A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

APRIL 28, 2026

The Lake County Board of County Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, April 28, 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 (via Zoom). 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 Brooks Braswell, with First Baptist Church of Umatilla, gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA UPDATE

Ms. Jennifer Barker, County Manager, mentioned that Commissioner Morris was not able to attend the meeting in person, and that he may be participating online, noting that even though he could comment on agenda items, he would not be voting since he was not in attendance.

Commr. Morris verified that he was online.

ARPA UPDATE

Mr. Sean Beaudet, Grants Program Manager with the Office of Water Resources, said that he would provide an American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) update, and that he would provide some background information, updates, recommendations, and the requested action. He commented that the Veterans Transitional Housing project on County Road (CR) 561 in the City of Tavares had been renamed the Multi-Family Detached Housing project because the Lake County Sheriff's Office (LCSO) recommended changing the clientele due to the proximity to the firing range, noting that the current balance for the sitework and building construction was $3,475,708; additionally, the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) had reallocated funds from cancelled projects to be used for the installation and connection to the City of Tavares water and sewer for this project, which was $1,224,856, for a total of $4,700,564. He also recalled that the Board had earmarked $400,000 for the purchase of one or more mobile shower and laundry trailers, which was previously titled Mobile Day Services for the Unhoused. He related that the Emergency Communication and Operations Center (ECOC) audio/visual phase II project was complete and had a balance of $3,366, and that the Fifth Judicial Circuit security camera project was ongoing and had funds set aside for contingencies, which were no longer needed, noting that the available balance was $104,913. He mentioned that the Multi-Family Detached Housing project was advertised as an invitation to bid (ITB), which closed on March 19, 2026, and that this included all sitework, building construction, and utilities for 21 residential units. He relayed that the County received three responses, and that a selection committee chose Nichols Contracting at a cost of

$4,997,879. He commented that a request for pricing (RFP) for the mobile shower and laundry trailers closed on July 29, 2025 with five responses, and that one respondent provided full management services but was overbudget while four respondents provided various trailer options all within budget; however, there were major obstacles, such as providing sufficient staffing levels to manage the units and the Federal funding time constraint. He stated that some recommendations included repurposing the excess funds of $108,279 from the ECOC and Fifth Judicial Circuit projects to help pay for repairs to Lake Erie Road, which was damaged due to a sinkhole, and to forgo the trailer purchase and reallocate the $400,000 to assist with the building construction costs of the Multi-Family Detached Housing project, which would cover all expenses and provide additional required sitework; furthermore, the contract approval with Nichols Contracting was Tab 14 on the consent agenda. He displayed a chart showing the most up-to-date project list and the recommended allocations, and said that the requested action was approval to reallocate funds within the project list, as presented.

Commr. Campione recalled that there was some disappointment at not being able to strictly allocate the housing project for veterans; however, she opined that this could be used for rapid rehousing, such as when people were waiting to get into permanent housing and needed a place to stay. She commented that there would be wraparound social services, including case workers, and that this would not be done by the County but by a separate entity who could handle those issues. She suggested that a couple of units could be held out for emergencies, such as storms, or instances when housing was required quickly, opining that it would be helpful to have this as an option. She remarked that in the past, the County had worked with the Mid Florida Homeless Coalition, and that they had used hotel rooms, which had to fall under certain parameters, noting that this was not easy to do. She relayed her understanding that this could serve several purposes and fit within the ARPA requirements.

On a motion by Commr. Sabatini, seconded by Commr. Parks and carried unanimously by a vote of 4-0, the Board approved to reallocate funds within the project list, as presented.

MINUTES APPROVAL

On a motion by Commr. Sabatini, seconded by Commr. Smith and carried unanimously by a vote of 4-0, the Board approved the minutes for the BCC meeting of March 3, 2026 (Regular 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, gave farm tips about pineapples, and then expressed concerns about placing blame for issues in society. He mentioned that 250 years prior, their forefathers were blaming England for their issues until they

took responsibility, and opined that we could either take ownership of this great nation or be blamers of nothing.

Ms. Cindy Newton, a resident of Commission District 4, indicated appreciation to Commissioner Campione for attending a Friends of the Wekiva River pavilion dedication at Katie's Landing on the previous Saturday, and opined that it was a wonderful day for the community and a great reminder of why they worked so hard to protect their local gems. She asked that the BCC take a critical look at several key definitions within the County code, including those regarding open space, recharge, recharge soil, protection, and stormwater ponds. She opined that there was increasing pressure on the Wekiva Study Area and surrounding spring sheds, and that how these terms were defined mattered. She opined that a stormwater pond had a utility function and should not be synonymous with open space or recharge, and that protections for recharge soil needed to be robust enough to ensure that the long-term health of the aquifer was being preserved. She said that she was willing to write suggestions for the Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan) and Land Development Regulations (LDR) changes, and believed that these updates would better align local policies with the shared goal of protecting the State of Florida's water and sensitive ecological zones.

Ms. Alexandra St. Martin, a resident of Sumter County, related that she had come to discuss a proposed injection well at the Heart of Florida Landfill in Sumter County and to ask for help in standing with Sumter County residents, the Citrus and Hernando County BCCs, Representative J.J. Grow, and Representative Samantha Scott in opposition to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) regarding this issue. She opined that this was a direct threat to the Floridan Aquifer, and said that residents had been asking the Bushnell City Council and Sumter County to do something about the growing landfill issues. She mentioned that when they fought to open an odor compliance case against them, they discovered a plan to construct a deep well with the intent of injecting leachate deep beneath the soil and water resources, noting that FDEP had already approved a class five exploratory well with the intent to operate a class one injection well in the future while the community was uninformed. She remarked that according to their research, injection wells failed often, and that there would be nothing they could do to fix the issue it created, opining that once the water resources were contaminated, they were contaminated for life. She stated that there was much data to support this, and that there were many other options for wastewater and leachate disposal that could be explored. She relayed that the landfill had currently drilled a class five exploratory well to test the viability of the area, and that there was FDEP data showing that the delicate and unpredictable karst geology of this area was not suitable for an injection well. She commented that the area in question was susceptible to sinkholes, opining that the risk for failure was too high and not worth the reward. She opined that there was a lack of transparency with the community, and that a privately owned company was being permitted and encouraged to grow their operation. She opined that they were putting drinking water at risk, that the City of Bushnell was permitting operations while ignoring their constituents, and that Sumter County did not want to get involved. She opined that it was every elected representative's obligation to protect the community and place the health of the people first, and

that even though this was taking place in Sumter County, it could affect the waterways in Lake County. She asked that the Lake County BCC write a letter of opposition to FDEP and express opposition to this injection well, and said that one could learn more at stopacms.org.

Commr. Campione commented that the Board could look at the website, and asked if staff could bring back some information from the application itself or a link where it could be viewed.

Commr. Sabatini recommended that it be added to the following agenda so that it could be revisited.

Commr. Campione opined that this would give the Board a deadline to review it.

Commr. Parks remarked that he wanted to obtain all the information first and then review it, as he had concerns about it as well.

Ms. Susan Fetter, President of the Lake County Conservation Council and speaking via Zoom, asked the BCC to reconsider the density bonus included in the Rural Conservation Subdivision ordinance, particularly in areas of high aquifer recharge, including the Ferndale community, the Wekiva River Protection Area, Wekiva Study Area, the Lake County Rural Protection Areas (RPAs), and the Green Swamp. She mentioned that the Wekiva River Protection Area already had transfer of development rights (TDRs) in place to address any density bonuses needed, and that the County was pursuing TDRs for the entire county in discussions with municipalities. She pointed out that the Wekiva Study Area was critical for the State of Florida's water supply, was a high recharge zone for the Floridan Aquifer, and protected the spring shed, making land use management vital to maintain groundwater quality and spring flow; additionally, she opined that no density bonuses should be allowed in the Wekiva Springs area due to the decreased recharge and increased water use from the aquifer. She mentioned that protecting the Green Swamp was critical as it was another prime recharge area for the Floridan Aquifer, supplied drinking water for millions, helped prevent flooding, filtered water, supported biodiversity, and was the headwaters to four major rivers, opining that adding density to this area was not appropriate. She opined that a bonus density of 25 percent or more for open space acreage was an incentive for more pumping of the aquifer at a time when there were water shortage alerts and would promote overdevelopment in designated low-density areas. She asked the Board to reconsider this aspect of the Rural Conservation Subdivision.

Mr. John Johnson, speaking via Zoom, mentioned that he had recently moved to the City of Fruitland Park, and wondered when the Burrell Lock would be open again. He opined that everyone living on Lake Griffin was lake-locked, and questioned if there were any updates on what was going on with the Burrell Lock, noting that when he called the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD), they could not give him any answers.

Commr. Campione commented that Mr. Johnson could leave his information so that he could be connected with the Lake County Water Authority (LCWA), and that someone could possibly give him an update on the situation and tell him how long it would be before it was operational.

PROCLAMATION 2026-35: RECOGNIZING LIFEPOINTE CHURCH FOR COLD WEATHER SHELTERING

Commr. Campione remarked that there were four proclamations that needed to be approved before they could be presented.

On a motion by Commr. Parks, seconded by Commr. Sabatini and carried unanimously by a vote of 4-0, the Board approved the following: Proclamation 2026-35 recognizing LifePointe Church for Cold Weather Sheltering; Proclamation 2026-31 recognizing May 3-9, 2026, as National Travel and Tourism Week; Proclamation 2026-32 designating May 2026 as Building Safety Month in Lake County; and Proclamation 2026-41 recognizing Community Legal Services for their 60th Anniversary.

Ms. Dana McGeehan, with the Office of Emergency Management, stated that since 2018, the Lake County Office of Emergency Management had supported sheltering for homeless and underhoused individuals through its cold weather response program, and that cold weather shelters were activated when temperatures were forecast to fall below 40 degrees for four or more hours or when windchill values were expected to drop below 35 degrees for the same duration. She commented that since the program's inception, there had been 40 activations, providing safe refuge for hundreds of Lake County residents. She related that LifePointe Church had been a dedicated partner since the beginning, and that they had consistently provided a warm and welcoming environment for residents during times of need; additionally, members of the congregation continually stepped forward to generously offer their time and service to their neighbors. She mentioned that preparedness, response, and recovery were most effective when all parts of the community were engaged, and that LifePointe Church exemplified this concept in action. She expressed appreciation for the leadership of LifePointe Church and for the ongoing dedication of its team of volunteers; furthermore, she introduced Pastor Jonathan Pearson, Pastor Pedro Linares, and Pastor Dann Ragan to be recognized for their service.

Commr. Campione read Proclamation 2026-35 and presented it to Pastor Pearson. She indicated appreciation for their attendance, and opined that this was not an easy situation. She opined that volunteers in the church community had embraced this opportunity to help those who were vulnerable, and that even though at first the County had questions about how this would work, everything had worked well, noting that there had also been coordination with law enforcement and the surrounding community. She opined that LifePointe Church had been a great community partner and had been a role model for other organizations, and pointed out that the County welcomed other churches to get involved. She opined that there were many logistics that went into this effort, and that it was not easy to do, commenting that the County wanted to recognize them for doing this.

Pastor Pearson expressed appreciation to the Board for the proclamation, and said that they were grateful to partner with the County in this endeavor, noting that they were never more like Christ than when serving. He indicated appreciation to their lead volunteers, and commented that without them, they would not be able to do the work they did in helping to serve the community

with the cold weather shelter, opining that it was an honor and a privilege to serve alongside the County.

PROCLAMATION 2026-31: NATIONAL TRAVEL AND TOURISM WEEK

Mr. Ryan Ritchie, Director for the Office of Tourism, expressed appreciation to staff and to the Board for supporting tourism in Lake County, and pointed out that the Central Florida Hotel and Lodging Association (CFHLA) had distributed pineapples on the current day, which would be explained by Mr. Robert Agrusa, President and CEO of the CFHLA.

Mr. Agrusa stated that on behalf of their Board of Directors and Chairman Jon McGavin, he indicated appreciation for continued support of the vibrant tourism and hospitality industry that employed more than 168,000 residents across the Central Florida region, which was 37 percent of the entire workforce. He pointed out that the tourism and hospitality industry was the backbone of the economy in Central Florida with a regional economic impact of $94.5 billion and generating $6.7 billion in State and local tax revenue, and that it provided each household with annual tax savings of over $7,600 across the region. He mentioned that the following week was National Small Business Week, and that this was a reminder that there were many small businesses that relied on success of the tourism and hospitality industry. He commented that their organization represented over 500 of those small businesses, which included the following: landscapers; heating, venting, and air conditioning (HVAC) companies; cleaning and sanitation; laundry facilities; printing; and many more. He explained that the pineapples were from one of their small businesses, and said that they also presented the Board with a pin with their international symbol of hospitality. He remarked that the CFHLA was able to distribute over $160,000 to 62 students in student scholarships to continue their education, and that their organization had contributed $1.5 million toward student scholarships and provided 305 items for students in need within their communities working with all of the school districts. He relayed that their members participated in their adopt-a-school program and were helping to support 117 schools, several of which were in Lake County, including Leesburg Elementary, Lake Hills Elementary School, and East Ridge Middle School. He commented that they had a Patriot Day Remembrance Breakfast the prior year, which recognized first responders who went above and beyond every year, and that Deputy Sheriff Ronald Kaliszewski, with the LCSO, was recognized as the 2025 Patriot Day Heroism in Law Enforcement Award winner. He mentioned that these were just a few highlights of their industry working together to create a positive and lasting impact on local communities in addition to providing jobs, significant tax revenue, and competitive wages and benefits, and he expressed appreciation to the Board for recognizing the impact that tourism and hospitality had on Lake County and the Central Florida region.

Commr. Campione read and presented Proclamation 2026-31 to Mr. Agrusa.

PROCLAMATION 2026-32: BUILDING SAFETY MONTH

Mr. Bill Ondulich, Director for the Office of Building Services, stated that Building Safety Month was an international campaign to raise awareness about the importance of building safety, and that the campaign emphasized the need for the adoption and enforcement of modern, regularly updated building codes and helped individuals, families, and businesses to understand what it took

to create a safe and sustainable structure. He indicated appreciation to staff for their dedication to building code enforcement and for their excellence in customer service and to the Board and executive management for recognizing the importance of building safety.

Commr. Campione opined that this was a difficult job; however, they were ensuring that there was safety and were being recognized for it. She then read Proclamation 2026-32 and presented it to Mr. Ondulich.

PROCLAMATION 2026-41: RECOGNIZING COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES FOR THEIR 60TH ANNIVERSARY

Commr. Campione read and presented Proclamation 2026-41 to Mr. Matt Frey, Board Member for Community Legal Services, and Ms. Adrianna Tran, Director of Government Relations for Community Legal Services. She expressed appreciation to Community Legal Services for this opportunity to bring awareness to their services, and noted that it took many volunteers and staff as well as commitment from the legal community.

Mr. Frey indicated appreciation to the BCC for the recognition in honor of their 60th anniversary, and said that their continued support meant a great deal to Community Legal Services and the many individuals and families who relied on their work. He commented that the organization's mission was simple but crucial, opining that access to justice was a fundamental right and should not depend on income; however, for many Floridians, access to legal support was out of reach. He wondered what good the justice system was if people could not meaningfully participate in it, and said that this was why they were there. He remarked that their mission was to enhance the lives of those they served through legal support, assistance, and education, and that every client they assisted, every clinic and presentation they hosted, and every partnership they forged moved them closer to a community where the justice gap was closed. He related that since their founding in 1966, they had remained steadfast in that purpose, and that as they celebrated six decades of service, they were more determined to carry that mission forward by expanding their reach, deepening their impact, and sharing that everyone, regardless of circumstance, could obtain the legal support they deserved. He invited the Board and staff to a 60th Anniversary celebration at Hickory Point Park on May 9, 2026, which would be open to the public, noting that there would be food, family-friendly activities, and stories from community members of their impacts.

CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT AND COMPTROLLER'S CONSENT AGENDA

On a motion by Commr. Sabatini, seconded by Commr. Parks and carried unanimously by a vote of 4-0, the Board approved the Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller's Consent Agenda, Item 1, 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.

COUNTY MANAGER'S CONSENT AGENDA

Commr. Sabatini said that he would like to pull Tabs 11 and 14 to the regular agenda.

On a motion by Commr. Parks, seconded by Commr. Smith and carried unanimously by a vote of 4-0, the Board approved the Consent Agenda, Tabs 7 through 23, pulling Tabs 11 and 14 to the regular agenda as follows:

PROCLAMATIONS

Recommend approval and adoption of ALS Awareness Month Proclamation 2026-29, per Commissioner Morris.

COUNTY MANAGER

Recommend approval for the Chairman to execute a letter of support and agreement to the Florida Attorney General regarding the Crime Stoppers Grant Program. There is no fiscal impact.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Information Technology

Recommend approval:

1. Of the continued utilization of various State of Florida Information Technology related hardware and software contracts on an as-needed basis.

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

The estimated annual fiscal impact is $2,000,000 (expenditure) and will not exceed any Fiscal Year Budget.

Recommend approval:

1. Of the grant agreement for the Local Government Cybersecurity Grant Program with the State of Florida Department of Management Services; and

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

There is no fiscal impact.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Housing and Community Services

Recommend approval of the First Amendment to the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program Subreceipient Agreement with the City of Eustis, for the Coolidge Street Improvement Project.

The estimated fiscal impact is $400,000 (expenditure) and is within, and will not exceed, the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget. Commission District 4.

Transit Services

Recommend approval:

1. Of the Florida Department of Transportation Section 5311 Off Cycle Capital Grant Agreement for Federal Fiscal Year 2025 and State Fiscal Year 2026; and

2. To adopt Unanticipated Revenue Resolution 2026-45 to accept and appropriate $732,768 for the FDOT Section 5311 Off Cycle Capital Grant Agreement for Fiscal Year 2026; and

3. To procure vehicles under the State's bid list through FDOT's Transit Research Inspection Procurement Services (TRIPS) program.

The fiscal impact is $732,768 (revenue/expenditure - 100 percent grant funded).

INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Public Works

Recommend approval:

1. To increase the expenditure limits of Contract 23-510C with Flotech Environmental, LLC (Miami, FL) for Storm Drain System Cleaning not to exceed $75,000 to an estimated $150,000; and

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

The estimated fiscal impact is $150,000 (expenditure). Annual expenditures will not exceed the available funding in each Fiscal Year's Budget.

Recommend approval:

1. Of Contract 26-604 with Asphalt Paving Systems, Inc. (Zephyrhills, FL) for as-needed pavement preservation services.

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

The estimated annual fiscal impact is $500,000 (expenditure) and will not exceed available funding in any approved Fiscal Year's Budget.

Recommend approval:

1. Of Contracts 25-754 for countywide Road Resurfacing and Related Services as needed with the following pool of vendors: C.W. Roberts Contracting, Incorporated (Tallahassee, FL); Estep Construction, Inc. (Apopka, FL); Jr. Davis Construction Company, Inc. (Kissimmee, FL); Premier Paving LLC (Deland, FL); Ranger Construction Industries, Inc. (West Palm Beach, FL - providing services from Winter Garden, FL); Superior Asphalt, Inc. (Bradenton, FL); and The Middlesex Corporation (Littleton, MA - providing services from Orlando, FL); and

2. To authorize the Office of Procurement Services to execute the contracts with the selected vendors and all supporting documentation.

The estimated annual fiscal impact is $8,000,000 (expenditure). Annual expenditures will not exceed available funding in each approved Fiscal Year's Budget.

Recommend approval:

1. To proceed to closing on a deeded right-of-way dedication for Treasure Trove (DR-26005), which is in the City of Leesburg; and

2. To authorize 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 5.

Recommend approval:

1. Of a Roadway Improvement Agreement with BDE Development, LLC, related to improvements and land acquisition associated with Wallick Road and the Wekiva Trail Segment 2; and

2. To proceed with the dedications and transfers upon receipt of clear title and authorizing the Chairman to execute all necessary closing documents.

The estimated fiscal impact is $2,000 (expenditure) and is within, and will not exceed, the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget. Commission District 4.

Recommend approval of a Maintenance Map for Micro Racetrack Road which covers 8,800 linear feet between CR 466A and Lake Ella Road near the City of Lady Lake area.

The estimated fiscal impact is $200 (expenditure) and is within, and will not exceed, the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget. Commission District 5.

Recommend approval of a Road Transfer Agreement to transfer portions of Bridges Road, Busby Road, Dewey Robbins Road, Duncan Road, Fernery Road, Number Two Road, Poe Road, and Windmill Road to the City of Leesburg.

The estimated fiscal impact is $200 (expenditure) and is within, and will not exceed, the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget. Commission District 5.

Recommend approval of a Road Transfer Agreement to transfer Turkey Farm Road (CR 1750) from Lake County to the City of Minneola.

The estimated fiscal impact is $102 (expenditure) and is within, and will not exceed, the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget. Commission District 2.

PARKS AND WATER RESOURCES

Parks and Trails

Recommend approval:

1. Of an Interlocal Agreement with the Town of Astatula to provide Infrastructure Sales Tax funding in the amount of $110,000 to complete park improvement projects at Joe Swaffer Park (Delaware Ave, Astatula) and Kirkwood Park (County Road 561, Astatula).

2. Of a budget transfer in the amount of $110,000 from Improvements Other Than Buildings to Aids to Gov't Agencies.

The fiscal impact is $110,000 (expenditure). Commission District 3.

TAB 11: DRUG COURT PROGRAM

Commr. Sabatini commented that even though other members of the Board were in favor of the Drug Court program, he believed that there were better uses for the opioid settlement funds. He mentioned that this had been discussed previously, and that he would vote no. He expressed concerns about when the opioid funding was spent, and opined that there would be a fiscal impact of about $500,000 per year going forward.

Commr. Campione recalled that in the previous discussion, the Board let the committee know that some of the funding should go to other programs in addition to the Drug Court program, opining that it could provide opportunities for some of the providers to have access to this funding for their services.

On a motion by Commr. Smith, seconded by Commr. Parks and carried by a vote of 3-1, the Board approved the following: to execute a Funding Agreement with The Fifth Judicial Circuit Office of Court Administration for the Operation of the Lake County Adult Post-Adjudicatory Drug Court Program; to execute a Funding Agreement with the State Attorney for the Operation of the Lake County Adult Post-Adjudicatory Drug Court Program; and to execute a Funding Agreement with the Public Defender for the Operation of the Lake County Adult Post-Adjudicatory Drug Court Program.

Commr. Sabatini voted no.

TAB 14: MULTI-FAMILY DETACHED HOUSING PROJECT

Commr. Sabatini asked for some clarification on this item, and questioned what the County's obligation was on these agreements to help with the construction of multi-family housing and why this was being done.

Ms. Melanie Marsh, County Attorney, explained that this was a multi-family housing project on County-owned land where the former animal shelter was, and that the Board had previously decided that this would be an appropriate location for rapid rehousing and transitional housing. She commented that the County was expending ARPA funds for this project and constructing 21 units, which would be prefabricated with one and two bedrooms, and that once it was constructed, the County would look for a company to manage those units.

Commr. Campione opined that it was not typical housing, and said that it could be used for overnight housing, for a week, month, or year for those who were on a list to obtain permanent housing. She opined that there was much red tape in some of those programs, and that this could be for someone that Mid Florida Homeless Coalition was working with to get them a voucher to

obtain housing. She commented that this was not Section 8 Housing, and that this would be for that in-between period, opining that the County could help somebody who was trying to help themselves but did not have access to housing while they were waiting to qualify. She stated that Find, Feed and Restore was an example of this type of service, and that they could possibly bid on managing this project; additionally, the Salvation Army was another group that could potentially oversee this.

Commr. Parks remarked that this was not free housing, as there were wraparound services to get residents to the next stage.

Commr. Morris inquired if the construction company would be required to do all the infrastructure and roads for the 21 homes.

Ms. Barker answered that this was correct, and that it was a turnkey project.

Commr. Morris pointed out that this would be about $238,000 for each 700-foot home, which he opined was expensive.

Commr. Campione commented that it was not just for the home, as it included the infrastructure, such as the water, sewer, and roads, and said that when developing land, there was the cost of the home as well as the cost to make the space usable for that purpose.

Commr. Morris relayed his understanding that the County would own the houses and pay somebody to manage them, and asked if there was a prospectus on what it would cost for it to be managed. He wondered if the County would be able to make funds with it or reinvest it, opining that there were many questions that were not answered. He indicated his understanding that the County was just spending $5 million for 21 homes, and said that he did not see what the County would get out of it.

Commr. Campione commented that when working with the Mid Florida Homeless Coalition, Find, Feed and Restore, and some faith-based groups, one could see that there was a gap, and noted that Lake County did not have a homeless shelter, as there had not been a consensus in the county to have an actual homeless shelter.

Commr. Morris stated that he did not disagree with that; however, he wondered about 20 years in the future, opining that there should be a prospectus done or some numbers showing what it would cost the County to keep this going.

Commr. Campione opined that it was not intended to make funds, and noted that it was part of filling the gap without building something as extensive as a shelter, which there was no support for because of all the issues that came with that. She remarked that this project was for people who were trying to get into permanent housing that they would be paying for, and that the Federal or State government would often offer vouchers for people who qualified, noting that this could help offset the cost; however, there was no guarantee. She mentioned that there were instances where someone had not qualified for the voucher, and that it would be up to the organization operating this to do fundraising and other things to operate the housing. She commented that when this discussion first started, she was in favor of the County managing it, and that it was suggested that there could be an organization managing it that did this all the time as a nonprofit organization. She stated that the cost that would come back to the County was the

maintenance, and opined that this would not be a large cost on an annual basis. She opined that 20 years in the future, there may be a different model for how these situations were handled, and that the buildings could be repurposed or sold. She remarked that for the current time, this was the County's way of trying to fill that gap, and opined that there needed to be a place to house someone while they were trying to get into a permanent housing program.

Commr. Morris indicated his understanding that the County was going to build 21 homes but did not know who was going to run it, and inquired if the County would do a request for proposal (RFP) to see who wanted to run it, as well as what the management fees were going to be and what the anticipated revenue was going to be.

Commr. Campione relayed her understanding that the County could put an RFP out for any of these organizations that do these kinds of things, such as the Salvation Army who actually managed many of these units; however, they were not in the same location. She remarked that the Salvation Army worked as a wraparound service for people who had obtained vouchers to help offset their costs, as did Find, Feed and Restore, noting that they did fundraising to offset those differences in cost.

Commr. Morris expressed concern that even though the bid went out at $4.9 million, the Board added an additional $400,000 to it on the current day.

Commr. Campione indicated her understanding that a part of this would go to the City of Tavares for water and sewer connections.

Ms. Barker clarified that a portion of the $4.9 million was for the utility connection to the City of Tavares, and that even though the bid came in at $4.9 million, the County had only allocated the $4.7 million identified in the ARPA funding. She commented that the County decided to not purchase the mobile shower and laundry trailer, noting that there were some time constraints as well as the issue of providing staff to manage them; therefore, they transferred the $400,000 allocated for that to cover the shortfall to meet the quote for the transitional housing.

Commr. Campione pointed out that the County was up against the deadline for using the ARPA funds, and that there were very restricted uses that they could be used for, noting that transitional housing was one of those uses.

Commr. Sabatini questioned what the deadline was.

Ms. Barker replied that all funds had to be fully expended by December 31, 2026.

Commr. Sabatini opined that this was a large expenditure, and that when it came to helping people who were underprivileged or had serious housing needs, rehabilitation and redevelopment of existing structures would be preferrable. He opined that this item could be tabled for another month so that it could be discussed more, and said that he did not think that the deadline was that imminent, as there were eight months to make a final decision and transfer the funds, noting that he would vote no until he had a chance to study it more.

Commr. Campione remarked that if she had known that there would be opposition to this item, she probably would have scheduled a workshop on homelessness and housing needs in Lake County. She relayed her understanding that the County currently knew about 2,500 students in Lake County that either lived in a car, a hotel, or with someone else, and that they did not know

where they would sleep from night to night. She opined that there was a large need in Lake County, and that even though these people were trying to do all the right things, they could not make ends meet. She commented that there was a large network of groups that worked with them and helped them find employment and acquire new skills, noting that the people they were trying to help were not the people that lived in encampments and had many issues, such as substance abuse. She said that these were people who could not afford housing or had something happen that caused them to lose their home and needed a place to stay, and that much time had been spent trying to find the best way to approach these issues, noting that there were housing units all over Lake County where nonprofit groups were helping people to go through this kind of transition and obtain permanent housing. She pointed out that there were many houses that were being rehabilitated, and that the County gave impact fee credits to build infill housing and provide rent at reasonable levels; however, there was a gap for a place where somebody could stay for a relatively short time while getting connected with one of those programs. She mentioned that initially, the project was focused on veterans because of the need for veterans in these situations, giving them a place to stay while getting connected with a program that could help them. She stated that the Board decided to use the property from the old animal shelter for this purpose, and opined that these units could even be left available for when people needed housing because of storms. She pointed out that the Lake Yale Baptist Assembly was a great partner and offered rooms at the Lake Yale Baptist Conference Center where people who had come to the county to help or people who had been displaced could stay, and that when the City of Eustis had a situation with a bridge going out at Spring Ridge Estates, Lake Support and Emergency Recovery (LASER) was there along with the Lake County Fire Department and several public safety officials, noting that the County was working with the Lake Yale Baptist Assembly to place those affected into their units. She commented that this happened very quickly, and that if those units had been full, this housing project could potentially be used for a few weeks while people waited to see if they could get back into their homes. She relayed that much had happened leading up to this point, and that staff was asking for support on the current day.

Commr. Smith stated that this was not decided on in the prior two months, and that there had been multiple workshops and discussions on this project, noting that it had been about three years in the making. He mentioned that there was much research done, and that he believed that this was the best option for the funding to help citizens in need; therefore, he would be a strong supporter.

Commr. Parks expressed his support for this project, and opined that even though this was a difficult discussion that had to be done at the local level, they had been trying to do it for a couple of years. He opined that these could be people living in the woods at any moment, and said that even though he attended a church that was active in donating and providing food and services, it did not solve the issue of homelessness. He opined that this could provide wraparound services and housing for moms with kids or veterans, noting that that if one did a ride-along with the LCSO, one could see people living in parking lots in Lake County. He said that regarding the cost, he had

questions about the bidding system and procurement; however, he opined that the cost to not do this for the residents could end up being far greater through the cycle of homelessness.

Commr. Morris opined that it was a fabulous idea, and that even though he was not concerned about building the 21 homes, he was concerned about what happened after the 21 homes were built, noting that he wanted to be cautious and not put the County in a position of paying more funds.

Commr. Campione mentioned that there had been discussion of buying units or buying lots and building units, and that it had been questioned if these units would be given to one of the nonprofit groups. She commented that the idea of owning them had been mentioned in this discussion, and that if the County owned them, then the destiny of those units could be controlled. She opined that even though the County contracted with someone to operate the program, if the County owned them, then it could be sold one day, and that funding could go towards other purposes and give the County more options in the future.

Commr. Sabatini said that he wanted to be more cautious and did not think that the need was there; additionally, he opined that this would not solve the issue.

On a motion by Commr. Parks, seconded by Commr. Smith and carried by a vote of 3-1, the Board approved the following: Contract 26-902 with Nichols Contracting, Inc. (Columbia, MD - Orlando Office) for construction of Multi-Family Detached Housing; to authorize the County Manager to execute the final negotiated contract; and to authorize the Office of Procurement Services to execute all supporting documentation.

Commr. Sabatini voted no.

RURAL CONSERVATION SUBDIVISION DESIGN STANDARDS

Mr. Mike Fitzgerald, Director for the Office of Planning and Zoning, said that this item was for discussion and direction regarding a proposed ordinance for amending the rural conservation subdivision design standards. He relayed that the Lake County Comp Plan contained policies which allowed development in the form of a rural conservation subdivision, which was primarily applied to the Rural future land use (FLU), the Wekiva River Protection Area, the Wekiva Study Area, and the Green Swamp Area of Critical State Concern. He recalled that in 2022, the BCC received public comment on the creation of rural conservation regulations, and that on January 24, 2023, the Board adopted Ordinance 2023-9 which created the LDR for those subdivision provisions. He commented that since then, the Board determined that adjustments to the regulations were needed, and that staff had worked with the County Attorney's Office, stakeholders and residents, along with taking input and recommendations from them, and had come up with a draft ordinance which was provided to the Board. He said that one highlight was enhancement to the definition of primary and secondary conservation areas, which included the following: historic and archaeological sites including cemeteries; codification of prime farmland; protection of wildlife habitat; buffers to wetlands and waterbodies; preservation of viewsheds; mapping and feature analysis; and protection of open areas by a legal document recorded in public records. He added that enhancement to the conceptual sketch plan included the following: revised timing for the public information meeting; revised timing of the onsite meeting with County staff;

enhancing the management plan for open space, preservation areas, stormwater and roads; all conceptual sketch plans would be reviewed by the BCC; and provided for the Board to approve a conceptual sketch plan by a resolution.

The Chairman opened the floor for public comment.

Ms. Katherine de Jongh, Project Director for the Island Pond Cemetery Project, requested that this ordinance be amended to include human burial sites, cemeteries and documented areas of interment as primary conservation instead of secondary conservation areas. She indicated that she would also like to see some language added that would require the homeowners association (HOA) or community to maintain these conservation areas according to best practices outlined by the Florida Division of Historical Resources and the Florida Public Archaeology Network. She pointed out that the purpose and intent identified in Section 17.00.01 included cultural, historic and archaeological sites and features that contributed to rural community character, and opined that to remain aligned with the purpose, human burial sites needed an extra layer of protection in this ordinance. She relayed that the current draft tied primary conservation areas to natural and physical resources, opining that this created risk and uncertainty for developers when it came to human burial sites. She opined that this was the one case where she could see an exception being made for including them in primary conservation, and said that by law, human burial sites could not be built upon, excavated or graded without violating State and Federal laws. She opined that cemeteries were not recreation areas, and that they were not areas utilized as open space. She opined that by placing cemeteries in primary conservation, it would provide clarity for developers and limit risk. She also requested to see some language added that would require the HOA or community to maintain the conservation areas, indicating that Florida Statutes intended for landowners to maintain cemeteries on their property; however, there was nothing binding to enforce this. She elaborated that statutes said that if landowners did not maintain the sites, descendants were permitted to do so. She opined that ongoing maintenance of these sites was an issue, and that language removing the burden of care from the community should not be permitted in future developments. She also opined that requiring a community to maintain a site was not creating a burden.

Commr. Campione commented that if cemeteries were primary conservation, then they would not count toward open space requirements, and she asked that if they gave a landowner the credit for being able to use it as open space, would they not be more inclined to want to take care of it and make it part of their overall plan. She said that if she had a piece of land with one of these on it, then she may possibly carve it out and not incorporate it into her overall plan. She opined that the goal was protection, but that they might be lessening protection by wanting it designated as primary rather than secondary conservation. She opined that they might be penalizing a developer who wanted to incorporate it into an overall plan.

Ms. de Jongh opined that this would not be the case if they included language which required maintenance.

Commr. Campione opined that if they were requiring maintenance, then they may be dissuading someone from wanting to incorporate something like this into an overall plan.

Ms. de Jongh opined that there was not enough protection when it was grouped under a historical or archaeological site, and that a human burial site elevated it to a higher level of protection. She added that people did not use cemeteries as open space or recreation.

Commr. Campione opined that they possibly needed to review the wording, adding that the County was trying to protect those sites and come up with something practical which did this.

Ms. Newton said that this ordinance allowed for land application of biosolids in the State of Florida's ecologically sensitive areas, and that while she acknowledged the regulatory framework provided in Chapters 62-600, 62-610 and 62-480 of the Florida Administrative Code (FAC), as well as recent passage of House Bill (HB) 1245, current protections remained insufficient to safeguard groundwater and springs. She remarked that the land application of class A or B biosolids was prohibited in the Wekiva Study Area, and that while the application of AA biosolids was currently permissible when distributed and marketed in accordance with Chapter 62-640, this practice required immediate and rigorous oversight. She expressed opposition due to the following factors: the persistence of forever chemicals; there were Wekiva-specific protections which could come into effect there, commenting that the wastewater treatment facilities operating in a protection zone must adhere to the strictest treatments required under the FAC regulations; the springs criteria, established as Sections 373.801 to 373.811 of the Florida Statutes, indicated that unique karst geology of the Wekiva Study Area made it highly vulnerable to nutrition loading and chemical leaching; there were some regulatory gaps; and the marketing and distribution of class AA biosolids often bypassed the site specific scrutiny applied to class B materials, potentially leading to overapplication of nutrients and contaminants in high risk zones. She urged the Board not to allow the class AA biosolid land spreading in this ordinance, and to at least exclude the Wekiva Study Area, the Wekiva Protection Area, and the Green Swamp Area of Critical State Concern to ensure that something permissible did not become detrimental. She opined that they must prioritize the health of their springs and the long term safety of drinking water over the convenience of waste disposal.

Mr. John Blodgett, a resident on Number 2 Road speaking via Zoom, asked how far clustering went regarding viewsheds and the purpose of rural conservation subdivisions. He indicated that it said that they preserved scenic viewsheds and enhanced rural character for the project and the surrounding area, and he asked if there were avenues to make it so it did not look like an urban subdivision placed in a rural area. He questioned if they could consider staggering houses and making it so that they were not so urban looking within a subdivision.

Mr. Bill Ray, with Ray and Associates, commended staff for working with stakeholders, opining that they had clarified some points and made it a reasonable and predictable outcome for the developer and the County. He expressed support for the ordinance, opining that some small items needed to be addressed, but that it was flexible enough that they could do this through the process and the approval of the conceptual sketch plan.

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

Commr. Campione asked that for Section 17.01.02, item C(4), which discussed slopes of 15 to 25 percent which required special site protection, did this become an average as opposed to saying if it was a slope of 15 percent or more.

Mr. Fitzgerald clarified that it was between 15 and 25 percent, and that it appeared to pertain to septic tank fields.

Commr. Campione opined that anything 15 percent or over should have protection.

Commr. Parks opined that if the slope reached a certain point, then that was where one needed to do stabilization.

Commr. Campione relayed that for cemeteries, they could possibly say that 50 percent of the cemetery could be considered primary conversation and 50 percent could be secondary conservation. She opined that they were assuring greater protection when it was secondary conservation because the developer would be looking at it as being valuable to them because it gave them that use as open space in the sense that it was not being developed; furthermore, it seemed like it would have more protection. She added that the County could mandate that for one of these which was incorporated in an overall plan, it would be their obligation and would not fall on the County or the public.

Commr. Parks opined that it was key to ensure that the right kind of open space was being maximized, and that the Federal prime agricultural soils and prime farmland definitions should be a basis, relaying his understanding that there were still soils on that map which were good for certain crops and forestry that possibly were not defined as Federally prime agriculture land; therefore, they could possibly go above and beyond the Federal definition. He added that there could potentially be soils that the County could map to demonstrate this. He said that he would review how this connected to the Florida Wildlife Corridor, and relayed that there were some secondary and tertiary corridors which could be connected to this; therefore, he would look to see if they should further address this. He agreed with Ms. Newton's comment about biosolids, and opined that any onsite treatment for a septic or sewer system should be treated to at least 85 percent of a municipal sewer system. He opined that viewsheds could be addressed, and that there was much value in clustering when trying to protect areas with ecological value.

Commr. Campione said that they could possibly review a book by Mr. Randall Arendt, a landscape planner, to see whether there was any commentary on this and if there was a way to assure that the clustering did not impact the viewshed.

Commr. Parks relayed that the State had limited their ability for some architectural standards, but opined that there was something they could do. He opined that this needed to be embraced in all of Lake County, and that urban versions required more site planning and concern for environmental resources.

Commr. Smith commented that there were strict State laws on what could be done with cemeteries, as well as perpetual oversight on cemeteries. He opined that this ordinance was good enough to move forward for advertising, noting that they could modify it as they went along.

Commr. Morris inquired if Onsyte septic systems would treat up to 85 percent of nutrients.

Commr. Parks added that one could have a distributed wastewater treatment system (DWTS) and advanced treatment units (ATUs).

Commr. Morris clarified that he wanted to ensure that there were other options, and asked if it was a percentage that everyone would be able to work within.

Commr. Parks confirmed this, and added that there would be more than one option.

Mr. Fitzgerald relayed his understanding that staff needed to take some recommendations from the Board to incorporate into the draft ordinance that they would advertise.

Ms. Marsh commented that the Board could approve it for advertising on the current day, and she summarized that the concrete changes were the change in slopes to read "15 percent or greater," and for cemeteries to qualify for 50 percent open space credit. She said that the ordinance still had to go to the Planning and Zoning Board for a public hearing, and then it would come back to the BCC for a public hearing.

Commr. Sabatini made a motion to approve this item for advertising.

Commr. Smith seconded the motion.

Commr. Campione expressed support for this, opining that the current code needed significant work.

Commr. Smith opined that they had an ordinance in place which needed to be changed, and that this would get it moving quicker.

Mr. Fitzgerald said that staff would take recommendations from the Board members and incorporate it into the ordinance.

Commr. Campione was unsure if the Board wanted to leave the density bonus language.

Commr. Smith opined that it needed to be removed, and Commissioner Campione agreed.

Commr. Parks stated that he would meet with staff on some of these items.

Ms. Marsh explained that once they advertised it, they did not make changes to the draft; rather, they did errata sheets. She said that the Board could send staff additional changes which could be included in an errata sheet when it came back for a public hearing, or staff could make changes at the current time, bring it back to the Board, and the Board could approve to advertise it at a different meeting.

Commr. Parks remarked that he would leave the density bonus in at the current time, opining that it could possibly be tied to a transfer of development rights (TDR) where there would be no additional density across the county or within an area. He opined that if it was tied to something like this, then it could be a useful tool; therefore, he did not want to eliminate it currently. He opined that the alternative was going back to the code, which he expressed concerns for, and that the 0.5, one, three and five acres lots which were platted out may seem rural, though people could potentially clear areas that had great ecological value which might have been maintained with a good management plan. He reiterated that he did not want to lose that opportunity.

Ms. Marsh said that the density bonus language was in the Comp Plan, and that they could remove it from this ordinance; however, staff would have to do a text amendment to remove it

from the Comp Plan as well. She added that this density bonus was specific for rural conservation subdivisions, and that it had been adopted in January 2023 at the same time they adopted the LDR.

Commr. Smith opined that it had become more of a burden than he anticipated, and said that he did not like density bonuses.

Commr. Campione opined that it created confusion and a perception which was not necessarily fair, and that from a practical standpoint if one had rural land of one unit per five acres and owned 100 or 200 acres, they could currently plat small lots and cluster to a certain degree; additionally, she asked how small of a lot they could have in that scenario.

Mr. Fitzgerald replied that if they were going to come in with a plat, staff would consider the overall acreage, the overall density and road frontage, noting that they did not currently have lot size in Lake County's code.

Commr. Campione relayed her understanding that they were also considering wetlands and waterbodies, and that those items were getting removed for the overall density calculation.

Mr. Fitzgerald confirmed this.

Commr. Campione commented that someone who currently wanted to have a clustered neighborhood in a rural area could do this, though they did not have items which were in the proposed ordinance including how slopes were handled and common open space versus open space that was created because one had a large lot.

Commr. Parks pointed out that this was still optional.

Commr. Campione confirmed that the County was creating an option, and that one would have to decide what they were achieving for the public interest as a result of this option. She opined that the question was whether to give one a density bonus by doing something that was considered to be more desirable and added more protection to the environment.

Commr. Parks opined that there were developers who would voluntarily do this without a density bonus, though he was considering homebuilders who would utilize straight zoning because there would not be an incentive.

Commr. Campione opined that the rationale behind a density bonus was that one may utilize straight zoning and cluster versus doing something like this. She relayed her understanding that Commissioner Parks was saying that the reason why they had the density bonus was so that the County might have them do a better product with more protection for the environment.

Commr. Smith said that they were doing this in Agriculture or Rural Transition, and that if they had Rural Transition of one unit per acre with 50 percent open space and then they said that they would provide 65 percent open space with 22 more homes, then they would be over one unit per acre. He opined that that they did not need to be like a municipality, and reiterated that he did not like the density bonuses. He added that he also liked 65 foot lot lines.

Commr. Campione remarked that they could possibly remove this for Rural Transition but leave it for Rural.

Commr. Parks opined that it was more of a site planning item, and that it would not be used everywhere.

Commr. Smith relayed that he had not seen one of these come before the Board that did not utilize the density bonus, and that some had come down because of other regulations.

Commr. Campione opined that this was because one elected for it over just using straight zoning. She opined that Commissioner Smith was making the argument that applicants saw it as beneficial enough, and that to receive the density bonus, applicants were willing to do something that they otherwise would not have done to go the extra mile on these protections. She opined that to a large degree this came down to public perception, and that most of the Board did not currently want to be associated with something that appeared to be giving people more density when everyone was so concerned about growth.

Commr. Parks wished that there would be more rational discussion on this in the public.

Commr. Campione opined that the more they provided information, the greater chance there was for people to understand why they did what they were doing. She opined that they were not necessarily just trying to add more houses; rather, they were trying to get the protection that came along with having an ordinance like this.

Ms. Marsh clarified that the motion included the following: the change to the slope language; the change to cemetery open space; and the onsite wastewater treatment of 85 percent of nutrients.

Commr. Smith asked to ensure that other changes could be made, relaying his understanding that Commissioner Parks had not had the opportunity to review this.

Ms. Marsh confirmed that she would make these three changes, and that Commissioner Parks could send additional comments to her.

On a motion by Commr. Sabatini, seconded by Commr. Smith and carried unanimously by a vote of 4-0, the Board approved this item for advertising with changes to the language for slope, cemetery open space, and wastewater treatment of 85 percent of nutrients.

RECESS AND REASSEMBLY

The Chairman called a recess at 10:53 a.m. for 10 minutes.

FIRE RESCUE AMBULANCE SERVICES UPDATE

Mr. Tommy Carpenter, Assistant County Manager, provided a six-month update of the Office of Fire Rescue's operational plan to add ambulances to the City of Clermont area and countywide. He recalled that on October 14, 2025, the County managed 20 countywide ambulances with two assigned to the City of Clermont area, and that ambulance response times for the City of Clermont for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 included an average response time of 10 minutes 33 seconds, with the 90th percentile response time being sixteen minutes 21 seconds; furthermore, the Office of Fire Rescue's FY 2026 plan was to minimally add two ambulances to the City of Clermont area with one being added by December 1, 2025 and the second by April 1, 2026. He commented that in Commissioner Campione's letter to the City, she addressed the following areas: described the County's emergency medical services (EMS) System which had been in place for over 25 years; the City's request to provide ambulance service; the City's response data titled "Dispatch to Arrival over 20 Minutes," recalling that on October 14, 2025, Mr. Rick Van Wagner, Clermont City Manager, had spoken about the times that it took the

County's ambulances longer than 20 minutes to arrive on scene; encouraged the City to work with the County to improve service; and addressed the County's advanced life support (ALS) EMS system support. He explained that the County was the holder of the certificate of public convenience and necessity (COPCN), that they held the only ALS license, and that they had one set of medical directors, noting that anyone who worked on an ambulance or any fire apparatus in the county or a city worked under that single license with a single medical director. He recalled that Commissioner Campione's letter started out with it being ALS fire first response with provision of care by a paramedic, relaying that paramedics on ambulances and firetrucks were trained equally, met the same standards, used the same medical protocols, and worked under the same medical director's license. He said that if there was an emergency call in Lake County, a firetruck and ambulance were dispatched at the same time, and that in most cases the firetruck would arrive first; furthermore, that firefighter/paramedic initiated the same level of care, and when the ambulance arrived, they would turn over care to the ambulance paramedic and then take one to the hospital. He indicated that their metric for measuring when care started was when the first paramedic arrived, and that if it was on an ALS firetruck, then this was when it occurred. He relayed that in November 2025, the County operated 20 to 23 ambulances countywide, and that the City of Clermont benefited from a coordinated system and had access to all County resources. He added that at that time, two ambulances were assigned to the City of Clermont area, though they did not have any ambulances permanently assigned within the city, noting that one was in the City of Minneola and one was at Fire Station 109.

Commr. Campione clarified that Mr. Carpenter meant ambulances housed in the City of Clermont, relaying her understanding that they were assigned but could not stay in the city because there was not a location that the City fire department was providing.

Mr. Carpenter confirmed this, and commented that at that time they were not assigning or posting anyone within the city. He continued his presentation and recalled that Commissioner Campione's letter had indicated that two additional ambulances would be assigned to the City of Clermont area and begin service by April 2026. He also added that five to six ambulances would be added to the system countywide by December 2026. He said that for the City's request to provide ambulance service, Commissioner Campione had pointed out that if the City withdrew from the existing integrated model of service, they would lose access to the shared pool of countywide resources; additionally, the City would be required to invest in personnel, vehicles, equipment, dispatch, infrastructure, medical direction, patient report billing and training. He said that it was estimated that if the City were to staff six ambulances, the conservative cost estimate would be $7.3 million annually, and that in FY 2024 the County had collected $4.27 million between the ambulance municipal services taxing unit (MSTU) and billed patient revenue, clarifying that in the letter that Commissioner Campione had written, staff had provided the figure of $4.4 million. He stated that the estimate for taxes collected for the ambulance MSTU was correct, which for FY 2024 was $2,386,932, though there was a difference between what they billed and collected. He said that for FY 2024 this number was less, noting that they only collected $1,885,121 and had billed over $2 million. He remarked that in FY 2025 the County collected

slightly less at about $4.26 million between the ambulance MSTU and billed patient revenue, recalling that in Commissioner Campione's letter they estimated closer to $5 million. He commented that the taxes collected from the City of Clermont increased by almost $250,000 to $2,635,374, and that billed revenue cash receipts from patient transports provided $1,633,913. He related that this would come in during future fiscal years, and that they may collect bills that they billed in FY 2024 and FY 2025 in the current and following year. He said that they worked with their vendor to understand that just because they billed it does not mean that they had it, noting that they looked at what they collected in a fiscal year. He said that Commissioner Campione had pointed out that the City's goal was to have ambulance response times of 10 minutes, 90 percent of the time, and that the next part of the letter regarded the document from Mr. Van Wagner regarding the dispatch to arrival time being over 20 minutes. He stated that several days after the Board presentation in October 2025, Fire Chief David Ezell, with the City of Clermont, received a public records request regarding this item. He said that the County reviewed the document, and that the time period for the information was January 1, 2025 to October 11, 2025. He stated that during that period of time, there were 5,394 unique ambulance calls, and that Mr. Van Wagner's document represented 249 calls where there was a greater than 20 minute response, which was about 4.6 percent of the total calls. He commented that of the 249 calls in question, 59 percent were determined to be a low acuity alpha call or public assist call where an ambulance had a nonemergency response, or an emergency response where the ambulance responded in less than 14 minutes. He explained that in an alpha call, the firetruck and ambulance went nonemergency, and that in a public assist call, just firetrucks went nonemergency. He relayed his understanding that there had been 25 public assist calls and that for 22, they were requested to come nonemergency by the fire department to transport a patient to the hospital. He added that they found three calls in which they were requested in an emergency, and that of those three calls they had response times less than 14 minutes. He mentioned that of the remaining 101 calls which warranted emergency response and took over 20 minutes or longer for an ambulance to arrive, this represented less than 1.9 percent of emergency calls where an ambulance responded in the City of Clermont between January 1, 2025 and October 11, 2025. He then relayed that the next item that Commissioner Campione had addressed was to work with the County to improve service, and reiterated that there were currently no ambulances stationed within the City of Clermont. He said that there were two agreements in place which authorized the placement of ambulances at two City of Clermont fire stations, and that six municipalities in the county housed ambulances at no cost; additionally, Commissioner Campione had shared the challenges of fire service transitioning to provide ambulance service. He commented that the letter had mentioned the increased number of paramedics, and he read that recent recruiting of paramedics had vastly improved thanks to competitive shifts and single certified flexibility. He specified that they increased pay by providing the 24/72-hour shift schedule for single certified personnel, and that the Office of Fire Rescue had implemented a one of a kind in-house paramedic program which completed paramedic training in only six months. He mentioned that the last part of the letter regarded the County's ALS EMS system support, and that Commissioner Campione had shared that if the City pursued a standalone

service, then County-provided services would no longer be available. He added that this included annual funding provided to the City for ALS first response services through an agreement between the City and the County, and that ALS first response funding provided to the City of Clermont, and to all Cities which had this agreement with the County, 0.1 mills of assessed value annually; furthermore, for FY 2026 the City of Clermont would receive $617,868 to provide ALS first response services. He explained that the system was designed to have ALS first response to respond, and that they typically arrived first and began care. He remarked that the Office of Fire Rescue knew that they had deficits in staffing ambulances to the level they wanted, and that they had currently reached a point to staff them. He then stated that since October 14, 2025, four ambulances had been added to the City of Clermont area through a phased implementation approach, and that in December 2025 there was one 24-hour ambulance added with three peak load 13-hour ambulances staffed with personnel on overtime; additionally, minimum ambulance staffing countywide was 21 ambulances for 24 hours, and up to 24 ambulances for 13 hours a day. He added that through their partnership with the Lake County Sheriff's Office (LCSO) and healthcare partnerships, the three 13-hour ambulances were assigned within the city limits of Clermont at the LCSO South District Office, the AdventHealth standalone emergency department, and the University of Florida (UF) Health standalone emergency department. He said that in January 2026, one of the three 13-hour peak load ambulances was converted to a 24-hour full time ambulance which increased minimum ambulance staffing countywide to 22 ambulances for 24 hours, and 24 ambulances for 13 hours per day. He commented that all peak load 13-hour ambulances were now staffed with assigned personnel and were part of the minimum ambulance staffing requirement, and that in February 2026 the second of the three 13-hour peak load ambulances was converted to a 24-hour full time ambulance; furthermore, minimum ambulance staffing countywide was 23 ambulances for 24-hours, and 24 ambulances for 13 hours per day. He recalled that on March 9, 2026, all peak load ambulances had been converted to 24-hour full time ambulances, providing increased minimum staffing of 24 full-time ambulances. He specified that three of the four added ambulances continued to post during peak hours in the City of Clermont at the LCSO South District Office, as well as the AdventHealth and UF Health standalone emergency departments. He related that in addition to the 24 full time ambulances, up to three additional ambulances may be in service each day to train paramedic provisionals, and he showed a chart of ambulance response times in the City of Clermont. He reviewed ambulance response times for March 16 through April 19, 2026 between the City and the County, noting that the County's response time increased at nighttime because they no longer had ambulances in the city.

Commr. Campione pointed out that the County did not have a place to put them, rather than because the County chose not to be there.

Mr. Carpenter said that during the day, ambulances were at temporary places, though overnight facilities were not provided; therefore, at night they returned back to the stations at which they reported to in the morning, noting that two ambulances went to the City of Minneola and one went to Fire Station 109 south of the City of Clermont. He mentioned the effort over the last two years between the current collective bargaining agreement and the in-house paramedic program,

and he indicated that the system had been recently described at a City workshop as fragile; however, based on these response times, he did not believe it to be fragile. He then relayed the following information for their strategic plan moving forward: staff was evaluating the purchase of a commercial building in the City of Eustis to use as an ambulance hub, noting that up to three ambulances and one supervisor may be located at this facility; received $1 million in legislative funding in the previous year for the design of a new Wellness Way public safety building with space for the LCSO, fire apparatus and multiple ambulances; implementation of a real-time response and resource distribution dispatch software which would provide predictive models and help them best position their resources; the fifth ambulance was anticipated to be added to the system in May 2026, noting that this would be the 25th full time ambulance in service and that it would be in the north side of the county; and the County's second in-house paramedic program had 17 students enrolled and scheduled for graduation in June 2026. He said that challenges moving forward included finding new locations to house ambulances to meet growth needs, noting that they could co-locate in a municipal fire station or use a municipal facility, as well as the lease or purchase of buildings appropriate for public safety use; additionally, another challenge was strategically adding ambulances to meet service demands, noting that paramedics were a commodity.

Commr. Parks opined that a question was that ambulance service in the City of Clermont area was a moneymaker for the County, and he inquired about this.

Mr. Carpenter clarified that they were a public service and not for profit, and that they received what they could. He commented that the tax revenue increased in FYs 2024 and 2025, and that the medical billing would be hit or miss, relaying his understanding that the collection rate was between 60 and 70 percent. He said that for the six ambulances that the City of Clermont wanted to add, it would be $5.2 million just to add the 45 staff.

Commr. Parks indicated his understanding that compartmentalizing and working in silos could add a significant additional cost to taxpayers in Lake County when it did not necessarily have to be that way, opining that one could have the best service if they worked together.

Mr. Carpenter recalled that in the October 14, 2025 presentation they had referenced a report from the end of 2017 or 2018 which indicated that if the Cities of Leesburg or Clermont did this independently, it would cost more funding because the County would go around the city and would not have it as part of their response operation. He opined that no one entity could provide service alone, and that they would need outside help. He opined that with the economy of scale the County had and the way this worked, they improved response times and the City had access to all of the ambulances in the county.

Commr. Parks inquired that when Cities received a dispatch, did they have the ability to say that they were not going to a call, and how often did this happen.

Mr. Carpenter confirmed that they could do this, though it did not happen frequently. He added that County and City leadership had worked together to resolve this, and he relayed his understanding that this had been tracked.

Commr. Smith opined that the County's in-house paramedic program was one of a kind, though this did not mean that the level of education was diminished; rather, it was amplified because Lake County was sending its people eight hours per day instead of two to three hours at night. He added that graduates had to pass the state test that each paramedic had to pass, and that they had to participate in the field training office internship. He then asked if the City of Clermont planned on housing its own ambulance services outside their city.

Mr. Carpenter relayed his understanding that they had plans to build to accommodate this within their current stations.

Commr. Smith inquired that if the County kept its current staffing level, would it be surmised that if the City of Clermont housed the three 13-hour ambulances, those response times would decrease during nighttime.

Mr. Carpenter opined that if they had the ability to station their ambulances within the city 24 hours per day, then they could achieve the daytime response time minimally at that level, if not better.

Commr. Smith indicated his understanding that the only reason why the County's daytime numbers were better was because they had partnered with other entities outside of the City of Clermont to help the Clermont and Lake County citizens within the city, and that the only reason why the ambulances were not in the city was because the County did not have a place to house the ambulances 24 hours per day inside the city.

Mr. Carpenter confirmed this.

Commr. Smith opined that the County had a great program and that worked well with the City of Clermont, and that if the City would allow the County's ambulances within the city, then these times would decrease further.

Commr. Campione opined that it kept getting lost in the discussion at the City level that if they had multiple calls or a large emergency that required more resources than a typical call, and if all they had were six ambulances, then they would not have the other 20 ambulances in the overall system. She opined that this could hurt residents in the City of Clermont if they had a separate system because the depth of resources benefited the entire county when they were needed. She also mentioned ambulances being out of commission when they were transporting to trauma centers outside of the jurisdiction. She opined that the point was to have the best service possible at the most reasonable cost, and she did not think that people wanted to pay more taxes for this; furthermore, she did not see how they could have the needed depth of resources and all of the other items which needed to be funded to run a single City service without a significant increase in cost, opining that this meant it would be passed onto residents. She did not think that people in the county or city limits wanted to be taxed more, and opined that the key was to work with the system they had and improve it to the extent they could, noting that the County had been doing this. She said that she was glad to see that staff was looking at a hub in the City of Eustis area and that they had another ambulance coming online which would be between the Golden Triangle area and the City of Leesburg. She opined that the dispatch software looked like a great way to make

their resources go as far as possible, and stated that residents could contact the County with questions.

Mr. Carpenter opined that fire leadership had done a great job.

Commr. Sabatini praised the presentation and thanked staff.

Commr. Campione expressed appreciation for reviewing the calls with a response time of over 20 minutes.

Mr. Carpenter relayed that the presented numbers were unverified, which meant that if any municipality wanted to run the same numbers, then they would receive the same results as the County. He added that what the County did not present was if someone forgot to indicate that they were on scene, or if human error was involved and they were there quicker; therefore, staff vetted and reviewed everything.

Commr. Campione indicated appreciation for it being objective and for providing information whether it was good or bad.

PUBLIC HEARING – CERTIFICATE OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCE AND NECESSITY

Deputy EMS Chief John Simpson, with the Office of Fire Rescue, explained that the State of Florida was a COPCN state, and that it was within statute that sole authority rested with the BCC in each county to issue a COPCN. He commented that the COPCN was a requirement to provide ambulance service in the state at the basic life support (BLS) or ALS level, or to provide ALS of any kind. He relayed that Section 11-19, Lake County Code, provided the process for COPCN application and renewal, and that it also required that they advertise and hold a public hearing before the BCC. He commented that the Lake County BCC currently held the only ALS COPCN in the county, and that it was the only unrestricted COPCN, which allowed them to provide ALS and BLS first response, as well as transportation services. He added that their municipal partners were licensed under the County's COPCN and ALS license, and that the current COPCN would expire on June 18, 2026; additionally, their current ALS license would expire on July 22, 2026. He added that renewal of the COPCN was required for them to renew their ALS license, and that the requested action was to renew the Lake County BCC COPCN.

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. Sabatini and carried unanimously by a vote of 4-0, the Board approved to issue a COPCN for the Office of Fire Rescue through June 18, 2028.

ORDINANCE 2026-17 REFERENDUM FOR ADDITIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT AD VALOREM MILLAGE TAX

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

AN ORDINANCE OF LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA, PROVIDING FOR THE LEVY OF AN ADDITIONAL ONE (1) MILL SCHOOL DISTRICT AD VALOREM MILLAGE TAX IN LAKE COUNTY FOR SCHOOL OPERATIONAL PURPOSES FOR A PERIOD NOT TO EXCEED FOUR (4) YEARS; PROVIDING FOR APPROVAL OF THE LEVY BY VOTERS IN A REFERENDUM; PROVIDING THAT THE IMPOSITION SHALL BE EFFECTIVE BEGINNING JULY 1, 2027 AND ENDING FOUR (4) YEARS THEREAFTER PURSUANT

TO SECTION 1011.71(9), FLORIDA STATUTES; PROVIDING FOR THE REFERENDUM TO BE HELD ON NOVEMBER 3, 2026; PROVIDING BALLOT LANGUAGE; PROVIDING FOR NOTICE OF THE ELECTION; PROVIDING FOR NOTIFICATION TO THE STATE OF FLORIDA, DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE; PROVIDING A CONFLICT CLAUSE; PROVIDING FOR FILING WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Ms. Marsh clarified that this item was a ministerial function of the BCC, and that the School Board had adopted a resolution; furthermore, under State law, they had the ability to direct the BCC to place this on the ballot, and this was the means by which they did so.

Commr. Sabatini said that he was opposed to the underlying ordinance and what the School Board wanted to do, and that he understood the current legal interpretation of the statute, which had been litigated previously, was that it was purely ministerial and the BCC was mandated to do it; however, he opined that there was a good faith legal basis for sustaining a challenge against that interpretation, pushing it up to an appeal, and having a different court of appeal look at it. He opined that it was peculiar language that the Legislature used when it created this subsection. He indicated that he understood that the Board was under the hand of the appellate court, but opined that they could challenge this by voting no and allowing the School Board to possibly sue the County, go to public court, and let another District Court of Appeals (DCA) have an opinion. He stated that he would be voting no, though he respected the County Attorney's opinion, and opined that the County was likely mandated to do this under the current law. He relayed that he was not willing to assist in placing this item on the ballot in even a minor form when he opined that the County could create a legal situation which would allow the law to be interpreted.

Commr. Campione said that she would rely on the County Attorney's opinion and her own interpretation of the statute on this issue, and that the statute was about taking a referendum to the voters to decide, opining that it was on the School District and anyone involved in this issue to make that case. She opined that it would be irregular to vote against something that the statute said that they were supposed to do to facilitate an issue being put forth.

Commr. Sabatini recalled that Hillsborough County had done this.

Commr. Campione opined that if Lake County went this route, they would need hearings on the pros and cons and to litigate this question in public. She remarked that the School Board was the body elected to oversee the School District.

Commr. Sabatini opined that the supermajority of the voters would not know about it until they picked up a ballot, and that they would not quite understand it because it was written in a dense legal language which was confusing to the average voter. He said that he would rather let the School District possibly sue the County and let it play out in the public eye, opining that this would draw more attention to it and that more people in the public could review it and agree with the Board doing what they could to stop what he opined was an unjust tax increase.

Commr. Campione relayed her understanding that this was the first year that they had an A-rated school system, and said that people elected the School District officials, who then appointed the Superintendent and ran the system, noting that the County did not. She expressed appreciation for the work that the School District had done when it came to the accolades and the

schools which were performing well, and said that she did not want to have an issue with the School District.

Commr. Parks stated that he was interested in what Commissioner Sabatini was saying about the process and why the Board decided whether it went on the ballot, though he relayed his understanding that this item would still be on the ballot if the law was different and it was in the School District's purview.

Ms. Marsh confirmed this if the statute did not tell them to direct the County to do it.

Commr. Parks opined that attempting to change the process was possibly the way to go.

Ms. Marsh read the following statutory language: "The District School Board, pursuant to resolution adopted at a regular meeting, shall direct the County Commissioners to call an election, at which the electors within the School District may approve an ad valorem tax millage as authorized in Section 9, Article 7 of the State Constitution."

Commr. Sabatini said that Lake County could be the third County to challenge it.

Commr. Campione asked who had won.

Commr. Sabatini replied that nothing had gotten to the Florida Supreme Court, though there was not an appeal in Indian River County, and that Hillsborough County had appealed with the second DCA going with the School Board. He stated that this technically bound all of the other appellate districts, though if they sued, lost in trial court, and immediately appealed under the good faith basis under Chapter 57.105, Florida Statutes, the County could then ask a new appellate court to make its own decision on the statute in the Fifth District with no penalty. He opined that it was peculiar language and that "shall direct" did not mean that the School District had authority to tell the County that they had to do this.

Commr. Campione opined that if the Legislature wanted the County to have the authority, they would have added after that phrase "at the discretion of the BCC." She stated that the right was being given to the voters to decide.

Commr. Sabatini opined that this was another candidate of judicial interpretation that they were depriving the Fifth DCA from exercising by not voting no and then prompting a lawsuit.

Commr. Morris noted that the taxpayers would have the ability to vote yes or no, and that he did not see an issue with it.

Commr. Parks opined that "shall" was mandatory.

Commr. Sabatini opined that it indicated that the School Board shall request the Board to do this, and that it was unusual language.

Commr. Campione relayed that the Board had ministerial, legislature and quasi-judicial functions, and that this fell into the category of a ministerial function. She opined that the Board was being told by the body which adopted the decision to then adopt an ordinance for it to go to the Supervisor of Elections, noting that the Supervisor of Elections would then have to perform a ministerial function and put it on a ballot for the voters to have the opportunity to decide. She also expressed concerns for saying that the voters could not read the language and know that it was a tax increase.

Commr. Sabatini opined that most voters generally did not find themselves with enough time to study it because it had not been brought to their attention before they went to vote.

Commr. Campione opined that amendments on the ballot could be confusing, though this was a local issue and a question of whether a voter was going to impose this on themselves.

Commr. Smith remarked that there was a duly elected board requesting the BCC to put something on the ballot and that whether the BCC agreed with it not, it was up to him to let his position be known to his friends and family, but not as an elected official saying that they would not even put it on the ballot to let the citizens decide. He also mentioned that the School Board was a separate line item on the tax roll, and that if the citizens had concerns for the School Board, then they could address this during the election. He added that he was not in favor of the first thing done being a lawsuit each time the Board did not agree with something. He said that he was agreeable with putting this item on a ballot and letting the voters indicate what they wanted to do.

Commr. Morris agreed, opining that if the Board kept threatening to sue people, they would spend all of the taxpayers' funding in lawsuits.

Commr. Campione reiterated that the statute did not indicate that the Board had discretion, and opined that it was a stretch to suggest that the Legislature meant anything other than performing an act that they were told to perform, noting that this was to put the item on the ballot and let the voters decide. She opined that individuals were smart enough to determine if they wanted to do this or not, and that there would be time for the School District to provide information and for people to hear about this and decide.

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. Parks opined that this item was not discretionary, and that if there was some clarification of statute that needed to be done, the Board could possibly pursue this later.

On a motion by Commr. Smith, seconded by Commr. Parks and carried by a vote of 3-1, the Board approved Ordinance 2026-17 providing for the levy of an additional school district ad valorem millage tax in Lake County for operational purposes effective in 2027 and ending four (4) years thereafter pursuant to Section 1011.71(9), Florida Statutes, providing for approval of the levy by voters in a referendum to be held on November 3, 2026, and providing for ballot language.

Commr. Sabatini voted no.

PUBLIC HEARING – AMENDED FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET

Ms. Jaime Stewart, Director for the Office of Management and Budget, said that the purpose of the mid-year adjustment was to realign the budget mid-way through the fiscal year, providing early detection and correction of variances, and that this strategic process allowed them to evaluate progress made during the first half of the year and implement any necessary revisions. She stated that currently, the countywide budget, which included previously approved unanticipated revenue resolutions, was $1.12 billion, and that the proposed changes were $19.7 million which would bring the supplemental budget to $1.14 billion. She commented that the total mid-year adjustments for the General Fund revenues were roughly $12.8 million and included

changes to the beginning fund balance of about $2.3 million in revenue projection adjustments for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grant reimbursements, the interest revenues earned, and Tax Collector excess fees. She remarked that adjustments to the General Fund for expenditures totaled about $2.3 million, which included the following: the LCSO hiring of new deputies for the courthouse at approximately $195,000; the Tax Collector's capital purchases and contractual services which represented roughly $1.1 million; and the Supervisor of Elections' renovations at $300,000. She related that there was around $757,000 for adjustments to personal services for the Public Works Department and stormwater which moved into the General Fund, and that there was about $701,000 for adjustment to reserves to offset the personal services; additionally, there were other miscellaneous adjustments in the amount of roughly $575,000. She indicated that there was one position requested for approval for a legislative affairs coordinator, and that the total loaded cost for the position was around $97,000. She stated that the adopted General Fund operating reserves were currently at approximately $28.7 million, which represented 11.1 percent of the operating budget, and that upon approval of the mid-year adjustment, the total General Fund operating Reserves would be roughly $39.3 million, which represented 14.3 percent of the operating budget. She explained that the long range target for reserves was 16 percent or two months of regular operating expenses, as recommended by the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA), and that the total adjustments to the other funds was approximately $17.5 million, consisting of the following: around $9.2 million in grant reconciliation adjustments, the majority of which was from the Federal and State grants; approximately $7.4 million in the beginning fund balance adjustments for revenues which exceeded the actual expenditures for projections in FY 2025 and which included an EMS fund adjustment of about $5.3 million; roughly $310,000 for adjustments due to repairs of Wolf Branch Road; about $210,000 for building projects funded through the LCWA; and approximately $288,000 in other miscellaneous adjustments due to transfers in, as well as personal service adjustments.

Commr. Sabatini asked about the specific changes to the Tax Collector's budget amendments.

Ms. Barker relayed her understanding that there were some needed repairs to HVAC systems within a couple of his facilities, and that she could provide this information.

Commr. Smith requested to concentrate on building reserves to over 16 percent of operating expenses.

Ms. Barker indicated that the County had spent $14 million on Hurricane Milton and that since 2022 they spent $18 million on hurricanes; however, since 2022 they had only received around $3 million from FEMA and it was moving slower due to the Federal Government shutdown. She said that their anticipation was that once they started receiving FEMA reimbursements for hurricane costs, they would start building the reserve to where it was about a year prior, which was around 18 percent of operating reserves.

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. Parks, seconded by Commr. Sabatini and carried unanimously by a vote of 4-0, the Board approved the following items: an amended budget for the Lake County Board of County Commissioners Fiscal Year 2026 to include a reconciliation of the beginning fund balance and other adjustments; and Resolution 2026-46 adopting a supplemental budget of $1,139,322,659 for Fiscal Year 2026.

REGULAR AGENDA

DISCUSSION ON WOLF BRANCH INNOVATION DISTRICT LOGO

Commr. Smith recalled that a logo had been presented to the Board previously, and said that his request was to approve to send the displayed logo to the City of Mount Dora for their thoughts and approval.

Commr. Campione relayed her understanding that at the previous meeting, the revised logo came back, which the City had initially approved and the Board had modified. She asked if Commissioner Smith wanted to send his logo to the City.

Commr. Smith confirmed this, noting that he wanted to see if the City liked it more than the other logo. He opined that the other logo did not make sense for why it would represent an innovation district.

Commr. Campione stated that she wanted to be clear that she was in favor of the logo that the County had worked on in collaboration with the City, and that she did not want to confuse the issue.

Commr. Parks relayed he would be supportive of sending Commissioner Smith's logo to the City to see if they liked it as opposed to the other logo.

Commr. Campione expressed concerns that the City would ask if the BCC had approved this logo.

Commr. Smith opined that the County could send a letter indicating that this was another option for the City to consider, and to ask which they liked better.

Commr. Campione opined that the Board needed to first decide if they were in favor of this logo being one of the options. She recalled that County staff worked with City staff and came up with some designs, that the City had blessed a design, and that the Board had reviewed it and wanted to modify it, noting that this had been sent back to the City. She opined that unless the Board voted on it, it needed to say that Commissioner Smith, as opposed to the BCC, would like the City to consider this.

Commr. Smith stated that he was agreeable with this.

Commr. Sabatini mentioned that he liked the original logo.

Commr. Morris said that he liked Commissioner Smith's idea to send his logo to the City to see what they thought of it.

Commr. Campione opined that the Board needed to let the City know that this was a Commissioner-initiated idea, and that she would otherwise stay with the process they went through to reach a logo. She reiterated that she did not want there to be confusion that the Board was actually saying that they wanted a different logo and wanted to know what the City thought, along

with whether the City wanted to change direction. She then remarked that there was consensus to do this.

LETTER THANKING CITY OF TAVARES FOR AMERICA 250 CELEBRATION

Commr. Smith said that he would like to send a thank you letter to the City of Tavares for placing the County's America 250 flags on Main Street, and that he would like each of the Commissioners to sign the letter.

Commr. Parks opined that this was a great idea, and he thanked the City for embracing America 250, relaying his understanding that some other Cities were doing this as well.

Commr. Smith asked each Commissioner if they could go to their respective Cities and see if they would like to do this, noting that the County could provide them with the flags.

On a motion by Commr. Smith, seconded by Commr. Parks and carried unanimously by a vote of 4-0, the Board approved to send a thank you letter for partnering with the County for the America 250 flags in the City of Tavares downtown, signed by all of the Commissioners.

UPDATE ON TAX COLLECTOR BUDGET INCREASES

Ms. Barker explained that the Tax Collector had two separate amendments, with the majority of costs for the first amendment being associated with facility repairs. She specified that there were two instances of a vehicle crashing through one of his facilities, and that a majority of the first amendment was for facility repairs. She added that the second amendment was associated with HVAC repairs, and that the Tax Collector had several people separate from their employment; therefore, he had to pay out vacation time, etc., noting that a majority of the amendment was related to this and the HVAC repairs.

BILL OF RIGHTS SANCTUARY COUNTY ORDINANCE

Commr. Campione commented that she included this item on the agenda for discussion, noting that Mr. Rick Carlins had visited her and inquired about the County adopting an ordinance which would be the same as one adopted by Collier County in 2023. She specified that this was called a Bill of Rights sanctuary county ordinance, and mentioned that she had discussed this with the County Attorney and Mr. Carlins, along with doing much research. She said that she understood some of the concerns raised by the County Attorney, and had tried to come back with a proposed ordinance that she thought might be a compromise, though she was open to this discussion and other ideas that the Commissioners had. She explained that her focus was on the idea that they often forgot about what the Bill of Rights established as rights that they had as individuals, and that sometimes there were Federal requirements which told them to do things that they may believe were inconsistent with the Bill of Rights; therefore, Lake County should be able to say that they were a sanctuary county and would not enforce or implement things that were contrary to the Bill of Rights. She relayed that the question then became if they created a cause of action where someone could sue the County, or if the County would have to take a particular action. She said that she wanted to have a discussion before requesting to advertise this to see where the Board was at and whether they would want to go with a model similar to Collier County, or a version such as what she put together which referenced the Bill of Rights and basically said

that should the County want to seek a determination on something they believed was an unlawful act as a result of it violating the Bill of Rights or the Constitution, the County could take that action as the BCC; additionally, 50 residents in Lake County could petition the BCC and they would need evidence of living in Lake County through a homestead exemption, noting that the Board could decide whether to take action and seek a decision by the court as to whether something was a violation of the Constitution or the Bill of Rights.

Commr. Sabatini opined that this was good, and that something stronger would also be fine.

Commr. Sabatini made a motion to advertise the ordinance in the packet.

Commr. Smith seconded the motion.

Commr. Sabatini asked if Collier County's ordinance was written in a way that the County believed could create a private cause of action of citizens against their own County government.

Commr. Campione relayed her understanding that it came off the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and the mask mandates, and that it was a pushback to say that that this could not be done in that county. She expressed support for this concept, though she did not want a scenario where the County was doing their jobs and someone said that they were violating their Constitutional rights and each code enforcement case became a challenge of these rights. She opined that this was directed at executive orders being implemented in relation to COVID-19, and she mentioned administrative items which came out of Congress where a law and administrative rule were put in place which many believed should not be enforceable because they did not track what the enabling legislation said. She opined that these were two areas where the County had to be able to push back and say that they were not going to enforce something that was against the Constitution. She questioned whether it had to be the Collier County ordinance to do this, versus the one that she drafted.

Commr. Sabatini expressed support for advertising this item and then having the debate once they had public comment at a future meeting.

Commr. Morris said that he would first like to hear from Mr. Carlins regarding how this would help Lake County residents.

The Chairman opened the floor for public comment.

Mr. Carlins asked if the alternative ordinance put forth by Commissioner Campione would require 50 residents to petition a grievance.

Commr. Campione confirmed that this was how it was written, though this did not mean that the BCC could not decide to go forth and place an item on the agenda to pursue it with a court of law.

Mr. Carlins indicated support for what gave the Sheriff the most power to protect the citizenry and their Bill of Rights. He added that it was to provide a means of criminal and civil consequence for the violation of these rights within the county's jurisdiction.

Mr. Bill Mitchell, Constitutional Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association (CSPOA) Florida State Director, submitted a comparison of the Lake County ordinance to an updated hybrid between Lake County and Collier County. He opined that the Collier County ordinance left some

things which needed to be defined better, and that the enhanced version made it a stronger ordinance and included many processes. He opined that the State of Washington recently passed an unconstitutional law, and that many Counties there questioned what they could do about this; furthermore, by having an ordinance which stated that they were going to be a Constitutional county, they could say that they would not enforce a law in the county because they were challenging it constitutionally, noting that they would have a mechanism in place by which they could determine that it was something unconstitutional at a lower level, be able to challenge it, and have the State be obligated to say how they would address this.

Commr. Campione asked if they would have a court remedy to challenge it, and why they would need something locally indicating that they had the right to challenge it if they always had the ability to challenge things which were contrary to the Constitution.

Mr. Mitchell responded that it would give them something immediately in place which provided jurisdiction to local authorities, and mentioned that the enhanced version of the ordinance discussed a three tier process of being able to address issues such as this.

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

Commr. Sabatini reiterated support for advertising the ordinance.

Commr. Campione indicated that the hybrid version put forward by Mr. Mitchell could be provided to everyone, as well as the version she had worked on and the Collier County ordinance. She added that everyone would have a chance to do their own research, and then they could address this in an open meeting.

Ms. Marsh commented that this would be May 19, 2026.

On a motion by Commr. Sabatini, seconded by Commr. Smith and carried unanimously by a vote of 4-0, the Board approved to advertise this ordinance as written for the May 19, 2026 BCC meeting.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTION FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Ms. Maria AbdoulKarim, Director for the Office of Housing and Community Services, stated that this item was a request from representatives from Atlantic Housing Partners related to their affordable housing project. She specified that they were present for approval of a letter of support and a local contribution in the amount of $460,000 to support the proposed 92-unit affordable housing development in the City of Fruitland Park. She added that this request was contingent upon the project receiving low income housing tax credits, and that it represented an opportunity to bring affordable housing units to the community.

Mr. Craig Thomas, with Atlantic Housing Partners, said that his organization lived, worked and invested there, and that they had built over 150 communities across Central Florida with over 35,000 units. He clarified that they were not a private equity investment; rather, they were a local grassroots organization built in Central Florida. He indicated that they currently built, owned and managed slightly over 10,000 units, and had recently received a contribution in Lake County for Lake Saunders Lakefront Living. He explained that the principals at Atlantic Housing Partners had owned and managed the project, the development, and the land from start to finish, and he

discussed their experience in Lake County, noting that the County's support would allow them to seek Florida Housing Finance Corporation (FHFC) tax credits to complete the project. He relayed that the subject project was 92 units consisting of 36 villas and 56 apartments, and that it would be 100 percent affordable and funded without third party financing; furthermore, the project was nearly permit ready, and construction documents were complete. He relayed the following information regarding affordability of the 92 units: 14 units would serve the lowest level at 30 percent area median income (AMI); 57 units would be at 60 percent AMI; and 21 units would cover 80 percent AMI, noting that these figures were based on the projected 2026 United States (U.S.) Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) incomes. He displayed an image of the projected rents based on the 2026 HUD incomes, and remarked that they were agreeing to a 50 year compliance period, which was beyond the minimum of 15 years. He said that when building developments, his organization did not distinguish between affordable and market rate in terms of the quality built. He reviewed the design of the project and stated that it would be on Spring Lake Road, just west of U.S. Highway 441, noting that it was overlooking Lake Geneva. He mentioned that they would have a series of lakefront apartments on the north side of the property, and he showed a concept of this, noting that they would be two bedroom/one bathroom units all with lake views. He stated that the other portion of the units would be one and two bedroom garden villas, and that there would be a large club space and outdoor amenities overlooking the lake. He commented that for community engagement, they were currently scheduled to host 1,352 events for residents across Central Florida with 151 events scheduled in Lake County. He relayed that some of these services included job training, self-sufficiency, and educating residents on financial literacy or how to obtain services. He recalled that in the previous year they had hosted a job fair for local residents in Lake County, and related that they would be bidding out to over 25 trades with multiple subcontracts for each trade, with the opportunity for local residents to be employed in the construction of the development; additionally, they hired management staff who lived and worked onsite at each of their properties.

Commr. Morris opined that the proposal looked good, and he expressed appreciation for the 50 year compliance period.

Commr. Smith asked if this was in the City of Fruitland Park, and Mr. Thomas confirmed this. Commissioner Smith then inquired if the City approved the project.

Mr. Thomas responded that the zoning was approved and that they had taken the site plan through the staff level approval in the previous week, recalling that they were approved at the City planning and zoning board meeting and that they would go before the City Commission on May 14, 2026 for approval as affordable housing.

Commr. Parks asked about the 30 percent AMI, and he agreed that the 50 year compliance period was better. He also inquired if it was open to anyone in those incomes.

Mr. Thomas clarified that they did not currently have an age restriction planned for the community, though they had an income restriction.

Commr. Parks opined that this could help with workforce housing issues.

Commr. Campione expressed concerns for a provision under the Live Local Act and said that although Lake County had opted out, they originally did not have the ability to opt out, noting that this regarded property tax exemptions on affordable housing. She recalled that the County had opted out and still collected property taxes, though they currently did not have the authority to do this because of a calculation over the market area, noting that it was decided that they did not have enough affordable housing; therefore, they had to give tax breaks to projects like this going forward. She relayed her understanding that the applicant was requesting $460,000 to help them receive the financing that the State allowed for projects like this, though the County was going to be losing ad valorem tax funding.

Mr. Scott Culp, with Atlantic Housing Partners, clarified that the exclusion the County had for nine percent low income housing tax credit properties were not eligible for this exemption in the Florida Statutes. He added that $460,000 was the minimum contribution in a medium sized county to be eligible for the nine percent low income housing tax credits, and that with those tax credits there was a specific exclusion for the communities that had the FHFC extended use agreement under that program; therefore, they would be paying real estate taxes based on income approach, which was the statute prior to the Live Local Act. He said that this act was specific to communities which were not supported by the nine percent low income housing tax credit, and that there was no actual funding from the Federal or State government for that program; rather, it was an annual tax credit that they received in exchange for keeping those units affordable. He stated that it was very competitive and was a resource that worked well since 1985 in creating affordable housing, though it did not necessitate the need to have that real estate tax exemption to make it economically sustainable long term. He reiterated that they would be paying ad valorem taxes, assuming that they received the nine percent low income housing tax credit allocation, and added that the County's $460,000 was contingent upon their receipt of this.

Commr. Smith asked if they would be requesting any impact fee waivers, and Mr. Culp denied this.

Commr. Campione inquired about restricting it to existing Lake County residents.

Mr. Culp said that they were not allowed to do that, and that it would be a violation of the Federal Fair Housing Act, though they often opened up early registration for pre-leasing for residents of the county or the city.

Commr. Campione asked if a senior could live there, and Mr. Culp confirmed this. Commissioner Campione then opined that this went to the overall situation regarding homelessness, and opined that it was hard to argue that they were keeping people from being in a homeless situation if they did not have opportunities like this for them to be able to qualify for housing.

Mr. Culp relayed that this community would be permit-ready in the application, which would give them a preference in the application process.

Commr. Campione said that the last thing she would want to do is authorize something contrary to what the City of Fruitland Park wanted to do, and that she wanted to ensure that they were in agreeance.

Ms. AbdoulKarim explained that for a family of four residing in the project on the higher end, their maximum income limit would be about $126,000; furthermore, on the lowest end, the highest income would be in the $30,000 range. She added that they had set aside five units for the HUD HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) program, though the majority of units would serve workforce housing.

Commr. Smith pointed out that this was 100 percent grant funded.

Commr. Campione relayed that they did not know for sure if they would receive the funding, noting that they were competing.

Ms. AbdoulKarim stated that the applicant needed the commitment from the County for their application.

On a motion by Commr. Smith, seconded by Commr. Parks and carried by a vote of 3-1, the Board approved the following items: a local government contribution in the amount of $460,000 for the proposed development of affordable housing units to be constructed in Lake County, contingent upon the developer receiving funding through the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) Program offered through the Florida Housing Finance Corporation; funding through the County's existing allocation of HUD HOME funds, if the project met the necessary HOME program eligibility criteria; and to authorize the Chairman to execute the Local Government Verification of Contribution Loan Form, the Local Government Area of Opportunity Funding Form, and a commitment letter substantially similar to the one attached herein which is to be submitted with the LIHTC Program application.

Commr. Sabatini voted no.

COMMISSIONERS REPORTS

COMMISSIONER SABATINI – DISTRICT 1

FLORIDA LEGISLATURE SESSION

Commr. Sabatini mentioned that the Florida Legislature was in session currently, and that the budget would be discussed in the following month. He opined there could be much policy discussed as well, and asked the Board to be diligent in speaking against terrible bills. He opined that the Legislature pressed policies that were hostile to the will of the people in Lake County, such as a bill that was signed into law in the previous week pertaining to agricultural enclaves. He opined that Lake County had been spared from language that would have included every large property in Lake County that was designated as agricultural, and that if it had been structured differently, then every farm could become dense residential housing overnight through administrative direction with no vote or public hearing. He stated that according to the County Attorney and staff, the agricultural enclave property did not affect certain properties that were of high public interest in the community; however, he was shocked at how little public scrutiny it got. He opined that it could have eliminated agriculture in the State of Florida, and hoped that the Board would review this and consider becoming involved in lobbying efforts to stop bills that could turn farms into high density housing.

COMMISSIONER PARKS – VICE CHAIRMAN AND DISTRICT 2

FLORIDA WILDLIFE CORRIDOR FOUNDATION TREK

Commr. Parks relayed that he participated in the Florida Wildlife Corridor Foundation trek, and opined that it was an amazing experience. He commented that they did much and gained much perspective, and that much of what he learned on the trek could be applied to Lake County, such as having more collaboration. He mentioned that there was some very good science available that had not been used in Lake County yet, and opined that this was a common thread between the Democrat and Republican parties. He stated that it was called the Longleaf to Lighthouse Expedition, and that it started in the City of Thomasville, Georgia, and ended at the St. Marks Lighthouse. He mentioned that even though there were only four people selected for the trek, there were about 50 people behind the scenes that were making a movie that could come out in October or November 2026, and he hoped that this would inspire people to promote the Florida Wildlife Corridor. He remarked that there were two parts of the corridor that came through Lake County, which not many counties had, and that there were one or two counties that did not have any mapped wildlife corridors. He pointed out that there was a wildlife corridor going north through the Wekiva area and one going south through the Green Swamp, and that there were a couple of critical lengths that had been protected, including one in Wellness Way. He related that what happened in between those areas was important as well, opining that they needed more corridor compatible communities and on-ramps to the corridor. He commented that there was a coalition coming together with people in agriculture and nonprofit conservation work, such as Trust for Public Land, the Nature Conservancy, the Archbold Biological Station, and the Tall Timbers Research Station, and that they were meeting the landowners and thinking about the next generation. He expressed appreciation to the Florida Wildlife Corridor Foundation and the camera crew who filmed the trek, opining that the movie should be very good. He remarked that even though he was still tired, he was more inspired about what the Florida Wildlife Corridor Foundation was doing and what the County could do in Lake County to promote conservation, such as keeping a culture of conservation and agriculture, opining that this was key to the future. He mentioned that there were some next steps that could be done with local leaders, and opined that this was a once in a lifetime experience that helped how he looked at policy.

Commr. Campione expressed congratulations on successfully going the distance and having those experiences.

Commr. Parks mentioned that others on the trek included the following: Commissioner Rick Minor, with Leon County; Commissioner Jacqueline “Jack” Porter, with the City of Tallahassee; and Commissioner Becky Troutman, with Polk County.

Commr. Campione relayed her understanding that there were two Republicans and two Democrats.

Commr. Parks confirmed this, and pointed out that this was not a blue or red issue. He remarked that President Theodore Roosevelt was good at conservation and a Republican.

Commr. Campione added that he was the father of the National Park Service.

COMMISSIONER SMITH – DISTRICT 3

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Commr. Smith commented that it was his wife's birthday on the current day, and he wished her a Happy Birthday.

COMMISSIONER MORRIS – DISTRICT 5

REMOTE PARTICIPATION

Commr. Morris indicated appreciation to the Board for allowing him to participate remotely.

Commr. Campione expressed appreciation for his input.

COMMISSIONER CAMPIONE – CHAIRMAN AND DISTRICT 4

2026 URBAN LANDSCAPE SUMMIT

Commr. Campione remarked that she attended the 2026 Urban Landscape Summit by the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Services (UF/IFAS), which was a two-day event, and said that Lake County was involved with one of the programs because of the Wellness Way landscape ordinance, opining that it was very well received. She opined that the people there were very interested in what Lake County was doing and what had been accomplished so far, and that there were many good questions. She opined that the focus was on Wellness Way being on the Lake Wales Ridge, and opined that something needed to be done about water conservation, such as finding ways to landscape so that yards were pretty and people could enjoy being outside in their yards, noting that 40 to 60 percent of the water consumed by Central Florida residents was for irrigation. She expressed appreciation to Commissioner Parks for all his hard work on these efforts and to staff who brought together many people and stakeholders for input, opining that because the County was listening, taking input, and balancing interests, it did not turn out the way it had started. She opined that the end product was something that Lake County could be proud of, and that since homeowners residing in that area had the opportunity to implement the Florida friendly and native plants in their yards, it could be a positive thing that other Counties and municipalities could look at.

FLORIDA FARM BUREAU DINNER

Commr. Campione related that she and Commissioner Parks attended the Florida Farm Bureau dinner on the previous evening at Southern Hills Farms, and opined that the venue was beautiful and well worth visiting, noting that Commissioner Sabatini was a regular visitor there. She indicated appreciation to the farmers, the Farm Bureau, and the Florida Cattlemen's Association, opining that they did a great job trying to keep their community cohesive.

LAKE COUNTY FAIR

Commr. Campione stated that she attended the steer auction at the fair, and opined that it was great seeing the Future Farmers of America (FFA) students and 4H participants. She opined that the work they did was outstanding, and pointed out that they were raising these animals and preparing them to be auctioned off at the fair. She opined that it was heartwarming to see how much responsibility it took, including learning economics and animal science, and that it was a good program with many parents who supported them in those efforts.

LAKE DORA SANDBAR AND SILVER GLEN SPRINGS RUN SIGNAGE

Commr. Campione commented that she had been working with Mr. Bobby Bonilla, Assistant County Manager, the LCWA, and the County Attorney's Office on getting signage at the Lake Dora sandbar area and Silver Glen Springs Run, and that law enforcement had been handing out a publication prepared by the Office of Communications explaining what the rules were. She opined that the situation was good as long as law enforcement was in the vicinity; however, there were questions about where the rules started and where they ended, opining that the signage would help with this. She stated that it would then be up to the LCSO and marine patrol to issue citations, and hoped that this would get this situation under control so people could still have a good time and not encroach on other people's rights.

WEKIVA RIVER BASIN COMMISSION MEETING

Commr. Campione mentioned that she attended the Wekiva River Basin Commission meeting, which included all the major state agencies, such as the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), and noted that the ramp at State Road (SR) 46 caused traffic issues on the Wekiva Parkway and SR 46A for long distances. She opined that the County needed to ask FDOT for a study or evaluation on how this could be addressed, as it was blocking the Wekiva Parkway and making it impossible for residents to make their commute, noting that it was reported that the use of the Wekiva Parkway was much above what was originally calculated and estimated.

ALLIGATOR INCIDENT

Commr. Campione stated there was an alligator incident the previous evening at the Pine Meadows Conservation Area, and reminded everyone that it was alligator mating season. She opined that people who had pets and small children should not go along lakeshores with vegetated areas, and noted that alligators could blend in with the vegetation and were more aggressive in moving around this time of year, opining that they should all be very careful.

WORK ON BRITT ROAD

Commr. Campione relayed that the County received a permit from SJRWMD for work on Britt Road, and that staff was working closely with FDOT who had until May 14, 2026 to issue their approval so that this could go out to bid. She hoped that this would be sooner so that staff could move forward with procurement and work could start on the road, opining there were people waiting for that road to be repaired to help with their commute.

COMMISSIONER SMITH – DISTRICT 3

ARBOR DAY CELEBRATION

Commr. Smith mentioned that the City of Mount Dora had a great Arbor Day celebration that was very well attended.

NATIONAL BLUEBERRY PIE DAY

Commr. Smith said that it was National Blueberry Pie Day.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to be brought to the attention of the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 1:13 p.m.

_____
LESLIE CAMPIONE, CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

_____
GARY J COONEY, CLERK