






# JACKSON COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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May 28, 2024

## Jackson County BOCC Regular Meeting Highlights

*Jackson County, FL. – On May 28, 2024, at 6:00 PM, 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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### INTRODUCTION: New CEO/President of Jackson County Chamber of Commerce



Board Chairman Paul Donofro introduced Lacey Ekberg, the newly appointed CEO/President of the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce, to the Board of County Commissioners. Lacey brings 25 years of extensive experience in chambers of commerce and economic development across 32 states. She has already hit the ground running with plans to promote both the Chamber and Jackson County. The Board of County Commissioners warmly welcomes Lacey Ekberg and looks forward to the significant contributions she will bring to our community.



### REQUEST: Adoption of Resolution & Approval of Project Agreement for Old US Road

Jackson County Road & Bridge Department announced the receipt of a Small County Road Assistance Program (SCRAP) Agreement from the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), which necessitates a resolution by the Board. This pivotal project focuses on the design of CR 167 (Old US Road) Improvement Project, encompassing vital resurfacing and necessary drainage enhancements.

The scope of the project includes comprehensive survey, design, and permitting efforts to prepare detailed construction plans and specifications. Adhering to appropriate design standards and criteria, all work will be conducted within the existing right-of-way, ensuring a streamlined and efficient process.

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Spanning a total length of 3.495 miles from SR 2 to the Alabama State Line, this project represents a significant infrastructure investment, with an estimated cost of \$342,046.00. The Board of County Commissioners adopted the resolution and approved the request, showing commitment to advancing this important initiative, which will enhance road safety and improve overall transportation infrastructure in our community.



**REQUEST: Approval to Set a Public Hearing for a Small-Scale Amendment**

In a move to support local land use planning, the Board of County Commissioners set a public hearing for June 11, 2024, at 9:00 AM to review a Small-Scale Amendment. This amendment aims to change 8.43 acres of one parcel from Agriculture 1 (AG1) to Agriculture 2 (AG2). The parcel in question is located on the east side of Highway 73, approximately half a mile south of Hasty Pond Road in unincorporated Jackson County.

The Planning Commission, at their regularly scheduled meeting on May 20, 2024, recommended approval of this proposed amendment. This change is designed to better align the land use with the evolving needs of the community, ensuring sustainable growth and development.



**REQUEST: Variance from Section 42-455(7) Jackson County Code of Ordinances**

On April 19, 2024, staff received a request from Heather Cloud for approval of a variance from the Jackson County Code of Ordinances Section 42-455(7), in order to allow a manufactured home to be placed on her property on Lot 63, Blk AE, Unit 2 in Compass Lake in the Hills Subdivision, which does not allow mobile homes. The parcel associated with the request is Jackson County Parcel ID# 02-2N-11-0083-10AE-0630 (664 Fairview Rd).

The Planning Commission, at their regularly scheduled meeting on May 20, 2024, recommended to deny the request for a variance from Sec. 42-455(7) of the Jackson County Code of Ordinances.

The Board approved the variance request with a majority vote of 4-1. After further discussion a motion was made and seconded to set a public hearing on June 18, 2024, at 6 p.m. to amend Section 42-455(7) of the Jackson County Code of Ordinances. The motion passed with a majority vote of 4-1.



**REQUEST: Approval to Appoint an AHAC Member**

The Board of County Commissioners approved the appointment of Ms. Debby Wood to the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC), filling the open position representing Employers. Ms. Wood, who currently works for Chipola CareerSource, brings a wealth of experience to this role, with many years dedicated to working with families in need and serving on various community boards.

Her extensive background in social services and workforce issues uniquely positions her to contribute valuable insights and expertise to the AHAC. Ms. Wood's commitment to addressing the needs of the community and her professional experience will undoubtedly be an asset to the committee. The Board is confident that Ms. Wood will play a pivotal role in advancing the goals of the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee and looks forward to her contributions in this critical area.



**REQUEST: Approval of Alcoholic Beverage License for Dollar General**

On May 6, 2024, the Planning Division received a request from Dollar General for a new alcoholic beverage license to permit the package sales of beer and wine (2APS). This request pertains to the Dollar General located at 4722 Highway 90 in unincorporated Jackson County. The Board approved the request as part of its ongoing efforts to support local businesses and provide convenient services to the community.



**REQUEST: Approval to Set a Public Hearing for Modifications to the Development Agreement for Project Bobo**

The Board of County Commissioners set a public hearing for June 11, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. to discuss a modification to the language of the Development Agreement for Project Bobo. This follows the Board's approval of a General Development Order for the project on March 26, 2024, for the construction of a 1,316 square foot oil change facility and 32,089 square feet of impervious surface, which includes sidewalks and a vehicular use area. The project is slated to be located at 2193 Hwy 71 South in unincorporated Jackson County.

This public hearing will provide an opportunity for community members to engage and offer feedback on the proposed modifications, ensuring transparency and community involvement in the development process. The Board is committed to facilitating growth that benefits Jackson County and its residents.

The Board looks forward to the successful advancement of Project Bobo, which promises to enhance local services and contribute to the county's economic development.



**REQUEST: Approval to Set a Public Hearing for School Board ½-Cent Sales Tax Referendum**

Jackson County Schools Superintendent Steve Benton requested approval to set a public hearing for June 11 at 9 a.m. The purpose of the hearing is to discuss the adoption of an ordinance that would place a referendum on the November General Election ballot. This referendum concerns the renewal of the 1/2-cent sales tax levied by the School Board, which is set to expire.

The continuation of this sales tax is crucial for funding essential educational programs and infrastructure improvements within Jackson County schools. By setting this public hearing, the Board ensures that community members have the opportunity to voice their opinions and participate in the decision-making process.



**REQUEST: Approval for TDC Sponsorship Reimbursement to Oak Grove Plantation**

In a continued effort to support local events and community engagement, the Board approved the reimbursement of \$3,000 to Oak Grove Plantation. This funding, initially awarded as sponsorship for the purchase of birds for the Fire & Feathers event, underscores the Board and TDC’s commitment to fostering unique and enriching experiences within Jackson County.

During its April meeting, the TDC board voted in favor of this reimbursement, recognizing the importance of the Fire & Feathers event in promoting local tourism and community spirit. The Board of County Commissioners commends the TDC's decision and appreciates Oak Grove Plantation's contributions to the cultural vitality of our region.

Oak Grove Plantation has submitted a final evaluation report for the Fire & Feathers event, held on February 24, 2024. The event aimed to raise awareness about the newly opened outdoor attraction and promote outdoor bird hunting recreation opportunities, while also supporting the local Fire Rescue teams.

The report highlights the successful partnership between Oak Grove Plantation, the Jackson County TDC, and Fire Rescue teams. The event raised \$8,968 to donate to Fire Rescue, in addition to covering the \$9,000 cost of the birds, thanks to the support of local and regional businesses and ticket purchasers. The funds reimbursed from the TDC will be donated back to the Jackson County Fire Rescue teams.

The Board of County Commissioners looks forward to the continued success and growth of the Fire & Feathers event and appreciates the collaborative efforts to benefit the community and local Fire Rescue teams.



**REQUEST: Approval to Award London Road & Bright Prospect Roadway Improvements Bids to Anderson Columbia Co., Inc.**

The Road & Bridge Department recently took significant steps to enhance the infrastructure within Jackson County by initiating bids for roadway improvements on London Road (RB-2324-11) and Bright Prospect Road (RB-2324-12). The bidding process, which began on April 25, 2024, concluded with six bids received for each project on May 16, 2024.

For both projects, Anderson Columbia Company, Inc. emerged as the lowest responsive bidder. After thorough evaluation, it was recommended that the projects be awarded to Anderson Columbia Company, Inc., ensuring quality and efficiency in the roadway improvements. The Board unanimously approved the bid award.

These projects are crucial for the development and maintenance of our county's infrastructure and awarding the contracts to a reputable company like Anderson Columbia Company, Inc. reflects the county's commitment to excellence and progress.



**REQUEST: Approval to Award Bid RB-2324-13 Thompson Road Guardrail to Emerald Coast Striping**

The Road & Bridge Department continues to make strides in enhancing road safety within Jackson County by initiating the Thompson Road Guardrail project. Bids for this important safety improvement were requested on April 25, 2024, and two bids were received by May 16, 2024.

After a thorough evaluation, Emerald Coast Striping emerged as the lowest responsive bidder. It is recommended that the project be awarded to Emerald Coast Striping, ensuring that the guardrail installation meets high standards of safety and quality.

This project is a crucial step towards improving road safety for residents and visitors alike. The Board of County Commissioners is pleased with the proactive measures taken by the Road & Bridge Department and looks forward to the successful completion of the Thompson Road Guardrail project, which will enhance the safety and reliability of our transportation infrastructure.



**REQUEST: Approval of New Copier Contract with RJ Young**

The county is taking steps to optimize its copier lease arrangements, currently under contract with RJ Young. With several machines already off lease and more set to go off lease in August 2024, two new proposed contracts have been introduced to improve efficiency and reduce costs.

The first contract will replace four machines with updated models and remove two under-utilized or unnecessary machines. The second contract focuses on upgrading and replacing the GIS wide-format printer. Together, these changes will result in a monthly cost reduction of \$216.37.

County staff are pleased with the service provided by RJ Young and believe that the new copier lease contracts will significantly benefit the operation of county offices. This initiative not only demonstrates fiscal responsibility but also enhances the overall efficiency of county operations.

The Board of County Commissioners supports these improvements and looks forward to the positive impact they will have on daily administrative functions.



**DISCUSSION: June 25<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting**

The Florida Association of Counties' Annual Conference is set to take place from June 25-28 in Orange County. Several Commissioners and staff members are scheduled to attend this important event. Given that the second June meeting is currently scheduled for June 25, the Board voted to reschedule it to June 18 at 6 p.m.

This adjustment will allow Commissioners and staff to fully participate in the conference, gaining valuable insights and networking opportunities that will benefit Jackson County. The Board of County Commissioners is committed to ensuring seamless governance and looks forward to a productive conference and a well-timed rescheduled meeting.



**REQUEST: Approval of Pooser Road Housing Purchase and Sale Agreement**

On April 9, 2024, the Board voted to award RFP 2324-19 to NW Florida LD, LLC, also known as Rausch Coleman. Since then, staff have been actively negotiating with representatives from NW Florida LD and have successfully reached an agreement that is satisfactory to both parties.

Staff is now requesting approval of the agreement, marking a significant step forward in this collaborative effort. The county is pleased with the progress and is confident that this partnership will bring valuable benefits to the community. The Board approved the Purchase and Sale Agreement.



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