



JACKSON COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Jackson County BOCC Regular Meeting Highlights

Jackson County, FL. – On April 11, 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.

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 April 2023 to **Mrs. Carrie Williams**, Road & Bridge Business Manager. The Jackson County Road and Bridge Department is an invaluable asset to our county, which ensures the safety, accessibility, and connectivity of our transportation infrastructure. Mrs. Williams plays a vital role in this department. She has been employed by the County since 2001, and as a result, provides a wealth of knowledge and insight into the inter-workings of Road & Bridge. Her dedication and diligence are on display every day. The Board would like to thank Mrs. Williams for her service to our great County.



PROCLAMATION

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:

- **Crystal Basford**
Ms. Basford currently holds the position of Sergeant with the Jackson County Correctional Facility. She is being recognized for 15 years of continuous service.
- **Steven Gross**
Mr. Gross currently holds the position of Sergeant with the Jackson County Correctional Facility. He is being recognized for 5 years of continuous service.
- **William Lipford, Jr.**
Mr. Lipford currently holds the position of Sergeant with the Jackson County Correctional Facility. He is being recognized for 5 years of continuous service.
- **Beverly Shores**
Mrs. Shores currently holds the position of Admin Support III for Jackson County Correctional Facility. She is being recognized for 30 years of continuous service.
- **Matthew Norville**
Mr. Norville currently holds the position of Paramedic/Firefighter with Jackson County Fire & Rescue. He is being recognized for 10 years of continuous service.
- **Alicia Purvis**
Ms. Purvis currently holds the position of Childrens' Service Manager for the Jackson County Public Library. She is being recognized of 5 years of continuous service.
- **Brian Mercer**
Mr. Mercer currently holds the position of Parks & Recycling Supervisor for Jackson County Public Works. He is being recognized for 5 years of continuous service.
- **Megan Burnet**
Ms. Burnett currently holds the position of Probation Assistant II/Office Manager for Jackson County Probation. She is being recognized for 10 years of continuous service.
- **Stacey Goodson**
Mr. Goodson currently holds the position of Probation Office/Supervisor for Jackson County Probation. He is being recognized for 30 years of continuous service.
- **Donald Hightower**
Mr. Hightower currently holds the position of Equipment Operator IV with the Road & Bridge Department. He is being recognized for 5 years of continuous service.

- **Willie Lipford, Jr.**
Mr. Lipford currently holds the position of Equipment Operator IV with the Road & Bridge Department. He is being recognized for 25 years of continuous service.
- **Sandra Lipford**
Mrs. Lipford currently holds the position of Equipment Operator II with the Road & Bridge Department. She is being recognized for 5 years of continuous service.
- **William McKinnie**
Mr. McKinnie currently holds the position of Environmental Service Tech for the Parks & Recycling Dept. He is being recognized for 20 years of continuous service.



RECOGNITION: Employee Recognition Proclamation/Hunter Potts



After serving Jackson County for over 7 years, Mr. Hunter Potts, Administrative Services Director, is leaving the County. At this meeting, The Board and staff recognized Mr. Potts for his significant contributions and dedicated service to the county. Mr. Potts 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 Hunter's hard work and wish him all the best in his future endeavors. Hunter will be greatly missed, and his hard work will continue to inspire his colleagues and future employees.



PROCLAMATION 

REQUEST: Board Approval/Extend Development Agreement for Partners 4 Pets

On June 22, 2021, the BOCC approved Partners for Pets to construct nine new buildings totaling 12,612 square feet to be used for an animal adoption center and shelter. The proposed development is located at 2810 Panhandle Road in unincorporated Jackson County.

On March 28, 2023, the BOCC set a public hearing for this meeting (4/11/23), to discuss a requested additional 24-month extension to the Development Agreement for Partners for Pets.



AGREEMENT 

REQUEST: Board Approval/Southern Grape Company, LLC

Sr. Planner with Community Development, Amber Barnes, mad a request for board approval of a General Development Order to construct a 9,810 square foot building to be used for a wine production and events facility along with retail, manufacturing, and meeting areas and 31,715 square feet vehicular use area including sidewalks. The proposed facility will be located on the east side of Hwy 231 approximately 1,723 feet north of the intersection of Hwy 231 and Hwy 73 North in unincorporated Jackson County. This request is also considered a special exception to the Agriculture 2 Land Use Category.

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



STAFF REPORT



REQUEST: Approval of TDC Grant Funding/Rock a Dock Event

The Jackson County Tourist Development Council has a policy allowing it to provide initial funding to non-profit organizations with the intent to promote special events and projects. Visitor Enhancement Grants are offered specifically to advertise and promote events and projects to out-of-county markets to attract visitors to the county.

Tourist Development Council Director, Kelsi Williams requested Board approval of TDC funding for a 2023 “Rock a Dock” event. During the March 2023 meeting the TDC Board voted to approve a \$5,845 grant for the event. This is a week-long paddling event that will take place at Florida Caverns State Park. The event organizer has reserved a majority of the park for the event, with an anticipated 300-400 attendees.



ROCKDOCK LINK



REQUEST: Adoption/Increased Utility Fee Rates/Resolution

A request was made for Board adoption of a resolution to increase base fees and usage rates for Jackson County Utilities water and sewer customers. This recommendation comes from a collaborative effort from County staff, Alday-Howell Engineering, and Florida Rural Water Association.

The decision to raise utility rates was made after careful consideration of the findings and recommendations from the study conducted by Florida Rural Water Association (FRWA), a reputable organization with expertise in water and wastewater management. The study evaluated the current state of Jackson County's utility services and identified areas where overhead costs have risen due to inflation, maintenance, and operational expenses.

This fee schedule will be implemented on the May 2023 billing cycle.



RESOLUTION



REQUEST: Approval of Shangri La Spring Protection Project/FDEP Grant Agreement

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection offers various grants for Spring Protection and restoration. Jackson County has applied for such a grant. During this meeting, Brigitte Rehberg, Interim Administrative Services Director, requested Board approval of a Shangri La Spring Protection Project grant agreement.

Jackson County has identified shoreline erosion, limestone face erosion and spring pollution due to natural elimination of ground cover and forestation at Shangri La Spring, which is located within a Priority Focus Area of the Jackson Blue Spring and Merritt’s Mill Pond Basin Management Action Plans. Shangri La Spring is also a part of Jackson Blue Springs, which is a first magnitude spring that headwaters to Spring Creek and feeds the Chipola River. The Project will include the construction of stormwater improvements (i.e., drainage structures and associated appurtenances), an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible boardwalk with observation platform, site restoration, facility restoration, and roadway/parking improvements. The Project will improve stormwater drainage and increase public recreation access to the Shangri La Spring. The Project will also include the installation and removal of vegetation, site restoration and stabilization practices, and restoration of the former “Graham Air Force Base Officers Club” facility. The total amount of grant funding is \$1,028,116.

This significant milestone marks a collaborative effort between the County and FDEP to protect and preserve the precious natural resources in our community. The Shangri La Spring is a vital natural resource, and this grant will support intentional conservation and restoration efforts to ensure its long-term sustainability. The Board extends their appreciation to FDEP for their partnership and support in safeguarding our environment and looks forward to the successful implementation of the Shangri La Spring Protection Project for the benefit of current and future generations.



REQUEST: Board Discussion of 5/9/23 Regular Meeting

County Administrator, Wilanne Daniels, requested Board discussion of an upcoming Regular Meeting scheduled for May 9, 2023. The Chairman will not be able to attend, therefore, this meeting is being rescheduled for May 16, 2023 at 9am.



REQUEST: Approval to Award Concessionaire Contract to Highest Bidder/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.

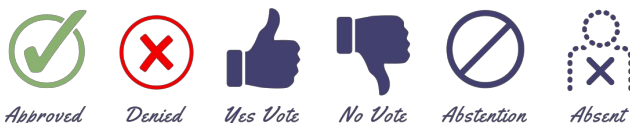
After discussion during past meetings, the Board directed staff to seek out RFP's (Request For Proposal) for Concessionaire Services at Blue Springs. This decision was made with the aim of reducing staffing and overhead costs, while also improving the visitor experience. Outsourcing concessions services 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 for 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 received three competitive bids, and after careful consideration, the Board of County Commissioners made a decision based on a ranking tabulation, which considered various factors including pricing, experience, and qualifications. At this meeting, Deputy County Administrator, Rett Daniels, requested Board approval to award 2223-11 Concessionaire to the highest ranked bidder, Coldwater Excursions.



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LEGEND:



COMMISSIONERS

DISTRICT 1	DISTRICT 2	DISTRICT 3	DISTRICT 4	DISTRICT 5
ALEX B. MCKINNIE	EDWARD CRUTCHFIELD	PAUL DONOFRO JR.	DONNIE BRANCH	JIM PEACOCK