opioid class action

Pedestrian and Vehicle Safety Ordinance

Dismissal of Cuts Ups Lawn Service Case

Wayne Giddings Appeal Denied

Dismissal Archer case filed against Code Enforcement Director, County Manager and County

Quiet Title cases for affordable housing

RES Agreement Completed

Smoking Ordinance

### 2024: Dismissal of Landfill Easement Case

Closure of Rohr Home

DEP Denial of BS Ranch Permit

Hurricane Milton

Dismissal Coastal lawsuit

Denial of BS Ranch Code Enforcement Appeal (6<sup>th</sup> DCA)

Huckleberry Farms Case settled (River Ranch North)

Efficiency Commission Referendum (Combining with Charter Review Committee)

### 2025: Multi-million dollar PFAS class action

3-year CBA with IAFF and IAEP

Interlocal Agreements for Legal Services with Property Appraiser, Supervisor of Elections and

Medical Director (Clerk and TPO added in 2026)

Waterway Protection Ordinance

Demolition of Rohr Home

BS Ranch Injunction

Master Inwood Street Lighting District created

New Impact Fee Interlocals executed w/ 15 municipalities as required by statute

\$24k in Visa class action

Public Camping Ordinance

## Current Office Staffing:

County Attorney

2-Deputy County Attorneys

5-Assistant County Attorneys (3-Attorney III and 2-Attorney I)

1-Office Manager

2-Paralegals

## Current Attorney Classifications

- County Attorney-Appointed by the BoCC
- Deputy County Attorney-Appointed by the County Attorney
- Assistant County Attorney I (0-3yr), II (4-6yr), III (7+)

### COUNTY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE DUTIES AND ASSIGNMENTS

| Randy Mink<br>County Attorney                                                                                                                                                                                          | Tom Norsworthy<br>Deputy County Attorney                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Heather Bryan<br>Assistant County Attorney III                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Breezi Hicks<br>Assistant County Attorney III                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Dane Norman<br>Assistant County Attorney I                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Sandi Howard<br>Deputy County Attorney                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Randall Vogel<br>Assistant County Attorney III                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Noah Milov<br>Assistant County Attorney I                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
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| <u>Primary</u><br>BOCC<br><br>County Manager<br><br>Legislative Affairs<br><br>Public Safety CC<br><br>Juvenile Justice Community Advisory Bd.<br><br>State of Emergency<br><br><u>Secondary</u><br>Eminent Domain (2) | <u>Reports:</u><br>Breezi Hicks<br>Heather Bryan<br>Randall Vogel<br><br><u>Primary</u><br><u>Waste and Recycling</u><br><br><u>Utilities</u><br>•STOPR Water Cooperative<br>•PRWC<br><br><u>Tourism/ Sports Marketing</u><br>•Tourism Dev. Council<br><br><u>Secondary</u><br>BoCC, & County Manager<br><br>Health & Human Svc. | <u>Primary</u><br><br><u>Roads &amp; Drainage</u><br>•TPO<br><br><u>Real Estate</u><br>•Conservation Easements<br>•Eminent Domain<br><br><u>Health&amp;Human Svc</u><br>•Indigent Healthcare<br>•COC<br><br><u>Court Services</u><br><br><u>Foreclosures</u><br><br><u>Garnishments</u><br><br><u>Secondary</u><br>Litigation | <u>Primary</u><br><br><u>Human Resources</u><br>•Employee Relations Council<br>•Deferred Compensation<br><br><u>Risk Management</u><br>•Insurance Committee<br><br>General Litigation/Discovery<br><br>Probate<br><br><u>Secondary</u><br>State of Emergency | <u>Primary</u><br><br><u>Information Technology</u><br>•Public Records<br>•Records Management<br>•HIPAA<br><br><u>Public Safety</u><br>•Fire Rescue<br>•Emergency Mgt.<br><br><u>Communications</u><br><br><u>Parks &amp; Natural Resources</u><br>•Parks CAC<br>•STAC<br>•Historical Commission<br>•CLASAC<br><br><u>Cooperative Extension</u><br><br><u>Grants</u><br><br><u>Plat Reviews</u><br><br><u>Ethics</u><br><br><u>Legislation</u> | <u>Reports:</u><br>Noah Milov<br>Dane Norman<br><br><u>Primary</u><br><u>Planning and Development</u><br>•Concurrency & Entitlements<br>•Planning Commission<br>•LUHO<br>•CRA<br>•JAZB/AZBA<br>•Infrastructure Agreements<br><br><u>Impact Fees</u><br><br><u>Economic Development</u><br>•Economic Development Tax Exemptions<br><br><u>Secondary</u><br><br>BoCC & County Manager<br><br>Procurement<br><br>Tourism Development Council<br><br>Tourism/Sports Marketing<br><br>Special Magistrates & LUHO agreements | <u>Primary</u><br><br><u>Code Enforcement</u><br>•Special Magistrate<br>•Demolitions<br>•Litigation/foreclosures<br><br><u>Building Division</u><br>•Contractor Licensing Bd.<br>•Fire Marshal<br><br><u>Bankruptcy</u><br><br><u>Secondary</u><br><br><u>Foreclosure Garnishments</u><br><br><u>Litigation</u><br><br><u>Planning and Development</u><br><br><u>Plat Reviews</u> | <u>Primary</u><br><u>Procurement</u><br><br><u>Budget &amp; Management Services</u><br><br><u>Facilities</u><br><br><u>Fleet</u><br><br><u>MSBU /MSTU</u><br>(Special Assessments)<br><br>Lay board appointments<br><br>Special Magistrates & LUHO agreements.<br><br><u>Secondary</u><br><u>Information Technology</u><br>•Public Records<br>•Records Management<br>•HIPAA |
| Emergency: Executive Group                                                                                                                                                                                             | Emergency: Shelters                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Emergency: Debris Removal                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Emergency: Human Resources and Risk                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Emergency: EM & Communications                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Emergency: Real Estate                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Emergency: Damage Assessment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Emergency: Procurement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Lisa Conran                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Lisa Conran                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Jackie Lanfair-Non Litigation & Foreclosures/Garnishments<br><br>Wyheinee Thervil-Non-foreclosure Litigation                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Wyheinee Thervil                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Jackie Lanfair                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Lisa Conran                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Wyheinee Thervil                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Jackie Lanfair                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

### BoCC Litigation

|      | Motor Vehicle | Negligence | Premise Liability | Plaintiff | Appeals | Employment | Others | Total | Eminent Domain | Handled In-house |
|------|---------------|------------|-------------------|-----------|---------|------------|--------|-------|----------------|------------------|
| 2023 | 13            | 2          | 8                 | 1         | 3       | 4          | 2      | 33    | 3              | 5 (3-appeals)    |
| 2024 | 8             | ----       | 3                 | ----      | -----   | ----       | 1      | 12    | 15             | 1                |
| 2025 | 7             | ----       | 5                 | ----      | 1       | 2          | 2      | 17    | 37             | 1                |
|      |               |            |                   |           |         |            | Avg:   | 21    | 19             | 2                |

Avg annual costs over last 3 years

Litigation: \$420K (Exclusive of Complex Litigation)

Eminent Domain: \$49k

Total: \$469k

Union Arbitration, PERC: \$34K

## 5-YEAR IN-HOUSE LITIGATION PLAN

**Year 1:** Assign two attorneys to begin transition of using in-house counsel to handle BoCC Litigation and Eminent Domain matters. Goal: handle 20% of BoCC litigation(non-employment and noncomplex) and Eminent Domain in-house.

**Year 2:** Continue transition of using in-house counsel to handle BoCC Litigation and Eminent Domain matters. Purchase case management software to track cases. Goal: handle 40% of BoCC litigation (non-employment and noncomplex) and Eminent Domain in-house.

**Year 3:** Add Deputy County Attorney position to oversee all litigation with the Deputy and two attorneys handling BoCC Litigation and Eminent Domain in-house. Transition to majority of BoCC Litigation and Eminent Domain being handled in-house. Goal: handle 60% of BoCC litigation (non-employment and noncomplex) and Eminent Domain in-house. (May add Deputy County Attorney earlier if Year 3 Goal is met prior to Year 3).

**Year 4:** Train additional attorneys to assist with in house litigation. Goal: handle 80% of BoCC Litigation(non-employment and noncomplex) and Eminent Domain being handled in-house.

**Year 5:** Finalize transition of using in-house counsel to handle BoCC Litigation and Eminent Domain matters. Goal: handle 90% of BoCC litigation (non-employment and noncomplex) and Eminent Domain in-house.

## STAFFING PLAN TO IMPLEMENT 5-YEAR IN-HOUSE LITIGATION PLAN

- Add 1 Assistant County Attorney I to allow assigned litigation attorneys to focus on in-house litigation.
- Add new categories of attorneys: Attorney IV, Senior Attorney, and Senior Litigation Attorney to allow movement and retention of attorneys.
- Add Deputy County Attorney to oversee litigation.

### Attorney Classification

- County Attorney-Appointed by the BoCC
- Deputy County Attorney-Appointed by the County Attorney
- (New) Senior Litigation Attorney-More than 15 years of practicing law in Florida with more than 10 years of litigation experience or Board certified in Civil Trial and assigned to handle litigation matters for the BoCC.
- (New) Senior Attorney-More than 15 years of practicing law with more than 10 years of practice in local government law or Board certified in City, County and Local Government Law or 10 years of practice or certification in the area of law assigned to handle on behalf of the BoCC.
- Assistant County Attorney
  - Current: Assistant County Attorney I (0-3yr), II (4-6yr), III (7yr+)
  - New: Assistant County Attorney I (0-3yr), II (4-6yr), III (7-9yr), IV (10+yr)