






JACKSON COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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PRESS RELEASE

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May 12, 2026

Jackson County BOCC Meeting Highlights

Jackson County, FL. – On May 12, 2026, at 9:00 AM, the Jackson County Board of County Commissioners held a Regular and then a Special Meeting at 11:00 AM. This is a recap of some of the reports and requests included in those meetings.

REQUEST: Jackson County Lifts Countywide Burn Ban

The Board voted to **rescind the countywide burn ban** previously enacted on April 28, 2026.

The burn ban was originally implemented following recommendations from the Florida Forest Service and Jackson County Fire Rescue due to dry conditions and elevated wildfire risk throughout the area. Following recent rainfall and improved environmental conditions, officials determined that it was safe to lift the restrictions.

With the burn ban rescinded, outdoor burning activities may resume in accordance with Florida Forest Service regulations and any applicable local or state requirements.

County officials are reminding residents that safe and lawful burning practices remain extremely important. Property owners are encouraged to follow Florida Forest Service guidelines, monitor weather and wind conditions carefully, keep burns attended at all times, and take appropriate precautions to prevent wildfires and the spread of fire to neighboring properties.

Residents with questions regarding outdoor burning regulations, burn authorization requirements, or safe burning practices are encouraged to contact the Florida Forest Service Office in Bonifay at 850-373-1801.

Residents can continue monitoring official Jackson County communication channels for future updates regarding weather conditions, wildfire risk, and public safety notices.



CONTINUED 

REQUEST: Adoption of Proclamation for National Travel and Tourism Week



The Board adopted a proclamation recognizing May 3–9, 2026, as National Travel and Tourism Week in Jackson County, highlighting the significant role tourism plays in supporting the local and state economy. The proclamation recognized tourism as a major economic driver that supports jobs, local businesses, and essential public services throughout the community.

The proclamation also noted the continued growth of tourism in Jackson County, which generated nearly \$223 million in visitor spending in 2024, supported more than 2,500 local jobs, and produced approximately \$42 million in tax revenue. The Board emphasized the importance of continued tourism promotion and community partnerships in sustaining economic growth and showcasing Jackson County as a destination for visitors from across the region and beyond.



REQUEST: Review and Selection of New Members for the 2026 AHAC Committee

The Board reviewed applicants for the current vacancies on the 2026 Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC), an important component of the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) program. The AHAC brings together representatives from a variety of housing, business, planning, and community service sectors to help evaluate local housing needs and provide recommendations related to affordable housing initiatives in Jackson County. Originally, eight applications were received for the four vacancies, with one applicant withdrawing prior to the Board meeting. During the meeting, several applicants addressed the Board to express their interest in serving and to highlight their experience related to affordable housing and community development, including Elizabeth Winskey, Kevin Sura, Danielle Newsome, and Charlene Trickey-Durham.

Following discussion, the Board voted to table selection of applicants for the four AHAC vacancies until the May 26, 2026 meeting at 6:00 p.m. to allow additional time to review the current applicant pool and extend an invitation to Jackson County municipality leaders and representatives to submit interested applicants prior to the next meeting in an effort to encourage representation from communities across the county. Commissioner Donofro (District 3) and Commissioner Crutchfield (District 2) voted against tabling the item, expressing that the vacancies had been properly advertised through multiple outlets in accordance with policy and noting that a strong applicant pool had already been received, including applicants who took the initiative to address the Board during the meeting.



REQUEST: Reappointment of District 1 and At-Large Planning Commissioners

The Board approved the reappointments of Leontyne Clay as the District 1 Planning Commissioner and Harrold Hatcher as the At-Large Planning Commissioner for additional three-year terms beginning April 1, 2026, through March 31, 2029. Both commissioners expressed their willingness to continue serving, and the Planning Commission recommended their reappointments in recognition of their continued involvement and contributions. Clay and Hatcher were originally appointed to their first terms in March 2023.



REQUEST: Approval to Set a Public Hearing for the Towers LLC Telecommunications Tower Facility

The Board approved a request to schedule a public hearing on May 26, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. to consider the proposed construction of a 255-foot wireless telecommunications facility with a 10-foot lightning rod on property leased from the Quinton and Janette Anglin Revocable Trust. The proposed tower would be located on the west side of Sylvania Plantation Road, approximately 0.55 miles northwest of the intersection of Sylvania Plantation Road and Fort Road in unincorporated Jackson County.

The Planning Commission reviewed the request on May 4, 2026, and recommended approval, advancing the item to the Board for formal consideration during the upcoming public hearing.



REQUEST: Approval of MOU between West Jackson County Development Authority, City of Graceville, and Fast, a Florida Company

The Board approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the West Jackson County Development Authority (WJCDA), the City of Graceville, and Project Fast, a Florida company, in support of ongoing economic development efforts in West Jackson County. The agreement is intended to assist with recruitment efforts aimed at encouraging new business investment, job creation, and the construction of a new facility in Graceville.

As part of the action, the Board, serving in its capacity as the WJCDA Board, authorized the use of available reserve funds that were originally established to promote economic development within the West Florida Electric service territory. The partnership reflects continued collaboration among local governments and economic development organizations to support growth and investment opportunities within the region.



UPDATE: Notification – Jackson County Correctional Facilities Visitation Changes

The Board was notified that the Jackson County Correctional Facility will transition from in-person visitation to video visitation beginning June 1, 2026. Under the updated policy, inmates will receive two free phone calls and one free video visit per week through IC Solutions.

According to information provided by the Correctional Facility, the change is intended to help reduce the introduction of illegal drugs and contraband into the facility and enhance safety for inmates and staff. Facility staff noted that several surrounding counties have implemented similar video-only visitation systems, including Walton County, Franklin County, Okaloosa County, Santa Rosa County, Wakulla County, Gadsden County, Jefferson County, Bay County, Taylor County, and Dixie County as part of broader efforts to address contraband and safety concerns within correctional environments.



REQUEST: Approval of Evaluation Criteria and Ranking Committee for 2526-19-Land Surveying Services

The Board approved the evaluation criteria and ranking committee for RFP 2526-19 – Land Surveying Services, as the County prepares for the expiration of the current surveying services contract in July 2026. The approved ranking committee includes Deputy County Administrator Rett Daniels, Community Development Director Kim Cole Sweazy, and Road and Bridge Assistant Director Tim Perry.

The Board also approved the weighted evaluation criteria that will be used to review proposals, focusing on firm qualifications, professional personnel, client references, and experience with similar projects. In accordance with the Consultants’ Competitive Negotiation Act (CCNA), price will not be used as an evaluation factor, and negotiations will occur with the top-ranked proposer. This process helps ensure the County selects qualified professional services providers to support future infrastructure and development projects.



REQUEST: Review of Road Swap Between County and City of Marianna

The Board voted to table consideration of an interlocal agreement between Jackson County and the City of Marianna regarding the exchange of ownership of certain roadway segments, with Commissioner Donofro (District 3) and Commissioner Crutchfield (District 2) opposed to tabling the item. Under the proposed agreement, the City would assume ownership of Old Cottondale Road from Penn Avenue west to the City limits, while the County would assume ownership of Milton Avenue from the “Y” intersection at Harrison and Milton south to Old Cottondale Road.

According to the City of Marianna, the proposed roadway swap would support planned sidewalk improvements intended to enhance pedestrian connectivity in the area, including connections

to existing sidewalks and improved access for foot traffic near Gibbs Village. The item is expected to be brought back before the Board at the May 26, 2026 regular meeting at 6:00 p.m.



DISCUSSION: Moratorium on Data Center Developments in Jackson County

The Board discussed the potential need for future regulations related to data center development in Jackson County, including consideration of how the County could proactively address future proposals and establish local standards intended to protect surrounding property owners and community interests. Discussion included the possibility of implementing a temporary moratorium on certain developments while local regulations and policies are evaluated.

Following discussion and recommendations from legal counsel, the Board voted to table the item and any action related to a moratorium until after July 1, 2026, pending implementation and review of recently approved state legislation addressing regulations for artificial intelligence (AI) hyperscale data centers in Florida. The recently signed legislation includes provisions related to utility ratepayer protections and environmental considerations.



REQUEST: Approval of Museum Business Plan and Immediate Short-Term Goals

During a special meeting, the Board discussed the Jackson County Museum and Dozier Memorial Park Business Plan and the proposed immediate short-term goals presented by TDC Executive Director Kelsi Jackson. The plan outlines a phased vision for preserving and sharing the history of the former Dozier School property and the broader history of Jackson County through the development of a museum, memorial park, walking trails, exhibits, and educational spaces intended to encourage reflection, learning, and community engagement. Members of the Museum Steering Committee and Tourist Development Council Board also addressed the Board during the discussion.

Following discussion, the Board voted to table approval of the business plan until the May 26, 2026 meeting at 6:00 p.m. to allow additional time for further review of the plan and consideration of any additional changes or recommendations prior to final submittal.



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