



Polk County Board of County Commissioners

Meeting Minutes - Draft

October 15, 2024 Regular BoCC meeting

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If a person decides to appeal any decision made by the board with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearing, he or she will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purpose, he or she may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

CALL TO ORDER - 9:00 a.m. (BILL BRASWELL, CHAIR)

INVOCATION

Murphy Hanley, Polk County Fire Rescue Chaplain

Minutes: A moment of silence was offered for Bruce Kinsler.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE (BILL BRASWELL, CHAIR)

A. PRESENTATIONS and RECOGNITIONS

A.1. Employee Recognition

Minutes: The Board recognized Ben Cassista with Fire Rescue and Karen Murphy with Utilities for their years of dedicated service.

C. REQUEST FROM THE GENERAL PUBLIC/AUDIENCE AND OPPORTUNITY TO BE HEARD

C.1. Comments.

Minutes: Father Boniface spoke in opposition to Amendment No. 4. He said thou shall not kill and he said the governor should put his foot down and stop this. He asked them to say no.

Commissioner Combee said this is something we can consider at our next meeting.

Chair Braswell said that is election day.

D. APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA

D.1. Approve Consent Agenda.

RESULT:	APPROVED
MOVER:	George Lindsey
SECONDER:	Martha Santiago
AYE:	Lindsey, Braswell, Combee, Santiago, and Wilson

E. COUNTY COMPTROLLER (STACY M. BUTTERFIELD, CPA)

E.1. Disbursements.

RESULT:	APPROVED
MOVER:	Neil Combee
SECONDER:	Martha Santiago
AYE:	Lindsey, Braswell, Combee, Santiago, and Wilson

E.2. Minutes of Regular Board meeting held on October 1, 2024.

RESULT:	APPROVED
MOVER:	Martha Santiago
SECONDER:	Rick Wilson
AYE:	Lindsey, Braswell, Combee, Santiago, and Wilson

H. COUNTY MANAGER (BILL BEASLEY)

H.1. Approve the first amendment to the contract with We Care of Central Florida, Inc. for transportation to health care services to eligible low-income county residents. (total amount not to exceed \$550,000 annually)

Minutes: County Manager Bill Beasley discussed the first amendment to the contract with We Care of Central Florida, Inc., for transportation to health care services to eligible low-income county residents. He recommended approval.

RESULT:	APPROVED
MOVER:	Rick Wilson
SECONDER:	Martha Santiago
AYE:	Lindsey, Braswell, Combee, Santiago, and Wilson

H.2. Approve the second amendment to the contract with Parkview Outreach Community Center, Inc. (Parkview) to provide primary and specialty care services to eligible low-income residents. (Total amount not to exceed \$306,090 annually.)

Minutes: County Manager Bill Beasley discussed the second amendment to the contract with Parkview Outreach Community Center, Inc., providing primary and

specialty care services to eligible low-income residents. He recommended approval.

RESULT:	APPROVED
MOVER:	Neil Combee
SECONDER:	Martha Santiago
AYE:	Lindsey, Braswell, Combee, Santiago, and Wilson

H.3. Approve the T. Mark Schmidt grant agreement between the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) and Polk County for the purchase of a water truck with spraying equipment to maintain Bone Valley ATV Park. (\$240,000 one-time grant revenue, \$60,000 County match).

Minutes: County Manager Bill Beasley discussed the T. Mark Schmidt grant agreement with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services for the purchase of a water truck with spraying equipment maintaining the Bone Valley ATV Park. He recommended approval.

RESULT:	APPROVED
MOVER:	Rick Wilson
SECONDER:	George Lindsey
AYE:	Lindsey, Braswell, Combee, Santiago, and Wilson

H.4. Confirm appointment of Mr. Ryan Wiggins, Sr. to serve as the Director of the Polk County Building Division.

Minutes: County Manager Bill Beasley discussed the appointment of Mr. Ryan Wiggins, Sr., to serve as the Director of the Polk County Building Division effective October 15, 2024. He requested approval.

Ryan Wiggins, Sr. said in his spare time he is also a pastor. He thanked the County Manager, the Board and Ben Dunn for this opportunity. He said it is an honor to represent our building department and staff. He said he will continue to work with other departments in an effort to make customer service top-notch. He introduced his family present today and he thanked them.

Chair Braswell said he cannot believe after hearing that resume that he has spare time .

RESULT:	APPROVED
MOVER:	George Lindsey
SECONDER:	Neil Combee
AYE:	Lindsey, Braswell, Combee, Santiago, and Wilson

I. COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 1 (GEORGE LINDSEY)

I.1. Commissioner Lindsey Comments.

Minutes: Commissioner Lindsey reminded the audience that October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. He said the praise and admiration for the team effort in the hurricane response, our Emergency Operations Center and all the teams that are assembled there are top-notch. He said we are a model for the rest of the state and

perhaps the country. He said it could not happen without dedicated people across the board from the top leadership to every employee. He said he is proud to be a very small part of that. He thanked all the team members that participated in that recovery in putting people of Polk County first.

J. COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 2 (RICK WILSON)

J.1. Commissioner Wilson Comments.

Minutes: Commissioner Wilson said it is amazing the people we have in place at the Emergency Operations Center and everybody else involved. He said we are way above anybody in the state and he said that is because we have had so many hurricanes come through our county and a lot of practice. He said other counties could see what we do and it would help them a lot. He thanked them. He said we are getting through it, it is getting better everyday and a lot of hard work went into it.

K. COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 4 (MARTHA SANTIAGO)

K.1. Commissioner Santiago Comments.

Minutes: Commissioner Santiago said it was great to see how the team came together for the hurricane. She said it was an ugly one and definitely the cry for the people to follow the rules, regulations, take shelter, and whatever it was people did do that and she said it was great. She said she appreciates Senator Colleen Burton for being there and helping out as much as she can with state issues. She stated Representative Jennifer Canady was also there. She said it is great when we start seeing our state representatives there helping us out and making those connections. She said Congressman Franklin was also there and she said he is always there to help out in Polk County. She said it is great to see them working for Polk County and she thanked them.

Commissioner Santiago gave condolences to the family of Bruce Kinsler. She said this is a hard time and she wants to make sure that they know that we care, we are sorry for what happened, and we hope that God's peace is over them.

L. COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 5 (NEIL COMBEE)

L.1. Commissioner Combee Comments.

Minutes: Commissioner Combee thanked all the county employees here and those manning the Emergency Operations Center for days leading up to and days after the storm passed. He thanked those that were not here and he said anyone who had been summoned would have been here. He thanked all the county staff and the Clerk. He thanked the folks who came from out of town to get our power restored. He said the guys out his way were from Philadelphia and he thanked all of them. He said he intends to vote no on Amendment No. 4 and he intends to urge his friends, neighbors, and family to vote no. He said he is willing to go on record that he is against Amendment No. 4. He said he is glad we are able to get here and continue with the county's business.

M. COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 3 (BILL BRASWELL, CHAIR)

M.1. Appoint Christina Hielscher as the Polk County Library Co-op Representative (Seat 9) for the Polk County Historical Commission, for the three-year term, October 1, 2024 through September 30, 2027.

RESULT:	APPROVED
MOVER:	Rick Wilson
SECONDER:	George Lindsey
AYE:	Lindsey, Braswell, Combee, Santiago, and Wilson

M.2. Chair Braswell Comments.

Minutes: Chair Braswell said he borrowed a radio from the Emergency Operations Center and listened to what was going on as the wind was blowing 100 mph. He said people's roofs were collapsing on them, we know how much water was on the road and it was crazy to listen to the radio and to hear the sheriff, firefighters and paramedics not bat an eye. He said it was I am done with this do you got something else for me. He said it was impressive and it was bizarre when they were getting phone calls that it's 2:00 in the morning and they decided to go to a shelter with the winds blowing 80 mph. He said people are stupid and are going to keep being stupid in these events and we are going to have people like fire fighters and sheriffs pulling them out of a bad situation. He said it is amazing to him what was going on and it was non-stop. He said when the winds got up so high that the ambulance could not run, the paramedics got in the back seat of a deputies car and still made the run. He said these guy do not bat an eye about putting themselves in harms way. He said he is genuinely impressed. He said we got a lot of work to do, we have a lot of recovery, a lot of flooding, and it is unfortunate but this is going to be a long term recovery.

N. LAY BOARD APPOINTMENTS

N.1. Appoint Katherine "Kate" Johnson as a member of the Tourist Development Council to fulfill the remainder of Nick Miller's (LEGOLAND) four-year term which ends April 30, 2027.

RESULT:	APPROVED
MOVER:	Rick Wilson
SECONDER:	Martha Santiago
AYE:	Lindsey, Braswell, Combee, Santiago, and Wilson

O. EXPEDITED HEARINGS PURSUANT TO RESOLUTION NO. 2022-089

Minutes: County Attorney Randy Mink reminded the audience of the procedures of the expedited hearings and the public hearings and swore in those who plan to speak.

O.1. Public Hearing (LDCPAS-2024-6 Copales Market CPA) (Adoption Hearing) to consider the Future Land Use Change from Leisure/Recreation (L/R) to Linear Commercial Corridor (LCC) in the Urban Growth Area (UGA). (No Fiscal Impact)

Minutes: Land Development Director Ben Ziskal reviewed the proposed land use change. He said that staff and the Planning Commission recommend approval.

The Chair opened a public hearing; no one spoke.

RESULT:	APPROVED
MOVER:	Neil Combee
SECONDER:	Martha Santiago
AYE:	Lindsey, Braswell, Combee, Santiago, and Wilson

O.2. Public Hearing (LDCPAS-2024-11 US 98 Ft Meade A-RR CPA) (Adoption Hearing) to consider the Future Land Use Map change from Phosphate Mining (PM) to Agricultural/Residential Rural (A/RR) in the Rural Development Area (RDA). (No Fiscal Impact)

Minutes: Land Development Director Ben Ziskal reviewed the proposed map change. He said that staff and the Planning Commission recommend approval. He said there is some property between the subject site and the river. He said it is adjacent to the park.

The Chair opened a public hearing; no one spoke.

RESULT:	APPROVED
MOVER:	George Lindsey
SECONDER:	Neil Combee
AYE:	Lindsey, Braswell, Combee, Santiago, and Wilson

O.3. Public Hearing (LDCPAS-2024-12 (Hall Communications IND CPA) (Adoption Hearing) to consider the Future Land Use Change on 49.10 +/- acres from Phosphate Mining (PM) to Industrial (IND) in the Urban Growth Area (UGA). (No Fiscal Impact)

Minutes: Land Development Director Ben Ziskal reviewed the proposed land use change. He said that staff and the Planning Commission recommend approval.

The Chair opened a public hearing; no one spoke.

RESULT:	APPROVED
MOVER:	Neil Combee
SECONDER:	Martha Santiago
AYE:	Lindsey, Braswell, Combee, Santiago, and Wilson

O.4. Public Hearing (LDCPAS-2024-13 5955 South Florida Avenue CPA) (Adoption Hearing) to consider the adoption of an applicant-initiated Small-Scale Comprehensive Plan Map Amendment to change the Future Land Use (FLU) designation from Business-Park Center (BPC) to Institutional (INST) on 11.8 acres. (No Fiscal Impact)

Minutes: Land Development Director Ben Ziskal said that the applicant would like to withdraw this case.

O.5. Public Hearing (LDCPAS-2024-14 Peace River ROS CPA) (Adoption Hearing) to

consider the adoption of a County-initiated Small-Scale Comprehensive Plan Map Amendment to change the Future Land Use (FLU) designation from Agricultural/Residential Rural (A/RR) & Linear Commercial Corridor (LCC) to Recreation/Open Space (ROS) at the Bartow Peace River Landing. (No Fiscal Impact)

Minutes: Land Development Director Ben Ziskal reviewed the proposed map amendment. He said that staff and the Planning Commission recommend approval.

The Chair opened a public hearing; no one spoke.

RESULT:	APPROVED
MOVER:	Rick Wilson
SECONDER:	George Lindsey
AYE:	Lindsey, Braswell, Combee, Santiago, and Wilson

O.6. Public Hearing (LDCPAS-2024-18 Crystal Lake CPA) (Adoption Hearing) to consider the adoption of a County-initiated Small-Scale Comprehensive Plan Map Amendment to change the Future Land Use (FLU) designation from Residential Low (RL) to Recreation/Open Space (ROS) at the Crystal Lake Park. (No Fiscal Impact)

Minutes: Land Development Director Ben Ziskal reviewed the proposed map amendment. He said that staff and the Planning Commission recommend approval.

The Chair opened a public hearing; no one spoke.

RESULT:	APPROVED
MOVER:	Neil Combee
SECONDER:	Rick Wilson
AYE:	Lindsey, Braswell, Combee, Santiago, and Wilson

O.7. Public Hearing (LDCPAS-2024-17 Homeland Park CPA) (Adoption Hearing) to consider the adoption of a County-initiated Small-Scale Comprehensive Plan Map Amendment to change the Future Land Use (FLU) designation from Rural Cluster Center (RCC) to Leisure/Recreation (L/R) at the Homeland Heritage Park. (No Fiscal Impact)

Minutes: Land Development Director Ben Ziskal reviewed the proposed map amendment. He said that staff and the Planning Commission recommend approval.

The Chair opened a public hearing; no one spoke.

RESULT:	APPROVED
MOVER:	Neil Combee
SECONDER:	Martha Santiago
AYE:	Lindsey, Braswell, Combee, Santiago, and Wilson

P. PUBLIC HEARINGS

P.1. Public Hearing to consider adoption of an amended Assessment Resolution and Non-Ad Valorem Assessment Roll pursuant to Ord. 2022-029, as amended, the Polk County Local Provider Participation Fund Ordinance.

Minutes: County Attorney Randy Mink discussed the amended Assessment Resolution and Non-Ad Valorem Assessment Roll pursuant to Ordinance 2022-029, as amended, the Polk County Local Provider Participation Fund Ordinance. He recommended approval.

The Chair opened a public hearing; no one spoke.

RESULT:	APPROVED
MOVER:	Rick Wilson
SECONDER:	Martha Santiago
AYE:	Lindsey, Braswell, Combee, Santiago, and Wilson

Minutes

Minutes: County Manager Bill Beasley said yesterday at the Agenda Review Paul Womble gave a comprehensive overview. He said he is going to re-cover six of those areas. He said the storm came in late Wednesday early Thursday morning and left Polk with 12-15 inches of rain. He stated a lot of the heavy rains were in the western portion of the county. He said the soil conditions in the eastern portion can weather heavier, larger amounts of rain better than some of the western sections. He said at the height of the storm we saw sustained winds at 60-65 mph and the highest gusts were 103 mph. He said we had opened 20 shelters with a total capacity of 37,000 people. He said there were 6,700 people at the shelters and within a few days we got out of the shelter business. He said people went to where they needed to be and we closed those shelters. He said the restoration of power is everything towards recovery. He said we are down to less than 5% without power. He said at the height of the storm 60% were without power. He said we have seen localized flooding at different parts of the county in both the east and the west but it was highly concentrated in the west. He said with Hurricane Helene we saw rains within the range of 12-15 inches and some areas may have seen 16-18 inches of rain.

Planning and Development Director Ben Dunn discussed the damage assessments. He said 42 teams were deployed after the storm and 70% of the damages were in the northwest quad of the county. He said there were 38 destroyed structures, 422 with major damages and 1,300 with minor destruction. He said they assessed over 22,000 properties. He said for the major and destroyed structures a lot of that was from intrusions from trees onto roofs and into structures. He said this was a huge rain event. He said they used drones and swamp buggies from the Sheriff's office.

Upon question, Mr. Dunn said the sinkhole has not reached the county right-of-way and it is on private property. He said the Sheriff's office helped the gentleman and brought him to a shelter.

Mr. Beasley discussed public distribution of food and water. He said stores are reopening, power is restored and fuel is refueling. He said the community is coming back to normal fairly quickly. He said the county is starting the debris management

program. He said the private haulers are going where the bigger money is and where the denser communities are. He said the state has jacked up the rate fairly well; he said Hillsborough County, Pinellas County are all increasing their collection rates and he may come back to the Board in the future with a contract rate adjustment to keep the trucks coming to Polk so they do not leave for higher wages in other jurisdictions.

Chair Braswell said we are lucky and there is a lot of debris but it is not like Irma or Ian. He said it is concentrated in areas. He said this was a rain event because there are still too many white plastic fences standing.

Mr. Beasley said they are not shortening us with the trucks and the private companies are going where the bigger money is being offered. He said Polk is a large county and there is a lot of windshield time in Polk County. He said other counties are incentivizing with higher rates.

Commissioner Combee said we need to ask if AshBritt is working in the counties that are paying more.

Mr. Beasley said it is a multi-year contract.

Commissioner Combee said the rain that fell probably fell in a 6 hour period. He said it is going to take a while for it to drain down and it obviously is getting better. He said the reason old timers have not seen this before is because they were not around the last time that it happened and was when Noah was on the ark. He said he is proud of everybody.

Commissioner Santiago said she is glad that the debris removal started yesterday. She said we had tremendous rain in a short amount of time and it is not going to go away very quickly. She asked people to be patient because staff is working very hard to get it cleaned up and back to normal. She said it is not going to happen over night. She said to be patient and she has a huge log in her yard from a tree and she knows what she is talking about with patience.

Commissioner Wilson said he has gotten a lot of calls worried about Peace River. He said they are not opening any gates. He said the incoming water into Lake Hancock and what it going out has just about equaled out. He said SWFWMD has done a great job working with us on certain things. He said unless there is a major catastrophe they are not opening flood gates P-8 or P-11. He said he looks at it every day at his house and for the last four days on his side nothing has changed.

Upon question, Mr. Beasley said under the Emergency Order he does have the latitude to adjust for the haulers to keep them here. He said there were three federal congress people at the Emergency Operations Center; Congressman Franklin, Congresswoman Lee, and Congressman Soto. He said that state reps were there regularly; Senator Burton, Representative Canady, all five constitutional officers, and a number of Board members present at different times. He said that sends a message to the staff that you got their back and will provide whatever resources are necessary. He said he cannot tell them how reassuring it was to see that kind of leadership. He said we had the tragic fatality and it accents the hazards that these men and women face.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Minutes: Meeting adjourned at 9:59 a.m.