A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

JANUARY 20, 2026

The Lake County Board of County Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, January 20, 2026 at 9:00 a.m., in the County Commission Chambers, Lake County Administration Building, Tavares, Florida. Commissioners present at the meeting were: Leslie Campione, Chairman; Sean Parks, Vice Chairman; Kirby Smith; and Timothy Morris. Commissioner not present: Anthony Sabatini. Others present were: Jennifer Barker, County Manager; Melanie Marsh, County Attorney; Misty Spahn, Executive Office Manager, County Manager's Office; Gary J. Cooney, Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller; Kristy Mullane, Chief Financial Officer; and Stephanie Cash, Deputy Clerk.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE

Commr. Campione welcomed everyone to the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) meeting.

Pastor Tony McCoy, with Hope International Church in the City of Groveland, gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA UPDATE

Ms. Jennifer Barker, County Manager, said that there were no updates to the agenda.

EMPLOYEE AWARDS

Ms. Jeannine Nelson, Human Resources and Risk Management Manager, announced that they would be recognizing employees who had reached significant milestones in their careers with Lake County, as follows:

FIVE YEARS

Michael Pritt, Security and Access Control Specialist
Office of Facilities Management

Glen Pirtle, Senior Building Inspector
Office of Facilities Management

Paul Hammond, Senior Code Enforcement Officer
Office of Code Enforcement

Brad Kaplan, Fixed Assets/Surplus Specialist
Office of Procurement Services

Jay Hauserman, Chief Maintenance Supervisor
Office of Water Resources

Suzann Howe, Program Associate
Circuit Judges

Robin Steinman, Office Associate III
Public Works Department Traffic Operations

Katherine Ennis, Emergency Dispatch Lead
Office of Fire Rescue Emergency Dispatch

Kathy Davis, Telecommunicator
Office of Fire Rescue Emergency Dispatch

Mikayla Gunther, Telecommunicator
Office of Fire Rescue Emergency Dispatch

James Fattizzi, Fire Lieutenant/Paramedic
Office of Fire Rescue

Gerald Hood, Fire Lieutenant/EMT
Office of Fire Rescue

Matthew Batista, Firefighter/Paramedic
Office of Fire Rescue

Justin Joseph, Firefighter/Paramedic
Office of Fire Rescue

Michael Lait, Firefighter/Paramedic
Office of Fire Rescue

Jordan Neal, Firefighter/Paramedic
Office of Fire Rescue

TEN YEARS
Justin Elkins, Water Resources Director
Office of Water Resources

James Coyle, Legal Office Associate
County Attorney's Office

Daniel Flannery, Traffic Operations Supervisor,
Public Works Department Traffic Operations

FIFTEEN YEARS
Richard Miller, Roads Senior Equipment Operator
Public Works Department Road Operations Special Projects

Brandon Rogers, Senior Equipment Operator
Public Works Department Road Operations Special Projects

Mark Shepherd, Senior Building Inspector
Office of Building Services

TWENTY YEARS
Justin Pouliot, Parks Ranger
Office of Parks and Trails

Michael Springer, Support Services Manager
Office of Library Services

Eric Welhaven, Office Manager
Office of County Probation

Roberto Bonilla, Assistant County Manager

Ryan Carroll, Fire Lieutenant/Paramedics
Office of Fire Rescue

Jason Graham, Fire Lieutenant/Paramedics
Office of Fire Rescue

Dane Wilson, Fire Lieutenant/Paramedics
Office of Fire Rescue

Ryan Dupont, Fire Lieutenant/EMT
Office of Fire Rescue

Mark Green, Firefighter/EMT
Office of Fire Rescue

Jared Rable, Firefighter/EMT
Office of Fire Rescue

Jacob Wiley, Firefighter/EMT
Office of Fire Rescue

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS
Aaron Chaddick, Service Desk Manager
Office of Information Technology – Service Desk

Jason Rivera, Fire Lieutenant/Paramedic
Office of Fire Rescue

THIRTY YEARS
Elizabeth Wright, Systems Database Manager
Office of Public Safety Support

RETIREMENTS
Anthony Deaton, Chief Probation Officer
Office of County Probation

James Globig, Assistant Traffic Operations Supervisor
Public Works Department – Traffic Operations

Ricky Magnus, Sign Fabricator
Public Works Department – Traffic Operations

Mr. Tommy Carpenter, Assistant County Manager, commented that he had worked with Mr. Anthony Deaton in his capacity of Assistant County Manager, and that it had been one of his greatest honors and privileges. He remarked that Mr. Deaton had dedicated nearly four decades to public service, and that he began his career in 1986 as a parole and probation agent in Prince George's County in the State of Maryland. He added that Mr. Deaton had worked with the State of Maryland Department of Corrections as a parole and probation officer, and that after moving to the State of Florida, he joined the Orange County Corrections Department as a probation and surveillance officer. He mentioned that in 1999, Lake County hired Mr. Deaton as Chief Probation Officer, and that he had led the office ever since. He related that over his 39 year career, Mr. Deaton's passion had always been helping people and strengthening the community, and that his accomplishments spoke volumes, including the following: working with the criminal justice system to improve outcomes for delinquent juveniles, substance abusers, and those struggling with homelessness and serious mental illness; working to improve the probable cause violation of probation procedure to enhance prosecution and reduce the likelihood of legal challenges; serving as the vice chairman of the Lake County Public Safety Coordinating Council, which provided oversight to reduce jail overcrowding and helped identify safe alternatives to incarceration; serving as a member of the Lake County Workforce Taskforce to promote economic workforce development opportunities for those who utilized the services of County Probation; serving as a board member of the Florida Association of Community Corrections, which facilitated professional training and development opportunities for probation agencies throughout the State of Florida; and playing a key role in shaping the Lake County Opioid Task Force and implementing the County's Drug Court. He commented that Mr. Deaton and County Probation personnel provided a significant role in staffing the County's Citizens Information Line before, during, and after the County's Emergency Operations Center was activated in response to hurricanes and

significant rainfall that impacted Lake County. He relayed that Mr. Deaton had plans for fishing, kayaking, and family time, including with his three children, and that he planned to travel and to visit his father in the State of Maryland. He expressed appreciation to Mr. Deaton for his hard work, dedication, and leadership, opining that he had made a lasting impact on Lake County.

QUARTERLY AWARDS
EMPLOYEE OF THE QUARTER
Mary Koch, Office Associate III
Office of Parks and Water Resources

Ms. Nelson commented that Ms. Koch became an employee two years prior during the transition of the Lake County Water Authority (LCWA) to the Lake County BCC and had been instrumental in helping the transition, and that she was a tremendous asset to both staff and upper management. She mentioned that Ms. Koch currently supported the LCWA, the Office of Parks and Trails, Mosquito Management, Aquatic Plant Management, the water lab, and the Office of Facilities Management, and that she managed the camping, kayak, canoe, pavilion, and ballfield rentals and fielded phone calls from staff and residents with questions. She opined that she maintained a strong customer service focus and provided excellent service to both external customers and internal staff, who had come to rely on her kindness, helpfulness, and deep institutional knowledge. She expressed congratulations to Ms. Koch.

SUPERVISORS OF THE QUARTER
Jeff Johnson, Roads Superintendent
Office of Public Works

Adam Sherk, Roads Assistant Superintendent
Office of Public Works

Ms. Nelson stated that Mr. Johnson and Mr. Sherk helped anchor the daily operational effectiveness of the Public Works Department with Road Operations, and that they provided essential front-line services that supported County infrastructure. She related that they consistently set the tone and standard for the how the Road Operations Division performed, and that they were known for their exceptional customer service. She mentioned that they assisted other County departments by providing timely support, collaboration, and practical solutions, and opined that in the field, they handled some the most difficult and emotionally charged situations with residents, demonstrating patience, respect, and clear communication. She also opined that their ability to balance firm decision making with empathy reflected the highest level of professionalism, and that with more than 40 years of combined service to Lake County, they exemplified unwavering dedication, institutional knowledge, and pride in public service. She indicated appreciation for all their hard work.

T.E.A.M. OF THE QUARTER
STATE OF THE COUNTY
Office of Communications Staff
Jeff Foley – Communications Manager
Jason Andrews – Videographer/Editor
Lexie Farmer – Public Information Officer
Paul Long – Creative Services Manager
Brian Petersen – Videographer Editor
Chelsea Velez – Public Communications and Outreach Coordinator

Ms. Nelson related that these talented individuals were the recipients of this award based on their extraordinary work on the State of the County video, which was presented at the December 16, 2025 BCC meeting. She opined that the team's commitment to showcasing the very best of the County's values, including leadership, customer service, dedication, teamwork, and professionalism, made them highly deserving of recognition.

MINUTES APPROVAL

On a motion by Commr. Morris, seconded by Commr. Smith and carried unanimously by a vote of 4-0, the Board approved the minutes for the BCC meetings of December 2, 2025 (Regular Meeting) and December 9, 2025 (Special Meeting) as presented.

CITIZEN QUESTION AND COMMENT PERIOD

Commr. Campione remarked that anyone who had joined the meeting through Zoom using their phone may press *9 to virtually raise their hand, and that anyone participating on Zoom could click the raise hand button to identify that they wished to speak. She added that everyone would have three minutes to speak, and that after three minutes, an alarm would sound to let them know that their time was up.

Mr. Banks Helfrich, a farmer from the Clay Road District in South Lake, mentioned that two types of crops were perennials and annuals, and that perennials lived year after year while annuals only lived one season, noting that eggplants and peppers were perennials. He stated that property taxes funded fire and police services, parks, libraries, and education, and that some of the ways the State of Florida wanted to eliminate property taxes was by doing the following: eliminating property tax for those over 65 years old; eliminating property taxes for those who had lived in their houses for at least 10 years; freezing the property tax when the home was bought and allowing it to go up only one to three percent per year, which was not an elimination of property taxes but a way to keep it at the same level; and increasing the homestead exemption to $250,000, which he opined was an equitable cut. He mentioned that if the State of Florida eliminated property taxes completely, then services would not be funded, and that some of the ideas to bring in funds included the following: increasing tolls for non-Florida residents; eliminating tolls for Florida residents; increasing tourism tax and expanding it to be used on roads, fire and police services, etc.; and increasing consumption taxes. He opined that even though people did not like to pay taxes, they did like the services they provided.

Mr. Joe Fumasi, a concerned citizen, expressed concerns about the municipal services taxing unit (MSTU), and said that he did not understand the spending. He relayed his understanding that there were several poles that that were not activated even though rent was being paid to Duke Energy, and opined that it was not fiscally efficient. He questioned when Hooks Street was going to be finished, and opined that landscaping was interfering with possible commercial development. He opined that no turns out of Wellness Way could be made because of the palm trees and other plants, making it difficult for commercial development to apply. He also indicated concerns about the wildlife corridor deed, opining that it was a way for developers to obtain more credits for impact fees by creating a wildlife area or to comply with a State of

Florida law by making spaces for wildlife. He opined that this could be turned into a high-end selling point for homes, and said that he did not want developers taking advantage of this item.

CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT AND COMPTROLLER'S CONSENT AGENDA

On a motion by Commr. Parks, seconded by Commr. Morris and carried unanimously by a vote of 4-0, the Board approved the Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller's Consent Agenda, Items 1 through 4, as follows:

List of Warrants

Notice is hereby provided of warrants paid prior to this meeting, pursuant to Chapter 136.06 (1) of the Florida Statutes, which shall be incorporated into the Minutes as attached Exhibit A and filed in the Board Support Division of the Clerk's Office.

Budget Amendment for the City of Groveland CRA

Notice is hereby provided of having received Ordinance 2025-36 adopting the Roll Forward Budget Amendment for the City of Groveland's Community Redevelopment Agency FY 2025-2026 per Florida Statute 163.387(6).

City of Minneola Ordinances

Notice is hereby provided of having received Ordinances 2025-13 and 2025-14 from the City of Minneola.

City of Fruitland Park Ordinance

Notice is hereby provided of having received Ordinance 2025-008 from the City of Fruitland Park.

COUNTY MANAGER'S CONSENT AGENDA

Commr. Smith requested that Tab 14 be pulled.

On a motion by Commr. Smith, seconded by Commr. Parks and carried unanimously by a vote of 4-0, the Board approved the Consent Agenda, Tabs 3 through 14, pulling Tab 14 to the regular agenda, as follows:

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Procurement Services

Recommend approval to declare the items listed on the attached inventory as surplus, authorize their removal from the County's official fixed asset records, and authorize the Office of Procurement Services Director to execute all necessary documentation.

The fiscal impact cannot be determined at this time (revenue).

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Economic Development

Recommend approval of the Third Amendment to the Interlocal Agreement between the City of Clermont and Lake County for consulting services for the Wellness Way Urban Services Area.

The total fiscal impact will not exceed $175,000 (expenditure) over five fiscal years and will not exceed the annual budget of $35,000 (expenditure) per fiscal year.

Planning and Zoning

Recommend approval of an Amended Unity of Title and authorization for Chairman to execute the document. There is no fiscal impact. Commission District 1.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Fire Rescue

Recommend approval of the Fire Training Facility Use Agreement with Lake Technical College.

The estimated fiscal impact is $16,226 (expenditure) plus the cost of water and LP gas which cannot be determined at this time, and is included in, and will not exceed, the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget. Future expenditures will not exceed the available funding in any Fiscal Year Budget.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Office of Tourism

Recommend approval of a Tourist Development Sponsorship agreement with PFXA, Inc., d/b/a PFX Athletics for Legends Way Ballfields.

The fiscal impact is $150,000 (expenditure) and is within, and will not exceed, the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Transit Services

Recommend approval to accept the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Fiscal Year 2026 Section 5311 Rural Operating Grant Program.

The fiscal impact is $601,568 — $300,784 (revenue/expenditure - grant funded) and $300,784 (expenditure – county match) and will be included in the Fiscal Year 2027 Budget request.

Fleet Management

Recommend approval:

1. Of Contract 25-724 with Mansfield Oil Company of Gainesville, Inc. (Gainesville, GA) to provide fuel delivery with related services; and

2. To authorize the Office of Procurement Services to execute all supporting documentation.

The estimated fiscal impact is $702,000 (expenditure) and is within, and will not exceed, the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget.

Public Works

Recommend approval to proceed to closing on a deeded right-of-way dedication for Novack Self Storage (DR-24034), which is in the City of Eustis, and authorization for the Chairman to execute any required closing documents.

The estimated fiscal impact is $800 (expenditure) and is within, and will not exceed, the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget. Commission District 1.

Recommend approval:

1. Of a Local Agency Program (LAP) agreement with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) for funding the construction and construction inspection services for Britt Road, in the Mount Dora area;

2. To adopt supporting Resolution 2026-5 for the LAP agreement;

3. To adopt Unanticipated Revenue Resolution 2026-6 (URR) adding approximately $1,584,526 to the Federal/State Grants Fund for the construction of the Britt Road project; and

4. To authorize the Chairman to execute the documents when available to avoid further delay in project construction.

The estimated fiscal impact is $2,372,107 ($1,584,526 revenue/expenditure - grant funded; $514,581 ARPA funded expenditure; $273,000 Sales Tax expenditure). Commission District 4.

Recommend approval:

1. Of a Local Agency Program (LAP) agreement with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT);

2. To adopt supporting Resolution 2026-7 with FDOT to fund the design services for the Hammock Ridge Road and Lakeshore Drive Roundabout;

3. To adopt Unanticipated Revenue Resolution 2026-8 (URR) to accept and appropriate $375,000 to the Federal/State Grants Fund for the design services for the Hammock Ridge Road Roundabout Project; and

4. Of a budget transfer in the amount of $425,375 from South Transportation Benefit District Infrastructure-Construction to South Transportation Benefit District Infrastructure-Design Hammock Ridge Road Roundabout.

The estimated fiscal impact is $800,375–$375,000 (revenue/expenditure - grant funded), $425,375 (expenditure - county match). Commission District 1 and 2.

Recommend approval to adopt Resolution 2026-9 accepting Amberbush Court (County Road Number 3-3783), Trailside Avenue (County Road Number 3-3883), Rustic Mill Street (County Road Number 3-3883A), Misty Pine Road (County Road Number 3-3883B), Emerald Forest Drive (County Road Number 3-3883C), Rope Bridge Road (County Road Number 3-3883D), and Spidersilk Way (County Road Number 3-3883E) into the County's maintenance system.

The estimated annual fiscal impact is $47,831.72 (expenditure), which is within, and will not exceed, the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget. Future annual expenditures will not exceed available funding in the Fiscal Year Budget. Commission District 4.

TAB 14: WILDLIFE CORRIDOR DEDICATION DEED

Commr. Smith inquired if this property could be conveyed to the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD).

Ms. Barker replied that since this was a State effort to identify areas throughout the State of Florida to be used as a wildlife corridor, the County was looking for a long-term solution for ownership and ongoing maintenance of the wildlife corridor. She commented that first, staff wanted to transfer ownership to the County, and that Ms. Kathleen Dial, Executive Director for Lake County Development Services, would work with stakeholders to identify long-term solutions.

Commr. Smith relayed his understanding that first the County had to own the land, and that they could then approach the SJRWMD.

Commr. Campione wondered if the SJRWMD was the owner of the other portions, or if there was a variety of other owners throughout the wildlife corridor.

Commr. Parks opined that it could be the SJRWMD, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), or the Florida State Park system, as they all had similar missions.

Commr. Campione questioned if it would go to whoever was adjacent to the property.

Commr. Parks opined that it would be given to whoever would be willing to take the property, which he opined could be FWC or the Florida State Park system. He commented that the intent was to obtain the land, as it had been identified as a point in the Florida Wildlife Corridor, and to ensure that wildlife could actually move underneath the roads, noting that this had been worked out. He stated that the plan was to keep the corridor going with access for wildlife into the Green Swamp underneath the roads, and that once the land was acquired, it would be transferred over. He remarked that since it would be for passive recreation, there would not be active fields or amenities for people to use, opining that there would be a trail paralleling State Road (SR) 516

that would provide viewing of the Florida Wildlife Corridor and would not require much maintenance.

Commr. Smith related that this was what he wanted clarification on since this was a State initiative.

On a motion by Commr. Smith, seconded by Commr. Morris and carried unanimously by a vote of 4-0, the Board approved the following items: to accept a Wildlife Corridor Dedication Deed consistent with the Wellness Way Area Plan, subject to receipt of acceptable survey, title commitment, and satisfactory results of due diligence items as determined by the County Manager and County Attorney; to authorize the Chairman to execute any necessary transfer/closing documents; and to authorize County staff to conduct due diligence (environmental testing and survey).

CAREERSOURCE PRESENTATION

Ms. Meg Brew, Director for the Office of Economic Development, introduced Ms. Pam Nabors, President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for CareerSource Central Florida, noting that it was the State of Florida's second largest workforce development board serving Orange, Seminole, Osceola, Sumter, and Lake Counties. She commented that they were charged with curating local talent for high-demand industries, meeting local business and workforce needs, and cultivating economic growth and prosperity in the communities that they served, and that they were located on the Lake-Sumter State College (LSSC) campus in the City of Leesburg. She opined that they had been a phenomenal partner to Lake County, and stated that they provided assistance to individuals, solved complex issues, and elevated the entire community. She mentioned that their collaborative and proactive response to the loss of three major employers over the prior years had been instrumental in mitigating disruptions at the individual and community level.

Ms. Nabors remarked that she would explain how CareerSource Central Florida had made an impact on Lake County in the prior year, including the services to the Kroger employees. She stated that their mission was to connect Central Florida residents to careers and develop skilled talent for business, and that they dedicated themselves to ensuring that this was a customized process for their businesses in the Lake County and all of their job-seekers as they were navigating new opportunities. She mentioned that for career seekers, they offered in-depth employment services, including the following: career coaching; job training; upskilling; job readiness; and e mployment connections. She said that for businesses, and particularly for small businesses, they provided human resource (HR) services, including customized recruitment and placement, and that for every three individuals referred for a position, one was being hired, which she opined was a great standard. She commented that in 2024 through 2025, they served nearly 4,000 Lake County residents through their onsite career center at the LSSC office, virtual services centers, and community locations where they were meeting those career seekers who needed support. She relayed that 1,465 residents had received one-on-one assistance with their career consultants, had created an employment plan, and were on a path either through direct placement to work or through training, and that 122 of them received a training scholarship to receive training from many

different training providers in Lake County and beyond, including the following: Lake Technical College (Lake Tech); LSSC; air conditioning contractors; apprenticeships; First Response Training Group; and Apple One, Inc. with Valencia College. She stated that employment and wages were measured through the Employ Florida system, and that they had 340 individuals placed making an average wage of $18.20, noting that many people were working in the $20 per hour range, especially if they had gone through training and had a new skill. She mentioned that regarding key population highlights, 42 veterans and 109 out-of-school youth were learning a trade or a skill and going to work, and that in their summer youth employment training program, they trained 86 more individuals. She commented that their top targeted training sectors being provided with apprenticeships, scholarships, and internships included the following: 43 percent of the training that they did was for healthcare; 21 percent was in construction and utilities; and 14 percent was for trade and logistics, such as warehousing and commercial driver's license (CDL) training. She remarked that they had accounts working for 153 businesses, and that the services provided included hiring and recruiting, employer workshops, career fairs, and HR services, such as providing business intelligence to shape the hiring process and recruiting appropriate candidates; additionally, she displayed a list of business and training partners. She pointed out that they also provided immediate rapid response to the Kroger closure, which included the following: they had already hosted two dedicated job fairs; coordinated employer, nonprofit, and training-provider outreach with much response from other businesses as well to hire individuals; about 460 individuals had attended and registered in Employ Florida; participants were completing eligibility and getting appointments; involved 35 employers in the job fairs and direct hiring; six training providers provided information and credential pathway information; and registered 104 dislocated workers into services. She related that CareerSource Central Florida had a hand in initially staffing Intellisteel, and she showed a video of an individual who was placed there, opining that he was currently on a great career path. She commented that in addition to the Kroger closure, they also did the following: operated a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) disaster recovery center supporting nearly 1,000 residents after receiving hurricane impacts; co-hosted a Career Expo with Lake County Schools; expanded low-income resident services through the Eustis Housing Authority partnership; provided monthly career services at Cagan Crossings Community Library; received the South Lake Chamber of Commerce Staffing Company of the Year award; and co-led a countywide HR Summit with Lake Economic Area Development (LEAD) and the Lake County Economic Development Center (EDC) to provide more information to businesses and provide outreach. She mentioned that they had continuing partnerships with Lake Tech and LSSC, and that they were exploring expansion into locations in south Lake County in the coming year as well as a community hub approach, noting that they were proud of the work they did with everybody. She said that she wanted to recognize Mr. Gustavo Henriquez, Career Center Manager, and Ms. Yolanda Green, Business Representative, opining that they did amazing work every day for the community in Lake County.

Commr. Campione expressed appreciation for all their hard work and for their help with the Kroger situation, and said that she liked the Intellisteel video, noting that it was a Lake County company at the Christopher Ford Commerce Park.

Ms. Nabors stated that she had toured the facility and was very impressed with the work they did there, opining that this story should be told for Lake County as well as for CareerSource Central Florida; additionally, she was encouraged that there was a good outreach from the Kroger population before they actually left their jobs.

PUBLIC LAND PRESENTATION

The Chairman opened the floor for public comment.

Mr. Mike Stephens, Chairman of the Friends of Lake County Trails and Chairman of the Florida Greenways and Trails Council for the State of Florida, remarked that he supported the Wekiva Trail, and opined that this trail had the possibility of being transformative for Lake County. He commented that the trail would not only link Lake County communities, such as the Cities of Mount Dora, Tavares, and Leesburg and the Sorrento area, it would also link all those communities to all the trails that had already been built in Seminole, Orange, Volusia, and Brevard Counties, noting that one could go from the Sorrento area to the City of Titusville by trail. He opined that people wanted the quality of life that the trails brought, and that there were also economic benefits and impacts to having trails, as it was the only investment that gave government a positive return on what was measurable. He related that one could go to the trail towns, such as the Cities of Winter Garden, Dunedin, St. Petersburg, and Inverness, and see what this municipal investment had brought in terms of the private investment that followed it, opining that they understood that those communities had been regenerated by the trails. He mentioned that several communities had invested in the trails through bond referendums and special sales tax, and that some communities had made the investment part of their General Fund, opining that they were investing in those trail systems every year because they saw what it was doing for their communities and the funds it brought into the community. He opined that Lake County was 20 years behind and was making up time, and that this trail needed to extend from the Sorrento area into the Cities of Mount Dora and Tavares, noting that it was already built halfway to the City of Leesburg, who was building from the other direction as well as going towards the City of Wildwood. He stated that it would connect all the completed trails for residents and visitors, and that even though trails were expensive, they were bringing in $40 million per year in Orange County, opining that it would not take long to get back that initial investment. He urged the Board to support the Wekiva Trail and move it forward as quickly as possible through construction, and noted that they had been working on it for 20 years; additionally, he urged the Board to make trails funding part of the General Fund so that there would be funds dedicated to it every year. He indicated appreciation to the Board for supporting trails, and encouraged them to continue to move forward and finish the Wekiva Trail as quickly as possible.

Commr. Campione expressed appreciation to Mr. Stephens for representing Lake County on the State level.

Mr. Stephens remarked that he was just trying to move the trail forward for his kids and grandkids.

Commr. Campione opined that it would be great to have people come into town on a bicycle or on foot as opposed to a car, and that this could possibly alleviate some of the traffic pressure.

Mr. Stephens stated that he rode paved trails with his kids and went downtown to eat ice cream or go to dinner and spend funds, noting that there were many studies showing how much was spent when people spent the day or overnight on a trail, which brought more into those communities without concerns of parking.

Commr. Campione commented that Ms. Melissa Hill, Senior Project Manager for Trust for Public Land, would give a presentation, and noted that Ms. Hill was present when Lake County went to Washington D.C. recently along with the Cities of Mount Dora and Tavares and was instrumental on being a catalyst on this project.

Ms. Hill stated that she would give an update to the BCC, staff, and the public on the progress made on the Wekiva Trail segments 1 and 5 acquisition, and that the goal was to work in partnership with Lake County and the Cities of Tavares and Mount Dora to acquire and ultimately complete an 11-mile multimodal infrastructure corridor for this community. She explained that Trust for Public Land was a national nonprofit that had been operating for over 50 years, and that their mission was to connect everyone to the outdoors. She elaborated that they did this by working as a trusted acquisition partner for parks, trails, and nature preserves with partners, such as the Federal, State, and local governments as well as nonprofit partners, and that this model had led to great gains for public access across the country. She commented that they had completed over 5,500 projects to-date across the United States (U.S.) resulting in 4 million acres of public access, and that they had also helped generate over $111 billion of public funds across the 50-year period to enable local and State government to acquire properties. She mentioned that in the State of Florida, there had been about 430 projects with over $1 billion in fair market value transactions resulting in over 185,000 acres of publicly accessible land, and that in Lake County, they were a partner on the County's previous bond referendums and the most recent one that passed in November 2024 with an 80 percent success rate; additionally, they were also the trusted acquisition partner for the Ferndale Preserve and the Palatlakaha Environmental and Agricultural Reserve (PEAR) Park, which were currently owned and managed by the County, and for the Cities of Wildwood and Leesburg bike trails. She relayed that Trust for Public Land was the national leader for acquiring rails to trails projects, and that they had completed over 48 projects to date, resulting in nearly 300 miles in rails to trails projects across the country. She showed a map of the primary trail corridors, and said that the Wekiva Trail segments 1 and 5 were located in the primary trail corridor that was a key east to west connector in the Lake County Trails Master Plan, noting that those trail plans had been ongoing since the early 2000s and represented a very clear and connected Lake County. She pointed out that the Wekiva Trail segments 1 and 5 started in the downtown area of the City of Tavares and worked its way east to the Sorrento area, noting that the property was an inactive rail corridor that had already been through project development and environmental

studies to confirm the location of this trail network. She remarked that acquiring both of those segments would close an 11-mile gap in the existing trail network and align with regional and State infrastructure plans by addressing critical transportation, economic, and health challenges, and that this acquisition would ultimately create a 26-mile multimodal trail connecting the Cities of Tavares and Mount Dora, along with their community redevelopment areas (CRAs), and the Mt. Plymouth-Sorrento CRA to Seminole County's Seminole-Wekiva Trail, Orange County's Coast to Coast Trail, and the Heart of Florida Trail Loop. She mentioned that this would connect important areas within the county and extend to other areas across the state, and that initial engagement with this corridor began in the early 2000s with the public overwhelmingly supporting inclusion of the Wekiva Corridor and the Lake-Sumter Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) long-range transportation planning update in 2005, noting that it also aligned with the statewide shared-use nonmotorized (SUN) Trail network. She commented that this project required the acquisition of 11 miles of corridor totaling approximately 110 acres, and opined that completing this trail would provide strong benefits for the community, such as safety. She remarked that according to data by Kimley-Horn based on bike and pedestrian crash data in this area from 2020 through 2024, there had been 289 crashes and 14 fatalities, and that 75 percent of those crashes occurred along the roads as opposed to intersections. She pointed out that 100 percent of the crashes occurred where there was no pedestrian or bicycle facility within a half mile buffer around the Wekiva Trail segment, and that bicycle crashes were on an upward trend, showing increasing need for safe, designated, multimodal pathways. She related that there were economic benefits by completing this type of project, such as providing safe, affordable, and healthy transportation, as there were currently no reliable driving alternative options for the residents of unincorporated county communities traveling into the Cities of Tavares and Mount Dora, and that this project would improve access to daily destinations, including jobs, healthcare, grocery stores, schools, places of worship, recreation, and parks. She mentioned that two census blocks served by this trail were considered communities with transportation disadvantaged, having rates below the national average for car ownership, and noted that this trail would also connect to historic downtowns, four CRAs and three major employment centers, including the Cities of Tavares and Mount Dora and the Wolf Branch Innovation and Development Employment Center District. She commented that the trail had the potential to increase property values, and that the National Realtors Association estimated an immediate 10 to 20 percent increase in the value of homes when located in close proximity to trails. She relayed that the trail would also provide easy additional access to businesses, and that based on a mapping analysis, approximately 618 businesses were within a quarter mile of the Wekiva Trail, providing ample employment, healthcare, education, fitness, and shopping opportunities. She remarked that a benefit/cost analysis completed by Kimley-Horn in 2023 for a Federal grant application showed the following: improving public safety by reducing accidents; increasing tourism spending; and increasing property values, noting that the overall substantial positive impacts from this project were monetized at $92.9 million in benefits over a 20-year period. She stated that acquiring a corridor of this nature also gave infrastructure improvement possibilities for the County and the Cities,

including the following: providing opportunities for road-crossing safety enhancements and trail amenities to be installed at portions of the corridor that currently lacked those safety features; allowing Intelligent Transportation System installation, which integrated fiber for real-time traffic management and emergency responder deployment; installing highspeed Wi-Fi within the corridor to improve opportunities for local agencies and private developers to provide widespread broadband; improving utilities, such as underground electric, water, existing systems, and w astewater transfer; and being able to mitigate for flood risks by improving existing conveyance systems and lessen flooding through swale installations in the corridor. She mentioned that Trust for Public Land did a 10-minute walk analysis, which calculated the number of residents that lived within a 10-minute walk of a proposed park or conservation project, and that they had analyzed that this would serve approximately 12,650 people, servicing approximately 6,000 households. She commented that there was also a study done in 2019 that concluded that spending as little as two hours per week outside had a positive measurable impact on mental health, and that a study on the health benefits from bike and pedestrian trails found that every dollar invested in trails resulted in three dollars of savings on healthcare costs, showing that trails were a cost-effective health intervention tool. She remarked that the Florida Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan had found that trails were a top recreational amenity, and noted that Central Florida had the second highest regional concentration of potential tourists in the state for this type of amenity. She mentioned that many people had been working hard on seeing this plan come to fruition, and that it was a compliment to the leadership and vision of County staff and partners on the effort that had been put in place to date. She relayed that in 2024 Trust for Public Land, the Cities of Tavares and Mount Dora, and the County entered into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to outline how they would work together through pre-acquisition efforts to acquire this corridor, and that since then, they had been working closely with partners to pursue public funding opportunities and to negotiate an option agreement between Trust for Public Land and the owner of the rail corridor, which was CSX Transportation, and their lease holder, Florida Central Railroad. She commented that Trust for Public Land had successfully negotiated an option contract that was currently being routed for signatures, and noted that by them entering into contract directly with CSX Transportation and Florida Central Railroad, partners were not obligating themselves to the purchase until there were funds secured. She explained that this model helped alleviate risk to the County and the Cities of Tavares and Mount Dora while simultaneously allowing for the pursuit of grants and local funding with a strong timeline and costs for budgets, and that Trust for Public Land had negotiated an option term of 24 months where they could convey this to the County by early 2028 at the latest. She elaborated that the anticipated purchase price for the corridor to be conveyed was $27 million, and that the price to acquire it would need to be supported by two appraisals before closing on the property, noting that this was the cost for acquisition of the corridor and did not include the cost for the installation of the trail or any infrastructure amenities. She related that regarding the funding strategy, the first grant she wanted to highlight was a U.S. Department of Transportation Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant, and noted that this would not be the first application the County had

made to this program, as the County and the Cities of Tavares and Mount Dora had applied in the previous year in partnership with Kimley-Horn; however, there 815 applicants and only 30 selected for funding. She mentioned that because the project met the criteria so well, they were moved onto a project of merit list, which meant that the project had scored high in all the categories needed for BUILD and had made it to the desk of the U.S. Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy, opining that they were well-poised for the current year's application. She pointed out that there were $1.5 billion available to compete for, and that the grant allowed for a maximum request of $25 million, which the County and partners were ready to ask for, noting that this would mirror the previous year's application with more than a one-to-one match, which was why they scored so well on the previous year. She commented that they expected the budget to have $16 million for acquisition within that $25 million total, and she displayed a timeline showing the application being due in February 2026, noting that they were all very busy working together on that grant application. She remarked that between March and May 2026, the application would be reviewed and scored, and that they would know by the end of June 2026 who had been successful for the current year's BUILD grant. She related that the second grant she wanted to highlight was a state-based program called Florida Communities Trust (FCT), and noted that Lake County had previously done multiple successful applications for this grant for acquisitions. She stated that for the current fiscal year, there was a total of $6.8 million available for the FCT grant, and that the Board had approved the transmittal letter for the application in December 2025. She mentioned that Trust for Public Land authored the application and exhibit resources in partnership with County staff and the Cities of Tavares and Mount Dora, and submitted it in the prior week in advance of the January 19, 2026 deadline. She said that the funds requested totaled $3.5 million to be put towards acquisition, and she showed a timeline and explained the following: between January and March 2026, applications would be scored and sites visited; in April 2026, there would be a tentative score awarded; in May 2026, the FCT governing board would rank and approve grants; in June 2026, formal award announcements would come out. She commented that the additional program that Trust for Public Land had nominated the property for was the Lake County bond referendum program, and that this project was nominated on December 15, 2025 and submitted to the PLTAAC and was being reviewed and ranked by County staff. She explained that the PLTAAC was established to advise in the implementation of the land acquisition tasks under the bond referendum as prescribed by the Parks and Trails Master Plan, and that it would then come to the BCC for consideration. She relayed her understanding that the bond referendum program had $50 million available to be split between natural passive use land and trails for connectivity, and that the following meeting for the PLTAAC was scheduled for April, 2026. She remarked that they should know what the success was of their BUILD grant application by summer, as well as the FCT grant application, and said that she would like to come back then and provide an update of the funding amounts requested, what was awarded, and what gap remained so that there could be discussion and consideration on the best way to proceed as partners.

Commr. Campione indicated appreciation to Trust for Public Land for all the hard work and dedication to this effort and to the Cities of Mount Dora and Tavares, noting that they were working hard on it with their U.S. Senators and State Legislators.

Ms. Hill opined that it was a pleasure to partner with the County and the Cities, and that what had been accomplished was impressive.

PUBLIC HEARING: ORDINANCE 2026-3 SILVER GLEN SPRINGS NOISE SENSITIVE ZONE

Ms. Melanie Marsh, County Attorney, placed the proposed ordinance on the floor for reading by title only as follows:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA; RENUMBERING SECTION 3-5, LAKE COUNTY CODE, ENTITLED SILVER GLEN SPRINGS RUN TO SECTION 5-4, LAKE COUNTY CODE; AMENDING THE SECTION TO DESIGNATE SILVER GLEN SPRINGS RUN AS A NOISE SENSITIVE ZONE; PROVIDING FOR ENFORCEMENT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR INCLUSION IN THE CODE; PROVIDING FOR FILING WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

The Chairman opened the public hearing.

There being no one who wished to address the Board regarding this matter, the Chairman closed the public hearing.

Commr. Campione expressed appreciation to the Lake County Sheriff's Department (LCSO) and the Marine Patrol for the hard work, and to Marion County for adopting an identical ordinance first, as this was a shared area. She commented that the National Forestry Service had requested to set this area up as a spring protection zone, and opined that there would be more discussions in the future about taking a position on that. She mentioned that she had reached out to Senator Keith Truenow about working with the National Forestry Service, FWC, Marion County, and Lake County to eventually have a restroom facility that could be used by boaters in the Silver Glen area to address another issue, noting that the existing park there was only for people who arrived by land. She remarked that Senator Truenow had indicated support for that, and that the details would have to be worked out. She opined that this was a step in the right direction, and noted that promises were made to the State in the previous year when the Spring Protection Zone was discussed that Lake County would do whatever could be done on a local basis to address behavior that was inconsistent with the natural surroundings and the protection of that area. She relayed that she was pleased to have this opportunity to move forward with this ordinance and to work in partnership with the LCSO and the marine patrol unit on the implementation phase, which she opined would be a challenge but well worth it.

Commr. Smith stated that he would like to work with the State to make it possible for the boaters to access the Silver Glen Springs property for the restrooms and picnic tables, which he opined would be helpful for the cleanup of the whole area. He expressed appreciation to the LCSO for all the work they had done there.

Commr. Campione mentioned that there was a video that the SJRWMD made about the St. Johns River, and that about 22 minutes into the video there was a section on Silver Glen Springs

showing divers going down into the spring, opining that of all the springs in the State of Florida, this was the most magnificent, as it had many valuable features and was very unique.

On a motion by Commr. Smith, seconded by Commr. Parks and carried unanimously by a vote of 4-0, the Board approved Ordinance 2026-3 renumbering Section 3-5, Lake County Code, entitled Silver Glen Springs Run, to Section 5-4, Lake County Code, amending the section to designate Silver Glen Springs Run as a Noise Sensitive Zone, and providing penalties for violations.

RECESS AND REASSEMBLY

The Chairman called a recess at 10:14 a.m. for 10 minutes.

PUBLIC HEARING: RESOLUTION 2026-10 AMENDED BUDGET FOR FY 2026

Ms. Miranda Lanoue, Budget Manager for the Office of Management and Budget, stated that the purpose of the mid-year budget amendment was to make adjustments to the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 budget, to add previously unanticipated revenues and expenditures, and to include any necessary changes that had been identified. She commented that the current countywide budget, which included previously approved unanticipated revenue resolutions, was $1.068 billion, and that the proposed changes on the current day were $47.9 million, which would bring the supplemental budget to $1.116 billion. She remarked that the total mid-year adjustments for the General Fund revenues were approximately $22 million and included the following: a decrease of $197,000 in ad valorem revenue due to the adjustment for the final property values as of October 1, 2025, which included Value Adjustment Board (VAB) adjustments; an adjustment for changes to the beginning fund balance of $20.5 million, which was attributed to additional revenues received and cost savings over projected spending in FY 2025; $1 million in grant award reconciliations; and $460,000 for the Kroger termination agreement. She related that adjustments to the General Fund for expenditures included a reduction of $1.1 million to CRA payments due to final property values as of October 1, 2025, including any VAB adjustments, and that adjustments impacting the Constitutional Offices included the following: for the LCSO, there was a $566,000 adjustment for service agreements and capital equipment; for the Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller, there was a $161,000 adjustment for network cabling and fiber installation; for the Supervisor of Elections, there was a $635,000 adjustment for leasehold improvements; t here was an increase of $1.7 million in anticipated inmate medical costs; there was an increase of $4.4 million in transfers to other funds, such as $3.4 million for opioid settlement funds received in FY 2023/2024 to the Drug Court reserves and $979,000 to support the employee health fund; and a $14.6 million increase to reserves, which included an increase to road resurfacing reserves of approximately $1.4 million. She added that there was $793,000 in other miscellaneous adjustments, which included the following: approximately $234,000 for wage adjustments, such as final rates provided by the State for the Florida Retirement System (FRS), elected officials, and overtime estimates; $355,000 for an increase in anticipated professional services for the Office of Planning and Zoning; and $169,000 for Lake Support and Emergency Recovery (LASER) grey sky funding due to the October 2025 flooding. She relayed that the current adopted General Fund operating reserves were $25.3 million, representing 9.5 percent of the operating budget, and that

the $3.4 million decrease from the adopted budget represented the use of the resurfacing reserves for resurfacing projects since the budget's initial adoption. She mentioned that after approval of the mid-year adjustment, the total General Fund operating reserves would be $41.5 million, which represented 15.4 percent of the operating budget, and pointed out that the long-range target for r eserves was 16 percent or two months of regular operating expenses, which was the recommended minimum by the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) for Counties. She commented that the total adjustments to the other funds were approximately $26.1 million, which included $5.3 million in grant reconciliation adjustments and approximately $17.4 million in beginning fund balance adjustments for revenues that exceeded actual expenditures than projected in FY 2025, including the following: major adjustments in the Transportation Trust Fund of about $2.4 million; EMS Fund of about $3.5 million; County Fire Fund of $8.2 million; and the Resort/Development Tax Fund of $2.2 million. She said that under capital projects, there was an increase in infrastructure sales tax revenues over projections resulting in additional funding that had been allocated for the following: the Judicial Center North Wing roof replacement project; the Butler Street boat ramp parking lot improvement project; the Britt Road construction and construction inspection agreement; and the purchase of additional ambulances. She remarked that there was approximately $990,000 in other adjustments that were primarily related to final property value adjustments and rebudgeting of the Eudora Road roundabout utility relocation project.

The Chairman opened the public hearing.

There being no one who wished to address the Board regarding this matter, the Chairman closed the public hearing.

Commr. Smith expressed appreciation for concentrating on reserves.

Ms. Lanoue stated that the requested action was approval of an amended budget for FY 2026 to include a reconciliation of the beginning fund balance and other adjustments, and the approval of the resolution adopting a supplemental budget of $1,115,630,621 for FY 2026.

Commr. Campione pointed out that the County had already begun using the funds for resurfacing, requiring that adjustment, and opined that this was good news.

Ms. Barker clarified that they added an additional $1.4 million towards new resurfacing.

On a motion by Commr. Morris, seconded by Commr. Smith and carried unanimously by a vote of 4-0, the Board approved an amended budget for Fiscal Year 2026, which included a reconciliation of the beginning fund balance and other adjustments, and Resolution 2026-10 for a supplemental budget for Fiscal Year 2026.

PUBLIC HEARING: RESOLUTION 2026-11 TO VACATE A PLATTED EASEMENT

Mr. Jeff Earhart, Engineering Director for the Public Works Department, commented that this vacation was located in the Dora Pines area and was being brought forward by the Malcomb family, and noted that it was north of Limit Avenue, west of Britt Road, and east of U.S. Highway 441 near the City of Mount Dora in Commissioner District 4. He stated that this vacation was to make the lot buildable by removing the cul-de-sac, sidewalk, and driveway easements that were part of the historic plat.

The Chairman opened the public hearing.

There being no one who wished to address the Board regarding this matter, the Chairman closed the public hearing.

On a motion by Commr. Smith, seconded by Commr. Parks and carried unanimously by a vote of 4-0, the Board approved Resolution 2026-11 to vacate a platted driveway, walkway, and cul-de-sac easement within Lots 200, 201, 218, 219 as shown on the Dora Pines, Unit 1 plat.

PUBLIC HEARING: RESOLUTION 2026-12 VACATION OF A DEEDED DRAINAGE EASEMENT

Mr. Earhart remarked that this was a vacation of part of the Manor Oaks subdivision in the City of Leesburg, and that it was being brought forward by Meritage Homes of Florida. He mentioned that the vacation was located north of Manor Oaks Court, west of U.S. Highway 27, and east of County Road (CR) 33 in Commission District 3, and that the existing ditch flowed through the corner of the subdivision, north through County property, and then through Arlington Ridge towards the lake. He commented that they would relocate the ditch and go around the site to make the property more conducive to the development of the subdivision, and noted that there were some floodplains in the area that the existing canal went through; furthermore, there was a floodplain in the middle of the site that the developer was maintaining. He said that the request was to vacate the part of the drainage easement in the development, and that the developer would construct a new drainage canal around the site and would build a retention pond in that location. He relayed that they had asked the developer to clear the drainage canal through the County property, as there were some blockages, and that the developer had also received permission to work with Arlington Ridge to clear some of the blockages that were in this area. He stated that there was also a development agreement that required the developer to do the following: retaining a right of way use permit in order to construct the new ditch; dedicating the new ditch right of way to the County; providing perpetual maintenance of the ditch; and indemnifying the County for 20 years to ensure that the new ditch would give the same level of flood protection as the existing ditch did, so that if something went wrong in the following 20 years, they would be responsible. He mentioned that the County requested for that to be in perpetuity; however, the developer requested that it would be limited to 20 years, opining that they would be able to see if it was working or not within 20 years.

The Chairman opened the public hearing.

There being no one who wished to address the Board regarding this matter, the Chairman closed the public hearing.

Commr. Campione asked if the Board had any ex parte discussions to disclose.

Commr. Smith indicated that he did.

Commr. Morris opined that the residents should know that they were responsible for this easement, and inquired if that would be in their contract.

Commr. Campione relayed her understanding that it would be on the plat and in the homeowners association (HOA) documents that they were responsible for ongoing maintenance of any stormwater facilities on that plat.

Mr. Dan O'Keefe, an attorney representing Meritage Homes of Florida, indicated that this was correct, and pointed out that the ditch currently was insufficient and overflowed onto the adjacent property. He commented that the realigned easement was engineered to accommodate water for a 100-year storm event; additionally, Meritage Homes of Florida had an offsite swale improvement plan to help the whole system function better by helping to clear the easement downstream, noting that the County would be protected and indemnified. He opined that if anything was going to go wrong with the realigned easement, they would know if there was an issue within 20 years, and noted that Meritage Homes of Florida and the HOA were fully responsible for that. He mentioned that their engineer was in attendance to answer any questions.

Commr. Campione indicated her understanding that there was a retention pond proposed for that area.

Mr. O'Keefe said that this was correct, and explained that the realigned easement would go just outside of that.

Commr. Campione opined that if there was an issue with the water, then it would arguably be isolated to that area instead of going into somebody's backyard.

Mr. O'Keefe opined that this was an improvement to the overall system, and that their engineers were confident that they were fixing and improving the situation.

Commr. Smith questioned why the developer did not just increase the retention pond size to take off the excess water since the current drainage easement went through the middle of their proposed retention pond. He also inquired if there was a bond included with the 20 years of indemnification; additionally, he asked why they were indemnifying the County for 20 years and not in perpetuity. He pointed out that properties with changes done longer than 20 years prior were having issues currently, such as those on Wolf Branch Road; therefore, he would like to see the developer indemnify the County in perpetuity. He indicated his understanding that once the developer finished, the agreement would go to the HOA, and wondered what would happen to the bond if the HOA disbanded. He expressed appreciation for the work done to clean up the ditch even though it was not their responsibility, opining that it would help the overall water flow in this area.

Mr. Lee Susewitt, engineer for Meritage Homes of Florida, replied that the drainage ditch was a conveyance swale, and that according to the SJRWMD, they had to keep their onsite retention separate from the conveyance for the natural flow of the water going through, noting that they would not be able to account for that capacity in their pond regardless. He mentioned that they kept the central wetland area natural and preserved, and opined that shifting the swale around the retention pond, which was on one of the lowest lying areas, was the best use of the property. He commented that even though they tried to get 141 lots, that number went down to 113 lots because of the drainage and the central wetland, opining that the improvements on the site would help everyone in the long run. He remarked that they had the ability to indemnify the property in perpetuity if necessary, and that they had decided on 20 years in the negotiation because they did not want to hold it up forever. He related that the bond would stay in place with the HOA or with

Meritage Homes of Florida and carry over, and that they could put up the reserve to cover it for them if needed so that the funds would be there to cover the bond regardless through the years.

Ms. Marsh pointed out that the agreement required insurance as opposed to a bond, and that they had to maintain a $1 million insurance policy for the term of the agreement, noting that if the County changed that to be in perpetuity, then they would have to maintain it. She remarked that if the HOA became inactive, the County had no mechanism to go back against them for a failure of this drainage system, and that since this development was in the City of Leesburg, the County could not levy a municipal service benefit unit (MSBU) without the City's permission to allow it; therefore, this was a risk that the County would take. She relayed her understanding that Meritage Homes of Florida was going to turn it over once it was built-out, and that they would assign this agreement to the HOA.

Mr. O'Keefe mentioned that the HOA would own the common tracts in the community and have the $1 million insurance policy, and that currently the County paid for the maintenance of the ditch, which was not functioning as intended. He opined that even though it was not perfect, it was much better than what existed currently.

Commr. Smith indicated his understanding that they were willing to put this into perpetuity, and that there was an insurance policy on it. He asked how the Board could make those changes happen.

Ms. Marsh answered that it would be included in the motion, and that before the document was signed, the County would have them resign a corrected document and process all of them for signatures with the County.

Commr. Morris inquired if they were doing a 100-year floodplain.

Mr. O'Keefe replied that it was designed for the 100-year floodplain.

Commr. Parks indicated his understanding that the issue with it being in perpetuity had been resolved, and pointed out that adding the curve lengthened the distance, which was better for water flow and flood protection. He questioned why the lot layout was done before they had this decision approved, and opined that this was done backwards.

Mr. Susewitt mentioned that they had been in conversation with the County through the entirety of the project and had an onsite permit approved to shift the ditch around, and said that they decided to go through the process of vacation and dedication after that. He commented that the way to handle the drainage and how to help it function better onsite and offsite had been part of the conversation for over a year, and that they were currently finalizing everything.

Mr. O'Keefe mentioned that this was not a County project, as it was a City of Leesburg project, and that this one piece was with the County, opining that they could have coordinated it better than they did.

Commr. Parks opined that when there were expectations for a certain number of lots, this outcome could change their plans.

Mr. O'Keefe agreed, and opined that the timing was not coordinated very well.

On a motion by Commr. Smith, seconded by Commr. Parks and carried unanimously by a vote of 4-0, the Board approved the vacation and the developers agreement with the changes of

the development taking on the responsibility of this easement in perpetuity with a guarantee of $1 million in insurance required with indemnification and the agreement being assignable to the HOA.

REGULAR AGENDA

LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA VS. CITY OF MOUNT DORA, ET. AL SETTLEMENT

Ms. Marsh remarked that this was an update regarding the litigation for the Mount Dora Northeast CRA expansion that was currently pending with the court, and that it was in abatement because the County was going through the intergovernmental dispute resolution process. She recalled that at a December 2025 meeting, the City of Mount Dora had requested that the County make the next offer, and that it allowed about 45 days to do that before going into a formal mediation process. She relayed her understanding that they were close to a resolution with only a couple of various concerns, and that in the interest of offering options to the City of Mount Dora, they had two proposals. She recommended that the Board would approve both and send them both to the City of Mount Dora, allowing the City to choose which one would work for them. She related that the first proposal would be that the incremental revenue would be split for the expansion property only with 55 percent going to the City of Mount Dora and 45 percent going to the County, and that the document would include language that would commit the County to using its 45 percent of the incremental revenues for transportation improvements in and immediately adjacent to the CRA boundary. She commented that the second proposal would include a slightly different shift in the percentages, and that the incremental revenues for the expansion property would be 60 percent to the City of Mount Dora and 40 percent to the County; however, the County would request that the City of Mount Dora take over certain identified roads that were within the city proper, noting that the County had already invested a significant amount of funds in making improvements to Limit Avenue, such as the roundabout, to help traffic flow through that area easier. She relayed that the Board could approve one, both, or none of the proposals so that they could communicate something to the City of Mount Dora, noting that the City would then have an approved document to choose from or to not accept at that time. She pointed out the segments on the map that the County would ask the City of Mount Dora to take ownership, maintenance, and jurisdiction of in exchange for the County accepting 40 percent and the City keeping 60 percent of the incremental revenue of the expansion property, including the following: Highland Street from Fifth Avenue to the Orange County line, which was still County maintained; Fifth Avenue from Alexander Street to McDonald Street; Fifth Avenue from Tremain Street to Highland Street; East First Avenue to Pinecrest Road from Highland Street; and all of Limit Avenue between U.S. Highway 441 and Donnelly Street.

Commr. Campione opined that this was a creative approach to offer the two options, and that the City of Mount Dora could decide which option worked best for them.

Ms. Marsh clarified that in addition to the split on the expansion property, the City of Mount Dora had consistently agreed that they would give the County 100 percent of the emergency medical services (EMS) incremental revenue for the entire CRA area, including the expansion property, noting that this was written into these agreements.

Commr. Campione wondered if it was clear enough with the 45/55 percent split that the County would make transportation improvements in and around the CRA area and not immediately adjacent to it, opining that it should be loose enough for that interpretation.

Ms. Marsh commented that the current language for that proposal said that Lake County would use its share of the retained incremental General Fund revenues for intersection improvements, sidewalks, and stormwater management associated with County owned and maintained roads within, near, or adjacent to the redevelopment area, including SR 44 and U.S. Highway 441.

Commr. Campione opined that either option was a good resolution, and that even though the new development should never have been included in the CRA, the City of Mount Dora had the right to make that legislative decision. She opined that a court might rule in the City's favor, and that since this was a decent resolution, the County was hoping that the City might accept one of these options. She commented that her preference was to not approve either option and to continue with the lawsuit; however, in the essence of saving attorney's fees and time she preferred to have this resolved and to make this compromise in the best interest of intergovernmental cooperation, opining that the City of Mount Dora had many issues currently, such as Donnelly Street and drainage issues.

Commr. Morris said that he did not like lawsuits.

Commr. Campione opined that the Board would discuss this again if the City of Mount Dora did not accept either of the proposals.

Ms. Marsh clarified that the motion was to send both proposals to the City of Mount Dora and to let them choose.

On a motion by Commr. Parks, seconded by Commr. Morris and carried by a vote of 3-1, the Board approved the proposals for a settlement in Lake County, Florida vs. City of Mount Dora.

Commr. Smith voted no.

RESOLUTION 2026-13 TO ADVERTISE AN EASEMENT VACATION

Mr. Earhart clarified that this was not a public hearing, and that he just had information to share with the Board. He commented that this item was a request to advertise, and that even though this would normally be a consent agenda item, staff was recommending that the Board deny this request until they came to an agreement with the developer, which involved the Bailey family and others. He related that this was located in Commission District 1, south and west of Montevista Road, north of Pine Island Road, and east of East Redwing Road, and that the County was requesting that the applicant provide 33 feet of right of way for East Redwing Road; however, they only wanted to provide 25 feet, which was an eight-foot difference. He mentioned that the County was open to vacating the easement area, which was about 1,275 feet, except for the additional eight feet, noting that the road required 33 feet from centerline of the road to maintain the appropriate right of way. He remarked that when the developments to the north or the south came in, they would have to give a 33-foot right of way as well, and that even though the County only had 25 feet of right of way on that road, the County did not want to give away something that was already owned and needed so that it would not have to be bought back in the future. He

commented that the petition filed was to vacate all but 25 feet of right of way from the centerline of East Redwing Road, and that the Public Works Department staff recommended a denial as they wanted to retain 33 feet. He relayed that the applicant did not agree with staff's recommendation of preserving the 33 feet and was still requesting to proceed with their application for 25 feet of right of way; therefore, the resolution was based on the applicant's request to continue despite the recommended denial.

Ms. Marsh commented that if the Board denied the request to advertise, then it would close the vacation petition, and no further action would be taken, with the right of way remaining under the County's control. She remarked that if the Board chose to move this item forward to a public hearing, then it could be brought forward as the applicant requested reserving only 25 feet of right of way, or it could be brought forward with the County's request of retaining 33 feet, noting that the public hearing could move forward with vacating all but the 25 or 33 feet of right of way depending on how the Board wished to proceed.

Mr. Earhart indicated that the applicant's representative was in attendance.

Commr. Parks relayed his understanding that this could be tabled.

Ms. Marsh clarified that the decision being requested on the current day was to deny this item for advertising, which would close the petition, and that the process would then be over.

Commr. Parks opined that if this item was tabled on the current day, there would be more time.

Ms. Marsh stated that the applicant did not want to give the 33 feet.

Commr. Smith indicated his understanding that the County currently had an easement that went to the road, and that the applicant would like that easement to be vacated. He opined that since the County already had access to the easement, the County could tell the applicant that it was retaining 33 feet, and said that he did not understand how the applicant could dictate to the County what could be retained.

Mr. Earhart stated that he also did not understand the developer's reluctance to provide the eight additional feet when the County was willing to vacate 1,200 feet.

Commr. Smith relayed his understanding that the owner had a fence currently at 25 feet, which also went across this easement, and opined that since he may not want to move his fence, the County could allow the fence to remain until there was a use for the right of way.

Ms. Marsh commented that this could be included in the vacation petition. She mentioned that this property was in Groveland Farms, which was platted in 1911, and that this had been a publicly dedicated easement since then.

Commr. Smith indicated his understanding that the applicant owned much land there, knowing that this easement went to the road, and that even though the owner wanted the County to vacate this easement, which he was in favor of, the owner wanted to dictate how much right of way the County could retain, which he opined did not make sense.

Ms. Madelyn Damon, attorney representing the applicant, stated that the property owners were seeking to vacate the public right of way, which currently served no practical purpose, and that East Redwing Road currently had a 25-foot right of way as recorded in public records and

provided in the sketch and legal description prepared by their surveyor. She related that the County requested that the property owners dedicate an additional eight feet as a condition of the vacation, effectively transferring a portion of their property to the County without just compensation, and that the County had indicated that the property owner's refusal to dedicate this additional right of way was a basis for denial. She remarked that according to the County, the purpose of this request was to come in line with the roadway classifications, and that as a policy matter in the interest of conserving taxpayer funds, the County would not want to vacate public right of way and then have to buy it back to improve a public road. She commented that the County wanted to acquire that right of way now to avoid compensating the property owners should the County ever wish to improve that right of way; however, she opined that because East Redwing Road and the surrounding area was in the Green Swamp area, future improvements to this right of way were highly unlikely. She relayed that there were no current plans to improve that road at the present time, and that providing that additional eight feet of right of way would also create an inconsistency along East Redwing Road. She pointed out that the entirety of that right of way was 25 feet, and that the only portion of that road with the additional eight feet would be where the vacation was; therefore, the County would need to obtain an additional eight feet from all property owners along East Redwing Road on the east and the west sides. She mentioned that this item was just for the approval to advertise, and that the Board would not need to come to a decision for the vacation on the current day. She requested that the Board would approve this item, and that they could plead their case further at the public hearing.

Commr. Smith said that even though Ms. Damon indicated that the County was asking the property owner to give up eight feet of his property, this was not the case, and that the County was telling the property owner that the vacation would stop at eight feet short of where he would like it to go, noting that he owned the rest of the eight feet on both sides.

Ms. Damon clarified that Mr. Bradley Bailey owned the property to the north, and that Mr. Jason Bailey owned the property to the south.

Commr. Smith pointed out that across the street there was another easement that was vacated by the County, and that a 33-foot right of way was retained, which was consistent with the County's request. He opined that if the owner wanted to keep his fence in place, then he could sign an agreement with the County indicating that he could use that property up until the time the County needed it for roadway or stormwater improvements.

Mr. Don Bailey, the applicant, stated that this was part of a 100-acre cattle farm, and that he had given each of his sons 30 acres and wanted to clear the title. He commented that he had initially given the County 50 feet for the road, and that his sons did not want to give up the extra eight feet. He asked the Board to approve the hearing, and opined that it could be worked out. He questioned why they were being asked to give up that land this early, opining that it would be a long time before the road was widened, if ever.

Commr. Campione inquired if Mr. Bailey understood that the only part the County was asking to be retained was just within the easement, and said that it was not on the whole length of the property.

Mr. Bailey commented that he knew it was not for the whole property, and noted that he owned much property on that road. He remarked that he was curious about what was planned for that area, and said that he did not want to give anything up that would help him.

Commr. Campione mentioned that the vacation was discretionary, as the easement was owned by the public, and that it encumbered his property. She opined that from the public's interest, which the BCC represented, it would be better for the County to keep the part that may be needed one day in case the road needed to be widened; otherwise, she opined that it would make more sense to leave the easement in place because then the County would be assured of the 33 feet it needed.

Commr. Smith pointed out that this was not Mr. Bailey's property, as it was the public's property, and that the County just wanted to retain eight additional feet and give them the rest.

Mr. Bailey said that if the Board approved to advertise the public hearing, then he would work with his sons to take care of it.

Commr. Campione opined that the Board should approve to advertise for the vacation, and that if the vacation was voted against at the next meeting, then the matter would die.

Commr. Smith remarked that he was not willing to vote for 25 feet, opining that it was in the public's interest to keep it. He stated that the job of the BCC was to do what could be done to help all of Lake County, whether it was for 10 years from the current day or 100 years. He mentioned that even though this road was in the Green Swamp, Dewey Robbins Road, which had been an orange grove road when he was a child, was also in the Green Swamp, and that they should consider this, opining that there was no telling what this road was going to be in 50 years. He opined that it was the BCC's responsibility to look ahead to the future, and that this was what he was trying to do.

Commr. Parks commented that he agreed with Commissioner Smith and Commissioner Campione, and that he was wondering how eight feet could cause this large of an issue. He related that Mr. Bailey could discuss this with his sons; however, the dedication needed to be there.

Mr. Bailey opined that even if it did not sound like much, in farming and agriculture, people were sensitive about giving up anything.

Commr. Smith pointed out that Mr. Bailey did not have it currently.

Commr. Parks opined that someone may be advising this for economic gain, and he wondered why eight feet was holding up this application.

Commr. Campione opined that the key was to discuss this, and said that she could meet with Mr. Bailey and his sons. She reiterated that the only part that the County was asking to keep was inside that easement area, and that if the County was going to give up the public's interest on that easement that encumbered his son's property, then the County wanted to keep enough feet next to the road.

Commr. Smith said that he was also be amenable to meet with Mr. Bailey's family, and that he would be willing to go out the property and look at it.

Commr. Morris asked if it could be advertised with the 33 feet.

Commr. Campione opined that it could be advertised as requested.

Ms. Marsh recommended that it be moved forward to be advertised with the County retaining 33 feet, noting that it could be less but not more once it had been advertised.

On a motion by Commr. Parks, seconded by Commr. Smith and carried unanimously by a vote of 4-0, the Board approved Resolution 2026-13 to advertise a public hearing to vacate a portion of an unnamed platted Right-of-Way easement with the County retaining a 33-foot right of way.

COMMISSIONERS REPORTS

COMMISSIONER PARKS – VICE CHAIRMAN AND DISTRICT 2

PUBLIC LANDS AND TRAILS ACQUISITION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Commr. Parks relayed that there had been a Public Lands and Trails Acquisition Advisory Committee (PLTAAC) meeting, and opined that the committee was doing a wonderful job. He mentioned that there was much discussion about philosophies, such as some points being worth a greater percentage than others, and that there were some changes made to the review criteria. He commented that the PLTAAC recommended approval of the revised review criteria for both the trails and the public lands categories, and that there would be a report on the decisions soon. He related that the PLTAAC would not be meeting again until April 2026; however, they wanted to meet more often. He stated that staff had expressed concern about meeting more often because of the constraints they had, and opined that the Board should be thoughtful about trying to help staff in their efforts to get applications done quickly. He remarked that even though there were many people in attendance with interest in selling their properties, some of them walked out when they heard about the timeframes, noting that it would take a year or more to close on those properties. He relayed his understanding that some property owners already had developer interest or offers, and opined that there was a race to get those properties into the system as quickly as possible. He wondered if the application period could be opened again on February 10, 2026, which would be based off the new review criteria that the PLTAAC approved, noting that this could be discussed and decided on at the BCC meeting on that day. He asked that this be placed on the agenda at that time, opining that this would speed up the process of purchasing properties. He mentioned that they still needed to decide how much of the bond should be released at a time, and opined that if the application could be opened before the committee met again in April 2026, then this could make a large difference on some of the properties. He pointed out that the decision to purchase those lands would come back to the BCC, and that the PLTAAC could start reviewing some of the applications as they came in.

COMMISSIONER CAMPIONE – CHAIRMAN AND DISTRICT 4

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Commr. Campione related that there had been three public meetings on the Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan) update, and that she attended the ones in the Cities of Umatilla, Leesburg, and Clermont, opining that they were good meetings and had good attendance. She mentioned that the public indicated concerns about developments, jurisdictions, transportation, congestion, inadequate public facilities, water issues, trails, roads, concurrency, and the Growth Management Act, which was a requirement by the State. She commented that the County did not have a map

yet and did not know if the existing inventory would be sufficient for what was projected, opining that there were many difficult issues in the future to address.

Commr. Parks encouraged the County staff to reach out to the younger adults, and noted that this was discussed at the City of Clermont meeting. He opined that their input was very valuable for how to write the Comp Plan, and that it was important to consider where the County would go in 20 years.

Commr. Campione opined that since this was supposed to be passed off to the next generation, their input was important; however, she opined that those who were older and wiser needed to make the decisions to ensure they had what they needed.

DONNELLY STREET COLLAPSE AND FLOODING

Commr. Campione commented that she attended a meeting in the City of Mount Dora in the prior week regarding the Donnelly Street collapse and flooding, and noted that there was staff there from the Public Works Department. She stated that the City went over what had been done through the years, what could have been done, what was supposed to have been done and maintained, and what they wanted to do in the future. She remarked that the City was going to come back with a timeframe for maintenance; however, there were issues with the structures that collapsed, and discussion about how those could be rebuilt better so they did not collapse again. She requested that the Public Works Department review the structure that came out of Lake Gertrude, and opined that the flooding was primarily along those areas where there was much velocity and volume of water coming through and washing out areas. She expressed concern that there was not enough outfall from Lake Gertrude to get water out fast enough, and opined that if that basin filled up and could not empty out to Lake Dora, then there could be flooding. She commented that even if there was increased drainage and structures in place, there could be too much water going into the lake that had nowhere to go. She recommended contacting the SJRWMD because it was the County's outfall structure from Lake Gertrude to Lake Dora, and opined that it was not large enough to handle the amount of water that would need to leave there to prevent flooding.

COMMISSIONER SMITH – DISTRICT 3

NATIONAL DISC JOCKEY DAY

Commr. Smith stated that it was National Disc Jockey Day.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to be brought to the attention of the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 11:28 a.m.

_____
LESLIE CAMPIONE, CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

_____
GARY J COONEY, CLERK