



Polk County Board of County Commissioners

Meeting Minutes - Draft

February 03, 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.

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: Chair Santiago invited the audience to an event for the 165th anniversary of Polk County. She invited everyone to celebrate with cake after this meeting in the lobby.

There was no one from the public wishing to speak on Agenda Items.

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

C.1. Disbursements.

RESULT:	APPROVED
MOVER:	Becky Troutman
SECONDER:	Michael Scott

AYE:	Troutman, Wilson, Braswell, Santiago, and Scott
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C.2. Minutes of Regular Board meeting held on January 20, 2026.

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

D. APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA

D.1. Approve Consent Agenda.

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

G. COUNTY MANAGER (BILL BEASLEY)

G.1. Approve Construction Contract with AC Schultes of Florida, Inc for the Northeast Regional Utilities Service Area (NERUSA) Alternative Water Supply (AWS) Receiving Facility Supply Well project (\$1,801,563.00 one-time expense)

Minutes: County Manager Bill Beasley discussed the construction contract with AC Schultes of Florida, Inc., for the Northeast Regional Utilities Service Area Alternative Water Supply Receiving Facility supply well project. He recommended approval.

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

G.2. Approve Construction Contract with Stokes Marine, Inc for the Crystal Lake Park boardwalk project (\$649,152.28 one-time expense).

Minutes: County Manager Bill Beasley discussed the construction contract with Stokes Marine, Inc., for the Crystal Lake Park boardwalk project. He recommended approval.

Upon question, Mr. Beasley said the park has been closed for a couple of years. He said in the community the park was popular and used. He said that construction will begin in about 30 days.

Chair Santiago said she is happy to see this back for the neighborhood and for the citizens in that area.

Commissioner Troutman said it is very popular right after school. She said the kids come down from the school.

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

G.3. Approve Consultant Services Authorization (CSA) No. 22-084-04 with Consor North America, Inc. (Consultant) to provide professional engineering services in connection to the design of the Avon Park Cutoff Rd Bridge No. 164312 Replacement Project and preparation of construction documents, utility coordination, permitting, and post-design services for a not-exceed cost of \$345,036.41 (one-time expense).

Minutes: County Manager Bill Beasley discussed Consultant Services Authorization No. 22-084-04 with Consor North America, Inc., providing professional engineering services in connection to the design of the Avon Park Cutoff Rd Bridge No. 164312 replacement project and preparation of construction documents, utility coordination, permitting, and post-design services. He recommended approval.

Roads and Drainage Director Jay Jarvis said part of the design is to look at alternatives, is there a way to build a bypass, or buy right-of-way to put in the replacement bridge. He said it is those types of things whether it is cost feasible or not. He said they will have to decide whether they will close the road down and they have the alternative of doing a time frame in the contract bid with the sooner they are done the more they get paid. He said after they get the design in place they will look at different alternatives.

Mr. Beasley said to let them vet this through the design process and before they proceed with construction they will bring it back to the Board.

Commissioner Wilson said there is no where to turn people off to get from Point A to Point B. He said it is something to look at.

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

G.4. Approve Land Purchase Agreement between Wynona Serenceses and Polk County for the construction of a new government center and CIP amendment and budget transfer. (\$5,525,000 one-time expense - \$569,500 one-time transfer)

Minutes: County Manager Bill Beasley discussed the land purchase agreement between Wynona Serenceses and Polk County for the construction of a new government center, CIP amendment and budget transfer. He recommended approval.

Upon question, Real Estate Services Director Wade Allen said with the design they will look for feedback. He said the use and esthetics will be similar to the Lake Alfred facility. He said there will be a difference with the exterior of the property to

accommodate the Kathleen Government Center.

Mr. Beasley discussed the reasons why this is needed. He said this is the third piece of the puzzle and they have talked about a North Lakeland Government Center for ten years. He said they were able to build and open the Northeast Government Center between Lake Alfred and Haines City; he said that facility has functioned extremely well for the constitutional offices and general county services. He said they envision a model similar to the Northeast Government Center. He said we are currently in an old facility in the downtown area of Lakeland. He said it no longer serves its function and they have a five year lease in that facility. He referred to the map and how convenient these services will be for the citizens. He said the Northeast Government Center brings relief to the county seat and the citizens in that growing area. He said as part of budget appropriations he will be asking the Board for design and engineering money to move to the next phase of the project. He said it sets the tone for the county for over the next fifty years. He said he cannot say enough about the vision that this Board and prior Boards had in doing that. He said the citizens will be appreciative.

Chair Santiago said the northeast center has served that community greatly.

Mr. Allen said the current location was never constructed as a government center. He said this will be constructed and utilized as a government center. He said we have been there for many years under a lease.

Clerk and County Comptroller Stacy Butterfield said they have been talking about the need they have for a court house for services. She said the county is growing and the demand for services have exceeded the functionality of the leased facility in terms of holding court and jury trials. She said the Northeast Government Center serves customers very well and she said the footprint works well. She discussed the need for courtrooms and said it will be used to house another judge.

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 said we survived the Florida blizzard of 2026. She asked for an update on how utilities fared through this.

Utilities Director Tamara Richardson said that the overall system did well. She said all the pipes are at three feet which is below the freeze line. She said there were problems from backflow preventers getting too cold, freezing or it started leaking at the service connection at the meters. She said staff is working 24/7 to respond to the calls and getting those repairs made. She said it was in individual places and it was not system wide.

Mr. Beasley said there were two communities on a boil water notice because of loss of water pressure.

Ms. Richardson said within two weeks they will have reached everyone and the calls are slowing down.

I. COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 2 (RICK WILSON)

I.1. Commissioner Wilson Comments.

Minutes: Commissioner Wilson had no comments.

J. COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 3 (BILL BRASWELL)

J.1. Commissioner Braswell Comments.

Minutes: Commissioner Braswell thanked Communications Director Amber Smith for putting together the celebration of Polk. He said this seemed the right time to do it since it is the 250th anniversary of our country. He said he can speak for every farmer in Florida to get this winter over with. He said he has never seen teen temperatures. He said we had 22 degrees for quite a while Sunday night.

K. COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 5 (MICHAEL SCOTT)

K.1. Reappoint Skip Alford as Member (Seat 9) of the Polk County Industrial Development Authority, for the three-year term, February 6, 2026, through February 5, 2029.

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

K.2. Commissioner Scott Comments.

Minutes: Commissioner Scott said we have lots of resources to respond. He said they did a great job responding to the utilities calls with the resources that we have. He said we are always being conscious of how we spend tax payers dollars and those budgets are key. He said he appreciates Tamara and her whole group. He said the communication efforts were great on FaceBook and other social platforms.

L. COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 4 (MARTHA SANTIAGO, CHAIR)

L.1. Chair Santiago Comments.

Minutes: Chair Santiago said thank you for a job well done with the county and the temperatures. She said she did not know what to expect and her only experience was with a hurricane and everybody had to be ready to deal with the issues. She said she felt sorry for the farmers and she prayed about the whole situation. She said she is glad we fared the cold temperatures.

M. LAY BOARD APPOINTMENTS

M.1. Appoint Lita Epstein to the Tohopekaliga Water Authority (TWA) Board of Supervisors for the remainder of a vacated term ending September 30, 2028.

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

O. PUBLIC HEARINGS

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

O.1. Public Hearing to Consider Adoption of a Resolution Allowing for the Installation of Six Traffic Calming Devices (Speed Humps) on Hancock Road, Near Kathleen. (Estimated \$30,000.00 one-time expense)

Minutes: Amy Gregory, Traffic Manager, reviewed the proposed request for the installation of six traffic calming devices on Hancock Road, near Kathleen. She said that this met the required favorable responses and non-votes. She recommended approval.

The Chair opened a public hearing.

Jeff Shenefield said he has lived here for seven years. He said last fall a child was nearly hit while waiting at the bus stop. He asked for this to be approved. He showed where the bus stop is located.

George Stephen Black said he has been a resident for 46 years. He said this is a county maintained road not built to county maintained standards. He said this is used as a short cut off of Old Dade City Road. He discussed speeding and said he hopes the speed humps will help control those using this as a short cut.

The Chair closed the public hearing.

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

O.2. Public Hearing to Consider Adoption of a Resolution to vacate a portion of deeded, right-of-way for Johnson Road, Auburndale, Florida and request Board accept a Drainage Easement from Barbara Jean Monday. (No fiscal impact)

Minutes: Scott Lowery, Real Estate Services, discussed the proposed vacation request for a portion of deeded, right-of-way for Johnson Road and for the Board to accept a Drainage Easement from Barbara Jean Monday. He said that staff

recommends approval.

The Chair opened a public hearing.

Helen B. Gainey said she has lived at her property for 54 years. She said they object to this and it is a county maintained road. She said they all gave 25 feet. She said they do not want drainage to be disturbed and they do not want to be flooded out. She said the drainage has not been kept clean. She asked that this be delayed to see if there is a right-of-way for drainage.

Mr. Lowery said this extends this further south and connects to the ditch. He stated this is an improvement to the ditch.

Roads and Drainage Director Jay Jarvis said they have met with Real Estate Services about this and discussed the drainage. He said their intent is to clean the drainage system and tie into the existing outfall system. He said maintenance would then be as needed. He said it can be completed before hurricane season.

Commissioner Braswell said this will be the first time the water will have some place to go. He said it is going to go down with the extension.

Mark Hundhausen said his concern is Johnson Road would get cutoff from the creek. He said Mr. Allen has assured him that they would be able to reconnect and keep the water going that way.

Hector Santiago thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak but they have done everything.

The Chair closed the public hearing.

Mr. Allen said there is a house being constructed and they also objected. He said they have an easement that runs them to Berkeley Road. He said what gets constructed will have to go through Land Development, engineering and SWFWMD. He said this is a one-lane road, the drainage ditch is on the east side of the road, and the driveways have culverts. He said on the west side of the road there is no drainage and the culverts are very far up, and most of the properties down to the south do not have culverts and there is not a ditch line it is a swale type of situation. He said they will have to do a cross drain at some point in time.

Mr. Santiago said there is a house being built on Johnson Road. He said the safest access to that house is on Johnson Road and he asked where is the safest way to go.

Mr. Lowery said Johnson Road is not a county road and they would not be able to connect to this.

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

O.3. Public Hearing to Consider Adoption of a Resolution to vacate a portion of a platted public drainage/retention easement as shown on the plat of Country Class Estates Phase Two, Lakeland, Florida. (No fiscal impact)

Minutes: Scott Lowery, Real Estate Services, reviewed the proposed vacation request. He said there are no objections to the proposed vacation. He said that staff recommends approval.

Upon question, Mr. Lowery said staff does not see this as a negative impact. He said that the petitioner had volunteered to remove the fill to mitigate that impact. He said neighbors were not notified because it is not adjacent to other properties. He said it is on the other side of the ditch.

The Chair opened a public hearing; no one spoke.

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

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

P.1. Comments.

Minutes: Kay Bourque said the pictures they will see today are from Polk. She discussed animals being rescued and the different methods people help to rescue animals. She thanked all the people helping the animals.

Debbie Hicks discussed the cold weather and said that the animal shelter is concrete. She discussed the floors being hosed off and the beds getting wet. She said the facility needs to be redone. She discussed growth and said to set the tone for a good animal control. She said there are different things an advisory committee can do. She said we need to stop the process of having so many animals.

Commissioner Troutman said there are insulation panels over the vents. She said despite what many people post on social media there is heat in that building.

Jhoanna Mukai Allende discussed the things that she does and said that she supports small businesses and the community. She asked for participation in animal welfare. She urged them to make themselves aware and said more people are demanding change. She said we need the Board's advocacy. She said animal welfare is stuck and said they are asking for progress.

Meeting adjourned at 10:09 a.m.