

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
LEON COUNTY, FLORIDA
WORKSHOP
2020 State & Federal
Legislative Priorities
September 24, 2019**

The Leon County Board of County Commissioners met for a Workshop on the 2020 State & Federal Legislative Priorities on Tuesday, September 24, 2019 at 1:30 p.m.

Present were Chairman Nick Maddox, Vice Chairman Jimbo Jackson and Commissioners Mary Ann Lindley, Bryan Desloge, Rick Minor, Bill Proctor, and Kristen Dozier. Also present were County Administrator Vincent Long, County Attorney Herb Thiele and Clerk to the Board Beryl H. Wood.

Facilitator(s): Andy Johnson, Assistant to the County Administrator
Nicki Paden, County Administrator Office, Management Analyst
Jeff Sharkey and Taylor Beal, Capitol Alliance Group
Sarah Vilms and Victoria Cram, Squire Patton Boggs

Vice – Chair Desloge introduced the workshop and presented Andy Johnson to make staff’s presentation.

Mr. Johnson noted that the workshop is held annually to offer the Board an opportunity to develop its priorities for the upcoming legislative session. He indicated that the lobbying teams would provide the Board a synopsis of the upcoming state and federal legislative sessions. He shared that along with himself, Ms. Paden would provide an overview of ten legislative appropriation requests; fifteen projects for potential grant funding; five state-level legislative policy issues, and four federal policy issues proposed for the 2020 state and federal legislative sessions and the second session of the 116th Congress.

Proposed Appropriations Request - State	Amount	Project Phase
Backup Generator - Secondary Needs Shelter	\$300,000	Capital/Fixed Assets
Mitigation/Retrofit – Branch Libraries and Community Centers	\$1 million	Capital/Fixed Assets
Leon Works Expo and Junior Apprenticeship	\$100,000	Program Funding
Orchard Pond Greenway Trail, Phase II	\$350,000	Design/Permitting
Lake Henrietta Renovation	\$1.5 million	Design/Construction
Fords Arm/Lexington Tributary Restoration	\$1 million	Construction
Centerville Trace Septic-to-Sewer Project	\$1 million	Design/Permit/Land Acquisition
Harbinwood Estates Septic-to-Sewer Project	\$2.5 million	Design/Permit/Land Acquisition
Fred George Wetland Restoration	\$1 million	Construction

PROJECTS RECOMMENDED FOR POTENTIAL GRANT FUNDING

Mr. Johnson highlighted the County’s success in recent years securing funds through the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Five - Year Work Program, the Springs Restoration Matching Grant Program administered by the Northwest Florida Water Management District (NFWFMD), and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP). Additionally, he recommended continuing the County’s successful strategy of pursuing grant funding where

appropriate, which best aligns major County projects with the most likely sources of state funding. The grant projects presented to the Board for their approval were as follows:

Additional Proposed Appropriations Request		
Leon South Regional Water System	\$750,000	Design/Construction
Veterans Memorial Drive (CR 59) Bridge	\$530,000	Design/Construction
Capital Cascades Trail Segment 3 D RSF	\$5.1 million	Construction
Capital Southwest Circle	\$10 million	Construction
Woodville Highway (CC to Paul Russell)	\$29.7 million	Construction
Northeast Gateway (Welaunee Blvd./Sham)	\$4.3 million	Design
Orange Av Widening & Beautification	\$3.3 million	Design
Lake Lafayette St. Marks Regional Linear Park	\$750,000	Land Acquisition
St. Marks Headwater Greenway Trails	\$800,000	Construction
Williams Landing Improvements	\$450,000	Design & Construction
Coe Landing Improvements	\$200,000	Design & Construction
Fred George Greenway Boardwalk & Obs. Decks	\$650,000	Design & Construction
J. Lee Vause Park Boardwalk & Obs. Decks	\$650,000	Design & Construction
Hazard and Flood Mitigation Projects	\$TBD*	All Phases*

Nicki Paden, Management Analyst, relayed updates on State Legislative Policy Issues.

- Protection of the State Workforce - Support
- Local Option High Impact Tourist Development Tax- Support
- Amtrak Passenger Rail Restoration - Support
- Canopy Roads Protection – Oppose
- Relocation of the State Capital – Oppose
- Public Safety on College and University Campuses - Oppose
- Support Florida Association of Counties (FAC) Legislative Program - Support

Dr. Jeff Sharkey, Capital Alliance Group, provided remarks regarding the upcoming legislative session that will start 2 months earlier next year. He shared the regular session would start on January 14, 2020 and end on March 13, 2020. He added they are working quickly to get appropriations items moving. He noted there are 338 bills that have already been presented. He also noted that firearms bills would be highlighted again this year. Dr. Sharkey stated there was strong support for bills about carrying concealed weapons. He shared that Governor DeSantis has support for issues related to the environment, economy, education and health. These include water quality, hurricane preparedness, economic development issues, children’s issues and mental health issues. He shared that they would continue promoting Leon County Works as a top priority and how it meets requirements for the apprenticeship program. He noted the Governor strongly supports Career-Workforce Training and has allocated \$10 million in for apprenticeship programs.

Board Discussion

Commissioner Lindley inquired about the Tourist Development Tax (TDT). Mr. Johnson responded there are a different number of tourist development taxes. He shared information regarding the high impact tax that is a one cent tax and that there around 15 counties in the state that are eligible. He noted the criteria is that you must be a larger county with high volume hotel bed night stays or transactions that are subject to the TDT or a smaller county that has a huge proportion of their taxable sales subject to TDT. He shared that Leon County was maxed out at five percent of TDT and if they can get authorization from the Legislature, they would be able to levy 6 cents of Tourist Development Tax. The Board would then have option for a super-majority vote to adopt.

Commissioner Maddox remarked on the jail population. He inquired was there anything addressing the mental health population in the jails on the state level and how they could look at more innovative ways to move them to the proper facilities.

Dr. Sharkey responded on the Criminal Justice Reform efforts for reducing felony amounts for those entering county jails and then onto the Department of Corrections. He stated there is some talk about training inside the fence. He noted it was detrimental to identify those individuals that may need mental health treatment while inside the fence without law enforcement and mental health professionals working together to decide who belongs behind bars versus who needs mental health attention.

Commissioner Minor inquired would the Florida Association of Counties (FAC) support the local option tourist development tax? Commissioner Maddox replied yes, FAC would be supporting.

Commissioner Dozier questioned Leon Works. She asked was their additional funding for the apprenticeship training to connect businesses.

Dr. Sharkey replied that there was a different apprenticeship program through high school, state and community colleges. He shared that it was formula driven and had been there for years. He recalled Governor DeSantis' recent push with apprenticeship with Career Source Florida. He noted that he had not seen any information coming from the City, Tallahassee Community College or Lively Technical College.

Commissioner Dozier added how Leon Works was unique and commented they are creating a demand for programs that may not fully exist because of funding. She inquired about additional policies that they could support so that the pipeline would exist clearly defined for businesses to place people. She noted in would be a compliment to their efforts and asked for additional information on apprenticeship.

Commissioner Dozier noted the work of the Florida Division of Emergency Management that has pushed out backlogged funds from 2014 and before for hurricanes and storms. She inquired of additional funding for Bike and Trails. She noted the statewide networks and was inquiring if other funding may be available.

Commissioner Minor commented on Riley House Museum and how they are not in line to receive funding and would request to add an additional appropriation for Florida African American Heritage Preservation in the amount of \$450,000. He added this appropriation would not impact the other infrastructure projects. The Riley House Museum would receive 25% of the funding and it would retain the headquarters in Tallahassee which would result in an increase in tourism.

Commissioner Dozier inquired how have they dealt with other requests from partners in the past and wanted to be sure they position it in the right way.

County Administrator Long stated there is language that we have adopted each year that gives authority to support community projects that may line up with the Board's priorities.

Commissioner Desloge concurred with Commissioner Dozier. He was in favor of offering assistance for a state-wide funding request.

Commissioner Minor moved, duly seconded by Commissioner Maddox to direct staff to include a request for \$450,000 from the Florida Legislature to support the Florida African American Historic Preservation Network (FAAHPN) resulting in a portion of the funding being allocated to the Riley Center Museum to administer the FAAHPN. The motion carried 7-0.

Commissioner Proctor inquired about aid to assist the historical black colleges and universities on the federal level. He commented on Florida A & M University ranking 7 among historically black universities.

Sarah Vilms, Squire Patton Boggs, noted the long-standing grant program that has been protected by Congress for some time and has bipartisan support. However, she did note that with the Administration being less supportive in certain circumstances there is still an effort needed to make sure that program is fully funded. She recalled a situation with the University of Georgia where some of their grant funding was halted and they worked with Congress to receive funding and for their research to go forward. Victoria Cram, Squire Patton Boggs, shared they would be happy to get an update on the historical black colleges and universities.

Commissioner Proctor addressed his concerns of the 32304-zip code being one of the most impoverished in the State of Florida and inquired what opportunities are available to address poverty. He commended Florida State University on being ranked in the top 20 public universities and now ranked at number 18 in the nation. He inquired about educational incentives for the University. He also asked for support for student loan forgiveness/student debt for medical providers.

Dr. Sharkey noted the different levels of funding programs related to those topics. Sarah Vilms relayed they would provide a briefing on related topics.

Chairman Jackson voiced his continued support for the Teachers Loan Forgiveness Program that gives teachers loan forgiveness after 3 years for teaching in Title 1 Schools. He spoke of the Title 1 funding dealing with poverty and the 32304-zip code.

Commissioner Lindley moved, duly seconded Commissioner Minor for approval of the 2020 State Priorities, as amended by the Board.

Mr. Johnson announced the dates for the Annual Delegation Meeting with Senator Montford - October 28, 2019 at 5:30 p.m. and Community Legislative Dialogue Meeting - February 14, 2020 at 9:00 am -10:30 am.

The motion carried 7-0

Ms. Padon presented the three federal initiatives:

- Amtrak Passenger Rail Restoration
- Foreign Trade Zone Application
- Support the National Association of Counties (NACo) Legislative Program

Sarah Vilms, Victoria Cram, Square Patton Boggs, provided their insights on 4 items on the federal level:

- Continuing Resolution – that would continue to fund the Government through Nov. 21st
- Appropriations Outlook
- Waters of the USA
- Infrastructure Packages

Commissioner Minor inquired about Choice Neighborhood Grants. Mr. Johnson stated it was one of their priorities highlighted at last year's legislative session and since that time they have met with City, Housing Authority and all Affordable Housing Partners to work out how to best position themselves for an extremely competitive grant application process.

Commissioner Dozier commended the good work and the great dialogue shared. She recalled Amtrak and asked about adding it to the Southern Rail Commission. She inquired on which side is this request being made. She noted Florida should be a part of this effort. Mr. Johnson shared how it needs to be expressed as formal priority of the state. He responded the state legislature would need to act and formally join the Southern Rail Commission. They would then work with the Governor's Office and Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). He shared they have held discussion with FDOT about restoration of passenger rail.

Commissioner Dozier moved, duly seconded by Commissioner Lindley approval of Options 1-3 with the addition of lending support to any bills about disaster supplement funding after storms:

Option 1: Approve the 2020 State and Federal Legislative Priorities, as amended by the Board.

Option 2: Authorize the County Administrator to extend the existing contract for state lobbying services with Capital Alliance Group, in a form approved by the County Attorney, for \$70,000 annually for an additional one-year term.

Option 3: Authorize the County Administrator to extend the existing contract for federal lobbying services with Squire Patton Boggs, in a form approved by the County Attorney, for \$100,000 annually for an additional one-year term.

The motion carried 7-0.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 2:53 p.m.

LEON COUNTY, FLORIDA

ATTEST:



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Bryan Desloge".

BY: _____
Bryan Desloge, Chairman
Board of County Commissioners

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Doreen Marshall".

BY: _____
Gwendolyn Marshall, Clerk of Court
& Comptroller, Leon County, Florida