



## Alachua County Special Meeting Minutes

**June 6, 2024, 6:30 PM**

Present: Chair Mary Alford, Vice Chair Charles S. Chestnut, IV,  
Commissioner Ken Cornell, Commissioner Anna Prizzia,  
Commissioner Marihelen Wheeler

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### **A. Call To Order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

### **B. Welcome**

### **C. Introduction**

1. Katherine Weitz Mayor, City of High Springs  
City Commissioner Byron Williams gave the Invocation.  
Mayor Weitz led the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. Mary Alford Chair, Alachua County Commission

### **D. Adoption of the Agenda**

**Commissioner Prizzia moved** adoption of the agenda as printed. The motion carried 5-0.

2nd Commissioner Chestnut

**City Commissioner Williams moved** adoption of the agenda. The motion carried 4-0.

2nd City Commissioner Miller

### **E. Items For Discussion**

1. Youth Literacy  
Mayor Weitz presented the above item.

Mayor Weitz stated that Mrs. Lane brings her therapy dog to the library every two weeks for the children to have an opportunity to read to the dog. The sessions are amazing, and she encouraged the County consider such a program to assist with children's literacy in Alachua County.

Commissioner Prizzia stated that the County is working with the Children's Trust and the School Board to develop Countywide Comprehensive Literacy Plan.

Commissioner Cornell, Commissioner Wheeler, and Sue Weller presented comments.

2. City's Proposed Infrastructure Surtax Partnership Project(s) Update

City Manager Jeremy Marshall stated that the city has purchased 6 backup pumps for the lift stations. The other possible projects have been on pause while the city was in the process of hiring a new Public Works Director.

Mayor Weitz stated that the city is looking into putting in pipes for reclaimed water. There are not grants available for the engineering of the project so the city may look to use the surtax partnership funds for the engineering expense.

Commissioner Prizzia stated that there is funding set aside on both the parks and conservation side as well as the infrastructure.

City Commissioner Grunder stated that the County owns an 88-acre property behind River Run. He stated most of it is wetlands, but 8 acres is suitable for and would be great for a park. He would like to know if the County has any plans to develop the site.

County Manager Lieberman stated that she would have to consult with staff on the Parks Master Plan to see what is planned.

Commissioner Wheeler, City Manager Marshall, and Commissioner Cornell presented comments.

Mayor Weitz stated that the city is working on a Parks Master Plan and that piece of property would be a great resource for the area.

Commissioner Prizzia requested that the city share their master plan with the County when completed so that staff can review it and look for opportunities to coordinate park efforts.

Chair Alford stated that there is still a possibility of the rail trail project with the CSX tracks between High Springs in Newberry. She encouraged the City of High Springs contact the City of Newberry to see if there is a possible partnership on the project.

Chair Alford recognized Sean Coals who presented comments to the Board.

3. Transportation Projects Impacting the City of High Springs - 24-00531

Growth Management Director Jeff Hays and Public Works Director Ramon Gavarrete presented the above item.

Mr. Hays stated advised on the following projects:

- A Grant was received from the US DOT called Safe Streets for All. The funds are to develop safety projects for all users of the roads cars, bicycles, and pedestrians within the County. There will be a large amount of Community Outreach associated with this process.
- The County is also working on a countywide Bicycle/Pedestrian Masterplan in partnership with The University of Florida and City of Gainesville.
- FDOT will have an \$11,000,000 resurfacing project on US 27/41 by Newberry and is scheduled for FY 2025/2026.

Commissioner Wheeler stated that for citizens wanting a light at Poe Springs Road she has learned that the proper information for the FDOT was not being received so that at this time there is no proposal for a light.

Mayor Weitz stated that stop signs or speed bumps are needed on 237th Street. When the Poe Springs Road traffic backs up drivers are taking 237th Street which goes through downtown, has a curve, and high pedestrian traffic which is a very dangerous set of factors.

Public Works Director Gavarrete stated that \$33,400,000 is dedicated to the High Springs area with the following projects:

- NW 170th Lane Rehab \$590,000
- CR 2054 to US 441 Minor Rehab \$2,900,000
- NW 110th Ave \$3,000,000
- 235A from NW 190th to CR 236 \$10,900,000

- 235A US 441 to NW 190th \$6,000,000
- NW 182nd Ave \$9,400,000
- Flashing Beacon at the Community School \$36,000

He also advised that an interactive map is available on the County website that will provide detailed information on all the projects Countywide.

Commissioner Cornell, Chair Alford, Mayor Weitz, and City Commissioner Williams presented comments.

Chair Alford recognized Rick Testa, Julie Tapia Ruano, and Sue Weller who presented comments to the Board.

#### **F. Public Comment**

Chair Alford recognized Leila Ceilley, Anna Weitz, Camden Treese, Commissioner Prizzia, David Lynch (documents provided for the record), and Chair Alford presented comments.

#### **G. Commission General Comments and Information Discussion**

##### **1. County Commission Comment**

Commissioner Wheeler stated that she is excited to see what is taking place at the Preist Theater. She also is watching the Canoe Outpost site to see what the City is going to do with the property. She has not had the opportunity to visit the peanut factory yet, but the tourism industry is becoming very interesting, and she is excited about the work going on in the town.

Commissioner Cornell stated that the growth in the State keeps him awake at night. The County has adopted impact fees to try to make sure that the residents do not have to pay for the demands the growth is creating. He wanted the City to know that the County will help the City as a resource with data analysis or whatever it can provide. He also encouraged everyone to watch the Netflix documentary Live to 100 Secrets of the Blue Zone. There are a couple of City's that have adopted the approach, and it may be interesting to she if the City could adopt some of the policies towards health.

Commissioner Prizzia stated that she prides herself on having better relationships with the municipalities and looks forward to working with the City. She encouraged the City to review impact fees to deal with the growth that is coming and stated that the County EPD Department would

be willing to work with the City and the Youth Council on water quality projects.

Commissioner Chestnut thanked the City for hosting the meeting. He would like to work with the City on road projects in the future.

Chair Alford stated that she remembers coming to High Springs as a child and always enjoys the opportunity to visit.

2. City Commission Comment

City Commissioner Miller announced that the employee of the week for High Springs is Public Information Officer Kevin Mangan.

City Commissioner Williams thanked the County for listening to the City of High Springs. The relationship in the past has not been as strong and he really appreciates the County's efforts.

Commissioner Cornell thanked City Commissioner Williams for Co-Chairing the workforce board with the School Board. He has provided great service to the youth of the County.

City Commissioner Grunder inquired on the status of the request to expand the City CRA. He stated that the CRA is working well and he does not want to lose momentum. He further stated that the City has implemented impact fees. The fees were the lowest in the area but the City addressed that and also added a fee for Parks and Recreation projects.

Economic Development Director Sean McLendon stated that there is new leadership at the City of High Spring and discussions need to take place to work out the direction and details of the CRA expansion.

Mayor Weitz stated that the Youth Council has met with the Director of the Springs Council and their enthusiasm is incredible. They have developed some great ideas and are pursuing grant opportunities. She also introduced the new Fire Chief Peters to the Board.

**H. Adjourn**

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 7:49 p.m.