

MINUTES
SEMINOLE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MONTHLY WORK SESSION
BEALL CENTER
TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 2026
5:00 P.M.

The Seminole County Board of Commissioners held their Regular Monthly Work Session on Tuesday, March 10, 2026. The meeting was held at the Beall Center. Those present were Chairman Shelia Williams, Vice Chairman Darius Culverson, Commissioner Mark Spooner, Commissioner Jeffrey Braswell, and County Manager/Clerk Paula Granger. Commissioner Brenda Williams was absent due to illness. The agenda for the regular monthly meeting was discussed with no action taken.

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Chairman Williams called the meeting to order. Commissioner Jeffrey Braswell gave the invocation which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll call was conducted. All were present except for Commissioner Brenda Williams. A quorum was established.

Approval of Agenda

Chairman Williams requested an addendum to the agenda to accommodate Ms. Melody Pierce from WorkSource, who would be moved to item 6a under Citizen Comments, with Ms. Jessica Givens moved to 6b. Commissioner Braswell made a motion to amend the agenda as requested. Motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Culverson. All in favor, motion passed.

Citizen Comments

Ms. Melody Pierce - WorkSource Southwest Georgia

Ms. Melody Pierce, Executive Director of WorkSource Southwest Georgia, presented information about a \$985,000 grant awarded to assist dislocated workers following the plant closing in Early County that impacted over 534 employees. The grant, which expires in June 2027, is available to any individual within the 14-county service area, including Seminole County. The program offers upskilling opportunities through subsidized training, including CDL training and other short-term programs not typically covered by federal aid like Pell grants.

Ms. Pierce explained the on-the-job training component, where WorkSource can reimburse employers 50 percent of salary costs for up to six months for new hires who meet eligibility requirements. This allows businesses to reinvest funds into inventory or existing employees. She emphasized that both job seekers and employers must be vetted for eligibility before any funds are disbursed. Ms. Pierce requested the commissioners' assistance in spreading awareness about the program through flyers with QR codes and asked them to share information through social media, church bulletins, and other community channels. She offered to provide electronic copies and to present to city commissioners as well.

Ms. Jessica Givens - Acts 29 The Next Chapter Incorporated

Ms. Jessica Givens presented information about a nonprofit youth development organization known as Acts 29 The Next Chapter. The faith-rooted program focuses on providing teens and preteens with practical skills, community service opportunities, music, agriculture, science, and leadership development. Current programs include a flock project teaching responsibility, animal care, and teamwork.

Ms. Givens requested county sponsorship for rural development grants that would help secure land for an educational ranch serving as a home base for youth programs including agriculture, gardening, leadership retreats, and environmental education. She clarified that the county would not provide funding but would only need to be listed as a sponsor on grant applications, as rural grants require county endorsement rather than individual applications. The organization is fully incorporated with 501c3 status and has established banking and financial systems.

Ms. Givens explained that having a rural community event program would open opportunities for additional grants both for her organization and potentially for the county. The program would serve Seminole County residents initially but would not restrict participation from neighboring counties. Plans include potential residential facilities for foster care system integration, though that development is projected for 3-5 years down the road. Chairman Williams requested that she follow up with County Manager Paula Granger to provide detailed information for board review before any voting takes place. The grant deadline is before July 2026, though other grant opportunities would be available if that timeline is not met.

Constitutional Officer / Department Manager / Officials / Authority Updates

4H Agent, Ms. Cindy Meadows

The Board commended Ms. Cindy Meadows on achieving the AG Person of the Year Award.

Ms. Cindy Meadows provided a comprehensive report covering September 2025 through March 2026 activities. The 4H program conducted 72 total club meetings for fifth through seventh grade students at Seminole County schools, focusing on educational lessons and community service. Notable achievements included the junior land judging team placing first at the state competition and successful participation in various livestock shows and competitions.

Ms. Meadows highlighted the Seminole County Southwest Georgia Invitational Livestock Show held with Young Farmers and FFA, attracting exhibitors from Alabama, Florida, and Georgia. 4H members participated in numerous state-level competitions and conferences, with Seminole County having the most participants in the Southwest District. The program initiated new activities including shotgun practices and the first-ever horse quiz bowl program. Recent events included the Seminole County Hog Show, 4H Day at the Capitol where one member served as a page, and a milkshake contest with ten participants.

Regarding ANR Agent Justin Odoms' accomplishments, Ms. Meadows reported his December graduation with a master's degree in plant protection and pest management from the University of Georgia. She noted that he has served three years with Seminole County Extension. Mr. Odom serves on multiple committees including farm tours, livestock shows, and agricultural advisory councils. He has hosted numerous production meetings for cotton, peanuts, corn, and beef, and conducted various research trials. The 2025 farm tour was successfully coordinated with the harvest festival.

Chairman Williams commended both agents for their excellent work, noting that her grandchildren enjoy 4H and praising Ms. Meadows for her dedication and the program's first-place winners. Commissioner Braswell inquired about equipment needs, and Ms. Meadows mentioned they would eventually need van rotation due to high mileage but confirmed they are currently in good shape with their 2018 vehicle. Commissioner Culverson noted the positive reputation Seminole County maintains at state events, with other counties praising their participation levels.

EMA Director / Volunteer Fire Chief, Mr. Kale King

Chief King reported on grant applications currently pending, including the Golden Triangle Grant typically awarded annually to all applicants, a \$20,000 Georgia Fireworks Grant with drawing results pending, and a Georgia Forestry 50/50 grant for \$10,000. He announced that the fire department received their ISO rating letter confirming implementation of a new 5-5Y split classification rating effective June 1st. Properties within five miles of a fire station will receive a 5Y rating, while those within 1,000 feet will receive standard classification ratings.

Chief King presented equipment needs requiring immediate attention: brush truck tires costing \$2,966 for four 395-size tires shipped from Texas (significantly less than local quotes of \$1,000 each), and rescue truck tires totaling approximately \$1,200 for six tires from a local supplier. He also requested new reporting software for \$8,450 for the first year including data conversion and volunteer training, with annual recurring costs of \$6,850. The software would streamline asset tracking, CAD information, and run data management.

Chief King noted the department is averaging 40 calls per month, tracking toward 480 calls annually compared to 282-290 last year. The increase includes both fire and medical calls, with medical calls particularly taxing on resources. Vice Chairman Culverson made a motion to approve tire purchases while tabling the software request for budget consideration, stating the tires are a safety priority. Commissioner Spooner seconded the motion. All in favor, motion passed. Commissioner Braswell suggested the software be included in the upcoming budget process. Chief King mentioned that Spring Creek also needs tires for one truck but can wait until later in the year.

Code Enforcement Officer, Mr. Greg Long

Mr. Long reported he issued 22 permits since the last meeting, identified eight new code violations, and is continuing to work with existing violators. Activities included handling one illegal burn, one illegal dumping incident, two animal complaints, and one animal cruelty case resulting in arrest while Mr. Long was attending training. He conducted seven power connection approvals and two residential mobile home approvals.

Mr. Long announced his completion of week-long training in Savannah, earning his Level 1 Code Enforcement Certification. He reported successful completion and passing of audits from both the Environmental Protection Division (EPD) and Georgia Soil and Water Commission.

Economic Development Authority Director, Ms. Sarah Avery

Ms. Sarah Avery provided an update on the Reynolds Landing Park plan development. The project team met the previous week and identified four phases for presentation to the Army Corps of Engineers.

Phase 1 involves contacting the Department of Health to arrange environmental inspections and surveys for well and septic locations, emphasizing that EPA approval is crucial before proceeding with any other work. Phase 2 covers the area closest to Big Jim's, the largest section including existing infrastructure from previous projects that require repair and expansion. Phase 3 was reordered to include the lodge and restaurant facilities. Phase 4 encompasses the archery range and remaining RV slips.

Ms. Avery planned to attend a Corps meeting later in March in Chattahoochee and was working to include other team members. She requested the previous plan illustration for comparison purposes during the presentation. Commissioner Spooner asked for clarification about Phase 2 components. Ms. Avery confirmed it includes areas with existing roads, the bathroom requiring renovation, and the large open recreation area previously used for Hurricane Michael debris storage.

Ms. Avery noted that her team feels positive about including all desired elements in the plan, which would be implemented over 20-50 years. Corps approval would enable grant funding applications. The meeting was scheduled for March 25th at 10 a.m. in Chattahoochee.

County Attorney Report

Status Report

Attorney Bill Mills provided updates on multiple ongoing legal matters as detailed below.

Declaration of Taking

Attorney Mills reported all declarations of taking have been completed for Galilee Church Road except one delayed by service issues. Time frames have expired, transferring title to the county, though some parcels are still being finalized through closing agreements rather than declaration of taking procedures.

Annexation Oakview Church / Post Road; Hwy 91 ALT; Ash Crossing

Attorney Mills reported Highway 91 Alt deed was received and filed, transferring responsibility for that street corner to county possession and maintenance.

Airport Property

Attorney Mills noted that additional requests were received requiring coordination with the City of Donalsonville for the airport authority issue. Attorney Mills reached out to City Attorney Chip Stewart, providing necessary documentation for review.

Elections IGA with Donalsonville and the Board of Education

Attorney Mills completed his response to Election Supervisor Ron Foskey regarding the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with the Board of Education for election handling, though he had not seen the executed copy. The City of Donalsonville IGA was in limbo pending FLOST decisions but would be revisited since FLOST was not moving forward.

Building Regulations Ordinance

Attorney Mills apologized for failing to publish the required public notice for the building regulations ordinance, requesting a re-reading of the first reading to ensure proper publication for the next meeting. The resolution addresses amendments to Chapter 14 Article 1 of the Seminole County Code of Ordinances to comply with current state law regarding building and construction codes, procedures, rules, and regulations for construction activities in unincorporated areas. The public hearing was scheduled for April 14th, 2026, with Attorney Mills suggesting a 6:00 p.m. start time before the regular meeting.

SPLOST VII Agreement

No updates were provided regarding the SPLOST VII Agreement.

Term Limits for Board of Tax Assessors

Regarding term limits for the Board of Assessors, Attorney Mills noted the Department of Revenue's request to standardize terms rather than using 2, 4, and 6-year staggered terms. He planned to contact DOR for clarification, as staggered terms typically prevent complete board turnover. County Manager Granger clarified that DOR requested consistent 4-year terms while

maintaining staggered election timing. Attorney Mills was waiting for DOR templates to review specific requirements.

Financial Statements, Minutes, ACO Reports, Overtime Reports

County Manager Granger reported approximately 70% of property tax revenues had been received.

Commissioner Spooner made a motion to approve Financial Reports for February 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes for February 10, 2026, and ACO Reports as written. Commissioner Braswell seconded the motion. All in favor, motion passed.

Unfinished Business

FLOST – Distribution of Proceeds

County Manager Granger reported inability to reach agreement on FLOST proceeds distribution, suggesting this delay was beneficial given pending state legislation potentially eliminating property taxes for homestead properties. She expressed concern about researching impacts on county funding, particularly challenging for smaller counties like Seminole that rely heavily on property tax revenue for budget operations. With the June 1st budget deadline approaching, County Manager Granger felt uncertain about financial planning and had begun sending budgets to departments earlier than usual to allow more preparation time.

Civic Plus Update / Open Records / Card Transactions / Permitting

County Manager Granger reported ongoing progress with Civic Plus implementation. Online permitting and payment systems are functioning well. The latest development involves the ClickFix app allowing citizens to report issues by pinning locations and describing problems. Implementation is expected within one to two months, providing useful public service capability.

CHIP

County Manager Granger noted continuing work on one CHIP grant home, mentioning Commissioner Braswell's request for publicity materials. She planned to work with the regional commission to develop public information showing CHIP grant capabilities, highlighting that four properties were included in this year's funding.

CDBG MIT

County Manager Granger reported the Hebrew Road bridge installation project passed final inspection successfully, with positive feedback about the quality of work completed.

CDBG DR

County Manager Granger provided updates on the paving project for Riverside Acres and Galilee Church Road. Work was underway with no complaints received despite right-of-way acquisition stakes being placed very close to residences. She encouraged commissioners to visit the work site

before construction progressed significantly, noting positive community remarks about rapid work pace.

Water line issues have been reported; Danny Love from Water Works is coordinating with the construction team to ensure easy access for emergency repairs. City Attorney Chip Stewart raised concerns that County Manager Granger forwarded to Attorney Mills. Attorney Mills noted difficulty finding easement rights for existing water lines crossing the dirt road area, questioning liability issues. He concluded minimal county exposure existed since property was deeded without reservations. County Manager Granger explained that the Drake family originally owned the property and installed the water system before selling to current operators, creating a situation with aging, poorly maintained infrastructure crossing roadways.

FY25 Audit

The annual audit remains underway with some outstanding items, due for submission by May 31st.

FEMA

County Manager Granger reported that FEMA recently sent a check for \$151,000 including six months of tower rental reimbursement from Ware County's extended tower placement during hurricane recovery. County Manager Granger sent Ware County a \$50,000 check for rental costs. Additional reimbursement sections are being pursued with GEMA and FEMA for resolution.

Local Maintenance Improvement Grant (LMIG)

Next LMIG projects are scheduled for April 1st release according to Stacy.

Safety Action Plan (SAP)

SAP projects will also be released April 1st according to scheduling updates.

Zoning Update

County Manager Granger reported no recent meetings occurred with consultant Angel Gray, though she visited Seminole County to examine Lake Seminole areas with campers and RV concerns. County Manager Granger discussed historical challenges leading to current camping situations and explained past enforcement difficulties. The primary zoning update focus remains agricultural aspects, with camper regulations being developed. A meeting with Ms. Gray is planned within two weeks.

Zoning Ordinance Resolution

The first reading was completed during tonight's meeting, with public hearing scheduled for next month's meeting.

Lakeside Annex Repairs

Mr. Justin Turner has not yet assessed mold and other issues at the facility. County Manager Granger will provide information to the board following his inspection.

Transfer Station Repairs

An insurance adjuster visited to assess damage from Young's recycling container accident that struck the building, along with wind damage to shingles. County Manager Granger combined both incidents for insurance purposes, noting the building may need replacement rather than extensive patching. She awaits insurance company determination.

New Business

Survival Flight Contract Renewal

County Manager Granger presented the contract renewal with a 3 percent increase, raising annual costs to \$795,675 from the previous \$772,500. The original contract was \$750,000, with increases of 3 percent annually. Despite the significant cost for two full-time ambulances, no complaints have been received regarding service quality. County Manager Granger received clarification from the Board that fire department response is standard procedure for assistance, traffic control, and scene management and the increase in fire department medical calls was not an indication of provider problems. Commissioner Spooner made a motion to approve the renewal of the Survival Flight Contract. Commissioner Braswell seconded the motion. All in favor, motion passed.

Reynolds Landing Restroom Renovation

Additional termite damage was discovered during renovation work, requiring an extra \$2,100 for wood replacement and repairs. Rather than seeking new bids, County Manager Granger recommended allowing Big R Construction to continue the project since they were already performing the work. Portable restrooms are being rented during renovation completion. Commissioner Spooner made a motion to approve Big R to continue and complete the Reynolds Landing restroom renovation. Vice Chairman Culverson seconded the motion. All in favor, motion passed.

Retirement 401(A) Amendment

County Manager Granger presented a retirement amendment for senior management that had been discussed for several years. The change would include key positions at board discretion. Commissioners requested additional time for review. Commissioner Braswell made a motion to table a decision on the retirement amendment until next month. Commissioner Spooner seconded the motion. All in favor, motion passed.

Admin Office Renovation

County Manager Granger discussed elections board needs for better public access during election nights, as current space is inadequate for public viewing of results. The elections supervisor

currently requires deputy escort to access computers in the separate West Wing building for downloading information.

County Manager Granger had Justin Turner assess feasibility of connecting the administrative office to the back building through an exterior wall opening with a short hallway. Several doorways would need widening for handicapped accessibility, but the project appeared feasible without requiring additional property acquisition. The solution would provide adequate space and parking for election night activities while meeting accessibility requirements.

Commissioner Spooner requested cost quotes and project planning, emphasizing the need to ensure compliance with election regulations. Commissioner Culverson noted parking availability in the rear lot and front areas for public access. Vice Chairman Culverson made a motion for County Manager Granger to obtain an estimate and project plan for admin office renovation. Commissioner Braswell seconded the motion. All in favor, motion passed.

FY27 Budget Calendar

County Manager Granger announced budget distribution to departments the previous day, requesting review of FY26 accuracy and FY27 preparation. She planned individual meetings with constitutional officers and department heads first, followed by board meetings with these officials. The timeline targeted the first or second week of April for board meetings once preliminary numbers were established.

Executive Session

Chairman Williams called for a motion to enter executive session for the purpose of discussing personnel issues. Commissioner Braswell made a motion to enter executive session to discuss personnel issues. Vice Chairman Culverson seconded the motion. All in favor, motion passed.

With no further business to discuss in executive session and no action taken, Commissioner Braswell made a motion to end executive session and reenter the regular meeting. Vice Chairman Culverson seconded the motion. All in favor, motion passed.

Announcements

Poultry House Public Forum, Provided by County Agent, March 24, 2026, at 6 p.m.

Annual Conference, Savannah, GA, April 23 – 26, 2026

Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, Commissioner Spooner made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Culverson. All in favor, motion passed.