



Citrus County Legislative Priorities & Strategic Progress Report

Lecanto Government Building
3600 W. Sovereign Path, Room #166
Lecanto, Florida 34461

MINUTES

August 14, 2025 - 9:00 AM

Rebecca Bays, Chairman, District 4
Diana Finegan, 1st Vice Chair, District 2
Janet Barek, 2nd Vice Chair, District 3
Jeff Kinnard D.C., Commissioner, District 1
Holly L. Davis, Commissioner, District 5

Steve L. Howard, County Administrator
Denise A. Dymond Lyn, County Attorney
Traci Perry, Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller

A. WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

August 14, 2025 Citrus County Courthouse
The meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM.

Chair Rebecca Bays provided opening remarks.

A.1. Invocation

First Vice Chair Diana Finegan gave the Invocation.

A.2. Pledge of Allegiance

B. OPENING REMARKS

Chairman Rebecca Bays
County Administrator Steve Howard
Introductory Video

County Administrator Steve Howard played a video and provided opening remarks.

C. MID-YEAR PROGRESS REPORT STRATEGIC PLANNING GOALS

Mid-Year Progress Report

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County Administrator Steve Howard provided the presentation and Special Projects Manager Veronica Kampschroer read the proposed 2026 Strategic Planning Retreat dates into the record: Monday, January 12, 2026; Wednesday, January 14, 2026; Wednesday, January 28, 2026; and Thursday, January 29, 2026.

D. LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES UPDATE

Legislative Priorities Update by Sarah Busk Suskey, State Lobbyist, The Advocacy Partners

Intergovernmental Affairs Manager James Toy provided the 2025 Legislative Session re-cap.

Mr. Toy introduced Sarah Busk Suskey, State Lobbyist with The Advocacy Partners, who provided the 2025 and the 2026 Legislative Session updates, and Ms. Suskey and County Administrator Steve Howard addressed questions from the Board.

E. 2026 STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Appropriations Request

2026 Legislative Priorities - Staff Recommendations

Legislative Priorities Submission Forms from Staff

Florida Association of Counties 2025 Legislative Session Final Report

Mr. Toy introduced Chuck Dixon, Planning and Growth Management Director of the Citrus County School Board, and Sheriff David Vincent, who provided the Public Safety Training Facility project updates, and Mr. Dixon, Mr. Toy and Public Works Director Carlton Hall addressed questions from the Board.

Consensus of the Board was given to staff to support the proposed Public Safety Training Facility project.

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Mr. Toy, Ms. Suskey and County Administrator Steve Howard discussed with the Board the proposed time period to bring the Legislative Priorities list back to the Board.

Mr. Toy presented the recommendation for the Cardinal Street Fire Station project, followed by Board discussion with Mr. Toy.

Consensus of the Board was given to staff to strike the Cardinal Street Fire Station project from the Legislative Priorities list.

Mr. Toy presented the recommendation for the Fire Station #3 Relocation project, followed by Board discussion with Mr. Toy.

Consensus of the Board was given to staff to strike the Fire Station #3 Relocation project from the Legislative Priorities list.

Mr. Toy presented the recommendation for the Holder Industrial Park Road Resurfacing project, followed by Board discussion with Mr. Toy.

Consensus of the Board was given to staff to strike the Holder Industrial Park Road Resurfacing project from the Legislative Priorities list.

Mr. Toy presented the recommendation for the Floral City Septic to Sewer Expansion project, and Water Resources Director Ken Cheek addressed the Board and responded to questions from the Board.

Consensus of the Board was given to staff to support the Floral City Septic to Sewer Expansion project.

First Vice Chair Diana Finegan provided the recommendation to work with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) on requesting funding for Septic to Sewer Expansions.

Consensus of the Board was given to support this request to obtain FDEP funding to assist with Septic to Sewer projects.

Mr. Toy presented the recommendation for the Septic to Sewer Incentive Program.

Consensus of the Board was given to staff to support the Septic to Sewer Incentive Program, as an appropriation request.

Mr. Toy presented the recommendation for the Halls River Multi-Use Path project, and Mr. Toy and Engineering Director Walt Eastmond addressed questions from the Board.

Consensus of the Board was given to staff to support the Halls River Multi-Use Path project.

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Mr. Toy presented the recommendation for the CR-491 Roadway Widening project, and Mr. Toy and Mr. Eastmond addressed questions from the Board.

Consensus of the Board, by the majority, was given to staff for direction to work with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to take the CR-491 Road Widening on as a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) project, federalizing from CR-486 to SR-200, and bring back to a Board meeting.

Chair Rebecca Bays provided a recommendation for an appropriation request of \$3-5 million for the short-term and long-term Judicial space needs, followed by Board discussion with Ms. Suskey and Mr. Howard.

Citizen Josh Wooten, President and CEO of the Citrus County Chamber of Commerce, commented.

Commissioners responded to comments from Mr. Wooten, followed by Board discussion with Mr. Toy.

Mr. Toy provided the proposal for a letter of support for Pasco County's litigation with the Florida Association of Counties (FAC) regarding amending the language in Senate Bill 180. County Attorney Denise A. Dymond Lyn addressed the Board, followed by Board discussion with Ms. Lyn and Mr. Toy. Ms. Lyn announced that an item will be brought back to the Board.

Mr. Toy opened up the floor regarding policy proposals and the requests for special consideration from the Board:

Commissioner Holly Davis discussed the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) study from 2004 that reflected the lower Withlacoochee River degradation period and read into the record the following report: Alternative 1, removing the rock damn, constructing an operable structure in the Barge Canal, and replacing the U.S. 19 Bridge over the Withlacoochee River; Alternative 2- replacing the rock damn with an operable structure, construct an operable structure and lock in the Barge Canal; Alternative 3- reconstructing the bypass and spillway; Alternative 4- Do nothing.

Board discussion ensued.

Consensus of the Board was given to direct staff to send the State of Florida a policy request to restore the flow of the lower Withlacoochee River.

Second Vice Chair Janet Barek discussed the following proposed policy proposals: body-worn cameras for code enforcement, Florida Retirement System (FRS) special risk classification for code enforcement, records exemption, and Transportation Concurrency.

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Mr. Toy addressed comments from the Board, followed by Board discussion.

Mr. Toy addressed Commissioner Holly Davis regarding strike records exemptions from the policy proposal list.

Mr. Toy announced the dates for the 2026 Florida Legislative Session, Florida Associate of Counties upcoming events and conferences, and Citrus County Chamber of Commerce Legislative Day.

[Item E - PowerPoint](#)

F. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 12:07 PM.

[Proof of Publication](#)