



JACKSON COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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March 10, 2026

Jackson County BOCC Regular Meeting Highlights

Jackson County, FL. – On March 10, 2026, 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 Quarter



The Board recognized **Aron Schaus of Jackson County Fire Rescue** as the **Employee of the Quarter for the First Quarter of 2026**. Schaus was selected for consistently demonstrating the County's core values of integrity, dedication, competency, loyalty, innovation, and accessibility in her role as a paramedic firefighter. She is recognized for providing exceptional advanced medical care during high-stress emergency responses and for her ability to make sound, timely decisions during complex medical and trauma situations. In addition to her clinical expertise, Schaus is known for her collaborative approach,

positive attitude, and willingness to support her team. She has also played an important role in mentoring and orienting new staff, helping to strengthen the skills and confidence of fellow Fire Rescue personnel. The Board commended Schaus for her professionalism, service to the community, and commitment to excellence.



REQUEST: Fire Rescue Public Servant Awards

The Board recognized **Firefighter/EMT Austin O'Neil** and **Division Chief Johnny Padgett** of Jackson County Fire Rescue for receiving **Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) National Public Servant Awards**, presented by representatives of **VFW Post 12046**. O'Neil was honored with the VFW National Firefighters Public Servant Citation for his dedicated service to the community. As he was actively responding to a call at the time of the presentation, Fire Chief

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Charlie Brunner accepted the award on his behalf. Padgett received the VFW National Emergency Medical Technician Public Servant Citation in recognition of his leadership and commitment to the County’s Community Paramedic Program, which works proactively to improve health outcomes for residents. The awards were presented by Tyler Schaeffer and Quartermaster Isaac Williams of VFW Post 12046, along with U.S. Army Drill Sergeant and Airborne Challenge Coins, recognizing the professionalism and service these individuals provide to the Jackson County community.



REQUEST: Adoption of Resolution for the 2026 Local Mitigation Strategy Plan

The Board adopted a resolution approving the 2026 Jackson County Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS) Plan, completing the final step in a required five-year update process. The plan, which has been reviewed and approved by the Florida Division of Emergency Management, serves as a comprehensive framework for identifying and reducing the County’s vulnerability to natural, technological, and societal hazards. Developed through collaboration with the Jackson County Local Mitigation Strategy Working Group, the updated plan outlines prioritized projects and programs designed to strengthen community resilience and reduce the potential impacts of future disasters. Adoption of the plan allows Jackson County and its partners to pursue funding opportunities to implement mitigation initiatives that protect residents, infrastructure, and the local economy.



REQUEST: Approval of Agreements for Public Services for Ambulance Standby for Upcoming Events

The Board approved two agreements for ambulance standby services through Jackson County Fire Rescue to support upcoming events in Jackson County. Coverage will be provided for the Moto Cross event at Decker Training Facility, scheduled for March 13–15, 2026, and for the Big Dawg Rodeo at Circle D Ranch in Marianna, scheduled for April 17–18, 2026. These agreements ensure that trained emergency medical personnel and equipment will be on site during both events.



REQUEST: Approval of Ulyss Bridge Repair Certificate of Completion, Final Pay, and Closeout Documents

The Board approved the Certificate of Completion, final payment, and closeout documents for the Ulyss Bridge Repair Project (RB-2425-06). The project was funded through the Florida Department of Transportation’s Bridge Small County Outreach Program (BSCOP) and was awarded to Extreme Land Restoration. County staff confirmed that the contractor has completed all required work, the repairs have been inspected, and the project meets the

County's standards. With construction successfully finished, the project is now ready for final closeout.



REQUEST: Approval to Award 2526-06 Realtor Services

The Board approved the award of RFP 2526-06 for Realtor Services to Lauren Lyons of Chipola Realty. The County solicited proposals from qualified realtors within Jackson County to provide professional real estate services. While two realtors initially expressed interest, the County ultimately received one formal proposal. After reviewing the submission, staff recommended award based on the proposed pricing structure and the ability to provide the services needed. This agreement will allow the County to utilize professional real estate expertise as needed for property-related matters.



DISCUSSION: 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 Lafayette Street entrance. As previously reported, a certified arborist determined the tree's structural condition presented a potential safety concern due to its proximity to the building entrance, walkways, and adjacent roadway. The Board initially approved professional removal of the tree at its February 10, 2026 meeting, and at the February 24 meeting discussed options to commemorate the tree's historical presence on the courthouse grounds. At the March 10 meeting, Deputy County Administrator Rett Daniels informed the Board that a second arborist report had been received and also recommended removal of the tree, with a third arborist inspection expected prior to the next meeting.

The Board also discussed potential ways to commemorate the tree if removal is confirmed, including preserving the stump for a sculpture incorporating Lady Justice with the scales of justice along with elements proposed by the NAACP depicting Esop Bellamy planting an oak tree and the American flag. Another option discussed included installing a commemorative plaque and planting a new tree either in the same location or elsewhere on the courthouse grounds. No additional action was taken at this time, and the Board will revisit the matter after receiving the third arborist evaluation.



LEGEND:



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