

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
LEON COUNTY, FLORIDA  
WORKSHOP  
2023 State & Federal  
Legislative Priorities  
October 25, 2022**

The Leon County Board of County Commissioners met for a Workshop on the 2022 State & Federal Legislative Priorities on Tuesday, October 25, 2022 at 1:07 p.m. in chambers with Vice-Chairman Nick Maddox presiding. Present with Vice-Chairman Nick Maddox were Commissioners Carolyn Cummings, Brian Welch, Rick Minor, and Kristen Dozier. Also present were County Administrator Vincent Long, County Attorney Chasity O’Steen and Clerk to the Board Beryl H. Wood.

Facilitator(s): Andy Johnson, Assistant to the County Administrator  
Jeff Sharkey and Taylor Biehl, Capitol Alliance Group  
Sarah Vilms and Victoria Cram, Squire Patton Boggs

County Administrator Long briefly introduced the workshop. This workshop item seeks the Board’s approval of recommended state and federal legislative priorities for the 2023 Florida Legislative Session and the first session of the 118th Congress.

Mr. Johnson stated this was their annual workshop where the Board provides important guidance to staff as well as the County Lobbying Teams on policy and funding priorities during the 2023 Legislative Session as well as the next year in Congress. He introduced everyone at the roundtable. He shared that the 2023 Florida Legislative Session will be held from March 7 through May 5, 2023, with interim committee weeks beginning in January. The first session of the 118th U.S. Congress will convene on January 3, 2023. This workshop item recommends several policy and appropriations priorities for the 2023 state and federal legislative sessions, arranged as follows:

- 25 County projects for legislative appropriation requests and potential state and/or federal grant funding;
- 10 state-level legislative policy priorities, including support of the FAC 2023 Legislative Priorities, for the 2023 Florida Legislative Session; and
- 7 federal legislative policy priorities, including support of the NACo 2023 Legislative Priorities, for the first session of the 118th United States Congress.

Table 1: Proposed 2023 Legislative and Executive Agency Funding Requests

Request:	Amount:	Project Phase:
Line-Item Appropriation Requests:		
Backup Generators – Branch Libraries and Community Centers	\$500,000	Capital/Fixed Assets
Leon Works Expo and Junior Apprenticeship	\$50,000	Program Funding
Baum Road Drainage Project	\$350,000	Construction

Fords Arm/Timberlane Tributary Restoration	\$500,000	Construction
Leon South Regional Water System	\$500,000	Design/Construction
Projects for Executive Agency Grant Funding:		
Cap. Circle SW (Springhill to Crawfordville Rd.)	\$52 million	Construction
Woodville Highway (Capital Circle to Paul Russell Rd.)	\$29.7 million	Construction
NE Gateway (Welaunee Blvd./Shamrock St.)	\$85 million	Construction
Miccosukee Road Bridge Replacement	\$2.3 million	Construction
Orange Avenue Widening & Beautification	\$22 million	Design/Construction
Old Bainbridge/Capital Circle NW Intersection Improvements	\$725,000	Construction
Old Plank Road Drainage Project	\$1.2 million	Construction
Veterans Memorial Drive (CR 59) Bridge Replacement	\$700,000	Design/Construction
Magnolia Drive Trail (Phase 3 – Diamond to Apalachee Pkwy.)	\$7 million	ROW/Construction
Northwest Connector (Tharpe Street)	\$2 million	PD&E/Design
Orange/Meridian Placemaking Stormwater Ditch Improvements	\$1.15 million	Design/Land Acquisition
St. Marks Headwaters Greenway Trails	\$800,000	Construction
Orchard Pond Greenway Trail, Phase II	\$350,000	Design/Permitting
Capital Cascades Trail Segment 4	\$20 million	Design/Construction
Williams Landing Improvements	\$900,000	Design/Construction
Coe Landing Expansion	\$1 million	Design/Construction
Harbinwood Estates Septic-to-Sewer Project	\$32 million Design	Permit/Acq./Construction
Centerville Trace Septic-to-Sewer Project	\$10.6 million	Design/Permit/Acq./Construction
Springs Protection Projects*	Several	All Phases

Stormwater Preventative Maintenance Projects	Several	All Phases
--	---------	------------

**PROPOSED POLICY REQUESTS**  
**2023 STATE LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

Mr. Johnson briefly discussed each of the recommended legislative action. Following is a listing of the proposed Leon County 2023 state legislative policy priorities in which they are in support of:

Mr. Johnson shared they had submitted this policy to FAC, and it was considered by their Health, Safety and Justice Committee during their policy conference last month. He stated at that time the committee directed FAC staff to get feedback from the Florida Sheriff Association and other relative partners and bring it back for their consideration during legislative conference, which begins the end of November beginning of December. He shared he would keep the Board updated. He shared at the June 14, 2022 meeting, the Board directed staff to include policy and priorities in this workshop to support funding a request from the Florida Civil Rights Museum, Inc., a citizen’s group that was developed that is interest in making a statewide museum here in Leon County. He continued to give a summary of each item they supported:

- Protection of the State Workforce
- Pretrial Felony Offenders in County Detention Facilities
- Florida Civil Rights Museum
- Monument to Confederate Soldiers from Leon County at the Florida Capital Complex
- Establish Florida’s Emancipation Day as a State Holiday
- Medicaid Expansion
- Amtrak Passenger Rail Restoration
- Public Safety on College and University Campuses
- Public Records Exemption for Election Workers
- Florida Association of Counties (FAC) Issues

Dr. Jeff Sharkey, Capitol Alliance Group, spoke on the 2023 legislative session. He mentioned the election cycle and spoke to the new leadership coming for the Florida House and Senate. He shared they had met last week to discuss some issues. He stated they are anticipating a vibrant election. He commented on the new leadership coming to the House of Representatives, Speaker Paul Renner and Senate President, Kathleen Pasidomo, whom they met with last week to discuss issues. He stated that President Kathleen Pasidomo spoke on one of her trending issues, Affordable Housing. He also reiterated it was a huge issue throughout the state. He spoke about Hurricane Ian and the significant property damage issues and infrastructure from Southwest Florida. He stated Speaker Paul Renner’s focus is private business issues and infrastructure. He discussed issues important to Governor DeSantis, such as property insurance and the fact that insurers are leaving the state and how they could combat those issues. He is looking for strong solutions that are market based and affordable for homeowners. He noted other important issues such as insurance stabilization, hurricane recovery, death penalty, guns, taxes, right to life abortion issue, and the federal funds that have been received by state. He stated it was always a pleasure to lobby on behalf of Leon County.

Chairman Proctor is now present and presiding.

Chairman Proctor thanked the Dr. Sharkey for the overview and for the work they do on behalf of Leon County. He asked the Commissioners if there were any questions and discussed his concerns regarding gun issues and what specifically they are targeting and inquired about the exact legislative roadmap.

Commissioner Welch inquired about affordable housing. He asked what it means to achieve meaningful funding and what kind of meaningful legislation they would see. He asked what role the Florida Senate would play in achieving this initiative.

- Dr. Sharkey stated that President Pasidomo was very clear, that affordable housing was her number one priority. He stated that her team is putting together a kind of very comprehensive, “livable housing” legislation. It would include variety of tools for local governments to incentivize different types of projects, that includes additional funding and variety of tools for local government. He asked Commissioners that if they have ideas that would help, to please forward them to him.
- Commissioner Proctor reminded all that there are lobbyists from Washington, D.C. present and asked that they be mindful that they are afforded the opportunity to talk about the more distant probabilities regarding access and money.
- Commissioner Welch asked about the additional projects with executive agency grant funding and whether the list provided was a priority list or just a list based on the type of project.

Commissioner Minor inquired about executive agency grant funding and if they were competitive, discretionary grants. Mr. Johnson confirmed that the listed grants are competitive discretionary grants. He stated their intent is to apply for as many as possible. He commented on the Big Bend Continuum Care that had a legislative request for operational funding that would make up the reduction in a CDBG grants. He clarified that it was adopted by the legislature but vetoed by the Governor. He asked what the possibility was of it getting vetoed again for the upcoming session.

- Mr. Johnson stated it would not be impossible and provided background. He explained the process of the appropriations request and that it was created through a program called local project funding. He stated he didn’t think anything would preclude any organization from coming back next session to request a direct line-item appropriation.
- Dr. Sharkey commented that specific item did not go through the normal appropriation and committee review process and that it was a last effort, and it did not get funded because the Governor did not submit it and there is a possibility that if submitted it could move its way through again.

Commissioner Cummings shared that her question was related to the Florida Civil Rights Museum, and she felt it had been answered through the discussion.

Commissioner Dozier inquired about Hurricane Ian and rebuilding due to the magnitude of the hurricane. She discussed the smaller programs that the County would incur, she inquired about the SHIP program and the inclusionary housing ordinance, along with the City, she pointed out how important it was to look at that overlap.

- Dr. Sharkey stated there are some opportunities that will be there. He stated that the County would get SHIP allocation right on a prorated basis. In addition, there may be some additional funds for some innovative projects. She asked about

workforce training. Commissioner Dozier discussed new leadership with Mr. Keith Bowers, Office of Economic Vitality, as they continue to search for additional grant funding and continue to work more closely with the DEO and others. Dr. Sharkey stated that it was such a small amount of money; however, they will discuss apprenticeship opportunities.

Commissioner Maddox discussed the concerns with Lake Munson making it a legislative priority and Lake Hall School to help fund either or both projects. Dr. Sharkey commented on the Lake Munson issue with the water quality and stated that it was something they could explore.

That ended the local discussion with the state lobbyist.

### **PROPOSED POLICY REQUESTS 118TH UNITED STATES CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION**

Andy Johnson introduced Sarah Vilms and Victoria Cram.

Sarah Vilms and Victoria Cram, Squire Patton Boggs, gave brief overview and shared how they were pleased to be in Leon County after two plus years of COVID. Mrs. Vilms gave an overview of the fiscal year '23 appropriations process that is the federal budget She stated there are 12 bills that provide funding/ funding streams that includes everything Leon County cares about such as healthcare, agriculture, recreation, education, and social security. She shared they continue to advocate across those funding streams for affordable housing, water, and energy, etc. This year they advocated for funding for Veterans Memorial Bridge in the amount of \$1.6 million. She shared this was a bridge replacement project. She stated Congressman Lawson championed this bill. She shared all bills are expected to be finished by the end of December and hopefully they can report back what funding amounts are in those bills and what amounts would benefit Leon County and its citizens.

Chairman Proctor commented that since the pandemic there has been a slight increase in poverty. He then introduced Dr. Temple Robinson of the Bond Community Health Center to discuss and share statistics with the federal lobbyist.

Dr. Temple Robinson, Bond Community Health Center, commented on the 32304-zip code, which is only about 16 square miles. She discussed the health disparities and the death mortality within Leon County. She stated that the death rate and age of death and mortality drop, and the expected life span is approximately 65 years of age. She stated that 25-30% of the patients at Bond Community Health Center live in the 32304-zip code and they treat about 4,000 women of childbearing age. She shared that due to COVID, they have seen numbers, such as low birth weights, go up due to lack of access to care and lack of education for pregnant mothers, as well as early entry into prenatal care, which has gone down. She discussed mental health, sex education, healthy sex practices, and the need for women to make good decisions about selecting partners and keeping them, and how to deal with conflict. She shared the need for funding for comprehensive services. She shared her thoughts on what would help and how they could be creative by bringing women into the apprenticeship programs to grow them into the healthcare field. She concluded by discussing the maternal death rate in this area and thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak.

Chairman Proctor commented on how Bond was the testing authority for COVID. He acknowledged the continuance of support for the lobbying team. He asked Dr. Robinson to recall a trip regarding women's and children's health. Dr. Robinson confirmed that it was an important trip in the sense that it allowed them to see the different models that exist and discussed their importance as well as the importance of teamwork.

Commissioner Welch commented on the November 9<sup>th</sup> elections and how the new Congress would not seat until January and there is an expected flurry of activity to come.

- Mrs. Vilms replied that was correct. She shared that Congress has a number of items to move before they address additional issues before the end of this year. They have to pass the fiscal year '23 appropriations, which is funding all of the federal government and many of the state and local programs that Leon County from which could benefit. She shared information of the National Defense Reauthorization Act, which funds our National Defense as well as another bill regarding renewable energy and fossil fuels. She highlighted FY23 appropriation bills. Mrs. Cram shared that there will also be a plethora of items, including mental health legislation, that they are likely to pass before the end of the year.

Commissioner Cummings acknowledged both local and federal lobbyists, as well as Dr. Robinson. She shared her appreciation for the Bond Community Health Center. She commented on those living in poverty in the 32304-zip code. She stated her support of Bond and having the best health care available and asked if there was anything the Board could do proactively that is not being done.

- Dr. Robinson shared she likes what she sees and appreciated being able to shed light in front of the federal lobbyist. She stated they need to broadcast the statistics and the stories in Leon County and the need for insurance with those that are in need of insurance or between insurance, in the gray zone. She stated they need to plug that hole. She asked that they look at those numbers. Commissioner Cummings commented on the different statistics to address different deficiencies as well as the need to do more to help Bond. Dr. Robinson stressed the importance of ongoing and fresh data analysis.

Chairman Proctor asked that they add community health to the retreat agenda for discussion.

Commissioner Minor thanked Dr. Robinson for her work. He discussed the Amtrak Rail discussion and commented on the different steps. He commented on tax credits associated with solar panels and shared now was the time for Leon County to think about adding solar panels to existing buildings through the IRA. He discussed septic-to-sewer and federal funding options.

Commissioner Dozier thanked the Chairman for suggesting continuing this discussion at the Board Retreat in January. She acknowledged the new grants coordinator position and asked for confirmation that one had been budgeted. She asked if they would be looking at the full scope and do you need board direction or will the Board have the flexibility to look at all areas.

- County Administrator Long commented yes, they have budgeted the grants coordinator position. He shared they would have flexibility to look at new areas and be sure to come back to the Board if further direction is needed.

She asked if they align with the Board Goals on a sustainability, on neighborhood improvement, women's health, violence against women, human trafficking education on new organizations, and transitional housing assistance to name a few. She asked that they broaden the scope and look in these different funding categories. She highlighted that the County had qualified for our first economic development administration grant. She continued to discuss options for additional funding for Headstart and childcare and asked is there something the County can do to support these efforts to get additional funding.

- Mr. Johnson stated they can take additional looks. She asked that they get creative and collaborative in their approach.
- County Administrator Long commented they would work with them. She commented on an additional allocation for transportation.
- Commissioner Dozier shared her concerns with the Amazon bus service and how workers would get to that facility. She asked if there is federal or state funding they could go after. Mr. Long replied yes, and they will do it regardless of who the responsible entity is. He stated they would figure out collectively what could be brought to the table to address that issue. Commissioner Dozier encouraged her colleagues to take up this matter soon on the agenda.

Chairman Proctor discussed transportation. He commented on Secretary Buttigieg sharing that there are funds for transportation infrastructure. He asked what monies will be there for transportation. He shared the need for improvement on Highway 319 and specified that it is an emergency evacuation route, which makes it a priority.

Mr. Johnson commented on the letter the Board approved to send in support to CRTPA to prioritize the project and get construction accelerated. He also commented on the partnership with BluePrint and others on different projects.

Vice Chair Maddox thanked everyone for their attendance. He discussed how informative this workshop was and made a motion for options 1 and 2. He added that they add to the Retreat Agenda the health piece that Dr. Robinson spoke to as a topic of discussion and asked that they add Lake Munson, Lake Hall to our legislative priorities as well.

*Vice Chair Maddox moved, seconded by Commissioner Minor, the Board approved Options #1 and 2: Option # 1: Approve the 2023 state and federal legislative priorities.  
Option # 2: Provide any additional Board direction on the County's 2023 state and federal legislative priorities. And add to the Retreat Agenda the piece that Dr. Robinson spoke to as a topic of discussion and Lake Munson and Lake Hall to our legislative priorities.*

*The motion carried 6-0.*

Dr. Jeff Sharkey shared they represent Space X and that there is \$400 million rural broadband infrastructure, internet, and satellite opportunity. He stated the desire to partner with local communities. He noted it was a rare opportunity and he would keep Mr. Johnson informed for areas in Leon County that don't have high speed internet.

**Adjourn:**

There being no further business to come before the Board, the workshop was adjourned at 2:27 p.m.

**LEON COUNTY, FLORIDA**

ATTEST:



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nick Maddox", is written above a horizontal line.

BY: Nick Maddox, Chairman  
Board of County Commissioners

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gwen Marshall Knight", is written above a horizontal line.

BY: Gwen Marshall Knight, Clerk of Court  
& Comptroller, Leon County, Florida