



# JACKSON COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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February 25, 2026

## Jackson County BOCC Regular Meeting Highlights

*Jackson County, FL. – On February 24, 2026, 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.*

### **REQUEST: Approval of a Resolution to Re-Establish Navigation on Apalachicola River**

The Board adopted a Resolution presented by Ken Jones of the Riparian County Stakeholder Coalition, urging a balanced and responsible approach to restoring navigation on the Apalachicola River. The resolution supports efforts to explore navigation opportunities that could enhance economic development and recreational access, while avoiding a return to full-scale dredging practices that previously impacted the river’s floodplain and bay system. Through participation in the Riparian County Stakeholder Coalition, Jackson County joins neighboring counties like Gulf, Calhoun, Liberty, and Gadsden, in presenting a unified regional perspective that encourages the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to consider strategic, less invasive alternatives that protect natural resources while supporting sustainable river use.



### **REQUEST: Adoption of Resolution to Apply for FDOT Grants**

The Board adopted a Resolution authorizing Jackson County to apply for this year’s FDOT SCOP, SCRAP, and CIGP grant cycles. These competitive transportation grants support roadway resurfacing and improvement projects that enhance safety and connectivity across the county. The proposed applications include CR 271 (River Road) Phase I from US 90 to TJ Road (SCOP), Nortek Boulevard from the end of pavement to Lakepoint Road (SCOP), South Street from Penn Avenue to Highway 73 (SCRAP), Old US Road from Tin Cup Alley to Highway 162 (SCRAP), and Sapp Road from US 90 to Lovewood Road (CIGP). Adoption of the resolution allows the County to pursue additional state funding to improve key road corridors and strengthen local infrastructure.



CONTINUED

**REQUEST: Discussion/Direction on Courthouse Tree Removal and Sculpture**

The Board continued discussion regarding the oak tree located on the north to northwest side of the Jackson County Courthouse grounds near the front entrance along Lafayette Street. As previously shared, a certified arborist determined the tree’s structural condition presents a potential safety risk due to its close proximity to the building entrance, walkways, and adjacent roadway. The Board approved professional removal at its February 10, 2026 meeting. At the February 24 meeting, staff sought direction on how to thoughtfully commemorate the tree’s long-standing presence on the courthouse grounds.

During the discussion, Linda Franklin, 2nd Vice President of the Jackson County NAACP, spoke on behalf of the organization. The Board voted to obtain two additional professional arborist opinions to further evaluate whether removal is necessary. If removal is confirmed, the Board intends to preserve the stump for a commemorative sculpture that incorporates Lady Justice with the scales of justice, along with elements of the NAACP’s proposed design featuring the American flag and Esop Bellamy planting an oak tree, accompanied by an inscription honoring his legacy in Jackson County. The cost of removal has been approved by the Chief Judge’s designee, and any sculpture expenses will be contingent upon their approval as well.



**REQUEST: Approval of Updates and Additions to County Rental Policies & Fee Schedule**

The Board approved updates and additions to the County’s rental policies and fee schedule to ensure clarity, consistency, and responsiveness across facilities. The revisions include enhancements to existing policies as well as the creation of two new discount options for the Endeavor Convention Center, Great Oaks, and the Extension Office. These updates help streamline the rental process while providing structured flexibility that supports events and activities benefiting the community.



**REQUEST: Approval of Public Records Request Policy**

The Board approved the adoption of a formal Public Records Request Policy, establishing clear guidelines for how public records requests are received and processed. While the County has always complied with Florida’s public records laws, this policy provides a structured framework to ensure consistency, efficiency, and transparency moving forward. The policy was recommended by legal counsel and reviewed and approved by Ms. Kerry Parsons of Nabors, Giblin & Nickerson (NGN).



**REQUEST: Approval to Award 2526-08 Supervisor of Elections Upgrades**

The Board approved the award of ITB 2526-08 for Supervisor of Elections security upgrades to Arrow Construction Company LLC, advancing important facility improvements that were previously

budgeted. After initially receiving a bid that exceeded the budget, staff re-solicited the project to ensure a more cost-effective outcome before moving forward. The Board also approved a related budget amendment to transfer funds from the Property Appraiser’s security update account to support the project, with confirmation that the remaining Property Appraiser improvements can still be completed using previously authorized excess funds.



**REQUEST: Approval of Design Proposal from DHM for Landscape Improvements Along Penn Avenue**

The Board approved the design proposal from DHM for landscape improvements along Penn Avenue, following the County’s recent award of a \$250,000 FDOT grant for beautification between Pooser Road and South Street. While the grant funds construction, FDOT requires an approved design prior to moving forward. The approved proposal includes project design, permitting, bid documents, and a maintenance plan.



**REQUEST: Approval of Withdrawal from HMGP and CDBG Pooser Road Drainage Grants**

The Board approved formally withdrawing from the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) and associated CDBG match funding for the Pooser Road drainage project. The County had been awarded funding for drainage improvements on the eastern portion of Pooser Road, from Wynn Road to Highway 73. The proposed mitigation work required roadway widening and expanded outflow areas, which in turn required securing property easements. Due to the inability to obtain the necessary easements, the project could not move forward as designed, and the funding agencies have requested a formal withdrawal letter.



**REQUEST: Approval of Work Change Directive #1 and Closeout Documents for Shangri-La Site Restoration Project**

The Board approved Work Change Directive #1 and the closeout documents for the Shangri-La Site Restoration Project, marking the completion of this grant-funded phase. The directive extends the contract time by nine days and authorizes use of the contingency funds for necessary and eligible project expenses. The restoration improvements at the Shangri-La Recreation Area include a 40’ x 60’ open-air pavilion, a 10’ x 10’ storage shelter, gravel parking area, access roadway, entrance gate, drainage structures, benches, picnic tables, trash receptacles, and landscaping.



**REQUEST: Approval of the City of Marianna Fire Interlocal Agreement**

The Board approved the updated Fire Interlocal Agreement with the City of Marianna, continuing a long-standing partnership that has been in place for more than 50 years. The revised agreement strengthens coordinated fire protection efforts by providing full-time fire coverage within a five-mile radius of each City station and recognizing the strategic importance of a station near the Kynesville Highway and Interstate 10 interchange to support future housing and economic development.

Under the agreement, Jackson County will contribute \$65,000 for the period of October 1, 2025 through September 30, 2026, and \$75,000 for the period of October 1, 2026 through September 30, 2027. Beginning October 1, 2027, the County’s annual contribution will remain \$75,000 each fiscal year unless terminated by either party with a 30-day notice prior to the end of a fiscal year.



**REQUEST: Approval of County Attorney Contract with Knowles & Randolph**

At the January 27, 2026 Board meeting, the Jackson County Board of County Commissioners finalized the ranking of proposers for County Attorney services as part of its transparent and structured selection process. Each Commissioner submitted individual scores, which were tabulated and presented publicly during the meeting. Based on the final rankings, Casey Bigelow was identified as the top-ranked candidate, followed by Knowles & Randolph, Nathan Nolin, Marcus Green, Blankenship Jordan, and Hartman Law Firm.

In accordance with the Board’s direction, staff initiated contract negotiations with Mr. Bigelow. While he was ultimately unable to move forward in the process, the Board appreciates his participation and recognizes him as a strong candidate. As previously authorized by motion on January 27, the Board proceeded to the second-ranked firm, Knowles & Randolph. A contract was drafted, reviewed by the interim County Attorney, and formally approved by the Board at the February 24 meeting. The Board looks forward to working with Knowles & Randolph as they begin serving Jackson County.



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**LEGEND:**



- District 1**  
Dr. Willie Spires
- District 2**  
Edward Crutchfield
- District 3**  
Paul Donofro Jr.
- District 4**  
Donnie Branch
- District 5**  
Jamey Westbrook