

North Florida Water Utilities Authority

April 20, 2026, 09:30 A.M.

The North Florida Water Utilities Authority (NFWUA) met in a scheduled meeting at Columbia County Tourist Development Conference room, 971 West Duval Street, Lake City FL 32055 The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

Board Attendance:

Chairman, Commissioner Rocky Ford

Vice-Chairman, Commissioner Franklin White

Board Member, Commissioner Timothy Murphy

Board Member, Commissioner Leo Mobley

Board Member, Commissioner Steven Dicks

Others in Attendance:

County Manager, David Kraus

NFWUA Attorney, Grady Williams

Executive Director, Shannon Roberts

Assistant County Manager, Kevin Kirby

Assistant County Administrator, Jason Furry

Customer Service Support Specialist, Wendy Parnell

Columbia County Utilities Superintendent, Robert Domingue

Powell & Jones, CPA- Richard Powell

Deputy Clerk, Melissa Williams

Additions and Deletions: none.

Approval of Agenda

MOTION by Commissioner, Franklin White to approve agenda. SECOND by Commission Leo Mobley. The motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment:

- Stew Lilker -made a comment about others in attendance inconsistently listed, suggestion to list all citizens or none -citizen (Dale Williams) was listed.
- Stew Lilker- made a request to clarify noted roles- Richard Powell as consultant.
- Stew Lilker – made a comment about missing recorded answers to public/board Q&A (number of utility customers).
- Stew Lilker -made a comment that legal requirement centers on motions/votes, but requests to be more fully captured for transparency.

Discussion and Actions:

1. Approval of Minutes:

Meeting minutes approval for 03/16/2026- NFWUA Meeting

MOTION by Commissioner, Franklin White to approve the minutes from 03/16/2026 for the NFWUA meeting. SECOND by Commissioner, Leo Mobley. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Bills & Vouchers: Powell & Jones, CPA- Richard Powell

Requesting approval of the payments for bills and vouchers during the period of March 20-April 8, 2026.

Executive Director, Shannon Roberts spoke about the bills & vouchers item from U.S. Water Services Corporation.

- US Water charge 42,671.72 due to misrouted invoices during operational transition (sent to county, not authority), covering-three months plus current.
- Typical monthly US Water charges -14,000–15,000-example 11,499.
- US Water monitors Ellisville water and sewer plant and assists with maintenance.
- Contract between county and US Water has not been assigned to the authority; authority is paying against that contract and seeking direct invoicing to the authority.

Please see the attached bill payment list in the amount of \$110,414.15.

MOTION by Commissioner, Franklin White to approve the payment of bills and vouchers in the amount of \$110,414.15 during the period from March 20th - April 8th, 2026. SECOND by Commissioner, Timothy Murphy. The motion carried unanimously.

3. NFWUA Financial Report- Powell & Jones, CPA- Richard Powell

Presentation and review of financial information for 6 months as of March 31, 2026.

- Financial Report (as of March 31-six months)
 - Balance Sheet: assets \$502,876.56 (cash \$421,240.05- A/R \$81,636.51) liabilities \$17,134.60 net equity/fund balance \$485,741.96.
 - Profit & Loss: income \$866,347.50 (user charges \$295,482.92- remainder from county grants) expenses \$577,258.63- excess revenue \$287,746.59.
 - No board questions.

4. Continuing Service Agreements with respondents from RFQ 2026-01

RFQ 2026-01: Continuing Professional Engineering Services - Executive Director, Shannon Roberts

See attached document

- 13 responses; top five plus a tie resulted in six firms: Hazen and Sawyer, Four Waters, North Florida Professional Services, Kimley Horn, Arcadis and Dugan Dewberry
- Commissioner, Franklin White spoke about picking engineers.
- Executive Director, Shannon Roberts made a comment about depending on the firm all are good with piping.
- Commissioner, Tim Murphy asked about picking based on qualifications.
- Executive Director, Shannon Roberts asked County Manager, David Kraus if there was a dollar amount.
- Agreements include master agreement, statement of work, and rate sheets.
- Legal guidance: rotation/round-robin not allowed under the Consultant's Competitive Negotiation Act (CCNA); selection must be qualifications-based with broad opportunity; negotiate with one firm at a time, and if negotiations fail, move on without returning. Commissioner, Tim Murphy spoke about it was not legal to do a round robin. He made a comment about NFWUA Attorney, Grady Williams and County Attorney, Joel Foreman need to talk about the Florida Statute 287.055.
- Executive Director, Shannon Roberts stated he will follow up and look into the Florida Statute 287.055.

- Profitability multiplier capped at 2.9 (lower than DOT's typical 3.96) and all six firms agreed.
- Board approved six vendors for continuing services contracts under Florida Statute 287.055 no obligation to assign work; Executive Director Shannon Roberts may recommend firm based on suitability price may be considered but not sole factor.
- Citizen Comment: Stew Lilker made a comment about picking 6 vendors/engineering. You cannot pick one against the others. Put it out there and advertise it and get the best price. Put out an ITB, not an RFQ. NFWUA cannot put RFQ as not legal.
- Citizen Comment: Moses Clepper made a comment about the Florida Statute 287.055 and the need for oversight on how to choose.
- Commissioner, Franklin White had a question about bidding out every project?
- Chairman, Rocky Ford stated only negotiate with one and if that one does not work then go to the next one just cannot go back.
- Citizen Comment-Mose Clepper made a comment to change the order when they come back.
- Citizen Comment: Dale Williams made a comment about not just basing it on price, make sure it is based on quality. Invite both attorneys.
- Commissioner, Tim Murphy asked for input from NFWUA Attorney, Grady Williams.
- NFWUA Attorney, Grady Williams stated that they had 13 responses- 6 were rewarded-professional engineering services. Spoke about the Florida Statute 287.055. Proposal sent out to all 6 that is how Clay Counties does this.
- Board acknowledged complexity and committed to verifying requirements, including consulting referenced county contacts and legal counsel, and preparing practical guidance for compliant workflows.

MOTION by Commissioner, Franklin White to approve RFQ 2026-01 for continuing service agreements with respondents. SECOND by Commissioner, Steven Dicks. The motion carried unanimously.

Cost Control, Oversight, and Documentation

Citizen: Stew Lilker made a comment

Citizen: Moses Clepper made a comment

- Concerns about high hourly rates and administrative costs, calls for broader vendor lists and active negotiation to reduce costs.
- Emphasis on oversight in firm selection, avoiding single-person determinations; support for a committee or defined process.
- Commendation for catching vague contract descriptions; need for clear, descriptive terms to prevent misuse of funds.
- Minutes insufficiently informative need to add more information.

5. Emergency repair services respondents from RFP 2026-03

RFP 2026-03 Emergency Repair services respondents – Executive Director, Shannon Roberts.

Two responses: D&B Heavy Equipment and Marloff Environmental (Ocala).

- Vendors provided locked-in labor/equipment pricing; materials excluded due to variability; plan to cap material markups by percentage.
- Board authorized Director to negotiate contracts with both vendors and return contracts for approval.
- Clarifications requested: mobilization rates (per equipment vs per job), scope-per-price item, differences in equipment hourly rates.
- Executive Director, Shannon Roberts spoke about the scope of repair statements and do a mark-up on repairs. Allow Executive Director, Shannon Roberts and NFWUA Grady Williams to negotiate.
- Marloff is out of Ocala.
- Commissioner, Rocky Ford stated that Executive Director, Shannon Roberts needs to go over and clarify what we are getting for our price.

MOTION by Commissioner, Timothy Murphy to approve RFQ 2026-03 emergency repair services respondents and allow Executive Director, Shannon Roberts and NFWUA Attorney, Grady Williams to negotiate. SECOND by Commissioner, Steven Dicks. The motion carried unanimously.

6. Service Agreement with Express Employment Professionals

Review and approval of service agreement with Express Employment Professionals – Executive Director, Shannon Roberts.

Staffing and Administrative Support

See attached documents:

- Approval of service agreement with Express Employment Professionals to hire one temporary administrative assistant (billing/secretarial); 40 hours/week target; temp rates include agency overhead; prior budget amendments fund this role.
- Rationale: no HR function; temp provides recruitment flexibility and redundancy for critical functions (billing, permits, procurement, grants).
- Commissioner, Franklin White made a comment about the contract that said four is it only for One?
- Citizen Moses Clepper made a comment to prove Executive Director, Shannon Roberts is working before you hire someone.
- Commissioner, Timothy Murphy asked the question, is this a rate for 4?
- Executive Director, Shannon Roberts stated no the rate is on what we have now.
- Chairman, Rocky Ford stated that you would need to come back before the Board.
- Executive Director, Shannon Roberts stated no it was in the budget.

- Public concern over staffing size addressed by describing plant operations, regulatory workload, and need for separation of duties and coverage.
- Stew Lilker made a comment about customers that come from Fort White, about 300 and 50 from Suwannee. Spoke about Fort White and doing their billing.
- Chairman, Rocky Ford made a comment to Stew Lilker about there being a lot more to run now than just a sewer plant.
- Commissioner, Franklin White agreed with Chairman, Rocky Ford more than just sending out bills.
- Commissioner, Timothy Murphy made a comment about how many hours for the person?
- Executive Director, Shannon Roberts stated 40 hours a week.
- Chairman, Rocky Ford stated that it requires doing all the permits.
- Executive Director, Shannon Roberts spoke about doing bills, grants, RFQ's for customers. If Wendy was out sick it only would be me.
- Ongoing debate on temp agency vs direct hiring: general agreement to prefer direct hire for longer-term or part-time needs where feasible; temp agency viewed as short-term until suitable permanent hire is identified.
- Discussion ensued.
- Commissioners, Franklin White stated that you need back-up.
- Stew Lilker made a comment that the 4th employee would be the operator at Ellisville/Fort White.
- Executive Director, Shannon Roberts stated that he also does maintenance.
- Stew Lilker wanted to know how many vehicles do they have?
- Executive Director, Shannon Roberts stated they have 5 vehicles.
- Stew Lilker made a comment that 2 people could cover the office and the need to surplus the vehicles.
- Operations and Assets
 - Vehicle fleet: five vehicles for four employees (one at plant; two inherited spares). Suggestion to surplus extras; no decision recorded.
 - Clarification of staff: fourth employee identified as Freddy Davis, certified wastewater plant operator at Ellisville and Fort White. Monitoring/testing subcontracted; authority operates plants with staff.
 - Moses Clepper made a comment about watching the money and keeping people honest.
 - Moses Clepper made a comment about saving the tax payors money on the minutes.
 - Moses Clepper made a comment about having meetings every two weeks and asked if they had any leads on new people.
 - Chairman, Rocky Ford agrees with Moses Clepper about more people on the Board.
 - Wayne Hannaka made a comment about express employment.
 - Commissioner, Timothy Murphy made a comment about payment of the future Board member and coming before the BOCC.
 - Executive Director, Shannon Roberts stated we had deferred it while waiting on instructions to move forward.

- Commissioner, Timothy Murphy stated to go public with it and decide so County Manager, David Kraus can move forward.

MOTION by Commissioner, Franklin White to approve the service agreement with Express Employment Professionals. SECOND by Commissioner, Steven Dicks. The motion carried unanimously.

NFWUA Attorney, Grady Williams spoke about making an amendment to the interlocal for both counties.

Draft proposed interlocal agreement amendments for:

- Expanded public finance/asset management authorities.
- Board member compensation (with fiscal year options).
- Provide a budget impact analysis of the industrial park plant transfer, delineate responsibilities and liabilities (deep injection well, loans) post-transfer.
- Commissioner, Timothy Murphy Spoke about the funding of the sewer plant coming up on the budget time. Go forward with the local agreement.
- County Commissioner, Timothy Murphy spoke about what Executive Director, Shannon Roberts, said at the BOCC meeting and who told him that it was ok.
- Chairman, Rocky Ford stated he said it was ok.
- County Commissioner, Timothy Murphy stated to send it out to the NFWAU Board members.
- County Manager, David Kraus stated that it was brought to my attention by Chairman, Rocky Ford that he got the email at the end of the day. County Commissioner, Timothy Murphy stated that he feels like NFWUA Board needs to be included.
- Clarify communication protocols for staff presentations to County Boards and policy on circulating recent presentations and materials to all board members.
- Schedule a joint workshop with both county commissions to align on regional scope, asset ownership, and financing strategy.
- Chairman, Rocky Ford made a comment about the rates.
- County Commissioner, Timothy Murphy made a comment that they were stated.
- Chairman, Rocky Ford stated let's have a meeting about the contract and what is the rush.
- Discussion ensued
- County Commissioner, Franklin White made a comment about transparent is what he likes.
- Commissioner, Steven Dicks stated he wants to understand why we are doing this. We have done a report with Raftelis and it included the Mega Park. What is our role with the water authority and the 2 counties. Focus our efforts to make it work. Commissioner, Franklin White, agreed.
- Commissioner, Timothy Murphy stated let's put the money in Ellisville, will bring this Board in the black. When Fort White gets everything ironed out, we get the utility and the State of Florida agrees. Economic Development Director spoke about the B& B store that is going to be in Ellisville will be a faster return
- Chairman, Rocky Ford spoke about there no reason to sell the Mega Park there was 1 year left for the city to run it. He spoke about the decision being rushed.
- Commissioner, Franklin White made a comment about when the loan payment is due.

- Chairman, Rocky Ford stated that it is due June of next year.
- Commissioner, Franklin White made a comment about Suwannee County going to be part of the utility-Mega Park, now what happens.
- Chairman Rocky Ford stated that Columbia County does not want to be in the utilities business.

Schedule a joint workshop with both county commissions to align on regional scope, asset ownership, and financing strategy. Establish separation-of-duties and contingency coverage policies for billing and permit-critical tasks.

Establish separation-of-duties and contingency coverage policies for billing and permit-critical tasks.

Provide clear emergency repair pricing breakdowns to avoid ambiguity during events.

Define the authority's future scope post-industrial park transfer; delineate deep injection well and loan obligations

Board Comments: Commissioner, Franklin White spoke about the authority is going to get busier. Find a person and hire them.

Attorney Comments: none.

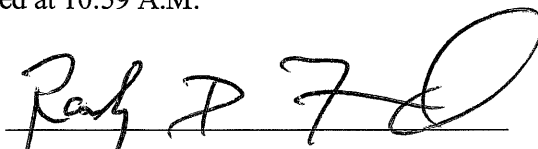
Director Comments: none

The next meeting scheduled is May 18, at 09:30 A.M. in Live Oak Florida

Adjournment:

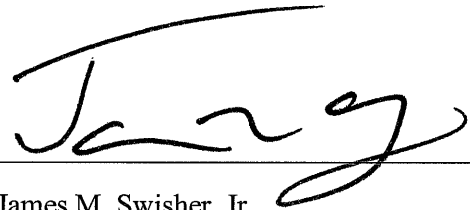
There being no further business, meeting was adjourned at 10:59 A.M.

ATTEST:



Rocky Ford, Chairman

Columbia County Commissioner

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Swisher, Jr.", written over a horizontal line.

James M. Swisher, Jr.

Clerk of Court & County Comptroller