



COLUMBIA COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AGENDA ITEM REQUEST FORM

The Board of County Commissioners meets the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month in the Columbia County School Board Administrative Complex Auditorium, 372 West Duval Street, Lake City, Florida 32055. The first meeting of every month is at 9:30AM while the second meeting of every month takes place at 5:30PM. All agenda items are due in the Board's office one week prior to the meeting date.

Today's Date: 10/14/2022 Meeting Date: 11/3/2022

Name: John Crews Department: BCC Administration

Approved By:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "John Crews", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

1. Nature and purpose of agenda item:

Meeting Minutes - Special Meeting - 1/13/2022

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
Special Meeting

Minutes of
January 13, 2022

The Columbia County Board of County Commissioners met in a special meeting at the auditorium of the School Board Administrative Complex at 5:30 p.m. The meeting opened with prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

Commissioners in Attendance: Chairman Robby Hollingsworth, Timothy Murphy, Toby Witt, Rocky Ford and Ronald Williams

Others in Attendance: County Manager David Kraus ("CM")
Assistant County Manager Kevin Kirby ("ACM")
County Attorney Joel Foreman
Deputy Clerk Tricia Hollingsworth

Discussion and Action Items

David Kraus, County Manager

(1) Animal Control Policy Discussion and Direction (p.1)

The matter of Lake City/Columbia County Humane Society's ("HS") funding, their contract and to have some initial discussions as to whether animal control services should be placed under the Columbia County Sheriff's Office in the next fiscal year 2022-2023.

CM Kraus explained as the County moves forward, the Commission's direction was needed as to what their desires are in terms of animal control strictly defined, or animal control that includes animal care as well as some other factors. The Board will need to make decisions on whether to move forward with the current contract and address funding issues/questions for animal control and animal care.

The Lake City/Columbia County Humane Society currently provides Animal Control Services as an independent contract for the county. As part of the FY 2021-2022

budget, the County Commissioners approved an increase in funding, but it was contingent upon completed audits and a contract being renegotiated.

Open Public Comments and/or Questions:

Speaking on behalf the Lake City/Columbia County Humane Society was Mr. Richard Rossi, who conducted an independent review including the contract between Columbia County and the Lake City/Columbia County Humane Society. He acknowledged that the review revealed performance and standards were not up to the expectations, and terms of the contract were not being met by the Lake City/Columbia County Humane Society. Mr. Rossi reviewed the area where the Lake City/Columbia County Humane Society found room for improvement and positive changes.

- Reduction in workforce by eliminating six positions, including the position of executive director. Reassigning remaining staff to positions based upon their experience with animal services, customer service, education and their ability to get the job done.
- The Finance Department has neglected to provide an audited, independent financial statement within 90 days after the end of the fiscal year. Mr. Rossi noted that because the Lake City/Columbia County Humane Society fiscal year ends December 31st, they are not able to close out their year completely until mid-January. Mr. Rossi assured the Board that all records will be sent to the independent auditor, Powel & Jones by January 31st. Going forward, he asked that the contract be changed from 90 days to 120 days after the end of the fiscal year.
- The procedure for handling after hour service calls is being improved upon. Going forward, certain authorities and elected officials will have a direct cell phone number where they will be able to reach staff directly after hours.
- The Humane Society has fallen short on providing a formal report. They now plan to give a formal written report on a monthly basis on things such as calls, adoptions, pickups, number of animals euthanized, how calls were handled, etc.

Mr. Rossi asked that if the Commission votes to not renew the contract, that the HS Lake City/Columbia County Humane Society be given a 6-7-month transition period.

Members of the public addressed the Board with their comments and/or questions regarding the following items:

- Heather McDowell
- Nancy Moon
- Robin Smithy
- Ronnie Pippin
- Tanna Norris
- Ron Fizzell

Staff Comments:

None.

Commissioner Comments:

Comments by the Sheriff:

Sheriff Hunter acknowledged the Sheriff's Office will need some lead-time to prepare for a takeover as it would require careful preparation and planning. In the Sheriff's opinion, it would probably be best to leave everything in place as it is for the remainder of this fiscal year. Answering a question from the Board, the Sheriff said that several sheriff's offices handle animal control in other counties; a good model is Sarasota County. He estimates it would take six full time employees to handle animal control services with an approximate cost of \$300,000.

Further Comments by Commissioners:

There appeared to be a consensus among the commission they need to know with certainty how much animal control is costing and what animal care costs. The two costs need to be broken down separately for comparison and discussion, and capital outlay figures need to be compiled for review also. Once this is done, the Commission can make some decisions for the next fiscal year.

It was agreed that there needs to be a clear separation in the budget for care and the one for control. Everyone agreed that the agencies need to work together for the good of the county.

MOTION by Commissioner Witt to direct Staff to negotiate with the Lake City/Columbia County Humane Society for a contract for the remainder of the fiscal year; a contract that breaks down animal control and animal services. SECOND by Commissioner Williams. The motion carried unanimously.

MOTION by Commissioner Murphy to have Staff continue negotiating with the Sheriff to bring back the real numbers for everything, including capital outlay, for the Sheriff's Office to take over animal control services. Second by Commissioner Ford. The motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

ATTEST:

Robby Hollingsworth, Chairman
Board of County Commissioners

James M. Swisher, Jr.
Clerk of Circuit Court