A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

MARCH 10, 2026

The Lake County Board of County Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, March 10, 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; Anthony Sabatini; Kirby Smith; and Timothy Morris. 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; Mary Burns, Accounting Director; and Stephanie Cash, Deputy Clerk.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE

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

Pastor Chase Allen, with First Baptist Church of Umatilla, gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA UPDATE

Ms. Jennifer Barker, County Manager, stated that Tabs 18 through 20, as well as the Annexation Report, were added after the agenda was first published, and requested that they be moved under the regular agenda. She mentioned that a business impact statement and an affordable housing impact statement were added to Tab 13, and she requested that Tab 14 be pulled to be brought back at a later date; furthermore, a conflict waiver was added for Ms. Michelle Craske on Tab 17.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Commr. Campione introduced Ms. Noelle Schnacky, Miss Florida's Teen 2025, and said that she was a Lake County resident. She relayed that Ms. Schnacky was a lifelong Central Florida resident and a Minneola High School graduate whose leadership and advocacy had brought visibility to Lake County through her work raising awareness of congenital heart defects and promoting cardiovascular health, which included the following: she was the founder and president of Hope for Heart Kids, which was a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that supported children and families impacted by congenital heart defects through hospital book distributions, community outreach, and educational initiatives; her children's book collection had been distributed to pediatric heart patients in eighteen states and in three countries; in 2024 Ms. Schnacky played a key role in supporting Mr. William Roberts, Principal for Lake Minneola High School, in receiving the high school voters registration award, highlighting her continued commitment to civic engagement, youth leadership, and educational excellence within the community; she had been honored by Mayor Buddy Dyer, with the City of Orlando, for her contributions to the Central Florida community and her efforts to raise awareness for congenital heart defects, which was the most common birth defect in the United States (U.S.); she had been recognized locally in the *Lake and Sumter Style Magazine's* 40 Under 40 list as an honoree, highlighting her impact leadership and influence in the community; she had received national distinction as a top seven community service achievement finalist at Miss America's Teen 2025,

recognizing her work among hundreds of young women nationwide for exceptional service, leadership, and civic engagement; she served as an American Heart Association youth ambassador advocating for proactive cardiovascular health education, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) awareness, and heart healthy lifestyles with an emphasis in engaging young adult and youth audiences; through school visits, community events, public appearances, and digital outreach, she represented Lake County as a positive role model for youth leadership, volunteerism, and public health advocacy; and as a Minneola High School alumni, her legacy continued locally through her support of the Heart of Minneola Scholarship, which recognized students who demonstrated commitment to living a cardiovascular healthy lifestyle and who served as positive examples for their peers, families, and the broader community, noting that this scholarship reflected her ongoing dedication to investing in the next generation of Lake County leaders. She opined that this indicated much achievement and community involvement, and she presented a certificate on behalf of the BCC recognizing Ms. Schnacky for her hard work and dedicated service.

Ms. Schnacky stated that she was honored to be in attendance with many people who were affecting the community in a positive way. She commented that she had started a 501(c)(3) called Hope for Heart Kids to continue the legacy of a cousin who had been born with hypoplastic left heart syndrome and passed away during a heart transplant at 15 years old, and that she was grateful to honor him and continue on his legacy in this way. She mentioned that her family had a couple of ministries, including JWLKRS Worship and a women's ministry, and she expressed appreciation for the certificate.

MINUTES APPROVAL

On a motion by Commr. Parks, seconded by Commr. Morris and carried unanimously by a vote of 5-0, the Board approved the minutes for the BCC meeting of February 2, 2026 (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.

Ms. Tomi Newberry, a resident of the City of Eustis, stated that her family had moved to their home in 2022, which had a 50-foot strip of land that was dedicated to the public in 1990 for roadway purposes, and that even though the strip was public, it was not maintained by the County, noting that they paid property taxes on it. She opined that it had created a dangerous legal loophole that prevented the Lake County Sheriff's Office (LCSO) from protecting them on their own land, and that the easement was not necessary for the neighbor living behind them to access public roads and was a luxury access to a paved road. She pointed out that the neighbor's property had driveway access via Old Post Office Lane, and that they were not landlocked. She opined that this access had led to a long-documented cycle of criminal harassment, which included blocking the driveway and entrance for deliveries and visitors, and said that even though they had called the LCSO many

times, law enforcement could not tow or arrest the neighbor for a civil parking issue on a public road. She requested that the Board would direct the County Attorney to initiate a petition to vacate and return the land to private acreage so they could enforce no trespassing laws for their safety.

Commr. Campione commented that typically, a vacation petition was initiated by the landowner, and that it would be reviewed by the Public Works Department and then come before the BCC. She mentioned that issues, such as unwanted access, would be considered with the review of the application, and that Ms. Newberry could work with the Public Works Department on this issue.

Ms. Barker remarked that Mr. Jeff Earhart, Engineering and Operations Director for the Public Works Department, could assist Ms. Newberry out in the rotunda.

PRESENTATION OF PROCLAMATION 2026-19

On a motion by Commr. Smith, seconded by Commr. Morris and carried unanimously by a vote of 5-0, the Board approved Proclamation 2026-19 declaring March 15 through 21, 2026 as Florida Surveyors and Mappers week.

Commr. Campione read and presented Proclamation 2026-19 to the surveyors in attendance. She indicated appreciation for all that they did, opining that much business, activity, and transactions in Lake County could not occur without the work they did in the field, including accurately describing boundaries and facilitating transactions and corrections to help solve boundary disputes and protect natural resources.

CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT AND COMPTROLLER'S CONSENT AGENDA

On a motion by Commr. Morris, seconded by Commr. Sabatini and carried unanimously by a vote of 5-0, the Board approved the Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller's Consent Agenda, Items 1 through 3, 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.

Windsor Cay CDD Public Facilities Report

Notice is hereby provided of having received the Windsor Cay Community Development District Initial Public Facilities Report in accordance with Section 189.008, Florida Statutes.

Lake County's Semi-Annual Investment Report

Lake County's Semi-Annual Investment Report of December 31, 2025 is hereby provided.

COUNTY MANAGER'S CONSENT AGENDA

Commr. Morris requested that Tab 11 be pulled to the regular agenda.

On a motion by Commr. Sabatini, seconded by Commr. Parks and carried unanimously by a vote of 5-0, the Board approved the Consent Agenda, Tabs 4 through 10, pulling Tab 11 to the regular agenda, as follows:

PROCLAMATIONS

Recommend approval of Proclamation 2026-16 designating May 2026 as Law Enforcement Month in Lake County, per Commissioner Campione.

Recommend approval of Liberty Tree Proclamation 2026-17, per Commissioner Campione.

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Economic Development

Recommend approval and execution of the Memorandum of Understanding/Funding Agreement with Career Source Central Florida for the Future Ready Lake Program to support training and up-skilling for Lake County residents laid off by Kroger and Ocado.

The fiscal impact is $360,000 (expenditure) and is within, and will not exceed, the Fiscal Year 2026 budget.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Fire Rescue

Recommend approval of a Fourth Amendment to the Interlocal Agreement for Fire Protection and Rescue Services with the City of Mascotte. There is no fiscal impact. Commission District 1.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Housing and Community Services

Recommend approval and execution of a Termination and Release of Declaration of Covenants and Restrictions and Mortgage to release the restrictive covenants and Mortgage/Note executed by the Okahumpka Community Club, Inc.

The estimated fiscal impact is $27 (expenditure) and is within, and will not exceed, the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget. Commission District 5.

Library Services

Recommend approval to designate Lindsay Platt as the Single Administrative Head of the Lake County Library System and authorize the Chairman to execute Florida Department of State, Division of Library and Information Services Form DLIS/SA01, State Aid to Libraries Grant Certification of Credentials – Single Library Administrative Head.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Public Works

Recommend approval of an agreement to provide for the repair of pavement damage that occurred to six County-maintained roads in Yalaha during permitted work. There is no fiscal impact. Commission District 3.

TAB 11: SALES AGREEMENT FOR RHAMES PROPERTY

Commr. Morris relayed his understanding that the County was buying five acres and a 1987 mobile home for $550,000, and questioned if all of that property was needed. He said that the agenda item stated that the property was appraised at $499,850, which was approximately 10 percent or $50,100 less than the purchase value, opining that this did not make sense.

Commr. Smith relayed his understanding that the County was buying a piece of property to build a road.

Ms. Barker clarified that the property was being purchased for the widening of County Road (CR) 455 or Ray Goodgame Parkway, and asked Mr. Earhart if the County needed the entire five acres.

Mr. Earhart answered that the County did not, and explained that this was to extend CR 455 from where it ended at Lost Lake Road down to Johns Lake Road and continuing through the Cemex property to the end. He commented that they only needed about one half acre; however, when the County only did a partial purchase, it sometimes cost almost as much as it would to acquire the total property. He mentioned that once the County had the entire property, there would be an option to resell it or potentially use it for some other County purpose, such as a fire station

or recreational area, and noted that across the street, the County had paid more for a smaller portion.

Commr. Morris asked if the County was using Federal grant funding.

Mr. Earhart replied that this was using State matching funds, which was 50/50.

Commr. Morris indicated his understanding that the County's cost was $275,000 for a 1987 mobile home on five acres, and he asked about eminent domain.

Commr. Campione opined that the County would spend more for eminent domain because it would be a partial take.

Commr. Morris relayed his understanding that the County also had to pay relocation assistance in addition to the $550,000.

Mr. Earhart commented that the relocation assistance could be up to $50,000; however, he pointed out that across the street, the County paid more than $500,000 for just a strip of land, which was a partial take, and that there were other eminent domain issues.

Commr. Campione explained that the County would be paying attorney fees for the other side, appraisal fees, and other costs, and that there would have to be multiple appraisals. She opined that the County wanted to avoid eminent domain because of the costs and would try to work with the property owners to facilitate a transaction that was mutually agreeable and acceptable instead of forcing it on them.

Mr. Earhart elaborated that the person who owned this property passed away, and that her son and daughter were living there, noting that they were willing to sell the property. He opined that the County could possibly surplus the excess property and regain most of the funding being spent if there was not another beneficial County purpose.

Commr. Smith remarked that the County had the opportunity to purchase an entire piece of land, and opined that it was better than buying a 50-foot strip for the same amount. He commented that once the property was purchased, the County could do whatever it wanted with it, including reselling it to recoup the $275,000 or using it for County purposes. He opined that people had the opportunity to do what they wanted with their land and determine if they wanted to sell all of it or none of it.

Commr. Morris inquired how long the County was going to hold onto the land to do CR 455.

Mr. Earhart replied that the desire for this stretch was about two blocks, and that the City of Clermont would like the connection down to Johns Lake Road. He related that the County was planning to do that soon, assuming that there was funding, and that the connection down to Hartwood Marsh Road would take longer; additionally, he opined that since Cemex was considering selling that large property to a developer, the developer could construct the rest of the road from there to Hartwood Marsh Road. He opined that it would take about three to five years to build that; however, the City of Clermont would like it to be built in the following year.

Commr. Parks commented that there were already people that drove through there.

Mr. Earhart remarked that there was currently a dirt road, and that the County had blocked it off.

Commr. Campione reiterated that once the property was purchased and the actual amount needed for the road was utilized, the rest could be surplus and sold or used for a public purpose, allowing the County to recoup a portion of what was being paid.

Commr. Sabatini expressed appreciation to Commissioner Morris for bringing this to the attention of the Board, initiating the conversation, and asking the questions.

Commr. Morris opined that there were times when the County was taken advantage of, and pointed out that property owners could hold onto their property as long as they wanted to.

On a motion by Commr. Smith, seconded by Commr. Parks and carried by a vote of 4-1, the Board approved the following: to initiate a Real Estate Purchase and Sales Agreement for Property with Mr. Donald E. Rhames and Ms. Laura Mae Rhames; to authorize the County Manager to approve any amendments to the Purchase Agreement that do not have a fiscal impact, including but not limited to extended possession for Mr. Donald E. Rhames as allowed by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Residential Relocation and Moving Assistance under the Florida Relocation Assistance (Relocation Assistance) Program; to authorize the County Manager to approve any required expenditures of relocation benefits to the eligible displaced individual(s) pursuant to FDOT's Relocation Assistance Program guidelines and requirements; to authorize the Public Works staff to work post-closing on the encumbrances with the County Attorney's Office; and authorization for the Chairman to execute any necessary closing documents.

Commr. Morris voted no.

PUBLIC HEARING: ORDINANCE 2026-10 AFFORDABLE HOUSING ASSISTANCE TRUST FUND

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; AMENDING SECTION 11-33, LAKE COUNTY CODE, ENTITLED LAKE COUNTY AFFORDABLE HOUSING ASSISTANCE TRUST FUND; UPDATING ELIGIBLE USES OF FUNDS FOR CONSISTENCY WITH STATE LAW; AMENDING SECTION 11-40, LAKE COUNTY CODE, ENTITLED AFFORDABLE HOUSING COVENANTS AND GUARANTEES; PROVIDING FOR REGULATIONS ADDRESSING THE IMPACTS OF SECTION 125.01055, FLORIDA STATUTES, KNOWN AS THE LIVE LOCAL ACT; 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 commented that State law required the County to comply with the Live Local Act.

On a motion by Commr. Sabatini, seconded by Commr. Parks and carried unanimously by a vote of 5-0, the Board approved Ordinance 2026-10 amending the Lake County Affordable Housing Assistance Trust Fund and Live Local Act requirements pursuant to Senate Bill 1730 (2025).

PUBLIC HEARING: ORDINANCE 2026-11 TREE PROTECTION

Ms. Marsh 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; AMENDING SECTION 9.02.00, LAKE COUNTY CODE, LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS, ENTITLED TREE PROTECTION; CLARIFYING TREE REMOVAL REQUIREMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH A DEVELOPMENT PROJECT; 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.

Mr. Adam Edgington, a resident of Lake County, opined that even though there was no fiscal impact to the County, there would be a fiscal impact to the individual citizen, and that every regulation and ordinance that was put forward was creating additional bureaucracy and additional work for County staff. He opined that the more regulations were introduced, the more burdens were carried by the people, and that landowners would lose land value; additionally, he opined that the Lake County Property Appraiser would see an increase in cases of people asking for their appraisals to be reduced.

Commr. Campione wondered if Mr. Edgington was concerned that keeping large trees on a property would reduce the value of the property, or if his concern was based on the ordinance standing in the way of a road that could be built or lots that could be developed.

Mr. Edgington indicated concerns about those items as well as moving roads, redesigning developments, and individual lot owners with salvaged trees, opining that since those trees were going to die, the owner would have to pay to remove it. He also opined that additional government regulation did not help the economy.

Commr. Campione opined that usually those trees died because the developers raised the land around them or cut the root system, and hoped that this would not be the case. She mentioned that the County already had this ordinance in place, and that those trees were already supposed to be protected; however, there was confusion over at what point the developer would have to adhere to the ordinance. She remarked that the proposed ordinance was just clarifying an already existing law, and hoped that developers would be more conscientious and design the property so that the trees would enhance it.

Mr. Edgington related that his neighborhood was developed in 1995, and that there were many mature oak trees, opining that it was a beautiful neighborhood. He opined that the two trees that were salvaged were passed to the buyer who currently had the burden of tree removal, and that there would be additional County regulations to remove them. He asked how many people would retroactively be affected by having to go back through review, and said that his email asking this question was not responded to.

Commr. Morris opined that this ordinance was not for the single lot owner, and said that when the Board received a plot plan for a development, it showed the roads but not the trees, noting that it was voted on this way. He opined that the ordinance would have developers focus on how to save heritage trees, and that even though it would cost them more funds, he would rather see

that than to have the property mowed down, noting that most of what was in this ordinance was already in effect.

Mr. Edgington opined that there would be additional regulations, and that there would have to be adjustments and reengineering.

Commr. Campione relayed her understanding that this was already the law, and opined that there was confusion over how this was applied.

Mr. Edgington opined that page six section C seemed to be a retroactive punitive deal, which he opined could cause the County to rereview, and he wondered why the County would burden staff to redo the work if the rules were followed originally. He stated that he did not receive a response to that question from his email.

Ms. Marsh explained that for any development that had an approved zoning ordinance but had not yet submitted a site plan, preliminary plat, or master park plan as of March 1, 2026, the developer would be required to design around heritage trees or obtain a variance, and that if a developer was already in the development review process, then staff would not make them redesign anything. She pointed out that the developer should have already designed around heritage trees because the current code clearly said, "Removal of a heritage tree shall be prohibited unless it poses a danger to persons or property."

Mr. Edgington opined that this section should be wiped entirely if it was followed originally by the County, and that the additional language was unneeded.

Ms. Marsh commented that it was additional protection for people that had submitted applications, and that it could be taken out if the Board wanted to do that.

Mr. Edgington opined that additional rules, regulations, and burdens on the citizens did not seem arbitrary, and that the County had put together a solution to find an issue.

Commr. Campione indicated her understanding that there were people who were using their conceptual site plan attached to a zoning ordinance to justify taking all the trees out because they rationalized that the County would not have approved it if the trees could not all be removed to accommodate it, even though there was an ordinance that said the developer had to keep those heritage trees. She stated that this ordinance needed to be clarified because people were trying to circumvent the rules, and that a concept plan was just a drawing on a piece of paper, noting that it was not a tree survey.

Mr. Edgington inquired if this was not clear in the previous ordinance.

Commr. Smith questioned if the concept plan given to the County was the engineered plan for the development, and Mr. Edgington indicated that it was not. Commissioner Smith then commented that the concept plan did not give a reason to take out the heritage trees, and that this ordinance was clarifying that one could not do that.

Mr. Edgington mentioned that he had asked in an email how much of an additional burden this created for staff and how many developments would have to go back through the planning and zoning process.

Commr. Parks relayed his understanding that staff brought this forward because they wanted the ordinance to be clarified so that they could enforce what was in place.

Ms. Marsh said that this was correct, and commented that what created an additional burden on staff was constant arguments with developers and their attorneys over interpretation of the code. She stated that rather than continuing to argue with developers' attorneys, which was where this came from, the County was clarifying language from a 2012 code so that staff did not have to argue with developers and their attorneys any longer on the fact that heritage trees were protected. She mentioned that she had responded to Mr. Edgington's email as well as to the Home Builders Association of Lake-Sumter (HBA-LS) email, which he was copied on; additionally, Ms. Kathleen Dial, Executive Director for Development Services, had spoken to him about this item.

Mr. Edgington remarked that he had not received a response to his question asking how many developments had been affected and how many potential submissions had been redone.

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

Commr. Campione wondered if applications still in the process would have to comply with this ordinance, and asked how many were affected.

Ms. Marsh commented that Mr. Edgington wanted staff to go back and calculate how many projects were in the process that may have heritage trees on their property where somebody may or may not have to redesign something, and that staff did not want to spend the time undertaking that exercise, noting that for those already in the development review process, if staff missed that comment, then they were not going back and making them redesign.

Commr. Campione indicated her understanding that the County was not going to go back and make someone redesign a development if it was missed initially, and that from this point forward, the applications being reviewed would have to comply.

Ms. Marsh said that this was correct, and clarified that if an applicant was in the development review process and staff did not make that comment to them, then they were not going to go back and have them redesign or redo a preliminary plat or site plan. She pointed out that since October 2025, they had been including a specific provision in every Planned Unit Development District (PUD) ordinance or conditional use permit (CUP) ordinance that came before the Board telling people that they had to design around heritage trees, and that this was not new, as it was pending this ordinance coming before the Board.

Commr. Campione opined that certainty was key to doing business, and that having clear language was important. She opined that this ordinance would make the rules clear so that the County would not end up in disagreements over what the ordinance said and was intending to do, and that everybody would understand.

Commr. Smith commented that he had one request for Section 9.02.02, and that he wanted all of their tree measurements to be the diameter at 54 inches from the ground instead of being measured at breast height, which he opined was ambiguous depending on how tall a person was.

Commr. Parks relayed his understanding that he wanted to define the diameter at breast height (DBH) throughout the code so that it would be the same exact height.

Commr. Smith opined that the ordinance could just use heritage trees and change nothing else.

Commr. Campione questioned if heritage trees were measured at 54 inches, opining that this would make sense for the others as well.

Commr. Parks related that DBH was usually 48 inches; however, the ordinance could say that for purposes of this code, DBH shall be defined as 54 inches.

Commr. Campione wondered if the measurement should be different for different types of trees.

Commr. Smith remarked that in the section where it listed the protected trees, it said that sand pines and scrub oak trees would be measured at breast height, and that he would like it to be consistent with the heritage tree height of 54 inches.

Mr. Mike Fitzgerald, Director for the Office of Planning and Zoning, remarked that this would be consistent with Section 9.02.12 regarding heritage trees where the size was measured at 54 inches from the surface of the ground.

Commr. Parks mentioned that the DBH was not defined, and opined that it could be defined with an exact measurement.

Mr. Fitzgerald opined that they could remove DBH and just say 54 inches from the ground.

Commr. Smith opined that it should be consistent throughout the code.

Commr. Campione agreed that DBH needed to be removed and be referenced as 54 inches from the ground.

Ms. Marsh remarked that since this was part of the motion, they would go through the ordinance and ensure that all the measurements were using the same standard.

On a motion by Commr. Smith, seconded by Commr. Parks and carried by a vote of 4-0, the Board approved Ordinance 2026-11 amending Section 9.02.00, Lake County Code, Land Development Regulations, entitled Tree Protection with a change to clarify the height of the tree measurement as 54 inches from the ground.

Commr. Sabatini was not present for the vote.

REGULAR AGENDA

NAMING OF COUNTY FACILITIES

Mr. Bobby Bonilla, Assistant County Manager, commented that this item was a request from Ms. Kathy Stone, the applicant, regarding the application for Lake County Policy LCC-69 titled “Naming County Facilities and Placement of Memorials.” He mentioned that the Lake County Water Authority (LCWA) currently owned the property at Hickory Point Park, and that in 2016, a portion of the soccer fields was set aside in memory of Mr. Mike Stone, late husband of Ms. Stone, and that since the LCWA Board voted to rename the facility the Hickory Point Recreational Complex in June 2024, they were currently working in conjunction with the Office of Tourism on the amenities as Hickory Point continued to evolve. He remarked that staff was seeking direction on the preference of the Board regarding the kind of memorial or designation for the facility.

Commr. Campione related that she had known Mr. Stone, and noted that he was instrumental in creating those fields as well as other recreational venues in Lake County. She recalled that Mr. Stone began a mission to bring those soccer fields there, and said that when he

passed, the Board discussed honoring him. She commented that even though the soccer fields were owned by the LCWA at that time, the County managed and oversaw them, and that it was decided to place a sign there in memory of Mr. Stone. She stated that she was surprised that the LCWA did not want to honor Mr. Stone with the signage, and that her preference was to find a way to honor him at that location in a very visible way.

Mr. Bonilla believed that the LCWA Board and BCC both intended to honor Mr. Stone's legacy; however, because the park was evolving, there were many amenities and changes to the facility that would change the footprint of this area. He elaborated that it was more than a soccer complex, and that there were multi-purpose fields that were used in many ways based on current needs, including a track area where Olympians trained.

Commr. Parks wondered why this was on the agenda on the current day, and opined that this could have been resolved before. He opined that Mr. Stone was amazing, and noted that Ms. Stone could not attend on the current day because of work, noting that she was asked to fill out a form for naming a County facility. He opined that the intent was never to rename the facility or change what was done on June 12, 2024 renaming the facility to the Hickory Point Recreation Complex, and that the LCWA may not have been aware of the consequences of the name of the fields going away. He opined that even though there were plans for the site, this was not a request to rename the whole complex, and he inquired if the fields could be memorialized and named after Mr. Stone to give Ms. Stone something she could see. He commented that he did not know when the whole project would be finished, and opined that there could be something the County could do for the time being.

Commr. Smith mentioned that he was the liaison for the Parks, Recreation and Trails Advisory Board, and that there had been discussion and agreement that Mr. Stone would be honored somewhere. He commented that they did not know where this would be because the master plan was not fully developed yet; however, when it was done, Mr. Stone would certainly have a place in the fields.

Commr. Parks opined that this could be made clear to Ms. Stone, and that staff could possibly give her some assurance.

Commr. Campione suggested that the Board could send a letter.

Commr. Parks opined that the letter could explain what the County was doing and contain a drawing or detailed explanation of what was going to happen, and that this could take care of it.

Commr. Campione opined that it was unfortunate that Ms. Stone thought that she had to apply for the County to consider whether to name those fields after her late husband, noting that after Mr. Stone passed, the idea was initiated by the BCC to do something to honor him. She stated that since the BCC had started the process at that time, she would like to make amends to Ms. Stone who had been asked to initiate something that had already been agreed on. She opined that this could be focused on just the fields, and that once it was determined where the fields would be, there could be a sign.

Commr. Morris commented that Lake-Sumter State College (LSSC) dedicated its baseball and softball complex as the Mike Matulia Fields at J. Carlisle Rogers Stadium, opining that the County needed to let Ms. Stone know that there was a way to do it.

Commr. Campione opined that this would be taken care of either in conjunction with the LCWA or after the deed passed to the County, noting that the BCC would then be in a position to make that decision.

Commr. Parks agreed, opining that this would be a good way to handle it.

Commr. Campione opined that Mr. Stone was a great person, a great leader, and a great collaborator, as he brought multiple people together to initiate those fields, and said that she was glad to hear that everybody wanted to find a way to continue to honor him.

APPOINTMENTS TO THE LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD

On a motion by Commr. Morris, seconded by Commr. Parks and carried unanimously by a vote of 5-0, the Board approved to appoint the following members to the Lake County Library Advisory Board: Mr. Lawrence Ross as the primary member representing the City of Tavares (reappointment) with a term expiring on February 28, 2030; Ms. Tamara Watkins-Small as the alternate member representing the City of Tavares with a term expiring on February 28, 2030; Mr. Robert Miller will move from the alternate member to the primary member representing the City of Umatilla (reappointment) with a term expiring on February 28, 2030; and Ms. Robyn Lambert as the alternate member representing the City of Umatilla, with the conflict waiver with a term expiring on February 28, 2030.

APPOINTMENT TO THE PARKS, RECREATION AND TRAILS ADVISORY BOARD

Commr. Smith mentioned that he was the liaison for this advisory board, and that even though the appointment was for District 5, there were no applicants from District 5; therefore, he opined that Ms. Amanda Wettstein would be a perfect fit for this board.

Commr. Sabatini remarked that he would always defer to anybody from their own district, and noted that this was Commissioner Morris' district. He opined that whoever represented that district should have their preference, and that he would defer to whoever represented this district despite who he thought was best qualified for that board.

On a motion by Commr. Morris, seconded by Commr. Parks and carried unanimously by a vote of 5-0, the Board approved to appoint Ms. Amanda Wettstein for a vacancy on the Parks, Recreation and Trails Advisory Board for Commission District 5 for a term ending June 30, 2027, noting that the applicant resides in District 4.

RESOLUTION 2026-28 EXPRESSING OPPOSITION TO THE RURAL BOUNDARY AMENDMENT

Commr. Parks opined that it would be constructive to pass a resolution expressing opposition to the Rural Boundary amendment, and that since he learned when listening to the Florida Association of Counties (FAC) meeting that this had not gone away yet, this would be the time to express opposition if the Board wanted. He commented that this amendment would prohibit the County from establishing in the new Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan) process a rural

line with no annexations one side, or rural areas on one side at the very least, with more development on the other side, noting that this amendment would be statewide.

Commr. Campione questioned if this amendment would completely nullify a joint planning agreement (JPA) or an interlocal agreement with a City, and Commissioner Parks indicated that it would. Commissioner Campione then stated that she was in favor of the resolution. She opined that the County should ensure that somebody was monitoring this, and that if it was inserted into another bill, then it could be pointed out to the County's legislative delegation.

Commr. Smith mentioned that this called out Senate Bill (SB) 208, and opined that even though this was not moving forward, he was concerned about the amendment and the wording of it. He inquired if the resolution could include any amendment that reflected this wording.

Ms. Marsh clarified that it did say this, and that it mentioned SB 208 or any substantially similar proposal.

Commr. Parks opined that the County's lobbyist should provide the Board with updates every couple of days, especially if the Board approved a resolution, which he opined was an important document. He remarked that he had been working with the legislature on some of the home rule issues, and that he had seen much of this preemption legislation coming in, which he opined was becoming an endless issue.

Commr. Campione indicated her understanding that the Board's request was for the lobbyist to provide updates.

Commr. Sabatini opined that the Board should be updated for the following workshop where this issue could be discussed more, and that whatever lobbyist was used should be expected to give 100 percent to the few things the County would ask them to do regarding policy.

Commr. Campione agreed, and opined that it was important to have a lobbyist to finesse the County's legislative priorities through as well as a lobbyist who would advocate against certain policy. She opined that it would be difficult for the first lobbyist to do both because the first responsibility was to work on building relationships rather than arguing against a bad idea, and that this process needed to be considered.

Commr. Sabatini opined that a lobbyist could strain relationships by fighting for certain policy, and that the County needed to get an independent lobbyist who would do that. He recalled that he had previously made a motion for this regarding the Lake County Property Appraiser's budget issue, and opined that since the County's current lobbyist needed to work with the legislature, it would be better to have outside representation; however, this did not pass. He opined that when these policy decisions went through, they could erase home rule, and that even though home rule had been declining since the 1990s, there was an acceleration. He opined that within the coming 10 years, it could become as it was before 1968, which was when every single bill with any local effect had to go through the City of Tallahassee, such as building a road, and that this would be an issue. He opined that since there was much funding concentrating in lobbyist efforts in the City of Tallahassee, it was much easier to affect the rest of the state, and he hoped that the County could fight it.

On a motion by Commr. Smith, seconded by Commr. Parks and carried unanimously by a vote of 5-0, the Board approved Resolution 2026-27 Expressing Opposition to the Rural Boundary Amendment proposed as an Amendment to Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 208 (2026).

WILDFIRE THREAT UPDATE

Chief David Kilbury, Public Safety Director, commented that there had been an increase in the Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI), which was normal for this time of the year, and noted that in the prior week, there were 15 incidents which included the following: five were related to escaped fires from legal burning; some were unknown; somebody used fireworks; and there was a vehicle fire and a vehicle crash. He mentioned that this was not outside the usual activities, and that most of them were small in size, as the largest was about six acres. He showed a map of the State of Florida's fire danger index throughout the state, and said that Lake County was in a moderate risk area, noting that everything south of the Interstate 4 (I-4) corridor was extremely dry. He stated that the average KBDI by county as of the previous day was at 491, which was close to the number in the ordinance to enact a burn ban, and noted that the State of Florida's fire danger index considered fuels, weather, wind, and other contributors, reiterating that Lake County was in a moderate index. He remarked that even though Lake County's average KBDI was under 500, it was close to approaching this, and that since there was some rain forecast for the current week, it might be enough to prevent Lake County from enacting a burn ban. He displayed the overall heat map of the fire danger through the drought index, and pointed out that the state was slowly moving from a green/yellow toward red. He showed a chart of the KBDI numbers, and commented that Lake County went up four points from the prior week, noting that the lowest min/max number was 400; however, there were areas in the county that were approaching 600, which was an extreme fire condition. He related that when they first started tracking this, Lake County had about 26 percent in the high fire danger area of the drought index, and that it was now close to a 60/40 split, opining that it was close to the time when they would ask the Board to pass an ordinance to enact a burn ban until the county could get below that number. He mentioned that Marion County was doing better than Lake County, and noted that they had some rainfall to bring down their KDBI. He showed the numbers for all of the neighboring counties, and said that Orange was at 452 and was below 400 a couple weeks prior, noting that Sumter County was similar to Lake County at 491. He commented that the upcoming weekend's weather forecast would determine whether the burn ban would take effect, and that the County Manager was being updated daily.

Commr. Campione indicated her understanding that if the county reached that number, then it would automatically signal a burn ban, and that they would get the word out. She questioned if the ordinance that was similar to the Osceola County ordinance would come back at the following BCC meeting.

Chief Kilbury stated that they were currently in the process of advertising it.

Commr. Campione relayed her understanding that this was a situation where Lake County was at 491, and that there was a percentage of the county was over 500 currently, noting that telling people to stop burning would be the call of the experts according to the ordinance. She opined

that the update was helpful, and that it helped to see what was actually going on, how many resources were being deployed currently, and how often fires started with someone burning in their backyard.

Chief Kilbury commented that they received many phone calls for burn bans, opining that Lake County had some very conscientious residents that were concerned about the fire danger.

Commr. Campione opined that even though a burn ban was an inconvenience to those who relied on burning on rural property to eliminate debris, everybody was concerned, and that they did not want what somebody else was doing to cause them to lose their property.

ANNEXATION REPORT

Mr. Fitzgerald relayed that he had three annexation reports for the current day, and that they were all for the City of Leesburg and would be heard by the City Commission at their March 23, 2026 meeting. He commented that the first annexation included the following: it was 9.26 acres; it was located north of Dewey Robbins Road and east of U.S. Highway 27; the current County zoning was Agriculture; the proposed City zoning was small PUD; the current County future land use (FLU) was Rural; the proposed City FLU was Estate Residential; the County density was one dwelling unit per five net acres; and the proposed City density was 2.6 dwelling units per one acre. He related that the intent was to develop the property with residential uses, and that the Office of Solid Waste stated that the properties would remain within the Lake County residential solid waste program through September 30, 2026 because they had paid for the service through that time period. He mentioned that the Public Works Department had made comments that turn lanes would be required at Dewey Robbins Road, additional right of way would be required on Dewey Robbins Road, and a traffic impact study would be required when developing the PUD. He showed an aerial map illustrating where the property was located within the City of Leesburg, which was their story map from their website, and said that that this would be an infill to the development that was being built in the City of Leesburg.

Commr. Smith indicated his understanding that it was not really infill because it was not connecting, and that it would create another enclave.

Mr. Fitzgerald stated that this was correct, and that even though it was connecting to the city boundary, it would be creating an enclave of the property to the east; however, according to the interlocal service boundary agreement (ISBA), the City of Leesburg could create an enclave if they agreed to supply City services to it, which they had confirmed.

Commr. Campione opined that even though the ISBA said that, it was still worth expressing concern over one unit per five acres going to 2.6 units per acre.

Mr. Fitzgerald commented that their Estate Residential allowed up to four dwelling units per acre, and that the developer was actually under the City's maximum allowance.

Commr. Campione opined that this did not sound like estate residential, as it was high density and equal to the County's urban density. She asked if there was consensus to express opposition.

Commr. Smith related that he was going to write a letter to the City and ask if they would at least go to a one unit per acre density.

Commr. Campione opined that this should be discussed, as she wanted to write a letter asking for one unit per five acres.

Commr. Smith opined that the BCC needed to be consistent in their message, and that in some areas, the Board had eliminated the transitional zone while keeping it intact in other areas. He opined that one unit per acre would be good because it was a transitional zone designation and would be a good compromise, noting that he was trying to be consistent in protecting the transitional zones.

Commr. Campione commented that she liked to look at the facts of the situation and what was going on the actual property, and pointed out that the Whitaker property had rights on their property for 30 years when they were taken away over time by the County. She mentioned that when they wanted to do a master plan on property that they previously had rights on, she looked at those situations differently, and that even though the term eliminating the transition was used, she wanted to consider what somebody had before it had been taken away by the government. She inquired if the majority of the Board wanted a letter to oppose the annexation and ask the City of Leesburg to acknowledge the County's one unit per five acres Rural land use or to ask the City to consider one unit per acre.

Commr. Smith stated that he would like to give the City of Leesburg something that they would actually consider, such as one unit per acre, and opined that they would not consider one unit per five acres, which would only allow for two homes on the whole property. He opined that since the City of Leesburg had a right to annex it, the County needed to try to do what it could with the property, and he hoped that the City would see that the County was trying to keep some rural density in the area. He opined that Dewey Robbins Road had been hit hard, noting that this was an old dirt road when he was a youth. He opined that what had happened to Dewey Robbins Road was terrible; however, there nothing that the County could do about it. He opined that the County should go forward with the best possible plan forward, and that since the City of Leesburg would turn down one unit per five acres, the County needed to give the City something they could consider.

Commr. Campione opined that the letter could say that the County's preference would be for the area to stay one unit per five acres; however, since the City might find this unrealistic, the County could support one unit per acre if the City would consider a compromise.

Commr. Smith said that he was fine with that.

Commr. Parks questioned how much of an enclave this was going to create.

Mr. Fitzgerald answered that it was one single parcel to the east, and that it would be about a five-acre enclave.

Commr. Parks mentioned that this was the issue with the ISBA, and opined that he would eliminate the ISBA and do JPAs where Cities would not create enclaves without some master planning done between the County and the City. He opined that this could be included in the letter.

Commr. Campione said that she appreciated trying to get the City of Leesburg to compromise to something better than 2.6 units per acres since the City might not consider a letter

asking for one unit per five acres. She opined that the letter should say that even though the County's preference was one unit per five acres, they understood that this may not be realistic; however, the County would appreciate it if the City would consider one unit per acre.

Commr. Smith opined that the ultimate goal would be for the City of Leesburg to not annex the property into the city, and said that he would be making phone calls requesting that.

Commr. Campione opined that this could be where it would start.

Commr. Smith opined that there needed to be a letter to follow up.

Commr. Campione reiterated that the County's preference was to not annex, and that if they annexed, the County would ask them to consider a one unit per acre density. She asked if there was consensus for that or a motion.

Ms. Marsh commented that this could be done by consensus, and inquired who the signatory on the letter would be.

Commr. Smith remarked that he could send it.

Ms. Marsh stated that she could prepare something for Commissioner Smith to review.

Mr. Fitzgerald related that the next annexation included the following: it was 25.07 acres; it was located south of Gospel Hill Road and east of Number 2 Road; the current County zoning was Agriculture; the proposed City zoning was PUD; the current County FLU was Rural Transition; the proposed City FLU was Estate Residential; County density was one dwelling unit per one to five acres depending on the open space; and the proposed City density was three units per acre. He commented that the intent was to develop the property with a residential use, and that the Office of Solid Waste stated that there were certain alternate keys that would remain under Lake County service through September 30, 2026. He related that the Public Works Department commented that there were deeded easements for roads, drainage, and utilities named Gospel Hill Road and Helgs Road that would need to be transferred to the City of Leesburg or vacated with future development of the property. He displayed the Lake County zoning and FLU maps, and noted that the property was surrounded by the City of Leesburg. He showed the story map of the area that would be developed, and relayed his understanding that this property would be included in the Lake Margaretta Estates development.

Commr. Campione opined that the County should ask the City of Leesburg to not annex it.

Commr. Smith indicated his understanding that this property was outside their ISBA, and that Number 2 Road was the City of Leesburg's ISBA boundary.

Mr. Fitzgerald commented that this property was contiguous to the City of Leesburg and was within their ISBA.

Commr. Smith inquired if this property was in the Rural Protection Area (RPA).

Mr. Fitzgerald said that this was not in an RPA.

Commr. Parks asked how close was this property to Number 2 Road where it looped around and went to CR 48, opining that there should be a plan for Number 2 Road long-term that the City of Leesburg needed to contribute to.

Ms. Barker commented that there had been discussions with the City of Leesburg about Number 2 Road, and that they had agreed to take Number 2 Road. She stated that this would be coming forward in a road transfer agreement soon.

Mr. Fitzgerald mentioned that Number 2 Road went north and south to the west of Lake Margaretta, and that CR 48 was on the north.

Commr. Campione relayed her understanding that if this property was added to the Lake Margaretta Estates development, then there would be more traffic on Number 2 Road. She opined that the County should ask the City of Leesburg to not annex, as it was in the County's Rural Transition land use area.

Commr. Smith indicated his understanding that it was a planned development with a master plan, and that the City of Leesburg would take over the roads and provide water and sewer.

Commr. Campione asked if the open space was commensurate with the County's requirements.

Mr. Fitzgerald replied that the open space was 35 percent.

Commr. Parks wondered if the County could ask for 50 percent open space.

Commr. Campione opined that the County should ask the City of Leesburg to not annex, and that if they annexed, they should honor the County's Rural Transition open space requirements. She opined that this may be a way to suggest a compromise, and noted that the County's Rural Transition would be one unit per acre as the highest allowable density with 50 percent open space, while the City's was three units per acre.

Commr. Smith relayed his understanding that if the City of Leesburg annexed the property, this area would get water, sewer, and new roads, and that this would provide all the infrastructure, noting that it was a planned development.

Commr. Parks opined that if the City of Leesburg agreed to 50 percent open space, there could be more clustering, which would be more efficient for providing water and sewer.

Commr. Campione opined that the County could ask the City of Leesburg to consider that.

Ms. Marsh indicated her understanding that there was consensus to send a letter to the City of Leesburg for this case requesting no annexation, and that if the City did annex, the County requested that they would honor the Rural Transition open space at 50 percent. She clarified that the City of Leesburg was taking the road transfer to the City Commission on March 23, 2026, and that it would include about nine roads, such as Number 2 Road from CR 48 to the terminus of the ISBA.

Commr. Smith wondered if the County should wait to send the letter until they agreed to the road transfer.

Ms. Marsh questioned when the annexation would be heard.

Mr. Fitzgerald answered that all three annexations would be heard on March 23, 2026.

Commr. Campione opined that it could be included in the letter that the County would like the road agreement to go through, since that was a critical part of this.

Ms. Marsh relayed her understanding that if the City of Leesburg decided to annex the property, the County would like the City to take the road and do the 50 percent open space.

Commr. Campione commented that those items were being heard on the same night, and indicated her understanding that on the County's FLU map, nothing in this area had ever been designated Urban Low.

Mr. Fitzgerald remarked that there was Rural Transition in the area to the east and Rural to the southeast, noting that most of the surrounding property was currently in the City of Leesburg.

Commr. Campione opined that before the land was in the City of Leesburg, it was not urban, and that this was why the County was not happy about all the land on Dewey Robbins Road being annexed, noting that it was Rural.

Mr. Fitzgerald mentioned that the third annexation to be heard by the City Commission on March 23, 2026 included the following: it was 202.6 acres; it was east of CR 33, south of Lake Brite Street, west of CR 33, and south of Desert Lane; the current County zoning was Agriculture; the proposed City zoning was PUD; the current County FLU was Rural; the proposed City FLU was Estate Residential; the current County density was one dwelling unit per five net acres; and the property City density was 2.47 dwelling units per acre. He stated that the intent was to develop the property with residential uses, and that there were certain alternate keys that would remain within the Lake County residential solid waste program through September 30, 2026. He remarked that a roadway improvement and impact fee credit agreement for improvements at the CR 470, CR 48, and CR 33 intersection was approved by the BCC on September 9, 2025, and that the Public Works Department had noted the following: turn lanes were required at CR 33; additional right of way would be required on CR 33; a trail fronting CR 33 would need to be accommodated; and a traffic impact analysis would be required. He displayed the current County zoning and FLU maps and the City of Leesburg story map, and said that the property was south of the Preservation Place subdivision bordering east and west of CR 33, noting that this was a noncontiguous annexation.

Commr. Campione recalled the she had visited the Preservation Place area before it was developed, and that they had taken kayaks through an easement that the LCWA had underneath Florida's Turnpike, opining that it was heartbreaking to know that the property would be completely developed. She indicated her understanding that there was a floodplain in that area, and that after much rain, the Public Works Department had to work with the City of Leesburg because much of Preservation Place was holding water. She opined that since the County's designation was one unit per five acres and it was not contiguous, the Board should oppose the annexation.

Ms. Barker pointed out that the Board had already approved intersection improvements from this development for the intersection of CR 33 and CR 470.

Commr. Parks inquired where the improvements were on the map.

Mr. Earhart replied that they were at CR 33, CR 470, and CR 48 where there was a barbershop and a gas station, and noted that the developers agreement said that within six months of receiving approval from the City of Leesburg, the developer would construct the new turn lanes and a traffic signal for about $2 million.

Commr. Campione mentioned that this agreement was based on an annexation by the City of Leesburg, and that the best the County could do was to obtain some road improvements. She

opined that even though she appreciated obtaining the road improvements, she thought that the annexation was terrible.

Commr. Sabatini stated that he would support a letter of opposition.

Commr. Campione wondered if the annexation should go forward, since the road improvements would happen in accordance with the development agreement.

Commr. Parks questioned if there was going to be a trail along CR 33.

Mr. Fitzgerald replied that they received a comment that a trail along the development road frontage for CR 33 would need to be accommodated.

Commr. Parks asked if there was anything from environmental resources about floodplains, and opined that it looked like a system that looped around to the larger wetland system.

Mr. Fitzgerald answered that they did not have comments at this time; however, he relayed his understanding that through intergovernmental coordination, they should be seeing the development plans for this property, and that if there were issues with the floodplain, then they would comment on it.

Commr. Parks expressed concern about the development impacting wildlife corridors and connectivity.

Mr. Fitzgerald opined that alternate key 1044189 would be a great candidate for some conservation.

Commr. Parks agreed, and opined that the resources on the site made it look like it had not been citrus.

Commr. Campione opined that the letter could include the following: opposition to the annexation; acknowledgement that the County had a development agreement for road improvements as it was likely to move forward; and consideration for the opportunity to review alternate key 1044189 for conservation purposes and wildlife connectivity. She asked if there was a consensus, and the Board agreed.

BRITT ROAD REPAIR PROJECT PURCHASE AGREEMENT

Mr. Earhart related that this item was associated with the Britt Road reconstruction where it washed out, and pointed out that the County had previously acquired the Brautcheck property. He said that the County also wanted to acquire 0.12 acres of right of way for a pipe going into the pasture on the west side of the road, noting that it would show that the County owned it by deed and not by right. He commented that it would be $14,500, and that the owner was open to moving forward. He mentioned that this would be the last piece of right of way that was needed, and that once they obtained the permit with the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD), the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) would give them approval to bid the project.

Ms. Marsh commented that the County had sent a purchase agreement to the attorney for WDL Property Holdings 8 LLC, the property owner, and that they had received it back on the current day with a couple of minor comments that could be fixed quickly. She said that they were hopeful that the owner would sign it on the current day, and that they could quickly move this to closing. She mentioned that staff was asking for the Board to waive the due diligence, as they already had the survey done inhouse, noting that since this was adjacent to the right of way, she

did not foresee any issues with that. She related that their plan was to close on the property in no later than 30 days; however, they would like it to be sooner if possible.

Commr. Campione indicated her understanding that if this went to closing in one week, the bidding process could start for the actual Britt Road construction.

Mr. Earhart remarked that they were expecting comments back from SJRWMD on their permit, and that once they had this, then FDOT would still have to deem everything complete. He pointed out that FDOT had four to six weeks to give them permission to bid, at which point they could then bid the project.

Commr. Campione opined that FDOT should know how urgent this project was.

Mr. Earhart opined that even though it would likely be expedited, this was what was shared with the County.

Commr. Morris asked if WDL Property Holdings 8 LLC owned the nursery.

Mr. Earhart answered that WDL Property Holdings 8 LLC leased the property to the nursery, but was not operating the nursery. He explained that 0.1 acres was between the edge of the pavement and the fence line, and that 0.02 acres was a small area to extend their stormwater pipe and make the grades better.

Commr. Morris relayed his understanding that WDL Property Holdings 8 LLC was the company the County previously asked to sell a portion of their property so that Britt Road could be built on the other side.

Mr. Earhart indicated that this was correct; however, they were not interested in selling property that would diminish their future holdings.

Commr. Morris expressed concern about the length of time for this project.

Commr. Campione agreed; however, she opined that it was promising that even though they did not want to sell before, they were willing to do the drainage easement. She opined that it would make the project better, and that when the water was flowing from that property and going under the road, having an actual drainage easement would be important.

Commr. Morris inquired if there was a 50/50 match, and relayed his understanding that the purchase price was still being negotiated but was not anticipated to exceed $30,000 without further Board approval, noting that the fiscal impact was $14,500.

Ms. Marsh clarified that there was no grant funding for this purchase, and that the reason there was a cap was because at the time of the printing of the agenda, they had not heard back from the property owner and were not sure whether or not the owner would attempt to negotiate the price. She stated that it appeared that the owner was fine with the price because this was not one of the comments they had made.

Commr. Campione commented that the original pipe that was under the road previously was connected where the WDL Property Holdings 8 LLC property was.

Mr. Earhart remarked that the pipe went under road, and that this deal would allow the County to extend the pipe further and make the grading less than one to one, such as one to four, so that it would tie in much better.

Commr. Smith stated that he would vote against this, and opined that the County should not have bought the Boardcheck property in the first place for such a large amount of funds.

Commr. Morris agreed with those sentiments.

Commr. Campione hoped that there would still be three votes, and opined that Britt Road was critical as a north/south connector from State Road (SR) 44 to Wolf Branch Road. She opined that without this road, there had been large issues for the residents of Lake County.

Commr. Smith commented that the County had already bought the Brautcheck property, and that there was nothing that could be done about that currently.

Commr. Campione mentioned that the County could acquire an easement to ensure that the drainage worked properly.

On a motion by Commr. Sabatini, seconded by Commr. Parks and carried by a vote of 3-2, the Board approved the following: a Purchase Agreement for Property with WDL Property Holdings 8 LLC for the Britt Road Repair Project; to authorize the County Manager to execute the Purchase Agreement and any necessary amendments; to proceed with closing the transaction by waiving due diligence or accepting any encumbrances due to the emergency relief needed in order to close the transaction within thirty days; and to authorize the Chairman to execute any necessary closing documents.

Commr. Smith and Commr. Morris voted no.

REPORTS

COMMISSIONERS REPORTS

COMMISSIONER SABATINI – DISTRICT 1

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Commr. Sabatini mentioned that the State was in the last week of the legislative session, and that it was announced that they would either continue or have a special session. He asked that the Board would stay focused on the bills, opining that the coming 72 hours were the most important of the session.

COMMISSIONER PARKS – VICE CHAIRMAN AND DISTRICT 2

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Commr. Parks requested that the Board would watch what was happening currently in the State Legislature, and expressed approval of the resolution passed on the current day.

OFFICE OF FIRE RESCUE

Commr. Parks indicated appreciation to the Office of Fire Rescue, and opined that they were currently working hard with the fires.

PUBLIC LANDS AND TRAILS ACQUISITION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Commr. Parks related that the application process was open for the Public Lands and Trails Acquisition Advisory Committee, and that there were opportunities for grants, such as the Rural and Family Lands Protection Act funds. He mentioned that there were opportunities to combine working agricultural lands with an environmental conservation component, and that this partnership made it more likely for the County to acquire that grant. He urged the Board to get people in their districts to apply, and said that there was about a month left until April 17, 2026.

COMMISSIONER SMITH – DISTRICT 3

SERVICE MEMBERS

Commr. Smith hoped that everybody would keep the service members in their thoughts and prayers during this time.

COMMISSIONER MORRIS – DISTRICT 5

GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS POSITION

Commr. Morris commented that he would like the Board to consider a governmental affairs position under the County Manager, and said that he had sent a synopsis to the County Manager, noting that she could forward it to the Board and comment on it. He opined that this employee could attend the City meetings that Ms. Barker attended, which he opined took much of her time, and could work with their lobbyist in the City of Tallahassee. He opined that the County had grown large enough that this position should be considered.

Commr. Parks stated that he would be supportive of that discussion, and opined that there may be some ways to restructure. He opined that having that type of position could be a benefit directly to the Board, and that if there were Commissioners at FAC or other important events, there could be someone to go to the City of Tallahassee or to meet with the local legislative delegation.

Commr. Sabatini relayed that even though he was open to having a discussion, he was hesitant making a decision this early, and opined that if the goal was to get something done, then hiring an independent lobbyist for a specific issue in the City of Tallahassee would be more effective than a local government employee. He indicated concern about someone who attended meetings but did not actually accomplish anything, and opined that the County wanted a targeted lobbyist.

Commr. Morris related that the synopsis showed that this would not be that kind of position, and opined that this employee would be very focused on what they were doing.

Commr. Parks opined that those numbers could be looked at, and that even though there were some specialist lobbyists that did a great job, if there were 10 issues, then it might be too expensive to hire three or four different lobbyists for that.

Commr. Smith stated that he would like to see the proposal before discussing it.

Commr. Morris opined that it was a good start.

Commr. Campione opined that the Board should start the discussion.

Commr. Sabatini opined that this conversation needed to happen synonymously with what the Board wanted out of its normal routine lobbyist.

Commr. Morris relayed his understanding that the lobbyist's contract was expiring.

Ms. Barker commented that the last renewal was in the current year, and that it would expire on December 31, 2026, noting that the County would be going out to bid in the current summer.

Commr. Morris opined that this would be a good time to include anything the Board would want in the bid.

Commr. Campione opined that the Board could define the scope, including smoothing over issues to pass legislative priorities versus advocating against or for particular pieces of legislation.

Commr. Morris opined that since the bid would go out in the current summer, this should be considered.

Commr. Parks stated that he welcomed the discussion, and noted that there were examples in other Counties.

Commr. Campione asked when the Board could see it.

Mr. Barker related that she would email the synopsis on the current day.

COMMISSIONER CAMPIONE – CHAIRMAN AND DISTRICT 4

FLORIDA GREENWAYS AND TRAILS FOUNDATION MEETING

Commr. Campione remarked that she attended the Florida Greenways and Trails Foundation meeting on March 5, 2026, and that Mr. Gallus Quigley, Recreation Coordinator for the Office of Parks and Trails, did a presentation of all the trail news from Lake County. She mentioned that she was so impressed by it that she wanted the County to host a couple of town hall meetings where people could come and see the different trails that were planned and under construction as well as the connections the County was making, opining that it would be a great time to update the public and inform people that were interested in that topic. She wondered if there would be support to host some town halls about trails.

Commr. Parks said that he was supportive, and asked that the fiscal situation be included, such as how much trails cost. He opined that there could be an educational component that showed the plan and how far the County had to go to make it cost feasible.

Commr. Campione opined that there would have to be a way to work it in; however, it could just give people an overview so they could know what was happening around them and what they could look forward to. She opined that the discussion about funding and maintenance would be more of a workshop, and that she did not want to lose the opportunity to engage the public and keep them informed.

Commr. Parks opined that even though those would be great meetings, it could be years before the trails could be built, such as with the roads workshops.

Commr. Campione stated that her focus was not about the master trail plan, which was many years out, and that she wanted to focus on what was actually happening currently. She commented that she was impressed with the list of things that were currently going on, and that this was what she wanted to focus on. She opined that the County needed to update the master trail plan, and that there would be a formal process for that, including having meetings to obtain input, which she opined would be a good time for a fiscal discussion. She related that she wanted to let the public know where the County was at currently, including what had been built and what was on the horizon.

Commr. Smith opined that it would be good to include the Cities to see what they were doing to build trails and connect to the County’s trails.

Commr. Campione opined that it would be a great chance for the Cities to see the County's plan and for the County to look at what the Cities were doing.

AMBULANCE UPDATE

Commr. Campione relayed that on the current afternoon, she would be going with staff to an ambulance update for the City of Clermont, and that there would be an update provided on everything that had happened since the Board discussions in October and November 2025. She commented that there would be some news to share about the number of ambulances, response times, and ongoing needs for locations inside the city limits.

Commr. Smith questioned if the City of Clermont had agreed to allow the ambulances inside the city.

Commr. Campione hoped that when she delivered a positive message, it would create the synergy necessary for the County to have those agreements honored that were currently in existence. She opined that there was good news and opportunities for even better response times.

NATIONAL PACK YOUR LUNCH DAY

Commr. Smith said that it was National Pack Your Lunch Day.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to be brought to the attention of the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 11:06 a.m.

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LESLIE CAMPIONE, CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

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GARY J COONEY, CLERK