



Polk County Board of County Commissioners

Meeting Minutes - Final

April 07, 2026 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.

Rollcall

Present:	Commissioner Becky Troutman Commissioner Rick Wilson Commissioner Bill Braswell Commissioner Martha Santiago Commissioner Michael Scott
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CALL TO ORDER - 9:00 a.m. (MARTHA SANTIAGO, CHAIR)

INVOCATION

Murphy Hanley, Polk County Fire Rescue Chaplain

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE (MARTHA SANTIAGO, CHAIR)

A. PRESENTATIONS and RECOGNITIONS

B. PUBLIC COMMENTS CONCERNING AGENDA ITEMS

B.1. Comments.

Minutes: There was no one from the public wishing to speak concerning Agenda Items.

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

C.1. Disbursements.

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

C.2. Minutes of Regular Board meeting held on March 17, 2026.

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

D. APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA

D.1. Approve Consent Agenda.

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

G. COUNTY MANAGER (BILL BEASLEY)

G.1. Approve agreement with Dewberry Engineers, Inc. to provide engineering services for repairs to Circle B Bar Reserve from Hurricane Milton (Not-to-Exceed of \$1,149,927.44).

Minutes: County Manager Bill Beasley discussed the agreement with Dewberry Engineers, Inc., providing engineering services for repairs to Circle B Bar Reserve from Hurricane Milton. He recommended approval.

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

G.2. Approve construction contract with Central Concrete Products Inc. for the Wabash Park Basketball Court and Sidewalk project (\$481,981.00 one-time expense)

Minutes: County Manager Bill Beasley discussed the construction contract with Central Concrete Products Inc., for the Wabash Park basketball court and sidewalk project. He recommended approval.

Commissioner Scott said he has visited this area a lot and has been to that center. He stated he appreciates the resources we have there for the younger kids but there is not much of an activity center for the older kids and he is appreciative of the county putting

this together. He said it will serve that community very well.

Mr. Beasley said we did hear from the senior community and the walking trail was the number one thing that they wanted to be able to get outside and get some active exercise.

Chair Santiago said she does not play basketball and she noticed the floor of the court is different.

Derek Harpe, Parks and Natural Resources, said is it tiles that they have used at other courts. He said it gives a better aesthetic and it is a safer surface.

Mr. Beasley said this is the new standard, maintenance cost is minimal, and the capital cost is acceptable.

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

G.3. Approve Consultant Services Authorization (CSA) No. 2025-054-03 with RS&H Inc. (Consultant) to provide Construction Engineering and Inspection (CEI) services for the Country Club Road at Buckeye Loop Road Intersection Improvement Project. (\$460,157.24 one-time expense).

Minutes: County Manager Bill Beasley discussed Consultant Services Authorization No. 2025-054-03 with RS&H Inc., providing construction engineering and inspection services for the Country Club Road at Buckeye Loop Road intersection improvement project. He recommended approval.

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

G.4. Approve Consultant Services Authorization (CSA) No. 2022-095-06 with RK&K, LLP, (CONSULTANT) to provide professional design services for the development of full construction documents for the US 27 at Bates Road Intersection Improvement project. (Total cost not to exceed \$307,006.07)

Minutes: County Manager Bill Beasley discussed Consultant Services Authorization No. 2022-095-06 with RK&K, LLP, providing professional design services for the development of full construction documents for the US 27 at Bates Road intersection improvement project. He recommended approval.

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

H. COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 1 (BECKY TROUTMAN)

H.1. Commissioner Troutman Comments.

Minutes: Commissioner Troutman had no comments.

I. COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 2 (RICK WILSON)

I.1. Commissioner Wilson Comments.

Minutes: Commissioner Wilson said he has received a lot of rain in the last couple of days. He asked about the Burn Ban and where we are at with this.

County Attorney Randy Mink said he thinks they are hesitant and if it dries up we are back over the 500 index. He said he will have discussions with the fire chief. He said he looks everyday at the KDBI.

J. COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 3 (BILL BRASWELL)

J.1. Commissioner Braswell Comments.

Minutes: Commissioner Braswell asked for a few days window to burn.

County Attorney Randy Mink said the fire chief can do a temporary one for up to seven days. He said he can look at that too.

Commissioner Braswell said it is election day for Bartow, Dundee, Lake Wales, and Haines City. He said there are notoriously low turnouts on city elections and now is the opportunity to say something about who you elect as city commissioners. He said last week in Okeechobee a four-year old kid got a hold of a gun, shot himself playing with it and survived. He said about a year ago in Davenport the exact same thing happened a four-year old got a hold of a gun, shot himself and died. He said April is Child Gun Safety Education Month and there has been a huge increase in these incidents and they usually happen at home. He said it is frequently kids between the ages 11 and 15. He said it is not about access it is about education. He recognized those here with In-Gauge Polk County. He said they offer gun safety training, a concealed carry course, advanced training, and church guardian programs. He said it is based on responsible ownership, safe handling and awareness. He stated they have a kids program called Eddie Eagle and it teaches kids the four steps of when you find a gun and that is stop, don't touch it, run away, and tell a grown up. He said it is a great program if we can prevent one tragedy. He thanked them for being here. He said they have a FaceBook page, a website and we will get their information out.

Chair Santiago thanked them for being here today and said we appreciate the work they do for our county.

K. COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 5 (MICHAEL SCOTT)

K.1. Commissioner Scott Comments.

Minutes: Commissioner Scott said Sun 'n Fun is coming up. He said this is a great event of aviation and we will look forward to that next week. He said to bring clarity, he has a stack of everything Mr. Abercrombie has requested of public records. He said he has hard copies to be delivered to him and the Hunt Fountain Park removal, disposal and the installation of new fence is on the very top. He said over the next couple of months he will visit several of the surrounding counties Animal Control Centers and will be taking some notes. He said if we can look at some incremental improvements he will be doing that.

L. COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 4 (MARTHA SANTIAGO, CHAIR)

L.1. Chair Santiago Comments.

Minutes: Chair Santiago said she was going to bring up the election. She thanked Commissioner Braswell for bringing that up and said the turnout is usually low. She encouraged everyone to vote.

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

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

N.1. PUBLIC HEARING (LDCT-2025-28 Flex Space & Retail Plazas) (First Reading) to consider the adoption of an ordinance amending the Land Development Code to add standards for Flex Space and Retail Plazas. (No Fiscal Impact)

Minutes: Land Development Director Ben Ziskal reviewed the proposed text amendment for Flex Space and Retail Plazas. He said that staff and the Planning Commission recommends approval. He said that this is the first reading.

The Chair opened a public hearing.

James Abercrombie said compatibility is suggestive and there is no real definition for compatibility. He said infrastructure is nothing more than parks, fire stations and schools. He said today it is so confusing to go through the Land Development Code and they overrun everything. He said they keep making this harder and harder. He said if we say it, it means nothing because we are not professionals. He asked where are the citizens considered. He said he signed up for updates on the Kathleen meeting and he received nothing.

The Chair closed the public hearing.

N.2. PUBLIC HEARING (LDCT-2025-29 Storage Yards) (First Reading) to consider the adoption of an ordinance amending the Land Development Code to add storage yards as a new land use activity in the Industrial (IND) districts. (No Fiscal Impact)

Minutes: Land Development Director Ben Ziskal reviewed the proposed text amendment for Storage Yards. He said that staff and the Planning Commission recommends approval. He said that this is the first reading.

The Chair opened a public hearing; no one spoke.

- N.3. PUBLIC HEARING (LDCT-2025-30 Administrative Plat Approval) (First Reading) to consider the adoption of an ordinance amending the Land Development Code to change the procedure of approving subdivision plats from the Board of County Commissioners to the Land Development Director in accordance changes to the Florida Statutes. (No Fiscal Impact)

Minutes: Land Development Director Ben Ziskal reviewed the proposed text amendment for Administrative Plat Approval. He said that staff and the Planning Commission recommends approval. He said that this is the first reading. He said he would offer one amendment to have an alternate signature authority and he recommended adding that in absence of the Land Development Director that an assistant or deputy county manager could be the final signature on a plat.

The Board reached consensus on adding an alternate signature authority for the plats.

The Chair opened a public hearing.

James Abercrombie said they are taking away their power again and they have nothing to say about it. He said it is unconstitutional and we do not need this. He said Mr. Allen is a common name, he is part of the process and is on the committees. He said we are supposed to have the say and not the attorneys. He said these people are taking over and it is not right.

The Chair closed the public hearing.

O. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- O.1. PUBLIC HEARING to Consider Adoption of a Resolution Allowing for the Installation of One Additional Traffic Calming Device (Speed Hump) on Avenue Y Northeast, Near Winter Haven. (estimated \$5,000.00 one-time expense)

Minutes: Amy Gregory, Traffic Manager, discussed the resolution allowing for the installation of one additional traffic calming device on Avenue Y Northeast, near Winter Haven. She said that this received the required favorable votes.

The Chair opened a public hearing; no one spoke.

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

- O.2. PUBLIC HEARING to Consider Adoption of a Resolution to vacate a portion of platted, unopened, and unmaintained right-of-way as shown on the map of Cruse and Horney's First Addition to Lake Bonny Park, Lakeland, Florida and request Board accept a Drainage Easement from Arizona Holding IV, LLC. (No fiscal impact)

Minutes: Scott Lowery, Real Estate Services, discussed the resolution vacating a

portion of platted, unopened, and unmaintained right-of-way as shown on the map of Cruse and Horney's First Addition to Lake Bonny Park, Lakeland, Florida and requested the Board accept a drainage easement from Arizona Holding IV, LLC. He recommended approval. He said there are no objections to the proposed request.

Upon question, Mr. Lowery said there is an existing ditch that would allow for future extension of it if needed. He said what is there today is working.

The Chair opened a public hearing; no one spoke.

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

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

P.1. Comments.

Minutes: David Butler said a couple weeks ago the sheriff offered TSA agents to come work for the Sheriff's office because they would not miss a paycheck. He said the sheriff said that they offer overtime. He stated street level deputies do not get overtime and if they get overtime they are to flex the time off and have to go home early or come in late. He said there were 12,000 hours of flexed overtime for these deputies last year. He said they have money in the budget for the airplane that they fly on. He said to pay them for the overtime they deserve. He thanked Commissioner Scott for listening to the people on Animal Control.

Commissioner Wilson responded and said when we fly it is for appropriations from the state or Washington D.C. He said it is cheaper than flying commercial. He said on two trips we brought \$22 million back to Polk County from the state and the feds. He said the money brought back makes things better for this county. He said they are expecting another \$11 or \$12 million for a total of \$35 million. He said if we can do it cheaper and we can bring back money for Polk County and we do not go to New Orleans on this plane like you think or everybody else thinks. He stated we go to work, bring money back and make it better and cheaper to get that job done.

Kay Bourque discussed the need for spay and neuter programs. She said critical prevention programs are either missing, underdeveloped or under supported. She discussed the high number of puppies that are out of control. She discussed spay and neuter programs that are funded by the community.

Eve Salimbene thanked Commissioner Scott for taking the time and she encouraged the others to do the same. She discussed citizens seizing animals and the requirements of doing it correctly. She said they have reports of animals in cages for 2-7 days before Animal Control can get there. She asked for them to look into why the code says unaltered animals.

County Manager Bill Beasley said that they will look into this.

Charlene Leis said the last time she was here she spoke of the connection with domestic violence and animal abuse. She said this is a crisis that is happening in our community. She asked if they know how many have to give up their pets. She said this could be the only source of comfort that the victim had left.

Commissioner Scott said he did ask the Sheriff's office for more data for domestic violence scenarios versus animal abuse. He said he appreciates the insight to look into that.

Commissioner Troutman said some of the advocates for animals are trying to suggest that because of Animal Control we are seeing spikes in domestic abuse and she stated there is no causation linked between the two. She said they are right when you look at young children and adults that oftentimes sociopaths in our society start out with cruelty to animals but in no way is that linked to what we do at Animal Control.

Audrey Stansbury said she is a small scale animal rescuer. She showed pictures of animals that came from the shelter and she discussed their conditions.

Debbie Hicks discussed the Animal Control facility and she discussed more people and animals coming. She said that we need a committee and we need to look at all different angles. She said she appreciates them looking at this.

James Abercrombie discussed his case he took to court and said he won. He said he beat the county 100% and he lost everything he had. He said he tried to get his money back and to get his attorney fees and they won that and said he is the only one in history that got the attorney's fees back.

Kristin Ahlberg showed pictures of cats and dogs that have been used in pitbull rings. She discussed how this happens when animals are given away for free. She showed a picture of cockroaches in dog food. She said Judd is selling the dead cats because of the money. She said they are asking for \$50,000 for TNR.

Meeting adjourned at 10:12 a.m.