

# **Brevard County Board of County Commissioners**

*2725 Judge Fran Jamieson Way  
Viera, FL 32940*



## **Minutes**

**Tuesday, July 9, 2024**

**5:00 PM**

**Regular**

**Commission Chambers**

**A. CALL TO ORDER: 5:00 p.m.**

**Present:** Commissioner District 1 Rita Pritchett, Commissioner District 2 Tom Goodson, Commissioner District 3 John Tobia, Commissioner District 4 Rob Feltner, and Commissioner District 5 Jason Steele

**C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Commissioner Feltner led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**D. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL**

The Board approved the February 29, 2024, Special Budget Workshop, April 23, 2024, Regular Meeting, May 2, 2024, Zoning Meeting, and May 7, 2024, Regular Meeting Minutes.

**Result:** Approved

**Mover:** Tom Goodson

**Second:** John Tobia

**Ayes:** Pritchett, Goodson, Tobia, Feltner, and Steele

**E.1. Resolution, Re: Recognizing the South Brevard Debutante Assembly Committee, Inc. on its 55th Anniversary**

Chair Steele read aloud, and the Board adopted Resolution No. 24-054, recognizing the South Brevard Debutante Assembly Committee, Inc. as they celebrate 55 years of tradition, friendship, and service.

**Result:** Adopted

**Mover:** Rob Feltner

**Second:** Rita Pritchett

**Ayes:** Pritchett, Goodson, Tobia, Feltner, and Steele

Chair Steele asked if there is a representative to accept this Resolution; he stated he thinks her name is Laura; he noted he did not know this before that Dorothy Mitterling was one of the founders of this; he does not think Dorothy is here because she has passed, because if she answers, he is going to be in big trouble; he suggested just moving on with the presentation, and to go from there; and he asked if staff has the plaque. He explained this is going to be fun, because normally what the Board tries to do is take a picture of them all together.

A representative from the South Brevard Debutante Assembly Committee, Inc. stated she really likes Chair Steele; and she expressed her appreciation to Chair Steele.

**E.2. Resolution, Re: Recognizing the Space Coast Hurricanes as the National Champions for Theatre on Ice**

Commissioner Goodson asked if there is a Fifi or a Phoebe in the audience to accept the resolution; and he explained after Commissioner Feltner reads the resolution, she will have the opportunity to speak.

Commissioner Feltner read aloud, and the Board adopted Resolution No. 24-055, recognizing Coach Katie Nyman and all of the members of the Space Coast Hurricanes Theatre on Ice Team for their dedication and achievements.

Commissioner Goodson pointed out that is the longest Resolution the Board has ever had he thinks, and the biggest crowd.

Commissioner Feltner stated he thinks Commissioner Goodson laughed earlier at the idea of him reading that.

A representative stated on behalf of the Space Coast Hurricanes, they are deeply honored to accept this Resolution from the Board, recognizing their team as the 2023 National Champions; this award is a testament to the dedication, hard work, and relentless spirit of their red and black teams; since becoming National Champions in 2023, their black team have gone on to win the silver medal at the Nations Cup this past April; and just two weeks ago, both the red and black teams were named the 2024 Theatre on Ice National Champions for their respective divisions. She went on to say these achievements highlight the continued excellence and determination of their athletics; she wants to express their heartfelt gratitude to their coaches who have guided them with unwavering support and expertise; to their parents and families, their encouragement and sacrifices have been invaluable; to their sponsors in the community, thanks for believing in them and backing them every step of the way; this achievement would not have been possible without the collective support of everyone involved; and they are proud to represent the Space Coast, and will continue to strive for excellence on and off of the ice. She expressed her appreciation to the Board for the recognition.

**Result:** Adopted

**Mover:** Tom Goodson

**Secunder:** Rob Feltner

**Ayes:** Pritchett, Goodson, Tobia, Feltner, and Steele

Coach Amy Katie Nyman stated they have a gift for the Board; every year they do team pins to say what their story is; and they have a set for the Commissioners, so she will ask some children to hand them to the Board Members.

**F.29. Legislative Intent and Permission to Advertise, Re: Ordinance Further Exempting Landscape Maintenance Activities on Golf Courses from County Noise Regulations**

Commissioner Goodson commented his understanding is the proposed change would exempt golf course maintenance activities from County noise regulations at all times; and he asked if that is true.

Morris Richardson, County Attorney, replied yes, as long as they are operating equipment in good condition with the proper muffling apparatus and things like that on it while they are doing things like taking care of the greens, fairways, and things of that nature; normally, all landscape maintenance, for example, him mowing his yard, that is exempt between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m.; but golf courses, because of their hours of operation, they do maintenance really early; and he would let the District 4 Commissioner speak more of why this is being done, as this is his Item.

Commissioner Feltner mentioned he thinks first of all, many municipal governments have this exemption for golf cart courses, so he thinks that is something that was sort of left out, but in Suntree, in particular, they cut the grass at 7:00 a.m. because people are out there playing by 7:30 a.m.; and that is what this seeks to cure for them.

Commissioner Goodson advised right now golf courses start cutting grass 5:30 a.m. to 6:00 a.m. in order to open at 7:00 a.m.; the way he checked it out, quite a few golf courses open at 7:00 a.m., so they try to get ahead of the players; he asked if that is correct; he stated if it is not going to have any restrictions, there could end up being some confusion or concerns; he knows

surely they are not going to get out there at 2:00 a.m.; but he does not know if the Board needs to do this; and he asked where the concern is to change this.

Commissioner Feltner responded it is mostly Suntree/Viera; he is not a golfer, so he is not out there at that time; he would submit to Commissioner Goodson that the golf courses are surrounded by their players that are also their neighbors; this arrangement has existed for a long time, the County enacted the Ordinance, and that created the conflict; for the last 40 years they have existed without this restriction in there; and in some other places, like Viera East, because it is a Community Development District (CDD), which the County considers sort of a municipal government, so they were exempted by virtue of that.

Commissioner Goodson exclaimed he does not see a need to enact another ordinance; and that is the only noise ordinance he has not had yet in two years, so if this is enacted and he gets it, he is going to come see Commissioner Feltner.

Commissioner Tobia asked if Commissioner Goodson will be voting for or against this.

The Board approved the Statement of Legislative Intent set forth on the Agenda Report; directed the County Attorney to prepare an ordinance amending Chapter 46, Article IV, Section 46-129 of the Brevard County Code of Ordinances accordingly and a business impact estimate, if required; and authorized advertisement of the Board's intent to consider such ordinance.

**Result:** Approved

**Mover:** Rob Feltner

**Second:** Rita Pritchett

**Ayes:** Pritchett, Feltner, and Steele

**Nay:** Goodson and Tobia

#### **F.26. Acknowledge Receipt, Re: Bill Folder**

Kristin Lortie stated as the Board knows, she periodically looks at the Bill Folder; she has a particular charge she is bothered by; she brought it up when she was originally bothered by it; it is still on this Bill Folder; and she remains troubled by it. She continued by saying that is the \$32.04 that Commissioner Tobia has put on his Purchasing Card (P-Card) for the TruthFinder service; her understanding, thanks to the Clerk of Courts, is that Commissioner Tobia has submitted this for his last TruthFinder subscription for May 2024; she is disputing the entire charge of why he has been submitting this to the County on his P-Card; she has a couple of things where she would like to go through a brief timeline of the events of the public's disputing of this request; she would like to make sure that this was to be able to review the assignments and assignees for the public boards; but the TruthFinder website says that in order to do it, one must certify below by selecting he or she agrees to their privacy in terms of use, and will not use their site or the information they provide to make decisions about, or in connection with, hiring, promoting, reassigning, or continuing to employ any person, current or potential volunteers, and household employees, such as childcare workers, contractors, or home health aides, or for any purpose related to any eligibility determination about a person. She pointed out Commissioner Pritchett said this had been used to determine and weed-out candidates, so she does not understand the expense in the first place; there is an allegation in the deposition that says what Commissioner Tobia has used it for; but once again, that is an allegation; on March 12 she revealed and denounced the expense during Public Comment; April 21, there was a Letter to the Editor called 'Why Does Tobia need TruthFinder by Eileen Davis; April 24, the County Attorney's Office response to a public records request for the names that were searched and they responded, "There is no responsive record to your below request;" May 21, Commissioner Tobia advised of cancelling his subscription due to a new Policy; and Commissioner Pritchett thanked him for using it to background check and to avoid bad

appointees. She stated on July 9, that is today, Commissioner Tobia continues billing for his May 13 expense; she noted what it can be used for is to locate old friends or estranged family members, to research potential romantic partners from dating apps, learn more about ones neighbors, and to catch a cheating spouse; she is not sure why public funds are being used when the service says it is for those items that it can be used for; she would like the Commissioners who have not called upon Commissioner Tobia apparently, and are approving this Agenda Item, because otherwise it would not be in the Bill Folder, to please call on Commissioner Tobia to say please return the \$544.68 charged to his P-Card; and if he or she cannot do that, to please stop using P-Cards, because it is not working and the Commissioners are not accountable to the people.

Chair Steele stated it is a new time now; he is going to tell the audience that he appreciates them being here today; but to please not go into applause on all these things, because it will make this meeting very, very long; the rules and regulations say that he or she should not be disruptive like that, so he asked them to please not applaud on those areas; and since Ms. Lortie has mentioned this, the rules also say that Commissioner Tobia has a chance to respond if he would like to, Commissioner Pritchett, or anyone else she mentioned.

Commissioner Tobia explained he thinks he has responded to this on multiple occasions; as said previously by Ms. Lortie, it was cancelled on May 15; and he expressed his appreciation to the Clerk of Courts for taking over the responsibility to make sure that the people that are advocating for the County have nice backgrounds and do not have felonies or trespassing orders against them.

**F.1. Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Agricultural Environmental Services, Re: FY 2024-2025 Detailed Work Plan Budget - Arthropod Control**

The Board authorized the Chair to execute the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Agricultural Environmental Services, FY 2024-2025 Detailed Work Plan Budget for Arthropod Control to ensure the Brevard Mosquito Control maintains its status as a State–Approved Mosquito Control Program.

**Result:** Approved

**Mover:** Rita Pritchett

**Second:** Rob Feltner

**Ayes:** Pritchett, Goodson, Tobia, Feltner, and Steele

**F.2. Waiver of Subdivision Perimeter Buffer, Re: Meadow Pointe (22SD00010) (24WV00016) Developer: DRMP, Inc.**

The Board granted a waiver of Section 62-2883(d) of the subdivision requirements to allow improvements to be made to the stormwater system that will encroach into the required fifteen-foot perimeter buffer for Meadow Pointe – Developer: DRMP, Inc.

**Result:** Approved

**Mover:** Rita Pritchett

**Second:** Rob Feltner

**Ayes:** Pritchett, Goodson, Tobia, Feltner, and Steele

**F.3. Resolution and Release Performance Bond, Re: Laurasia Subdivision, Phase 2 - Developer: The Viera Company**

The Board executed and adopted Resolution No. 24-056, releasing the Contract and Surety Performance Bond dated February 20, 2024, for Laurasia Subdivision, Phase 2 – Developer: The Viera Company.

**Result:** Adopted

**Mover:** Rita Pritchett

**Second:** Rob Feltner

**Ayes:** Pritchett, Goodson, Tobia, Feltner, and Steele

**F.4. Dedication of Ingress/Egress Easement and Sanitary Sewer Easement from Merritt Country Mobile Home Park, LLC Related, Re: Sewer Connection Into the Existing County Sewer Line**

The Board approved and accepted the Ingress/Egress Easement and Sanitary Sewer Easement from Merritt Island Country Mobile Home Park LLC related to sewer connection into the existing County sewer line.

**Result:** Approved

**Mover:** Rita Pritchett

**Second:** Rob Feltner

**Ayes:** Pritchett, Goodson, Tobia, Feltner, and Steele

**F.5. Resolution, Water Line & Ingress/Egress Easement and Bill of Sale to the City of Cocoa, Re: Brevard County Sheriff's Fleet Building**

The Board executed and adopted Resolution No. 24-057; executed and approved Water Line and Ingress/Egress Easement Agreement; and executed and approved the Bill of Sale with City of Cocoa for the Brevard County Sheriff's Fleet Building.

**Result:** Adopted

**Mover:** Rita Pritchett

**Second:** Rob Feltner

**Ayes:** Pritchett, Goodson, Tobia, Feltner, and Steele

**F.6. Approval, Re: Donation of 1) Temporary Construction Easement from Abre Chase and Kimberley Chase, and 2) Drainage Easements from Suntree Master Homeowners Association, Inc. for the Oak Park Drainage Improvements Project**

The Board approved and accepted the Temporary Construction Easement from Abre Chase and Kimberley Chase and Drainage Easements from Suntree Master Homeowners Association, Inc. for the Oak Park Drainage Improvements Project.

**Result:** Approved

**Mover:** Rita Pritchett

**Second:** Rob Feltner

**Ayes:** Pritchett, Goodson, Tobia, Feltner, and Steele

**F.7. Approval, Re: Dedication of Reuse Water Main Easement from School Property Development Brevard, LLC for the Pinecrest Academy Space Coast Project**

The Board approved and accepted the Reuse Water Main Easement from School Property Development Brevard, LLC for the Pinecrest Academy Space Coast Project.

**Result:** Approved  
**Mover:** Rita Pritchett  
**Second:** Rob Feltner  
**Ayes:** Pritchett, Goodson, Tobia, Feltner, and Steele

**F.8. Acceptance and Approval, Re: 1) Previously recorded Warranty Deed from Green Leaf Estates, LLC, and 2) Quit Claim Deed from Greenleaf Estates Homeowners Association, Inc. Related to Tract R-1, Plat of Green Leaf**

The Board accepted and approved previously recorded Warranty Deed from Green Leaf Estates, LLC, and Quit Claim Deed from Green Leaf Estates Homeowners Association, Inc. related to Tract R-1, Plat of Green Leaf.

**Result:** Approved  
**Mover:** Rita Pritchett  
**Second:** Rob Feltner  
**Ayes:** Pritchett, Goodson, Tobia, Feltner, and Steele

**F.9. Resolution and Release Performance Bond, Re: Fox Glen Subdivision – Developer: D.R. Horton, Inc.**

The Board, in accordance with Section 62-2844(b), authorized the Chair to sign and adopted Resolution No. 24-058, releasing the Contract and Surety Bond dated January 10, 2023, for Fox Glen Subdivision – Developer: D.R. Horton, Inc.

**Result:** Adopted  
**Mover:** Rita Pritchett  
**Second:** Rob Feltner  
**Ayes:** Pritchett, Goodson, Tobia, Feltner, and Steele

**F.10. Approval, Re: Crosswinds Youth Services' Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC) Annual Contract (\$208,815)**

The Board approved the draft Annual Contract for the JAC through Crosswinds Youth Services, Inc.; authorized the County Manager to endorse the Contract, upon approval of the County Attorney and Risk Management; authorized the County Manager to sign amendments, modifications, and renewals; and authorized the County Manager to approve any related Budget Change Requests (BCR).

**Result:** Approved  
**Mover:** Rita Pritchett  
**Second:** Rob Feltner  
**Ayes:** Pritchett, Goodson, Tobia, Feltner, and Steele

**F.11. Approval, Re: Grant Application with the Florida Division of Emergency Management's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program for Wildfire Mitigation at Erna Nixon Park, 1200 Evans Road, West Melbourne, FL**

The Board approved and authorized the Chair to sign the Grant Application with Florida Division of Emergency Management's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program for wildfire mitigation at Erna Nixon Park; authorized the County Manager to sign the Grant Agreement, any amendments, or renewals, upon County Attorney and Risk Management approval; and authorized the County Manager to execute any necessary Budget Change Requests (BCR).

**Result:** Approved  
**Mover:** Tom Goodson  
**Second:** Jason Steele  
**Ayes:** Pritchett, Goodson, Tobia, Feltner, and Steele

**F.12. Approval, Re: Brevard County Board of County Commissioners Written Consent to Easement in Connection with Florida Power & Light for the Use of State-Owned Uplands for a Light Pole Guy Wire Extending Into the Florida East Central Regional Rail Trail**

The Board approved and authorized the chair to execute the Brevard County Board of County Commissioners Written Consent to Easement in Connection with Florida Power & Light for the use of State-owned uplands for a light pole guy wire extending into the Florida East Central Regional Rail Trail.

**Result:** Approved  
**Mover:** Rita Pritchett  
**Second:** Rob Feltner  
**Ayes:** Pritchett, Goodson, Tobia, Feltner, and Steele

**F.13. Approval, Re: Fire Protection System Agreement and Stormwater Maintenance Agreement for City Project--Wickham Park Adaptive Recreation Center, City Project Number: ENGR2023-0012**

The Board approved and authorized the County Manager to execute the Fire Protection System Agreement and Stormwater Maintenance Agreement with City of Melbourne for City Project – Wickham Park Adaptive Recreation Center, City Project Number ENGR2023-0012.

**Result:** Approved  
**Mover:** Rita Pritchett  
**Second:** Rob Feltner  
**Ayes:** Pritchett, Goodson, Tobia, Feltner, and Steele

**F.14. Authorizing Resolution, Grant Recipient Information Form, and Execution of Grant Agreement, Re: SFY 2025 Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged Trip & Equipment Grant**

The Board authorized the Chair to sign and adopted Resolution No. 24-059; approved and authorized the Chair to sign the Grant Application Form; approved and authorized the Chair to execute the Grant Agreement, contingent upon County Attorney and Risk Management approval; approved and authorized the Transit Services Director to execute any additional follow-up documentation, resolutions, and amendments necessary to secure these funds; and approved and authorized the County Manager to execute any Budget Change Requests (BCR).

**Result:** Adopted  
**Mover:** Rita Pritchett  
**Second:** Rob Feltner  
**Ayes:** Pritchett, Goodson, Tobia, Feltner, and Steele



**F.15. Board Approval, Re: Renewal of Interlocal Agreement between the County and the United States Department of the Interior, United States Fish and Wildlife Service - Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge**

The Board approved the renewal of the Interlocal Agreement between the County and the United States Department of the Interior, United States Fish and Wildlife Service – Merritt Island Wildlife Refuge; and authorized the Chair to execute the Agreement.

**Result:** Approved

**Mover:** Rita Pritchett

**Second:** Rob Feltner

**Ayes:** Pritchett, Goodson, Tobia, Feltner, and Steele

**F.16. Acknowledge Receipt, Re: FY 2025 Proposed Budgets for Community Development Districts**

The Board acknowledged receipt of the FY 2025 proposed budgets for the Community Development Districts of Baytree, Chaparral of Palm Bay, Heritage Isle at Viera, Mayfair, Montecito, Tranquility, Viera East, Viera Stewardship, and Willow Creek.

**Result:** Approved

**Mover:** Rita Pritchett

**Second:** Rob Feltner

**Ayes:** Pritchett, Goodson, Tobia, Feltner, and Steele

**F.17. Approval, Re: Administration and Collection Cost for Business Tax Receipts - July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025**

The Board approved cost, as submitted by the Tax Collector, for administration and collection of the County Business Tax Receipts – July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025.

**Result:** Approved

**Mover:** Rita Pritchett

**Second:** Rob Feltner

**Ayes:** Pritchett, Goodson, Tobia, Feltner, and Steele

**F.18. Approval, Re: Budget Change Requests**

The Board reviewed and approved the Budget Change Requests, as submitted.

**Result:** Approved

**Mover:** Rita Pritchett

**Second:** Rob Feltner

**Ayes:** Pritchett, Goodson, Tobia, Feltner, and Steele

**F.19. Approval, Re: Notice and Sale of Surplus Real Property, Identified as Tax Parcel I.D. Number 23-36-22-00-766, by Private Sale Process to an Adjacent Property Owner**

The Board authorized the County Manager, or his designee, to send notice of the County's intent to sell Parcel I.D. Number 23-36-22-00-766 to all adjacent property owners; adopted Resolution No. 24-060, authorizing the conveyance of real property interest to adjacent property owner; approved the private sale of County surplus property identified as Tax parcel I.D. Number 23-36-22-00-766; authorized the County Manager, or his designee, to negotiate the terms of the private sale, pursuant to Section 2-243(b), Brevard County Code of

Ordinances; accepted a Stormwater Storage Easement over the entire transfer parcel; and authorized the County Manager to sign any and all necessary documents to affect the sale.

**Result:** Approved

**Mover:** Rita Pritchett

**Secunder:** Rob Feltner

**Ayes:** Pritchett, Goodson, Tobia, Feltner, and Steele

**F.20. Permission to Advertise, Re: Request for Proposal for Internal Auditing Services**

The Board authorized Purchasing Services to advertise a Request for Proposal for the County's Internal Auditing Services; appointed the following members to the Internal Audit Selection and Negotiation Committee: Jill Hayes-Budget Director, Mary Ellen Donner-Parks and Recreation Director, and Kathy Wall-Central Services Director; and authorized the County Manager to sign the contract for Internal Auditing Services upon the recommendation from the Internal Audit Selection and Negotiation Committee and approval by the County Attorney's Office, Risk Management, and Purchasing Services.

**Result:** Approved

**Mover:** Rita Pritchett

**Secunder:** Rob Feltner

**Ayes:** Pritchett, Goodson, Tobia, Feltner, and Steele

**F.21. Auditor Selection Committee Recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners, Re: Top Three Ranked Firms for External Auditing Services and Authorize Negotiation with the Top Ranked Firm**

The Board accepted the rankings and recommendations of the Audit Selection Committee of the three (3) Certified Public Accounting (CPA) firms that they deem to be the most highly qualified to perform the County's External Auditing Services, as follows: a) Cherry Bakaert, LLP, b) MSL, P.A., c) and James Moore Company; appointed the following members to the negotiation committee: Commissioner Rita Pritchett, Kathy Prothman-County Finance Director, and Kathy Wall-Central Services Director; and authorized the County Manager to execute the negotiated contract upon the review and approval of the County Attorney's Office, Risk Management, and Purchasing Services.

**Result:** Approved

**Mover:** Rita Pritchett

**Secunder:** Rob Feltner

**Ayes:** Pritchett, Goodson, Tobia, Feltner, and Steele

**F.22. Legislation Intent and Permission to Advertise, Re: Revisions to Ordinance No. 98-37, Also Known as Chapter 2, Article VII of the Brevard County Code of Ordinances, Entitled "Construction and Improvement of Public Buildings"**

The Board approved legislative intent and granted permission to advertise a public hearing on revisions to Chapter 2, Article VII, Brevard County Code of Ordinances, "Construction and Improvement of Public Buildings."

**Result:** Approved

**Mover:** Rita Pritchett

**Secunder:** Rob Feltner

**Ayes:** Pritchett, Goodson, Tobia, Feltner, and Steele

**F.23. Acceptance and Approval, Re: Internal Audit Reports**

The Board acknowledged and approved the Internal Auditors' Reports.

**Result:** Approved

**Mover:** Rita Pritchett

**Second:** Rob Feltner

**Ayes:** Pritchett, Goodson, Tobia, Feltner, and Steele

**F.24. Acknowledge Receipt, Re: Economic Development Commission of Florida's Space Coast, Inc. (Hereafter Referred to as the "EDC") Annual Audit Report and Bi-Annual Report**

The Board acknowledged receipt of the EDC's Annual Audit Report for years ended September 30, 2023, and 2022, and the Bi-Annual Report for the period of October 1, 2023, through March 31, 2024.

**Result:** Approved

**Mover:** Rita Pritchett

**Second:** Rob Feltner

**Ayes:** Pritchett, Goodson, Tobia, Feltner, and Steele

**F.25. Appointment(s)/Reappointment(s), Re: Citizen Advisory Boards**

The Board appointed/reappointed **Daniel Ciuro** and **Jim Ducharme** to the Investment Committee, with terms expiring December 31, 2025; and **Robert S. Springer** to the Value Adjustment Board, with term expiring July 8, 2026.

**Result:** Approved

**Mover:** Rita Pritchett

**Second:** Rob Feltner

**Ayes:** Pritchett, Goodson, Tobia, Feltner, and Steele

**F.26. Acknowledge Receipt, Re: Bill Folder (continued)**

The Board acknowledged receipt of the Bill Folder.

**Result:** Approved

**Mover:** Rita Pritchett

**Second:** Rob Feltner

**Ayes:** Pritchett, Goodson, Tobia, Feltner, and Steele

**F.27. Permission to Advertise, Re: Public Hearing to consider the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Application for Brevard County**

The Board granted permission for the Brevard County Sheriff's Office to advertise for a public hearing to consider the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Grant application; and authorized the Chair to sign the Certification of Participation.

**Result:** Approved

**Mover:** Rita Pritchett

**Second:** Rob Feltner

**Ayes:** Pritchett, Goodson, Tobia, Feltner, and Steele

**F.28. Approval, Re: Precinct Boundaries - Altered and Added (Chapter 101.001(1) F.S.)**

The Board approved the revised precinct boundaries due to annexations and redrawing of the Montecito Community Development District (CDD) boundaries.

**Result:** Approved

**Mover:** Rita Pritchett

**Second:** Rob Feltner

**Ayes:** Pritchett, Goodson, Tobia, Feltner, and Steele

**MINUTES FOR APPROVAL (continued)**

Chair Steele stated apparently he missed approval of the minutes the approval of the April 9, 2024, Regular Meeting Minutes; and he asked for a motion for approval.

The Board approved the April 9, 2024, Regular Meeting Minutes.

**Result:** Approved

**Mover:** Rita Pritchett

**Second:** John Tobia

**Ayes:** Pritchett, Goodson, Tobia, Feltner, and Steele

**J.2. Resolution, Re: Calling for a Referendum: Economic Development - Ad Valorem Tax Abatement Program**

John Thomas, Executive Director of Home Builders and Contractors Association (HBCA), on behalf of the Economic Development Commission of Florida's Space Coast (EDC) Ad Valorem Tax (AVT) Task Force, stated since 1994, the Ad Valorem Tax Abatement Program has been crucial in recruiting, retaining, and expanding companies that provide high-paying jobs for the communities; as the Board knows, according to Section 196.1995 of the Florida Statutes, the Ad Valorem Tax Abatement Program is set to sunset in November of this year; historically, the Ad Valorem Tax Abatement Program has received strong voter-support, being renewed in 2004 with 62.6 percent of the vote, and again, in 2014 with 70.3 percent support from Brevard County voters; and therefore, on behalf of the AVT Task Force, he respectfully requests that the Board consider a referendum on the November 5, 2024, ballot allowing voters to decide whether they wish to continue the program.

Commissioner Tobia stated he is going to start with a softball question, as a former coach; and he asked since 2018, if Mr. Thomas can name three businesses that have successfully gone through the abatement program.

Mr. Thomas replied he can get any of those questions answered for Commissioner Tobia; but he does not have the details with him; and all they are asking for right now is to simply ask the voters and to put it on the ballot.

Commissioner Tobia advised what he is doing is he is looking at the past, so the past is a good predictor of the future; and he asked if Mr. Thomas can name one business.

Mr. Thomas responded as he said, he does not have any statistics with him; he did not come prepared for that; he can get Commissioner Tobia answers to any questions he has; and he reiterated he is simply asking to get it on the ballot for the voters.

Commissioner Tobia stated he will go through some other ones because it is probably good to look at this historically, and he wishes Mr. Thomas had come a little more prepared; he asked how many of these approved abatements failed to meet the criteria of the program, and were

either rescinded or withdrawn; he noted there has been six since 2018; and his question is how many of those.

Mr. Thomas replied if something has been rescinded or withdrawn, that means the checks and balances are working in the program.

Commissioner Tobia pointed out the answer to that is four of the six have been . . .

Mr. Thomas exclaimed great, means it is working.

Commissioner Tobia stated that means two of six, or one-third actually worked.

Mr. Thomas mentioned because the checks and balances worked.

Commissioner Tobia explained in that same time period there were a total number of abatements rescinded by the Board; and he asked what that number is, because there are more than three, as there were some that were started before, but failed to meet those requirements; and he asked again how many, since 2018, failed to meet those requirements.

Mr. Thomas advised he will repeat his previous answer, he will be happy to get all the answers to Commissioner Tobia's questions.

Commissioner Tobia remarked the answer is 10; 85 percent of the ones that came before the Board ultimately failed; he does not think there is any definition in any environment where an 85 percent failure rate is succeeding; he asked in the last six years how many promised jobs have been created by the AVT exemption; he stated Mr. Thomas is part of task force; and he again asked how many jobs have been created in the last six years.

Mr. Thomas responded he will answer that, once again, by a previous answer, but he will tell Commissioner Tobia that if one job is created, it is a benefit, because that is one job the County did not have; and whatever the failure rate is, that means the checks and balances of the program are working.

Commissioner Tobia remarked he is going to disagree with Mr. Thomas because there are costs that goes into this; the correct answer, by the way, is 42 jobs in six years, 21 by USSI Global and 21 by Roswell Marine; he is sorry Mr. Thomas did not come a little bit more prepared; L3Harris promised to bring 201 jobs to the County with Projects Leo and SAMT; less than eight months later *Florida TODAY* reported L3Harris would lay off five percent of its global workforce, which is roughly 350 jobs in Brevard County; this is a net loss of 149 jobs; and he asked if Mr. Thomas considers this job creation.

Mr. Thomas replied as he mentioned to Commissioner Tobia, he is not sure his statistics are correct.

Commissioner Tobia stated not sure that his statistics are correct, five percent, this was in *Florida TODAY*.

Mr. Thomas pointed out it does not mean they are correct if it is in *Florida TODAY* for sure; he would not use that as a reference; he will be happy, once again, he is not trying to dodge his questions; he does not want to give him inaccurate information; and he will be happy to make sure that every question he has is answered fully.

Commissioner Tobia noted he would have hoped that Mr. Thomas would come prepared on this stuff; and clearly, that is not the case.

Mr. Thomas mentioned all he is asking is simply to do what the voters have done for 30 years, and that is to give them a chance to vote for this.

Commissioner Tobia stated the County functions a representative democracy, not a direct; he will explain the difference a little bit later; and he asked as a former law enforcement officer, does Mr. Thomas consider fraud to be a serious crime.

Mr. Thomas responded of course.

Commissioner Tobia advised on page three of the supplemental application of L3Harris, they answered no, and to let him tell Mr. Thomas what they answered no to; they were asked would they relocate or expand without the exemption; what he finds very interesting is four weeks prior to answering that question, they filed a Notice of Commencement with the City of Palm Bay, so they answered no that they would not come here, and four weeks prior they started the paperwork with the City; and he asked if that would meet Black's definition of fraud.

Mr. Thomas replied he would answer that question by saying that obviously, the Board has made the determination that, that was not to not approve that particular project; and there are checks and balances in the program to make sure that the ones who do go through that and receive tax dollars are successful.

Commissioner Tobia explained that Rogue Valley answered the question in the same way on the application, and yet had purchased the facility four weeks prior to coming to the Board; and he asked if Mr. Thomas finds this fraudulent.

Mr. Thomas responded he will refrain from making judgment, he is not an attorney.

Commissioner Tobia expressed his appreciation to Mr. Thomas for coming, as he lasted longer than Todd Pokrywa of The Viera Company; and he stated he hoped the next time Mr. Thomas came up here, he would be more prepared.

Chair Steele explained he understands what Commissioner Tobia was alluding to, and he thinks he has some valid points; the issues are going to be up to the general public in his opinion; he is the one who brought this before the Commission; it has been, in his opinion, a potential to succeed; and the general public has a right to be able to determine whether or not that the County can offer this to specific companies that may be coming to Brevard. He went on to say it is an incentive for people to come to Brevard County and go to work; he is not going to abate anything that Commissioner Tobia said, because normally, his intelligence and research is very good; in the event that something happens in Brevard County and the economy starts to dump and dive, it is going to need every tool possible to incentivize these companies to come to Brevard County; one of the tools is the ad valorem tax rebate; he does not want to be sitting here in the event the County has a rocket explosion or something else and the County has the need to give those kinds of incentives; and he thinks that the general public has the right to be able to vote to determine whether or not the County should be able to give those incentives. He pointed out each and everything that comes before the Board needs to be vetted, so he does not see the harm in allowing the general public to have its say in regards to the ad valorem tax program; he is not disagreeing with Commissioner Tobia's analysis, he is just saying that the County does not know what is going to happen in the future; he hopes and prays it never has to do that; but he will tell everyone right now, the County needs every insurance policy it can get; and he asked the Board to please say yes on this, and to give the general public the right to be able to determine whether or not to utilize it.

Commissioner Pritchett asked where the businesses were located where the abatement was given to, and does Commissioner Tobia have that data.

Commissioner Tobia asked what Commissioner Pritchett is looking for.

Commissioner Pritchett advised maybe the area or the District.

Commissioner Tobia noted he did not break them down by County Commission Districts.

Commissioner Pritchett asked if it was maybe in the Melbourne area.

Commissioner Tobia replied a number of them were; the ones that the Board denied recently would be L3Harris, the LEO, and the SAMT, as well as Rogue Valley; all three of those were in the City of Palm Bay; and those are the three most recent ones to come to the Board.

Commissioner Pritchett remarked she did not have anyone call or come talk to her about this; she has put the word out even to Save Our Indian River Lagoon (SOIRL) that she is not going to put anything on the ballot; but Linda called her; if this was Linda's completely, 100 percent, she would be with it because she just watches her, trusts her, she is not political, and she is amazing; she asked the County Attorney and he said this could be tabled to the next meeting, because if she has to vote today, she is going to vote no; but if the Board tables it, she may take some time and let people kind of give her reasons why the Board should do this. She stated Commissioner Tobia has a lot of good input in this; it seems like it is isolated to a certain area, as well; when doing those abatements in a certain area, it is not sharing the equity Countywide, so those are some questions she would like to have answered; and again, she just had a call from Linda today, which was a 'hail Mary' for Mr. Thomas to her; and that would be her request from the others, if the Board is comfortable with it.

Commissioner Goodson asked if Commissioner Tobia knows that in January 2023 through December, and January 1, 2022, through December 31, 2022, how much total abatement money went to companies.

Commissioner Tobia replied during that time the Board has only had Rogue Valley and L3Harris come to the Board; both of those the Board wisely said no; he has reasons why the Board should not go through with this; but to be very clear, both Rogue Valley decided, in fact, he has a quote from the CEO recently who said, "We're also ramping expansion up from our West Coast foundry in Oregon to our new location on the Space Coast of Florida;" he noted this was said just a couple of weeks ago, so this is someone that is a CEO of a company that the Board decided not to give an abatement for, and yet, they came here anyway and they are expanding. He went on to say his goal here is for the Board not to pick winners and losers; and that is exactly what this program seeks to do as well.

Commissioner Goodson advised his research shows about \$2 million of tax abatements given in two years.

Commissioner Tobia pointed out yes, there are abatements going on from ones that started 10 years ago; he expressed his apologies as he was talking about new ones that entered the system; and he stated Commissioner Goodson is correct.

Commissioner Goodson stated his concern about this whole thing is it is up to the public, and that is fine, he wants the public to vote on this; he asked will the public have a clear understanding of what he or she is doing; is the County educating them as well as it should for the pros and cons, because nowhere has he seen any abatement given to a small businessman in Brevard County, nowhere; all he gets are regulations, even lawn work cutting, and more taxes; and he does not get a break. He advised he has been in business since 1988; he has never seen the government come to him and give him a check; he is all for the public voting; but he is also for educating the public to make sure they understand.

Commissioner Feltner explained he does not think the County can educate the public like in sort of a campaign.

Commissioner Goodson stated if the County can educate a lawn mower at 5:30 in the morning, surely it can educate the public.

Commissioner Feltner stated he thinks that is an issue of an ordinance; but when Commissioner Goodson says to educate the public, he is not sure what that means; he does not think the County can expend resources in something like that; and he asked if that sounds correct.

Morris Richardson, County Attorney, replied by State law, the County is very limited in what it can do in the realm of elections, communication, and things like that; but the County could provide data.

Chair Steele asked in the event the Board wanted to do this anyway without a referendum, if a company came into Brevard County and said they will in fact move into Brevard County if it gives them a tax abatement, would the Board be allowed to do that.

Attorney Richardson responded no.

Chair Steele pointed out without the referendum, the Board cannot do it period, if the referendum passes.

Attorney Richardson advised that is correct; the statutory authorization requires approval by the voters at a referendum; and that approval works in 10-year periods.

Chair Steele noted once again the County is dead in the water in the event the County has an emergency, and it cannot get jobs, and that is a mistake.

Mr. Thomas stated the AVT Task Force, through a number of volunteers just throughout the business community, has volunteers going around through the different chambers, different community organizations, and sharing the results of the AVT Program over the course of the history of it through its duration, so it has been very informative to the public; and he knows they are planning on continuing that, if this were to end up on the ballot.

Commissioner Tobia asked if some of those volunteers, with some of that information, could come to the Board the next time that knows some of those answers.

Mr. Thomas remarked they can do a full presentation if the Board would like.

Sandra Sullivan stated first of all, as far as giving companies incentives, there is already a mechanism to do that and that is through North Brevard Economic Development Zone (NBEDZ) where a company can be given up to one-half of a million dollars to incentivize them coming to the County; in addition, with a vote from this Commission, the County can give them much more; it gave, for example, the richest man in the world, Blue Origin owner, \$8 million to bring Blue Origin here, so the County does have a mechanism; if a person's house is falling in and has rain pouring in, they are not going to give money to their neighbor; they have a situation like that in Brevard County; there is a room full of Brevard Fire here today that the County cannot pay them enough, so when the Board is talking about tax abatements, that tax money can go to fix some of the crises in Brevard, from the roads where there is over a billion in deficit for roads, because that can has been kicked down the road; and maybe the Board should be fiscally conservative, think about the people of Brevard, and of the small businesses. She pointed out everybody else is being taxed; instead of giving the richest of the richest tax breaks when many of them are not even paying property taxes, because they are up there on



Space Florida, so she thinks they are getting quite enough as it is; if the Board has not looked at the economy now, it cannot fill the jobs that are out there right now, it does not need to do job incentives and abatements; another thing, right now is it; if and when the economy turns, it can be revisited; but the economy is strong right now, it does not need to be stimulated; and the County needs to take care of Brevard first for Fire Rescue, the roads, et cetera, and not give tax exemptions.

Chair Steele advised if the applauding continues, he will end up taking a five, 10, or 15 minute break, and people can sit here for the rest of the night, so the audience members can either cooperate with him this evening with no applause, or it will be done his way, and the Board will get to it when it gets to it.

Laura Petruska commented there are a number of reasons why counties might offer tax incentives to attract new businesses, job creation; new businesses bring new jobs, which can boost the local economy; more jobs mean more people spending money in local businesses, which increases tax revenue for the County in the long-run; economic development, tax breaks can encourage businesses to locate in a particular county, which can help diversify the local economy and make it less reliant on one industry; revitalization, in areas with high vacancy rates or struggling businesses, tax incentives can be used to attract new businesses to fill empty storefronts and create a more vibrant atmosphere; and specific industries, counties may offer targeted tax breaks to attract businesses in specific industries that they want to encourage, such as technology and manufacturing. She continued by saying of course, there are potential drawbacks to consider; tax breaks mean less money coming into the County coffers in the short-term; it is important to make sure that the businesses receiving the breaks are actually creating the jobs and contributing to the local economy; overall, the decision of whether or not to offer tax incentives is a complex one that the counties must weigh carefully; and she trusts the Board will vet the companies correctly in order for them to offer these incentives, and the citizens get the most out of their eventual businesses.

Councilman John Dittmore, City of West Melbourne, remarked he agrees with Chair Steele on this; he thinks the ad valorem tax rebate program is in place; a special election cannot be called if the opportunity arises to bring a company to Brevard County; some things are time sensitive; he believes they are an economic driver if they are administered correctly; and according to what Commissioner Tobia said, the County is kind of policing that, and he thinks that is appropriate. He went on to say something is needed to actually bring these companies to Brevard; the County wants these companies to see this because when they are looking for places to go, they will say Brevard County has this; they may come here, sign an agreement, and not keep up to it; that is up to the County to police this; and apparently it is doing a really good job of it because not much money is being handed out. He stated from the City of West Melbourne's point of view, their taxpayers pay Municipal Service Taxing Unit (MSTU) and so do the people who do business there; MSTU is for the fire, but it can also be for police as well; he understands that MSTU is not a huge dollar amount; but he thinks if the County is going to be giving these tax breaks it considers taking the MSTU out of the equation to pay for some of the public safety folks and use that money appropriately; it should also look at what impacts it has on the budget as far as with the general fund, it has actually been impacted by some of these tax rebates; what he is getting at is he thinks the program would be good, it would do well to advertise that and have people come into the community; and he agrees with Chair Steele that it cannot be done at the last minute, and cannot call a special election as it would be bad timing. He noted they want to be able to let people know that Brevard is open for business, and it will offer something to them; but it also comes with those strings attached that they have to perform their portion as well.

Commissioner Pritchett stated she agrees with Chair Steele with everything he said; the County can get to where it quits staying ahead of the situation; Brevard County has lived through the collapse of the real estate and the banks; in North Brevard they suffered greatly; it was these

incentives that came along that really helped get the good businesses in; and the County has to have new industry, because the same dollar cannot continue to be passed around, she watched that last time. She noted if it was not for some of the things past Commissioners did and the things carried through with, there would not be the money there is in this community now; the State of Florida ranked number one out of the states as far as business creation, and Brevard County ranked on the top of all these, because of a lot of these things that are in place; her complaint is that this is an important thing being put on the ballot, and nobody came and talked to her; she may not be comfortable with all of the language; but she thinks if it is important enough for a group to come forward with, that is something that should have been respectfully given to the Commissioners with some good conversation, because he or she has to make the decision; and there is enough time to make that happen.

The Board tabled the request for a resolution calling for a referendum election on November 5, 2024, to renew the authority of the Board to grant exemptions for new and expanding businesses to the July 23, 2024, Board meeting.

**Result:** Tabled

**Mover:** Rita Pritchett

**Secunder:** Tom Goodson

**Ayes:** Pritchett, Goodson, Tobia, Feltner, and Steele

## **G. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Thomas Perez read, "My name is Tom Perez and I am a resident of Titusville. I am attending this meeting after seeing numerous posts on social media about issues occurring here at the Commission. I would like the Commissioners to know that it's not just the same 10 people that are concerned about the County Commissioners meeting behavior. There are residents throughout Brevard County who do not attend every meeting, but who do care that our County Commissioners are treating members of the public, including firefighters, with the respect we deserve. A post was recently shared on social media about the County Manager and the County Attorney's annual pay that has received over 10,000 views. The excessively high annual raises and large salaries are concerning to myself, who is a Titusville taxpayer that is also funding the exceedingly high salary of my own city manager and city attorney. How can residents trust anything that the County presents about compensating Brevard County firefighters when we learn that our local officials are busy garnering hefty salary increases and conducting no annual performance evaluations? The recent changes to the public participation Policy BCC-97 also raises concern after policy amendment language was inserted after the vote occurred to deny a candidate from identifying themselves during their Public Comment introductions. The final policy language changes have not been voted on by the Commissioners. Is that how controlling the Commission has become, that it is willing to prohibit members of the public from even identifying as candidates? Commissioners should rethink this oppressive policy change that was inserted after the May 7th Commission meeting without public comment on Commissioner Pritchett's ambiguous anti-campaign language amendment. This language was specifically not endorsed by Commissioner Goodson who supported the proposal that commenters should not give a stump speech. He did not endorse the self-identification language that was added after the meeting by the County Attorney. In a County with numerous issues that require attention from our leaders, it's very disturbing to see that our elected and appointed officials are not doing right by we the people. The Commissioners should rethink their current treatment of the people of Brevard County and find ways to represent all of us. I ask that my comment be included in the meeting minutes for this meeting and am providing a copy to the Clerk of Courts."

Charles Tovey stated he wrote on his card about his property, and going for a last plea for just a little bit longer; he lost a couple of days because of a police episode; he is complying with everything; if he can just have one last delay, he can make everyone happy; he had some

issues because a tree fell on his garage, and it blocked his house; and he cannot move, disassemble the garage, or do the trees without a permit. He went on to say he is having problems getting permits; but if he can just get a little bit longer; the problem with his property is his house, because the County said it is unsafe; there are more than 230 people here today, all the seats are filled, standing room only, and that is a public safety issue, which is not being addressed; his house, which is falling apart because of the erosion from where they gave the easement away; and some of this looks like it includes his property, so there is motive behind the attempted murder, the arson, and the destruction of all of his property. He noted he would like to show it on the thing, but the County does not have that available, unprepared he guesses; he asked the Board to excuse him, this is not directed towards anyone on the Council; it is all in the past; he is moving forward beyond all that; but there is obvious things, which he wants to reveal because they are a public safety issue; and everybody goes to dog park. He advised he has been barricaded in his house is why he needs more time, because he had everything in the kitchen sinks, double, triple, 15 refrigerators, 15 barbeques, 15 washers, 15 dryers, 12 trucks and trailers, and that is what the time consumption has been is doing a thorough job on everything to make sure, for him it is just the way he does things, to get the job done; he just needs a little bit more time; he is complying all the way; the bullets, the bees, the bulldozer, and the continuous burglaries, the vandalism, the sabotage, all that is why; and he cannot do anything about it, so he has to take it as it comes and do the best that he can.

Christina Fleming commented she is a retired, 25-year firefighter; some months ago in the Florida Room, the undersheriff Doug Waller spoke on behalf of Brevard County Sheriff's Office (BCSO); Mr. Waller suggested that the younger generation coming into law enforcement does not seem to view this calling as a career anymore; instead, Mr. Waller suggested that the new hires view the job as simply a job, a job that they would quickly vacate for a few dollars more on the other side of the St. Johns, Indian River, or to the private sector; in Fire Rescue, they are seeing a similar phenomenon; and though she personally agrees with Mr. Waller's assessment, she disagrees in one regard, the younger generation does view this as a career, just not with Brevard County Fire Rescue (BCFR). She went on by saying they will leave for departments all over the State, taking with them years of experience, job-related intuition, and training, while leaving the residents with no return on investment; in 2023, BCFR set off with a lofty goal to hire 90 firefighters; they came up short and hired 77; the qualified applicants simply did not come; and word is out that the Board of County Commissioners will simply not provide a livable wage. She mentioned in 2023, the intention of hiring 90 was in part to cut costs in overtime; instead, overtime costs continued to soar; the County is projected to spend \$8 to \$10 million this year on overtime alone; the training cost associated with hiring 77 last year was roughly \$1.6 million; in addition, the County spent roughly \$105,000 on sponsorships; and in 2024, the County is forecasted to spend another \$1.6 million in training new hires with an additional quarter million spent on the scholarships or sponsorships. She stated furthermore, the County is spending roughly \$350,000 on paramedic school this year, because the paramedics do not apply with frequency to the County; they have no choice but to send the Firefighter/EMT's to paramedic for \$7,500 per student; once the Firefighter/EMT's become the fire medics, they become more incredibly marketable around the State and jump ship for more competitive wages and benefit packages, once again, leaving the residents with no return on investment and inexperienced workforce; in 2023, BCFR lost 55, seven for retirements, and 48 retired before they were even eligible, three more were reclassified for admin and inspections, so the County lost about 4.8 field employees per month; and in 2024, there were 44 resignations, two being retirements, 38 resigned before being retirement eligible, and that means eight field employees per month. She asked the Board to please stop the wasteful spending associated with employee attrition, please compensate its employees appropriately from top to bottom, and stop the bleeding; she noted they do not ask for top tier compensation, they just simply seek the industry standard; the comps that its lead negotiator has provided show that the top dot BCFR employees are roughly 29 underpaid; and she asked the Board to please give the constituents a qualified and experienced public safety they deserve.

Marcus Hochman expressed his appreciation to the firefighters every day for what they do, as he really appreciates it; he stated that is why he is here, partly to speak on this issue and concerns; please know he comes honestly ignorant from the Board's point of view and also from the firefighters point of view since he is learning about this subject over the past few weeks; the information he hears is usually, a Facebook page like the Riley post; and he is going to read some comments he has heard from others from just reading. He continued by saying one of the biggest concerns he has as a parent, and also as an educator, is if the firefighters are going to be there for the citizens, for the schools; he has read, because of the shortage of medics, that Brevard County is already looking at removal of Paramedics from ambulances starting at Merritt Island, leaving instead Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) without much experience, in other words, providing only basic life support instead of advanced life support; this is expected to cost lives; he does not know how the Commission feels about that; he is pretty sure the firefighters and the paramedics have their point of view on this; but living in Viera, they have Viera High School with 2,500 students, and the middle school opening up will be another 700 students; and that is over 3,000 students plus staff in probably about a two square-mile area, so his biggest concern after reading and hearing the different things is if the citizens are going to have the firefighters there in need of for the kids, senior citizens, and all of the businesses the Board has talked about. He noted he hopes everybody is understanding and paying attention to him when he is talking about that, because that is extremely important; he does not know all of the answers; he read some of the solutions, some things were said about the County does not want to tax, and some other things the Board may not have answers to, or maybe it does have answers, he just does not know, about the development impact fees which he read something about that he does not quite all of the way understand; but he asked if that has correlation to this matter; he advised he has read and heard from others before about the 1998 referendum passing and how the Board in the past five years, or several years, has been not using the property taxes assessment to help pay for paramedics, maintenance, new stations, new trucks, et cetera, so that is what he would like to know; and if that is not the solution, he asked what the solution is from this Commission, County Manager, and staff to support the firefighters.

Sam Nosh remarked she is a firefighter with Brevard County Fire Rescue; she has been with them for almost six years; in the past six years, she has adapted this rhetoric of disappointed but not surprised; she is disappointed but not surprised that since January of this year, they have had 44 personnel leave the department, with only two being retirements; that is eight vacancies a month being left open to be filled with overtime and/or mandatory overtime; and out of the 44 personnel that left, one was a lieutenant fire medic that had 18 years of experience. She advised she is disappointed but not surprised that he is now working for another fire department in this County making substantially more, and he even took a demotion; the County has spent anywhere from \$1.5 to \$1.7 million annually on training alone; another \$250,000 to \$260,000 a year for the sponsorship program; and this year so far, as Christina has said, they have spent \$350,000 to send the EMT's to paramedic school. She pointed out the County spends roughly \$20,000 per person on new hire orientation, then once it receives all of that free training and education, they leave and go to higher-paying fire departments, including in this County, so out of the 44 who left, minus the two who retired, the County spent \$840,000 with no return on investment; the problem is not really recruitment now that people can get a free scholarship, which is the only reason they apply; no, the problem is retention; Brevard County has always been the revolving door and stepping stone; and at this rate, it always will be. She mentioned the County's proposal to frontload the contract is designed to pay people who do not even work for Brevard yet; it is not designed to take care of the ones who have been here taking care of the citizens of Brevard; the Board is doing a disservice to the people he or she has been appointed to represent; she personally has 11 years' experience as a paramedic, three years as a firefighter; she loves what she does; and she just wishes she made a livable wage. She stated everyone is aware of the rising costs of living; and they are only asking for the industry standard, so for once County Commissioners, she begs him or her to surprise her.

\*The Board recessed at 6:14 p.m., and reconvened at 6:20 p.m.

Chair Steele advised that the County Attorney has given the Board a memorandum regarding decorum at meetings; it is available through the County Attorney's office or his office; if anyone wishes, a copy can be requested and will be emailed to he or she; it is very simple stuff, nothing that has been changed; and its rules and regulations have been in effect since day one.

#### **H.1. Public Hearing, Re: Extension of Temporary Moratorium on New Applications of Biosolids to Lands within Brevard County**

Chair Steele called for a public hearing to consider an ordinance extending the temporary moratorium on new applications of biosolids to lands within Brevard County.

Amanda Elmore, Natural Resources Management Deputy Director, stated this is a 365-day extension; it is the eighth such extension; and she is available for any questions.

Sandra Sullivan commented she was here in 2018 when this was brought forth by former Commissioner Lober; in looking at this Agenda Item, she does not appreciate the misrepresentation of what the reason was for doing the moratorium; while the biosolids does contribute to Saxitoxin, which the County had that issue, as there was a lot of people in Brevard getting sick; there was a big town hall meeting in Melbourne because of the number of people who were ill; she appreciates what the County did with the moratorium; and she appreciates it bringing this forward to have an extension of that moratorium. She pointed out what she does not appreciate is the misrepresentation of the other part of the reason why this was done; she was here when this passed; there was a farmer who had biosolids on his lands; by agreement the County agreed that the County could come in and test those biosolids; the issue was one of Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) contamination contaminating his land; and the moratorium had not just to do with the public safety of the County's drinking water source in Lake Washington upstream, but also of PFAS contamination. She noted that is missing from the documents in this Agenda Item; she does not appreciate that because it is very much a health hazard in as much as the Saxitoxin and the other harmful algae blooms; if a person realizes, the firefighting foam or the PFAS forever chemical, it is phosphorus-based; this is also going to feed that; as the Board knows, most of those biosolids, as mentioned within these documents, come from South Florida; that is one of the most heavy, largest PFAS contamination in their sewage treatment plants because of the issues they have with the firefighting college down there and the pollution that is done; she reiterated she appreciates this being on the Agenda, and she hopes the County will continue to have the moratorium; and in addition, she hopes it will adjust next time and be a little bit more transparent and honest about the other reasons, the PFAS and the biosolids coming from South Florida and the contamination it had on lands here.

Commissioner Goodson asked if staff can give him the area where the biosolids are spread, the general area.

Ms. Elmore replied biosolids are used in agricultural operations across the State.

Commissioner Goodson stated no, not in the State, in Brevard County; yes, he knows they are spread on cow fields; but in Brevard County, tell him where they are located.

Ms. Elmore responded she believes there are a couple of active permits in the County; staff has had one inquiry since this for a new application since this has been in place; but she does not have those permits in front of her; and she would hesitate to tell Commissioner Goodson exactly where.

Commissioner Goodson asked if Ms. Elmore could tell his office tomorrow.

Ms. Elmore responded certainly.

Commissioner Goodson asked if they are coming from Miami.

Ms. Elmore replied there is a concern in South Florida certainly.

Commissioner Goodson pointed out he does not want to hear a concern; and he asked again if they are coming from Miami.

Ms. Elmore advised there are biosolids in South Florida.

Commissioner Goodson noted to Brevard County.

Ms. Elmore remarked to Brevard, she is not sure.

Commissioner Goodson inquired if Ms. Elmore can tell him in the morning.

Ms. Elmore responded affirmatively.

Commissioner Goodson asked if the County knows where they are coming from.

Ms. Elmore explained part of the reason for this extension is to allow for more data, which will be available mid-next year, funded by St. Johns.

Commissioner Goodson stated to have more data is, he thinks, one could easily go out State Road (SR) 192 and follow the trucks coming from Orlando; and he asked if that would be a fair statement.

Ms. Elmore replied she does not know how to respond to that.

Commissioner Goodson inquired if tomorrow she can respond to his office on how she is going to get more data.

Ms. Elmore pointed out it is funded by St. Johns, the County is not the ones collecting it.

Commissioner Goodson mentioned maybe the Board should table this and bring St. Johns up here next time for them to answer questions.

Ms. Elmore stated if this Item is tabled, the County will lose a moratorium and not have the opportunity to continue with the extension.

Commissioner Goodson stated he guesses he hears Ms. Elmore, but he is not too sure that she is going to have a moratorium to follow, because she has not answered any questions, but tomorrow she will.

Ms. Elmore advised certainly, staff can provide any additional information Commissioner Goodson would like.

Commissioner Goodson asked if he should call Ms. Elmore in the morning, or does she know what he would like.

Ms. Elmore responded no, sir.

Chair Steele pointed out unfortunately, tomorrow is too late; and the Board is going to either pass this or kill it.

Commissioner Pritchett expressed her appreciation to Ms. Elmore for all of the information, as she knows back in the past Virginia Barker, Natural Resources Management Director, has been working on this quite a bit; and she again thanked Ms. Elmore for picking it up. She stated if she remembers correctly, the County did this to keep any new things from coming, because it was not able to really do anything about the existing at the time; this is something the County has in place, so staff will have more tools that they can go in and hopefully find a way to monitor this a little better or maybe make it cease; and she made a motion to approve the Item.

Commissioner Feltner stated he will second the motion.

Stel Bailey stated she runs a non-profit organization that works in environmental health; she is in support of this moratorium; she thinks it should be passed tonight; one of the locations, to answer one of Commissioner Goodson's questions, is behind Space Coast High School in Port St. John, Florida, so they have an interactive map on their website, fight4zero.org; it is an interactive map that has biosolids, applications, and where it is at; and she really appreciates Brevard County government for doing this moratorium. She went on to say she has worked with farmers in Washington, DC, passing bills, because their cows died because of this Perfluorinated compounds and the PFAS that was spread in their fields; it has also impacted the crops; she reiterated she is in support of this, and she would appreciate the Board passing it; and she would like to see PFAS put in it, because that is a big concern for biosolids.

Chair Steele called for a vote on the motion.

There being no further comments or objections, the Board conducted a public hearing and adopted Ordinance No. 24-11, authorizing an extension of temporary Countywide moratorium for 365 days from the effective date; prohibiting the land application of Class B Biosolids except existing permitted activities; providing for exhaustion of administrative remedies; and providing for severability, repeal of conflicting provisions, resolution of conflicting provisions; area encompassed and an effective date.

**Result:** Adopted

**Mover:** Rita Pritchett

**Second:** Rob Feltner

**Ayes:** Pritchett, Goodson, Tobia, Feltner, and Steele

**H.2. Public Hearing, Re: Petition to Vacate Public Utility Easements - 3645 Sparrow Hawk Tr – Lots 348 & 349, "Fawn Lake P.U.D. Phase 2, Unit 3" Plat Book 39, Page 79 - Mims - Stanley E. & Patricia L. Retz**

Chair Steele called for a public hearing to consider a resolution to vacate public utility easements at 3645 Sparrow Hawk Tr., Lots 348 and 349, Fawn Lake P.U.D. Phase 2, Unit 3, as petitioned by Stanley E. and Patricia L. Retz.

Marc Bernath, Public Works Director, explained H.2. is a petition to vacate a public utility easement at 3645 Sparrow Hawk Trail; it is in District 1; it is vacating part of two public utility easements to construct one single-family residence; and there are no issues.

There being no comments or objections, the Board adopted Resolution No. 24-061, vacating public utility easements, Lots 348 and 349, Fawn Lake P.U.D. Phase 2, Unit 3, at 3645 Sparrow Hawk Tr., Mims, as requested by Stanley E. and Patricia L. Retz.

**Result:** Adopted  
**Mover:** Rita Pritchett  
**Second:** Rob Feltner  
**Ayes:** Pritchett, Goodson, Tobia, Feltner, and Steele

**H.3. Public Hearing, Re: Petition to Vacate Public Utility Easements - 285 Diana Blvd - “Diana Shores Unit No. 2” Plat Book 20, Page 148 - Merritt Island - Timothy Scott and Denise Irene Gannon**

Chair Steele called for a public hearing to consider a resolution to vacate public utility easements in Diana Shores Unit No. 2, as petitioned by Timothy Scott and Denise Irene Gannon.

Marc Bernath, Public Works Director, stated Item H.3. is a petition to vacate a public utility easement; it is Diana Shores, Unit 2, Merritt Island, south of Highway 528 and east of North Courtenay Parkway; it is in District 2; it is looking to vacate two public utility easements to allow for an existing shed and a covered patio to remain and be removed as an encroachment; and staff has no issues with removing it.

There being no further comments or objections, the Board adopted Resolution No. 24-062, vacating public utility easements in Diana Shores Unit No. 2, in Merritt Island, as requested by Timothy Scott and Denise Irene Gannon.

**Result:** Adopted  
**Mover:** Tom Goodson  
**Second:** John Tobia  
**Ayes:** Pritchett, Goodson, Tobia, Feltner, and Steele

**H.4. Public Hearing, Re: Petition to Vacate, Re: Plat Note 18 - “Water’s Edge” Plat Book 55, Page 78 - Melbourne - M & R United, Inc.**

Chair Steele called for a public hearing to consider a resolution to vacate a public utility easement in Plat Note 18, Water’s Edge, which was requested by M & R United, Inc.

Marc Bernath, Public Works Director, advised Item H.4. is a petition to vacate a plat note for Water’s Edge; the property is located in Melbourne, south of Wickham Road and Windham Drive; it is in District 4; after the public hearing notice was sent out, and this was sent to him to be able to put onto the Agenda, he noticed some concern with regard to traffic safety; staff put a conditional approval in here because it was already publicly noticed; however, the developer has already worked to meet the request of having a restrictive covenant in place of this Plat Note; and it needs to be reviewed by the County Attorney, so one of the additional actions on this is to allow the Public Works Director, if it meets the approval of the County Attorney, to go ahead and approve it and submit with the petition to vacate assuming the Board approves it.

There being no further comments or objections, the Board approved the vacating of Plat Note 18, “Water’s Edge” Plat Book 55, Page 78, in Section 16, Township 26 South, Range 36 East; adopted Resolution No. 24-063, vacating the referenced plat note in Brevard County; authorized the Public Works Director to accept and sign a restrictive covenant upon agreement from M&R united, Inc., following review and approval by the County Attorney’s Office; and if the restrictive covenant is not agreed upon, this will need to come back to the Board to be rescinded.



**Result:** Adopted

**Mover:** Rob Feltner

**Second:** Tom Goodson

**Ayes:** Pritchett, Goodson, Tobia, Feltner, and Steele

#### **H.5. Public Hearing, Re: Brevard County Code of Ordinances Chapter 94 - Solid Waste**

Chair Steele called for a public hearing to consider adopting the amendments to Brevard County Code of Ordinances Chapter 94 – Solid Waste.

Tom Mulligan, Solid Waste Management Director, stated Item H.5. is a request to the Board to consider adopting amendments to Brevard County Code of Ordinances Chapter 94 – Solid Waste; the proposed amendments are summarized in the Agenda Report, and further detailed in the proposed ordinance included in the Agenda package; and he would be happy to answer any questions the Board may have.

Sandra Sullivan expressed her appreciation to the Board for not having her escorted out of this room by a Sheriff's Deputy when it forgets her card; on this Agenda detail item, this is going to have a fiscal impact of generating \$8 million in potential additional revenue; what is not clear to her in reading this, it is vague, and she asked if this is going to be more taxes on the people, because that is the way it looks to her; and it would be nice when the County lays something out is when it is talking vaguely about rates. She stated this one is amending an ordinance regarding yard waste collection to include pay applicable fees and charges, and require proof of origin of debris; the County is generating \$8 million of additional revenue; she asked how much more are the people looking at in increases; she stated as the Board knows, one of the things she has been very passionate in coming up here in five-plus years are coming to County Commissioners meetings; for many of those years the topic that was discussed more than any other topic was Sarno; the County waited until it ran out of room at Sarno to start building a new dump at SR 192 that takes five years to build; and then it decided to tax the people to transport that truck to other facilities. She asked again if the people are looking at more tax rates, she just wants to know.

There being no further comments or objections, the Board conducted a public hearing and adopted Ordinance No. 24-12, amending Chapter 94 of the Code of Ordinances of Brevard County, Florida, specifically revising Chapter 94 – Solid Waste, Article I – in general; revising Sec. 94-1 – Definitions to Update Definitions of Landclearing Debris and Yard Waste and Add Definition of Proof of Origin. Revising Article II – Solid Waste Collection and Recycling; revising Sec. 94-49 – Yard Waste Collection to add paying applicable fees and charges and requiring proof of origin of waste; revising Sec. 94-76- Construction Demolition, Landclearing Debris to include paying applicable fees and charges and requiring proof of origin of debris; revising Sec. 94-91 – Collection Agreements and Permits to use the term contracts in place of agreements and specify selection of collection contractor through solicitation of competitive bids; revising Sec. 94-93 – Roll-Off Collection Service permit Application, Fees, Duration to add requiring proof of a current business tax receipt and limiting permit term to one year; revising Sec. 94-97 – General Permit Conditions to add updated insurance requirements and requiring proof of origin of debris. Revising Article IV – Special Assessments, Service Fees, and Impact Fees; revising Sec. 94-236 – Special Assessments and Service Fees prior to initiation of first full year annual special assessments and service fees; payment of prorated special assessments and services fees; discharge of lien to add the option of including prorated assessment amount to the building permit fee in lieu of individual invoice; revising Sec. 94-242 – Exemption Application; filing date; review; denial; appeal; revocation to amend exemption filing date; revising Sec. 94-245 – Vacancy Adjustments for Improved Real property from Annual Assessments and Service Fees; criteria to amend vacancy period; revising Sec. 94-246 – Vacancy Adjustment Petition; filing date; review; denial; appeal to amend filing date; revising Sec. 94-277 – Landfill Gate Accounts, Payment of Deposits, Special Rates; delinquency;

collection; exemptions to remove management; revising Sec. 94-286 – Definitions to Update Conditionally Exempt Small Quantity Generator to Very Small Quantity Generator. Delete Article VII – Debris Removal from private Right-of-way and Other Private Property.

**Result:** Adopted

**Mover:** Rita Pritchett

**Second:** Rob Feltner

**Ayes:** Pritchett, Goodson, Tobia, Feltner, and Steele

**I.1. Approval, Re: Name Additional Defendants in National Prescription Opiate Litigation**

Morris Richardson, County Attorney, commented this is requesting authorization to name additional defendants in the National Prescription Opiate Litigation; as the Board knows, the County is part of the National Opioid, multi-district litigation in Federal court in Ohio; Brevard County's outside counsel has recommended that new defendants be added to the case, or at least authorize the addition of new defendants to the case in three categories, pharmacy benefit managers, retail pharmacy, and several small opiate manufacturers; today, the request is that the Board approve outside counsel's recommendation to name up to seven additional defendants in those categories, and authorize the Chair and County Attorney to sign related documents, as necessary; and as was pointed out, the County's outside counsel on the opioid litigation, Mr. Charpentier is here for any questions.

The Board approved outside counsel's recommendation to name additional defendants in the national prescription opioid litigation; and authorized the County Attorney and the Chair to sign related documents as necessary.

**Result:** Approved

**Mover:** Tom Goodson

**Second:** Rob Feltner

**Ayes:** Pritchett, Goodson, Tobia, Feltner, and Steele

**J.1. Approval, Re: Contract for Sale and Purchase from Micco Properties, LLC for the Micco Master Stormwater Plan**

Marc Bernath, Public Works Director, stated this is a contract for sale and purchase seeking for the Board to approve and execute the contract for sale and purchase; authorize the Chair to execute all required closing documents; this is in support of a Natural Resources Management project for an outfall pipe system to reduce the recurrence of flooding at 10th Street and Central Avenue; it is part of the Micco Master stormwater plan that was previously approved by the Board in September 2020; there are three properties in which the appraisal is \$200,000; and the owner has agreed there are no issues.

The Board approved and authorized the Chair to execute the Contract for Sale and Purchase from Micco Properties, LLC for the Micco Stormwater Plan; and authorized the Chair to execute all required closing documents related to the Contract.

**Result:** Approved

**Mover:** John Tobia

**Second:** Rob Feltner

**Ayes:** Pritchett, Goodson, Tobia, Feltner, and Steele

**J.3. Approval, Re: Elected County Officer Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Budget Requests that Exceed Three Percent**

Doug Waller, Brevard County Sheriff's Office, introduced Brett Carman, Sheriff's Chief Administrative Officer (CAO); he stated the Sheriff's Office is proud to present a budget that is both reasonable and necessary for the safe and efficient operations of the Brevard County Sheriff's Office; as usual, he would like to thank the Board for all of the continued opportunities to discuss the budget and answer any questions he or she may have; and they have worked closely with the County Manager and his staff to prepare this years budget.

Commissioner Pritchett expressed her appreciation to the Sheriff's Office for the way they turn their budget in; she stated the details are incredible; they break it down by their segments; they just do a great job; the Sheriff will call a lot of times if there is something different to kind of really explain it; and she appreciates all that they do.

Kristin Lortie stated she thought this Agenda Item was very interesting; there was both the Sheriff's budget, 94-page proposal, on the presentation on the Sheriff's budget, and then there was a 10-page presentation by the Property Appraiser; she agrees with Commissioner Pritchett that there was a lot of detail on that; she thinks it is very helpful for the public to be able to see that detail; she thinks everyone should read it, so it is available on the County website and the Brevard Care Citizens Coalition Facebook group where she has reposted both of those presentations, links to both of them; on the Sheriff's budget especially, she thinks it takes some time to digest; and she just realized it was on the Agenda yesterday, so she did not have time to look through it more closely. She went on to say she hopes that there will be more opportunity for the public to look at it; as far as support or oppose the budget, the Appraiser is not a part of requiring any support, but the Sheriff's budget does, so she does not offer support or opposition; she just likes seeing the detail and process; it is the first time she has seen a 94-page proposal from the Sheriff's Office, so she thinks that they should be commended; on the slide for the Property Appraiser, Dana Blickley, actually posted a slide into Brevard Cares; that slide designates that only \$7,000 of her overage of the over three percent from last year, only \$7,480 has any discretionary value to it, so it is all mandates and required costs and expenses; and she has listed it out in that slide, so she appreciates that extra step Ms. Blickley took. She pointed out she would actually like to see more of these for more departments, including the Fire Department; there are a lot of people with questions, and the public does not understand what is going on; this process adds more visibility to the public; she reiterated she would like the public to have more access to more of these; and she would like to see more even from the County's budget or adding other constitutional officers, as she does not think it should be over three percent for them to see more visibility, especially at this time of year where the budgets have more definition, they are more refined, and the County is going into the final stages, the budget hearings. She again commended both of the departments for that; she thinks the citizens should take a look at it; she believes in the visibility; she would certainly love some more visibility for the Fire Department budget, because there is quite a controversy and concern in the public regarding that asking why they cannot have a budget like this in screenshots; there is actually screenshots that show the exact amount over and then they categorize that amount over, so a person can literally see a chart that gives some information; and then one can go to the rest of the presentation to see more.

Chair Steele asked if the Board needs to take a motion on this or move on.

Frank Abbate, County Manager, replied to move on.

Commissioner Tobia remarked he thinks this was Commissioner Pritchett's idea a couple of years ago to give folks, constitutionals the opportunity to come up here and explain their budget a little bit more, so a shout out to Commissioner Pritchett for bringing this to the Board's attention; he hopes he voted for this; and it turns out it was very positive. He continued by

saying he certainly wants to speak to the constitutional officers who are not here; he or she did not hit that cap, so hats off to each one of them; there were certainly some challenges in this upcoming year's budget with rising health care and benefit costs, so to make it under that three percent cap certainly, hats off to them; and for the Sheriff, goodness gracious, he thinks he received that 90-some page budget about a month ago, so the amount of time that was put into that, it was hand-delivered to the Commission offices to give him or her ample time to go over that, and then further call and ask a whole bunch of questions about contracts and negotiations, upcoming labor negotiations and all of that nonsense. He noted he appreciates the Sheriff's Office giving the Board that ability; for the Property Appraiser, he also likes that chart that was out there between personnel and operating costs; it seems as though as the operating costs that were there were mainly contracts; he guesses this is going to be a question to those Commissioners who are going to stay after this year; the Board does not know the terms of those contracts whether or not there are automatic escalating clauses, if they were competitively bid, or anything to that nature, so those two Commissioners can make long-term plans whether or not these requests will be much higher next year, he has no idea; clearly, the County Manager can handle this increase above three percent; but the Board does not know what it is next year; and those answers may be in those contracts that are out there. He stated obviously, this could be done through a public records request, but he does not think that is necessary; and he asked Commissioners Goodson and Feltner, the Property Appraiser outlined that those contracts were what caused her to go over that three percent, and would those Commissioners be interested in seeing those contracts and the terms there for future budget years. He pointed out, if not, it is not necessary, but as each Commissioner knows, those contracts do escalate, which would give an idea of what is coming up.

Commissioner Feltner commented he appreciates the questions and he will try to answer it this way; he worked in the Property Appraiser's Office for six and one-half years; he has some concept of what is happening there; he will happily talk to the Property Appraiser to find out what is still remaining in her Computer-Assisted Mass Appraiser (CAMA) contract and he thinks, the service they supply the County; and he thinks those are probably the two big ones.

Mr. Waller stated there are multiple types of contracts that the Sheriff deals with; they have labor and service-providing contracts; and they tried to accomplish all of their contracts on or before June 1st, so that way they have the ability to inform the Board what they are looking at.

Commissioner Tobia stated he spoke with the Sheriff, and since the budget was provided a month ahead of time, he had the ability to run over those with the Sheriff; he was able to answer whether or not they were competitively bid or escalating clauses; that is the benefit of the Sheriff handing that out well ahead of time, so he did get those answers which were gone over in detail; and again, he expressed his appreciation to the Sheriff's Office, as the Board just did not get that from all of the other constitutional officers.

Mr. Waller advised it is probably one of the most difficult processes because they have so many service contracts and other contracts; but they try to feed them out in at least a three-year time period, that way they can see what is going to happen in the next two or three years afterwards; and it is difficult, but they try to accomplish that.

Commissioner Tobia commented if Commissioner Feltner wants to handle that, absolutely, he trusts him, as Commissioner Feltner knows this a heck of a lot better than he does; he will have to deal with those increases should they come; and he expressed his appreciation to Commissioner Feltner for taking the mantle on that.

Commissioner Pritchett expressed her appreciation to Mr. Waller and to Rachel Sadoff, Clerk of Courts, for being here today; she stated she did not know if the Clerk wants to say anything; but she turned in a great budget as well; it is just an opportunity at one of these for them to

come up and to let the public know what he or she does; they do such a great job; and it is just a great opportunity.

The Board discussed, but took no action, on the elected County Officer Fiscal Year 2024-2025 budget requests that exceed the three percent over the current budget.

**J.4. Approval, Re: Board Direction on City of Cocoa Request to add Four-Quad Gates at Michigan Avenue**

Frank Abbate, County Manager, explained that staff put this on the Agenda at the Board's request; this Item relates to a grant application; it was submitted after receiving some input from some County consultants in terms of safety features for various railroad crossings related to Brightline; staff looked at what was provided by the consultant for the Michigan Avenue crossing in Cocoa; the recommendation from County staff was to go to a three-quad with a median in it; and they saw, consulted, and agreed that the safety features were comparable. He continued by saying there was additional cost, incremental costs to the County of \$33,000, \$165,000 total if the County put a fourth quad in; that was not what was recommended by staff; the City Council of Cocoa made a request to the City Manager to ask the Board to put a fourth quad in with the County picking up the costs; and that is what this Agenda Item has for the Board's consideration.

Sandra Sullivan remarked again she will use her analogy of one's roof is falling down; the County is looking at giving money away that it does not need to be giving away; what was not in this Agenda Item but was in the May 21, 2024, Agenda, is that the \$1.1 million used for the grant was matched with money from the fuel gas tax; the issue she has with this is the County is not good negotiators, because the responsibility of the crossings is Brightlines; when the County did its contracts, and thanks to Commissioner Tobia, the County could have negotiated a better deal; she has brought it up before, she means he has brought it to her attention in this Commission that seven of these in Grant/Valkaria, they will be on the hook for them in 18 years from when that contract was signed; but she asked what the County is doing now when it has an \$800 million deficit on roads, which it uses the gas tax for, capacity needs, and \$1 billion for transportation deficit. She asked again why the County is giving away \$1.1 million to Brightline to fix their obligation; their responsibility, is their responsibility to fix these crossings that were quad arms; when they had the first death, she was down in South Florida, and she said the problem with these is they do not have quad arms; and she was right. She asked what the County is doing now; she stated it is going to lay this basically on the taxpayers again when they are a large corporation fortress, private equity firm owns Brightline, they are talking billionaires; the County is going to use the measly little money to help them out here when it is their responsibility; it sucks; the Board has a room full of people here; the County is not meeting its obligations to the people here in Brevard; but it is certainly helping out the people with money.

Commissioner Goodson stated he does not know how the Board feels about this; the City of Cocoa is not putting a dime in, but they want the County to do it; he is not going to vote for this; the City found \$5 million to put in the slush fund for the train station, they found \$700,000 supposedly to build a splash pad; but they want the County to pay for it; and he reiterated he is not paying for this.

Commissioner Pritchett advised the County Manager mentioned in the beginning what the County is putting in with the median strip; and she asked if it is just effective as the extra quad.

Mr. Abbate replied yes, the consultant report shows that the safety was comparable between the two.

Marc Bernath, Public Works Director, pointed out it is just incrementally better, but at a much more significant cost; and then the out-year cost of maintenance, a concrete median for all-intents and purposes is zero maintenance the County will be maintaining an actual quad gate yearly or every other year.

Commissioner Pritchett noted she agrees with Commissioner Goodson unless Cocoa picks up the maintenance later.

Chair Steele passed the gavel to Vice Chair Pritchett.

Commissioner Steele stated he has three more months here, and he has things he would like to be able to accomplish; one of them is dealing with fire and the police, the Indian River Lagoon, and the Brightline station; he is going to err on the side of safety; if a quad gate needs to be put up there, he does not care what it costs, because the County needs to protect its citizens and do what is needed to make sure he or she is safe; he is not looking for anything from anyone tonight; but the County needs to help people for what he or she is doing for it; and the County also needs to help the Sheriff's Department. He went on to say he does not care what it costs for fire, police, or public safety; in his opinion, this is one Commissioner that people will not see after October or November, which may be happy for some of the residents; he does not want anyone killed on the railroad tracks, he does not want anybody killed in these fires, he does not want anyone killed in these situations going on in Brevard County, and protection needs to be given to everybody, so he asked that this be put on the Agenda; if the other Commissioners do not want it, he gets it, and one loses some and wins some; and he moved to approve the recommendation.

Commissioner Pritchett asked again if there is any comparable difference between the safety of citizens with these two different proposals.

Mr. Abbate replied the Board heard from Mr. Bernath that it was incremental; he was told they are both comparable; and staff also did make a request of Cocoa whether they pick up the maintenance costs, and they declined.

Commissioner Goodson asked if Cocoa did not want to give a dime on either one, is that correct.

Mr. Abbate responding relating to this, yes.

Commissioner Goodson stated for the three gates or the quad gates, they did not want to put a dime in; and he asked if that is correct.

Mr. Abbate advised the City Manager said that he only had the authority to ask the Board to add the fourth quad, not to pay for any maintenance.

Commissioner Goodson remarked that would imply to him that the City Manager does not want to put a dime in; one cannot fix stupid; if a gate is ran on a railroad track, there is not enough money in the world to protect stupid; if the Board wants to pass this, then to get four votes; and he is not for it.

Motion died due to lack of a second.

Vice Chair Pritchett passed the gavel back to Chair Steele.

Commissioner Pritchett asked if Chair Steele wants to try sending it back to see if the City of Cocoa will help pay some of the maintenance later.

Commissioner Steele replied no, he thinks the Board should tell them that the County did not do it; there is no sense in wasting people's time; the Board does not want to do it; and he understands it, it is one he lost, and he will fight for other issues he has.

The Board discussed, but took no action, on the request for Board direction on the City of Cocoa's request to add four-quadrant gates at Michigan Avenue.

## **K. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Chair Steele stated before getting started, this is an emotional night for all of them; he expressed his appreciation for everyone sitting there patiently; he told them earlier, that the Commission all appreciates what he or she does; it is going to do the best it can to make everybody as happy as possible; but it is going to be difficult, so the Board wants to hear what people have to say, and for them to say it with all of the passion he or she can; and to try not to repeat some of the things that are going on so that it is not that they need more money.

Susan Edison commented that she is the mother of a paramedic, and it is a very difficult job; she knows the firefighter/paramedic they do it all; her daughter is simply a paramedic, so she would like the Board to visualize some of the things that she deals with; she deals with motorcyclists splattered on the concrete, on the asphalt and heads twisted 180 degrees, for \$15 an hour is what she gets; attending to a gunshot victim from a drug deal that has gone bad, the scene is not secure; and again, she makes \$15 an hour. She went on to say running an Intraosseous (IO), which is similar to an Intravenous (IV), with a needle that gets stuck into a newborn baby's leg bone, for \$15 an hour; she is debating whether this AVT tax abatement is just irony or is it lunacy; the Board wants to bring highly-compensated individuals into this County and to keep on growing; bring in more houses and more apartments; and the County violated going west of I-95, which there are complexes over there that used to be cattle land. She mentioned it is crazy that the County cannot take care of its own; the house is burning down; the County's firefighters are leaving; they need more money; it should be a matter of risk and return; for all of the risk they get, there should be some return; this is an opposite principle; and she does not understand why it is working this way. She noted she was a budget analyst at Harris Corporation, she knows how budgets work; there is always money there; it gets moved around, it gets the shell game; it is people keeping their budget from one year to the next when they really did not spend it; and they really do not want to relinquish it. She stated some creativity is needed here; she does not care about the caps on property taxes or something; there is money that can be found and there are ways that can be allocated to take care of people who are taking care of the County for the lowest of wages; personally, she does not think Brevard County needs more growth or to bring more people in; she thinks there is a mentality that they will not be happy here until all of the green, as in grass and land, is gone, and has been developed; by the way, she was an electrical contractor along with her husband, so she has seen it all, as she is a farmer as well; and the County needs to make some things and fix it now, the money is there.

Joshua Madsen stated he is a 23 and one-half year employee with Brevard County Fire Rescue, and his wife has served almost 25 years now; he would like to say he thought things would get better; but as Commissioner Tobia said, the past is a great predictor of the future; he has been here 23 years, and he has not seen it; there is money there; and he knows it takes four out of the five Commissioners to vote above the cap. He went on to say he saw an article where one Commissioner said he would definitely do it; there was a couple of other Commissioners who might not risk it because he or she are in political positions in the future; they take risks every day, every call, that is what they do, they take risks; they cannot say he or she is going to go home or that they will come home to their families; and he asked the Board to take the risk and bet on them, bet on every person in this Department. He asked where the money went last time; there was an increase, it was supposed to all go to wages, and that was the directive to Frank Abbate, County Manager; but it did not come to them; a very small

amount came to them; the next negotiation meeting they had, Mr. Abbate said the County had no money; he would also like answers from Mr. Abbate; and he would also like the Board to look at its directors. He advised the County directors are told when they come to the budget workshops how much they can ask for and exactly what they are going to do before they come to the Board; they cannot tell the Board the truth, because their job is on the line; he hopes the Commissioners call the directors into their offices individually and ask them the truth; to have them come up and explain the budgets to the Commissioners individually and what they need; they are losing employees the same as the Fire Department; and to not listen to Mr. Abbate, and to find out where the money went. He asked the Board to use the comps the County Attorney and County Manager use for their wages; to use their comps for the firefighters' comps, as they are comparable to their counties; he advised he would like to see that; he is not asking to be rich, he is just asking to be fairly compensated so he can afford his bills; he knows a lot of these guys who have made \$15 an hour for their first eight years; and he has been there 23 years, and he makes just under \$25 an hour. He pointed out that is a topped out Lieutenant/Medic in the streets, just under \$25 an hour; they are not asking for South Florida wages, they want Seminole, Marion, Orange, and people around Brevard; Palm Bay and Melbourne make way more than they do right now and they just signed 30 percent contracts; and the County's people are going to be working for them. He advised his people come to him right now asking him what he or she should do; he tells them to look at how one treats them in the contract; if a person is not getting a competitive wage, the County does not care about them, and they never will, to take their family where they can take care of themselves; and the firefighters take care of the citizens, but someone has to take care of them, otherwise, it is just not fair.

Fred Douglas stated he is here representing Bright; Bright is a community organization made up of diverse, religious congregations across Brevard County; together they work to address the problems impacting everyday people in the community by working together with the elected officials to help determine common sense solutions; each year they conduct a Countywide listening process; and from their 2020 founding, they have heard more stories about the lack of affordable housing than any other issue in Brevard County. He continued by saying Bright began advocating for affordable housing and affordable housing trust fund in 2021, because County resources are often limited by a lack of funding; the Charter Review Commission developed and proposed the Charter amendment, it was placed on the ballot, and approved by the voters; after two years, there remains no dedicated funding; he told the Board about Harry and Tamaya; they were forced to move following a dispute with their apartment manager; they began to search for a two bedroom apartment for their family; during COVID, many landlords were asking for first, last, and deposit cash to move in; and based upon the average rental rate of \$2,100 per month for a two-bedroom, they did not have the almost \$5,000 required to move in. He explained they had recently lost a new business and both worked every day, but they were homeless, and the five of them routinely slept in their car; generally, they cycled between the car, having their three sons scattered among school friends in couch-surfing conditions, and on certain occasions, they were able to spend a week in a hotel; this would continue for some 24 months until someone finally connected them with the Community of Hope, and they found an apartment that they could meet the cash requirement; after a year in the new apartment, Harry and Tamaya were able to find a home with the assistance of their landlord; and when someone goes to work every single day, they should have access to a safe home that they can afford. He concluded by asking the Board where the accountability is to follow through on this voter-approved initiative; when will the Board of County Commissioners move to fund the Workforce Housing Trust Fund; he stated as people of faith, Bright believes that everyone wants to live in a community that cares about all of its families; and Bright is calling upon the Brevard County Commissioners to dedicate the resources to this workforce housing trust fund, and expand housing access for all of Brevard County's families.

Commissioner Pritchett asked Mr. Douglas and Bright to come to the next affordable housing meeting, as she thinks that is a good place to start a good conversation of maybe trying to find



funds and some ideas; they meet once a month on Thursday; if he would come there, it would be good; it is almost like a workshop environment; and it is a good place to come.

Mr. Douglas advised they are absolutely interested in attending; and he asked Commissioner Pritchett to let them know when.

Pastor Oliver Wells commented he is the Pastor of Christ the King Baptist Church and the Vice President of Bright, serving in that capacity; the cost of housing in Brevard County is, and has been for years, a critical issue for the citizens of this County for a very long time; at this point, more than 30,000 families in Brevard are paying more than one-half of their income on housing; the fact that he is sure all of the Commissioners would be surprised at the number of Brevard County employees that must work a second job just to be able to afford decent housing for their families; this is a major barrier; and people are struggling to make ends meet. He noted of course, this is no new issue for the Commissioners that he is addressing at this moment; his colleague who the Board just heard, Frederick Douglas, just stated that the County has a workforce and supportive housing trust fund that has no revenue funding source, and has remained like this for more than two years; this sad state of affairs is at the least misleading, and at the most deceptive for the citizens of this County who voted for a creation of a housing trust fund but are, to date, completely unaware that no viable revenue source has been identified by the County Commissioners; this affects the people that he serves; there is a husband and wife team at Christ the King Church who through no fault of their own have ended up homeless; and they were living in the woods for over 18 months while still being employed. He remarked thank goodness they have since qualified for HUD low rent housing that they are living in now; however, they are still challenged to make ends meet; locating and designating a viable revenue stream, or source he should say, for Brevard's Housing Trust Fund will alleviate hardships like this; this has already been accomplished in other regions of the nation; there are housing trust funds in existence all over the United States; he is sure the Board knows this; in over 500 cities and nearly 200 counties, most of these governmental entities, have revenue streams; and he asked the Board to help them, meet with Bright, so they can identify a viable revenue stream and source, and fund this trust fund.

Heather Elko advised she comes to speak to the Commission as a whole about the Viera wetlands; while its physical location is in District 4, her request is to all of the Commissioners, because as an entity, he or she are supervisors of County staff; it is well-understood that Viera wetlands is not a park, but rather a working utility under the management of the Utilities Department; after a period of closure for repairs, limited access now is permitted for wildlife viewing on foot and bicycle, no motorized vehicles; and because the Board supervises the Utilities Department Director and staff, she is asking the Board to get them to implement two inexpensive fixes to Viera Wetlands access. She continued by saying they are as follows: 1) post a sign with the hotline number at the entrance to the wetlands; 2) have the department update the hotline without fail; she stated requests for these things have been made before with no results; she knows the Board can get these done; the hotline is designed to inform visitors of hours of access and any closures that might occur; but the hotline is not being updated, and people arrive, sometimes after a very long drive, to find gates closed and no way to get information. She asked why it is so difficult to just update the hotline; she stated secondly, they need a sign at the wetlands that gives the hotline number; a couple of years ago there was such a sign, but it was taken down, and it has not been replaced; certainly, erecting a sign with the hotline number would be a courtesy to visitors, and it would be really easy to do; she hopes she has the Commissioners ear, and that it will direct the Utilities Department to solve these two simple problems; she would not be here if these requests had not already been made and ignored; this is a cry for help; and with all of the complexities and challenges that the Board has to deal with, accomplishing this for its constituents should be a slam dunk.

Elizabeth Michelman stated she is not really fond of stump speeches either; the reason for it is she is just going to run through it, the Board is not going to hear her, nobody is going to hear

her, and she provided a document to Board and County Attorney; she is here early to speak about 1260 South Courtenay Boulevard; it is going to be on the Agenda on Thursday; for her, it is a very important issue, because she wants to start drawing a line in the sand; one hears it over and over again, wetlands, flood plains; and she asked when it is going to stop. She remarked she appreciates everything about biosolids, putting a moratorium, and she thinks it is about time the County puts a moratorium on building on its wetlands; she sent Commissioner Goodson an email; in the email it said there was a process for zoning, the three steps; one, a person does the application; two, it has to be advertised; three, a sign has to be put on the property; and she asked if that is correct. She asked how beholden the Board is to that, because there is a sign, and she sent a picture to Commissioner Goodson of the sign, which is sitting there in half; it is not even legible, as it is folded in half; when she went walking, it was 108 degrees, and talked to the neighbors who do not know about this; to her, it does not matter, it is all of the wetlands that are a problem; she provided the Board a picture of the property; and she stated what this is showing the Board is flood lands, plus AE property, which is coastal hazard. She advised she provided information to the Board, and if it needs additional information, she has been doing a lot of research; the reason it is important is because the Board is talking about money; she asked if the Board knows anything about Community Rating System (CRS) and the class system; Brevard is in a contracted agreement with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) that the County has to learn to mitigate flooding; she asked how to mitigate flooding; she advised do not build on wetlands, because that naturally mitigates flooding, so what happens is the County's class grade just went up; she spent a lot of time talking to John Smith who is the County's Flood Plains Manager; they went from a seven to an eight; they just lost five percent of that discount; and that means all of these people talking about not being able to live, their insurance is going up based on that information. She pointed out the Board can stop that; it is not the hardest thing to figure out; it is not rocket science; and she expressed her appreciation to everyone in the room who is wearing yellow.

Commissioner Tobia remarked that the Board is going to listen to Ms. Michelman; what he finds very interesting is he has been here seven years, and she is the first person to come to a Board meeting about a future zoning meeting, so he really appreciates that; he reiterated he has never seen that before, which draws the question over to the Clerk's Office; he asked if the Board has to disclose this as a meeting, or since this was done in an open . . .

Morris Richardson, County Attorney, advised the document that was passed out, Ms. Michelman provided to the Clerk; and John Denninghoff, Assistant County Manager, has a copy that is going to be placed in the zoning file.

Commissioner Tobia asked if the Board has to disclose this as a meeting; in other words . . .

Attorney Richardson replied it is not a meeting for that purpose.

Commissioner Tobia remarked got it.

Thea Beth Thorne introduced her husband Van Lee Thorne to the Board; she stated she has been a registered nurse for 36 years, and her husband is retired from Brevard County Fire Rescue (BCFR) with 29 years as a Lieutenant Emergency Medical Technician (EMT); they are here today to show support for the great men and women of BCFR; she will not rehash the issues that so many people have already said; and the Commissioners are all smart and well-aware of the issues and what is at stake, for not only for the citizens of Brevard County, the firefighters of BCFR, and for the tourists that visit the County. She went on to say her husband was born in Brevard County, and he wanted to stay here and work near his home, his family, and to serve his local community; he chose to stay here for 29 years with the low pay, and many of them did it out of honor and respect for the people here; now many have left and they needed to, had to, they were forced to; she, as a registered nurse, was able to help supplement; but there were many times, there were weeks, when they hoped their children did

not get sick because they could not even afford antibiotics for them; and she hopes that none of them are having to deal with those same issues. She noted they need help; she is just hoping the safety and the well-being is utmost, she heard Chair Steele say that, that he did not care what the cost was for the safety and the well-being of every citizen here; she asked what if one of the Commissioners family members has an accident or heart attack, does he or she want a newbie that is fresh out of school, or does he or she want someone with knowledge and experience; she stated they have a member in the community that was saved with that knowledge; they did the IO into his bone and saved him; and he would have died without that procedure. She asked the Board to reconsider in these negotiations and help these great men and women to remain here in Brevard County where they want to be.

Sandra Sullivan explained she wants to continue with Ms. Michelman's story; she had a cardiac arrest, and the ambulance came to her home; there was an EMT and a Paramedic; the EMT thought she was having stress, like a panic attack; the Paramedic recognized she was having a cardiac arrest; and she is here today, because there was a Paramedic on the ambulance. She mentioned the situation the Board is creating is causing a public safety crisis; the County does not need to bust the cap, raise taxes on the people, because there are several things the Board can do right away to fix this; one is Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and fire, impact fees have not been updated in 32 years; she has read the County's budget; she can see what it is dealing with is primarily growth costs, additional costs of fire trucks and ambulances that have doubled and tripled in cost; and she reiterated, the County is dealing with growth. She stated the assessment, 39 percent back on March 1, 2021, it is going to bring in \$7.2 million; she read, "This increase will provide flexibility to accelerate the timeframe for addressing the wage disparity between Brevard County and identified 2021 comparables of surrounding jurisdiction. It would allow addressing Brevard County Fire Rescue field classifications with surrounding jurisdiction comparables, notwithstanding attrition rates;" she stated there is another thing the Board can do, she is looking at her tax records; in 1998 when Harbour City had a critical failure, the County went to referendum to take those services in-house in Brevard County; and she asked why those cities are not charged for those EMS services. She stated the County only taxed the unincorporated and the small cities that get fire services; she asked what a Countywide service is; is the Board afraid of the lobbyists for the cities; do they have too much power, kind of what was seen with the lifeguards, the pushback; and she noted the County does not have the bravery to address that issue. She provided the Board with a picture of when Rob Feltner ran for County Commissioner in 2022; she read, "Friends, I stand with our fire and emergency rescue personnel. The public safety is top priority for local government. Like you, I support the men and women who support Brevard County as first responders;" she pointed out what people saw in the newspaper is that the Brevard County Commissioners do not really want to address this issue; and she implored the Board to please address it and fill its commitments.

Erika Orriss remarked as someone alluded to, the *Florida TODAY* is not a credible source; she will tell the Board she almost wrote to them because of the situation with the firefighters; she has gone to the negotiations; she sits there and listens; but only when it came to her home did it really start to make sense; to Commissioner Goodson's point, education is so important; many people do not know the County is down on its firefighters, that it is six ambulances down, that it is in a critical shortage; and most people do not know that the staff is overworked. She stated when they come to her house if her husband was having a heart attack, they might be tired, they may have worked three shifts in a row, and most people do not know that; she knows because she has been walking around with a magnifying glass for a year and a half campaigning and learning more about what is going on; she lives in the South Shores and they have one ambulance; she and her husband were sitting on the couch talking about who is going to Publix; her husband was going to go; and all of a sudden she heard a shriek and a thud, and he was having a seizure. She added she called 9-1-1; the dispatcher was wonderful and stayed on the phone with her; the fire truck showed up, not the ambulance; they told her that her husband was in trouble and needed help; they needed an ambulance there fast; but

they had to wait on an ambulance. She advised she did not have to wait on an ambulance long, but knowing that the County was six ambulances down is frightening; she asked what if they had not gotten there in time; they thought he was stroking out; may none of the Commissioners ever hear the words, "Hey, we have to wait on an ambulance;" it is a loved one; the County needs to take care of the people who take care of them; she cannot tell the Board how much this is on her heart; and the firefighters need to make more than the people working at McDonalds.

Cara Cooper stated today she stands before the Board to address a critical issue that affects every resident of Brevard County; as a resident and taxpayer of this County, she feels Fire EMS is on a brink of a service failure reminiscent of the crisis of 1998; without action, it is a guarantee that lives will be lost due to the degradation of Emergency Services; for years Brevard County has been postponing real solutions, choosing short-term fixes that waste tax dollars; and as a result, the County's staff is leaving at alarming rates due to inadequate pay and benefits. She went on to say Commissioner Tobia specifically questioned the Brevard County Fire Rescue employees earning more than some of the County officials, with overtime being factored in; this is unreasonable; these dedicated individuals sacrifice family time to serve the County; she asked how sustainable it is to mandate excessive overtime to fill in these gaps, and then criticize their wages; she noted Commissioner Tobia claims in 2021 impact fees would line the pockets of the union members; and he is creating a false narrative that distracts from the real issue. She mentioned the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) advocates for the rights and the interests of firefighters and Emergency Medical workers at the local, State, and Federal level, similar to the responsibilities the Commissioners took to serve Brevard County; Local 2969 officials take on those responsibilities with very minimal compensation; since 2019, Brevard County Commissioners have ignored a law created from the 1998 voter referendum, which mandates minimum millage rates of .64 percent for EMS services; this rate was intended to support Countywide EMS services; but city residences who receive these services pay nothing. She remarked it is time to enforce this law and ensure that everyone pays their fair share; all Brevard County residents, including those in cities, should be assessed for the EMS portion of the Fire EMS assessment approved back in 2021; currently, only unincorporated areas receiving both fire and EMS services pay these assessments; it is unfair and must be rectified; cities should also contribute to the costs of lifeguard services provided by the County; it is not fair for unincorporated residences to bear this burden; and as the Port expands, the County needs to ask its State Legislators to change the Tourism Development Tax (TDT) statute to allow the use of funds for Fire Rescue EMS, including lifeguard and police services for the designated tourism parks. She stated these funds could help alleviate the financial burden on the Emergency Services; Brevard County cannot afford to wait any longer as populations are expected to increase over 20 percent; police and firefighters face high suicide rates due to job stress and trauma; they lose at least one per day; they proudly call them Brevard's finest; and she asked the Board to support them with the pay that they deserve. She expressed her appreciation to the first responders as she is indebted to their service.

Diana Haines stated she is here to address the issue of the firefighters and disparity in their salaries; she has with her some salaries that she pulled off-line that she thought the public would find interesting; the Clerk of Courts makes approximately \$184,000 a year, so does the Property Appraiser, Supervisor of Elections, and the Tax Collector; the Sheriff makes over \$200,000 a year; and the Commissioners make approximately \$110,000.

Chair Steele stated no, ma'am.

Ms. Haines advised Chair Steele would have to argue with the Office of Economic and Demographic Research.

Chair Steele noted he apologizes, but that is absolutely incorrect, about one-half of that.

Ms. Haines pointed out this is what they provided online; the School Board makes approximately \$50,000; the Superintendent of Schools makes approximately \$184,000; these were posted online, so she is only going to go by that; and they could be wrong. She went on by saying based on the population, there are six other counties where the salaries are approximately \$10,000 more, per year, based on their population amounts; Broward County had about 1.9 million, Duval County has a million, Hillsborough has 1.5 million, Miami has 2.7 million, Orange has 1.4 million, and West Palm has 1.5 million in population; they make \$10,000 more per year according to this document; and Brevard has approximately 693,000 individuals. She stated the very people who are called out to save the Commissioners' lives and the residents' lives, the County is paying them \$15 an hour to start; it is just unconscionable; the fact that they top out somewhere between \$21 and \$25 per hour after 15 years of services, the Board should hang his or her heads in disgrace; this is absolutely disgusting, it is not even livable; these young responders have seen death to magnitudes one cannot imagine; one of the Commissioners should show up on a motorcycle accident, overdose, heart attack, or any of these gruesome scenes that are seen daily now on the news here in Brevard County, a suicide at a Brightline, and he or she can tell her that is only worth \$15 an hour; an elderly friend of hers had an accident on Apollo Boulevard who laid there for five hours before someone finally turned him in; he lost his dog; and the only thing he was concerned about was his dog, which the responders went back and found the dog. She advised it was certainly worth the world to the gentleman; and it is certainly worth more than \$15 an hour.

Susan Connolly remarked that yesterday she turned 75; on this side of life a person sees things a little differently; and she is here to talk about citizen representation. She went on to say when a person gets to be as old as her, she can say they all have experienced some type of situation that involved conflict or did not have an easy resolution; tonight everyone is in this place with all of the problems and issues coming forth; what she also sees evolving, however, between citizens and County Commissioners is anger, ridicule, unbecoming, and unproductive behavior; this is both on the part of citizens and the Commissioners; and she asked what possibly could have driven everyone to resorting to attacks rather than answers to problems. She mentioned she thinks what is happening is a growing focus on people being the problems rather than issues; Charles F. Kettering said, "A problem well-stated is a problem half solved;" she asked the Board to clearly define issues, seek solutions through these opposing viewpoints, and develop solutions that are representative of the people who he or she represents; and after all, at the end of the day, all are citizens, and all are people.

Kristin Lortie stated this pertains to the cost and the lack of accountability of Brevard County leadership; following numerous conflicts between the citizens and local officials at the County Commission this year, a social media post in the Brevard Cares Citizens Coalition Facebook Group has published a line item detail of County Manager, Frank Abbate, and County Attorney, Morris Richardson's year-over-year pay history from 2009 to the present; as of this writing, this post has received over 10,000 views; according to public records, the County Attorney received an \$86,241 increase in 2022 after leaving the City of West Melbourne and returning to Brevard County; and what a nice payday for him when switching jobs and returning to County employment. She continued by saying the County Manager received \$52,858 in increases on the exact same day; when asked about Mr. Abbate's substantial pay increase at the 2023 Citizens Academy, Mr. Abbate responded that his sizable increase had to do with achieving pay equity with the County Attorney; she asked where the pay equity originated; she commented this is a mystery; Attorney Richardson must have some excellent negotiation skills to warrant a 49 percent, \$86,000 pay increase in just a months' time to rejoin the County's employment; and she asked what the reason was that this increase was needed to recruit Attorney Richardson's services back to the County. She advised the increase in these County positions cost taxpayers \$111,770 in annual pay increases in FY 2023 alone; she asked if that sounds like a pretty expensive event for Brevard County for these combined position increases; she noted records requests have also revealed that neither position has been receiving annual performance evaluations from the County Commissioners; she asked if these individuals would be receiving

annual performance reviews as noted in their contracts; were their sizable pay increases warranted; do their current salaries of \$275,000 and \$265,000 a year warrant a five percent annual cost of living increase for them to keep up with inflation; would it save taxpayers of cost of living adjustments or limited to lower paid positions; and while the County Attorney and Manager are enjoying their generous salaries, and the absence of performance evaluations, what can the County taxpayers look forward to, including the firefighters that are present today, fighting for their own equitable compensation. She inquired how many speakers have been interrupted and possibly removed from this very meeting, interrupted, but not so far removed; when will the Brevard County leaders start assisting residents instead of belittling them; she requested that this comment and the pay history detail be included in the meeting minute records for July 9, 2024; a hard copy is being provided to the Clerk of Courts; people should know what is going on in Brevard County; these reviews need to happen; and these pay things need to be known by the public.

Katie Delaney commented she had a speech written, but she is not going to use it; she has been going to the negotiation meetings since February; since February, the contracted attorney that costs over \$300 an hour, and that is just his base pay, promised they would talk about wages in the April meeting; the April meeting came and went; the firefighters came on their off time to witness that meeting; and no wage package was brought forward. She went on to say then they promised it would be the June meeting; the June meeting came, the wage packet was brought, but to many peoples surprise, they apparently were not listening the months prior when the Fire Union was telling the County that the wages that were needed were not in the front of the contract; it was for the people who have been here who have been serving this community for 10-plus years, and they cannot even afford to get their kids shoes; she received a call from a District Chief who was so upset because one of their people literally said they were a single father of a little girl and he could not even afford shoes for this child, yet he puts himself in the line of duty for the citizens of the County, and his kid cannot get shoes; negotiations are not over, Commissioners Pritchett and Tobia; both Commissioners have been here for seven years; and this is not a new problem. She pointed out this is the Board's problem; it would be nice when the Commissioners go off to his or her next thing, which each is trying to get a new office, if he or she would take care of the 200-plus people that showed up to be in this room today; she rejects the Board saying it is the same 10 people that come here, because there are 200-plus of her friends who showed up; these people are busy; they have work schedules; she is lucky enough, privileged enough to be able to spend her time making sure that people on boards like this are not screwing over the people; and people should not have to show up like this in force, because the Board should be doing its job serving the public. She stated at the very least, Mr. Abbate should look at these people in the face, because he has been here.

Chair Steele asked everyone to sit down now.

Ms. Delaney stated she thought Chair Steele was with the firefighters.

Chair Steele advised he is, but that has nothing to do with the disruption that is going on right now.

Ms. Delaney asked who is going to hold Mr. Abbate accountable.

Chair Steele asked Ms. Delaney not to start this again tonight; and he asked Attorney Richardson to respond to this.

Attorney Richardson stated he is good; the speaker's time is over; he has the right to bring the meeting to order; but he has his right to call down the speaker.

Chair Steele pointed out her time was not over, there was another 10 or 15 seconds; she is intentionally trying to disrupt; and he asked to take a five-minute break.

\*The meeting recessed at 7:47 p.m. and reconvened at 7:51 p.m.

**L.5. Reports, Re: John Tobia, Commissioner District 3**

Chair Steele advised he understands everybody's feelings and passion tonight; he is going to let this go; the Board is going to try to move forward in a positive manner; he is going to ask for a motion to adjourn the meeting; the Board cannot discuss anything with the audience in regards to negotiations, because they are in the middle of negotiations, and it will not do any good; he thinks they made their point tonight; he respects it, and he thinks the Board respects it; and he asked for a motion to adjourn.

Commissioner Tobia stated he will skip over all of the useful Florida Facts, but he does have a County employee to recognize who has been diligently waiting; Rosann Meyer, Accountant II, Public Works Department; she has six years of service; she has 15 years of experience in finance with eight years of government experience in accounting; her job duties include processing invoices, purchasing requisitions, billings, and monitoring and analyzing budgets; in addition, she supports multiple programs within Public Works, has trained multiple new employees during her time with the County; and most importantly, she is an extremely loyal and dedicated employee who is always willing to help. He noted a fun fact is Ms. Meyer enjoys quilting, reading, traveling, and spending time with her family; in fact, she enjoys quilting so much she has generously donated countless hours of her time creating multiple quilts for different organizations, one of which is for an orphanage in Honduras; and he expressed his appreciation to Ms. Meyer for her dedicated service.

Upon vote and motion, the meeting adjourned at 7:54 p.m.

**Result:** Approved

**Mover:** Tom Goodson

**Second:** Rob Feltner

**Ayes:** Pritchett, Goodson, Tobia, Feltner, and Steele

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
RACHEL SADOFF, CLERK

\_\_\_\_\_  
JASON STEELE, CHAIR  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

As approved by the Board August 27, 2024.