



Polk County Board of County Commissioners

Meeting Minutes - Final

May 20, 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

A. PRESENTATIONS and RECOGNITIONS

A.2. Employee Recognition

Minutes: The Board recognized Alice Brown with Health and Human Services and Maria Arriola with Health and Human Services for their years of service.

A.1. Lance Schmidt, Managing Principal of Office, Central Florida of CliftonLarsonAllen, LLP will present the Annual Comprehensive Financial Audit for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2024.

Minutes: Clerk and County Comptroller Stacy Butterfield said Lance Schmidt from CliftonLarsonAllen is presenting the annual audit. She recognized Senior Manager Tanra-Lee Milson, Budget and Management Director Christia Johnson, the county manager and all the fiscal managers throughout the county. She said it takes a team to put together the financial reports.

Lance Schmidt, CliftonLarsonAllen, showed slides and reviewed the professional services that were performed. He discussed the various audits and reports that they complete. He gave a recap of the reports that they issue. He discussed the Independent Auditors' Report; Single Audit Report, Federal; Independent on Internal Controls and the Management Letter. He thanked county staff, the constitutional officers, and the Clerk's office. He said it takes a lot of collaboration from all the

departments. He said they appreciate the participation and cooperation of the team.

Chair Wilson thanked Mr. Schmidt and said they always do a great job.

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

C.1. Regional Community Council (Ken Henry & Linda Fife) to discuss the Thompson Nursery Road Phase II alignment project.

Minutes: Ken Henry showed slides and discussed the Thompson Nursery Road Phase II alignment project. He discussed options and said that they would like the bike path removed and they would like a 10 foot multi-path use to accommodate pedestrians, bicycles and mobility devices. He asked for access to future pathways planned for Winter Haven and Lake Wales. He said Option 1 has caused Florida to be rated number one in the nation for bicycle path fatalities. He said they are not promoting golf carts. He said they have written assurances from the HOA board from Traditions and the CDD boards at Lake Ashton advising their residents that golf cart use outside of their community is prohibited with the exception of Traditions operating golf carts crossing Thompson Nursery Road. He said if the city supports a multi-use path why not support it here.

Linda Fife showed a map of the area and said the Publix is under construction and said they have been given a cut across the median on 27. She discussed the retail and the businesses coming to the intersection. She discussed concerns with traffic. She discussed speeding dump trucks on the road. She said they hope to have the golf cart crossing signalized. She discussed safety issues with the bike path. She said to get rid of the bike bath, look at the safety issues, and add traffic lights. She said when the Publix opened on 17 in Haines City the traffic tripled. She discussed the resolution on the agenda and said they are talking about the safety and said that they do not need fatalities.

C.2. Comments.

Minutes: Cassandra Richards said the previous presentation was wonderful and it is in her area. She thanked Jay Jarvis and Ryan Taylor. She said she is still waiting for her three-way stop sign on Friedlander and Tangelo Road. She said someone is getting killed more and more. She thanked the Board for everything they discuss and do for us.

D. APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA

D.1. Approve Consent Agenda.

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

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

E.1. Disbursements.

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

E.2. Minutes of Regular Board meeting held on May 6, 2025.

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

G. COUNTY ATTORNEY (RANDY MINK)

G.1. Discuss letter to the Governor regarding Senate Bill 180

Minutes: County Attorney Randy Mink asked if the Board would like for them to draft a letter to the governor requesting him to veto Senate Bill (SB) 180. He said the big impact is the offset of the county being able to update the Comprehensive Plan and the Land Development Code (LDC). He said there are several items and this is the Hurricane Response Bill. He said a lot of the requirements for local governments we already do. He said there are additional requirements but the big impact is the county not being able to update the LDC. He said some of it was in response to the storms that we had for the stress basin.

Commissioner Scott said when you look at the balance of SB 180 and the preventing factors of us not being able to improve guidance for life safety from floods. He said he would be in support of a letter to veto. He said there are good components in SB 180 and it is not fair to the residents who depend on life safety.

Upon question, County Manager Bill Beasley said the Florida Association of Counties (FAC) has weighed in on this and they are torn. He said there are decent initiatives but they acknowledge it is an overbearing issue and it takes local governments' authority to manage at the local level.

Mr. Mink said the letter will include that there are good items in the bill but because of the impact of the county's ability to update the LDC is offset by it. He said this is not just Hurricane Milton it is for every time we are within 100 miles of a storm track we cannot adopt anything for a year. He said there is a continuous impact for this.

Chair Wilson said the bad things are what concerns him and it affects our county. He said staff has worked hard to make some changes to help this county with the basins. He said Tallahassee is not Polk County and they are sticking their finger in our business. He said we can send a letter.

Commissioner Santiago said it would be good for us to make phone calls.

Chair Wilson said he does not mind hand delivering the letter.

Motion to send letter to the Governor regarding vetoing Senate Bill 180.

RESULT:	RECOMMENDATION OF APPROVAL
MOVER:	Martha Santiago
SECONDER:	Bill Braswell
AYE:	Troutman, Wilson, Braswell, Santiago, and Scott

H. COUNTY MANAGER (BILL BEASLEY)

H.1. Approve Consultant Services Agreement (CSA) No. 2022-064-03 with Kisinger Campo & Associates Corp. to provide professional engineering services for Bone Valley ATV Park Campground. (\$864,752.29)

Minutes: County Manager Bill Beasley discussed Consultant Services Agreement No. 2022-064-03 with Kisinger Campo & Associates Corp., providing professional engineering services for Bone Valley ATV Park Campground. He recommended approval.

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

H.2. Approve agreement with Carollo Engineers, Inc. to provide Part 1 engineering services for the East Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility. (\$490,426.00 one-time expense)

Minutes: County Manager Bill Beasley discussed the agreement with Carollo Engineers, Inc., providing Part 1 engineering services for the East Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility. He recommended approval.

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

H.3. Approve Construction Agreement with CSX Transportation, Inc., (CSX) for the CR 35A Kathleen Road @ Deeson Road Intersection Improvement Project. Also accept a Deed of Easement from CSX and approve payment for the purchase thereof. (\$541,047 one-time expense)

Minutes: County Manager Bill Beasley discussed Construction Agreement with CSX Transportation, Inc., for the CR 35A Kathleen Road at Deeson Road intersection improvement project. He said staff is requesting acceptance of a deed of easement from CSX and approving payment for the purchase. He recommended approval.

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

I. COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 1 (BECKY TROUTMAN)

I.1. Commissioner Troutman Comments.

Minutes: Commissioner Troutman said they are in the midst of graduations and said she went to two yesterday. She congratulated the graduates. She said in May we observe mental health. She said she spent many years working with families and children to normalize conversations about mental health. She said gaslighting is a term that is being used more frequently. She said in our last meeting it was spoken from this dais. She said she does not believe that we should be using such a term to have an emotional response or to discredit another professional. She stated that gaslighting is not disagreeing, it is not criticism, it is not conflict, and it is not likely that it will be any part of a land use meeting. She said it is our responsibility to educate ourselves about the real meaning of the words that we use and in the future she hopes that we avoid using psychological terms or misusing psychological terms in our political discussions.

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.

N. LAY BOARD APPOINTMENTS

N.1. Reappoint Mark Ferreira as a member of the Housing and Neighborhood Development Office Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC). (No fiscal impact).

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

N.2. Appoint Vermishia Pitts as a new member of the Housing and Neighborhood Development Office Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC). (No fiscal impact).

Minutes: County Attorney Randy Mink said the term for the appointments is to May 6, 2028.

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

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

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

O.1. Public Hearing (LDCPAS-2025-1 Richard Munday CPA Amendment) (Adoption Hearing) to consider the adoption of a Small-Scale Comprehensive Plan Amendment to change the Future Land Use designation on 1.47 acres from Residential-Suburban (RS) to Linear Commercial Corridor (LCC). (No Fiscal Impact)

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

The Chair opened a public hearing; no one spoke.

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

P. PUBLIC HEARINGS

P.1. Public Hearing to consider the adoption of an Ordinance of the Polk County Board of County Commissioners repealing and restating Ordinance 91-13, the "Polk County Waterway Protection Code", as amended, to update and clarify language, add and amend definitions, and create authority to establish designated swim areas and vessel exclusion zones.

Minutes: County Attorney Randy Mink presented this case with item P. 2. He reviewed the proposed ordinance repealing and restating Ordinance 91-13, the "Polk County

Waterway Protection Code", as amended, to update and clarify language, add and amend definitions, and create authority to establish designated swim areas and vessel exclusion zones. He reviewed the proposed Resolution with the designated swim areas and vessel exclusion zones. He recommended approval.

Upon question, Mr. Mink said it has to be both a vessel exclusion area and designated swim area to meet the statutory requirement.

Commissioner Braswell said this was created as a solution to a bunch of people partying off of someone's dock in a backyard, people using the bathroom in the backyard, and doing stupid stuff. He said it seems a good way to handle it. He said people are here to object to it and he thinks the objections are about designating a swim area somewhere that is not designated a swim area.

Mr. Mink said the sign will state that it is a vessel exclusion area. He said it will not be inviting individuals. He said these are public waters and it is the safety issue of vessels and swimmers being in the same area.

Commissioner Braswell said our intent is good.

Mr. Mink said the designated area is 300 feet out. He said this is the first attempt, we can quickly make changes, give the ten days notice, and bring it back to the Board. He said that they selected these areas based on law enforcement informing that these are areas they have been monitoring and that they feel there are safety issues. He said it allows for individuals to move to and from their docks.

Upon question, Assistant County Attorney Randal Vogel said the verbiage on the signage is designated by statutes.

Commissioner Braswell said one guys sees this as a potential to create a problem. He said lets try it and see what happens.

Jason Varnadore, Sheriff's office, said most of the areas have been problems with heavy boater activity with swimming activity. He said this will alleviate some of the risks involved with people swimming in the same area where boats are coming in and out. He said this will give them some advantages with enforcing this. He said right now there is nothing they can do to enforce safety issues.

Mr. Mink said the signage would be emphasizing the vessel exclusion area. He said we will get some feedback from the state. He said we are not inviting people.

Upon question, Deputy Varnadore said this does not create conflict with the new Boater Freedom Bill. He said this is keeping boats out of the swim zone. He said it is not giving us any authority or taking away any authority unless they are violating that ordinance.

The Chair opened a public hearing.

Kurt Boyette said he lives on the west side of Lake Winterset. He said the issue is with

the people on the east side of the lake. He said they can use a trolling motor and still bring their boat up. He said these people do not care about signs and said he does not want these people in his backyard. He asked why did we put a swim zone on the west side of the lake. He asked that they come up with something else. He said they can do a vessel exclusion area and he said a swim area will do nothing but invite people to swim.

Jimmy Deese said they do not have people swimming in their back yard. He said they are concerned that this will bring more people swimming and coming onto their property. He said making it a non vessel area would eliminate any issues for them.

Scott Short was sworn in by County Attorney Randy Mink. He said he recognizes their concern and said there is a serious issue with the lake. He said he goes to the problem areas to see what goes on. He said there were over 73 boats out there plus wave runners parked behind two houses. He said the people do not respect the laws and rules. He said he has to watch when he puts his boat up because people do not watch when coming in and out of the canal. He said we do need an ordinance to try to solve this problem.

Don Mason was sworn in by County Attorney Randy Mink. He said this is an ongoing problem. He said people want to pull their boats on the shore and drink their beers. He said he does not think it will attract more people. He said it is a real issue that needs to be addressed. He recommended that we get this started to help the neighbors.

Leslie Dunson was sworn in by County Attorney Randy Mink. He said this is a great solution for the safety and environmental concerns. He said this is a great beginning and he appreciates the county attorneys working through this to find a solution.

The Chair closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Braswell said he is going to support this. He said for Mr. Boyette to get back with them if what he thinks will happen does happen. He said to keep them informed. He said they have the whole lake to swim in.

Commissioner Scott asked if we can add additional zones.

Mr. Mink responded and said the swimming and boating zones changes can be done by resolution.

Commissioner Santiago said she is glad to see this. She said she has heard many stories from residents and they come up really close to the property with loud music. She said she will be supportive of this.

Commissioner Troutman said she is in support of this. She encouraged the residents that if it becomes a problem with safety to reach out to the commissioners. She said we can adjust this as the problems change.

Upon question, Mr. Mink said it will not be by this holiday weekend and they have to go through the state for the signage approval. He said they will move as quickly as they

can.

Chair Wilson said ditto. He said the good thing is they can change it if they need to and we have got to give law enforcement the opportunity to be able to help. He said he will support this.

Commissioner Santiago said this is a good start and as we move forward we will depend on the residents to tell us how it is going so they can make further decisions.

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

P.2. Consider the approval of a Resolution of the Board of County Commissioners of Polk County, Florida, establishing designated swim areas and vessel exclusion zones in certain portions of Lake Winterset, Lake Clinch, and Lake Ariana.

Minutes: This was presented with the previous hearing.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Minutes: The Regular Board meeting session adjourned at 10:14 a.m.