A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

AUGUST 11, 2026

The Lake County Board of County Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, August 11, 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 (arrived at 9:57 a.m.); Kirby Smith; and Timothy Morris. Others present were: Jennifer Barker, County Manager; Melanie Marsh, County Attorney; Misty Spahn, Executive Office Manager, County Manager's Office; Gary J. Cooney, Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller; Kristy Mullane, Chief Financial Officer; and Josh Pearson, Deputy Clerk.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE

Commr. Campione welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Ms. Jocelyn Williamson, from the Central Florida Freethought Community, gave the Invocation, and Commissioner Campione led the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA UPDATE

Ms. Jennifer Barker, County Manager, stated that for Tab 1, there were revised agenda minutes added for June 9, 2026. She commented that for Tabs 4 and 5, signed termination and release of unity titles were added, and that Tabs 26 and 27 were added as addendums to the regular agenda. She also requested that they address Tab 24 after the citizen question and comment period, noting that many people were in attendance.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Mr. Chris Carmody, with GrayRobinson, opined that they had a great legislative delegation and that they addressed items right away. He discussed property tax reform and congressional redistricting, and said that the House Speaker and President wanted to reduce the budget; however, they would have almost $15 billion or $16 billion in unspent funding based on revenue estimates. He listed the following priorities for Florida Governor Ron DeSantis: data centers, noting that a good compromise bill had passed which put many guardrails on the impacts of the power grid and required anyone coming in with a data center to pay the full share of their impact on the grid and environment; an artificial intelligence (AI) bill of rights, which had died; congressional redistricting, which had been signed on May 4, 2026; vaccine mandate rollback on K-12 traditional public schools, which did not go anywhere in the House; Senate Bill (SB) 7040 which required sign offs from the Budget Review Commission for spending from the emergency fund; the national push for a Federal balanced budget amendment; and the State-level Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) Act, which regarded voter identification (ID), noting that it had passed at the State level and that they were trying to push it at the Federal level. He indicated that Senate President Ben Albritton had the following three major bills that he wanted to get through, though none of them made it: rural renaissance which would have put a large infusion in funding in some areas that did not have the benefit of some of the urban revenues, opining that President Albritton would try to get this to the finish line in the next two years; school district deregulation; and school scholarship reform. He indicated that Speaker Daniel Perez, Florida Speaker of the House, had

priorities including the following: raising the caps on sovereign immunity, which had passed but was vetoed by the Florida Governor; a medical malpractice bill which died; an item for school materials that died; and local preemptions on items dealing with diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). He specified that the DEI bill would go into effect on January 1, 2027 and would possibly put Cities and Counties into a precarious situation as things that were not necessarily meant to be DEI focused could possibly fall under this if they were not national holidays or carved out as reasons that they could not do something. He remarked that the State ultimately landed at a $114.5 billion budget, and he reviewed a chart of the budget, noting that health and human services was one of the largest expenses, followed by education and transportation and economic development. He specified that the housing and road funds were fully funded this year, and that these expenses were followed by agriculture and environment. He listed the following budget highlights: employee benefits were protected; reduced spending; the tax package was about $150 million and was mostly focused on the back to school sales tax and a few exemptions for home-hardening products; and there were some investments in education infrastructure. He commented that Lake County had two appropriations in the budget, noting that they were vetoed, and he opined that they were both worthy projects and that they would have a good chance in the following year. He reviewed bills that passed and stated that for House Bill (HB) 803, Building Permits and Inspections, the State would adopt uniform commercial and residential permit applications, opining that it should not have much impact, though they would want to monitor this; furthermore, his organization would be working with the Florida Building Commission (FBC) to ensure that this was fair and had enough flexibility so that Lake County would be protected. He indicated that the Live Local Act had been modified, and that for HB 1389, Affordable Housing, height, density and zoning were the three things that a County or City was unable to use as a reason that one could not build an affordable housing project in a certain area; however, some communities started using setbacks as a reason not to do this, noting that this could no longer be used. He discussed SB 686, Agricultural Enclaves, and said that it would impact Lake County, noting that St. Johns County already had some impacts. He said that other bills included the following: HB 1217, which was a ban on net zero policies; SB 1134, Official Actions of Local Government; HB 1019, noting that they were trying to push PFAS chemicals out of any use, though there were some exemptions for airports due to Federal regulations; SB 168, Public Nuisances, which lifted some of the fine caps and added some illegal gambling sites to help local government regulate this; HB 925, Clerks of Court, to allow more flexibility in how Clerks could use their court fees and create more efficiencies; and HB 1103, Local Administration of Vessel Restrictions, which changed some rules on how they dealt with vessels. He commented that HB 803, Building Permits and Inspections, gave an exemption for permitting for anything $7,500 or less, that HB 797, Nonprofit Corporations, created more efficiencies for nonprofits, that HB 249, New State Flagship, designated the SS American Victory as the state flagship, and that HB 919 renamed Palm Beach International Airport to President Donald J. Trump Airport. He listed the following bills that died: SB 354/HB 299, Blue Ribbon Projects, which said that if one had at least 15,000 acres together and would dedicate at least 60 percent to conservation, agriculture or public use, they could

essentially do what they wanted with the other 40 percent and did not require much input from other entities; SB 122/HB 103, Local Business Tax; HB 11, State Bird Change; HB 27, Term Limits for County Commission and School Boards, which sought to establish 12-year term limits; HB 733/SB 902, Department of Health, which discussed the vaccine mandate, and SB 1756/HB 917, Medical Freedom, which was also part of this; and HB 321/SB 406, Carrying of Weapons and Firearms, opining that the current law was unclear. He listed the following notable dates: the primary election would be in the following week; the general election would be November 3, 2026; the organization session would be on November 17, 2026; the regular session would convene on March 2, 2027; and the last day of session would be April 30, 2027, noting that this would include a new Governor. He then reviewed the following information for Amendment 3, regarding property tax reform: would increase the homestead tax exemption from $50,000 to $150,000 on January 1, 2027; on January 1, 2028, the exemption would increase to $250,000; it could be indexed to the consumer price index (CPI); and the annual increase on one's assessed value could go from 10 percent to a maximum of five percent. He mentioned that there was a statutory change occurring in November 2026 regardless, and that a rollback rate had some qualifiers for personal income and maximum millages so that they could stay level on what they needed for spending; however, they would now have to go to the base rollback rate, which had no qualifiers, noting that this would be a reduction in the County's revenue to keep it at neutral. He added that if they wanted to go any higher to cover the services they had as they increased costs, they would need a supermajority. He said that language in the amendment would be challenged in the courts, and that there were also some legal challenges filed regarding the ballot summary, noting that the Florida Attorney General would rewrite it and that the court could also request a rewrite; furthermore, there were challenges to the constitutionality of it. He then displayed Lake County's proposed property tax amendment impact.

Commr. Campione mentioned the pulling away of local governments' ability to manage growth pressures and giving this to the State, and she expressed concerns for the blue ribbon bill being close to approval. She opined that the County had to do a good job trying to get this information out to people so that they knew what to ask their State legislators and indicate concerns about. She opined that they had to have a lobbyist there monitoring this and advocating for the County, and she expressed interest in dedicating time to delving into the land use items so that they knew what to request to be amended. She then opined that with all of the funding that the State had, it seemed like the perfect time for all of the Counties, Cities and citizens to get together to request setting aside funding to catch up on Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) projects, noting that Lake County had many. She requested direction on what Lake County could do to lead the charge with other Counties, especially those in similar situations with major state roads that looked and felt more like local roads, and try to get funding designated to catch up on infrastructure.

Mr. Carmody stated that the incoming Speaker of the House, Representative Sam Garrison, was out of Clay County, and opined that from what he had seen, they would see better treatment of local Counties and Cities in the next two years, especially in the rural areas, because

Representative Garrison saw the impacts. He opined that more bad bills had died in the last session than in the past, and that getting MPO projects would require getting others involved. He suggested to let the Governor candidates know about this, noting that funding would be available.

Commr. Campione opined that the Board could possibly reconvene on this issue, get their marketing team involved, and look at a way to put together a marketing campaign that they could take to some other Counties to see if they would support it.

Mr. Carmody mentioned that they would have a new Governor due to term limits, and that they would have a transition team and period after November 2026; therefore, the County should engage with that transition team to make this a priority.

Commr. Smith said that Lake County and Polk County were on a ridge, and that they received pressure from the state commodity of sand; therefore, they had many heavy trucks using the roads with no help from the State to improve the infrastructure that the trucks were using. He opined that they needed to put this pressure onto the State, and he agreed that Lake County had many state roads that looked like county roads which needed some assistance.

Mr. Carmody stated that gas taxes helped fund some road maintenance and building, though this was a declining source of revenue due to cars being more efficient, as well as there being more electric vehicles (EVs). He opined that they would see more of an appetite to change the approach to this, and that conversations could also come out of this regarding where heavy commercial traffic flowed.

Commr. Sabatini arrived at 9:57 a.m.

Commr. Campione opined that the gas tax item was significant, recalling that in the last session they had reduced some of this by how they did indexing. She added that the large trucks degraded roads faster, and that this linked into the discussion about this as a funding source. She also expressed interest in focusing on these as two separate issues of maintenance and resurfacing, along with expansion capacity projects which had been sitting for many years.

Commr. Parks said that he had met with Representative Garrison, and believed that he would be much different. He opined that $19 billion for transportation was not enough, and that they needed to follow the long range transportation plan which had been adopted in the past year, noting that this showed that Lake County and the Cities were trying to commit their own funding; however, they wanted the State to recognize that there were many roads fallen behind on.

Mr. Carmody relayed his understanding that the legislative delegation would all likely be back, and that Senator Keith Truenow and their representatives would be moving up. He added that there was usually much turnover with a new Governor, and that they would likely have a new Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Secretary, along with a potential different FDOT District Secretary.

Commr. Parks predicted that in the following year, trying to repeal or redo the entire Growth Management Act could be the largest issue, opining that some items were antiquated and needed to be changed. He opined that the County had to watch this, and that it would be incumbent upon residents to follow this.

Mr. Carmody acknowledged their partner Ms. Angie Langley, and said that much of their success working with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and FDOT was due to the County's team.

MINUTES APPROVAL

On a motion by Commr. Parks, seconded by Commr. Smith and carried unanimously by a vote of 5-0, the Board approved the minutes for the BCC meetings of June 9, 2026 (Regular Meeting) and June 23, 2026 (Regular Meeting).

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. Vincent Niemiec, a resident of the City of Clermont, thanked the Board for when he had requested help regarding a crossing guard along Hartwood Marsh Road and Hancock Road. He mentioned that there was construction on Hancock Road, and that Windy Hill Middle School's hours were until 4:00 p.m. He indicated that the crossing guard left at 3:45 p.m., and he expressed concerns for the safety of children crossing the busiest intersection in the city; therefore, he requested to extend the hours, at least until construction was complete.

Commr. Parks said that they could connect with staff after the meeting.

Ms. Cheryl Martin, a resident of Lake County, expressed concerns about the Eudora Road school zone speed limit signs and the third party that was monitoring them as a 25 miles per hour (MPH) speed limit, noting that she had received the resolution and challenged her ticket from the City of Mount Dora because the resolution called for the speed limit to be 35 MPH. She indicated that she could not get a new court date, and that she could not contact the Mount Dora Police Department. She requested assistance with this.

Commr. Campione noted that the Mount Dora City Manager was in attendance, and said that the County could do its part to try to have communications with the City about what they could do to resolve this.

Mr. Banks Helfrich, candidate for State House of Representatives District 25 and a farmer in the Clay Road District, said that a farm tip of the day was that peanuts were legumes and root vegetables, noting that they were currently being harvested in the State of Florida. He also spoke about political representatives and service, and he expressed support for home rule.

PROPERTY APPRAISALS, PARTNER WITH TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND, AND ISSUE PUBLIC LANDS REFERENDUM BOND

Ms. Angela Harrold, Operations Director for Parks and Water Resources, stated that she would present findings of the Public Lands and Trails Acquisition Advisory Committee (PLTAAC), introduce the properties they recommended, and have discussion on moving forward with the bond. She mentioned that staff had presented site visits to the PLTAAC on June 30 and July 30, 2026, and that they visited many of the properties. She commented that they received a

total of 26 applications, 18 of which were fee simple, and that 11 properties received a site visit. She remarked that eight conservation easement applications were received; however, they had not moved forward on any of them, noting that they would be discussed at the September 24, 2026 PLTAAC meeting. She related that during the June 30 and July 30, 2026 meetings, they recommended that the BCC move forward with appraisals on four public lands as well as the due diligence and potential purchase of land for the Wekiva Trail. She explained that they moved the properties through a desktop evaluation, which included geographic information systems (GIS), soil maps, the Florida Forever program, the Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI), the Florida Wildlife Corridor, and the State areas of critical concern. She commented that they did site visits to confirm the desktop findings and looked for natural resources, intact systems, public access, infrastructure presence, the condition of the infrastructure, and any boundary or development pressures. She then remarked that the Sunderman Family Trust property was recommended and included the following: it was 562 acres located in the City of Groveland; the asking price was $11.6 million, which was the price placed on the application before appraisal; had public access; there was a structure present; was adjacent to the Pasture Reserve; it had an intact system, noting that this was one of the highest ranked properties; was in the habitat conservation area; and was part of the Green Swamp. She mentioned that they were asking for approval to appraise these properties, which would require two appraisals, and that at this point, they would start price negotiations and determining if they wanted to proceed with purchasing the property.

Commr. Sabatini inquired what the maximum density was currently in the Green Swamp.

Ms. Harrold answered that it had a future land use (FLU) of Green Swamp Rural and had a 47 dwelling unit capacity for over 500 acres, noting that it was made up of five different parcel numbers.

Commr. Sabatini opined that the PLTAAC was doing great work, and expressed appreciation to the family and people who highlighted this parcel; however, he opined that the priority for buying land should be to stop urban sprawl, such as a parcel wanted by a City to expand its next dense project. He opined that land in rural areas were not under that pressure and were not a priority, and said that he wanted to use the funding to stop the sprawl. He stated that he did not feel comfortable spending funds on the appraisal process to buy land where there was no growth versus being able to contain some of the Cities that were growing and destroying the feel of Lake County. He pointed out this land was in one of the only State overlay areas for legally protected land, which did not allow dense development, and wondered why the County would buy land in protected rural areas. He opined that instead of buying the development rights of agricultural areas and conservation easements in rural areas where there was no development, no utilities and no growth, the County should protect the areas that were about to be destroyed by sprawl, and said that he did not want to spend the funding to move forward in that direction.

Commr. Campione opined that it was a priority to everyone to stop sprawl and protect rural lands and the rural character of the county, and that practical thinking was necessary. She commented that Cities were allowed to jump over County owned land to annex land, and that in the City of Eustis area when the City wanted to grow east, they had to hop over the Lake May

Reserve, which was conservation land bought by the County with public funds, opining that buying public land would not create a barrier to a City annexing. She opined that it was important to consider the underlying land use on the property being purchased, how much could be developed, and the condition of the property itself; however, she opined that a developer might be fine with 47 units. She opined that the County could not create a barrier by buying public lands around the perimeters of cities.

Commr. Sabatini questioned if the County had found a way to place public land in private hands.

Commr. Campione opined that this was very difficult, and that even though it was an option, the County was only able to do this by having another entity take a piece of it, opining that even though the County created its own barrier, trying to stop the annexation was a touch-and-go situation.

Commr. Parks commented that he was the liaison to the PLTAAC, and opined that they had done a great job vetting this. He pointed out that the County was not buying any property on the current day, and that this item was for appraisals only. He mentioned that these properties had already been vetted, opining that there may be more that could be added that had not been considered because of the cooperation of the Rural and Family Lands Protection Act under the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS), which had not been sought out yet. He remarked that this item was to approve proceeding with due diligence and appraisals, as there was a time constraint with the Wekiva Trail property; additionally, staff was seeking approval to do the entire $50 million bond, opining that this needed to be done because of the time value of money. He opined that this property was a good option because of the potential clearing of the land for agriculture, and that this could open the way for development in the following 20 years.

Ms. Harrold mentioned that when considering these properties, they looked at what it would take and how much funding would be required to restore and maintain the properties, noting that this property was fairly intact, which was why it was moved forward.

Commr. Smith suggested that since there were five items on the list under the same tab, each one could be commented on individually, and that if the public wanted to comment on the Sunderman Family Trust property, then they could speak at that point. He opined that once the Board had made a decision on whether or not to move forward, then discussion could be moved to the next property.

Commr. Sabatini opined that a motion should be made to approve all of the properties to be appraised, and that there could be the presentation and discussion afterward. He opined that staff could do the appraisal, and that the BCC could do its own homework, noting that the PLTAAC had already done its homework.

Commr. Parks commented that he was in favor of approving all the properties for appraisal, including the Wekiva Trail property; however, the bond was another issue.

Commr. Morris indicated his understanding that the Wekiva Trail property had already been appraised, and Ms. Harrold confirmed this.

Commr. Campione opined that public comment should be taken on that property.

Commr. Sabatini opined that the appraisals for separate parcels for conservation should be approved, and that the debate and the presentation could end at the same time.

Commr. Campione stated that she was in favor of doing the appraisals, opining that until this was done, there was not much sense in delving into other factors, as the County would not know how much would have to be paid.

Commr. Parks remarked that there were many numbers, and opined that there were some property owners who were not selling their land for profit. He opined that some landowners were selling land for legacy or because they did not want to see it paved over with homes.

Commr. Morris opined that $20,000 per acre was a large legacy.

Commr. Smith commented that since this was only for an appraisal and not discussion, he was in favor of approving this item.

On a motion by Commr. Sabatini, seconded by Commr. Morris and carried unanimously by a vote of 5-0, the Board approved to begin the property appraisal process for the Sunderman Family Trust, National Developers, LLC, Shelley/Chasteen, and Holloway properties submitted for purchase under the Public Lands Referendum as recommended by the PLTAAC.

Commr. Smith asked if this was a public hearing, noting that this was already approved for appraisal.

Ms. Barker clarified that this was just for public comment, and that the motion passed was for the four properties. She mentioned that the Wekiva Trail property was a different question, and that they could move to this discussion at the current time, noting that there were public comments for this item.

Commr. Campione remarked that she would give those who wanted to speak on the approved properties the option to speak; however, she opined that the ideal time to give those comments would be when the appraisals came back and the Board was actually deliberating on the properties.

The Chairman opened the floor for public comment.

Mr. Willy The Losen, with the Putnam Land Conservancy and speaking via Zoom, commented that they worked with Putnam County and surrounding Counties to protect critical connectors in the Wekiva to Ocala Greenway, which was a corridor between Rock Springs State Park and Wekiwa State Park connecting to the Ocala National Forest, and noted that this was a critical wildlife corridor with some important natural areas. He mentioned that since this was a State designated corridor, it was eligible for State funding from the Florida Forever program; however, he opined that this program had been underfunded for the coming funding cycle, making State acquisitions improbable. He opined that the County funding could fill the gap for conserving critical areas in that corridor to ensure that those connected lands were not severed, and that this County program was important to protect wildlife corridors within the County, especially when State funding was not available.

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

Ms. Harrold relayed that the Wekiva Trail segments one and five was submitted to the PLTAAC under the greenways and trails portion of the referendum, which included the following: it was about 11 miles; it ran through unincorporated Lake County, the Sorrento area, and the Cities of Mount Dora and Tavares; the request was for $23.5 million; there was public access; it had been in the adopted trails master plan in 2008 and 2018; it was listed on the Office of Greenways and Trails SUNTrail priority map; there were partnerships with Trust for Public Land (TPL) and the Cities of Mount Dora and Tavares; it was near parks and conservation areas; and it ran east to west through the county. She remarked that the request for this property would be to continue due diligence, move to a purchase agreement, and utilize $23.5 million of the public lands funds.

The Chairman opened the floor for public comment.

Mr. T.J. Fish, a resident of the City of Tavares, remarked that he had been personally engaged in the Wekiva Trail project since 2005 and had listened to members of the community opining about how amazing the trail could be, which included tying it to the corridor and connecting it to the Coast to Coast Trail. He stated that he worked in south Lake County where the Coast to Coast Trail was currently under construction, extending through the City of Groveland to the City of Mascotte, and opined that Lake County deserved to be connected. He commented that one of the misconceptions he consistently heard, including on social media, was the viability of bringing the train back; however, the County and the Cities of Tavares and Mount Dora were not running a train, as it required a railroad company, such as CSX Transportation and Florida Central Railroad, who had both been involved and had made it clear that the train was not coming back. He mentioned that FDOT did a study for commuter rail to Lake County, and that the conclusion was that it was not economically viable. He opined that there was an idyllic railroad corridor with overviews of the City of Mount Dora and Lake Dora connecting the Mt. Plymouth and Sorrento areas to the City of Tavares, and that they could be connected east of Seminole County to the Coast to Coast Trail, which he opined was an amazing opportunity. He opined that if Lake County made the effort, then FDOT would respond, and that once the County had the right of way for a trail, FDOT would be a partner. He opined that this trail would be a transformational economic development investment and would lead to more private investment, noting that this had been proven in the City of Clermont with the South Lake Trail, which was currently part of the Coast to Coast Trail. He opined that this had been 21 years in the making, and that if Lake County took this step to obtain the railroad corridor, then FDOT would be a partner to get this trail done.

Commr. Smith commented that the train still ran northbound between the Cities of Tavares and Eustis.

Councilmember Dennis Dawson, with the City of Mount Dora, related that he was a resident of Lake County and Vice President of the Heartland League of Cities, which encompassed the Lake County Cities, and opined that bicycling through Lake County was amazing with its hills and lakes. He opined that as Lake County continued to grow and develop, some of the favorite places to bike were going to be developed, and that this trail will would provide a safe place for all residents of Lake County. He opined that there would be economic opportunities with this trail,

and that about a year prior, a group who was looking to put in a trail from the City of Sanford to Lake Okeechobee shared some information from FDOT. He elaborated that FDOT did 1,600 miles of the Florida Shared-Use Non-motorized (SUN) Trail, and that in one percent of those trails, where there were the Cities of Tallahassee, Dunedin, Gainesville, Titusville and Homestead, there was $30 million in annual gross domestic product (GDP), $22 million increase in personal income, 300 more jobs per year, and an increase in property values of $125 million. He concluded that this was a recreational and economic plus, and asked that the Board would support this trail.

Commr. Sabatini opined that public comment benefited from some previous debate so that residents would know where the Board stood, and inquired if this could be done at the current time and if they could then go back to public comment.

Commr. Morris opined that the funding mechanism may change from the taxpayers in November 2026, and that even though 43 percent of the residents would pay for the bond currently, if the homestead exemption law passed, then it would go down to 18 percent. He opined that it needed to be on the record that people would be paying more funds, and noted that even though he did not have an issue with the trail, he had an issue with what could happen in November 2026. He asked that if there was a $50 million bond issue, could this be bonded to keep it open and not close until after the November 2026 vote for Florida Amendment 3.

Commr. Campione remarked that she was in favor of efficiency and also in favor of giving everyone a chance to speak on the record. She indicated her understanding that Commissioner Morris would be in favor of approving the $50 million bond but not closing it until after the November 2026 election to see how the County would handle what might change if Florida Amendment 3 passed, opining that the County may need to make some adjustments.

Commr. Morris commented that even though the County would be going through negotiations for the land acquisition, the bond could be kept open in case it went through and the County did not like any of the properties or the trail.

Commr. Campione opined that if the County acquired the $50 million now, then they would have the right to proceed no matter what happened with Florida Amendment 3; however, if Florida Amendment 3 passed, the County could have the right to change the amount of the bond. She said that the Board still needed to decide whether to recommend that the Wekiva Trail property proceed with the understanding that there were other variables at play, and that if the Board made that decision and did not hear from the public, there may be some disappointed people who wanted to be heard. She opined that there was also some valuable information that would be important for the public to hear to cover some of the points that had been raised, noting that railroad companies were able to decide what they were going to do with the property they owned. She opined that it would be helpful for the public to have these facts.

Commr. Sabatini remarked that when a resident came up to speak, he would like them to have an accurate reflection of where the Board stood and what the primary concerns were, and noted that he supported the following: the trail; taking out the $50 million bond; and getting the project moving as soon as possible. He mentioned that one of the reasons for this was because the bond referendum passed with an overwhelming majority, and he opined that if the County put up

another $50 million, it would pass again, even with the economic uncertainty, because residentsknew that it would help acquire the lands and trails. He opined that the Board should stay in touch with what the residents wanted, move forward as quickly as possible, and then consider whether it should be done again in another 10 years or less.

Commr. Parks opined that there was overwhelming support for trails and public lands and a concern about sprawl, noting that some of those properties of concern were on the current list that was just approved for appraisals, as they were in the development path. He mentioned that he had been deeply involved with the PLTAAC, and opined that they were doing a great job. He opined that there was another tier of properties that were excellent that were also in the path of development, noting that one of the properties approved for appraisal had a trail connection to it as well for the South Lake Trail, which he opined was heavily used. He stated that he was in favor of moving forward with the purchase of the Wekiva Trail property as soon as possible, and he asked if the County could work with CSX on the cost. He wondered if $2 million could be allocated out of the Tourist Development Tax (TDT), and opined that this should be used for trail projects; additionally, he opined that the County should have a long-term source of funding for trails with at least $1 million coming out of TDT to connect all the cities. He then inquired what the reserve was for TDT.

Ms. Barker answered that there was currently $6 million in the capital reserve for the TDT fund, and said that this was an eligible expense, noting that the Wekiva Trail was in the trails master plan.

Commr. Smith commented that he could bring it up to the Tourist Development Council (TDC).

Commr. Parks requested that the County allocate $2 million from TDT to go towards the $23.5 million, and opined that more of the TDT should be used for trail projects.

Commr. Campione mentioned that this would not stop the Board from moving forward, and that the TDC could give their opinion on utilizing $2 million from the TDT.

Commr. Parks opined that this could give the County $2 million more for properties that were being discussed that were in the path of development.

Ms. Barker commented that if the County were to enter into an agreement with TPL to purchase the property, the transaction would need to be completed by spring 2028; therefore, there was still over one year to come up with other funding options, such as grant funding or TDT funding. She pointed out that the County could enter an agreement if the Board chose to move forward with the acquisition of the railbed, and noted that since the due diligence was a complex transaction that would take some time, this needed to begin in January 2027.

Commr. Morris asked about a special municipal services taxing unit (MSTU) for parks and trails.

Ms. Barker replied that there was currently an MSTU for parks and trails for the unincorporated areas only, and that for it to be a countywide MSTU, it would either have to go to a referendum or the County would have to coordinate with the municipal partners to have them join in.

Commr. Morris relayed his understanding that every other County had funded their trail systems.

Commr. Campione commented that other Counties, such as Seminole County, did a large bond issue to buy the land, and that they had an ongoing revenue stream to help maintain them. She opined that it would be an ideal scenario to know how much funding would go to trails every year, noting that trails required maintenance.

Commr. Morris related that there would be $3.8 million per year for debt service for 20 years for the $50 million bond, and that if this was doubled, this would be $7.6 million per year, which he opined was much funding; however, it could all be fixed at one time.

Commr. Campione mentioned that there was still another tier of lands that had not been through the PLTAAC, and opined that when there was a very large property, this could be taken out as a bond issue if everybody knew exactly what they would be getting in return. She stated that when she was voting for a referendum, she wanted to know exactly where her funds would go, and opined that if the County could be more specific about what the tax funding would be going to, there would be a better chance of getting it approved. She opined that there was much property that the County would like to see preserved, and that they did not want to lose those opportunities.

Commr. Parks commented that Seminole County allocated a percentage of their General Fund every year for trails and bonds that they had done, and that this was why he brought up the TDT, opining that there needed to be a strong policy in place to allocate funds to the trails.

Commr. Smith related that he had been involved with this since 2009, and that he was in favor of this. He opined that the County could possibly get the Cities of Tavares and Mount Dora to do an interlocal agreement to help with the maintenance costs.

Commr. Campione opined that this would be a large benefit, and commented that she had also been involved with this at least since 2009. She relayed that she had been in many meetings with the railroad companies, and had been involved with the group that wanted to find a way to keep the tourist train on the railroad right of way for a joint trail because she did not want to lose the opportunity to connect the lakefront Cities of Mount Dora and Tavares. She pointed out that the trail in the City of Clermont was used much, and that they had connected the Cities of Winter Garden and Clermont. She opined that connecting two lakefront cities would be phenomenal, and that connecting the Sorrento area would be even better, noting that the trail in the Sorrento area already went to Seminole County. She stated that she did not want to miss this opportunity, and noted that there was a Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant from the Federal Government to build trails if the County owned the underlying property, opining that this would put Lake County in a much better position to actually build the trail and take pressure off local government.

Ms. Elanah Coulson, a resident of Lake County, commented that her family had ridden the train when Thomas the Tank Engine was in town, and opined that it was not very nice outside the car, as it included the back of industrial places. She opined that if rails to trails wanted to have

this, then the County should let them buy it, and that taxpayers were already paying for many things that they did not vote for.

Ms. Bethany DeLoof, a resident of the City of Mount Dora, expressed support for the Wekiva Trail extension, and opined that residents needed a place for family bike rides, training runs, long walks with friends, and a dynamic place that could be used in different ways throughout her life. She opined that the West Orange Trail in the City of Winter Garden was crowded with people using it in many different ways, and that it was a safe place to go out and do something important.

Mr. Alexander McMichael, a resident of the City of Mount Dora, encouraged the Board to prioritize the completion of the trail connection into the City of Mount Dora, and opined that since the population and traffic had grown, many of the roads that were once safe for road cycling had become increasingly difficult to share with vehicles. He relayed his understanding that in previous years, the City of Mount Dora had been a destination for cyclists from all over Central Florida, and that groups would plan rides specifically to go there to enjoy the quiet roads, explore downtown, and eat at local bakeries and coffee shops; however, he opined that as traffic had increased, many of those riders had chosen safer destinations to ride. He opined that this was one of the reasons why this trail connection was so important, and that it was a recreation amenity and an investment in the future of Lake County. He opined that trails created a healthier, safer and more vibrant Lake County, and gave children and families a place to ride safety and spend time outdoors, as well as giving visitors another reason to choose the City of Mount Dora and the surrounding towns over somewhere else.

Ms. Kelly Close, a resident of Lake County, indicated that she was not against purchasing the railroad, and that she had worked on the Royal Palm Railway tourist train from 2018 to 2020 when it went out of business due to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). She recalled that many people had called from all over the nation to come there and ride the train, and that they would make many purchases. She opined that it was great for tourism, and she proposed that the County consider rails with trails. She also mentioned the land/sea/air tickets that they sold, noting that it was a unique tourism opportunity.

Commr. Campione relayed her understanding that there would still be excursion opportunities that left the City of Tavares and went around the lake.

Ms. Holly Newby, a resident of Lake County, encouraged the County to slow down on this project while they were assessing how much sprawl Lake County could take. She opined that the trail program was sold as conservation and nature trails, though the reality was that the trail was a paved concrete road for bicyclists. She opined that while this was a great asset to have if money was no object, it was about to be an object in the budget, and would be more of an object when homestead exemptions were eliminated. She opined that the trail was the concrete sprawl that people did not want, and that a rail redevelopment trail in the City of Umatilla had been a greenspace; however, it was currently a new roadbed for cyclists. She expressed concerns for habitat loss, and opined that there would be an ongoing law enforcement issue with golf carts, e-bikes and non-approved vehicles on these roads. She questioned where horseback riders and

segways were included, and she asked the Board to consider how much concrete the City of Mount Dora could take.

Mr. Rick Gonzalez, a resident on Estes Road, expressed support for purchasing this railroad as quickly as possible, and recalled that it had been planned since 1998 or 1999. He also mentioned the amount of money that went through a bike shop on Highland Street; furthermore, he opined that people came from all over the country to ride bikes there, and that it was an economic boon for the community.

Ms. Lou Buigas, Chair of the Lake 100, relayed that her organization submitted a letter of support for the purchase of the railroad, and she highlighted the following five items from the economic development standpoint: long term infrastructure value; business and talent attraction; support for local business; tourism and regional connectivity; and downtown economic activity. She opined that this would bring funding to the community and serve all of Lake County, and said that her organization encouraged the Board to support this.

Mr. Ashton Nau, owner of Pure Cycles in downtown Eustis, expressed concerns for his customers explaining that they could not ride on the roads like they used to. He indicated that he had been across the country riding, and that he stayed at local hotels, went to local places to eat, and used local trails. He opined that it would be a benefit for anyone, and that e-bikes were being patrolled and had speed limits in the Cities of Clermont and Winter Garden.

Ms. Rozann Abato, a resident of the City of Mount Dora, discussed the COVID Cruisers group, and remarked that most trails they rode were not in Lake County, noting that they spent much money. She also opined that trails were not just for cyclists.

Councilmember Doug Bryant, with the City of Mount Dora, mentioned how this would bring people into the middle of the county, and how this could help with parking and congestion in downtown Mount Dora.

Mayor James Homich, with the City of Mount Dora, indicated that the City strongly supported this, and opined that the trail would benefit the Cities of Mount Dora and Tavares, the county, and the Central Florida region. He opined that the amount of funding it would take to put this corridor together was significant when compared to the asking price, and he expected that the appraisal would show that it was worth about $23 million. He opined that this would be well spent for the benefit of all residents, businesses and everyone in the county. He added that the City of Mount Dora would be a strong partner in this endeavor.

Ms. Rachel O'Ryan, a resident of the City of Mount Dora and President of the Mount Dora Chamber of Commerce, recalled that in 1974 the Chamber had created the Mount Dora Bicycle Festival, and that over the years it had become more dangerous on the roads. She opined that it was not a safe place for many cyclists to ride, and that they could turn the trails into a place that connected the east and west coasts, along with getting up to speed with what Orange County had done. She opined that the economic impact could greatly help in light of what might be coming in the election with funding possibly being taken away from government.

Mr. Tim Baylie, with Parks, Recreation and Culture for Volusia County and speaking via Zoom, recalled that Volusia County had similar deliberations regarding the rail to trail program,

and that they had moved forward with creating a trail system connecting Volusia County to Brevard, Seminole and Lake Counties. He relayed that since that time, they had much economic growth and people coming to west Volusia County to use the trail system. He added that developers who were developing adjacent property opted to connect their communities to the backbone of the trail system at their own cost and maintenance funding because they were aware that connecting to the trail helped them sell properties. He encouraged the Board to stay the way regarding the acquisition, noting that it brought much economic development and people from out of the area.

Mr. Mike Stephens, Chairman of the Friends of Lake County Trails and the Florida Greenways and Trails Council, expressed support for this item. He mentioned that it was already listed as a State priority trail, which made it eligible for SUNTrail funding, and that it was also part of the Florida Greenways and Trails system plan and was eligible for funding. He remarked that Lake County had been working on this for at least 25 years, and that segments had already been built, noting that they were trying to tie it in and get it into central Lake County and bring users there without having to build additional roads and parking lots. He recalled that the PLTAAC had approved this unanimously, and that staff was recommending it unanimously. He opined that Lake County was already 20 years behind surrounding counties, and that they needed to catch up and benefit from that economic development.

Mr. Egor Emery, a resident of Commission District 4, indicated that he had been involved in this process, and that this project was a culmination of many years and many people's efforts. He encouraged the Board to move forward with this, and he thanked Commissioner Campione for the work she did to try to protect some public lands from being leapt over by the City of Eustis. He also encouraged Commissioner Sabatini to do everything he could to stop sprawl, opining that land acquisition was part of this.

Mr. Jim Wood, with Kimley-Horn, said that his team had provided support regarding development of some recent Federal grant applications for the Wekiva Trail, and that the United States (U.S.) Department of Transportation (DOT) was increasingly looking for projects that were ready to move quickly and which demonstrated the lowest risk to ensure successful project delivery. He stated that one of the most effective ways to reduce risk was to complete critical early phases before seeking Federal construction funding, and that for trail projects, right of way acquisition was often the most challenging piece to fund through discretionary grants. He elaborated that the Federal Government preferred to invest in projects where local partners had already secured the corridor, resolved property issues and made a clear commitment to its implementation, and that if Lake County advanced acquisition through the proposed bond funding, the County would preserve the current opportunity and substantially strengthen future Federal grant applications. He relayed that there continued to be strong opportunities through BUILD and other discretionary programs, and that the projects which rose to the top were increasingly those where the challenging upfront work had been done. He said that the trail had broad support, a significant commitment from FDOT and other partners, and strong Federal merit ratings. He

opined that taking the next step on acquisition would position the County in a stronger place to compete for future construction funding.

Ms. Melissa Hill, with TPL, relayed that TPL had been working as a partner to Lake County to negotiate an option agreement between TPL and CSX, the owner of the rail corridor, and their leaseholder Florida Central Railroad, for the purchase of the Wekiva Trail segments 1 and 5. She noted that for safety and regulatory reasons, CSX and Florida Central Railroad had both confirmed that they did not allow its rail corridors to be used for recreational use adjacent to the rail; therefore, a rail with trail was a nonstarter. She commented that the only acquisition option was to acquire the property fee simple for a rail to trail project, and that TPL had successfully negotiated an option contract with a 24 month term, meaning that the County had until March 2028 to purchase the property, should they choose. She stated that the anticipated purchase price was $27 million, and that this price had been supported by appraisal work that the County reviewed and approved; additionally, this was the first time that the corridor had been under contract in the project's 20+ year history. She related that TPL nominated the project for the public lands tax consideration and use of the bond referendum funds, noting that the referendum had $50 million available with direction from its ordinance for the PLTAAC to recommend a 50/50 funding balance between natural lands and lands used for trail connectivity under the parks and trails master plan, such as the Wekiva Trail project. She recalled that the PLTAAC voted unanimously in support of the Wekiva Trail project, and for use of $23.5 million from the bond referendum for the BCC to consider. She highlighted the following items that set this project apart: it had a seller under contract with a negotiated price and a clear timeline; it had the support and expertise of TPL as a trusted acquisition partner to invest staff time and capacity, and to navigate the complexities of rail corridor acquisition; project partners had already been pursuing matching funds, creating a clear understanding of the remaining need and outlining the current request for the remaining $23.5 million; the Cities of Tavares and Mount Dora were ready to share in the due diligence costs for the acquisition and to take on management responsibilities of their segments of trail; and to pursue funding for infrastructure once the trail was acquired. She opined that there had never been a better opportunity to purchase this project, and that with the grant pending to Florida Communities Trust (FCT) for $3.5 million toward the total $27 million purchase price, she requested the Board to support the staff recommendation to move forward with this item.

Ms. Misty Sommer, with the City of Mount Dora, indicated that while this would benefit the Cities of Mount Dora and Tavares, she wanted to focus on the countywide impact through the increased sales tax and TDT revenues, which would be passed to municipalities. She stated that the City of Mount Dora had invested more than $20 million in public infrastructure, recreational amenities and corridor improvements that supported and complemented this proposed trail, which included improvements to their parks and public spaces, expanded recreational amenities, parking and beautification improvements, and upgrades to their waterfront facilities. She opined that these investments demonstrated the City's long term commitment to creating an interconnected network of trails, recreational amenities, and public spaces, as well as doing their part to support the success of this larger regional investment. She reiterated that the City was already committed to the due

diligence costs for this project, and that they were already in conversations regarding maintenance; furthermore, the Mount Dora City Council was supportive of this, and they were already planning for it in their budget.

Mr. John Drury, Tavares City Administrator, relayed that the Tavares City Council supported this project, and that the City had invested $25 million into the train tracks which ran north/south, noting that they also invested $3.5 million into the new train bridge over the Dora Canal. He added that they had a train station at over $1 million, and that would continue to host train service to the blueberry farm with a pumpkin patch. He said that they hosted train service on the tracks for the Polar Express and would continue to do this, and he invited anyone who had a train to bring to the City of Tavares, noting that they could work an agreement out for the railroad station and the use of the tracks; additionally, they could have excursion tourist trains there forever. He then recalled that 80 percent of voters had a vision of half the funding being spent on trails, and that the nine people assigned to decide the number one trail voted unanimously that this was the trail to fulfill what 80 percent of the voters had voted for. He mentioned that County staff had also identified this as the number one trail to fulfill this, and that what was before the Board currently was the implementation part of the vision. He commented that there was quite a number of people who had been rowing in this direction for 20 years, including the Cities of Mount Dora and Tavares. He added that this would connect the City of Leesburg to the Cities of Wildwood, Tavares and Mount Dora, as well as Sorrento. He related that letters of support had been written to Lake County from the following individuals: Secretary of State Marco Rubio; Representative Daniel Webster; Representative Randy Fine; Ambassador Michael Waltz; and Senator Rick Scott. He said that each dollar spent on this project would bring in another dollar to build it, and that they had a $25 million BUILD grant in Washington, D.C. with senators, governors and representatives supporting it, noting that they were looking for if the County owned it. He opined that the $25 million would turn into $50 million, that it would be built quickly, and that if they continued to delay, they could start losing support. He hoped that the Board could take Lake County across the finish line.

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

Commr. Campione pointed out that since CSX and Florida Central Railroad owned that land, they had every right to basically do what they wanted with it and make money from it. She recalled that many railroad cars had been stored on that right of way, and that the County had no jurisdiction over that. She added that by having the right of way to use for a trail, this would no longer be able to happen. She also mentioned that whistleblowing was experienced from the Cities of Mount Dora to Tavares and that this became an issue, and that the current item also solved this.

Commr. Parks expressed support for the trail system, and he indicated interest in optimizing the $50 million bond as much as possible. He said that he wanted to move forward on the current day, and he hoped that there was the understanding that he would want to use $2 million out of TDT because this was $2 million which could possibly go toward conservation or another land with a trail connection. He clarified that the PLTAAC did not stipulate that this was a

requirement, and that they recognized that TDT should be explored for trail funding. He also opined that there may be a chance to continue to work with CSX.

On a motion by Commr. Smith, seconded by Commr. Morris and carried unanimously by a vote of 5-0, the Board approved to partner with Trust for Public Land and begin the process to purchase the CSX Corridor and connected parcels needed for the Wekiva Trail Project.

Commr. Campione relayed her understanding that several Board members felt that the key was to move forward with the $50 million bond on the current day, but wait until after the referendum on the property tax to decide whether they would end up going to closing.

Ms. Marsh explained that it took about 90 days to do a bond, and that staff could ensure that they did not close it until after they saw the results of the referendum.

Commr. Campione said that the burden would shift significantly at that point, and that they needed to be cognizant of how this affected commercial and rental properties, as well as the general economy in the county.

On a motion by Commr. Sabatini, seconded by Commr. Parks and carried unanimously by a vote of 5-0, the Board approved for the Public Lands Referendum Bond to be issued at the full $50 million under Ordinance 2024-18.

CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT AND COMPTROLLER'S CONSENT AGENDA

On a motion by Commr. Morris, seconded by Commr. Sabatini and carried unanimously by a vote of 5-0, the Board approved the Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller's Consent Agenda, Items 1 through 7, 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.

Cascades at Groveland CDD Resolutions

Notice is hereby provided of having received Cascades at Groveland Community Development District Resolution 2026-10 adopting the FY 2026-2027 proposed budget, and Resolution 2026-12 to approve the FY 2026-2027 meeting schedule.

City of Tavares ACFR

Notice is hereby provided of having received the City of Tavares' Annual Comprehensive Financial Report for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2025.

Grace Groves Oaks CDD Annual Financial Audit Report

Notice is hereby provided of having received the Grace Groves Oaks Community Development District Annual Financial Audit Report for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2025, in accordance with Section 11.45 and Section 189.418, Florida Statutes.

City of Leesburg ACFR

Notice is hereby provided of having received the City of Leesburg's Annual Comprehensive Financial Report for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2025.

Hammock Oaks CDD Annual Financial Audit Report

Notice is hereby provided of having received the Hammock Oaks Community Development District Annual Financial Audit Report for the Fiscal Year ended September 30, 2025 pursuant to Section 11.45 and Section 189.418, Florida Statutes.

Emerald Creek CDD Annual Financial Audit Report

Notice is hereby provided of having received the Emerald Creek Community Development District Annual Financial Audit Report for the Fiscal Year ended September 30, 2025 pursuant to Section 11.45 and Section 189.418, Florida Statutes.

COUNTY MANAGER'S CONSENT AGENDA

On a motion by Commr. Morris, seconded by Commr. Sabatini and carried unanimously by a vote of 5-0, the Board approved the Consent Agenda, Tabs 3 through 18, as follows:

COUNTY ATTORNEY

Recommend approval to extend the 2026 Tax Roll until completion of the Value Adjustment Board Hearings. There is no fiscal impact.

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Planning and Zoning

Recommend approval of Termination and Release of Unity of Title for Lots 408 & 409 Bella Collina East.

There is no fiscal impact.

Recommend approval of Termination and Release of Unity of Title for Vaughan Property.

There is no fiscal impact.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Public Safety Support

Recommend approval:

1. Of the Verizon Tower Lease Agreement and Memorandum of Tower Lease Agreement for co-location of communications equipment on/at a County tower; and

2. To authorize the County Manager, or designee, to execute all future supporting documentation and related expenditures; and

3. To adopt Unanticipated Revenue Resolution 2026-85 (URR) to accept and appropriate $16,500 for the Radio Communications Tower Co-Location Agreement with Verizon.

The annual fiscal impact is $16,500 (revenue). Commission District 3.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Housing and Community Services

Recommend approval:

1. Of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026-2027 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Proposed Projects and Annual Action Plan; and

2. To authorize the Office of Housing & Community Services Director to execute and submit any documents required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development related to the FY 2026-2027 Annual Action Plan; and

3. Of Resolution 2026-86 adopting the FY 2026-2027 Annual Action Plan for CBDG; and

4. To authorize the County Manager to execute the awarded respective CDBG Program Subrecipient Agreements and amendments that do not have a change in the fiscal impact.

The fiscal impact is $2,780,328 (revenue/expenditure - grant funded) and will be included in the Fiscal Year 2027 Budget.

Recommend approval:

1. Of a HOME Investment Partnerships Program Subrecipient Agreement between Lake County and Habitat for Humanity of Lake-Sumter, Inc. for the Sager's Cove project; and

2. Of a budget transfer in the amount of $124,900 from Aids to Other Organizations to Aids to Other Organizations - Sager's Cove.

The fiscal impact is $124,900 (expenditure - grant funded). Commission District 4.

Recommend approval:

1. Of a HOME Investment Partnerships Program Subrecipient Agreement between Lake County and Habitat for Humanity of Lake-Sumter, Inc. for the Magnolia Landing project; and

2. Of a budget transfer in the amount of $160,000 from Aids to Private Organizations to Aids to Private Organizations – Magnolia Landing.

The fiscal impact is $160,000 (expenditure - grant funded). Commission District 5.

Recommend approval:

1. Of the Second Amendment to a HOME Investment Partnerships American Rescue Plan Program (HOME-ARP) Subrecipient Agreement between Lake County and Find, Feed & Restore, Inc., for an Affordable Housing Project for Fiscal Year 2026; and

2. Of a budget transfer in the amount of $92,479 reallocating funds from Aids to Other Organizations to Aids to Private Organizations.

The fiscal impact is $900,000 (expenditure-grant funded). Commission District 5.

Transit Services

Recommend approval:

1. Of the Office of Transit Services' revised Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan; and

2. To authorize the Office of Transit Services' Director to execute the Annual Certification and adopt the plan.

There is no fiscal impact.

Recommend approval of a budget transfer in the amount of $4,050 from Transit Reserves to the Fixed Route Promotional Activity.

The fiscal impact is $4,050 (expenditure).

Recommend approval of the Third Amendment to the Agreement with Mid Florida Community Services, Inc. D/B/A You Thrive Florida for the provision of transportation services for nutritional purposes.

There is no fiscal impact.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Facilities Management

Recommend approval:

1. To utilize the Term & Supply Contract 23-402 with Hill York Service Company, LLC., for the replacement of six (6) air handler units at the Lake County Sheriff's Detention Center; and

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

The estimated fiscal impact is $1,699,979.25 (expenditure) and is within, and will not exceed, the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget. Commission District 3.

Public Works

Recommend approval:

1. Of Contracts 25-750A - E for transportation planning and traffic engineering services on an as-needed basis to American Structurepoint, Inc. (Indianapolis, IN, serviced through Tampa Office), CDM Smith, Inc. (Boston, MA, serviced through Boca Raton Office), Metric Engineering LLC (Miami, FL, serviced through Lake Mary Office), Patel, Green, and Associates, LLC (Temple Terrace, FL), and Traffic & Mobility Consultants, LLC (Orlando, FL) ; and

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

The annual estimated fiscal impact is $300,000 (expenditure) and is within, and will not exceed, the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget. Annual expenditures will not exceed available funding in the Fiscal Year Budget.

Recommend approval:

1. Of a Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMPG) Contract; and

2. To adopt Unanticipated Revenue Resolution 2026-87 (URR) to accept and appropriate $577,805 for design and construction services for the CR 44A and CR 439 Intersection Traffic Signal Improvement Project; and

3. Of a budget transfer in the amount of $190,000 from Infrastructure to Infrastructure - Intersection CR44A / CR439.

The estimated fiscal impact is $767,804.56 — $577,804.56 (revenue/expenditure - grant funded) and $190,000 (expenditure - county match). Commission District 4.

Recommend approval of 10-Ton Truck Restriction Resolution 2026-88 on Lake Erie Road between SR 33 and Bay Lake Road. The proposed signs are expected to provide advance warning to truck traffic that might otherwise consider taking Lake Erie Road. Local deliveries are exempt from the restriction.

The estimated fiscal impact is $5,400 (expenditure) and is within, and will not exceed, the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget. Commission District 1.

Recommend approval of 10-Ton Truck Restriction Resolution 2026-89 on Lake Louisa Road between Hammock Ridge Road and US 27. The seven signs are expected to provide advance warning to truck traffic that might otherwise consider taking Lake Louisa Road. Local deliveries are exempt from the 10-ton truck restriction.

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

PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2027 INFRASTRUCTURE SALES TAX PROJECTS

Ms. Jaime Stewart, Director for the Office of Management and Budget, stated that the extension of the Infrastructure Sales Tax (IST) was approved by voters in November 2015, and that the term of the levy was for 15 years from January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2032. She remarked that the revenue from the taxes collected would be evenly distributed among the County, the School Board and the municipalities, and that the ordinance for the 2018 to 2032 sales tax authorization provided for an annual public hearing in August to reevaluate priorities and make adjustments to the rolling five year plan. She remarked that the four categories identified by the referendum included public safety, quality of life, public works, and other public infrastructure, and that the fiscal year (FY) 2027 revenue projections included about $1.3 million in carryforward from FY 2026 due to estimated revenues and unanticipated interest earned. She mentioned that for FY 2027, the revenue estimates were around $27.4 million with a projected 3.6 percent average increase year over year. She related that ongoing projects totaled approximately $31 million and were currently funded, and that they included the following: the FDOT grant match of $12 million; the East Lake Sports and Community Complex; and the County library renovation and replacements. She said that it was about $26 million for funding by category and allocation for FY 2027, that it was around $27 million for FY 2028, and that the five year total was approximately $139 million. She mentioned that the five year plan for public safety in FY 2027 included the following: fire apparatus, vehicles and equipment totaled $1.8 million; the fire/emergency medical services (EMS) station renovations were $1.5 million; and Sheriff vehicles and equipment were $1.5 million, among other items, to total $7.2 million in the first year and $45 million over five years. She stated that the quality of life projects included the following: South Lake Regional Park partnership with the City of Groveland for $1.8 million; the Golden Triangle Regional Park

for $1.5 million; the East Lake Sports and Community Complex improvements per the master plan for $1 million; and other various trail, lighting and pavilion park improvements to total $6.6 million in FY 2027, noting that the five year total would be $36 million. She commented that public works in FY 2027 had the following: FDOT grant match at $2.6 million; road resurfacing and improvements at $1.9 million; and various other intersection, bridge, landfill, solid waste and public works projects to total $8.7 million in FY 2027 and $41.3 million in the next five years. She remarked that the five year plan for other public infrastructure projects included the following: $1 million for the capital building construction and renovations; some information technology (IT) enhancements; and fleet equipment over the next five years to total $6.6 million. She said that the five year debt service included the following: various road resurfacing projects; the animal shelter; and the public safety radios debt, as well as the $516,000 revenue, noting that the five year total was $9.8 million. She listed the following next steps: a public hearing on August 25, 2026; the September 8, 2026 first budget public hearing; and the September 22, 2026 final budget public hearing.

Commr. Campione mentioned that they had a placemark for fairgrounds funding for $500,000 per year, and that they had a pending State grant to go toward that use. She elaborated that the County had been in a holding pattern because they thought they would move quickly with a public/private partnership, though some things happened that possibly called this into question. She proposed potentially gathering some information on the possibility of moving forward with the utilities to the fairgrounds site, site plan completion, and a pavilion which could be utilized to create revenue immediately for barrel racing and rodeos, noting that they did not have anything like this in Lake County. She opined that they could become a popular place for this to happen, and relayed her understanding that they could have someone there twice per month, as well as have the facility available for other agricultural purposes. She clarified that this would not preclude building the expo center eventually, and that this would create a revenue stream immediately.

Commr. Smith said that he would be having the final meeting for the public/private partnership before it came to the Board, and he asked if they could wait one more meeting before making this decision.

Commr. Morris mentioned that the County had $2 million that they could use for infrastructure for the fairgrounds and not lose it; therefore, he would rather use it.

Commr. Campione stated that when the Board received a presentation, they could determine whether it made sense to bifurcate it.

Commr. Morris mentioned that Lake-Sumter State College (LSSC) let the contract out for the Nichols Group to build their workforce center, which was the partner of the public/private partnership, noting that the Nichols Group would be in the area.

PUBLIC HEARINGS: REZONING

REZONING REGULAR AGENDA

Tab 1. Ordinance No. 2026-36
Rezoning Case # PZ2026-266
Smith Family Trust Cemetery (CUP)
Conditional Use Permit (CUP) approval on approximately 470 +/- acres to allow a private family cemetery within the Agriculture (A) District.

SMITH FAMILY TRUST CEMETERY (CUP)

Mr. Mike Fitzgerald, Director for the Office of Planning and Zoning, stated that Tab 1, Rezoning Case # PZ2026-266, Smith Family Trust Cemetery (CUP), had been advertised in accordance with Florida Statute, and that the requested action was for approval of a conditional use permit (CUP) on approximately 470 acres to allow a private family cemetery within the Agriculture district. He said that the location was 6200 Calvin Lee Road in the City of Groveland area, and he displayed the concept plan. He commented that the CUP required that the private cemetery be set back a minimum of 100 feet from any of right of way, that it be set back five feet from any property line, that there be a five foot landscape buffer on all sides, and that it be set back a minimum of 50 feet from the jurisdictional wetland line. He related that CUPs required inspections once they were approved, and that it would be inspected in accordance with the outlined provisions. He stated that this request was also in compliance with the Land Development Regulations (LDR) and the Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan).

Commr. Campione said that she had conversations with the applicant, and that this was important to the family because they had lost their son and wanted to be able to bury him on their own property, as well as maintain it as a family cemetery.

The Chairman opened the public hearing.

Ms. Carol Smith, the applicant, mentioned that with the way the trust was set up, the property could never be sold and would stay within their family.

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

On a motion by Commr. Morris, seconded by Commr. Parks and carried unanimously by a vote of 5-0, the Board approved Tab 1, Rezoning Case # PZ2026-266, Smith Family Trust Cemetery (CUP).

PUBLIC HEARING: ORDINANCE 2026-35 EXTENSION OF NORTH LAKE COUNTY HOSPITAL DISTRICT

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

AN ORDINANCE OF LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA, PROVIDING FOR A CONTINUATION OF THE EXISTING NORTH LAKE COUNTY HOSPITAL DISTRICT IN LAKE COUNTY; PROVIDING FOR APPROVAL OF THE CONTINUATION BY REFERENDUM; PROVIDING THAT THE CONTINUATION SHALL BE EFFECTIVE FOR A PERIOD OF TEN (10) YEARS BEGINNING OCTOBER 1, 2027; 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 added that the enabling legislation for the North Lake County Hospital District (NLCHD) stated that the BCC shall put this on a referendum every 10 years.

The Chairman opened the public hearing.

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

Commr. Sabatini indicated that he would vote no, opining that there was at least some merit to the idea that just like the School Board tax vote, it was presented as ministerial; however, if the Board voted no, they would be forced to sue and they could test it this way.

Commr. Campione opined that it was unfair for people to read social media and think that the Board had a choice, indicating that she was a believer in the rule of law and that when there was a statute and enabling legislation which said that the Board shall put something out to the voters on a referendum, it was not their endorsement of it; rather, it was them doing what the statute directed them to do. She asked for Commissioner Sabatini to consider this if he decided whether to post something, and to write it in such a way that people understood that those who voted in favor of this took the position to follow what the statute indicated that they were supposed to do.

Commr. Sabatini said that Indian River County and Hillsborough County had also denied it.

Commr. Morris expressed support for letting them sue and seeing what they came up with, noting that he did not want to jump in a lawsuit with someone else.

Commr. Sabatini indicated that he would not post about it, and that for those who asked, he would say that there was a fair and good faith reason that it was mandatory, along with an argument that they could vote no. He opined that this was why they had to vote, and that there was an argument that it was discretionary.

Commr. Campione opined that it was not discretionary because to put something on a referendum, they needed to adopt an ordinance, noting that the BCC was the legislative body for Lake County and had to adopt the ordinance to put it on a referendum and let the voters decide. She opined that if the legislature wanted them to have discretion, they would have said this in the statute; however, they said to let the voters decide whether there would be this tax.

On a motion by Commr. Smith, seconded by Commr. Morris and carried by a vote of 4-1, the Board approved Ordinance 2026-35 to place on the November 2026 ballot a measure regarding the extension of the North Lake County Hospital District for ten (10) years beginning October 1, 2027.

Commr. Sabatini voted no.

REGULAR AGENDA

ADVERTISE CEMETERIES ORDINANCE

Mr. Fitzgerald relayed that the agenda items regarding cemeteries and the definition of site plans had been advertised in accordance with Florida Statute. He stated that on May 21, 2026, Governor Ron DeSantis signed into law HB 425 which required administrative approval of applications from historic African American cemeteries to change the land use category and zoning district of excess vacant land to allow development consistent and compatible with adjacent land

uses. He said that this proposed ordinance amended the Lake County code to require administrative approval of rezoning and future land use (FLU) changes for excess vacant cemetery property to fund the cemetery's long term maintenance and upkeep with no further action by the governing body, so long as the cemetery was a historic African American cemetery recorded in the State of Florida master site plan file. He clarified that this item was a State mandate.

Ms. Marsh relayed that this item was for approval to advertise, and that it would come back for a public hearing at a future meeting.

The Chairman opened the floor for public comment.

Ms. Katherine de Jongh, a resident of Commission District 4, expressed support for this ordinance amendment because it was bringing them in line with the new legislation from the State. She said that currently, hundreds of burial grounds had been lost, consumed by development, obscured by vegetation, or overlooked by historical record. She stated that these sites were often unregistered and unmarked on official maps, and were uniquely vulnerable. She mentioned that the loss of such a site was erasure of identity, memory and genealogical connection for entire family lines, and that the State had taken meaningful legislative steps to address this, noting that Florida Statutes provided protections for historical burial sites 50 years and older; furthermore, the Florida Division of Historical Resources administered a number of programs to support preservation efforts. She commented that one tool was the maintenance of the master site file of registered cemeteries 50 years and older, and that this data was made available to planning departments throughout the state. She related that unless it was requested and incorporated in a database, these sites were vulnerable. She said that when applications were submitted to local planning and zoning departments for local construction projects, these sites were often missed if they were not on a database for local planning staff to consult. She remarked that staff may not recommend necessary precautions that should be considered when proceeding with one of these applications, and she requested that the County look into adopting a policy to incorporate master site file data so that the County and municipalities would have the necessary data when they received an application to protect cultural resources.

Commr. Parks indicated his understanding that staff was receiving reports based on sites, zoning, etc., and that it was often a requirement for one to submit letters from the Florida Department of State and Division of Historical Resources on information.

Mr. Fitzgerald replied that the applicant must disclose to staff if there was a historic cemetery on the site.

Ms. Marsh clarified that the County did not have a requirement for a property owner or developer to do this.

Commr. Parks mentioned that this was free, and that it could be helpful with the process.

Ms. de Jongh added that the State already had a GIS map layer which was easy to incorporate, and that it was a resource which prevented a complication later.

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

Commr. Campione commented that there was the request from Ms. de Jongh for the County to consider making a change to their LDR, opining that it made sense and that there was no cost.

On a motion by Commr. Sabatini, seconded by Commr. Smith and carried unanimously by a vote of 5-0, the Board approved to advertise an Ordinance amending Sections 3.08.00 and 3.01.04(10), Lake County Code Appendix E, Land Development Regulations, entitled Cemeteries. Required by HB 425 (2026).

ADVERTISE SITE PLANS ORDINANCE

Mr. Fitzgerald explained that the proposed ordinance clarified the major and minor site plan definitions for better review and categorization, along with charges of fees. He stated that they outlined major and minor site plan definitions in the ordinance.

Commr. Morris asked if this would create more of a burden.

Mr. Fitzgerald denied this, and said that it helped staff to know when not to overcharge a business.

On a motion by Commr. Smith, seconded by Commr. Sabatini and carried unanimously by a vote of 5-0, the Board approved to advertise an Ordinance amending Section 14.09.01, Lake County Code, Appendix E, Land Development Regulations, entitled Site Plans.

APPOINTMENT TO THE CENTRAL FLORIDA EXPRESSWAY AUDIT COMMITTEE

On a motion by Commr. Sabatini, seconded by Commr. Parks and carried unanimously by a vote of 5-0, the Board approved to appoint Ms. Mary Burns, Accounting Director, to the Central Florida Expressway Audit Committee.

DEEP WOODS CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT

Mr. Billy Dove, an attorney representing Mr. Richard Graham, who was the owner of the property at 46600 Deep Woods Road, indicated that in the previous week Mr. Graham requested a review of the Deep Woods Ranch CUP; however, he requested that they table this vote to a later meeting to allow the property owners additional time to review the information and the process surrounding this so that they could ensure they were moving forward in a manner conducive to everyone’s interests.

Commr. Smith opined that this was a reasonable request, and he relayed his understanding that Mr. Dove had met with the attorneys from Embry-Riddle and the other property owners.

Mr. Dove said that they had been in conversations, and that the CUP touched three separate parcels, noting that all three were aligned that it would be preferred to table this vote.

Commr. Smith made a motion to table this item until the property owners could get with staff and bring back a good plan.

Commr. Morris seconded the motion.

Commr. Sabatini indicated that the reason why he was pushing to get the CUP analyzed was not for one applicant, owner or citizen, but for the county as a whole. He requested putting it on the agenda immediately to be reanalyzed, opining that it was a major effect over the county and that it had already created more conversation than almost any of the land use items that the Board

had voted on in the last two years since he had been on the Board. He said that he had thought that guardrails were being put in place where this would not be modified in a substantial way, and then they found out through the media and some diligent citizens that it was. He opined that adjacent property owners who had their property affected in a direct manner mattered, but that this was not an argument for tabling the item.

Commr. Campione clarified that Mr. Graham was not adjacent, and that he was part of the CUP.

Commr. Sabatini indicated his understanding that regarding the motion made in the previous week, they were going to reopen the CUP and analyze it to see if what was being proposed was in in accordance with the original CUP.

Commr. Smith stated that he made the current motion to table this item until they could come to the Board and clear everything up on the CUP.

Commr. Sabatini opined that they needed a hearing on the CUP and to study what was happening, and not just because one person who partook in the benefit of the CUP was requesting this.

Commr. Campione reiterated that an owner of one of the parcels in the CUP, as well as Embry-Riddle, which was the other owner, were asking the Board to let them get together, meet with staff, and see what they could work out. She added that this could then be brought back and they could decide whether Commissioner Sabatini's request to open it up and have a hearing was something that they supported. She opined that the property owners needed to make this decision because the only time she had ever known the BCC to unilaterally initiate a zoning change of someone's property was when that property owner wanted their property to be changed to fix something, noting that one could ask the County to initiate it because they opined that they should not have to pay for it.

Commr. Sabatini commented that he wanted to have a hearing on the CUP because he was hearing unilateral complaints that the CUP and the proposed plans within the CUP did not reflect what they were originally entitled to. He added that he wanted this studied and that he wanted a public hearing on it, as well as seeing what legal options the County had to ensure that it was not being abused or changing in a way that changed the quality of life in the area.

Commr. Parks expressed concerns about the impacts on the forest and going outside of what they could already do. He indicated his understanding that there would be another instance where everyone would hear this item, but it would be after the property owners had gotten together.

Commr. Campione said that there could be a due process hearing so that they could have impacted individuals who wanted to provide statements.

Commr. Parks relayed his understanding that they would still get the question answered regarding if this was in compliance, and that it would be in the near future. He added that the property owners would come back, and that staff would also have a compliance check.

Commr. Campione opined that by paving the airstrip and the things which went along with this including road relocation, trees being cut, the U.S. Forest Service and the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) weighing in, the argument from those who were opposed

to the airstrip being paved was that the original 2006 CUP was being expanded. She mentioned that staff had thus far opined that it was not being expanded, and she opined that Commissioner Sabatini was opining that it was an expansion and wanted to have a hearing on this; additionally, the owners wanted to table having this discussion about whether the County would initiate a hearing so that they could decide if they wanted to do this or if they wanted to oppose a County-initiated hearing.

Mr. Dove stated that they were requesting to move this vote out a couple of meetings to give them time to look at all of the background information, noting that the CUP touched three different landowners' properties.

The Chairman opened the floor for public comment.

Ms. Louise Chen, a resident of Lake County, showed images of the property and wildlife, and opined that the school would not raise any property or school taxes. She also expressed concerns for noise.

Commr. Campione asked if pictures of birds were taken from Mr. Graham's property, noting that Mr. Graham was requesting time.

Ms. Chen clarified that they were on the easement road.

Ms. Shannon Geis, a resident of the City of New Smyrna Beach, stated that she visited this area for its tranquility, serene environment and the opportunity to observe wildlife. She expressed opposition to the Embry-Riddle expansion plans at Deep Woods Ranch, opining that it posed a significant threat to the environment and would diminish the quality of life for local residents. She opined that this project would degrade the experience of thousands of nonresidents who fueled the local ecotourism economy, and that it was an incompatible expansion of scope. She relayed her understanding that this project included high frequency commercial grade flight training directly into a rural residential haven, and that Embry-Riddle's commissioned biological assessment admitted that the project was likely to adversely affect and impact protected wildlife. She urged the BCC to protect the peace of the forest, defend local residents, enforce the strictest interpretations and limits of the original agreement, and use every legal avenue available to block this expansion.

Commr. Campione stated that when the County had a public hearing on land use issues, they had to follow due process and let the applicants have a chance to be heard, along with anyone with an interest and any member of the public; however, they were not having a zoning hearing currently, opining that this was when one would indicate that they did not want something changed or done.

Mr. Alan Chen, a resident on Treasure Island Road, opined that one of the issues regarding this project had been the misleading use of the term Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), and he provided information related to this. He opined that this gave the impression that the proposed clearing, grading, road construction and destruction of the 35 acres was required by the FAA, opining that none of this was required. He displayed a list of misleading and unverified claims made regarding the term FAA, and opined that Embry-Riddle collectively chose which FAA documents were required, noting that one requested a minimum of 2,000 feet altitude in noise

sensitive areas like Alexander Springs Wilderness and Lake Woodruff Wildlife Refuge; furthermore, there was a document suggesting a separation distance to wildlife attractants. He opined that Embry-Riddle planned to use mitigation credits to destroy wetlands, and indicated his understanding that there was a significant offsite construction plan, questioning why it was being done if it was not required by the FAA. He questioned the intent of the original CUP when it was granted to a family farmer who owned a plane.

Ms. Diana Williams, a resident of Lake County, opined that there were many issues with this project including removing property rights from the other two property owners who had deeded access to this runway, and she expressed concerns for wildlife and water. She showed an image of the property, and relayed that the spring fed Clay Lake sat 500 or 600 feet from the end of the runway and that the magnitude three Mosquito Spring was 2,000 feet from the end of the runway. She asked how these water sources would be protected, and opined that the spring needed to be tested before putting things out there. She also said that she had over 2,500 signatures in opposition to this project, and she asked the Board to consider a hearing.

Ms. Susan Fetter, President of the Lake County Conservation Council, asked the Board to consider serious environmental issues such as sound and fuel, and if there were things they could do to help mitigate them. She inquired when the next public hearing would be, relaying her understanding that the site plan was under review by staff and it could possibly be passed without a further public hearing.

Commr. Campione explained that property owners who owned the land where the CUP was located had asked for a pause so that they could get together, and that they had to decide whether they wanted to initiate a CUP hearing or whether they would they would be in favor of having a County-initiated CUP hearing. She opined that the springs and lake needed to be protected, and that that the issues related to forestry mattered; however, they had to find out whether the landowners would support a County-initiated CUP or whether they wanted to do their own application for a CUP.

Ms. Fetter indicated her understanding that if the CUP was reevaluated, whether the County or the landowners were doing it, the choice was the landowners'.

Commr. Campione said that if the landowners did not want to initiate it themselves, the decision then came to the BCC regarding if the County was going to initiate it. She elaborated that the landowners would have an opportunity at that point to either fight the County's initiation or not. She stated that they were dealing with property rights issues including potential damages and much funding, and that this was why the landowners had requested a pause.

Commr. Parks remarked that anything said was being documented as part of the process. He also recalled Ms. Fetter's question about the site plan and asked Ms. Marsh if the site plan was on hold.

Ms. Marsh denied that it would be on hold, and explained that site plans were administratively approved by staff so long as they met all requirements of the LDR.

Commr. Campione commented that the issue of the CUP would still come back in front of the Board regardless, even if they had site plan approval, noting that the issue of whether there

would be a CUP hearing still had to come back; furthermore, the owners had requested a pause on this question.

Commr. Smith said that he saw this as no different than a planning and zoning issue where someone came in and stated that they were going to make some changes and would like to come back at a later date. He mentioned that he had never heard a Board member tell a developer that they needed to address this immediately, and that they always provided an opportunity to go back and redo their projects to meet County standards or the CUP. He indicated support for giving them time to talk to each other and staff, as well as bring it back to the Board.

Mr. Cliff McCall, a resident of Lake County, mentioned that flight schools could have constant noise and traffic, as well as the negative impact this could have on surrounding areas, including wildlife. He did not believe the middle of a national forest was the right place for flight schools or training.

Ms. Faith Attinger, a resident of Lake County, indicated that this property was in a national forest, which she opined was public land. She asked why Embry-Riddle was allowed to ask the U.S. Forest Service to remove 40 acres of national forest on a popular recreation area for locals, and she asked the Board to consider that they took an oath of office to uphold the Constitution; furthermore, she mentioned Section 7 of the Florida Constitution.

Commr. Campione commented that there was due process, and that this was what the Board was trying to adhere to so that everyone had a chance to speak, along with the property owners. She recalled that the property owners had asked the Board if they would postpone this so that they could work together before having a hearing on facts. She added that this was why she had asked speakers if they wanted to not speak on the current day so that they could speak at a time when the Board was making a decision.

Ms. Attinger indicated her understanding that the runway was in the middle of a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood zone, and she questioned where the water would go if it was paved.

Commr. Campione pointed out that the SJRWMD was reviewing the application which had to do with FEMA, runoff and stormwater.

Ms. Cindy Newton, a resident of Commission District 4, opined that the intensive use was not evaluated under obnoxious uses during the 1987 CUP approval or the 2006 CUP amendment, and recalled that staff had determined that the conditional use would have limited, if any, adverse effects on adjacent properties; however, she opined that with this intensity change, this determination was no longer true, and that they needed a new determination. She relayed her understanding that they were constructing a paved taxiway and an apron which was parking for 12 aircraft, and opined that this intensive use should not be allowed under any CUP or with a zoning change within the Wekiva-Ocala Rural Protection Area (RPA) under several County objectives and policies. She opined that the Florida Wildlife Corridor and the Ocala to Osceola Wildlife Corridors were important, and she displayed images of this. She opined that they should be looking at protecting land with acquisitions, that this was an intensive use, and that it needed to be evaluated.

Mr. Ray Hayden, a resident of Commission District 5, expressed support for the pause that the property owners requested, and opined that the original CUP was for a grass airstrip. He relayed his understanding that the applicant could get an approval and that this could be done, along with this being law at that point, and he expressed concerns for this. He questioned what the next step would be and if anything could happen before the County took up this issue.

Ms. Lisa Hayden, a resident of Lake County, opined that on June 2, 2025, a mistake was made and that only the attorney representing Embry-Riddle was listened to. She opined that Embry-Riddle had not lived up to the promises they made to the Board, and that if they had the site plan approved, this mistake would only get worse. She opined that it was not Mr. Graham's responsibility to protect the Ocala National Forest, and that it was everyone's responsibility. She opined that on June 2, 2025, something moved forward which should not have, and that it created financial issues for Embry-Riddle in Lake County. She also opined that about 460,000 people in Lake County had been affected.

Commr. Campione reiterated that Mr. Graham had requested the postponement, and that she thought that people would want to wait until there was an actual hearing so that information could be presented which went into a record that was part of a decision. She added that the Board was not making a decision on the current day, other than whether to honor what that property owner had requested.

Ms. Hayden expressed appreciation for Mr. Graham, but opined that he was just one person and that others were also in Lake County.

Mr. David Williamson, a resident of Lake County, recalled that on November 24, 1908, President Theodore Roosevelt has signed a proclamation establishing the Ocala National Forest, and opined that they were currently discussing whether a portion of it should be sacrificed for Embry-Riddle. He opined that this should not be done, relaying that this was the oldest national forest east of the Mississippi River and that it protected the largest contiguous sand pine scrub ecosystem in the world. He opined that people came there for many activities and enjoying land that had not been developed. He mentioned that the forest was also home to wildlife, and he asked that the Board listen to the people.

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

On a motion by Commr. Smith, seconded by Commr. Morris and carried by a vote of 4-1, the Board approved to table this item until the property owners could get with staff and bring back a good plan.

Commr. Sabatini voted no.

CHALLENGING SENATE BILL 686 CONCERNING DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL AGRICULTURE LAND

Commr. Sabatini expressed concerns for SB 686, which was called the Agricultural Enclave Bill. He explained that it basically defined an agricultural enclave as almost any land, and that if one had agricultural land with half their border being suburban sprawl, they would automatically be entitled to the same suburban sprawl in terms of density with no hearings or

discretion. He stated that within 60 days of this law going into effect, 4,047 acres of agricultural land in St. Johns County was automatically entitled to high density suburban sprawl housing with no hearing, and that six applications had hit that County in the first 30 days of developers learning about it. He indicated that the St. Johns County BCC had a 5-0 vote to exercise all options to consider gaining legal knowledge to see if a lawsuit would be successful, and that he believed that the amount of land in Lake County that would eventually be considered an agricultural enclave would be significant. He clarified that he was not saying that Lake County should do anything yet in terms of legal action, though he wanted to see if they would have consent to have staff confer with the St. Johns County Attorney and staff to assist and possibly come up with a plan to identify a legal option to have this struck.

Commr. Morris said that he would like to identify those properties in Lake County before trying to help another County.

Commr. Sabatini opined that assisting St. Johns County also meant assisting Lake County, and said that he was proposing partnering with them to see if there was a legal strategy that Lake County could then use for their own citizens. He believed that there were already a number of parcels that fell within the grasp of this new statute which would significantly change the quality of life in Lake County, and that he did not want to specify this because some of them could be imminent votes or administrative hearings. He also said that the amount of parcels that fell within this was dependent on what the County did with other parcels.

Commr. Morris asked to identify them, and he expressed concerns for wasting legal time with St. Johns County; furthermore, he indicated support for letting St. Johns County do the work.

Commr. Parks opined that rewriting the Growth Management Act in its entirety could be of grave concern, along with this law. He opined that it would affect parts of Lake County, and he indicated that he would not want to join a lawsuit currently because he would want to know how this would affect them and what strategy one would recommend.

Commr. Sabatini clarified that he was only asking if the Board had consent and direction for staff to communicate with St. Johns County regarding potential legal options to keep Lake County abreast on what they were doing, and then hopefully help in some basic legal research to identify a pathway and a possible injunction against what he opined would be the most destructive law ever passed for agriculture in the history of the state. He opined that this was a minor ask, and said that he saw identifying Lake County properties which would be administratively approved as an extension of this.

Commr. Smith opined that this was a small ask to keep an eye on what St. Johns County was doing, and that they needed to conserve rural lands; however, Lake County already had 34 percent conservation land, which was much higher than all of the counties in Central Florida and most of the counties in the state. He opined that Lake County needed to continue down the path that they had been going on for the last six years in trying to save rural Lake County, and that he was in favor of at least having staff look at options.

Commr. Sabatini remarked that he would go slightly further and say that Lake County was in support of St. Johns County's efforts and were potentially willing to partner with them on exploring legal options.

Commr. Smith opined that Lake County should be talking to them, though he could not approve saying that Lake County would do something if St. Johns County did this without Board approval.

Commr. Campione opined that Commissioner Sabatini should put together a document for the Board and articulate it.

Commr. Sabatini opined that this is why they had staff, noting that he would be directing staff to confer with other legal experts on the issue of whether legal action could be taken against the bill.

Commr. Campione thought that they could have that conversation with the St. Johns County Attorney and find out their theory.

Commr. Sabatini indicated that he was not going to do this without the Board knowing.

Commr. Campione relayed her understanding that if this was the request, the Board was all in favor, though she did not think that everyone had the appetite to join a lawsuit until they understood it more.

Commr. Sabatini said that St. Johns County was not suing anyone, and that they were exploring all legal options, noting that he wanted official correspondence from Lake County saying that they were aware of what St. Johns County was doing and were willing to engage in research because they could potentially do the same thing at some point. He also opined that Lake County should be instructing staff to file a lawsuit, and that the bill could possibly turn each piece of agricultural land in the county into high density sprawl.

Commr. Campione commented that they could have more discussion at the next meeting, and that she planned to do more research.

Commr. Smith opined that they needed to know what St. Johns County was doing, and that Lake County could call them and ask about this.

Commr. Parks indicated his understanding that staff could see how much land this could potentially apply to.

REPORTS

COMMISSIONERS REPORTS

COMMISSIONER SMITH – DISTRICT 3

VOTING

Commr. Smith encouraged everyone to vote, and said that one's vote counted. He also opined that the Canvassing Board was doing a great job.

Commr. Morris asked everyone to fill in the ovals when voting.

COMMISSIONER MORRIS – DISTRICT 5

LOBBYIST SERVICES

Commr. Morris relayed his understanding that the County had a request for proposal (RFP) out for lobbyist services, and he asked how long the County had employed GrayRobinson for, noting that he would like to know their track record and other options.

Ms. Barker replied that the County had employed GrayRobinson for over 10 years.

COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AREAS

Commr. Morris mentioned that he saw where the City of Umatilla was looking at reducing the size of the community redevelopment area (CRA), and he asked if this was something that the County could possibly discuss with the other Cities. He also questioned if the County had a CRA that they could review.

Commr. Campione said that the County only had the Mt. Plymouth-Sorrento CRA, and opined that it was as small as it could be.

Ms. Barker relayed that staff could have this discussion with all of the Cities with CRAs.

Commr. Smith opined that CRAs should sunset at a certain point once they had done their job.

COMMISSIONER SMITH – DISTRICT 3

NATIONAL SON AND DAUGHTER DAY AND NATIONAL RASPBERRY TART DAY.

Commr. Smith commented that it was National Son and Daughter Day and National Raspberry Tart Day.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to be brought to the attention of the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 1:31 p.m.

_____

LESLIE CAMPIONE, CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

_____

GARY J COONEY, CLERK