



# JACKSON COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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March 14, 2023

## Jackson County BOCC Regular Meeting Highlights

*Jackson County, FL. – On March 14, 2023, at 9:00 am, the Jackson County Board of County Commissioners held a Regular Meeting. This is a recap of some of the reports and requests included in that meeting.*

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### **REQUEST: Approval of FDOT Grant Resolution**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners often submits applications to the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) for grants to fund several road projects aimed at improving transportation infrastructure in the county. The grant applications seek funding for road improvement projects to enhance mobility and safety for residents and visitors alike.

The proposed road projects include improvements to roadways, bridges, and intersections in Jackson County. These upgrades will not only improve the safety of the roads, but they will also reduce congestion, enhance access to important public facilities, and increase connectivity throughout the county.

*"We're always excited to submit grant applications for additional funding. FDOT, offers various grants which will allow us to make significant improvements to our county's transportation infrastructure," said Dylan Bass, Public Communications Officer. "By investing in our roads and bridges, we can improve safety, reduce travel times, and support economic growth in our community. These projects will have a significant impact on the daily lives of our residents and visitors, and we are grateful for the opportunity to apply for this funding."*

FDOT requires a resolution to be adopted in support of applications made for the SCOP, SCRAP, BSCOP, and CIGP grant programs. Road and Bridge Director, Jeffrey Register, requested Board adoption of a resolution in support of these applications. Jackson County is submitting applications for the following grants and roads:

- **SCOP (Small County Outreach Program):** Kynesville Road, River Road
- **SCRAP (Small County Road Assistance Program):** Blue Springs Road, Old US Road
- **B-SCOP (Bridge Repair):** Ulyss Road Bridge, Stephens Road Bridge
- **CIGP (County Incentive Grant Program):** Pooser Road

Applying for grants like these is just one of many efforts that Jackson County is undertaking to improve transportation infrastructure and support economic growth in the area.



## **RECOGNITION: Years of Service Awards**



The Jackson County Board of County Commissioners has recognized the dedicated service of its employees by awarding "Years of Service" awards to those who have shown commitment and loyalty to the county through their tenure. This acknowledgement of their hard work and dedication serves as a testament to their contributions towards the growth and success of Jackson County.

At this meeting, Human Resources Director, Judy Austin along with District 3 Commissioner and Chairman, Paul Donofro Jr., presented awards to the following employees:

- **Benet Johnson**  
Mrs. Johnson currently holds the position of Executive Secretary with the Building Department. She is being recognized for 15 years of continuous service.
- **Abraham Johnson**  
Mr. Johnson currently holds the position of Facilities Maintenance Director. He is being recognized for 5 years of continuous service.
- **Amber Barnes**  
Mrs. Barnes currently holds the position of Senior Planner with Community Development. She is being recognized for 15 years of continuous service.
- **Mary Smith**  
Mrs. Smith currently holds the position of Planner with Community Development. She is being recognized for 5 years of continuous service.
- **Deandre Gibson**  
Mr. Gibson currently holds the position of Food Service with the Jackson County Correctional Facility. He is being recognized for 5 years of continuous service.
- **Fedora Whitakerson**  
Ms. Whitakerson currently holds the position of Correctional Officer with the Jackson County Correctional Facility. She is being recognized for 5 years of continuous service.
- **Shawn Tipton**  
Mr. Tipton currently holds the position of EMT/Firefighter with Jackson County Fire Rescue. He is being recognized for 5 years of continuous service.
- **Seto Van Boxtel**  
Ms. Van Boxtel currently holds the position of Technical Services Director with the Library. She is being recognized for 5 years of continuous service.



**RECOGNITION: Employee of the Month**



The Jackson County Board of County Commissioners provides an Employee of the Month Award to a deserving employee who has exhibited exceptional performance, dedication, and commitment to serving the community. This recognition highlights the importance of acknowledging and appreciating the hard work and contributions of employees who go above and beyond in their duties.

At this meeting, Human Resources Director, Judy Austin along with District 3 Commissioner and Chairman, Paul Donofro Jr., presented the Employee of the Month for March 2023 to **Mr. Lee Treadwell** of the Information Technology Department. The IT department serves all the other County Departments, and subsequently, the citizens of Jackson County.



**PROCLAMATION** 

**RECOGNITION: Employee Recognition Proclamation/Josef Stackowicz**



After serving Jackson County for 11 years, Mr. Josef “Joey” Stackowicz is leaving the Board of County Commissioners. At this meeting, The Board and staff recognized Mr. Stackowicz for his significant contributions and dedicated service to the county. Mr. Stackowicz has made a positive impact during his tenure with the county and has played a vital role in supporting the county's mission and goals. The Board would like to express their gratitude for the Joey’s hard work and wish him all the best in his future endeavors. Joey will be greatly missed, and his hard work will continue to inspire his colleagues and future employees.



**PROCLAMATION** 

**REQUEST: Approval of Dove Rest RV and Mobile Home Park Modification**

At this meeting, Senior Planner with Community Development, Amber Barnes, made a request for a General Development Order for an expansion to Dove Rest RV and Mobile Home Park. The applicant is requesting to add four (4) mobile homes to the existing RV and Mobile Home Park located at 1973 Dove Rest in unincorporated Jackson County.

On February 20, 2023, the Planning Commission recommended approval to the Board of County Commissioners.



**REQUEST: Set a Public Hearing/Peacock Bridge Store**

Senior Planner with Community Development, Amber Barnes, made a request to set a public hearing for March 28, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. for a General Development Order to construct a 3,200 square feet convenience store and liquor store and 22,785 square feet of impervious surface for a vehicular use area including sidewalks. The proposed project will be located on the west side of Hwy 71 South approximately 470 feet north of the intersection of CR 278 (Peacock Bridge Road) and SR 71 South in unincorporated Jackson County.

On March 6, 2023, the Planning Commission recommended approval to the Board of County Commissioners.



**REQUEST: Ordinance Variation**

Senior Planner with Community Development, Amber Barnes, requested Board approval of a variance to Section 42-61(c) to allow a recreational vehicle as a temporary dwelling on private property for up to one year while the applicant builds a permanent home. The parcel associated with the request is Jackson County Parcel # 12-5N-08-0000-00700000 (6587 Messer Road, Grand Ridge) in unincorporated Jackson County.

On March 6, 2023, the Planning Commission recommended approval of the variance to the Board of County Commissioners.



## **REQUEST: Lifeguard Staffing at Jackson Blue Springs**



Jackson Blue Springs Recreational Area is a popular destination for both locals and tourists, with its natural beauty and recreational activities such as hiking, swimming, paddling, and picnicking. However, running and maintaining the park requires a significant amount of resources and funding, which can be challenging for the county. Over the past few years, the County has been fortunate enough to develop upgrades to the park, which has generated record numbers in visitation. As a result, the JCBOCC has been considering the use of a third party entity to manage daily operations.

After discussion during past meetings, the Board directed staff to seek out RFP's (Request For Proposal) for Concessionaire Services at Blue Springs. This decision was made with the aim of reducing staffing and overhead costs, while also improving the visitor experience. Outsourcing concessions services to a professional and experienced vendor, Jackson County hopes to reduce costs while also enhancing the visitor experience. With a concessionaire, visitors can expect a wider range of food and beverage options, the potential of longer operating seasons, and overall improved customer service. Furthermore, this decision will allow Jackson County to focus on other important tasks such as maintenance, conservation, and education, which are essential to the park's long-term sustainability.

The County has since, sought out RFP's and has received questions from interested parties about whether we will require Lifeguards, so that they can provide the best response. Subsequently, County Staff has met with risk management and the County's Insurance Agency to determine the requirements of Lifeguards, and learned that it has become more common throughout the state to forego Lifeguard staffing. Instead, the consultants recommended supplementing Lifeguards with adequate signage along with additional life-saving measures. In fact, throughout the State, most facilities comparable to JBS do not have Lifeguards on duty.

The Board ultimately voted to transition Jackson Blue Springs to Swim at Your Own Risk status. Signs will be placed throughout the facility, and staff will ensure notice is given to the public. A walkthrough will be completed with a risk management advisor and life-saving equipment will be placed throughout the park based on their recommendations.



**REQUEST: Adoption of Amended Spring Creek Litter Ordinance**

The Jackson County Board of County Commissioners have been discussing a litter ordinance for Spring Creek, aimed at reducing the amount of litter and debris in the waterway. This new ordinance will help protect the environment and enhance the natural beauty of the area, ensuring that it can be enjoyed by locals and visitors alike. The current Ordinance includes amendments to the original that removes responsibility to any vendors that operate on Spring Creek. The amended ordinance will go into effect on Memorial Day, and the Board will revisit the effectiveness of the ordinance at the end of the season.

The litter ordinance will require all individuals using Spring Creek to properly dispose of their trash and litter. The ordinance also prohibits the use of disposable containers in Spring Creek by tubers or paddlers. Boaters are exempt as they are registered vessels with locked interior compartments. The ordinance will be enforced by the Jackson County Sheriff's Office, and individuals found in violation of this ordinance may face Civil Infractions with a minimum fine of \$250.

The Jackson County Board of County Commissioners hopes that this ordinance will promote a cleaner and healthier environment for all, while also encouraging greater responsibility and accountability from those who use Spring Creek for recreational purposes. Spring Creek is a popular destination for locals and visitors, offering opportunities for boating, fishing, and other recreational activities. With the passage of this ordinance, Jackson County is taking an important step in preserving this valuable resource for generations to come.



**REQUEST: Flagpoles at Citizens Lodge/Woodmen Life**

Recently, staff approached the local "Woodmen Life" Chapter about partnering with the County on some projects at Citizens Lodge in Marianna. Woodmen Life would like to host a Memorial Event on 9/11 at which they would provide flagpoles for the park and create a memorial area to be accessible by all citizens. Woodmen Life will purchase materials, and the County would provide installation labor.





### **REQUEST: Surplus Real Property in Greenwood**

A Florida County might surplus real property for a variety of reasons, including generating revenue for the county, reducing maintenance costs, consolidating county-owned properties, or to dispose of properties that are no longer needed for county operations. Surplussing real property can also provide opportunities for private individuals or organizations to acquire land for development, investment, or other purposes.

Administrative Services Director, Hunter Potts, requested Board approval to Surplus Real Property in Greenwood, FL. (Parcel ID: 33-6N-09-0000-0020-0000). The County has been approached by several prospective buyers regarding the aforementioned property. From all appearances this land is landlocked without an actual easement to the property. Florida Statute allows for the County to either put the property up for public auction or effect a private sale if the Board declares the property to only be of use by the adjacent landowners.

#### **Tax Collector Land Value: \$21,600**

Professional Property Appraiser Opinion

- Not Landlocked \$5,500 to \$6,500 per acre @ \$6,000 per acre = \$32,400
- Landlocked \$3,500 to \$4,500 per acre @ \$4,000 = \$21,600

The Board voted to set the minimum bid for the property listing at **\$20,000**.



### **REQUEST: Non-Binding MOU with City of Marianna/Utilities Assets**

Jackson County Board of County Commissioners has been exploring the possibility of selling the County's utilities assets to the City of Marianna as part of a strategic decision to streamline operations, reduce costs and improve service delivery. Consolidating utility assets can lead to greater efficiency in operations, allowing for improved maintenance and customer service. Additionally, it can reduce the administrative burden on the County, enabling it to focus on other important priorities such as infrastructure, public safety, and economic development. By selling utilities assets, the County can also generate revenue that can be reinvested in other areas of public service.

At the direction of the BOCC, Chairman Donofro and staff met with the City of Marianna on multiple occasions to develop a Non-Binding MOU recommendation. In an effort to further review the feasibility of the selling of the County's utilities assets, staff recommended entering into a non-binding MOU with the City of Marianna. The City of Marianna approved this non-binding MOU at their March 7, 2023 meeting. As a part of this MOU, the County would enter an in-depth analysis of the logistics involved in transferring the loans, grants, and assets to the City of Marianna.

An alternative to selling the utilities assets would be to raise utility rates. After much discussion at this meeting, the Board opted to Set a Public Hearing on (TENTATIVE) April 11, 2023, to consider raising the Utilities Fee Schedule, as presented by Alday-Howell Engineering during a previous meeting. They also voted to enter into the MOU to explore the possibility of selling the Utilities Assets to the City of Marianna.



**NON-BINDING MOU**

####

## LEGEND:



*Approved*



*Denied*



*Yes Vote*



*No Vote*



*Abstention*



*Absent*

### COMMISSIONERS

DISTRICT 1  
ALEX B. MCKINNIE

DISTRICT 2  
EDWARD CRUTCHFIELD

DISTRICT 3  
PAUL DONOFRO JR.

DISTRICT 4  
DONNIE BRANCH

DISTRICT 5  
JIM PEACOCK