

JANUARY 13, 2004 – REGULAR MEETING

The Board of County Commissioners, Walton County, Florida, held a Regular Meeting on Tuesday, January 13, 2004 at 4:00 p.m. in Courtroom B of the Walton County Courthouse.

The following Board members were present: Larry Jones, Chair, Tim Pauls, Vice-Chair, Commissioner Rosier Cuchens, Commissioner Lane Rees, and Commissioner Kenneth Pridgen. Mr. Mike Underwood, County Administrator, Attorney Gary Vorbeck, Legal Services Director, and Ms. Martha Ingle, Clerk of Courts, were also present.

Commissioner Cuchens led with prayer followed by the pledge of allegiance to the American Flag. Chairman Jones called the meeting to order.

Mr. Phillip Ellis, Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance, presented the Board with a plaque of appreciation for their support and funding of the Coastal Dune Lake Program.

Motion by Commissioner Rees, second by Commissioner Pauls to approve consent agenda as presented. Ayes 5, Nayes 0. Rees Aye, Pridgen Aye, Jones Aye, Cuchens Aye, Pauls Aye.

1. EAL Approval	
General Fund	\$ 1,346,167.52
County Transportation	\$ 547,405.55
SHIP	\$ 28,840.44
Fine & Forfeiture	\$ 855,040.61
Debt Service Hospital	\$ -
Mosq. Control State	\$ -
Mott Sign Grant	\$ -
Section 8 Housing	\$ 424.16
Tourist Dev. Council	\$ 372,467.44
N.W. Mosquito Control	\$ 2,802.64

W. Co. Library	\$	24,218.70
Recreation Plat Fee	\$	3,319.84
Public Safety- 911	\$	13,737.90
Solid Waste Enterprise	\$	173,659.42
Mossy Head VFD	\$	2,209.67
Glendale VFD	\$	2,314.51
Darlington VFD	\$	478.05
Liberty VFD	\$	-
Red Bay VFD	\$	1,376.07
Local Option Gas Tax	\$	-
Special Law Enf. Trust	\$	-
Driftwood Debt Service	\$	876.23
Bldg Dept/Enterp. Fund	\$	19,801.01
Capital Projects Fund	\$	16,162.26
Imperial Lakes MSBU	\$	94.92
Totals	\$	3,411,396.94

2. Approve Minutes of December 15, 2003-Special Meeting  
December 16, 2003-LandUse Hearing
3. Records Disposition Request
4. Surplus Equipment from the Building Department
5. Surplus Equipment from Clerk's Office
6. Resolution for Local Law Enforcement Block Grant (2004-02)
7. Resolution for Local Law Enforcement Block Grant Program  
(2004-03)

Mr. Russ Barry presented a request to reduce the speed on New Harmony Loop due to the dangerous situation. The speed limit would be reduced from 35 to 25 mph for the entire length of the road. Chairman Jones agreed that this was needed.

Motion by Commissioner Pauls, second by Commissioner Pridgen to approve reducing the speed limit on New Harmony Loop. Ayes 5, Nays 0. Jones Aye, Rees Aye, Pauls Aye, Cuchens Aye, and Pridgen Aye.

Mr. Barry also presented a request from Arvida to reduce speed on CR 30A between Deer Lake and Camp Creek Lake from 45 to 35. Mr. Arner recommended reducing the speed, in addition to double striping the road. Commissioner Rees voiced

concern with this issue being discussed and the public not being aware of the issue due to it not being on the agenda. Chairman Jones also asked for an explanation of the double striping. This issue will be brought back before the Board.

Chairman Jones called the public hearing to order. Mr. Bill Imfeld presented information regarding the Sheriff's Criminal Justice Education Fund. Sheriff Johnson has requested that \$20,000 be made available for training purposes. Chairman Jones closed the public hearing after no public comments were voiced.

Motion by Commissioner Cuchens, second by Commissioner Pauls to adopt a resolution (2004-01) transferring \$20,000 from reserves into the current budget for the purpose of training. Ayes 5, Nays 0. Rees Aye, Pridgen Aye, Jones Aye, Cuchens Aye, Pauls Aye.

Mr. Dewey Wilson, President and General Manager of Florida Community Services, appeared before the Board requesting land use approval for a spray field. He explained that a large area is needed and he has located a site on the North American Farm properties, with the option to purchase. This will completely handle all wet weather disposal and provide additional capacity for the City of Freeport if needed. The purchase is approximately \$15 million, which will come from developer fees. Mr. Scott Brannon, Freeport City Council, stated that this is a top priority for bringing sewer to the city. This project will enable the city to service the needed areas. This will also enhance economic growth and help with the U.S. 331 commercial corridor. He stated that the city is looking forward to working out the details. Mr. Brannon stated that he would be presenting this issue back to his Board at their meeting. Commissioner Rees questioned the current land designation. Mr. Wilson stated that it is Agriculture. Mr. Wilson further stated that they

would be providing buffering around the site and ensures that all safeguards are put in place.

Motion by Commissioner Rees, second by Commissioner Cuchens to approve for Regional Utilities to proceed with the land use at First North American Farms as a spray field. Commissioner Pauls stated that he was encouraged by the support from the City of Freeport. He felt that this is the right time to proceed. Commissioner Cuchens agreed and commented on this opportunity and the vision for the future. Ayes 5, Nays 0. Rees Aye, Pridgen Aye, Jones Aye, Cuchens Aye, Pauls Aye.

Mr. Wilson stated that he met with Water Management and they are willing to come before the Board to give a presentation on the current water conditions. He also requested to schedule a public hearing to consider a rate restructure. Commissioner Pauls stressed the importance of public awareness regarding this issue.

Chairman Jones spoke about water shortages around the state. He stated how important it is to protect our own water resource, in addition to seeking an alternate source. He asked that staff be allowed to begin researching this matter. The Board concurred.

Commissioner Cuchens stated that he has a copy of the Gulf County resolution supporting the continued inclusion of “Local Sources First Policy” opposing any amendment to water resource policy. Commissioner Cuchens recommended reviewing the resolution in consideration of adopting a similar ordinance. Mr. Wilson stated that he would endorse that ordinance and advised to pass it on to Walton County’s representatives in Tallahassee. Chairman Jones felt that this would be the first step in protecting our resources. Commissioner Pauls asked that someone be designated and

clear direction be given in order to get the job done. He also recommended reviewing all of the studies that have previously been done at the direction of this board. Mr. Underwood stated that he would begin this process.

Mr. Jesse Borthwick, Sr. Environmental Scientist for Eglin AFB, appeared before the Board along with Molly Palmer, Deputy Chief of Staff for DEP; Secretary Struess; Bob Black, Defense Advisor to Congressman Miller; Deborah Keller, Nature Conservancy; and Luke Genoloni. Commissioner Rees voiced his appreciation to Mr. Borthwick for speaking with him. Commissioner Rees stated that he asked the Board to allow Mr. Borthwick to give this presentation. Mr. Borthwick spoke about the Northwest Florida Greenway.

Ms. Palmer gave an overview of the Greenway and how the plan was passed. The greenway is 100 mile by 10 mile and remains largely undeveloped. She stated that the greenway follows the current flight path of military aircraft on training exercises. She spoke about the concept and how it developed with the help of the Nature Conservancy. She stated that DEP bought the first parcel in the greenway. Recently, the Department of Defense joined the partnership. She stated that the greenway project is a land acquisition project. She addressed concerns over removing the property from the tax roll and stated that the State and DEP has a payment in lieu of taxes program, which reimburses local governments for actual tax loses incurred. She stated that Walton County does qualify for that program. Ms. Palmer stated that much of the land will be purchased through conservation easements, therefore the land would not be removed from the tax roll.

Mr. Borthwick introduced Mr. Gary Pelham who is the lead for the encroachment program.

Mr. Borthwick explained why this open space is needed. What is the vision for the open space for the future? He explained the proposed location of the greenway and gave a brief history of Eglin inception and some of its beginning activities. He also spoke about the other air force installations in this area. Mr. Borthwick also explained the environmental stewardship and their natural resource management plans. He spoke about Eglin's established air space including that space over the Gulf of Mexico. Part of the greenway corridor is to protect the endangered species. The Florida National Scenic Trail Group is also looking to preserve an area. The Greenway partners include: Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Air Armament Partner, The Nature Conservancy, and the Okaloosa Economic Development Council. Mr. Borthwick spoke about the Memorandum of Partnership Agreement. Commissioner Rees questioned about becoming a partner. He explained the concept of partnering and stated that they would like to have Walton County join in the agreement. The concept is preserving open space through partnerships. Commissioner Pauls asked if Mr. Borthwick has reviewed the Future Land Use Map. Mr. Borthwick stated that he had and that he has also reviewed the county's strategic plan and vision. Commissioner Pauls spoke about mitigation properties and felt that points should be awarded for mitigation. Commissioner Cuchens questioned if this would have any impact on the airport. Mr. Borthwick stated that the airport should not be affected in any way.

Ms. Keller explained who the Nature Conservancy Group is, how they were formed, and their mission. They are 52 years old with a mission to preserve the biodiversities of life and are part of a national organization. She spoke about their strategies on how to preserve the properties. Ms. Keller presented statistics about

properties that have been preserved by polls taken by their organization. She further explained the boundaries of the conservancy. The Board thanked Mr. Borthwick for his presentation. Commissioner Rees felt that it was the consensus to support the initiative and become a partner.

The commissioners recessed briefly.

Chairman Jones called the public hearing to order regarding the C.W. Fisher Abandonment. Attorney Colleen Coffield appeared before the Board and presented an agreement for right of way. She explained that a road was constructed on her client's property. Mr. Fisher has agreed to deed the property to the county in exchange for an abandonment by the county. That portion of road to be abandoned is that part of Driftwood Drive where the road should have been constructed. Compensation will also be paid and utilities fees will be waived. The Planning Commission and staff both recommended approval.

Motion by Commissioner Rees, second by Commissioner Pauls to adopt a resolution (2004-07) approving the Fisher Agreement in exchange for the abandonment by the county. Ayes 5, Nays 0. Rees Aye, Pridgen Aye, Jones Aye, Cuchens Aye, Pauls Aye.

The floor was opened for public comment. Mr. Brian Coins stated that he has a contract to purchase lot 17. He questioned what changes would take place as a result of this action. Mr. Vorbeck explained that this is correcting an error and that no change would occur as a result of this agreement. The public hearing closed.

Chairman Jones called for a vote on the motion. Ayes 5, Nays 0. Rees Aye, Pridgen Aye, Jones Aye, Cuchens Aye, Pauls Aye.

Mr. David Hewitt, scheduled on the agenda, was not present.

Mr. Maurice Gilbert, appeared before the Board on behalf of the TDC asking to schedule a public hearing on Feb 24<sup>th</sup> beginning at 8:30 a.m. to consider an ordinance relating to the TDC tax.

Motion by Commissioner Pauls, second by Commissioner Pridgen to schedule a public hearing to consider adoption of the TDC Tax Ordinance on the 24<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 a.m. Ayes 5, Nays 0. Rees Aye, Pridgen Aye, Jones Aye, Cuchens Aye, Pauls Aye.

Mrs. Kris Titus, Executive Director of the South Walton Tourist Development Council, requested authorization to trade a damaged tractor (BCC #4390) for a John Deere 727 A 2 Trak Mower due to extensive costs to repair the damaged tractor.

Motion by Commissioner Pauls, second by Commissioner Pridgen to approve the request to trade the damaged tractor. Ayes 5, Nays 0. Rees Aye, Pridgen Aye, Jones Aye, Cuchens Aye, Pauls Aye.

Mr. Mike Standley appeared before the Board requesting assistance with the expense of fire hydrants in the City of DeFuniak Springs. There are about 61 fire hydrants to install in the expansion area. Chairman Jones recognized Councilmen McLeod and Harrison, who were also present. The Board directed Mr. Imfeld to meet with the City to determine the best possible way to assist with funding for this project. Mr. Standley spoke about the placement of the hydrants.

Ms. Kris Titus appeared before the Board on behalf of the Catherine Cole Taylor Center for The Arts. She stated that they hired a group to perform a feasibility study. Mr. Kovaceich presented the information from the study. He spoke about how the study was performed and determined that raising \$6 million was not feasible. They agreed to

proceed with a fundraising campaign of \$2-4 million. The public felt that there were several issues that needed to be addressed before contributing. He spoke about the elements measured by the study and the popularity of the project. Commissioner Rees questioned if the people felt that this project is an overlap of other projects. Mr. Kovaceich stated that some felt that it is. However, the majority did not feel that it is an overlap of services. Commissioner Rees asked about future expansion of the facility. Mr. Kovaceich stated that the goal is to phase it in. Commissioner Pauls commended the Board who worked on this issue for their honesty in evaluating the feasibility of this project.

Mr. Charlie Burke appeared before the Board on behalf of the Scenic Corridor Association. He spoke about the importance of communication and then introduced Ms. Janet Reeves to speak about the guidelines.

Ms. Reeves, owner of Footprints Gift Shop, stated that she attended a code meeting regarding a violation she received due to outdoor storage and neon lighting. She stated that Code Enforcement removed a yard sale sign from her property. She felt that Code Enforcement is using selective enforcement and is very harassing. She asked the commissioners to obtain a transcript for review. Mr. Burke asked Commissioner Pauls to address the Scenic Corridor Business Association. Commissioner Pauls accepted the invitation.

Mr. Steve Cowen appeared before the Board to request a letter of support for the Muscogee Nation of Florida. The letter is in support of a grant request in the amount of \$50,000 to the Florida Department of State, Bureau of Historic Preservation.

Motion by Commissioner Rees, second by Commissioner Pridgen to provide a letter of support on behalf of the Muscogee Nation of Florida. Ayes 5, Nays 0. Rees Aye, Pridgen Aye, Jones Aye, Cuchens Aye, Pauls Aye.

Mr. Herman Chrishon appeared before the Board for an update for the issues he previously presented. He spoke about employment and hiring issues. Mr. Chrishon felt that the hiring process has not been handled fairly and asked the commissioners to review the situation.

Mr. Chad Myers, grandson of Mr. Tilley, appeared before the Board. Mr. Tilley donated the property known as Tilley Landing. He stated that it is now four years into the project and there is still no resolution. He stated that his property and livestock have been vandalized and is therefore requesting help in protecting his land until the project is complete. He stated that there is an agreement with the Northwest Florida Water Management District; however, they have failed to abide by it. Mr. Myers stated that they continue to give excuses for not completing the project. Mr. Barry explained that the NWFWM has asked the county to assist by providing an excavator and operator. Mr. Myers stated that no one has even worked on the project in over six months. Commissioner Rees asked Mr. Underwood to assist with the problem. Commissioner Pauls spoke about the agreement with the NWFWM and felt that the county should attempt to find out what it would cost for the county to complete the project. Mr. Myers uncle asked for a gate to be reinstalled near the road to prevent the public from entering their property for safety reasons. Chairman Jones said that the Board needs to convey to the NWFWM District that the terms of the contract need to be met. Attorney Vorbeck said the county can request them to construct a fence. Commissioner Pauls suggested that

Mr. Fischer of the NWFWM answer why action has not been taken. The Board agreed to contact Mr. George Fisher regarding this issue. Mr. Underwood will contact Mr. Fisher.

Mr. Collier did not present any items for discussion.

Mr. Ronnie Bell, Emergency Response Director, presented a request regarding a road name change for WWII Veteran's Road near the Landfill. Mr. Bell further advised that in order to designate a portion of U.S. Highway 331 as "War Veteran's Memorial Boulevard", the Board would have to submit a request to our local Legislative delegation.

Motion by Commissioner Rees, second by Commissioner Pridgen to adopt a resolution requesting consideration to designate a portion of U.S. Highway 331 as "War Veteran's Memorial Boulevard". Mr. Don Crim asked if "War" could be dropped from the name. Commissioner Rees amended the motion to drop "War" from the name, second by Commissioner Pridgen. Ayes 5, Nays 0. Rees Aye, Pridgen Aye, Jones Aye, Cuchens Aye, Pauls Aye. The section of roadway being recommended is U.S. Highway 331 from the intersection of U.S. 90 and U.S. 331 South to the Woodlawn Community.

Mr. Bell presented a summary on the Walton County Continuity of Operations Plan. This plan establishes a framework for an effective system of comprehensive emergency management. He asked the Board to adopt a resolution in support of the plan.

Motion by Commissioner Pauls, second by Commissioner Pridgen to approve a resolution (2004-06) in support of the Walton County Continuity of Operations Plan. Mr. Bell advised the Board that the county received \$25,000 from the State for this plan. He explained that Mr. Baltzley compiled the plan himself rather than contracting it out as most counties have done. Mr. Bell stated that the plan was so well drafted that the Department of Community Affairs has referred other counties to speak with Mr. Baltzley

to discuss how it was done. Chairman Jones called for a vote. Ayes 5, Nays 0. Rees Aye, Pridgen Aye, Jones Aye, Cuchens Aye, Pauls Aye.

Mr. Bell presented a brief outline of the Walton County Terrorism Appendix (C4) to the Walton County CEMP (Annex C).

Motion by Commissioner Pridgen, second by Commissioner Pauls to adopt a resolution (2004-04) approving the Terrorism Incident Response Plan. Ayes 5, Nays 0. Rees Aye, Pridgen Aye, Jones Aye, Cuchens Aye, Pauls Aye.

Mr. Bell presented information regarding the EMS pay system. He stated that this has caused problems and asked to pay all EMS employees for 24-hour shifts rather than 19 hours. He stated that additional funding might be needed to cover the expenses, which would incur about \$90,000. This is to help ensure that Walton County is being competitive with surrounding counties and to help retain personnel. Mr. Bell also explained the need for additional Paramedics and stated that they are continuing to advertise the vacancies.

Motion by Commissioner Pauls, second by Commissioner Cuchens to approve the pay change and to provide the necessary additional funding to cover related salaries. Ayes 5, Nays 0. Rees Aye, Pridgen Aye, Jones Aye, Cuchens Aye, Pauls Aye.

Mr. Bell presented information from the American Red Cross regarding the Citizen Corps Council and the need to develop (CERT), Citizen Emergency Response Teams. Mr. Bell is working with the ARC in surrounding counties to set up CERT teams in Walton, Okaloosa and Santa Rosa Counties. Mr. Bell requested support of a support letter for application.

Motion by Commissioner Cuchens, second by Commissioner Rees to approve a letter of support for the CERT teams. Ayes 5, Nays 0. Rees Aye, Pridgen Aye, Jones Aye, Cuchens Aye, Pauls Aye.

Commissioner Rees asked about animal control relating to a recommendation for a facility. Mr. Bell stated that he will be meeting with the committee and is hopeful of presenting a recommendation back at the next meeting. Mr. Bell commended the Board for the group established to review this issue.

Commissioner Rees question Mr. Vorbeck about an updated alcohol ordinance regarding the distance for the sale of alcohol. Mr. Vorbeck advised that this will be brought back before the Board at a later date. Commissioner Pauls also requested that this item be discussed further.

Mr. Underwood presented the meeting dates for 2004. Chairman Jones stated that the schedule was made at the direction of the Board. Commissioner Pauls stated that more sufficient room is needed for the public when they are held in DeFuniak Springs. The meetings will be moved to Courtroom A when available.

Mr. Underwood presented a letter from the Florida Department of Transportation regarding a vacant parcel located at U.S. Highway 98 and Mole Drive. They have declared the property as surplus and can sell the parcel or donate it to the county. Commissioner Pauls felt there is a need for the property. Mr. Underwood requested the Board adopt a resolution declaring it as a public purpose.

Motion by Commissioner Cuchens, second by Commissioner Rees to adopt a resolution (2004-05) stating that the Board has determined that the county can utilize this

property to provide a multi-use facility for the county and the community. Ayes 5, Nays 0. Rees Aye, Pridgen Aye, Jones Aye, Cuchens Aye, Pauls Aye.

Mr. Underwood advised the commissioners that he has received several complaints that the fencing around the old hospital needs to be replaced, as well as the roof. He spoke with Mr. Collier about the issue and the future use of the facility. He recommended preparing the site for demolition. He further suggested moving those county employees at the Warren Building to a location near the courthouse. Mr. Underwood stated that demolition would cost approximately \$50,000. Discussion was held regarding the bonds that were issued in 1992 to secure funding for the hospital. He further suggested enhancing the Warren Building to house senior citizens and requested approval for demolition of the old hospital.

Mr. JB Hillard, Greater DeFuniak Springs Association, stated that this was their previous recommendation. He also felt that using the Warren Building to house senior citizens would be appropriate. The City of DeFuniak would need to grant approval on how the area is developed. He stated that he does not object to tearing the building down. Mr. Hillard encouraged the Board to involve the city council and those citizens who live near the old hospital.

Mr. Harrison, City Council, stated that he is not opposed to removing the building and asked the Board to consider the possibility of using that property as a park.

Commissioner Pauls questioned if the bond is secured by the property. Vorbeck stated that it is secured by ad-valorem taxes by vote of the people. Bill Imfeld stated that the loan would have to be paid in full upon disposal of the property. Commissioner Pauls

felt that public input needs to be offered before proceeding forward. Mr. Hillard also asked about the designated zoning.

Chairman Jones spoke about previous discussion regarding an assisted living facility. He stated that this issue needs to be given serious consideration. Roy McLeod stated that \$1.43 million dollars would be owed if the property is disposed of.

Commissioner Cuchens stated that neighboring counties have taken similar facilities and revamped it as a veteran's facility/clinic under lease with the county. He would like to research this issue further and would like the demolition cost in writing. Commissioner Pauls asked for input from the City Council. Mr. McLeod felt that there would not be any opposition to a park.

Commissioner Pauls requested approval to submit a letter to the State Department of Forestry for public works to schedule the removal of a metal building from Legion Park. He stated that the Bureau of Land Management owns the property and the county did not have the right to place a building on that property. He recommended relocating the building to the Blue Mountain site. This would allow TDC to move forward with their plans at Legion Park. The Board directed Mr. Collier to have the building removed if at a reasonable cost, otherwise to take the building down. Mr. Collier stated that it would cost \$60,000 to \$80,000 to relocate the building with a new slab. Commissioner Pauls stated that the community would prefer to have the park restored. Mr. Barry stated that his crews could remove and dispose of the building. Mr. Bell stated that the fire departments could possibly use it. Commissioner Pauls stated that the building is currently being used for storage by the county and TDC.

Commissioner Pauls brought up the issue of exempt employees and tracking their hours. He questioned if there is a tracking system for the amount of time they work or if they are compensated in any way for their overtime. Mr. Mattison stated that an exempt employee is expected to work 50-60 hours a week. He stated that they attempt to provide flexibility by allowing department heads to make these decisions. He stated that the exempt employees hours are only tracked relating to time off, not the hours worked.

Commissioner Pauls commented that Ken Little is doing an excellent job. He felt that improvement could occur regarding county events. He suggested a master calendar be kept for all county meetings and events to provide better public information. Mr. Little commented about steps he has taken to make necessary improvements for informing the public.

Commissioner Pauls stated that the review of the road paving priority list would be deferred to the strategic plan discussion.

Commissioner Cuchens asked about the policy for road paving widths. He stated that the recommendation was set for 24 feet total. He felt that the consensus of the Board was something more narrow. He is still looking for something to minimize the width requirements. Mr. Barry stated that this is one issue that he would be discussing at the next meeting with Mr. Arner.

Commissioner Cuchens stated that the residents of the Farmer's Unrecorded Subdivision have requested a name change to Hammock Point Subdivision. Mr. Vorbeck advised that this issue needs to be researched to ensure that it is truly an unrecorded subdivision. If it is, the plat would need to be amended.

Commissioner Cuchens requested a street light for the intersection of Bob Sikes Road and Woodyard Road.

Motion by Commissioner Pauls, second by Cuchens to approve the installation of a light at the intersection of Bob Sikes Road and Woodyard Road. Ayes 5, Nays 0. Rees Aye, Pridgen Aye, Jones Aye, Cuchens Aye, Pauls Aye.

Commissioner Cuchens spoke about the stop signs at Rosemary Beach. Mr. Barry stated that Mr. Arner will be presenting several options at the next meeting. However, his recommendation is to remove them. Commissioner Pauls requested that representatives of Rosemary Beach be invited to the next meeting.

Commissioner Cuchens felt that this issue regarding the recycling center property has basically been taken care of with the proposal presented by Mr. Dewey Wilson. Commissioner Pauls stated that the RFP's need to be evaluated. Commissioner Cuchens felt it would be better for the county to obtain the property. Mr. Underwood advised that the bids have been received and reviewed. Appraisals have been received for two of the parcels and he is waiting to hear from Waste Management.

Commissioner Cuchens asked Mr. Underwood to contact Waste Management regarding individuals whose garbage is not being picked up.

Commissioner Cuchens asked for update on the Watertower Road. Mr. Barry stated that he is awaiting permits and design.

Chairman Jones requested to set a date for the Strategic Plan Meeting on February 26<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m. at EOC. The Board concurred.

Chairman Jones stressed the need to move forward on the water resources issue.

Chairman Jones advised that the Oklahoma State University Foundation has contacted the county about donating 2 lots in the South Orange Crest Subdivision. The Board declined the offer because of the lack of access to the property. The county will submit a letter advising them of the decision.

Chairman Jones recommended appointing a group of 10 citizens, 2 per commissioner, to discuss the functions of the county. Each division direction would be assigned a committee member to discuss pending issues to help improve communications. In addition, Mr. Jones also recommended comprising subcommittees to bring public input into the meetings. This would allow better communications between government and the public. Commissioner Cuchens agreed that more public input would be better. Discussion was held regarding the committees' requirements for abiding by the Sunshine Law. Commissioner Pauls stated that he is interested in developing this concept. The Board will consider this issue further. Ms. Ingle informed the Board how her advisory committee functions and how helpful it is in providing better communications.

Commissioner Pridgen requested that representatives from Hartman & Associates and Preble-Rish report to the Board about ongoing activities and the status of various projects. He felt that it would be beneficial to the Board as to why projects are being delayed. Commissioner Cuchens also favored having them appear before the Board. The general consensus was to have them report to the Board periodically.

Commissioner Pridgen also asked for an update on grant projects. He requested information on how much money the county has expended and how much was collected.

How many extensions were granted and why, and what projects remain incomplete Mr. Infeld will research this information and provide a response.

Commissioner Rees addressed the draft rules for the board of county commission meetings. Attorney Coley prepared a draft set of rules designed to provide simple protocol for the meetings. Ms. Coley stated that this came from Broward County. She requested input from other commissioners. Commissioner Pauls felt that a methodology should be adopted to follow. The board will discuss this further and bring back at the next meeting.

Commissioner Rees spoke about an early look at the budget process and the recommendations made by Mr. Powdermaker and Mr. Scupin, Walton County Taxpayers Group. There were 10 recommendations from the group and all but one of them have been implemented. He expressed appreciation for the work of the taxpayer group's recommendations and staffs implementing (in full or in part) the recommendations. He encouraged public input on the strategic plan for a better process. He also commented on the need for the various community-based organizations to become self-sustaining. Commissioner Rees stated that he is excited about the modified zero based budget process.

There were no public comments offered by the public.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_

Larry D. Jones, Chair

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_

Martha Ingle, Clerk of Court