



JACKSON COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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PRESS RELEASE

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October 13, 2026

Jackson County BOCC Regular Meeting Highlights

Jackson County, FL. – On October 13, 2026, at 9:00 AM, the Jackson County Board of County Commissioners held a Regular Meeting. This is a recap of some of the reports and requests included in that meeting.

PRESENTATION: Jackson County Celebrates State Funding with Ceremonial Check Presentation



The Board welcomed State Representative Shane Abbott and Adam Callaway of Florida Commerce during its October 13 meeting for a ceremonial check presentation celebrating a \$3.8 million grant award through the Small Cities Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. Administered by Florida Commerce with funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the grant will support critical

improvements to Jackson County's potable water infrastructure, including the construction of a new water production well near Interstate 10 and Highway 71, anticipated to produce approximately 1,000 gallons of water per minute, and a new 180,000-gallon water storage tank near Highway 90 and Highway 71.

These investments will help strengthen the County's water system, increase capacity to meet future demands, and support continued economic development by providing essential infrastructure for businesses, industries, and residents. The Board expressed its appreciation to Representative Abbott, Florida Commerce, county staff, and the many state and local partners whose collaboration helped secure this significant investment in Jackson County's future.

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RECOGNITION: Employee of the Quarter



The Board recognized **Chastity Sheffield, Interim Director of the Jackson County Tourist Development Council (TDC)**, as **Employee of the Quarter for the Third Quarter of 2026**. During the presentation, TDC Executive Director Kelsi Jackson highlighted Sheffield's leadership, dedication, innovation, and commitment to exceptional customer service. Sheffield began her career with the TDC as the Visitor Center Coordinator, later advancing to Program Manager before stepping into her current role as Interim Director. Throughout her tenure, she has played an instrumental role in the TDC's rentals program, launching the Tourism

Ambassador Program, and strengthening tourism advocacy and visitor services throughout Jackson County. Her recognition celebrates her continued professional growth, contributions to local tourism, and dedication to serving Jackson County residents and visitors.



RECOGNITION: Employee Years of Service

The Jackson County Board of County Commissioners has recognized the dedicated service of its employees by awarding "Years of Service" awards to those who have shown commitment and loyalty to the county through their tenure. This acknowledgement of their hard work and dedication serves as a testament to their contributions towards the growth and success of Jackson County.



At this meeting, the Board, along with Department Directors, presented awards to the following employees:

- **Justin Bragg**
Justin Bragg currently serves as a Corrections Officer (work squad officer/transport) with Jackson County Corrections. He is recognized for 15 years of continuous service.
- **Kesha Dawson**
Kesha Dawson currently serves as a Food Service Worker with Jackson County Corrections. She is recognized for 15 years of continuous service.
- **Carrie Williams**
Carrie Williams currently serves as Business Manager for Road and Bridge. She is recognized for 25 years of continuous service.
- **Vondell Faison**
Vondell Faison currently serves as a Grader Operator with Road and Bridge. He is recognized for 5 years of continuous service.
- **Lynn Price**
Lynn Price currently serves as Officer Manager with Jackson County Fire Rescue. She is recognized for 15 years of continuous service.
- **Chase Maddox**
Chase Maddox currently serves as a Paramedic/Firefighter with Jackson County Fire Rescue. He is recognized for 5 years of continuous service.
- **Lee Treadwell**
Lee Treadwell currently serves as IT User Support Analyst with Jackson County Administration/IT. He is recognized for 5 years of continuous service.
- **Chris Stewart**
Chris Stewart currently serves as Facilities Manager/Maintenance Tech at the Agriculture Center with Jackson County Maintenance. He is recognized for 10 years of continuous service.



PRESENTATION: Jackson County EDC Update

Darwin Gilmore, President and CEO of the Jackson County Economic Development Committee (JCEDC), provided the Board with an update on local economic development activities, recent accomplishments, and opportunities for continued growth. Gilmore highlighted progress on several business recruitment and expansion projects, including efforts to attract new industries, support existing businesses, and prepare industrial sites for future development. He also discussed the importance of workforce development, infrastructure improvements, and partnerships with local and state organizations to strengthen Jackson County's competitiveness. Mr. Gilmore provided the commissioners with a handout that emphasized the County's growing pipeline of economic development opportunities, along with the need for continued investment in shovel-ready industrial sites, workforce training, and infrastructure to attract new businesses, create quality jobs, and support long-term economic growth.



REQUEST: County Procurement Ordinance

The Board conducted the first reading and public hearing for a proposed ordinance to modernize Jackson County's procurement regulations, replacing the County's purchasing ordinance originally adopted in 1989. The proposed update establishes a more comprehensive framework for County purchasing, including competitive bidding and proposals, emergency purchases, cooperative purchasing, ethics standards, and federal procurement requirements. The changes also allow purchasing thresholds to be established through Board-approved policy, providing greater flexibility while maintaining accountability and transparency in the use of public funds. The Board approved scheduling a second public hearing for October 27, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.



REQUEST: Public Hearings Scheduled for Proposed Restaurant and Residential Developments

The Board approved scheduling two public hearings for October 27, 2026, at 6:00 p.m., to consider proposed commercial and residential developments in Jackson County. The first proposal involves a new **Jack's Family Restaurant** along Highway 90, west of Panhandle Road, featuring a 3,055-square-foot restaurant with associated parking, sidewalks, and site improvements. The second proposal, submitted by **Christian's Way LLC**, includes **four duplex** buildings totaling eight residential units at the northeast corner of Old US Road and Christiana Way, along with associated parking and a requested variance related to landscape buffering requirements. Both projects received recommendations for approval from the Jackson County Planning Commission and represent potential opportunities for continued commercial investment and expanded housing options within the community.



REQUEST: Alcoholic Beverage License for Blackbirds Hideaway Resorts

The Board approved the local portion of a 2COP Alcoholic Beverage License application for Blackbirds Hideaway Resorts Corp., operating as Blackbirds Hideaway Resorts and Graceville Campground at 4991 Highway 77 in unincorporated Jackson County. The proposed license would allow the business to sell beer and wine for consumption on or off the premises. The Board's action represents local approval only, with final review and licensing approval subject to the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR).



REQUEST: Approval of Evaluation Committees for Blue Springs Concessionaire, Public works Improvements, and Water Infrastructure Projects

The Board approved evaluation criteria and committees for three projects supporting infrastructure improvements and recreational services in Jackson County.

- For the **CDBG Water Well and Water Storage Project**, the Board appointed District 5 Commissioner Jamey Westbrook to serve alongside Community Development Director Kim Cole Sweazy, Road & Bridge Assistant Director Tim Perry, and Public Works Project Manager Billy Bailey. The committee will evaluate qualifications for grant administration and engineering services associated with the project.
- For the **Blue Springs Recreational Area Concessionaire**, District 3 Commissioner Paul Donofro was selected to serve alongside Administrative Services Director Lynsey Darragh, Interim TDC Director Chastity Sheffield, and Public Works Project Manager Billy Bailey. The committee will evaluate proposals for concessionaire services, considering vendor experience, operational approaches, staffing, and financial proposals.
- Commissioner Donofro was also selected to serve on the evaluation committee for **architectural services related to wind-retrofit improvements and a generator at the Jackson County Public Works facility**, alongside Grants/Contracts Manager Lucas Mayo, Facilities Maintenance Director Abraham Johnson, and Administrative Services Director Lynsey Darragh.
- Additionally, the Board approved an updated evaluation committee for the **Great Oaks Concessionaire** solicitation, consisting of Interim TDC Director Chastity Sheffield, District 3 Commissioner Paul Donofro, and Administrative Services Director Lynsey Darragh.

These approvals establish the evaluation processes needed to review qualified proposals and advance projects focused on strengthening County infrastructure, improving emergency preparedness, and supporting recreational amenities for residents and visitors.



REQUEST: Approval of Bid Awards for Blue Springs Sewer Extension and Endeavor Chapel Demolition

The Board approved two bid awards supporting infrastructure improvements and redevelopment efforts in Jackson County. The first award went to Extreme Land Restoration, LLC, for \$4,281,765 for the Blue Springs Road Sewer Extension Phase 3A project. The County received nine bids, with Extreme Land Restoration submitting the lowest qualified bid, as verified and recommended by the County's engineering firm, Alday-Howell Engineering. The project includes the installation of gravity and pressure sewer lines, a new lift station, and approximately 21 residential sewer connections, including the abandonment of existing septic tanks. The improvements will help expand wastewater infrastructure and provide additional sewer service to the Blue Springs Road area.

The Board also approved awarding the Endeavor Chapel Demolition project to Preslie's Construction & Land Development. The item had previously been tabled to allow staff to verify the contractor's bonding and insurance, which have since been confirmed as satisfactory. The award allows the County to move forward with the demolition project as part of ongoing work at the Endeavor property.



REQUEST: Approval to Schedule Special Meeting to Review FY 2026–2027 Capital Projects

The Board approved scheduling a special meeting for Tuesday, October 27, 2026, at 5:30 p.m., to review and determine capital project priorities for the 2026–2027 fiscal year. County departments submitted requests for equipment, facility improvements, infrastructure upgrades, and other operational needs, with department directors identifying their highest priorities for consideration. Proposed projects include Road & Bridge equipment replacements, Fire Rescue equipment and staffing needs, technology upgrades, facility repairs, and improvements to recreational areas. The special meeting will provide Commissioners with an opportunity to evaluate these requests, consider available funding, and determine which projects to prioritize for the fiscal year.



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LEGEND:

