



Alachua County Special Meeting

Minutes

April 1, 2025, 1:30 PM

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

A. Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Wheeler moved to allow Commissioner Cornell to participate remotely due to extraordinary circumstances. The motion carried 4-0.

2nd Commissioner Alford

Commissioner Wheeler moved to approval of the agenda as printed. The motion carried 5-0.

2nd Commissioner Prizzia

B. Items for Discussion

1. FY26 Budget Development Financial Policies, Budget Guidelines - 25-00227

Assistant County Manager Tommy Crosby and Budget Manager Maureen Rischitelli presented the above item.

Assistant County Manager Crosby stated that he would like the Board to consider rolling the MSTU into the General Fund. Residents paying the MSTU are currently paying 3.5678 mills for the services rolling into the General Fund would raise the General Fund Millage by 1.4 mills on a countywide basis. Staff will work to find savings to keep the millage below 9 mills.

Mr. Crosby advised the Board that the consultant for the Fire Assessment has advised that the County needs to recalculate the Tiers in order to be in legal compliance. The rapidly increase property values have skewed the

percentages making this recalculation necessary. This recalculation would shift expense from more expensive homes to less expensive homes. Mr. Crosby knows that this is not something the Board will be comfortable with.

Commissioner Alford would like to see the legal methodology for the Fire Assessment so that she can refresh her memory and understanding of the assessment. She also requested to see the financial trends from the housing bubble period if it would be helpful to prepare for a future economic downturn.

Commissioner Wheeler requested the figures on the how much revenue the County loses because of the University of Florida does not pay taxes but is a big draw on services.

Commissioner Alford, Commissioner Prizzia, County Manager Lieberman, Commissioner Cornell, and Commissioner Wheeler presented comments.

Commissioner Prizzia moved to adopt the updates to the budgetary policies for FY2026 financial policies with the exception of the public purpose policy which will be brought back with further clarifications. The motion carried 5-0.

2nd Commissioner Alford

Assistant County Manager Crosby advised the Board that staff is developing the budget on very conservative growth numbers. Staff is working to be prepared for a financial downturn should it occur.

Solid Waste Budget Review

Solid Waste Director Gus Olmos presented the above item.

Mr. Olmos stated that one of the major projects in the future is a new transfer station facility. The current building is not of adequate size to house the new equipment available for separating waste streams. He further stated that the Board had previously authorized the construction of a new hazardous waste facility at the Eco Loop. Staff had applied for grant a through the EPA to fund the facility. It is on clear if that grant is still available. His recommendation is to allow the process to work itself out this year. If there is no action on the grant, then he will bring back a recommendation for the facility in the next Fiscal Year.

Mr. Olmos presented the final numbers from Hurricane Helene that 208,833 cubic yards of yard waste, 271 hazardous trees and limbs were

collected at a cost of \$5,400,000. He advised that a new Request for Proposals (RFP) will be issued that includes service for 4 of the smaller municipalities.

The major item that needs to be address this year is that the New River Landfill Agreement is set to expire on December 31, 2028. There is an option for a 5-year renewal, but the County must give 2 years notice that they wish to pursue a renewal. The County is currently in that period. Based on distance and pricing there are very few alternatives for the County to use.

Commissioner Alford, Commissioner Prizzia, Assistant County Manager Crosby, and Commissioner Wheeler presented comments.

Commissioner Alford moved to authorize staff to initiate negotiations with the New River Solid Waste Association to extend the existing agreement for an additional 5-years. The motion carried 5-0.

2nd Commissioner Prizzia

C. Closing Comments

1. Public Comment

There was no one present who wished to address the Board.

2. Commission Comment

X Platform

Commissioner Wheeler stated that a citizen has sent emails expressing concerns about the County's use of the X Platform. She is not sure if this is something the County should be concerned about.

Communications Coordinator Mark Sexton stated that he sees no reason to cease the use of X. He stated the citizen concern is that the platform has become overly political. The County has over 12,000 residents that use it to get information from the County. He stated that the County does not really have interactions on the platform but uses it to post factual materials and notices of events, meetings, and press releases.

Documents Submitted for the Record

Commissioner Wheeler stated that Ms. Rupert had dropped off documents to be included in the record of a meeting. However, she attended the meeting by phone and the documents were not presented at the meeting.

She inquired if there is a way to work it out so that documents can be submitted electronically or by other means to be included in the record.

Traffic Enforcement Camera

Commissioner Prizzia stated that at the last two Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization (MTPO) Meetings traffic enforcement cameras have been discussed. She stated that she reached out to the Sheriff to see what the delay was, and he reported that they are ready to go but are waiting on the County to finish the contract.

D. Adjourn

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 3:31 p.m.