



Polk County Board of County Commissioners

Meeting Minutes - Final

June 03, 2025 Regular BoCC meeting

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Any invocation that may be offered before the official start of the Commission meeting shall be the voluntary offering of a private citizen, to and for the benefit of the Commission. The views or beliefs expressed by the invocation speaker have not been previously reviewed or approved by the Commission, and the Commission is not allowed by law to endorse the religious beliefs or views of this, or any other speaker.

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. (RICK WILSON, CHAIR)

INVOCATION

Murphy Hanley, Polk County Fire Rescue Chaplain

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE (RICK WILSON, CHAIR)

A. PRESENTATIONS and RECOGNITIONS

- A.1. Dee Dee Beaver, Retired Comptroller Division Director for Stacy M. Butterfield, CPA, Clerk & Comptroller Polk County, FL, to present the Government Finance Officers' Association (GFOA) Certificate of Achievement Awards for Financial Reporting for the 2023 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report and the 2023 Popular Annual Financial Report to Stacy M. Butterfield, CPA, Clerk and Comptroller. She will present the GFOA Distinguished Budget Award for 2023 to Commissioner Rick Wilson, Chairman, Board of County Commissioners.

Minutes: Dee Dee Beaver, Retired Comptroller Division Director for Stacy M. Butterfield, CPA, Clerk and Comptroller presented the Government Finance Officers' Association (GFOA) Certificate of Achievement Awards for Financial Reporting for the 2023 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report and the 2023 Popular Annual Financial Report to Stacy M. Butterfield, CPA, Clerk and Comptroller. She presented the GFOA Distinguished Budget Award for 2023 to Commissioner Rick Wilson, Chairman, Board of County Commissioners.

Clerk Butterfield presented the Popular Annual Financial Reporting (PAFR) and the Comprehensive Annual Financial Reporting (CAFR) to the Board and she said these

are also available on our website. She said this award is one way to measure the value of our work. She said it shows that we not only are meeting expectations but many times exceeding expectations. She said it is no small feat to earn these awards. She said there are many players involved. She said the CAFR includes all of the constitutional officers and the Board of County Commissioners' financial information. She said it is all compiled and put in this required report. She recognized staff from Budget and Management Services, Comptroller Division staff, the Inspector General Auditor's office and the external auditors.

Chair Wilson thanked Clerk Butterfield and all the staff. He said they do an amazing job and they keep us knowing what is going on. He said it is a team effort and they appreciate them.

Clerk Butterfield said we appreciate the support and the support of the County Manager's office.

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

C.1. Eve Salimbene to discuss transparency at Animal Control.

Minutes: Eve Salimbene said she is the president and founder of the Street Cat Foundation. She said they have altered and vaccinated over 5,100 street cats. She said what is being hidden at Polk County Animal Control (PCAC) is inhumane and abusive. She said that we are facing serious failures in transparency, oversight, morality and ethical accountability. She said when they met with Sheriff's office the PCAC could not explain their own statistics. She said shelter records are disorganized, incomplete or withheld. She said the public records requests can take 60-90 days. She said this is a failure of leadership. She discussed having a trap/neuter program, voucher program, updated ordinance to increase penalties for animal abuse and an oversight committee. She said to fix this mess at PCAC.

C.2. G. Robert Weedon, DVM, MPH to discuss revising Polk County's animal ordinance.

Minutes: Robert Weedon showed slides and discussed TNVR and said it was recognized by Hillsborough county as the most humane method of addressing cat overpopulation. He said Polk has no provision to support TNVR. He said Polk lags behind Hillsborough and Lake counties and also the state average. He discussed the lack of support for humane and effective management of feral cats. He discussed the shelter rate and shelter rate savings in Hillsborough county.

C.3. Jennifer Castro to discuss rescue partnerships with Animal Control.

Minutes: Jennifer Castro said she is here to support animal rescue partnerships. She said everyone at Animal Control has been respectable and helpful but things are not working. She said our networking helps the community see the animals. She said we need to do better with the information online about the animals. She discussed fosters and volunteers and allowing people coming in and getting the animals out of the shelter. She said spay and neuter programs and vouchers are a good way to do this.

She said people have had their animals killed when they have gone looking for them. She stated that we need micro-chipping and to register the microchips.

Commissioner Braswell said there is a misunderstanding of what happens in Polk County and who is in charge. He said the Sheriff is in charge and we do not consult with the Sheriff about the budget. He said they are independent, they are elected, and the Sheriff will continue to run Animal Control as they see fit. He said they are in the wrong place complaining to the wrong people; he said this Board is not going to change the Sheriff's policies. He said that they need to talk to the Sheriff. He said there are 16 municipalities and all 16 could establish their own animal control office. He said this is the Sheriff's deal and the five constitutionals are not under our purview.

C.4. Comments.

Minutes: Cassandra Richards said she has two house cats. She thanked the Board and said they are getting closer to the calming devices for speeding. She said Highland Park needs their help.

Linda DeLosey said she is here to address the issues in Highland Park Manor. She said it has turned into a speedway. She discussed the traffic and concerns with kids playing. She said it would be nice to get speed bumps to slow the traffic down.

Rocco Pilieri asked if Commissioner Braswell is his commissioner for Polk City. He said there is an overpass and the drainage is completely blocked. He said the stop sign at Evans Road and 557A has been twisted and is facing the wrong direction. He gave praise to Route 559 and said it was repaved. He said 557A has hundreds of potholes and there was an accident. He said trash was left on the road and was never picked up.

David Butler said the Sheriff paid \$4 million for an airplane. He said he asked Commissioner Braswell why and he read the response he got. He said it was for public safety and he said it was in Tallahassee 9 times this year. He asked the commissioners if they flew up on that plane and if they think that is a good way to spend taxpayers' money.

Chair Wilson stated if the numbers work and it is justifiable to use anything in this county that saves this county money it will be done. He said we are here to listen and try to help anyway we can. He said he does not like his attitude nor does Mr. Butler like his.

Mr. Butler said it is \$5,000 a round trip and he asked if that is a good expense. He said the Board can enact an ordinance to change the animal shelter. He said to enact an ordinance for body cameras. He asked for an animal control ordinance to help these animals.

Patty Jacquo said she is with Cat Rescue Alliance. She said they do trap and release. She asked for the county to help with the spaying and neutering. She said their cat rescue helps feed 150 cats a day.

Deborah Joseph said she has been helping in rescue for over 30 years. She asked for

an ordinance to stop the tethering of dogs 24/7. She asked for a voucher program. She discussed a dog that was left tied to a car when the people went on vacation. She asked for help. She said to give fines or jail time.

Diane Shaffer said the purple ribbons represent protection and humane treatment for the animals. She said the animals are in desperate need of our help. She said she helps with the street cat project. She asked if we could do something about the TNVR program. She said we need everyone on this Board to help with the animals.

Saralyn Smith said she is here to educate on animal welfare in our county. She discussed having an ordinance for unlicensed backdoor dog breeding, tethering regulations and a TNVR program. She said the TNVR program drops 66% of the feral cat population. She said that the sheriff told her that he would never meet with an animal activist. She asked for the Board to act.

Kay Bourque said they would like to see some ordinances for the animals. She said Polk has one of the highest euthanasia rates and she said this is a crisis. She said spaying and neutering programs and TNVR programs will reduce euthanasia rates. She said it is time to move from reaction to prevention.

Shannon Medina said she has seen a dramatic increase of the conditions when they receive animals from PCAC. She gave statistics on the euthanasia rates for dogs. She said we have to stop the animals from getting into the system. She said she asked for a spay and neuter program in 2022. She said they get 60 voicemails a day for people wanting to surrender their pets. She said they have had dogs that have died within days after pulling them from the shelter. She asked for an alter and spay and neuter program. She said they came out with a safe place for strays. She asked for support.

Angela Lorio said she is one of the founders of the Polk County Bully Project. She said Polk is now facing a full scale animal emergency. She said animals are being euthanized because they cannot be helped. She said this is a public health issue and it is a test of accountability. She said our county could have a foster system if they chose to. She said we are not here to assign blame we are here to offer solutions. She asked for emergency funding and said they rely on the constituents' support. She said we need spay and neuter vouchers. She said the number of animals dying and the number of calls is increasing.

Fon Silvers asked to make spaying and neutering mandatory in Polk. He said the sheriff obeys the law and if they pass it the sheriff will obey.

Dela Silvers said we have become ground zero for having dogs dumped. She said she was shocked with the conditions at Animal Control. She said she supports the Bully Project. She discussed having a full-time vet. She asked for a spay and neuter program.

Debbie Hicks said she resigned as a volunteer at the Sheriff's office because of Animal Control. She said she has nothing bad to say about them or the sheriff. She said the building was built in 1988 and she watched the new booking facility being built. She said they are short handed, they are good people and they want to do better. She

stated it is out of their league. She said the volunteers do not want to be there because of the terrible conditions. She said there should be a committee to help.

Betty Jean Ammarell said she and her daughter have volunteered and taken supplies to Animal Control. She said she turned in an application in February and said she has not received a phone call. She said there is no heating system and she said she donated towels and blankets and they were not used. She encouraged the Board to go out there and she said it is deplorable.

Crystal DiJoseph said they are in these positions because they want to effectuate change. She stated that tether laws and spay and neuter programs work. She said other counties have 90% or higher live release rates. She said it is disheartening to see Polk stick out. She said they can enact ordinances and for them to look at other counties because they have similar challenges. She said to help the community members and become an example for good.

Kelly Kalapp asked if the sheriff has to account for where money is allocated. She asked why do we not have a shelter. She asked why a hush release has to be signed and why do phones have to stay in the car to prevent videoing at the shelter. She asked about owners not being able to retrieve their animals because they were euthanized.

Cathy McGee discussed the cold conditions and water puddles in the shelter. She said she saw a lot of horrible things. She said she applied as a volunteer and has not heard anything. She asked them to send them in the right direction to get the help that they need.

Stephanie Widner said the current conditions at Animal Control are heartbreaking. She stated there is no air conditioning and she discussed the hot temperatures. She said the hours to claim pets is not conducive to working family hours. She said we need a spay and neuter program. She said the Board approved a budget for the sheriff and she thinks they can make recommendations.

Meshell Sullivan said the Board makes the budget and she asked how much money is supposed to go towards the food. She said they do not buy the food and that all the food is donated. She discussed the smell of Animal Control. She said to check where the money is going.

Kimberly Taylor said the elected commissioners have passion for the community. She said we are asking for change and accountability. She discussed the shelter being shut down due to a protest. She said if there is nothing to hide then there is nothing to defend. She asked for a citizens advisory council.

James Abercrombie said this is a charter government. He said they make and enforce their own rules and regulations. He said they should have been able to speak to the county manager and the county attorney. He said they have the final say and we should never have to take anything to civil action. He discussed his roof and said he cannot get insurance because he has an illegal roof. He said nobody cares. He stated he has been asking for public records for the last three months and he has received

nothing. He said he gave the Board 1,000 pages at the last meeting and asked if anyone read it.

David Rolland said he is here for speed bumps. He thanked the Polk County Bully Project. He said he has a deaf child and he discussed speeding in his neighborhood in Highland City. He said with the overpopulation of cats one has adopted him and he feeds him everyday.

County Attorney Randy Mink advised that Mr. Rolland's street is on the public hearings today for speed humps.

D. APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA

D.1. Approve Consent Agenda.

RESULT:	APPROVED
MOVER:	Bill Braswell
SECONDER:	Martha Santiago
AYE:	Troutman, Wilson, Braswell, Santiago, and Scott

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

E.1. Disbursements.

RESULT:	APPROVED
MOVER:	Bill Braswell
SECONDER:	Becky Troutman
AYE:	Troutman, Wilson, Braswell, Santiago, and Scott

E.2. Minutes of Regular Board meeting held on May 20, 2025.

RESULT:	APPROVED
MOVER:	Becky Troutman
SECONDER:	Bill Braswell
AYE:	Troutman, Wilson, Braswell, Santiago, and Scott

H. COUNTY MANAGER (BILL BEASLEY)

H.1. Approve agreement with Jones Edmunds & Associates, Inc. for professional engineering services for the Phase IV Landfill Cells at North Central Landfill (NCLF). (\$2,940,797.77 one-time expense)

Minutes: County Manager Bill Beasley discussed the agreement with Jones Edmunds and Associates, Inc., for professional engineering services for the Phase IV Landfill Cells at North Central Landfill. He recommended approval.

Upon question, Waste and Recycling Director Dale Henderson said the completion of

cell 1 will be in 2028. He said this next phase will give 16 years. He said after this phase they would likely go to the west of this cell. He said north and west of the proposed Phase IV is an area that could have a valley fill between Phase II and Phase V. He said they have plenty of expansion area to choose. He confirmed that we have space north of Phase III.

Mr. Beasley said in addition to these 16 years we have 100 years of capacity on that site.

Upon question, Mr. Henderson said there will be four cells within Phase IV.

RESULT:	APPROVED
MOVER:	Bill Braswell
SECONDER:	Martha Santiago
AYE:	Troutman, Wilson, Braswell, Santiago, and Scott

H.2. Approve agreement with AECOM Technical Services, Inc. to test their technology to reduce Harmful Algae Blooms (HABs) from the Upper Saddle Creek surface waters. (\$2,300,000.00 one-time expense)

Minutes: County Manager Bill Beasley discussed the agreement with AECOM Technical Services, Inc., to test their technology to reduce harmful algae blooms from the upper Saddle Creek surface waters. He recommended approval.

Commissioner Braswell said it seems crazy to be cleaning any water that is going into Lake Hancock and he understands that it is a test to see if the system works. He said if it does work there is a 1,200 acre 60 foot deep reservoir 500 feet from the banks of the Peace River on the other side of Lake Hancock that would be an ideal place to start cleaning up water to send downstream.

RESULT:	APPROVED
MOVER:	Becky Troutman
SECONDER:	Bill Braswell
AYE:	Troutman, Wilson, Braswell, Santiago, and Scott

H.3. Approve agreement with The Lunz Group, LLC, for architectural & engineering services for the Polk County Agricultural Center Complex. (\$1,572,400.00 onetime expense for Phase I)

Minutes: County Manager Bill Beasley discussed the agreement with The Lunz Group, LLC, for architectural and engineering services for the Polk County Agricultural Center Complex. He recommended approval.

Chair Wilson said this has been a lot of work for a lot of people. He said he has been after this since he has become a commissioner. He stated it has had a lot of ups and downs but it has been a great undertaking and it feels good to be able to see this. He thanked everybody who has been involved. He said it will be a nice facility for generations to come.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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MOVER:	Bill Braswell
SECONDER:	Becky Troutman
AYE:	Troutman, Wilson, Braswell, Santiago, and Scott

I. COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 1 (BECKY TROUTMAN)

- I.1. Reappoint Sean Malott as a Member (Seat 1) of the Polk County Industrial Development Authority, for the three-year term, June 4, 2025 through June 3, 2028.

RESULT:	APPROVED
MOVER:	Becky Troutman
SECONDER:	Bill Braswell
AYE:	Troutman, Wilson, Braswell, Santiago, and Scott

- I.2. Commissioner Troutman Comments.

Minutes: Commissioner Troutman said the public should know that anyone's budget is open for review and there is nothing hidden. She said she has a dog that is a part of her family. She stated the reality is we have human beings that live in this county that do not have air conditioning. She said it is somewhere we can see some improvement and she is sure because we can improve everywhere. She said there are larger issues of human beings not having air conditioning in this county. She said when it comes to food there are several thousand children who will not have three meals a day for the next two months because school is out. She said she loves animals. She stated if we take our eyes off some of these other issues and get focused on emotional issues she does not think we are doing the best service to our county.

J. COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 3 (BILL BRASWELL)

- J.1. Commissioner Braswell Comments.

Minutes: Commissioner Braswell had no comments.

K. COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 4 (MARTHA SANTIAGO)

- K.1. Commissioner Santiago Comments.

Minutes: Commissioner Santiago had no comments.

L. COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 5 (MICHAEL SCOTT)

- L.1. Commissioner Scott Comments.

Minutes: Commissioner Scott had no comments.

M. COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 2 (RICK WILSON, CHAIR)

- M.1. Chair Wilson Comments.

Minutes: Chair Wilson had no comments.

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

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

O.1. Public Hearing (LDCPAL-2024-19 Minute Maid Ramp Road 1 CPA) (Transmittal Hearing) to consider a Comprehensive Plan Map Amendment to change from Residential High (RHX) to Tourism Commercial Center (TCCX) on 3.2 ± acres of a parent tract of 13.47 ± acres. (No Fiscal Impact)

Minutes: Land Development Director Ben Ziskal discussed the proposed map amendment. He said that the Planning Commission and staff recommends approval. He said this is a transmittal hearing.

The Chair opened a public hearing; no one spoke.

RESULT:	APPROVED
MOVER:	Martha Santiago
SECONDER:	Becky Troutman
AYE:	Troutman, Wilson, Braswell, Santiago, and Scott

P. PUBLIC HEARINGS

P.1. Public Hearing to Consider Adoption of a Resolution Allowing for the Installation of Four Traffic Calming Devices (Speed Humps) on Eleventh Street Southeast, Near Highland City. (estimated \$20,000.00 one-time expense)

Minutes: Amy Gregory, Traffic Manager, showed slides and reviewed the resolution allowing for the installation of four traffic calming devices on Eleventh Street Southeast, near Highland City. She said that this meets the traffic calming policy. She recommended approval.

The Chair opened a public hearing; no one spoke.

RESULT:	APPROVED
MOVER:	Michael Scott
SECONDER:	Martha Santiago
AYE:	Troutman, Wilson, Braswell, Santiago, and Scott

P.2. Public Hearing to Consider Adoption of a Resolution Allowing for the Installation of Three Traffic Calming Devices (Speed Humps) on Friedlander Road, Near Highland Park Manor. (estimated \$15,000.00 one-time expense)

Minutes: Amy Gregory, Traffic Manager, showed slides and reviewed the resolution allowing for the installation of four traffic calming devices on Friedlander Road, near Highland Park Manor. She said that this meets the traffic calming policy. She recommended approval.

The Chair opened a public hearing.

Cassandra Richards said we are in favor and we need this. She said they asked for the stop signs and said her neighbor turned in the paperwork on Tangelo. She said to go ahead and do the Tangelo at the same time.

Ms. Gregory said the ballots are coming in on Tangelo.

Diane Borders said they do need the speed bumps. She said to do Tangelo at the same time. She said she requested a three-way stop. She thanked the Board.

The Chair closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Scott thanked Ms. Richards for challenging the BoCC. He said she was one of the firsts he heard from when he came on this Board last year. He said we had to reclassify the road. He thanked her for being patient with them and also for the vision she has.

RESULT:	APPROVED
MOVER:	Bill Braswell
SECONDER:	Michael Scott
AYE:	Troutman, Wilson, Braswell, Santiago, and Scott

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Minutes: Meeting adjourned at 11:06 a.m.