

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
LEON COUNTY, FLORIDA
FY 2023/2024 Strategic Planning Retreat
January 22, 2024
FAMU GRAND BALLROOM**

The Leon County Board of County Commissioners met for its FY 2023-2024 Annual Board Retreat at the FAMU Grand Ballroom on January 22, 2024, at 9:00 a.m.

Present were Chair Carolyn Cummings presiding, Vice Chair Brian Welch, and Commissioners Christian Caban, David T. O’Keefe, Bill Proctor, Rick Minor, and Nick Maddox. Also present were County Administrator Vincent Long, County Attorney Chasity O’Steen, and Clerk to the Board Beryl H. Wood.

Agenda and Table of Contents

Section I: Welcome & Strategic Planning Retreat Overview 9:00 a.m.

Chair Cummings called the retreat to order. She expressed gratitude to Commissioner Proctor for welcoming history students from FAMU. She extended a welcome to FAMU President Larry Robinson. Chair Cummings noted holding the retreat at FAMU and discussed the County’s Bicentennial Celebration.

Dr. Larry Robinson, President of FAMU, welcomed everyone on the FAMU campus. He thanked Chair Cummings for her kind remarks and thanked the Board for choosing FAMU to host the retreat. Dr. Robinson provided highlights of FAMU and acknowledged Dr. Pamela Monroe, BOCC Director of Library Services, for her dedication to FAMU.

Chair Cummings outlined ground rules for the retreat, emphasizing the importance of respecting them and being mindful of time. She highlighted the retreat as an opportunity for the Board to reflect on the Strategic Plan.

Opening Remarks from Commissioners

- Vice Chair Welch expressed gratitude for everyone attending the Board Retreat and noted that FAMU was an ideal setting. He thanked the staff for their contributions and expressed anticipation for a robust discussion.
- Commissioner Caban expressed gratitude for the hospitality. He mentioned his preference for checklists to track accomplishments and stressed the importance of staying on task and involving the community.
- Commissioner Maddox acknowledged the commitment and leadership of staff, Chair Cummings, and County Administrator Long. He commended the Board members for their contributions and looked forward to the robust conversation.
- Commissioner O’Keefe expressed gratitude to FAMU for hosting the retreat. He thanked County Administrator Long and the staff for their commitment. He noted that this was his second retreat and looked forward to the discussion.

- Commissioner Minor thanked FAMU and President Robinson for hosting the retreat. He acknowledged staff and the Board for their commitment, recognizing them as the face of the public and highlighting the community's support.
- Commissioner Proctor expressed his love for FAMU, describing it as feeling like home. He shared that he invited his history classes to join the discussion on the strategic plans for Leon County at some point during the day.
- Chair Cummings acknowledged the County Administrator and his exceptional staff. She commended the County Commissioners for their contributions.

The Strategic Planning Retreat Overview was provided by Vincent S. Long, County Administrator.

Leon LEADS Strategic Planning Process

County Administrator Long welcomed everyone and explained the retreat's purpose. He mentioned the key components of Leon Leads: Direct, Plan, Align, Fund, Deliver, Evaluate, and Report Results. He then offered a brief overview of the agenda.

County Bicentennial Update

Kerri Post, Director of Tourism, welcomed Vel Johnson to discuss details of the Bicentennial Celebration planning.

Vel Johnson, the Bicentennial Coordinator, welcomed the retreat attendees and discussed the Bicentennial Celebration. She shared insights into the last year of planning and outlined future directions. She provided a brief presentation.

Mathieu Cavell, Director of Community Relations and Resilience, shared the County's leading efforts.

The presentation was a culmination of 13 months of planning for the 200th anniversary including the latest schedule of programming, events, and activities planned throughout 2024. To date, nearly 100 Bicentennial-themed events had already been announced with more anticipated in the coming months. In support of additional community programming, the Board approved the commencement of a grant application cycle to distribute \$69,100 in Tourist Development Tax funds for Bicentennial-themed events. In addition to these community events, several County Bicentennial-themed programs and initiatives were unveiled including the new "Welcome to Leon County" signs, 200th anniversary library cards, and the County's interactive history kiosk. The history kiosk showcases 200 years of representation and progress by providing a historical overview of the County, information on current and past County officials, and significant County achievements and projects by decade.

County Administrator Long thanked staff for their hard work on the Bicentennial Celebration and recommended approval of staff recommendations.

Commissioner Welch moved, seconded by Commissioner Minor, to approve Option #1 and #2.

Option #1: Accept the status report on the Tallahassee- Leon County Bicentennial Celebration on programs, community engagement, and promotional activities.

Option #2: Approve conducting an additional grant application cycle specifically for Bicentennial-themed community events, in the amount of \$69,100, to be evaluated and administered consistent with the County's Tourism Event Grant guidelines for Special Event programs and authorize the County Administrator to execute the grant agreements, and any amendments thereto, subject to legal review by the County Attorney.

A brief discussion occurred with the Board.

Commissioner Proctor commented on slavery and asked the Board to prepare a Resolution to acknowledge and apologize for the history of racism and slavery in Leon County, including any historical role the County may have perpetuated related to racial inequity or bias.

County Administrator Long shared that the Board will have the opportunity to ratify decisions made at this retreat tomorrow night at the BOCC meeting. He stated that as soon as tomorrow night, they could prepare a resolution acknowledging slavery in Leon County.

Vice Chair Welch withdrew his motion and allowed Commissioner Proctor to make it and amend it by adding the resolution for slavery recognizing the good and bad within Leon County.

Chair Cummings stated let's vote on the motion on the floor, approval of Option #1 and #2.
The motion carried on Options 1 and 2. The motion carried 7-0.

Commissioner Proctor motioned, seconded by Commissioner Minor, to waive the rule for an agenda item for discussion of an official apology on slavery at tomorrow's Board Meeting.

Chair Cummings thanked Commissioner Proctor for bringing this issue up. She acknowledged how far the County has come.

Commissioner Proctor moved, seconded by Commissioner O'Keefe, to waive the rule.
The motion carried 7-0.

County Administrator Long noted that he would have a resolution at the first meeting in February.

History Kiosk Unveiling – Mathieu Cavell

Mathieu Cavell presented the 2024 History Kiosk that would be placed at the Courthouse and Library.

Chair Cummings thanked staff for their hard work on the history kiosk.

Vice Chair Welch acknowledged staff for their work on this and described how he envisioned the kiosk. He stated that it was approved at last year's Board Retreat.

Commissioner Proctor acknowledged the history kiosk and suggested other areas for placement, such as the Capitol, airport, and schools.

County Administrator Long stated they would explore those options.

Commissioner Maddox asked if the information from the 2024 History Kiosk would be available on the website. County Administrator Long stated that it would.

**The Commission recessed at 11:05 a.m. for a morning break and returned at 11:20 a.m. for the meeting to resume.*

Section III: Strategic Plan Update for FY 2024

County Administrator Long shared the vision and mission for Leon County. Strategic Priorities are:

- Economy
- Environment
- Quality of Life
- Governance

He commented on the total 67 Initiatives, 53 of which are complete and 14 in progress, and shared the Bold Goals and Targets. He also shared 5-Year Targets.

- A. Status Report on Strategic Plan Progress
- B. Amendment of Existing or Addition of New Strategic Initiatives

County Administrator Long provided the FY 2024 Board Retreat – Amended and New Initiatives.

Additional Initiatives to be added by Commissioners:

- Vice Chair Welch advocated for the addition of the 10th Year of the Honor Flight, emphasizing the significant contributions made by Leon County Veterans. He proposed elevating support by organizing a grand reception upon their return and urged exploring ways to enhance overall assistance for the Honor Flight initiative.
- *Vice Chair Welch moved, seconded by Commissioner Minor, to explore ways to honor the 10th Year of the Honor Flight with a reception. The motion 7-0 carried.*
- Commissioner Proctor highlighted the need to explore strategies for, *reduction in employee healthcare contributions from 13% to 10%, and millage reduction.*
- *Commissioner Caban seconded the motion and noted that this collaborative effort reflects their commitment to finding practical solutions.*
- County Administrator Long suggested that if direction is given, topics like millage, debt, and healthcare could be incorporated into the agenda items for the first budget workshop. *In response, Commissioner Proctor withdrew the proposal as a strategic initiative.* This approach aligned with the aim of addressing key financial considerations during budgetary discussions.

- Commissioner Maddox expressed his observations on the decreasing millage rate and emphasized the importance of debt reduction. He voiced support for the proposal to allocate staff resources for healthcare with a ratio of 13-10. Additionally, he suggested a cautious approach, preferring to wait and assess the impact of the FRS bill before making any definitive decisions.
- Agenda Items & Other Administrative Items
 - Consider a millage reduction to reduce the cost of living due to economic conditions.
 - Explore a 90-10 split in the employer contribution County's healthcare plan.
- Commissioner Proctor expressed gratitude to the students for their participation, and Chair Cummings extended thanks to each student on behalf of the County. Their acknowledgment underscores the value placed on the student's presence in the meeting.
- Commissioner Proctor deliberated on the prospect of acquiring federal lands as a strategic initiative to address housing issues and enhance the overall quality of life within the community and put forth a motion.
- Commissioner Maddox seconded the proposal for discussion, expressing his belief that exploring available federal lands is a commendable idea.
- County Administrator Long recommended a strategic initiative focused on exploring the available federal lands.
- Commissioner Caban sought clarification from the Board, inquiring if there was any opposition or lack of support for the motion under consideration.
- Commissioner Minor expressed his inability to support the motion, citing concerns about asking the Federal Government for Conservation Lands specifically for affordable housing.
- Chair Cummings called for a vote on the motion.
- *Vice Chair Welch - yes; Commissioner Proctor - yes; Commissioner Minor - no; Commissioner O'Keefe - no; Commissioner Caban - no; Commissioner Maddox - yes; Chair Cummings - yes. The motion failed because it did not receive a unanimous vote.*
- *Commissioner Caban moved, seconded by Commissioner Minor, to collaborate with law enforcement agencies to identify and implement solutions to immediately combat crime and nuisance activity in the Pensacola Street corridor and Highway 20. (Quality of Life)*
- Update existing Quality of Life Strategic Initiative #2023-17 as follows:
- Work with the City of Tallahassee, Big Bend Continuum of Care, and street outreach teams to develop corridor plans for North Monroe, Downtown, and Pensacola Street/Highway 20 to reach unsheltered homeless individuals and engage residents and businesses to address community aesthetics and neighborhood safety along the corridors.
- Commissioner Maddox provided suggestions to address homelessness and improve citizens' overall quality of life.
- *The motion carried 7-0.*
- *Commissioner Caban moved, seconded by Commissioner Proctor, to enhance Citizen Safety and Accessibility by reviewing and amending County policy regarding the use of the County's Private Road Repair and Maintenance Programs (Quality of Life). The motion carried 7-0.*
- Commissioner Proctor introduced Elijah Hooks, FSA Executive Director, and Chief of Staff for Students at FAMU, from Chipley, Florida. He shared that he was a fourth-year political science major.

- Elijah Hooks expressed gratitude to the Board, highlighting the significance of youth involvement and thanking them for the opportunity to address and engage with the Board at their annual retreat.
- Commissioner Minor commented on added signage to increase awareness and education on Human Trafficking by posting signage at County campgrounds.
- *Commissioner Minor moved, seconded by Commissioner O’Keefe, to increase awareness and education on Human Trafficking by posting signage at County campgrounds. The motion carried 7-0.*
- Commissioner Minor emphasized the significance of prioritizing the strengthening of neighborhoods in the coming year by indicating a commitment to community development and improvement, highlighting the importance of local neighborhoods in the community’s overall well-being. Expand the County’s existing Build Your Bucket training to include year-round neighborhood-level emergency preparedness workshops to increase awareness and resilience.
- *Commissioner Minor moved, seconded by Commissioner Welch, to expand the County’s existing Build Your Bucket training to include year-round neighborhood-level emergency preparedness workshops to increase awareness and resilience. The motion carried 7-0.*
- Commissioner Minor commented on electric vehicles and proposed expanding the County’s fleet in that direction. He also mentioned the upcoming World Athletic event in 2026 and suggested reviewing the Green Event List Policy to ensure sustainability for the year 2024.
- Commissioner Minor expressed his intention to formally propose these ideas at the upcoming meeting.
- Commissioner O’Keefe proposed a strategic initiative event on updating the Comprehensive Plan.
- *Commissioner O’Keefe moved, seconded by Commissioner Minor, to add a strategic initiative event on updating the Comprehensive Plan. The motion carried 7-0.*
- *Commissioner O’Keefe moved, seconded by Commissioner Caban, to expand the Biochar Pilot Program at the Leon County Solid Waste Management Facility into a full-scale, sustainable, and carbon-reducing processing facility for the community’s yard waste (environment). The motion carried 7-0.*
- *Commissioner Maddox moved, seconded by O’Keefe, to discuss eligible federal lands.*
- Vice Chair Welch commented on eligible federal lands.
- *Evaluate future opportunities to acquire eligible federal lands to provide affordable housing and public services. (Governance)*
- County Administrator Long shared when properties are added. He commented on the national registry. If it is available, he will bring it forward.
- Commissioner Caban proposed exploring alternative options.
- Commissioner Minor suggested considering all available lands for affordable housing by reflecting a comprehensive approach, indicating a commitment to exploring various possibilities to address housing needs within the community.
- Commissioner Maddox amended his language to evaluate other lands to preserve.

- *Amended—Evaluate future opportunities to acquire eligible federal lands for the provision of affordable housing and public services, excluding those lands that are conserved by the federal government. (Governance) The motion carried 7-0.*
- Commissioner Maddox commented on support for the Sheriff in offering competitive compensation to ensure the recruitment and retention of sworn officers. (Governance).
- *Commissioner Maddox moved, seconded by Commissioner O’Keefe, to support the Sheriff in offering competitive compensation to ensure the recruitment and retention of sworn officers. (Governance). The motion carried 7-0.*
- *Commissioner Maddox moved, seconded by Commissioner Proctor, to implement the statewide planning, coordination, and fundraising efforts to successfully host the 2026 World Cross Country Championships at Apalachee Regional Park. (Economy). The motion carried 7-0.*
- Chair Cummings proposed that the County implement a program to assist with the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) for their properties.
- *Chair Cummings moved, seconded by Commissioner Proctor, to enhance the County’s State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP) program to provide legal assistance and consultation to residents with their property issues and estate planning needs that will preserve affordable housing for low-income families. (Quality of Life) The motion carried 7-0.*

Closing Comments & Adjournment

Commissioner Minor expressed gratitude, thanking everyone for a successful retreat.

Chair Cummings expressed gratitude for the congeniality during the meeting, acknowledging and appreciating the collective efforts. She extended thanks for the work accomplished and expressed gratitude to President Larry Robinson for the warm welcome to FAMU (the Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University).

County Administrator Long expressed his appreciation to the Board for its continued leadership and guidance. He noted they are excited to execute all that resulted in today’s meeting.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 1:11 p.m.

ATTEST:



Carolyn D. Cummings

BY: _____
Carolyn D. Cummings, Chair
Board of County Commissioners

Gwendolyn Marshall Knight

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