Official Minutes of
MARION COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

May 5, 2026

CALL TO ORDER:
The Marion County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) met in regular session in Commission Chambers at 9:01 a.m. on Tuesday May 5, 2026, at the Marion County Governmental Complex located in Ocala, Florida.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:
The meeting opened with invocation by Commissioner Curry and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of our Country.

9:00 AM ROLL CALL:
Upon roll call the following members were present: Vice-Chairman Matthew McClain, District 3; Commissioner Craig Curry, District 1; Commissioner Kathy Bryant, District 2; and Commissioner Michelle Stone, District 5. Chairman Carl Zalak, III, District 4, was absent due to a prior commitment. Also present were Clerk Gregory C. Harrell, County Attorney Matthew G. Minter, County Administrator Mounir Bouyounes, Assistant County Administrator (ACA) Angel Roussel, ACA Tracy Straub, and ACA Amanda Tart.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:
Chairman McClain addressed upcoming scheduled meetings as listed on the Commission Calendar (Item 13.2.1).

1. PROCLAMATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS:
Upon motion of Commissioner Stone, seconded by Commissioner Bryant, the BCC approved and/or ratified the following:
Chairman McClain advised that the Board is going to move up Agenda Item 1.3 and present that Proclamation at this time.

1.3. PROCLAMATION - Problem Solving Court Month - Crystal Watkins, Drug Court Manager, Fifth Judicial Circuit (Approval and Presentation)
The Board presented the Proclamation designating the month of May 2026 as “Problem Solving Court Month” to Crystal Watkins, Drug Court Manager, Fifth Judicial Circuit; Administrative Judge Steven G. Rogers, Fifth Judicial Circuit; Circuit Judge Lisa Herndon, Fifth Judicial Circuit; and several other representatives.
Administrative Judge Steven G. Rogers, Fifth Judicial Circuit, expressed his appreciation to the BCC for its support of the court system in general, especially for its support of the problem solving courts. He advised that he runs the Felony Prison Diversion Court; Judge Herndon runs the Veterans Treatment Court; Judge Landt runs the Pretrial Diversion Drug Court and the Misdemeanor Court; Judge Cotton runs the DUI Court and Juvenile Drug Court; and Magistrate Joshua Soileau, Marion County Court Administration, provides a program for Juvenile Family Treatment Court. Judge Rogers stated it was the other people present today who do the heavy lifting and the day-to-day operations. He advised that these treatment courts take that extra step and by addressing “the why”, noting if we can address that issue, there will be fewer people coming in front of them. Judge Rogers advised that if a citizen ever wants to see something special, come and

watch one of these program graduations, noting when moms and other family members come to see their children graduate from a drug court program, there are always tears of joy.
Commissioner Bryant opined that one of the things State and local governments need to do collectively, is to work harder on ensuring that there are resources available for those with mental health disorders because that is a lot of the root of the problem.

1.1. PRESENTATION - Fiscal Year 2024-25 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report - Timothy Westgate, CPA, Audit Partner, Purvis Gray & Company (Presentation Only)
Finance Director Jennifer Cole, Clerk of Court, presented the following recommendation:

> Description/Background: Presentation of the FY 2024-25 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) by the External Auditors.
> The ACFR can be found at the following website:
> https://www.marioncountyclerk.org/departments/finance/annual-comprehensive-financial-report/
> Budget/Impact: None.
> Recommended Action: Presentation only.

Timothy Westgate, CPA, Audit Partner, Purvis Gray & Company, introduced Director Allison Stone and Audit Manager Margaret Ann McGuire, Purvis Gray & Company, who oversees the individual audits with the Constitutional Officers.
Mr. Westgate provided a brief overview of the complete audit process for the fiscal year (FY) September 30, 2025. The audits meet the reporting requirements for external audits under Florida Statutes (FS), Rules of the Florida Auditor General, Secondary Bond Market, State Loan Program requirements, as well as Grant audit requirements under Federal and State single audits. He stated the ACFR is submitted to the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) for the certificate of excellence in financial reporting. This is a voluntary program with expanded disclosure and information, to go above and beyond the minimum requirements and provides for an extra level of transparency. Mr. Westgate noted last year, as in previous years, the County received this award and is expected to receive it again this year.
Mr. Westgate advised that detailed exit conferences were held with each of the Constitutional Officers, Chairman Zalak, Clerk Harrell, County Administrator Bouyounes, and other members of Clerk and BCC Finance Departments. He stated an unmodified opinion was issued, which is the highest level of assurance on an audit. There were no material weaknesses or significant deficiencies identified, nor any noncompliance matters that would have a material impact on the Financial Statement. Mr. Westgate thanked each of those that met with them and cooperated throughout the audit process.
Clerk Harrell expressed his appreciation to Mr. Westgate and the rest of the team from Purvis Gray & Company, noting they are wonderful stewards of the process.

1.2. PRESENTATION - Fiscal Year 2023-24 Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting, Fiscal Year 2023-24 Award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting, and Fiscal Year 2025-26 Distinguished Budget Presentation Awarded to the Marion County Clerk of Court and Comptroller's Office - Gregory C. Harrell, Clerk of Court and Comptroller (Presentation Only)
Katie Hunnicutt, Chief of Staff, Clerk of Court, presented the following recommendation:

> Description/Background: Presentation of FY 2023-24 Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting, FY 2023-24 Award for Outstanding

Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting, and FY 2025-26 Distinguished Budget Presentation Awarded to the Marion County Clerk of Court and Comptroller's Office.
Budget/Impact: None.
Recommended Action: Presentation only.

Clerk Harrell stated he was pleased to report that for the second year running the County has obtained what staff call the Triple Crown of financial reporting. Some of these documents look backwards and some look forwards. He advised that GFOA has presented the Clerk's Finance Department with the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for its Annual Comprehensive Financial Reports (ACFR) for FY 2023-24, as well as the FY 2023-24 Award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting (PAFR). Clerk Harrell advised that the Budget Department was awarded the GFOAs Distinguished Fiscal Year 2025-26 Budget Presentation Award, so this is truly a triple crown event. He advised that each of these documents are available on the Clerk's Office website at www.marioncountyclerk.org. Clerk Harrell expressed his appreciation to the BCC and County staff for their good partnerships.

1.4. PROCLAMATION - Motorcycle Safety Month - Greg Smale, President, American Bikers Aiming Towards Education "ABATE" (Approval and Presentation)

The Board presented the Proclamation designating the month of May 2026 as "Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month" to President Greg Smale, American Bikers Aiming Towards Education (ABATE).

President Greg Smale, ABATE, expressed his appreciation to the BCC and the State of Florida for recognizing the need for motorcycle safety awareness. He advised that May is motorcycle safety and awareness month where the whole thing behind this is to make people aware to "look twice, save a life". Mr. Smale commented on the importance of being vigilant of what is on the road and the many vulnerable road users. That includes people on motorcycles, pedestrians, mothers pushing baby carriages, etc. He addressed the need to ensure that objects do not block your vision, noting there are a lot of blind spots in cars, so it is always best to look, turn your head, bob and weave, etc., to ensure you are not going to hit something you do not want to hit. Mr. Smale noted life is precious, and everyone wants to live another day.

1.5. PROCLAMATION - Anthony's 150th Anniversary - Bertha Flynn, President, Anthony Historical Society (Approval and Presentation)

The Board presented the Proclamation designating the month of May 2026 as "Anthony's 150th Anniversary" to President Bertha Flynn, Anthony Historical Society, and several other members of the Anthony community.

Commissioner Curry advised that it is always fun to learn a little bit about the communities within Marion County, noting the Town of Anthony is certainly one of those and the community is celebrating their 150th anniversary.

President Bertha Flynn, Anthony Historical Society, advised that the community of Anthony, Florida, was founded in 1876 following the purchase of land by Edwin C Anthony from Jacob Leitner, who was her great, great, grandfather. The property originated from the United States (US) Land Grant from the State of Florida. She invited everyone to come out to Anthony next Saturday, May 16th to enjoy the music, the good food and all the vendors that are coming out to show their wares.

Commissioner Stone advised that she would also like to recognize Ms. Flynn, for her service on the Marion County Historical Commission, noting she works tirelessly on behalf of Anthony, but also for the citizens of Marion County.

1.6. PROCLAMATION - National Travel and Tourism Week - Loretta Shaffer, Director, Tourist Development (Approval and Presentation)
The Board presented the Proclamation designating the week of May 3 through 9, 2026, as “National Travel and Tourism Week” to Tourist Development Director Loretta Shaffer and several representatives.
Tourist Development Director Loretta Shaffer opined that Travel and Tourism Week is a wonderful time to celebrate the successes of Marion County, noting the great work could not be done without the support of the BCC, County Administration, and the Constitutional Officers who ensure the fiduciary responsibility that comes with tourism funds brought into the community.

1.7. PRESENTATION - Employee Appreciation Month and Ideal Team Players 2026 - Bobbi Perez, Human Resources Director (Presentation Only)
Human Resources (HR) Director Bobbi Perez presented the following recommendation:

> Description/Background: Every year since 2018, the County has held an annual Employee Appreciation Day and since 2021, an Employee Appreciation Month to celebrate the hard work county employees do every day.
> As part of the Annual Employee Appreciation celebration, the County awards a selection of county employees and one (1) director as prestigious Ideal Team Players. This award is given to those who encompass the virtues of humble, hungry, and smart in the workplace. An Ideal Team Player is someone who goes beyond the call of duty, puts the team’s interest above their own, and is willing to hold themselves accountable for results and improvement within the organization. During April, we awarded four (4) Ideal Team Player employees and today we will award one (1) Ideal Team Player director. These award winners are here today to be presented to the Board along with a summary of the overall Employee Appreciation Month event.
> Budget/Impact: None.
> Recommended Action: For presentation only.

HR Director Bobbi Perez commented on the events held over the past month, from special discounts and complimentary movies at the Marion Theatre to after-hours events where team members took the stage for karaoke and tested their knowledge during Trivia with Executive Director of Internal Services Mike McCain, along with traditions like the annual Easter Egg hunt. The month provided meaningful opportunities to celebrate and recognize the people who make the organization strong.
Ms. Perez advised that as the County reflects on this past month, she would like to share a short video of these amazing moments that staff had throughout the month. She advised that as everyone can see from the video, in addition to Donut days and food trucks, staff also hosted a successful spirit week that brought energy and fun across the organization, culminating in the Sea of Red, White and Blue as employees showed their pride in honors. Ms. Perez noted this year's theme of Red, White and You and the America 250 milestone. Behind all these moments are more than 1,800 dedicated employees who show up every day serving the community with professionalism, pride and commitment day in and day out. She stated they are the reason the County continues to thrive, and this month is just

one small way to say thank you for the incredible work they do. Ms. Perez expressed her appreciation to the entire HR Department and Kerry Blood for making sure this went off without a hitch.She noted she would be remiss if she did not extend her sincerest thanks to Commissioners for their continued support of Employee Appreciation Month and for the role they play in recognizing County employees in meaningful ways, not just in April, but all year long.
ACA Amanda Tart stated a big part of the month long employee appreciation celebration is the recognition of the County's Ideal Team players. Each year, Ideal Team players are nominated across the organization based on the core principles of being humble, hungry, and smart. These individuals consistently demonstrate strong character and a drive to contribute and a high level of emotional intelligence and how well they work with others.
Ms. Tart advised that the 2026 Director of the Year is a Florida native whose roots run deep in this community, roots that have grown alongside the community her Department serves. For over three decades, this employee has led a Department that quietly and consistently changes lives. Since 1993, this employee has guided the Marion County Public Library system with vision, humility, and an unwavering belief in the power of lifelong learning. What began as a professional path quickly became something more. A mission to build a place where knowledge is accessible, community is strengthened, and every person feels welcome. This Director speaks often of her team, the talented, friendly and deeply committed individuals who show up every day to make a difference, and her leadership is not about standing at the front, but about standing beside them. This Director builds people up and creates space for ideas and fosters a culture where service is not just expected, it is lived. She advised that this employees' impact can be seen across the County just this year, from taking on the 211 program to ensure that residents can find help when they need it the most; to championing the Freedom Library expansion; to supporting the Veterans History Project "One Nation Many Stories" helping give a voice to those who have served; to the upcoming opening of the Silver Spring Shores Library, expanding opportunity and access for an entire community. Each initiative reflects something deeper, a commitment to people. Ms. Tart introduced Library Director Julie Seig, as the 2026 Director of the Year.
Ms. Seig expressed her appreciation to the BCC, her family and her work team.
Ms. Tart introduced the 4 Ideal Team Players from other County Departments: Courtney Fletcher, Parks and Recreation; Stephanie Owens, Animal Services; Dallas Homan, Community Services; and Randy Torrance, Marion County Solid Waste.

1.8. PROCLAMATION - Building Safety Month (Approval Only)
The Board approved the Proclamation designating the month of May 2026 as "Building Safety Month".

1.9. PROCLAMATION - Eagle Scout Court of Honor - Daniel Mercado (Approval Only)
The Board approved the Proclamation congratulating Daniel Mercado upon attaining the status of Eagle Scout in the Boy Scouts of America organization.

2. AGENDA ITEM PUBLIC COMMENTS:
Reserved for comments related to items specifically listed on this agenda. Scheduled requests will be heard first and limited to five (5) minutes. Unscheduled requests will be limited to two (2) minutes. Citizens may contact Marion County Administration by 5:00

p.m. the Friday before the meeting at 352-438-2300 to request to speak or submit the request online at: www.marionfl.org.
Chairman McClain opened the floor to public comment.
There being none, Chairman McClain advised that public comment is now closed.

3. ADOPT THE FOLLOWING MINUTES: (3 Sets)
3.1. January 6, 2026
3.2. January 20, 2026
3.3. January 26, 2026
A motion was made by Commissioner Bryant, seconded by Commissioner Curry, to adopt the meeting minutes of January 6, 20 and 26, 2026. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board (4-0).

4. CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS AND GOVERNMENTAL OR OUTSIDE AGENCIES:
4.1. Request Approval to Renew Agreement Between the Fifth Judicial Circuit Court and Marion County Board of County Commissioners to Provide Funding for a Court Program Specialist I in Post Adjudication Expansion Drug Court (26-27-02) (Budget Impact - Neutral; expenditure of $102,295.89)
The Board considered the following recommendation as presented by Chief Deputy Trial Court Administrator Terry Rogers, Court Administration:

> Description/Background: Fifth Judicial Circuit Court is requesting approval to renew an agreement with the Marion County Board of County Commissioners to provide funding for a Court Program Specialist I Fulltime Employee in Post Adjudication Expansion Drug Court (26-27-02). The current agreement expires on June 30, 2026, and is being renewed. The court will reimburse the County for this position upon receipt of invoices submitted to the Court's contract manager.
> Budget/Impact: Neutral; expenditure of $82,295.89, in Salaries and Benefits, as well as $20,000, in Operating expenses, which will be reimbursed.
> Recommended Action: Motion to approve and authorize the Chairman to execute the agreement between the Fifth Judicial Circuit Court and Marion County Board of County Commissioners to provide funding for a Court Program Specialist I in Post Adjudication Expansion Drug Court (26-27-02).

A motion was made by Commissioner Stone, seconded by Commissioner Curry, to approve and authorize the Chairman to execute the Agreement between the Fifth Judicial Circuit Court and Marion County Board of County Commissioners to provide funding for a Court Program Specialist I in Post Adjudication Expansion Drug Court (26-27-02). The motion was unanimously approved by the Board (4-0).

4.2. Request Approval to Renew Agreement Between the Fifth Judicial Circuit Court and Marion County Board of County Commissioners to Provide Funding for a Court Program Specialist I in Veterans Treatment Court (26-27-03) (Budget Impact - Neutral; expenditure of $101,331.89)
The Board considered the following recommendation as presented by Chief Deputy Trial Court Administrator Rogers, Court Administration:

> Description/Background: Fifth Judicial Circuit Court is requesting approval to enter into an agreement with the Marion County Board of County Commissioners to provide funding for a Court Program Specialist I Fulltime Employee in Veterans Treatment Court (26-27-03). The current agreement expires on June 30, 2026, and

is being renewed. The Court will reimburse the County for this position upon receipt of invoices submitted to the Court's Contract Manager.

Budget/Impact: Neutral; expenditure of $81,331.89, in Salaries and Benefits, as well as $20,000, in Operating expenses, which will be reimbursed.

Recommended Action: Motion to approve and authorize the Chairman to execute the agreement between the Fifth Judicial Circuit Court and Marion County Board of County Commissioners to provide funding for a Court Program Specialist I in Veterans Treatment Court (26-27-03).

A motion was made by Commissioner Stone, seconded by Commissioner Curry, to approve and authorize the Chairman to execute the agreement between the Fifth Judicial Circuit Court and Marion County Board of County Commissioners to provide funding for a Court Program Specialist I in Veterans Treatment Court (26-27-03). The motion was unanimously approved by the Board (4-0).

5. CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT:

Upon motion of Commissioner Stone, seconded by Commissioner Curry, the Board adopted the following Budget Amendment Resolutions transferring funds as presented by Clerk Harrell:

5.1. Budget Amendment

5.1.1. 26-R-110 - County Transportation Maintenance Fund - Multiple Departments - $200,000

5.1.2. 26-R-111 - Fine and Forfeiture Fund - State Attorney Technology - $115,700

5.1.3. 26-R-112 - Insurance Fund - Insurance - $944,947

5.1.4. 26-R-113 - Public Improvement Transportation Capital Projects Fund – Public Improvement Transportation Capital - $145,033

5.1.5. 26-R-114 - Solid Waste Disposal Fund - Solid Waste Disposal - $65,000

5.1.6. 26-R-115 - Solid Waste Disposal Fund - Solid Waste Disposal - $183,000

5.1.7. 26-R-116 - Solid Waste Disposal Fund - Solid Waste Recycling - $28,500

5.1.8. 26-R-117 - Stormwater Fund - Stormwater Program - $210,000

5.2. Clerk of the Court Items

5.2.1. Present the Acquisition or Disposition of Property Forms Authorizing Changes in Status, as Follows: 050667, 052188, 140750D and IT Disposition List

A motion was made by Commissioner Bryant, seconded by Commissioner Curry, to approve the disposition of property forms 050667, 052188, 140750D and IT Disposition List. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board (4-0).

7. CONSENT:

Chairman McClain advised that Item 7.7.1 is being pulled by the County Administrator and would be brought back for Board consideration at a later date. It was the general consensus of the Board to concur.

A motion to approve the Consent Agenda is a motion to approve all recommended actions. All matters on the Consent Agenda are considered routine and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion unless desired by a Commissioner.

Upon motion of Commissioner Stone, seconded by Commissioner Curry, the Board acted on the Consent Agenda as follows:

7.1. Attorney:

7.1.1. Request Board Authorization for County Attorney and County Engineer to Proceed with the Acquisition of Certain Property Interests from Ivan Portal and Annia Gutierrez, or their Successors in Interest, for the SW/NW 80th/70th Avenue Road Construction Project, Within the Purchase Price and Other Parameters Described Herein (Budget Impact - Neutral; expenditure of $38,274.75)

The Board accepted the following recommendation as presented by County Attorney Mathew G. Minter, Legal:

Description/Background: Marion County is currently constructing the SW/NW 80th/70th Avenue Road Construction Project. Acquisition of certain real property interests owned by Ivan Portal and Annia Gutierrez is necessary to complete the project as designed. Mr. Portal and Ms. Gutierrez own a parcel directly east of NW 80th Avenue. The approved roadway alignment necessitates the proposed acquisitions, which include a 0.007-acre "corner clip" taking of the northwest corner of the property, in order to construct the connection of NW 80th Avenue and NW 10th Street, and a 0.019-acre temporary construction easement to facilitate the contractor's activities on NW 80th Avenue. Following extensive negotiations and the filing of a Petition in Eminent Domain, the parties have reached an agreement on the essential terms of a negotiated settlement, which is being presented for the Court's approval via a Stipulated Order of Taking and Final Judgment ("Stipulated OT"). The proposed Stipulated OT provides for the acquisition of the necessary property interests to allow construction to proceed. Staff respectfully requests Board approval of the proposed Stipulated OT, based on the agreed-upon essential terms, and authorization for the County Attorney and County Engineer to finalize and execute the Joint Motion for Entry of the Stipulated OT and any related ancillary documents consistent with those terms that are necessary to complete the acquisitions. Approval of these settlement terms will facilitate the timely completion of the roadway project.

Compensation and Expenses: The most important part of the settlement provides for payment of the constitutional measure of "full compensation" to the property owner for all interests for $18,000.00, including any claims for severance damages or consequential damages. In addition to that, the County will be required to pay the owner's stipulated attorney fees of $15,906.00 and costs of $4,368.75, for a total cost to the County of $38,274.75. Payment of these amounts is subject to the Court's execution of a proposed Stipulated Order of Taking and Final Judgment.

This will provide for the acquisition of what has been described in the eminent domain proceedings as Parcel 22 for the fee simple right-of-way and a temporary construction easement. Descriptions of the acquisition parcel is attached to the proposed Stipulated Order of Taking and Final Judgment.

Budget/Impact: Expenditure of $38,274.75, payable from account #STC073804 CIP TRANSP NEWINF ROW 738 VJ738541 561301.

Recommended Action: Motion to approve the proposed Stipulated Order of Taking and Final Judgment to be finalized by the County Attorney and the County Engineer, incorporating the terms described above.

7.2. Community Services:

7.2.1. Request Approval of Second Amendment to the Marion County Standard Professional Service Agreement Acquisition and Rehabilitation of Rental Housing Project with S & A Allen SR 200, LLC (Budget Impact - None)

The Board accepted the following recommendation as presented by Community Services Director Cheryl Butler:

Description/Background: On June 18, 2024, the Board approved an agreement with S & A Allen SR 200, LLC in the amount of $1,200,000 to acquire and rehabilitate eight (8) rental units located at 3220 SW 26th Street, Ocala, FL 34474. This amendment seeks to modify the original agreement by extending the expiration date to August 31, 2026. This extension is necessary due to unforeseen delays regarding tenant's ability to vacate units and construction delays.

All other terms and conditions of the original agreement remain in effect, including S & A Allen SR 200, LLC's obligation to rehabilitate each unit to satisfy required repairs, maintain affordability guidelines, and meet income eligibility requirements.

Budget/Impact: None.

Recommended Action: Motion to approve and authorize the Chairman and Clerk to execute all necessary documentation associated with this agreement with S & A Allen SR 200, LLC and authorize the Community Services Director to extend the term of the agreement if necessary.

7.3. Fire Rescue:

7.3.1. Request Approval of the Interlocal Agreement between Marion County, Florida and the District Board of Trustees of the College of Central Florida (Budget Impact - None)

The Board accepted the following recommendation as presented by Fire Chief James Banta, Marion County Fire Rescue (MCFR):

Description/Background: This agreement continues a partnership between Marion County and the College of Central Florida to provide professional training for Marion County Fire Rescue (MCFR) firefighters. Under this arrangement, the College supplies the expert instructors and curriculum, while MCFR provides the necessary facilities, vehicles, and equipment. This contract ensures that firefighters continue to receive instruction in firefighting, emergency medical services, and fire prevention. This is a renewal that will be effective until September 30, 2026.

Budget/Impact: None.

recommended action: Motion to approve the Interlocal Agreement between Marion County, Florida and the District Board of Trustees of the College of Central Florida.

7.4. Human Resources:

7.4.1. Request Approval of the Reclassification of Three RLE Maintenance Tech Equipment Operator Positions, Pay Grade 103 Non-Exempt, to Three RLE Maintenance Tech Equipment Operator Positions, Pay Grade 103-105 Non-Exempt, within the Budget of Contracted Road Construction RLE MSTU HC505541 (Budget Impact - None)

The Board accepted the following recommendation to adopt Resolution 26-R-118 as presented by HR Director Perez:

Description/Background: Requesting correction of the pay grade structure for the RLE Maintenance Tech Equipment Operator position to reflect the intended matrix of 103-105, which was not accurately captured following the Evergreen implementation. This adjustment aligns the position with the originally approved structure and supports training progression and succession planning.

Budget/Impact: None.

Recommended Action: Motion to approve the reclassification of three (3) RLE Maintenance Tech Equipment Operator positions, pay grade 103 non-exempt, to three (3) RLE Maintenance Tech Equipment Operator positions, pay grade 103-105 non-exempt, within the budget of Contracted Road Construction RLE MSTU HC505541.

Resolution 26-R-118 is entitled:

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MARION COUNTY, FLORIDA, PROVIDING FOR THE RECLASSIFICATION OF THREE (3) RLE MAINTENANCE TECH EQUIPMENT OPERATOR POSITIONS, PAY GRADE 103 NON-EXEMPT, TO THREE (3) RLE MAINTENANCE TECH EQUIPMENT OPERATOR POSITIONS, PAY GRADE 103-105 NON-EXEMPT, WITHIN THE BUDGET OF CONTRACTED ROAD CONSTRUCTION RLE MSTU HC505541, ALONG WITH THE CORRESPONDING JOB DESCRIPTION AND PAY GRADE AND INCORPORATING THE FOREGOING ACTIONS INTO THE MARION COUNTY CLASSIFICATION PLAN.

(Ed. Note: MSTU is the acronym for Municipal Service Taxing Units and RLE is the acronym for Rainbow Lakes Estates.)

7.5. Procurement Services:

7.5.1. Request Approval of Bid Award: 26B-059 SE 113th Street Road Resurfacing Project - Art Walker Construction, Inc., Ocala, FL (Budget Impact - Neutral; expenditure of $974,113)

The Board accepted the following recommendation as presented by Procurement Services Director Susan Olsen:

Description/Background: On behalf of the Office of the County Engineer, Procurement advertised a bid for resurfacing SE 113th Street Road (from Bay Road to Fisher Road). The work includes pavement resurfacing, construction of side street and driveway aprons, shoulder sodding, restriping of pavement markings, and widening of pavement shoulders in curved areas. A total of four (4) submittals were received in response to the solicitation, and the bid tabulation is provided below:

Firm - Location	Bid Total
Art Walker Construction, Inc. - Ocala, FL	$ 974,113.00
Anderson Columbia Co., Inc. - Ocala, FL	$1,020,665.76
C W Roberts Contracting, Inc. - Ocala, FL	$1,128,393.34
Superior Asphalt, Inc. - Oneco, FL	$1,215,001.00

Steven Cohoon, PE, County Engineer, recommends that Art Walker Construction, Inc., receive the award as the lowest, most responsive, and most responsible bidder.

Attached for review is a draft of the contract. Upon approval at today's meeting, it will be sent to Art Walker Construction, Inc., for signatures, and upon return, will be forwarded to the Clerk and Chairman for signatures.

Budget/Impact: Neutral; expenditure of $974,113.00. Up to ten percent (10%) contingency will be added to the purchase order in accordance with the

Procurement Manual. Funding is from VJ738541-563220-STC073884 (Infrastructure Surtax Capital Project Fund).
Recommended Action: Motion to approve the recommendation and allow staff to issue a contract, and upon approval by Legal, authorize the Clerk and Chairman to execute the contract with Art Walker Construction, Inc., under 26B-059.

7.5.2. Request Approval of Bid Exemption: 26BE-087 Long-Term Gopher Tortoise Recipient Site - Atlantic Ecological Services, St. Augustine, FL (Budget Impact - Neutral; expenditure of $312,500)
The Board accepted the following recommendation as presented by Procurement Services Director Olsen:
Description/Background: On behalf of Marion County Parks & Recreation, Procurement Services is requesting a bid exemption to authorize Atlantic Ecological Services to provide recipient site services for the relocation of up to 69 gopher tortoises in support of the Taxiway A project.
Relocation of the tortoises is required to facilitate construction. While Hoyle Tanner's design scope included environmental services for identification, it did not include the cost for a permitted recipient site, and this gap was not identified prior to solicitation and award of construction. A permitted recipient site is required under regulatory guidelines, and relocation cannot occur without it.
To maintain compliance and avoid impacts to the project schedule, Atlantic Ecological Services was engaged to provide recipient site services. Multiple sites were evaluated, and Atlantic Ecological Services was determined to be the only option with sufficient capacity to meet project needs.
This project is grant-funded through the Federal Aviation Administration (90%) and Federal Department of Transportation (8%), and these services are eligible within the overall funding structure.
Attached for review and approval is the solicitation waiver. Upon approval at today's meeting, the waiver will be presented to the Chairman for signatures. Payment requests associated with the permitted relocation services will be processed in accordance with the services provided.
Budget/Impact: Neutral; expenditure of $312,500. Funding comes from BQ415542-563102 (Marion County Airport Fund).
Recommended Action: Motion to approve the bid exemption and allow staff to process payment requests, and upon approval, authorize the Chairman to execute the solicitation waiver under 26BE-087.

7.5.3. Request Approval of Contract: 26C-082 Evaluation of Leachate Treatment Options for Marion County Baseline Landfill – University of Florida Herbert Wertheim College of Engineering, Gainesville, FL (Budget Impact - Neutral; expenditure of $126,000)
The Board accepted the following recommendation as presented by Procurement Services Director Olsen:
Description/Background: On behalf of Marion County Solid Waste, Procurement requests approval of a 12-month research agreement with the University of Florida, Herbert Wertheim College of Engineering, Sustainable Materials Management Research Laboratory, to evaluate leachate treatment and volume-reduction options for the Marion County Baseline Landfill.

The project will evaluate and compare existing and emerging leachate treatment technologies to identify a cost-effective and operationally feasible solution for the County. The study will also develop a recommended treatment train, evaluate residual and concentrate management options, and consider regulatory requirements and emerging contaminants, such as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances and perfluorooctanoic acid.

Additional scope includes technical support for regulatory and agency coordination as needed, along with limited County-directed research on other solid waste priorities, including innovative landfill practices, recycling technologies, yard waste, and used tire management.

Because University of Florida is a public entity, the proposed agreement qualifies for an exemption under Marion County Code Section 2-235. Accordingly, the County may proceed with issuing the contract in compliance with the ordinance without a formal solicitation process.

Attached for review is the proposed agreement. Upon approval at today's meeting, the agreement will be forwarded to Legal, the Clerk, and the Chairman for execution.

Budget/Impact: Neutral; expenditure of $126,000. Funding comes from ZA423534-531109 (Solid Waste Disposal Fund).

Recommended Action: Motion to approve allow staff to issue a contract and upon approval from Legal, authorize the Clerk, and Chairman to execute the contract under 26C-082.

7.5.4. Request Approval of Contract Amendment: 25B-048-CA-01 Scrap Metal Recycling Services - Trademark Metal Recycling, LLC, Tampa, FL (Budget Impact - Revenue; estimated additional $50,000 annually)

The Board accepted the following recommendation as presented by Procurement Services Director Olsen:

Description/Background: On March 5, 2025, the Board approved a contract with Trademark Metal Recycling, LLC to purchase scrap metal collected at the recycling centers and the Baseline Landfill. On behalf of Solid Waste, Procurement is requesting approval of an amendment to the existing agreement to add aluminum wheels and chrome wheels as accepted commodities under the master contract. This modification establishes pricing for these materials based on the London Metal Exchange (LME) Cash price per pound on the date of delivery, less a per-pound differential for each material type. The amendment also requires that aluminum and chrome wheels be separated by material type and be free of lead wheel weights and valve stems prior to delivery, with the County responsible for removal of these items. All other terms and conditions of the original agreement remain in full force and effect.

Budget/Impact: Revenue; estimated additional $50,000, bringing the estimated annual revenue to $700,000.

Recommended Action: Motion to approve and allow staff to issue the contract amendment, and upon approval from Legal, authorize the Clerk and Chairman to execute the contract amendment with Trademark Metal Recycling LLC under 25B-048.

7.5.5. Request Approval of Contract Amendment (Renewal): 22Q-073-CA-02 Tree Services Contract - Flyway Access, LLC dba Conrad Tree Service, Ocala, FL and Enviro Tree Service LLC, Apopka, FL (Budget Impact - None)
The Board accepted the following recommendation as presented by Procurement Services Director Olsen:

> Description/Background: On May 3, 2022, the Board approved contracts with two (2) contractors; Flyway Access, LLC dba Conrad Tree Service and Enviro Tree Service LLC, for maintenance and removal of dangerous and damaged trees on County owned property.
> Both contractors have received favorable evaluations, and Facilities Management recommends renewing their contracts from June 1, 2026, through May 31, 2027, for the final one (1) year renewal term of the contract.
> Attached for review are the draft contract amendments; pending approval at today's meeting, they will be sent to Flyway Access LLC dba Conrad Tree Service and Enviro Tree Service, LLC for signatures, and upon return, will be forwarded for the County Attorney's, Clerk's and Chairman's signatures.
> Budget/Impact: None. Projects assigned to the contractors, which exceed $50,000 will be brought back before the Board as a separate task order with a detailed scope and fee schedule for review and final approval.
> Recommended Action: Motion to approve and allow staff to issue, and upon approval from Legal, authorize the Chairman and Clerk to execute the contracts under 22Q-073.

7.5.6. Request Approval of Contract Amendment (Renewal): 23Q-081-CA-01, Electric Motor/Pump/Blower Repair Services - CEC Motor and Utility Services, Palmetto, FL; and Electrical & Mechanical Maintenance, Inc., Bradenton, FL (Budget Impact - Neutral; estimated annual expenditure of $200,000)
The Board accepted the following recommendation as presented by Procurement Services Director Olsen:

> Description/Background: On June 6, 2023, the Board approved contracts with CEC Motor and Utility Services (CEC) and Mader Electric, Inc., now Electrical & Mechanical Maintenance, Inc. (EMMI), to provide electric motor, pump, blower diagnostics, and cleaning and repair.
> Marion County Utilities recommends renewal of these contracts for the first of three (3) available annual renewals, as the vendors have performed well under this contract and have received favorable evaluations. Each renewal extends the contracts for one (1) additional year, through June 30, 2027.
> The renewal with Electrical & Mechanical Maintenance Inc. also acknowledges the corporate merger from Mader Electric, Inc., with all rights and obligations assigned accordingly. All other terms and conditions of the agreements remain unchanged.
> Attached for review are the draft contract amendments. Upon approval at today's meeting the agreements will be sent to CEC and EMMI for signature, and once returned will be sent to Legal, the Clerk and Chairman for signatures.
> Budget/Impact: Neutral; expenditure is estimated at $200,000 annually, however, this will vary based on actual need. Annual expenditures shall not exceed approved FY budgeted amounts without being brought back to the Board for approval.

Recommended Action: Motion to approve recommendation, and upon approval by Legal, authorize Chairman and Clerk to execute contract amendments with CEC Motor Utility Services and Electrical & Mechanical Maintenance, Inc. under 23Q-081.

7.5.7. Request Approval of Contract Amendment (Renewal): 24B-227-CA-01 - Active Wear for Fire Rescue Personnel – Empire Printing LLC, Springfield, MO (Budget Impact - Neutral; Estimated Annual Expenditure of $75,000)
The Board accepted the following recommendation as presented by Procurement Services Director Olsen:

Description/background: On May 7, 2024, the Board approved a contract with Empire Printing LLC to provide embroidered and silk-screened active wear for Fire Rescue personnel. Products include T-shirts, sweatshirts, hats, and related items. Following a favorable vendor performance review, Marion County Fire Rescue recommends approval of the first of three (3) available renewal options, extending the contract through April 30, 2027.

This amendment also revises the Fee Schedule (Exhibit B) to include additional items: Sport-Tek PosiCharge Competitor Long Sleeve and Short Sleeve shirts, Sport-Tek PosiCharge Competitor Pocketed Shorts, and a Dark Heather 50/50 Blend Zip-Up Hoodie.

Attached for review is a draft of the contract amendment. Upon approval at today's meeting, the amendment will be forwarded to the vendor for execution. Once returned, it will be routed to the County Attorney, Clerk, and Chairman for final signatures.

Budget/Impact: Neutral; estimated annual expenditure of $75,000. Funds are available in EF300522-552107 - $45,000 (Fire Rescue, Clothing and Wearing Apparel Fund), and in AA305526-552107 - $30,000 (EMS, Clothing and Wearing Apparel Fund).

Recommended Action: Motion to approve recommendation, authorize staff to issue the contract amendment, and, upon legal approval, authorize the Chairman to execute the agreement with Empire Printing LLC under Contract 24B-227.

7.6. Tourist Development:

7.6.1. Request Approval of Tourist Development Council Recommendation for Room Night Generating Event (Budget Impact - Neutral; expenditure of up to $3,900)
The Board accepted the following recommendation as presented by Tourist Development Director Shaffer:

Description/Background: The Tourist Development Council (TDC) seeks funding approval for organizations that have festivals, events, or programs which support the TDC's mission of growing the economy and accelerating prosperity in Marion County through effective destination sales and marketing. The Room Night Generating Event Funding Program is intended to position Marion County as a must-experience destination in Florida through bringing quality events and initiatives to Marion County. The following funding contract was recommended for approval by the TDC.

ProAM Patriot Games Invitational $3,900

Budget/Impact: Neutral; expenditure of up to $3,900. Funding From CP155552-548101.

Recommended Action: Motion to approve the Tourist Development Council funding requests and authorize the Chairman and Clerk to execute the attached funding agreements.

7.6.2. Request Approval of Tourist Development Council Request for Event Bid Fee (Budget Impact - Neutral; expenditure of $90,000)
The Board accepted the following recommendation as presented by Tourist Development Director Shaffer:

Description/Background: The Tourist Development Council (TDC) seeks funding approval for organizations that have festivals, events, or programs which support the TDC's mission of growing the economy and accelerating prosperity in Marion County through effective destination sales and marketing. The Bid Fee Event Funding Program is intended to position Marion County as a must-experience destination in Florida through bringing quality events and initiatives to Marion County. The following funding contract was recommended for approval by the TDC.

Official Strongman Games $45,000 per event year*

*The event years will be for 2026 and 2027.

Budget/Impact: Neutral; expenditure of $90,000. Funding from CP155552-548101.

Recommended Action: Motion to approve the Tourist Development Council funding request and authorize the Chairman and Clerk to execute the attached funding agreements.

7.7. Transportation - County Engineer:

7.7.1. Request Approval of Amendment to the Purchase Agreement and Escrow Agreement with C & K Investments Ocala, LLC Related to the Construction of a Left Turn Lane on County Road 42 Associated with Previously Acquired Property (Budget Impact - Neutral)

Description/Background: This item requests approval of an Amendment to the Purchase Agreement and Escrow Agreement between Marion County and C & K Investments Ocala, LLC. related to property previously acquired by the County. Under the original Purchase Agreement dated December 19, 2023, the seller agreed to construct a left turn lane on County Road 42 at the entrance to their development, and to ensure completion of the improvement, $300,000 of the purchase price was placed in escrow with an escrow agent.

The parties have since determined that it would be in the best interest of both parties for Marion County to construct the left turn lane instead of the seller. An engineer's estimate prepared for the improvement, including a contingency for potential overruns, totals approximately $171,222.48.

The proposed amendment modifies the original agreement to relieve the seller of the obligation to construct the turn lane and provides for the appropriate release and application of the escrowed funds toward construction of the improvement.

Budget/Impact: Neutral; escrow funds previously held in the amount of $300,000 will be reduced to $171,222.48 and applied toward the construction of the turn lane improvement.

Recommended Action: Motion to approve the Amendment to the Purchase Agreement and Escrow Agreement with C & K Investments Ocala, LLC for the construction of a left turn lane on County Road 42 and authorize the Chairman and Clerk to execute the amendment.

(Ed. Note: This Item was withdrawn by the County Administrator and will be brought back at a later date.)

7.7.2. Request Approval of a Purchase Agreement Associated with the NW 80th/70th Avenue Segment 3 Road Improvement Project for a Portion of Parcel 23299-005-00 (Budget Impact- Neutral; expenditure of $15,000)

The Board accepted the following recommendation as presented by County Engineer Cohoon, OCE:

Description/Background: This is a request to approve a purchase agreement in the amount of $15,000 plus closing costs for a portion of parcel 23299-005-00 associated with the NW 80th/70th Avenue Segment 3 Road Improvement Project (from +/- 900 feet North of SR 40 to +/- 600 feet South of US Hwy 27). This is a 0.037-acre right-of-way taking of a 6.98-acre parcel.

The negotiated agreement is inclusive of any and all costs associated with this transaction. There are cost savings recognized in this negotiation by avoiding additional costs that occur during condemnation proceedings.

Budget/Impact: Neutral; expenditure of $15,000 plus closing costs (Fund STC073812- CIPTRANSP- EXPANS ROW-738- VJ738541-561301).

Recommended Action: Motion to approve the purchase agreement and authorize the Chairman and Clerk to execute the same.

7.7.3. Request Approval of a Purchase Agreement Associated with the NW 80th/70th Avenue Segment 3 Road Improvement Project for a Portion of Parcel 23299-003-00 (Budget Impact- Neutral; expenditure of $7,500)

The Board accepted the following recommendation as presented by County Engineer Cohoon, OCE:

Description/Background: This is a request to approve a purchase agreement in the amount of $7,500 plus closing costs for a portion of parcel 23299-003-00 associated with the NW 80th/70th Avenue Segment 3 Road Improvement Project (from +/- 900 feet North of SR 40 to +/- 600 feet South of US Hwy 27). This is a .011-acre right-of-way taking of an approximate 10.03 acres sized parcel.

The negotiated agreement is inclusive of any and all costs associated with this transaction. There are cost savings recognized in this negotiation by avoiding additional costs that occur during condemnation proceedings.

Budget/Impact: Neutral; expenditure of $7,500 plus closing costs (Fund STC073812- CIPTRANSP- EXPANS ROW-738- VJ738541-561301).

Recommended Action: Motion to approve the purchase agreement and authorize the Chairman and Clerk to execute the same.

7.7.4. Request Approval of a Purchase Agreement Associated with the NW 80th/70th Avenue Segment 3 Road Improvement Project for a Portion of Parcel 21625-000-05 (Budget Impact-Neutral; expenditure of $75,000)

The Board accepted the following recommendation as presented by County Engineer Cohoon, OCE:

Description/Background: This is a request to approve a purchase agreement in the amount of $75,000 plus closing costs for a portion of parcel 21625-000-05 associated with the NW 80th/70th Avenue Segment 3 Road Improvement Project (from +/- 900 feet north of SR 40 to +/- 600 feet south of US Hwy 27). This is a .027-acre temporary construction easement taking of an approximate 3.00 acres sized parcel.

The negotiated agreement is inclusive of any and all cost associated with this transaction. There are cost savings recognized in this negotiation by avoiding additional costs that occur during condemnation proceedings.

Budget/Impact: Neutral; expenditure of $75,000 plus closing costs (Fund STC073812- CIPTRANSP- EXPANS ROW-738- VJ738541-561301).

Recommended Action: Motion to approve the purchase agreement and authorize the Chairman and Clerk to execute the same.

7.7.5. Request Approval of a Purchase Agreement Associated with the SW 80th Avenue Segment 1 Road Improvement Project for a Portion of Parcel 21251-001-20 (Budget Impact- Neutral; expenditure of $63,300)

The Board accepted the following recommendation as presented by County Engineer Cohoon, OCE:

Description/Background: This is a request to approve a purchase agreement in the amount of $63,300 plus closing costs for a portion of parcel 21251-001-20 associated with the SW 80th Avenue Segment 1 Road Improvement Project (SW 80th Street to 0.5 miles north of SW 38th Street). This is a 0.110-arce right-of-way taking and a 0.13-acre temporary construction easement taking of an approximately 2.55 acres sized parcel.

The negotiated agreement is inclusive of any and all costs associated with this transaction. There are cost savings recognized in this negotiation by avoiding additional costs that occur during condemnation proceedings.

Budget/Impact: Neutral; expenditure of $63,300 plus closing costs (Fund STC073815- CIPTRANSP- EXPANSROW-738- VJ738541-561301).

Recommended Action: Motion to approve the purchase agreement and authorize the Chairman and Clerk to execute the same.

7.7.6. Request Approval of a Purchase Agreement Associated with the NW 49th Street Phase 3 Road Improvement Project for a Portion of Parcel 13561-001-02 (Budget Impact- Neutral; expenditure of $5,300)

The Board accepted the following recommendation as presented by County Engineer Cohoon, OCE:

Description/Background: This is a request to approve a purchase agreement in the amount of $5,300 plus closing costs for a portion of parcel 13561-001-02 associated with the NW 49th Street Phase 3 Road Improvement Project (from NW Hwy 225A to NW 44th Avenue). This is a .020 acre temporary construction easement taking of a parcel approximately 13.07 acres in size.

The negotiated agreement is inclusive of any and all costs associated with this transaction. There are cost savings recognized in this negotiation by avoiding additional costs that occur during condemnation proceedings.

Budget/Impact: Neutral; expenditure of $5,300 plus closing costs (Fund STC073811- CIPTRANSP-NEWINF ROW-738- VJ38541-561301).

Recommended Action: Motion to approve the purchase agreement and authorize the Chairman and Clerk to execute the same.

8. COUNTY ATTORNEY:

8.1. Request Board Authorization for County Attorney and County Engineer to Proceed with the Acquisition of Certain Property Interests from Adam Paul Lusk and Lynn Ann Lusk, as Trustees of the Adam Paul Lusk and Lynn Ann Lusk Joint Revocable Trust, or their Successors in Interest, for the NW 49th Street Phase 3 Road Construction Project, within the Purchase Price and Other Parameters Described Herein (Budget Impact - Neutral; expenditure of $2,488,131.25)

County Attorney Matthew G. Minter, Legal, presented the following recommendation:

Description/Background: Marion County is currently acquiring parcels for the construction of the NW 49th Street Phase 3 Road Construction Project (from NW Highway 225 A to NW 44th Avenue). Acquisition of certain real property interests owned by Adam Paul Lusk and Lynn Ann Lusk, as Trustees of the Adam Paul Lusk and Lynn Ann Lusk Joint Revocable Trust, is necessary to complete the project as designed. Mr. and Mrs. Lusk own a parcel directly east of NW Highway 225A. The approved roadway alignment traverses the parcel and necessitates the proposed acquisitions, which include 3.881 acres of right-of-way taking, 4.461 acres of drainage right-of-way taking, and 0.115 acres of a permanent drainage easement. Following extensive negotiations and the filing of a Petition in Eminent Domain, the parties have reached an agreement on the essential terms of a negotiated settlement, which is being presented for the Court's approval via a Stipulated Order of Taking and Final Judgment ("Stipulated OT"). Of important note, the parties agreed that rather than take the initial proposed acreage from the parcel, which was roughly 72% of the parcel, the County will instead purchase the entirety of the parcel, which is 11.81 acres in size. This agreement is advantageous to the County in that it avoids the substantial risk of severance damages associated with the originally proposed partial takings, which would have left a materially impaired remainder parcel with limited economic utility. Acquisition of the entire parcel simplifies title, eliminates the need for valuation and litigation of remainder damages, provides the County with complete control over the project area, and facilitates more efficient construction and long-term use of the property. The settlement therefore reflects a reasonable and cost-effective resolution of the County's acquisition needs.

Staff respectfully request Board approval of the proposed Stipulated OT, based on the agreed-upon essential terms, and authorization for the County Attorney and County Engineer to finalize and execute the Joint Motion for Entry of the Stipulated OT and any related ancillary documents consistent with those terms that are necessary to complete the acquisitions. Approval of these settlement terms will facilitate the timely completion of the roadway project.

Compensation and Expenses: The most important part of the settlement provides for payment of the constitutional measure of "full compensation" to the property owner for all interests for $2,187,900.00, including any claims for severance damages or consequential damages. In addition to that, the County will be required to pay the owner's statutory attorney fees of $257,000.00 and costs of $43,231.25, for a total cost to the County of $2,488,131.25. Payment of these amounts is subject to the Court's execution of a proposed Stipulated Order of Taking and Final Judgment.

Budget/Impact: Neutral; expenditure of $2,488,131.25, payable from account #STC073811-CIP TRANSP- NEWINF ROW-738- VJ38541-561301.

Recommended Action: Motion to approve the proposed Stipulated Order of Taking and Final Judgment to be finalized by the County Attorney and the County Engineer, incorporating the terms described above.

County Attorney Matthew G. Minter, Legal, stated this is a request for Board approval of a Stipulated Order Taking in Final Judgment for one of the road right-of-way (ROW) acquisition parcels. This one is unique in that staff determined that it had an immediate need for a part of the property and later on the County was going to go back and acquire the rest of the property. He advised that staff decided to do that all at one time, noting this will save some attorney fees, expert witness fees, and having to go through two different presentations with the Court. Mr. Minter stated staff is requesting Board approval to submit this Stipulated Order of Taking to the Court for Court approval.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bryant, seconded by Commissioner Curry, to approve the proposed Stipulated Order of Taking and Final Judgment to be finalized by the County Attorney and the County Engineer, incorporating the terms described above. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board (4-0).

9. COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR:

9.1. Present 911 Management Department Update
(Ed. Note: This Item was addressed later in the meeting.)

10. COMMITTEE ITEMS: NONE

11. NOTATION FOR ACTION:

11.1. Request Approval to Schedule a Workshop with Parks & Recreation Regarding Department Funding on Tuesday, May 26, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. in the McPherson Governmental Campus Auditorium

The Board considered the following recommendation as presented by Parks and Recreation Director Jim Couillard

Description/Background: The Parks & Recreation department is requesting a workshop with the Marion County Board of County Commissioners to discuss funding for the department.

Budget/Impact: None.

Recommended Action: Motion to approve a workshop for Tuesday, May 26, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. in the McPherson Governmental Campus Auditorium.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bryant, seconded by Commissioner Stone, to schedule a workshop to discuss the Parks & Recreation Department funding on Tuesday, May 26, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. in the McPherson Governmental Campus Auditorium. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board (4-0).

11.2. Request Approval to Schedule and Advertise a Public Hearing to Consider an Ordinance to Amend the Name of the Municipal Service Taxing Unit and to Increase the Maximum Assessment Rate for Bahia Oaks Municipal Service Taxing Unit for Street Lighting on Wednesday, June 3, 2026 at 2:00 p.m. in the McPherson Governmental Campus Auditorium

The Board considered the following recommendation as presented by Municipal Services (MS) Director Chad Wicker:

Description/Background: The following date is being requested for a Public Hearing associated with the Bahia Oaks Municipal Service Taxing Unit for Street Lighting and in accordance with Florida Statute 197.3632.

- Wednesday, June 3, 2026 at 2:00 p.m.

Budget/Impact: None.
Recommended Action: Motion to schedule and advertise a Public Hearing for the Bahia Oaks Municipal Service Taxing Unit for Street Lighting on Wednesday, June 3, 2026 at 2:00 p.m. in the McPherson Governmental Campus Auditorium.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bryant, seconded by Commissioner Stone, to approve a workshop to consider amending the name of the Municipal Service Taxing Unit and to increase the maximum assessment rate for Bahia Oaks MSTU for Street Lighting for Tuesday, June 3, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. in the McPherson Governmental Campus Auditorium. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board (4-0).

11.3. Request Approval to Schedule and Advertise a Public Hearing to Consider a Rate Resolution to Increase the Current Assessment Rate Associated with the Bahia Oaks Municipal Service Benefit Unit for Street Lighting on Wednesday, June 3, 2026 at 2:00 p.m. or as Soon Thereafter as Possible in the McPherson Governmental Campus Auditorium
The Board considered the following recommendation as presented by MS Director Chad Wicker:

Description/Background: The following date is being requested for a Public Hearing associated with the Bahia Oaks Municipal Service Benefit Unit for Street Lighting and in accordance with Florida Statute 197.3632.

- Wednesday, June 3, 2026 at 2:00 p.m. or as soon thereafter as possible

Budget/Impact: None.
Recommended Action: Motion to schedule and advertise a Public Hearing for the Bahia Oaks Municipal Service Benefit Unit for Street Lighting on Wednesday, June 3, 2026 at 2:00 p.m. or as soon thereafter as possible in the McPherson Governmental Campus Auditorium.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bryant, seconded by Commissioner Stone, to schedule and advertise a Public Hearing for the Bahia Oaks Municipal Service Benefit Unit (MSBU) for Street Lighting on Wednesday, June 3, 2026 at 2:00 p.m. or as soon thereafter as possible in the McPherson Governmental Campus Auditorium. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board (4-0).

11.4. Request Approval to Schedule and Advertise a Public Hearing to Consider a Rate Resolution to Increase the Current Assessment Rate Associated with the Kingsland Country Estates Whispering Pines and Kingsland Country Estates Forest Glenn Municipal Service Benefit Unit for Street Lighting on Wednesday, June 3, 2026 at 2:00 p.m. or as soon thereafter as possible in the McPherson Governmental Campus Auditorium
The Board considered the following recommendation as presented by MS Director Wicker:

Description/Background: The following date is being requested for a Public Hearing associated with the Kingsland Country Estates Whispering Pines and

Kingsland Country Estates Forest Glenn Municipal Service Benefit Unit for Street Lighting and in accordance with Florida Statute 197.3632.

- Wednesday, June 3, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. or as soon thereafter as possible

Budget/Impact: None.

Recommended Action: Motion to schedule and advertise a Public Hearing for the Kingsland Country Estates Whispering Pines and Kingsland Country Estates Forest Glenn MSBU for Street Lighting on Wednesday, June 3, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. or as soon thereafter as possible in the McPherson Governmental Campus Auditorium.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bryant, seconded by Commissioner Stone, to schedule and advertise a Public Hearing for the Kingsland Country Estates Whispering Pines and Kingsland Country Estates Forest Glenn MSBU for Street Lighting on Wednesday, June 3, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. or as soon thereafter as possible in the McPherson Governmental Campus Auditorium. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board (4-0).

11.5. Request Approval to Schedule and Advertise a Public Hearing to Consider a Rate Resolution to Increase the Current Assessment Rate Associated with the Indian Meadows Municipal Service Benefit Unit for Street Lighting on Wednesday, June 3, 2026 at 2:00 p.m. or as Soon Thereafter as Possible in the McPherson Governmental Campus Auditorium

The Board considered the following recommendation as presented by MS Director Wicker:

Description/Background: The following date is being requested for a Public Hearing associated with the Indian Meadows Municipal Service Benefit Unit for Street Lighting and in accordance with Florida Statute 197.3632.

- Wednesday, June 3, 2026 at 2:00 p.m. or as soon thereafter as possible

Budget/Impact: None.

Recommended Action: Motion to schedule and advertise a Public Hearing for the Indian Meadows Municipal Service Benefit Unit for Street Lighting on Wednesday, June 3, 2026 at 2:00 p.m. or as soon thereafter as possible in the McPherson Governmental Campus Auditorium.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bryant, seconded by Commissioner Stone, to schedule and advertise a Public Hearing for the Indian Meadows MSBU for Street Lighting on Wednesday, June 3, 2026 at 2:00 p.m. or as soon thereafter as possible in the McPherson Governmental Campus Auditorium. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board (4-0).

11.6. Request Approval to Schedule and Advertise a Public Hearing to Consider a Rate Resolution to Increase the Current Assessment Rate Associated with the Golden Hills Turf and Country Club Municipal Service Benefit Unit for Street Lighting on Wednesday, June 3, 2026 at 2:00 p.m. or as Soon Thereafter as Possible in the McPherson Governmental Campus Auditorium

The Board considered the following recommendation as presented by MS Director Wicker:

Description/Background: The following date is being requested for a Public Hearing associated with the Golden Hills Turf and Country Club Municipal Service Benefit Unit for Street Lighting and in accordance with Florida Statute 197.3632.

- Wednesday, June 3, 2026 at 2:00 p.m. or as soon thereafter as possible

Budget/Impact: None.

Recommended Action: Motion to schedule and advertise a Public Hearing for the Golden Hills Turf and Country Club Municipal Service Benefit Unit for Street Lighting on Wednesday, June 3, 2026 at 2:00 p.m. or as soon thereafter as possible in the McPherson Governmental Campus Auditorium.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bryant, seconded by Commissioner Stone, to schedule and advertise a Public Hearing for the Golden Hills Turf and Country Club MSBU for Street Lighting on Wednesday, June 3, 2026 at 2:00 p.m. or as soon thereafter as possible in the McPherson Governmental Campus Auditorium. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board (4-0).

11.7. Request Ratification of the State of Emergency Order Signed by the Vice Chairman on April 20, 2026, Pertaining to a Ban on the Use of Flares, Explosives, or Outdoor Burning Devices or Otherwise Lawful Outdoor Burning

The Board considered the following recommendation as presented by Executive Coordinator Coral Gowen, Administration:

Description/Background: Dry and windy conditions continue to cause and exacerbate wildfires in Marion County, so a mandatory burn ban is being used as a measure to protect the health, safety, welfare and property of citizens and visitors.

The burn ban prohibits all outdoor burning with the following exceptions:

- Use of outdoor cookers or grills as long as they are attended by a responsible adult at all times the unit is burning, cooking or otherwise in use
- Commercial land clearing where: inspection of review and approval has been granted by the Florida Forest Service or Marion County Fire Rescue on a case by case basis and it is determined that there will be sufficient fire suppression personnel and equipment on scene. Authorization must be granted by the Florida Forest Service
- Public fireworks displays with adequate fire suppression equipment and personnel on site; and pursuant to Marion County Special Use Permit and Marion County Fire Rescue Fireworks Permit

The state of emergency will be in effect until 5:00 p.m. on April 27, 2026, unless modified, extended or terminated upon the joint recommendation of the Marion County Fire Chief and the County Administrator, by action of the Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners (BCC), with ratification by the BCC as soon as practical at a regular or special meeting.

Budget/Impact: None.

Recommended Action: Motion to ratify the State of Emergency Order signed by the Vice Chairman on April 20, 2026.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bryant, seconded by Commissioner Stone, to ratify the State of Emergency Order signed by the Vice Chairman on April 20, 2026. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board (4-0).

11.8. Request Ratification of the Extension of the State of Emergency Order Signed by the Chairman on April 27, 2026, Pertaining to a Ban on the Use of Flares, Explosives, or Outdoor Burning Devices or Otherwise Lawful Outdoor Burning

The Board considered the following recommendation as presented by Executive Coordinator Gowen, Administration:

Description/Background: Dry and windy conditions continue to cause and exacerbate wildfires in Marion County, so a mandatory burn ban is being used as a measure to protect the health, safety, welfare and property of citizens and visitors.

The burn ban prohibits all outdoor burning with the following exceptions:

- Use of outdoor cookers or grills as long as they are attended by a responsible adult at all times the unit is burning, cooking or otherwise in use
- Commercial land clearing where: inspection of review and approval has been granted by the Florida Forest Service or Marion County Fire Rescue on a case by case basis and it is determined that there will be sufficient fire suppression personnel and equipment on scene. Authorization must be granted by the Florida Forest Service
- Public fireworks displays with adequate fire suppression equipment and personnel on site; and pursuant to Marion County Special Use Permit and Marion County Fire Rescue Fireworks Permit

The state of emergency will be in effect until 5:00 p.m. on May 7, 2026, unless modified, extended or terminated upon the joint recommendation of the Marion County Fire Chief and the County Administrator, by action of the Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners (BCC), with ratification by the BCC as soon as practical at a regular or special meeting.

Budget/Impact: None.

Recommended Action: Motion to ratify the extension of the State of Emergency Order signed by the Chairman on April 27, 2026.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bryant, seconded by Commissioner Stone, to ratify the extension of the State of Emergency Order signed by the Chairman on April 27, 2026. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board (4-0).

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS (Request Proof of Publication) at 10:00 am:

6.1. PUBLIC HEARING to Consider an Ordinance Amending the Marion County Code, Creating Section 18-8, Entitled Nonconsensual Towing and a Resolution Establishing Maximum Rates for Nonconsensual Towing Services and Storage of Vehicles and Vessels

County Attorney Minter, Legal, presented the following recommendation:

Description/Background: Section 125.0103(1)(c), Florida Statutes, requires counties to establish maximum rates to be charged for the towing of vehicles from public or private property, removal and storage of wrecked or disabled vehicles from an accident scene or for the removal and storage of vehicles, in the event the owner or operator is incapacitated, unavailable, leaves the procurement of wrecker service to the law enforcement officer at the scene, or otherwise does not consent to the removal of the vehicle.

It was brought to Marion County's attention that we do not have an ordinance pertaining to nonconsensual towing, and as a result, citizens who need the services are being charged rates from Alachua County. The proposed ordinance will establish a new section in the Marion County Code for nonconsensual towing. The maximum rates will be established by resolution, which will also be considered during the public hearing.

Budget/Impact: None.
Recommended Action: Motion to Approve an Ordinance Amending the Marion County Code, Creating Section 18-8, Entitled Nonconsensual Towing and Approve the Resolution Establishing the Maximum Rates for Nonconsensual Towing Services and Storage of Vehicles and Vessels.

Deputy Clerk Thornton presented Proof of Publication entitled, "Notice of Public Hearing by Marion County Board of County Commission to Consider Adoption of an Ordinance" published on the publicly accessible website www.MarionFL.org/LegalNotices on April 24, 2026. The Notice states the Board will consider approval of and adoption of a proposed Ordinance.

Chief Assistant County Attorney Dana Olesky, Legal, advised that today's public hearing is to consider establishing a new Section in the Marion County Code of Ordinances entitled Section 18-8, Nonconsensual Towing. Also for consideration is a Resolution establishing maximum rates for the nonconsensual towing services and storage of vehicles and vessels. She stated under Florida Statute (FS) 125.01031(c), Counties are required to establish maximum rates to be charged for the towing of vehicles from or immobilization of vehicles, removal and storage of wrecked or disabled vehicles from accident scenes or in the case of private property tows. Ms. Olesky advised that in 2024, House Bill (HB)179 was passed that reiterated that Counties are required to establish maximum rates for nonconsensual towing, noting nonconsensual towing is when the vehicle or vessel has been towed without the permission of the owner. For example, sometimes when someone is under arrest or has a driving under the influence (DUI) charge or is unable to give consent for a vehicle to be towed from an accident scene, that is considered nonconsensual towing. In a case where a vehicle's owner or operator request that the vehicle be towed, that is considered consensual. This Ordinance does not affect those rates that can be established by contract between a towing company and a vehicle owner or operator for consensual towing, noting this is only dealing with a situation when someone does not have the owner of the vehicle or vessel's permission to tow; therefore, it is considered nonconsensual.

Ms. Olesky clarified that the Ordinance does 3 specific things: 1) it will authorize the BCC to establish by Resolution what the maximum rates will be for both the towing and storage and some incidental fees and charges related to the towing; 2) it clarifies when storage and administrative fees can be charged by the towing company. Specifically, the Statue does not allow storage fees to be charged until a tow company has had the vehicle for at least six hours; and 3) HB 179 requires that if a Board adopts these rates, they have to publish them on the website and must also provide an investigation and complaint process criteria that is included in the Ordinance. The idea would be that there will be a link on the County's website outlining what the maximum rates are and then any complaints would go through the Code Enforcement process. She advised that during the Code Enforcement process an Investigator would hopefully be able to try to resolve whether a tow company has exceeded the maximum rates and then if not, it would go in front of the Code Enforcement Board. An appeal process would happen if a tow company wanted to appeal the Code Enforcement Board's decision. This is more of a dispute resolution process to try to understand why a tow company has exceeded the maximum rates. Ms. Olesky clarified that tow companies are also responsible for removing any debris when they tow on behalf of law enforcement. She advised that separate and apart from the proposed Ordinance, the Board will also consider a Resolution that gets into the specific tow rates.

Ms. Olesky advised that in the past, if a County did not establish a maximum tow rate, it defaulted to rates set by the Florida Highway Patrol (FHP); however, a couple of months ago, rules were put in place that FHP is not setting those rates anymore and are looking to the Counties to establish what those rates will be. She advised that Counties are broken up into FHP "Troops" and Marion County falls under Troop B, noting the only County in that Troop that has established rates is Alachua. Currently, if a tow happens here in Marion County, Marion County is operating under Alachua County rates. She presented the Board with a handout containing Alachua County tow rates, as well as the City of Ocala's tow rates. Ms. Olesky clarified that if the County adopted rates, it is only for the unincorporated portion of Marion County, and if a municipality adopts rates those rates only control towing costs within that municipality. She noted the Cities of Dunnellon and Belleview do not have adopted tow rates.

In response to Commissioner Bryant, Ms. Olesky stated Lake County was not part of Troop B; however, she did review Lake County's rates, noting their towing rates are actually higher than Alachua County. She advised that the handout also provided the Marion County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) agreement and their rates, noting the rates that are on the proposed Resolution before the Board kind of mimic what the sheriff's rates are. Also on that chart is the City of Ocala rates for the towing of Class A vehicles.

Commissioner Curry advised that when there is an accident, there has to be some period of time for investigation, depending on the severity of the accident, and questioned the timeframe for the towing company to clean up the accident debris.

Ms. Olesky advised that there are some representatives here today from FHP that may be able to answer those questions about the logistics of an accident scene when there is an investigation.

Commissioner Curry stated he has received some complaints even within Marion County that the debris is not properly being cleaned up. Ms. Olesky stated there is a provision in the Ordinance that addresses if the County has to call the tow company to come back and clean debris, the County will not be paying them for doing that.

Captain Jonathan Young, FHP, advised that there is obviously different severity of crash scenes, noting FHP will summon a tow company when they are ready for them. For example, if it is a traffic homicide case, it could be hours. If not, FHP can do it rather quickly, but the tow companies usually respond to their request. He stated FHP definitely supports the BCC adopting their own rates because right now Alachua County's seem a bit excessive and there are a lot of things that are not clear in the rates, and they are getting interpreted in different ways by tow companies.

Chairman McClain questioned how these rates that are being proposed today compare to Alachua County's. Ms. Olesky advised that the definitions she utilized for the different vehicles mimic both the Sheriff's Office as well as FHP. There is some variance between the different Counties as to the weight of Class A and Class B vehicles. She stated with regard to a Class A vehicle, which is a vehicle that has a gross vehicle weight (GVW) of up to 10,000 pounds, the tow base rate proposed for Marion County would be $120.00. In Alachua County it is currently $150.00 if it is a rotation tow base rate or $160.00 if it is a private property trespass (i.e., an apartment complex called and said they need to have a vehicle towed). Ms. Olesky advised that the mileage rate also varies, noting the proposed mileage rate for Marion County is $5.00 per mile upon hookup and in Alachua it is $6.00 upon hook up. The MCSO rate does not kick in until you reach a 10 mile radius. She stated the hourly rate proposed in Marion County is $85.00 an hour, whereas in Alachua it is $125.00 an hour and the storage fee is $25.00 (inside) versus $20.00

(outside) and in Alachua it is $40.00 (inside) and $30.00 (outside). Ms. Olesky noted there are some differences in the rates and the mileage charges in each one of the different classes.

In response to Commissioner Bryant, Ms. Olesky clarified that if the MCSO responds to an accident scene or somewhere a person is requesting wrecker services, MCSO has its own towing agreement. For instance, if MCSO had a DUI situation and needed to tow the vehicle, they have an agreement with towing companies as to what their rates are going to be. She stated MCSO rates were last updated in 2023, and the City of Ocala's were last updated in 2015.

In response to Commissioner Curry, Ms. Olesky stated it would make sense to have a timeframe to trigger the County to review the rates, noting some of the Counties actually have language that adjust the rates based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI). She noted Broward County has a chart where they actually adjust it annually based on CPI depending on what that is at that specific time.

General discussion ensued.

Ms. Olesky reiterated the proposed Ordinance and Fee Resolution only relates to nonconsensual towing, noting if a private citizen's vehicle breaks down on the side of the road and calls one of these tow companies, they have their own tow rates.

General discussion resumed.

Chairman McClain opened the floor to public comment.

Beth Revis, Revis Towing and Recovery of Ocala, SW 46th Avenue, advised that she would like the Board to oppose the Ordinance today, noting there are several terms and other things that need to be clarified. She requested the Board hold a workshop where the Commissioners or staff from the County could meet with some tow companies and even the State agency who have helped many Counties prepare an Ordinance that is detailed and well clarified. Ms. Revis stated insurance and fuel expenses are skyrocketing and the proposed Ordinance would reduce the rates that tow companies can charge.

In response to Commissioner Bryant, Ms. Revis stated she is comfortable with the Alachua County rates, noting those rates only apply to calls received from FHP.

In response to Commissioner Bryant, Ms. Olesky clarified that the proposed rates would not apply to the City of Ocala, noting there is provision that allows an agency (i.e., MCSO) to contract for a lower rate, but they cannot contract for a higher rate.

Richard Taylor, D&D Towing LLC, NE Jacksonville Road, opined that adopting the Alachua County rates was a good thing, noting some of those rates are a little high, but his company does not charge the maximum on every rate. He expressed concern that if the Board sets the rates back to the what MCSO has now, it will set companies back 15 years. Mr. Taylor advised that 15 years ago he could buy a tow truck for $70,000.00, noting he just ordered one yesterday, it is almost $150,000.00 for the same truck. He opined that the County just needs to step back and maybe get all the tow companies involved and get their opinion before deciding on this because it is going to affect tow in a big way.

Michelle Taylor, Carter's Towing and Recovery Incorporated, SE 126th Place, Belleview, opined that the proposal to reduce rates appears to be arbitrary and capricious, and lacking transparency. She commented on the need for a transparent methodology or a reliance on current economic data. Ms. Taylor advised that the rates being proposed reflect pricing structures that are more than a decade old, and do not account for the substantial increases the industry has experienced over the past 10 years. She stated expenses including fuel, insurance, labor, equipment, maintenance, regulatory compliance has risen significantly. Ms. Taylor opined that reverting to outdated rate structures would not only be economically unsustainable, but it could also negatively impact the quality, reliability and availability of towing services within the community. She commented on the importance of a fair and balanced rate setting, and requested a comprehensive and data-driven review be conducted. Ms. Taylor opined that engaging a qualified, non-biased economist to conduct a cost of living and industry specific expense study would provide an objective foundation for determining appropriate rates. This approach would ensure that any adjustments are equitable, transparent and reflective of current market conditions.

In response to Commissioner Curry, Ms. Taylor opined that the rates Marion County adopted through Alachua County are fair.

In response to Commissioner Stone, Ms. Taylor advised that her company looked at its base rates for a personal/individual tow during COVID, because it took such a big hit during that time, and with everything increasing in cost, they decided to raise rates. Then when the minimum wage was raised and with all of the prices that they have incurred over these past couple of years, they review the rates every single year and have raised them every single year since then.

Commissioner Stone advised that she does not know whether it is necessary for the County to hire an outside agency to come in and do an economic study for a business that is driven by the market themselves.

Commissioner Bryant commented on the need to ensure that whatever rate the Board sets is high enough to give tow companies the flexibility to move their rates back and forth for a couple years just to verify the viability of those base rates.

In response to Commissioner Bryant, Ms. Taylor advised that her company's base rates for non-consensual towing are $150.00 for FHP calls, $120.00 for MCSO calls, and $110.00 for the Ocala Police Department (OPD) calls.

Mike Seaman, Edgewater Drive, Orlando, Professional Wrecker Operators of Florida, commented on the impact that this decision is having on the families, noting there are approximately 19 companies on rotation. They all have employees and they all have families and as everyone knows all their expenses have gone up (fuel, oil, etc.). He requested the Board temporarily postpone this hearing and look at the economics of what the companies really need. Lake County's base rate currently is $200.00, Seminole County is $160.00 and is currently looking to increase those rates, and Pasco County is in the process of looking to increase to $200.00. Mr. Seaman commented on the dangers associated with trying to hookup a vehicle that has been involved in an accident on the side of a busy roadway.

In response to Commissioner Stone, Mr. Seaman advised that there is a customary 30 minute timeframe from the time a call comes in from FHP/law enforcement to the time the tow truck driver arrives on the scene, noting FHP does look at situations when the tow truck driver has trouble getting to the scene as the traffic tends to get backed up. He stated it can also take longer to get there if the driver is being called out in the middle of the night when everybody else is sleeping and they have to get dressed really fast, get in their truck and get to the accident scene to get it cleared.

Marson Johnson Jr., 52nd Street South, St. Petersburg, stated he is the current President for Professional Wrecker Operators of Florida. He requested the Board table what is happening today and get the rest of the stakeholders involved. Mr. Johnson advised that the Professional Wrecker Operators of Florida attended these meetings in Tallahassee and all over the State on a regular basis, trying to bring the best to the middle in order to resolve it for both sides. He stated nobody is going to get everything they want, but the rates that are being proposed today are substantially lower than anywhere else in the State of Florida. Mr. Johnson advised that he is dealing with his own home town of Pinellas County right now, noting their rates were last updated in 2023 and are already at $147.50. He stated the Professional Wrecker Operators of Florida along with its members and the other stakeholders would be honored to come up and help Marion County in order to understand the mechanics of what it takes to get to a reasonable fee level.

In response to Commissioner Stone, Mr. Johnson advised that in regard to vehicle storage fees, they average between $35.00 to $55.00 per day depending on what area the facility is located in and how many storage facilities are available.

Commissioner Stone questioned if a towing company does not have space to store on their site and they have to go out and rent a spot, does this preclude them from passing on that additional expense. Mr. Johnson noted per most of the law enforcement agencies, they have to have a specific facility relating to impound yards for non-consensual towing and private property tows. He stated it would depend on how this Ordinance is written and the logistics as to whether a towing company even has the ability to go out and rent another facility, more than likely they are going to have to purchase it or have some type of a lease on that storage property.

Commissioner Bryant stated the Ordinance would put a cap on how much a company can charge for storage.

Mr. Johnson advised that what the Professional Wrecker Operators of Florida has discovered is that for a lot of Counties their charge rates are old, and they have not graduated to all the equipment that is required, whether it involves a risk call where a towing company has to have specific pieces of equipment that are required, whether it is a tractor trailer, heavy duty wrecker, etc.

Vijay Maharaj, Kalli's Towing & Recovering, US Highway 301, Citra, advised that when his company began its towing service in 1992 the towing base rate was $85.00, noting if you utilize the 3% CPI cost analysis from then until now, the base rate would be $232.00. He stated in 1992 the average storage rate was $15.00 per day, noting 30 years later the proposed Ordinance has a rate of $20.00. Mr. Maharaj requested the Board utilize the Alachua County rates. He expressed concern relating to the increase in costs for insurance, fuel, employees, etc.

General discussion ensued.

In response to Commissioner Bryant, Mr. Maharaj opined that Alachua County's rates seemed very fair. He opined that it would be nice if it was all set at one contract rate and not a different rate for FHP, OPD and MCSO.

John Duggan, NW 195th Street, Williston, noted he was present representing Carl Johnson Towing, LLC. He advised that in order to get on a law enforcement rotation, the company has to have a twin boom wrecker and a flatbed wrecker. They have to equip their truck with zor (tow) ball chains, straps, brooms, chainsaws, all these things. Mr. Duggan commented on the hazards associated with this type of business, noting tow truck workers are just like first responders and the police. They are on the scenes, cleaning up blood, cleaning up glass, and everything else. He opined that Marion County should set the rates the same as Lake County. Mr. Duggan stated these companies have FHP come to their shops and do inspections on trucks and if they do not pass, then they do not get the calls. He opined that these drivers put their lives in danger and need to be paid for what they do. Mr. Duggan expressed concern that currently Marion County does not allow for mileage, noting having to tow for 10 miles before being able to bill is unfair

in a County this size.
Mike Valentin, SE 145th Street, Summerfield, Muggsuggs Towing, stated he performs private tow calls under contract. He advised that it takes approximately 15 minutes to warm up a vehicle in the proper way, check the oil and coolant, and ensuring there are no leaks prior to heading out for a call, noting meeting a 30 minute deadline is very difficult. Mr. Valentin recommended the BCC hold a workshop prior to making any decisions. He commented on the amount of money a company has to pay a dispatcher just to receive calls
Joseph Walker, SE 54th Place, Ocklawaha, expressed concern relating to where vehicles are being towed to and if those locations secured. He advised that some storage places are not open on the weekends, so a person has to wait until Monday to pick up their vehicle and are charged for the weekend days that the company was not open.
Captain Jonathan Young, FHP, clarified that FHP did not choose this, it occurred when the State updated its Administrative Code 15B, which governs the FHP. He clarified that if a County does not set these rates, FHP goes to the next closest contingent County rates. Captain Young advised that when FHP calls for a rotation record it wants to make sure that the consumer is treated and charged fairly, noting the BCC should have some say in that. He stated it has been his experience that most towing companies will charge the maximum rate every time. Captain Young requested that whatever rates the BCC sets, it be as explicit and specific as possible including the fees for mileage, storage, etc. For example, recently within the last year or so, the State adopted in the Statute an Administrative Fee of up to $250.00 that can be a lien release fee. A lot of companies, including the Professional Wreckers Association, have taken that and interpreted that as soon as they hook the vehicle, they are entitled to charge that $250.00 Administration Fee on every tow. He advised that his interpretation and FHP's legal interpretation was that it is not the intent of the law for a $250.00 Administration Fee to be charged on every tow. Captain Young expressed concern that $120.00 tow can easily turn into $500.00, $600.00 or $700.00 expense. Captain Young stated the one fee he does oppose is the Class D fee of $5,000 just to show up. He advised of a crash that involved two big trucks and one of the trucks incurred a $60,000.00 wrecker fee.
Chairman McClain advised that public comment is now closed.
In response to Commissioner Stone, Ms. Olesky stated there is no maximum rate for any of this in Administrative Code 15-B with the State. She reiterated that MCSO has its own towing agreement, noting this Ordinance does not prevent them from contracting for a lower rate than the maximum rates that are set by Marion County. Ms. Olesky advised that the City of Ocala does not have to adopt their own; however, they have adopted their own rates which are the $110.00. This is significantly lower than the proposed rates. She reiterated that this does not prevent whatever the rates are for a tow company for a private citizen that reaches out and wants to contract with a tow company. This is only dealing with a non-consensual towing.
Commissioner Bryant advised that it was not necessary for the BCC to hold a workshop, noting the rates as presented today are not going to work for Marion County. She stated her recommendation would be to direct staff to work on this some more and look harder at the Alachua County and the Lake County rates. Commissioner Bryant advised that before the next public hearing, the newly considered rates would be published, and those in the industry and the general public can give feedback when the BCC brings this matter back for another public hearing.

Commissioner Stone questioned whether the Board wants to appoint someone from the towing industry to be their representative and work with staff.
In response to Mr. Dugan, Commissioner Bryant clarified that until the Board makes its decision, the Marion County rates will fall back to Alachua County rates as it is currently doing.
Chairman McClain stated the BCC will let the towing industry appoint its representative to work with staff.
In response to Commissioner Bryant, Ms. Olesky stated staff can bring this back in 30 days, noting the public hearing would not have to be readvertised if the Board set the hearing to a date and time certain today.
General discussion ensued.
In response to Commissioner Curry, Ms. Olesky stated she would also bring back some sample language that would include the CPI for the Board to consider.
A motion was made by Commissioner Bryant, seconded by Commissioner Curry, to continue this public hearing to Tuesday, June 2, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board (4-0).

Commissioner Bryant out at 10:59 a.m.
9. COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR:
9.1. Present 9-1-1 Management Department Update
Michelle Sanders, 9-1-1 Management Director and County 9-1-1 Coordinator stated she was present today to update the Board on the County's progress with the Next Generation 9-1-1 core services implementation. She stated 9-1-1 Management exists to ensure that when a citizen calls 9-1-1, their call is routed to the correct public safety answering point (PSAP) with all of the correct information. Building on this foundation, staff are in the process of transitioning from a Legacy 9-1-1 system to Next Generation 9-1-1. Next Generation 9-1-1 is an upgrade to the traditional 9-1-1 emergency response system that incorporates modern technology to improve the way emergency services are provided. It builds upon and enhances the County's existing 9-1-1 system to better address the needs of today, especially with the rapid advancement of communication and digital technologies. At this time, circuits have been installed from the various carriers at each Communication Center, and the backroom equipment has been configured at each site. The carrier migration and testing, which is Phase 2, has begun ensuring the 9-1-1 calls are being accepted and delivered on INdigital's network. Ms. Sanders advised that staff are halfway through the carrier migration with T-Mobile, who is actually testing this morning. Once Phase 2 is complete, staff will see improved communication channels. She stated Next Generation 9-1-1 allows for more than just voice calls. In addition to text messages, staff will have the capability of receiving images, videos and other data. This upgrade will improve the accuracy of the location information provided to the Communication Centers. It utilizes Global Positioning System (GPS), Wi-Fi and other technologies to pinpoint the caller's location with greater precision. There will be enhanced data sharing with the installation of an EZI net, which is an emergency services Internet Protocol (IP) network. This network will transport the 9-1-1 calls along with the images, videos and other data that the Department will be able to accept.
Commissioner Bryant returned at 11:01 a.m.
Ms. Sanders advised that this enhancement provides a more robust, standardized framework that allows different regions and jurisdictions to work together more effectively, improving interoperability between disparate 9-1-1 systems across different areas. It is

designed to be more reliable, utilizing IP based infrastructure and redundant pathways to ensure that emergency calls and data can still be received even if part of the system fails. This new system uses advanced technologies to automatically route 9-1-1 calls to the nearest and most appropriate Communication Center based upon the caller's location. This minimizes delays and optimizes response efficiency. Staff are hoping to have the carrier migration and testing completed by the end of the summer. She advised that once the carrier migration is completed, both systems will run simultaneously to ensure that everything has migrated successfully and is functioning as expected. Ms. Sanders stated by January 2027, if everything is functioning as expected, the Department will then request that the old legacy system be decommissioned.

In response to Commissioner Stone, Ms. Sanders advised that there were a couple of “breaks” in the system recently, noting with this most recent outage that Lumen had, any of the carriers that had previously migrated to the INdigital network, those calls were received in the Communication Center. She clarified that for those carriers who had not yet migrated, their calls were dead in the water and were not being received. Luckily, with the RapidSOS platform, the Communication Centers were able to see the attempt to reach the Communication Center and staff called or texted those citizens back.

In response to Commissioner Stone, Ms. Sanders stated she was not aware of a specific date to get those carriers migrated over to the new network; however, there is a timeframe of approximately 6 months for them to complete their testing and migrate to the system.

General discussion ensued.

Commissioner Stone recommended the BCC provide staff with as much flexibility to get Marion County citizens secure with this ability to dial 9-1-1 and immediately have a response and make a recommendation, even if it meant leaving a carrier because of their lack of responsiveness to this. It was the general consensus of the Board to concur.

Ms. Sanders advised that during the most recent outage, she did receive a telephone call from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and expressed her concern to them, and they are supposed to be reaching back out to her. She stated this recent outage not only affected the 9-1-1 calls being able to be delivered, but it also affected the radio system as well.

12. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Scheduled requests will be heard first and limited to five (5) minutes. Unscheduled speakers will be limited to two (2) minutes. Citizens may contact Marion County Administration by 5:00 p.m. the Friday before the meeting at 352-438-2300 to request to speak or sign up online at: www.marionfl.org.

Chairman McClain opened the floor to public comment.

Andrew Goldberg, SW 111th Loop, presented a 2 page handout entitled, “Fact Sheet for Administrative Appeal”, noting he was not present to argue about a standard leak, but to address a catastrophic failure of notification and resource management by Marion County Utilities. He advised that in early 2026, his property suffered a leak; however, the issue today is that for 9 days, Marion County Utilities watched 31,000 gallons of water per day (gpd) pump into the ground after they had officially discovered the emergency. While the actual leak began on January 21st, he was told that this catastrophic leak was not discovered until January 29th, when an MCU representative identified a flow of 22 gallons per minute at his home. This is not a drip, it is a flood. Despite having my phone number and e-mail on file, the County made zero attempts to call, text, or e-mail me. Instead, they left a piece of paper on his door and walked away while the meter continued to spin. From the moment of discovery on January 29th to the shut off on February 7th, the County watched over 285,000 gallons of public water go to waste. They had the data, they had his contact information, and they chose to do nothing effective to mitigate the loss. Mr. Goldberg advised that he has already spent over $2,300.00 to replace the valves and lines to ensure that nothing like that happens again, noting he accepted responsibility for the initial leak. However, he is being billed over $1,700.00 for the water sewer charge that accrued after the County's discovery. He stated he is being charged for sewer treatment that never happened and not a drop of water entered the drain. Mr. Goldberg advised that more importantly, he is being penalized for the County's choice to use nineteenth century notification methods (door hanger) for a twenty-first century emergency. He stated he spoke with the Utilities Director who told him his hands are tied by an Ordinance.

Mr. Goldberg advised that he is requesting the Board to grant a communication failure credit for the charges accrued between January 29, 2026 and February 7, 2026 and to reduce the charge between January 21st and February 28th. He requested that the approximately 251,000 gallons be reduced to the lowest tier level, and for the Board to abate the surcharge in full as no service was rendered. Mr. Goldberg advised that he is prepared to pay for the initial leak, but is requesting that the County take responsibility for the waste it identified and allowed it to continue for those nine days between January 29 and February 7, 2026. He opined that leaving a door hanger for a 31,000 gallon per day leak is like leaving a note on a burning building instead of calling the Fire Department.

In response to Commissioner Byrant, Mr. Goldberg stated his bill is $1,771.98 and it should be reduced to $702.88.

Utilities Director Tony Cunningham stated he has spoken with Mr. Goldberg a couple of times relating to this unfortunate circumstance. He advised that when there is a leak, part of the challenge is that the County owns and operates everything up to the meter and then individual residents or commercial entities own everything from the meter beyond and so when there is a leak beyond the meter, flow goes through the meter to that leak. That is the actual water that has been treated and delivered to the home and there are costs associated with that. Mr. Cunningham advised that when something like this happens, staff have to rely on Ordinance 09-05, which allows staff to adjust the bill to closer to what would be the true cost of service, which is the cost to actually treat that water and deliver it to the home. He stated in this instance staff were able to take the original full water charge was $3,300.00 and reduce it. Staff took the usage to the third tier and then reduced the sewer charges down at a later date.

Mr. Cunningham advised that when staff did both of those things, it took this particular incident down to $1,621.00, noting what staff were also able to do to reduce those costs was to set up a payment plan.

In response to Chairman McClain, Mr. Goldberg advised that during the timeframe of the leakage he was out of town on a cruise. He noted while they were away, apparently a technician came to the door, knocked on the door, and then chose to leave the notice on the door.

In response to Chairman McClain, Mr. Cunningham stated staff typically reviews bills, but did not know about the leak until the bills hits and is reviewed. In this instance when the bill hit and staff did the billing analysis; a technician was sent out to look in the field. He stated nothing was obvious in the field, and nothing could be seen that was a leak. Mr. Cunningham advised that some people think a utility company can just cut off someone’s water; however, there are some challenges to turning off water. He clarified that three days of no water is a health issue, so the Department does not typically just turn the water off. In this case the thought was that it was a reading error, like a meter error, which is why a technician was sent out. Mr. Cunningham stated when the technician got there, the meter was fine, so he put up the door hanger, but did not send an e-mail or a phone call at that time. He clarified that staff did not do an additional follow up.

General discussion ensued.

In response to Commissioner Bryant, County Attorney Minter advised that generally speaking, the County has certain provisions in various parts of its Code that provide for waivers, that kind of thing; however, Ordinance 09-05 does not have that provision. So, one of the challenges the Board is dealing with here is Mr. Goldberg asking the County to be a guarantor or insurer of what happens on his side of the meter and that is not the County's responsibility.

Commissioner Bryant questioned whether the Board has the authority to forgive some of that excessive charge because this was such a highly unusual circumstance. Mr. Minter advised that the Ordinance says what the Ordinance says, but there have been occasions in the past when the Board, under extreme circumstances, has come up with an accommodation like what is being requested today. Commissioner Bryant clarified that the reason she is asking is that she does not want to set a precedent on forgiving bills for minor things because the Board does have to protect its investment into the utility; however, this is a very unusual circumstance.

Mr. Cunningham advised that recently the Utility has had a couple of these instances that are similar to this just this calendar year so in terms of framing it as highly unusual, he wants to put that in perspective. The other piece is from a utility perspective and how the Department collects its funds, it is either paid by the customer whose home it is, or it is shared by all the Utility customers.

Chairman McClain stated the highly unusual part of this is that there is not a better notification system in place. He opined that if staff are going to hang a door hanger, they should send an e-mail and let somebody know, because not only is it hurting them as a rate payer, but it is also dumping 285,000 gallons of water into nowhere, which is a waste of water.

Commissioner Bryant suggested the Board direct staff to work on this issue and bring this matter back to the Board at a later date for reconsideration.

General discussion ensued.

Commissioner Curry advised that the City of Ocala Utilities Department has a “one time forgiveness” program and questioned whether the County would want to consider amending its Ordinance to allow for a similar program. Mr. Cunningham stated the Department can review the City’s Ordinance and assess the matter further.

Chairman McClain questioned whether there is any technology that allow residences who plan on being away from their homes for a long period of time to monitor these types of things themselves. Mr. Cunningham advised technology exists where someone could have cell service put on their meter that will monitor so if it goes above a certain parameter, then it sends a notification to a customer.

Mr. Minter advised that if somebody is going on vacation, they can request utilities to turn the water off while they are on vacation, but there is a cost of $25.00 to have it turned back on.

General discussion resumed.

In response to Commissioner Stone, Mr. Cunningham stated Mr. Goldberg can continue to pay his regular bill until this matter comes back before the Board.

Chairman McClain clarified that the Board cannot provide any relief to Mr. Goldberg at this time and that the Board's direction is to continue to work with Mr. Goldberg and bring options back to the Board for consideration.

Bob Burton, SE C-25, Belleview, presented a 1 page (2 sided) handout entitled, "Who owns the WHO". He commented on a widow that appeared before the BCC two meetings ago that was asking for variance/waiver on $5,200.00 lien, noting he has been unable to contact her to see if there was something somebody could do to help, but expressed concern that nobody even asked that woman if she had food to eat.

Mr. Burton commented on Agenda Item 8.4 from the April 7, 2026 BCC meeting; wherein the BCC approved the Engagement Letter for services of Ballard Partners and how the County came up with the decision to hire them.

Mr. Burton advised of a group called "Seven Mountains" and their operation "plead not guilty". He expressed concern that the Sheriff's Department is not going to get drugs off the street, noting citizens have a right to defend themselves and their families against what is literally a chemical warfare invasion on Marion County.

Joseph Walker, SE 54th Place Road, Ocklawaha, commented on the Maricamp Dust Bowl, noting he was finally able to get the areas around fire hydrants cleaned up last year, but they are overgrown again. He requested the Board direct the Utilities Department to go out and maintain these two fire hydrants.

Chairman McClain advised that public comment is now closed.

13. COMMISSIONER ITEMS:

13.1. Commission Comments

Commissioner Curry stated he had nothing further to add.

Commissioner Bryant wished all the moms a Happy Mother's Day.

Commissioner Stone advised that it is her hope that the employees continue to feel the appreciation even though the County does not have a month long celebration, noting staff is appreciated every single day for the good work they do.

Chairman McClain stated he had nothing further to add.

13.2. Commission Calendar

13.2.1. Present Commission Calendar

The Chairman acknowledged receipt of the Commission calendar covering the period of May 5 through June 2, 2026.

14. NOTATION FOR RECORD:

14.1. County Administrator Informational Items:

14.1.1. Present Letter of Support Dated April 28, 2026, to FloridaCommerce for the East Central Florida Regional Capacity Building and Technical Assistance Project Proposed by the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council

14.1.2. Present Update on 2022-26 Strategic Plan Empowering Marion for Success II for May 2026

14.2. Present Walk-On Items From Previous BCC Meeting: NONE

14.3. Clerk of the Court:

14.3.1. Present Letter Dated April 14, 2026, from the City of Belleview, Development Services Department, Regarding Scheduled Meetings for the Annexation Application Relating to Parcels 36862-000-00, 36872-001-01 and 36872-001-03

14.3.2. Present Administrative Budget Transfer Report for Fiscal Year 2025-26

14.3.3. Present Regular Report of Utilization for Reserve for Contingencies

14.4. Present for information and record, minutes and notices received from the following committees and agencies:

14.4.1. Dog Classification Board - October 1, 2025 and February 19, 2026

14.4.2. Development Review Committee (DRC) - April 6 and 13, 2026

14.4.3. Land Development Regulation Committee - March 25, 2026

14.4.4. Marion Oaks Municipal Services Advisory Board for Recreation Services and Facilities - January 13 and February 10, 2026

14.4.5. Public Safety Coordinating Council (PSCC) - January 26, 2026

14.4.6. Tourist Development Council - March 26, 2026

14.5. General Informational Items:

14.5.1. Marion County Health Department – For the Latest health news and information, Visit the Website at http://marion.floridahealth.gov/

14.5.2. Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) - For Minutes and Agendas, Visit the Website at http://www.WaterMatters.org

14.5.3. St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) - For Minutes and Agendas, Visit the Website at https://www.sjrwmd.com

14.5.4. Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) - For Minutes and Agendas, Visit the Website at https://ocalamariontpo.org

14.5.5. Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority (WRWSA) - For Minutes and Agendas, Visit the Website at http://www.wrwsa.org

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting thereupon adjourned at 11:32 a.m.

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Carl Zalak, III, Chairman

Attest:

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Gregory C. Harrell, Clerk

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