Board of County Commissioners
Regular Public Meeting
Tuesday, September 8, 2026

The Board of County Commissioners in and for Wakulla County, Florida met for a Regular Public Meeting on Tuesday, September 8, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. with Chairperson Ralph Thomas presiding. Present were Commissioners Quincee Messersmith, Josh Lawhon, Valerie Russell, and Fred Nichols. Also present were County Administrator David Edwards, County Attorney Heather Encinosa, and Deputy Clerk Kelly Sessor.

The invocation was provided by Commissioner Nichols.

The Pledge of Allegiance was provided by Commissioner Nichols.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

(6:01) Commissioner Nichols moved to approve the agenda as presented; second by Commissioner Lawhon and the motion passed unanimously, 5/0.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

(6:01) Warner Counts: 4-H Fundraiser on September 17, 2026 at San Marcos Mexican Restaurant
(6:04) Crystal Ladwig: Keep Animal Adoption Center open
(6:09) Glenn Ladwig: Keep Animal Adoption Center open
(6:13) Shawn Golder: Veteran Services
(6:14) Tina Rich: Keep Animal Adoption Center open
(6:17) Mike Dilger: Property TRIM Notice concerns
(6:19) Erin Bennit: Keep Animal Adoption Center open
(6:21) Patrick Allison: Non-Profit Resource Fair on October 3rd at the Community Center from 10:00 am – 2:00 pm
(6:23) Zach Barton: Veterans Services concerns
(6:27) Jeanette Burdette: PAWS of Wakulla will commit to helping the Animal Adoption Center
(6:29) Lauren Matthews: Keep Animal Adoption Center open
(6:32) Cathy Leonardo: Keep Animal Adoption Center open
(6:35) Donna Fritsohe: County Parks Budget concerns
(6:37) Carrie Hughes: Making Budget Plans with Incomplete Data
(6:41) Samantha Sims: Keep Animal Adoption Center open
(6:42) Cortney Sims: Keep Animal Adoption Center open
(6:45) Roberta Phillips: Keep Animal Adoption Center open
(6:47) Josephine Putt: Keep Animal Adoption Center open

PUBLIC HEARING

(6:49)

1. Request Board Approval to Conduct the First Public Hearing and Adopt the FY2026/2027 Tentative Millage Rate and Tentative Budget

CHAIRMAN:

This is the first of two required public hearings on the Wakulla County Budget for Fiscal Year 2026/2027. If you wish to speak during the public hearing portion of this meeting, please come to the podium when you are called.

The tentative aggregate millage rate is 7.7000 mills which is 1.55% less than the aggregate rolled-back millage rate of 7.8216 mills.

Now the County Administrator will read the tentative millage rate into the public record.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR:

The proposed Board of County Commissioners of Wakulla County tentative countywide millage rate is 7.7000 mills which is 1.55% less than the countywide rolled-back millage rate of 7.8216 mills.

CHAIRMAN:

I'm opening the floor for a motion to begin the public hearing.

(6:50)

Commissioner Nichols moved to Approve to Conduct the First Public Hearing and Adopt the FY2026/2027 Tentative Millage Rate and Tentative Budget; second by Commissioner Lawhon and the motion passed unanimously, 5/0.

There was one citizen to be heard. There was discussion among the Board.

(6:59)

Commissioner Nichols moved to close the Public Hearing; second by Commissioner Lawhon and the motion passed unanimously, 5/0.

CHAIRMAN:

Florida Statutes require the Board to address the tentative millage rate before addressing the tentative budget. The Board must vote on the millage rate and the budget separately. I will now entertain the following motions:

(7:00)
Commissioner Lawhon moved to Approve the Board of County Commissioners FY2026/2027 tentative countywide millage rate of 7.7000 mills; second by Commissioner Nichols and the motion passed unanimously, 5/0.

(7:00)
Commissioner Nichols moved to Approve the Board of County Commissioners FY2026/2027 tentative countywide budget as presented by the County Administrator on July 13, 2026 and as amended through the agenda process today; second by Commissioner Lawhon and the motion passed unanimously, 5/0.

CHAIRMAN:
The 2nd and final public hearing for approval of the final millage rate and budget will be held on Monday, September 21, 2026 at 6:01 p.m.

(7:01)

2. Request Board Approval to Conduct the Public Hearing and Adopt the Amended and Restated Final Assessment Resolution for Fire Protection Services
   Commissioner Nichols moved to Approve to Conduct the Public Hearing and Adopt the Amended and Restated Final Assessment Resolution for Fire Protection Services; second by Commissioner Messersmith and the motion passed 4/1 with Commissioner Russell voting against.

(7:13)

3. Request Board Approval to Conduct the Public Hearing and Adopt the Annual Rate Resolution for Solid Waste Services
   Commissioner Nichols moved to Approve to Conduct the Public Hearing and Adopt the Annual Rate Resolution for Solid Waste Services; second by Commissioner Lawhon and the motion passed unanimously, 5/0.

(7:14)

4. Request Board Approval to Conduct the Public Hearing and Adopt the Annual Rate Resolution for Elm Ridge Subdivision Broadband Improvements Special Assessment Program
   Commissioner Nichols moved to Approve to Conduct the Public Hearing and Adopt the Annual Rate Resolution for Elm Ridge Subdivision Broadband Improvements Special Assessment Program; second by Commissioner Russell and the motion passed unanimously, 5/0.

(7:16)

5. Request Board Approval to Conduct the Public Hearing and Adopt the Annual Rate Resolution for The Park Subdivision Broadband Improvements Special Assessment Program

   Commissioner Nichols moved to Approve to Conduct the Public Hearing and Adopt the Annual Rate Resolution for The Park Subdivision Broadband Improvements Special Assessment Program; second by Commissioner Lawhon and the motion passed unanimously, 5/0.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

(7:16) Wakulla County Animal Services Update Regarding Jacksonville Humane Society Partnership – Walter Class, Animal Services Director

CONSENT

(7:30) Commissioner Nichols made a motion to approve the consent agenda; second by Commissioner Russell and the motion passed unanimously, 5/0.

6. Approval of Minutes from the August 17, 2026 Third FY2026-2027 Budget Development Workshop

   Approve - Minutes from the August 17, 2026 Third FY2026-2027 Budget Development Workshop

7. Approval of Minutes from the August 17, 2026 Regular Board Meeting

   Approve - Minutes from the August 17, 2026 Regular Board Meeting

8. Approval for Payment of the Bills and Vouchers Submitted for Aug 13, 2026 – September 2, 2026

   Approve - Payment of the Bills and Vouchers Submitted for Aug 13, 2026 – September 2, 2026

9. Request Board Approval of the Disposal of County Property

   Approve - Disposal of County Property

10. Request Board Approval of the Temporary Road Closure Permit for the Blue Crab Parade on September 26, 2026 from 10:00a.m. – 12:00p.m.

    Approve - Temporary Road Closure Permit for the Blue Crab Parade on September 26, 2026 from 10:00a.m. – 12:00p.m.

11. Request Board Approval of the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) Annual Certified Budget for Arthropod/Mosquito Control
    Approve - Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) Annual Certified Budget for Arthropod/Mosquito Control

12. Request Board Approval of a Resolution Accepting Dedication of Right-of-Way Within Greystone Subdivision
    Approve - Resolution Accepting Dedication of Right-of-Way Within Greystone Subdivision

13. Request Board Approval to Submit the FY 2026-2027 State Aid to Libraries Grant Application and Approval of the State Aid to Libraries Grant Agreement
    Approve - Submit the FY 2026-2027 State Aid to Libraries Grant Application and Approval of the State Aid to Libraries Grant Agreement

14. Request Board Approval of a Resolution Reappointing Members to Serve on the Tourist Development Council
    Approve - Reappointing Members to Serve on the Tourist Development Council

15. Request Board Approval of a Resolution Authorizing the Submission of a Grant Application to the Northwest Florida Water Management District's Water Conservation Cost-Share Grant Program Seeking Funds for a Weather Station and Designating the County Administrator as the Signatory for the Grant Application
    Approve - Resolution Authorizing the Submission of a Grant Application to the Northwest Florida Water Management District's Water Conservation Cost-Share Grant Program Seeking Funds for a Weather Station and Designating the County Administrator as the Signatory for the Grant Application

16. Request Board Approval of Amendment No. 4 to the Professional Consulting Services Contract with Dewberry Engineers, Inc. to Plan, Design, Permit, and Provide Construction Inspection Services for Phase V of Wakulla Gardens Septic to Sewer Project
    Approve - Amendment No. 4 to the Professional Consulting Services Contract with Dewberry Engineers, Inc. to Plan, Design, Permit, and Provide Construction Inspection Services for Phase V of Wakulla Gardens Septic to Sewer Project

17. Request Board Approval of Amendment No. 4 to the Professional Consulting Services Contract with Dewberry Engineers, Inc. to Plan, Design, Permit, and Provide Construction Inspection Services for Phase VII of Wakulla Gardens Septic to Sewer Project

Approve - Amendment No. 4 to the Professional Consulting Services Contract with Dewberry Engineers, Inc. to Plan, Design, Permit, and Provide Construction Inspection Services for Phase VII of Wakulla Gardens Septic to Sewer Project

18. Request Board Approval of Amendment No. 4 to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) Springs Protection Program Agreement LPS0111 to Connect Eagles Ridge Unit I, Eagles Ridge Unit II, The Park, and Wildwood Phase I to Wakulla County's Sewer Collection System
    Approve - Amendment No. 4 to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) Springs Protection Program Agreement LPS0111 to Connect Eagles Ridge Unit I, Eagles Ridge Unit II, The Park, and Wildwood Phase I to Wakulla County's Sewer Collection System

19. Request Board Approval of Amendment No. 2 to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) Agreement 24071 for Funds to Support the Repair and Replacement of Navigational Channel Markers and Pilings in the Ochlockonee River and Bald Point
    Approve - Amendment No. 2 to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) Agreement 24071 for Funds to Support the Repair and Replacement of Navigational Channel Markers and Pilings in the Ochlockonee River and Bald Point

20. Request Board Approval of Amendment No. 1 to the Consultant Services Agreement with CAS Governmental Services, Inc. for Legislative Liaison Services
    Approve - Amendment No. 1 to the Consultant Services Agreement with CAS Governmental Services, Inc. for Legislative Liaison Services

21. Request Board Approval of the Selection Committee Rankings for RFQ 2026-13 Professional Engineering Services for Panacea Inflow & Infiltration Project and Authorize the County Administrator to Enter Into Negotiations with Dewberry Engineers, Inc. to Negotiate a Fair, Competitive, and Reasonable Contract
    Approve - Selection Committee Rankings for RFQ 2026-13 Professional Engineering Services for Panacea Inflow & Infiltration Project and Authorize the County Administrator to Enter Into Negotiations with Dewberry Engineers, Inc. to Negotiate a Fair, Competitive, and Reasonable Contract

22. Request Board Approval to Accept and Award ITB 2026-17 Panacea Overflow Parking Lot Resurfacing to Capital Asphalt Inc., and Approve the Construction Agreement
    Approve - Accept and Award ITB 2026-17 Panacea Overflow Parking Lot Resurfacing to Capital Asphalt Inc., and Approve the Construction Agreement

23. Request Board Approval of the Thirteenth Amendment to Wakulla County Contract for State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) Program Administration Services with Accenture Infrastructure and Capital Projects, LLC

    Approve - Thirteenth Amendment to Wakulla County Contract for State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) Program Administration Services with Accenture Infrastructure and Capital Projects, LLC

CONSENT ITEMS PULLED FOR DISCUSSION

None

GENERAL BUSINESS

(7:31)

24. Request Board Approval of a Resolution Authorizing the Submission of a Grant Application to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection for the Coastal Partnership Initiative Grant Program Seeking Funds for Improvements at the Big Bend Maritime Center and Designating the County Administrator as the Signatory for the Grant Application

    Commissioner Nichols moved to Approve the Resolution Authorizing the Submission of a Grant Application to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection for the Coastal Partnership Initiative Grant Program Seeking Funds for Improvements at the Big Bend Maritime Center and Designating the County Administrator as the Signatory for the Grant Application; second by Commissioner Russell and the motion passed unanimously, 5/0.

PLANNING AND ZONING

None

COMMISSIONER AGENDA ITEMS

(7:32)

25. Commissioner Nichols - Request Board Approval to Direct Staff to Complete the County's Existing Impact Fee Study for Recreation and Mobility

    Commissioner Nichols moved to Direct Staff to Complete the County's Existing Impact Fee Study for Recreation and Mobility; second by Commissioner Russell for discussion.

(7:47)

After discussion, Commissioner Nichols pulled Item 25, to be brought back at a later date.

COUNTY ATTORNEY

None

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

(7:54) State Attorney FY 2026/2027 Budget Request – Commissioners gave staff direction to include the budget requests for the State Attorney, Public Defender, and Circuit Court Judge, and requests the Public Defender and Circuit Court Judge to come back to the Board to justify their increase.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

(8:14) Debra Murphy: Would like County Commissioners to care about Wakulla County

DISCUSSION ISSUES BY COMMISSIONERS

(8:19) Commissioner Messersmith – Request Board Approval to move the second Board meeting in November from November 16, 2026 to November 17, 2026 at 6:00 pm.

Commissioner Messersmith moved to Approve to move the second Board meeting in November from November 16, 2026 to November 17, 2026 at 6:00 pm; second by Commissioner Nichols and the motion passed unanimously, 5/0.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Commissioner Nichols moved to adjourn; second by Commissioner Messersmith and the motion passed unanimously, 5/0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:21 p.m.