



## Alachua County Special Meeting

### Minutes

**April 17, 2025, 6:30 PM**

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

Absent: Commissioner Anna Prizzia

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

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 p.m.

#### **B. Welcome**

#### **C. Introduction**

1. Louie Davis, Mayor, City of Waldo
2. Charles Chestnut, Chair, Alachua County Commission

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

**Councilmember Pisano moved** adoption of the agenda as printed. The motion carried 6-0

2nd Mayor Davis

**Commissioner Cornell moved** adoption of the agenda as printed. The motion carried 4-0 with Commissioner Prizzia absent.

2nd Commissioner Wheeler

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

1. Resource Center

Community Support Services Director Claudia Tuck and Community Stabilization Program Manager Satori Day presented the above item.

Ms. Day stated that the purpose of the upcoming community outreach meetings is to see what resources and network already exist in the

Community and determine the needs of the community and organizations and then see what the County can do to assist the good work already taking place in the community.

Councilmember Taylor, Commissioner Wheeler, Commissioner Alford, Commissioner Cornell, Councilmember Wade, Councilmember Boal, City Manager Worley, a citizen, Assistant County Manager Crosby, and Assistant County Attorney Forziano presented comments.

2. Lake Alto to Little Lake Santa Fe Canal Clean Up

EPD Director Stephen Hofstetter presented the above item.

Mr. Hofstetter stated that the first cleanout of vegetation did use an herbicide due to the large volume it could not be accomplished by hand. Subsequent cleanups are being conducted by hand. There was also a large tree that had fallen across the canal but that was removed as well.

Councilmember Boal, Commissioner Alford, Councilmember Johnson, a citizen, Mayor Davis, Commissioner Wheeler, and Councilmember Wade presented comments.

A citizen stated that he would like to see motorized boat travel on the canal be discouraged. He stated that the wake from boats erodes the banks of the canal.

3. Plans for Dinh Property

Land Conservation Programs Manager Andi Christman presented the above item.

Ms. Christman stated that the Dinh property has been purchased. There are other adjacent properties that are in the process of being acquired. There will be a plan for recreational use of the property developed but before planning parking facilities and the like staff wanted to complete all the acquisitions to have a cohesive plan for the property. The site does have several wetlands on site which will limit the use of the property to some extent. She advised that residents within in a quarter of a mile from the property will receive a mailer about the public input meetings for the property. The county also uses social media posting to alert the public.

Councilmember Johnson, Mayor Davis, Councilmember Wade, Councilmember Taylor, a citizen, and Assistant County Attorney Forziano presented comments.

4. Bike Path Tourism and Economic Development - 25-00322

Transportation Planning Manager Allison Moss, Tourism Director Jessica Hurov, and Economic Development Manager Sean McLendon presented the above item.

Councilmember Boal, Councilmember Taylor, Commissioner Cornell, Councilmember Johnson, and Commissioner Wheeler presented comments.

Ms. Moss stated that the proposed trail connecting the City of Gainesville and Waldo via a bike trail is part of the State's Sun Rail system. The County had applied for and received a grant for planning of the trail. That work has been completed, and the County is working on getting funding for construction of the facility. The project is currently ranked twelfth in the list of State projects for construction funding.

Commissioner Cornell stated that the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization which deals with funding for transportation projects was expanded to include the entire County. He wants the citizens to know that a rural representative was added to the Board and that representative is Councilmember Taylor from Waldo.

Councilmember Johnson expressed the need for a STOP Sign where SR 24 meets 301.

Tourism Director Hurov demonstrated the advertising and analytics tools that the County has to promote events and tourism in Waldo. She encouraged the City to work with the Tourism Department to promote events as well as take advantage of grants available to help fund events within the city. The small grant program makes available \$10,000 to promote and fund an event in Waldo. The grant could be split so that two events receive \$5,000 if that is what the city chooses to do.

Economic Development Manager McLendon stated that the Board has given direction to staff to work to spur economic development on the eastern side of the County. Staff started last year with meetings in Hawthorne to gather information on needs and opportunities in the city. That process will now begin in Waldo. Staff stands ready to work with any tourism projects to bring business to Waldo. Further staff will be looking take advantage of the lower property values and vacant buildings to use them as opportunities to attract new businesses to the area.

5. Cleaning of Ditches on 1475 Update

Assistant Public Works Director Brian Kauffman presented the above item.

Mr. Kauffman stated that there was a request to assist with the drainage ditches on 1475. The County is scheduled to be on site the first two weeks of May. The crew will clean out the ditches as well as repair or replace any culverts that are in need. Also, the County was asked about chip sealing 139 and the County has provided a cost estimate for the job. The County will provide the labor and equipment as an in-kind service. The city will be asked to pay for the materials. The estimate for the job is twenty-seven or twenty-eight thousand which is one third of what the project would cost. The City Manager has been provided the estimate which will come to the City Council for approval. If the City approves of the project the County will perform the work in July of this year.

Councilmember Boal stated that there is a ditch that cause flooding by the community center. He was wondering if the ditch which is on private property he believes is part of this project.

Mr. Kauffman stated that it is not part of this project and that if it is on private property the County cannot work on the ditch. He stated that he would be happy to check the property to confirm whether it is private or public. If it is on private land an easement would have to be obtained. He stated that the County can draft the language for an easement and offer surveying services, but it would best that the city and community to approach the citizen to try and obtain the easement.

Councilmember Taylor, Mayor Davis, City Manager Worley, Councilmember Boal, and Olivia Williams presented comments.

**F. Public Comment**

Chair Chestnut recognized Tara Crawford James, Councilmember Johnson, Councilmember Boal, a citizen, a citizen, Mayor Davis, Commissioner Alford, a citizen, Olivia Williams, Councilmember Wade, Councilmember Taylor, Mayor Davis, Councilmember Wade, and Lelia Powell who presented comments.

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

**1. County Commission Comment**

Commissioner Cornell stated that it is clear that everyone clearly loves Waldo. It is clear that citizens want things to improve in Waldo, and he thanked the County staff for listening tonight to the residents of Waldo. Waldo has some great opportunities before it and he would like to see the community come together make things better for all citizens of Waldo.

Commissioner Alford stated that is great to see so many residents willing to come to the meeting and stay so late. It is clear that the residents love the town, and she looks forward to seeing the progress made in Waldo.

Commissioner Wheeler has been considered that Archer, Hawthorne, and Waldo are struggling. It is natural for there to be difficulties during times of struggle. There have been changes and leadership, but we must remember that we are friends, neighbors, and family so let not your heart be troubled.

Chair Chestnut stated that the community needs to open to new ideas in order for the opportunity the residents of Waldo are looking for to occur. He would love to see this community come together.

2. City Commission Comment

Councilmember Pisano thanked the Board for coming tonight and their patience. He appreciates all that the County is doing for Waldo. If the County can resolve the flooding issues in Waldo that will be a tremendous benefit to the City.

Councilmember Wade thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

Councilmember Taylor thanked the Board for coming to the meeting this evening.

Councilmember Boal stated that this evening the meeting was not started with a pray. In tough times the City needs to remember to start with a pray.

Mayor Davis thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

**H. Adjourn**

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.