

5:30 p.m.

The Suwannee County Board of County Commissioners met on the above date and time for a special-called session and the following were present: Chairman Ricky Gamble; Commissioner Don Hale; Commissioner Clyde Fleming; Commissioner Larry Sessions; and Commissioner Ronnie Richardson. Clerk of Court Barry A. Baker; Eric Musgrove and Logan Woods, Deputy Clerks; Randy Harris, County Administrator; and James W. Prevatt, Jr., County Attorney were also present.

Chairman Gamble called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and asked County Administrator Harris to lead the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss, with possible Board action, policy issues as a result of Hurricane Irma.

The first item on the agenda was to discuss, with possible Board action, changes to the County's personnel policy manual as a result of Hurricane Irma for calculating employee salaries during the week of Monday, September 11 through Sunday, September 17:

- A. Wages to be paid at time and a half for all hours worked by personnel involved in post-storm activities, including, but not limited to, Fire/Rescue, Road Department, and Building Maintenance. Additional personnel may be included at the discretion of the County Administrator.
- B. Starting time for employees who were called upon to begin post-storm activities on Monday, September 11 shall be recorded utilizing the employees' regularly scheduled start time or earlier if the employee actually began working earlier.

- C. Solid waste collection site employees shall work as many extra days and hours as the County Administrator determines necessary to accommodate storm-related clean up.
- D. Employees who either worked or were out on approved annual or sick leave during the week of September 4 through September 10 and were directed to not work on any days between September 11 through September 17 due to storm-related issues would be compensated at their regular rate of pay up to a maximum of 4 days. Employees who were notified to appear for work and did not, shall not be compensated pursuant to this subsection but may use annual leave or sick leave if the absence complies with the County's sick leave policy.

The second item on the agenda was to discuss waiving building permit fees for repairs related to storm damage as determined by the Building Official and County Administrator.

County Administrator Harris stated that the current County policy allowed two days' pay during an emergency, but had not anticipated the vast issues associated with Hurricane Irma. He felt it appropriate to compensate the employees who were ordered to stay home due to power outages and other problems for up to four days, and to pay additional compensation for those worked during the hurricane or who worked more than forty hours. He discussed the details of pay to the employees and the effect of FEMA reimbursement. County Administrator Harris added that the solid waste collection sites were open every day last week, and the landfill had been open Sunday. He also discussed annual time, sick time, and waiving permit fees at the Building Department.

Commissioner Fleming asked if FEMA would reimburse the County for certain expenses related to debris. County Administrator Harris replied that FEMA had stringent guidelines for

debris, and citizens should not move debris into the County rights-of-way, but instead should contact FEMA at the Emergency Operations Center or the Branford Library.

Commissioner Richardson did not understand why some workers would be paid time and a half to work on their normal days while others were only paid regular time. Chairman Gamble replied that there were many employees that were ordered to stay home due to power outages or hazardous travel; however, other employees were necessary to help clean up from the hurricane. As the chairman saw it, the employee who had to come in during the hurricane should be paid more than an employee who was told to stay home.

Commissioner Richardson had no problem paying employees for their overtime work, but questioned paying someone more for showing up during their normal work hours. He added that if what was proposed was standard practice among other counties, then the County should pay the time and a half to be equitable.

Commissioner Hale stated that he had a similar situation with his warehouse flooding in Jacksonville, and gave a bonus to the employees that came in during and after the hurricane, as they were performing work beyond their job descriptions.

Discussion ensued on the multiple power outages throughout the County buildings and safety issues with having employees on the road during the emergency.

County Administrator Harris stated that he had no problem paying a “bonus” to the employees who worked equal to time and a half, but it would depend upon how FEMA regulations worked.

Commissioner Richardson understood that there were essential personnel that needed to work during Hurricane Irma.

County Administrator Harris stated that FEMA would reimburse the County for any work and expenses that qualified under their emergency categories. He discussed the categories in some detail and that the County would request reimbursement for anything it could.

Commissioner Sessions stated that the issue under discussion was proper documentation so that FEMA would reimburse the County.

Discussion ensued on fairness to employees who worked during and after Hurricane Irma versus those who were paid to stay home. Discussion also ensued on the wonderful job done by the County's employees during and after the hurricane, and the desire to compensate them for their hard work.

Commissioner Fleming moved to approve item 1 (A. - Wages to be paid at time and a half for all hours worked by personnel involved in post-storm activities, including, but not limited to, Fire/Rescue, Road Department, and Building Maintenance. Additional personnel may be included at the discretion of the County Administrator; B. - Starting time for employees who were called upon to begin post-storm activities on Monday, September 11 shall be recorded utilizing the employees' regularly scheduled start time or earlier if the employee actually began working earlier; C. - Solid waste collection site employees shall work as many extra days and hours as the County Administrator determines necessary to accommodate storm-related clean up; and D. - Employees who either worked or were out on approved annual or sick leave during the week of September 4 through September 10 and were directed to not work on any days between September 11 through September 17 due to storm-related issues would be compensated at their regular rate of pay up to a maximum of 4 days. Employees who were notified to appear for work

and did not, shall not be compensated pursuant to this subsection but may use annual leave or sick leave if the absence complies with the County’s sick leave policy). Commissioner Richardson seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Sessions moved to approve item 2 (waiving building permit fees for repairs related to storm damage as determined by the Building Official and County Administrator). Commissioner Hale seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

County Administrator Harris discussed reimbursement to the Tax Collector as presented at the last regular meeting. He asked for a consensus from the Board to send a letter based upon the Florida Statutes’ requirements that the County should pay any deficits in the Tax Collector’s salary.

The Board reached a consensus to send the letter regarding the Tax Collector.

Commissioner Sessions moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Fleming seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 5:56 p.m.

ATTEST:

_____, DC
BARRY A. BAKER
CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT

RICKY GAMBLE, CHAIRMAN
SUWANNEE COUNTY BOARD OF
OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS