

COLUMBIA COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

AGENDA ITEM REQUEST FORM

Department: BCC Administration

Meeting Date: 10/1/2026

1. Nature and purpose of agenda item:

Minutes - Regular Meeting - 04/02/2026

2. Recommended Motion/Action:

Approve

3. Fiscal impact on current budget:

This item has no effect on the current budget.

Columbia County
Board of County Commissioners

Minutes of
April 02, 2026

The Columbia County Board of County Commissioners met in a regular scheduled meeting in the auditorium of the School Board Administrative Complex at 09:30 A.M. The meeting opened with Prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America followed.

Commissioners in Attendance: Chairman, Tim Murphy
Co-Chairman, Robby Hollingsworth
Commissioner, Kevin Parnell
Commissioner, Everett Phillips
Commissioner, Rocky Ford

Others in Attendance: County Manager, David Kraus ("CM")
Assistant County Manager Kevin Kirby (ACM)
County Attorney, Joel Foreman
Financial Manager, Amy Overstreet
Economic Development Director, Jennifer Daniels
Director of Human Resources, Kari Guy
County Fire Chief, Jeff Crawford
Public Information Officer, Dennis Rivera
Assistant County Fire Chief, Lance Hill
Landscaping & Parks Director, Clint Pittman
Deputy Clerk, Melissa Williams

Agenda Additions/Deletions

Additions: County Manager, David Kraus stated that a Public Hearing is being added to the agenda.

(1) Notice of Intent to file USDA Rural Development Application for Wastewater Treatment Plant in Ellisville.

Discussion and Action:

(2) Commercial Building Lease Agreement – AmeriPro (p.3)

Proclamations:

Tim Murphy, District 5

(1) Proclamation No. 2026P-10- Public Safety Communicator's Week

- Proclamation Number 2026-P-10 was approved, designating April 12th-18th, 2026, as Public Safety Telecommunicators Week to recognize the vital, 24/7 role of the Columbia County Combined Communications Center's 911 telecommunicators.
- Several telecommunicators were recognized for their service.
- Jason Rosenthal and Megan Murphy spoke about staff that had reached a five-year milestone of service. (See attached list)

MOTION by Commissioner Phillips to approve Proclamation No. 2026P-10
SECOND Commissioner Ford. The motion carried unanimously.

(2) Proclamation No. 2026P-09-Recognizing National Line Worker Appreciation Week (p.3)

- Proclamation Number 2026P-09 was approved, recognizing National Line Worker Appreciation Week from April 12th to April 18th, honoring the hazardous, 24/7 work of line workers.
- Trevor Touchton, a representative from Suwannee Valley Electric Board, noted their crews worked 158,000 hours and traveled over 800,000 miles in 2025 with no major accidents.

MOTION by Commissioner Phillips to approve Proclamation No. 2026P-09
SECOND Commissioner Ford. The motion carried unanimously.

(3) Proclamation No. 2026P-08-Emotional Support Animal Awareness Month

- Proclamation Number 2026P-08 was approved, recognizing April as Emotional Support Animal Awareness Month in Columbia County to highlight the benefits of ESAs and reduce mental health stigma.
- The proclamation honored local youth advocate Ashley Combee, founder of Positive Change National Foundation Inc., who shared her personal story and her foundation's work, which includes a children's book titled "Bentley Makes It Better."

MOTION by Commissioner Phillips to approve Proclamation No. 2026P-08
SECOND Commissioner Ford. The motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Consent Agenda:

MOTION by Commissioner Hollingsworth to approve the Amended Consent Agenda. SECOND by Commissioner Phillips. The motion carried unanimously.

Adoption of Consent Agenda:

MOTION by Commissioner Hollingsworth to adopt the Amended Consent Agenda. SECOND by Commissioner Parnell. The motion carried unanimously.

Proposed Sale of Wastewater Treatment Plant to the City of Lake City

Joel Foreman, County Attorney:

- The Board discussed the potential sale of the wastewater treatment plant and NFIP to the City of Lake City. A public hearing is required before finalizing the sale. What you have in your packet is the most recent draft agreements as of the date of my request to set a public hearing.
- Requesting to set a date for the public hearing on April 16, 2026. The hearing will discuss selling the Wastewater Treatment Plant at the North Florida Mega Industrial Park (NFMIP) to the City of Lake City. The proposed price is approximately \$1.5 million, and the city would assume a \$5.5 million loan and all grant obligations.
- A key concern was guaranteeing a septage dumping location for septic haulers, especially with a potential state bill requiring septic tanks to be pumped every five years.
- Commissioner, Rocky Ford spoke about a place to dump.
- County Attorney, Joel Foreman made the comment that he would talk to the City's Attorney, Clay Martin.
- Commissioner, Rocky Ford spoke about the 50,000-60,000 gallons a day dumping and the interlocal agreement.
- A provision was requested to be added to the contract ensuring the city provides a septage dumping location with a capacity of 50,000-60,000 gallons/day.
- An outstanding balance of over \$80,000 owed to the County by the City under an existing interlocal agreement will need to be settled at closing.
- Attorney, Joel Foreman stated to enter into the contract and true up everything owed.
- Chairman, Timothy Murphy spoke about a bill going through about dumping every five years.
- County Manager, David Kraus spoke about the flow at the plant.
- Chairman, Timothy Murphy made a comment asking how many septic company dump and how many gallons a day.
- Commissioner, Everett Phillips made a comment about how much money is spent on the plant.

- County Manager, David Kraus made a comment that the city will take over the loan.
- Commissioner, Rocky Ford stated why give it away to the city.
- County Manager, David Kraus spoke about ACPA Money and Grants.
- Commissioner, Rocky Ford spoke about they have not laid any pipes.
- Discussion ensued.
- Stew Lilker made a comment about the property going to the water management and the city being responsible for the industrial park in the agreement. Who is going to put it in agreement?
- Commissioner, Rocky Ford spoke about the interlocal and that no one follows up.
- A project originally managed by the county is being turned over to the city. An optimal pipeline path recommended by the county engineer caused delays while awaiting approvals from the DEP and state legislature.
- The agreement with the city needs to clarify who is responsible for wastewater lines and infrastructure within the industrial park.
- A low-flow issue exists at the current wastewater plant, as a customer uses less than 1,000 gallons per day, which is insufficient to move sewage through the six-inch main.
- County Manager, David Kraus spoke about the city's proposed solution to connect the customer to the city sewer system via a new line to the Sheriff's Office, to be implemented over the next three weeks at a cost of about \$20,000 for parts (not a county expense).
- Commissioner, Rocky Ford asked the question did the city agree to this under pressure, the business had their permit issued, they had to have a plan?
- Chairman, Timothy Murphy made a comment that they did not get the proper permit. Spoke about this going on all the way back to 2022.
- Commissioner, Rocky Ford made the comment why would we give away our trump card. We give the city money anyway.
- Chairman, Timothy Murphy made a comment about the 50 million dollars for Ellisville.
- Commissioner, Rocky Ford questioned the strategy of developing utility assets only to transfer them to the city, arguing it undermines the county's ability to grow its own utility base and profitability.
- See packet included 1.5 million dollars price and the city assumes the loan. The \$91,000.00 paid out, and the deep well injection and the County will stay involved.

MOTION by Chairman, Murphy made a motion to set a public hearing for the sale of the MFMIP wastewater plant to the City of Lake City for the Board's regular meeting on April 16, 2026, with the exception for County Attorney, Joel Foreman to do a true up before they go to closing at the end of May 2026.

SECOND Commissioner Hollingsworth. The motion carried unanimously.

USDA Funding Application for Ellisville WWTP

- A public hearing was held on April 2, 2026, as a requirement for a USDA Rural Development application for a new wastewater treatment plant at the Ellisville site.
- The County is applying for funding for a 50,000 gallon-per-day plant, with a total estimated project cost of \$38,127,000, to address capacity limitations and growth.
- Proposed 250,000 gallon per day – process the train.
- Lori Hodson, North Florida Professional Services, planning and grant. Process the loans with USDA-application. They will come back with the amount of the grant, how much the loan. Will have to come back before you before anything can be approved. This is just to submit the application to USDA.
- Chairman, Timothy Murphy opened the public hearing, anyone here to speak for or against?
- Stew Lilker made a comment about the purchasing director not being here and why North Florida Professional Services being the consulting group being used. My question is since this is a public hearing, were any of our other consulting engineers and we have some pretty good ones, I guess were they elevated to do all this? Because this engineering firm will make a lot of money from this.
- Chairman, Timothy Murphy closed the public hearing.
- County Manager, David Kraus made a comment that this was presented at the last meeting and was brought back for a public hearing.
- Commissioner, Rocky Ford asked what account?
- Chairman, Timothy answered the budget money.
- **Conclusion:** A motion was passed to submit the application to the USDA.

MOTION by Commissioner, Hollingsworth approved to submit the application to USDA. SECOND Commissioner Phillips. The motion carried unanimously.

Contract Approval for Solid Waste Collection with Adams Sanitation

County Assistant Manager, Kevin Kirby: See attached contract with Adam's Sanitation

- The Board discussed approving the solid waste collection contract (Bid 2026-C) with Adams Sanitation Company.
- A \$5 million performance bond was added to the contract, and Adams will pay a 12% franchise fee on all services.
- Commissioner Rocky Ford made a comment about the 12% franchise fee.
- A concern was raised about the lack of an auditing process for franchise fees. An amendment was added to allow the county to conduct an audit

at its own expense. Adams Sanitation will also provide a detailed customer list with payments.

- Stew Lilker asked a question about two outstanding lawsuits from the current provider, Waste Pro, and why the new contract was approved before the current one expires on September 30th. It was noted the new contractor needs a ramp-up period.
- Attorney, Megan Logan is handling this lawsuit with Waste Pro, County Attorney Joel Foreman was out of town.
- Commissioner, Rocky Ford asked the question about how do we audit 12%.?
- Assistant County Manager, Kevin Kirby made the comment that we would do a 12% audit on the cubic yard and audit up to 5 years.
- County Attorney, Joel Foreman suggested we put it in the contract to audit at any time.
- **Conclusion:** The motion to approve the contract with Adams Sanitation, including the audit amendment, was passed.

MOTION by Commissioner, Hollingsworth to amend the contract with Adam's Sanitation Holding to do an audit at any time. SECOND Commissioner, Parnell. The motion carried unanimously.

Supplemental Agreement for DOT CEI US 90

A project on US 90 required redesigns after the initial retention pond design exceeded the grant amount.

Due to stormwater remodeling and wetlands, we are requesting additional time for FDOT CEI – US 90 and Tyre Road Project.

See attached agreement from DOT:

Conclusion: A motion was approved to extend the supplemental agreement time from June 30, 2026, to June 30, 2027.

MOTION by Commissioner, Hollingsworth to approve to extend the FDOT Supplemental Agreement CEI US 90 and Tyre Road. SECOND Commissioner, Ford. The motion carried unanimously.

Sidewalk Construction Interlocal Agreement

Interlocal Agreement with Fort White for FDOT Plymouth sidewalk construction to begin. Sidewalk is SW Plymouth Ave. from SW Wilson Springs Rd. to SW Jordan Street.

Conclusion: A motion to approve a DOT interlocal agreement for sidewalk construction on Plymouth was passed.

MOTION by Commissioner, Ford to approve to extend the FDOT Supplemental Agreement # 1 – CEI US 90 and Tyre Road. SECOND Commissioner, Ford. The motion carried unanimously.

Burn Ban Update: County Fire Chief Jeff Crawford

County Fire Chief, Jeff Crawford stated that the burn ban will remain lifted for another two weeks, as there has not been an increase in brush fires. The situation will be reviewed in two weeks.

County Manager, David Kraus

Incentive Request for Project Jumping Jellybean (Recoil Trampoline Park)

- The Economic Development Advisory Board recommended a six-year ad valorem tax rebate of 75 % of new property and 50% of Tangible Property Taxes for recoil Trampoline Park, previously known as Project Jumping Jellybeans.
- The project involves a \$3.5 million dollars capital investment for a 30,000 sq ft facility and is expected to create 30 full-time equivalent jobs. The owner, Trent Coggins, noted his Valdosta location has a \$7.3 million economic impact.
- In addition to over 9k square feet of indoor trampolines, the facility will include an indoor mini-kart course, arcade, laser tag, mini golf and several party rooms for birthday party rental etc.
- Commissioner, Everett Phillips spoke about parking.
- Trent Coggins, Owner of Recoil Trampoline Park stated that he has the parking covered.
- See attached presentation and Economic Development Agreement.
- **Conclusion:** A motion to approve the economic development incentive was passed.

MOTION by Commissioner, Ford to approve and execute the Economic Development Agreement for a rebate of 75% new property and 50% tangible property with Recoil Trampoline Park as recommended by the Economic Development Advisory Board. SECOND Commissioner, Hollingsworth. The motion carried unanimously.

Rural Infrastructure Grant Agreement (D0342)

- Grant D0342 provides \$2 million dollars fully funded with no local match, to install rail in the North Florida Mega Industrial Park.
- See attached commerce agreement:

- **Conclusion:** The motion to approve the grant agreement was passed.

MOTION by Commissioner, Hollingsworth to approve Rural Infrastructure Fund Grant Agreement with Florida Department of Commerce. SECOND Commissioner Ford. The motion carried unanimously.

2019 Small City CDD Housing Grant Modification

Modification # 3 was approved by Florida Commerce for the FFY 2019 Small Cities CDBG Housing Grant extending the agreement until July 31, 2026, amending single audit requirements, and adjusting project narrative.

See modification Number #3 subgrant agreement between the Department of Commerce and Columbia County, Florida attached.

Conclusion: A motion was passed to approve a modification extending the time limit to complete construction for an existing housing grant.

MOTION by Commissioner, Hollingsworth to approve modification #3 to the FFY 2019 Small Cities CDBG Housing Grant Agreement. SECOND Commissioner Ford. The motion carried unanimously.

Grant Application for Old Richardson High School

The Board considered applying for a \$1.5 million dollars grant for the Old Richardson High School renovation, which has an estimated construction cost of \$1.48 million dollars.

The State is likely to fund only \$1 million dollars requiring a cash match of approximately \$500,000 dollars.

Kail Partners have estimated the probable construction cost for the Old Richardson High School classroom wing at \$1,484,700.00 dollars. The Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources will open the FY2028 application cycles for Special Category grants on April 1, 2026, and close them at 5:00 P.M. (Eastern) on June 1, 2026. The grant will fund up to \$1,000,000.00 dollars and require a 25% match as a REDI County. Grant Committee recommended for a BOCC consideration.

There is a temporally delay watching when it opens so they can apply.

Commissioner, Kevin Parnell, stated that this grant is needed.

See the attached architectural services proposal from Kail Partners.

Conclusion: The motion to apply for the grant was passed.

MOTION by Commissioner, Parnell to approve applying to the Florida Division of Historical Resources for a Special Category Grant. SECOND Commissioner Ford. The motion carried unanimously.

County Manager, David Kraus spoke about the new Grant Committee. All Grants come to the Board. Spoke about the Grants and RFQ.

Chairman, Timothy Murphy urged following up on the outstanding RFQ for the Grant Managers before awarding more grants.

Funding for Ellisville Wastewater Treatment Plant Expansion

- The Board approved seeking funding for the Ellisville plant expansion to comply with a consent decree and increase capacity to 100,000 gallons.
- The selected option from Mac Industries will cost \$7.2 million.
- Both the North Florida Water Utility Authority (NFWUA) and the Board of County Commissioners recommended the option to expand the WWTP by adding two additional treatment trains at a cost of \$7,200,000.00. This will add 50,000 gpd capacity and resolve the Consent Order from FDEP.
- Staff requests the authority to apply for grant funding. Grant Committee recommended investigating grant opportunities with the understanding that specific grant applications return to the committee and the BOCC.
- **Conclusion:** A motion was passed to approve seeking funding.

MOTION by Commissioner, Parnell to approve investigating grant opportunities for the Ellisville Wastewater Treatment Plant Expansion. SECOND Commissioner, Ford. The motion carried unanimously.

Dollar General Literacy Grant

Requesting permission to apply for Dollar General Literacy Foundation Grant.

Conclusion: The Board approved an application for a \$3,500 grant from Dollar General for library literacy funds.

MOTION by Commissioner, Hollingsworth to approve permission to apply for Dollar General Literacy Foundation Grant. SECOND Commissioner, Ford. The motion carried unanimously.

Budget Amendment BA 26-69

- A large budget amendment was presented and approved, which included:
 - o \$470,000.00 for the Ameripro EMS contract.
 - o \$15,000.00 for new air conditioners at Sherriff's Office Administration & Task Force Buildings from General Fund Contingency.

- o \$100,000 for the potential acquisition of Five Points Elementary School from General Fund Contingency.
- o \$22,500 for a lobbyist contract settlement from General Fund Contingency.
- o Payments to Anderson Columbia for past retainage bills (\$74,900 and \$265,010). Retainage for Bell Street and NFMIP Rail Spur from Transportation Trust Fund Reserves.

\$400,000 for Economic Development Fund Enhancements.

Stew Lilker raised concerns about a lack of backup documentation for the items listed in BA 26-29

- **Conclusion:** The motion to approve the budget amendment was passed.

MOTION by Commissioner, Hollingsworth to approve BA 26-29. SECOND Commissioner, Ford. The motion carried unanimously.

Unpaid Leave Request

Gary Pitzer is requesting an unpaid leave of absence that is subject to interpretation of Chapter 24- Unpaid Leave policy. Please see letter attached.

Commissioner, Everett Phillips made the comment, is there a back-up for the building inspector?

County Manager, David Kraus stated yes.

MOTION by Commissioner, Hollingsworth to approve the request for unpaid leave of absence. SECOND Commissioner, Parnell. The motion carried unanimously.

Commercial Building Lease Agreement with Ameripro

The lease agreement for Ameripro to occupy two former fire stations was presented. The terms are the same as those offered to the previous EMS provider.

- **Conclusion:** The lease was approved, with rent payments beginning April 2nd, and staff were authorized to fill in the move-in date for the second station later.

MOTION By Commissioner, Hollingsworth to approve the lease with Ameripro, with rent payments to begin April 2nd, 2026, and staff were authorized to fill in the move-in date for second station later. SECOND Commissioner, Phillips. The motion carried unanimously.

Ameripro EMS Transition and Staffing Challenges

- A status meeting with Ameripro is scheduled for the upcoming week to address "growing pains" during the transition.
- County Attorney, Joel Foreman having a meeting with Ameripro this week, still in a ramp up period.
- Commissioner, Rocky Ford spoke about Ameripro having problems getting employees.
- Assistant County Fire Chief, Lance Hill spoke about Ameripro, facing difficulty finding employees and is using its full 60-day ramp-up period, currently staffing three to four units daily. They are working to increase Advanced Life Support (ALS) capabilities.
- County Attorney, Joel Foreman suggested when the budgets come up to remember this.
- Commissioner, Robby Hollingsworth, is interested to hear what they have to say.

Consent Agenda

- (1) BCC Administration – Minutes- Regular Meeting- 12/04/2025
- (2) BCC Finance – BA 26-30 – SW Plymouth Ave. FDOT LAP Project- \$438,818.00
- (3) Finance – Bills and Vouchers – 03/25/2026 - \$4,434,184.00
- (4) Public Works – Utility Permit – County Road 245
- (5) Public Works – Utility Permit – SW Centerville Ave.
- (6) Public Works – Utility Permit – 4300 NW Noegel Road
- (7) Public Works – Utility Permit – SW Hilliard Lane
- (8) Zoning Department- Special Family Lot Permit request (SFLP260303) by Alexander and Beth Shirah. District 4 (pg. 167)

Open Public Comments to the Board- 3 Minute Limit

Members of the public offering comments: Stew Lilker

Staff Comments: Clint Pittman, Landscaping & Parks Director

Road Maintenance and Mowing Season:

Mowing contractors will have to skip areas with utility work on the first cycle but are expected to complete them on the second cycle.

Water Restrictions and Park Maintenance:

The County is under Phase Two water restrictions, limiting landscape watering to one day a week.

This is insufficient for sports turf at ball fields, and field use may be limited to prevent turf death if there is no rain.

There were questions about why gray water is not being used at Southside Park and urged the Board to pressure the City of Lake City to provide it.

Rum Island Park Issues:

Law enforcement will be scheduled at Rum Island Park starting after Easter to manage overuse and parking.

A recurring issue involves people from nearby Airbnb's accessing the park through private gates, avoiding fees, littering, and causing damage.

A proposal will be made to fund a replacement boundary fence and close all private entrances.

Signage will be considered to restrict kayak/canoe launches to the boat ramp area to prevent grass damage.

Commissioner, Rocky Ford stated signs stating you cannot launch canoes. No Entry.

Clint Pittman, Landscaping & Parks Director stated they will pull down the signs.

Stew Lilker made a comment about the millions spent at Southside Parks and working bathrooms at Rum Island.

Commissioner, Everett Phillips spoke about private business outside of the State Park.

Clint Pittman, Landscaping & Parks stated no that he was on private property.

Commissioner, Rocky Ford stated that he was on private property with a glass bottom kayak.

Tim Bolduc, President of Adams Sanitation spoke about their company.

Updates from the County Manager: None.

Commissioner Comments: None.

Adjournment:

There being no further business, meeting adjourned at 11:32 A.M.

ATTEST:

Timothy Murphy, Chairman
Board of County Commissioner

James M. Swisher, Jr.
Clerk of Court & County Comptroller

