

But commissioner supported holding a hearing to ‘give the public a chance to speak’

# Moody: ‘I feel like if it went on the ballot, it wouldn’t get passed anyway, because nobody wants more taxes’

## SALES TAX

Continued from page 1

of property, mill closures, loss of jobs, loss of income, loss of tax base. In the context of this suffering, I was astonished when I read a group of Tallahassee experts has come into town and says the top priority of this community is to raise taxes.

“Members of this county commission recognized six months ago that raising taxes on Taylor County families was not the right thing to do,” Simmons said. “Commissioners said ‘no’ last year to new taxes because taxpayers simply do not have the money.”

Next to speak was W. David Polk, who said, “I have seven kids in the school system right now. I’m going to have kids in the school system for approximately 14 more years.

“I can tell you, I don’t really want the tax hike, but if we are going to invest in

something, our children’s education is something I’m willing to discuss. This agenda item today is to have a public hearing to allow the public a chance to comment.

“I would say we should give the public a chance to comment on whether they want to even take this to a vote,” Polk said. “I would not be able to say which way I would vote on this, but I would like to discuss it.”

The final speaker was Don Curtis, who also addressed the Taylor County School Board prior to its vote to approve the resolution it sent to the commission.

“Last month, I went to a school board meeting to talk about this and just ask them to reconsider,” Curtis said. “A sales tax is going to affect the seniors on fixed income. It will affect the poor. And, it’s going to affect younger couples trying to get started.

“I didn’t know the newspaper was going to

run my comments,” Curtis said.

“They did, and I started getting contacted, and 80% of the people that reached out to me were seniors on a fixed income. They’re just worried about more sales tax, and it just takes a bigger part what little they’ve got to work with their retirement -- and one of them was a school district retiree.”

Curtis said the school board should consider raising its property tax millage instead of asking for the sales tax.

“If you decide to have a public hearing, that’ll be fine. I’ll be back,” Curtis said. “If you don’t, that’s okay too.”

Although School Board Member Brenda Carlton was present at the meeting, no one from the school district addressed the commission at Tuesday’s meeting.

Commission Chair Jamie English noted that commissioners were voting

on whether or not to hold a public hearing on the issue, not to actually approve putting the measure on the November ballot.

“I feel like if it went on the ballot, it wouldn’t get passed anyway, because nobody wants more taxes in this day and time,” Commissioner Jim Moody said.

“It (the hearing) would give people an opportunity to speak on it,” Commissioner Michael Newman said.

“It would give the public a chance to speak, and that’s what this country is based on,” Moody said. “We’ll just have to watch how it pans out, but I’m all about having the public hearing.”

Moody then made a motion to hold the public hearing on the proposed ordinance and resolution that would place the issue on the November ballot. Commissioner Thomas Demps seconded, and the measure passed 4-0.

Commissioner Pam Feagle was not present at the meeting.

Last month, the school board passed a resolution asking the commission to approve adding the proposed one-half cent sales tax to the upcoming General Election ballot.

Under Florida Statutes, proceeds from the proposed new 10-year sales tax can only be used by the district to cover capital outlay expenses -- tangible property with a lifespan of five years or more.

The proposed new sales tax would generate an estimated \$1.8 million annually.

“That’s truly a lot of money for us to do the things we need to do to make our schools the best they can be, and, as superintendent of schools, that is my end goal -- to make our schools the best they can be and offer quality education for every child that comes through our system,” Superintendent of Schools

Reggie Wentworth told the school board in February.

Wentworth said the impact on citizens would be minimal.

“It’s very simple, just to give you a few examples -- on a \$4 cup of coffee, it would be two cents tax; a \$14 souvenir t-shirt would be seven cents in tax. You’re looking at roughly \$50 per year on an individual in a household, which is about two or three trips to McDonald’s if you have three kids in your family. So, the financial impact to the individuals really is not that significant,” Wentworth said.

The \$1.5 to \$1.8 million generated annually by the proposed half-cent sales tax would fund capital outlay projects such as renovations, safety and technology upgrades, buses and facility maintenance, which would free up General Fund dollars for teacher and employee raises, according to school officials.

# County received three quotes to conduct cleanup work in canals

## WATERWAY

Continued from page 1

asking local contractors, small businesses and vessel operators to provide a quote for the cost to complete the proposed work, which will focus on selected areas throughout Taylor County, including: Keaton Beach canals, Cedar Island canals, Dark Island canals, Dekle Beach canals, Steinhatchee River (inner canals and shallow navigational areas), Spring Warrior Creek, Hodges Park Beach nearshore waters and adjacent marsh shorelines.

The work will include collecting and removing “marine debris such as

plastics, fishing gear, dock fragments, tires and other storm-displaced materials from our waterways,” officials said.

Additionally, the contractors will mark the GPS locations of larger debris items that could be removed during a separate operation later this year, which county officials hope will be funded through a recently-announced Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) grant program that will open for applications this summer.

At the commission meeting on Tuesday, March 17, County Administrator LaWanda Pemberton told the board that they had

received three responses to the solicitation from Jody DeVane, Shannon Millinor and Jerry McGuire.

“The way that we solicited for quotes was to identify each of the areas and ask the captains to submit a quote on every area,” Pemberton said.

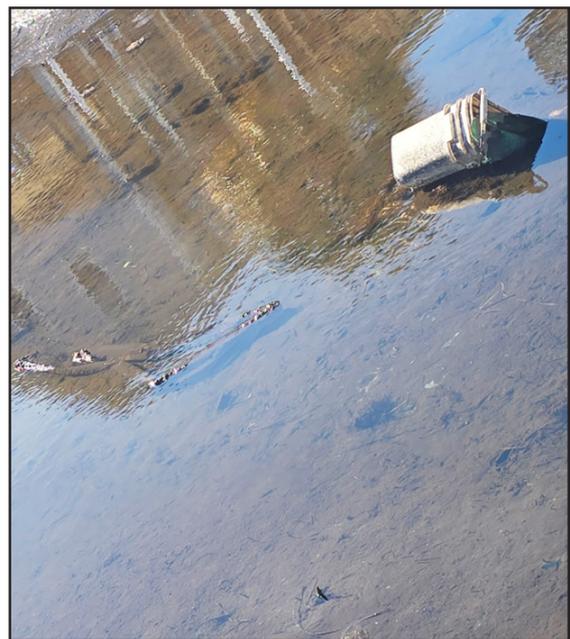
“The total that we would need would be \$125,000,” Pemberton said. “Now, if one of the captains does not wish to participate, then that could go up to about \$140,000. So, I would like to request a budget transfer from our bed tax reserves for the \$140,000 to cover this operation.”

Commission Chair Jamie English asked how quickly the work could begin.

Pemberton said she would need to submit the budget transfer the next morning. She then asked County Attorney Conrad Bishop if he wanted to draft an agreement between the county and the contractors, or if a purchase order along with the written scope of work would suffice.

Bishop said the purchase order would be enough to move forward.

Commissioner Michael Newman made a motion to transfer the \$140,000 from bed tax reserves. Commissioner Jim Moody seconded, and the measure passed 4-0. Commissioner Pam Feagle was not present at the meeting.



The waterway cleanup effort will focus on selected areas throughout Taylor County, including: Keaton Beach canals, Cedar Island canals, Dark Island canals, Dekle Beach canals (shown above), Steinhatchee River (inner canals and shallow navigational areas), Spring Warrior Creek, Hodges Park Beach nearshore waters and adjacent marsh shorelines.

## LEGALS

(Continued from page 10)

supporting data are available for public inspection during normal business hours, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except legal holidays, at the Department’s Northeast District Office, 8800 Baymeadows Way West, Suite 100, Jacksonville, Florida 32256-7590, at phone number (904) 256-1700.

### PUBLIC MEETING

DATE AND TIME: April 23, 2026, 5-7 p.m. EDT.

PLACE: Forest Capital Hall, Taylor County, 203 Forest Park Drive Perry, Florida 32348.

PURPOSE: The Florida Department of Environmental Protection will hold a public meeting to provide an opportunity for the public to ask questions, offer input and obtain information about the industrial wastewater permit renewal application submitted by Foley Cellulose, LLC. for the continued operation of the facility’s wastewater treatment system and groundwater monitoring of the site in Taylor County.

For more information or to obtain a copy of the agenda, please contact Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Northeast District Office, 8800 Baymeadows Way West, Suite 100, Jacksonville, Florida 32256; call 904-256-1700; or email DEP\_NED@FloridaDEP.gov.

Public participation is solicited without regard to race, color, religion, sex, pregnancy, national origin, age, handicap, or marital status. Persons who require special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or persons who require translation services (free of charge) are asked to contact DEP’s Limited English Proficiency Coordinator at 850-245-2118 or LEP@FloridaDEP.gov at least ten (10) days before the event. If you have a hearing or speech impairment, please contact the agency using the Florida Relay Service, 800-955-8771 (TDD) or 800-955-8770 (voice).

### NOTICE OF RIGHTS

The Department intends to issue the permit unless as a result of public comment appropriate changes are made.

### WRITTEN COMMENTS

Any interested person may submit written comments on the Department’s proposed permitting decision to Kathryn Craver, 8800 Baymeadows Way West, Suite 100,

Jacksonville, Florida 32256-7590 in accordance with Rule 62-620.555, Florida Administrative Code. The comments must contain the information set forth below and must be received in the Department’s Northeast District Office by the close of the public meeting. Failure to submit comments within this time period may constitute a waiver of any right such person may have to submit comments under Rule 62-620.555, Florida Administrative Code.

The comments must contain the following information:  
(a) The commenter’s name, address, and telephone number; the applicant’s name and address; the Department permit file number; and the county in which the project is proposed;  
(b) A statement of how and when notice of the Department’s action or proposed action was received;  
(c) A statement of the facts the Department should consider in making the final decision; and  
(d) A statement of which rules or statutes require reversal or modification of the Department’s action or proposed action.

### TIME PERIOD FOR SUBMITTING COMMENTS

When a public meeting is scheduled, the public comment period is extended until the close of the public meeting. Any person may submit oral or written statements and data at the public meeting on the Department’s proposed action.

### AUCTION SALE NOTICE

Taylor Storage Center  
To: Delbert McNutt, Jr., Unit #214  
Shantel Freeman, Unit #C08  
Taylor Storage Center, 3498 Hwy 19 S. Suite 1, Perry, FL 32348, has possessory lien on all the goods stored in the prospective units above. All these items of personal property are being sold pursuant to the assertion of the lien on March 28, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. in order to collect the amounts due from you. The sale will take place at 3948 Hwy 19 S. Suite 1, Perry, FL 32348.

### AUCTION SALE NOTICE

Taylor Storage Center  
To: Kit Buzbee, Unit #4A23  
Gavin Jinsen, Unit #432  
Sherri Tuten, Unit #354  
Taylor Storage Center, 3498 Hwy 19 S. Suite 1, Perry, FL 32348, has possessory lien on all the goods

stored in the prospective units above. All these items of personal property are being sold pursuant to the assertion of the lien on April 4, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. in order to collect the amounts due from you. The sale will take place at 3948 Hwy 19 S. Suite 1, Perry, FL 32348.

### IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 3RD JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, IN AND FOR TAYLOR COUNTY, FLORIDA

CIVIL DIVISION  
CASE NO. 25000147CAAXMX  
CARRINGTON MORTGAGE SERVICES, LLC, Plaintiff, vs. ALL UNKNOWN HEIRS, CREDITORS, DEVISEES, BENEFICIARIES, GRANTEES, ASSIGNEES, LIENORS, TRUSTEES AND ALL OTHER PARTIES CLAIMING AN INTEREST BY, THROUGH, UNDER OR AGAINST THE ESTATE OF CYNTHIA L SMITH, DECEASED; BRANDI S SMITH; BRANDI S. SMITH, PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ESTATE OF CYNTHIA L. SMITH, DECEASED; UNKNOWN PERSON(S) IN POSSESSION OF THE SUBJECT PROPERTY, Defendant(s)

### NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE SALE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to a Final Judgment of Foreclosure filed February 26, 2026 and entered in Case No. 25000147CAAXMX, of the Circuit Court of the 3rd Judicial Circuit in and for TAYLOR County, Florida, wherein CARRINGTON MORTGAGE SERVICES, LLC is Plaintiff and ALL UNKNOWN HEIRS, CREDITORS, DEVISEES, BENEFICIARIES, GRANTEES, ASSIGNEES, LIENORS, TRUSTEES AND ALL OTHER PARTIES CLAIMING AN INTEREST BY, THROUGH, UNDER OR AGAINST THE ESTATE OF CYNTHIA L SMITH, DECEASED; BRANDI S SMITH; BRANDI S. SMITH, PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ESTATE OF CYNTHIA L. SMITH, DECEASED; UNKNOWN PERSON(S) IN POSSESSION OF THE SUBJECT PROPERTY; are defendants.

Gary Knowles, the Clerk of the Circuit Court, will sell to the highest and best bidder for cash AT THE EAST DOOR OF THE COURTHOUSE, at 108 NORTH JEFFERSON STREET, PERRY in TAYLOR County, FLORIDA 32347, at 11:00 A.M., on April 14, 2026, the following described

property as set forth in said Final Judgment, to wit:

LOT 2, BLOCK “E”, EL RANCHO SUBDIVISION, A SUBDIVISION AS PER MAP OR PLAT THEREOF RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 1, PAGE 122, OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS OF TAYLOR COUNTY, FLORIDA.

Any person claiming an interest in the surplus from the sale, if any, other than the property owner as of the date of the lis pendens must file a claim before the Clerk reports the surplus as unclaimed. Dated this 18th day of March, 2026.

Gary Knowles  
As Clerk of said Court  
By: Shana Neal  
As Deputy Clerk

This notice is provided pursuant to Administrative Order No.2.065.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you are a person with a disability who needs any accommodation in order to participate in this proceeding, you are entitled, at no cost to you, to provisions of certain assistance. Please contact the Court Administrator at 108 N. Jefferson Street, 1st Floor, Perry, FL 32347, Phone No. (850)758-2163 within 2 working days of your receipt of this notice or pleading; if you are hearing impaired, call 1-800-955-8771 (TDD); if you are voice impaired, call 1-800-995-8770 (V) (Via Florida Relay Services).

### BIG BEND WATER AUTHORITY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT-DISASTER RECOVERY PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING SERVICES REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ) NO. 2026-1

The Big Bend Water Authority (“Authority”) is requesting Statements of Qualifications in response to this RFQ No. 2026-1 from qualified professional engineering firms to provide engineering services for Authority’s MS036 Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Infrastructure Repair Program in the amount of \$4,514,180 for the Water Main Replacement Project.

Submit in writing any questions or to request a copy of this RFQ No. 2026-1 to Mark Reblin, Big Bend

Water Authority General Manager, email bigbendwaterauthority@gmail.com. All questions and requests must be received by April 14, 2026.

Sealed proposals will be received by the Authority, in the office of the General Manager until: 2:00 PM THURSDAY, APRIL 23, 2026.

Proposals shall submit one (1) original and four (4) copies in a sealed envelope marked “SEALED PROPOSAL FOR CDBG-DR ENGINEERING SERVICES” to the following address:

Big Bend Water Authority  
1313 1st Ave., SE  
PO Box 670  
Steinhatchee, FL 32359  
ATTN: Mark Reblin, General Manager

Proposals will be accepted on an equally competitive basis. No bid or proposal will be accepted from individuals or firms placed on the convicted vendor list following a conviction for a public entity crime.

The Authority reserves the right to reject any or all responses, to waive any or all non-material irregularities and technicalities to re-advertise for RFQs, with or without changes in the scope of work, to award in whole or in part to one or more Respondents or take any other such actions that may be deemed to be in the best interest of the Authority.

THE BIG BEND WATER AUTHORITY SUPPORTS EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYMENT, AFFIRMATIVE ACTION, FAIR HOUSING, SECTION 3 PARTICIPATION AND IS A HANDICAP ACCESSIBLE JURISDICTION

### BIG BEND WATER AUTHORITY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT-DISASTER RECOVERY GRANT ADMINISTRATION SERVICES REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) NO. 2026-2

The Big Bend Water Authority (Authority) is requesting proposals in response to this RFP No. 2026-2 from qualified professional consulting firms to provide grant administration services for the Authority’s MS036 Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Infrastructure Repair Program in the amount of \$4,514,180 for the Water Main Replacement Project.

Submit in writing any questions

or to request a copy of this RFP No. 2026-2 to Mark Reblin, Big Bend Water Authority General Manager, email bigbendwaterauthority@gmail.com. All questions and requests must be received by April 14, 2026.

Sealed proposals will be received by the Authority, in the office of the General Manager until: 3:00 THURSDAY, APRIL 23, 2026

Respondents shall submit one (1) original and four (4) copies in a sealed envelope marked “SEALED PROPOSAL FOR CDBG-DR GRANT ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES” to the following address:

Big Bend Water Authority  
1313 1st Ave SE  
PO Box 670  
Steinhatchee, FL 32359  
ATTN: Mark Reblin, General Manager

Proposals will be accepted on an equally competitive basis. No bid or proposal will be accepted from individuals or firms placed on the convicted vendor list following a conviction for a public entity crime.

The Authority reserves the right to reject any or all responses, to waive any or all non-material irregularities and technicalities to re-advertise for RFPs, with or without changes in the scope of work, to award in whole or in part to one or more Respondents or take any other such actions that may be deemed to be in the best interest of the Authority.

THE BIG BEND WATER AUTHORITY SUPPORTS EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYMENT, AFFIRMATIVE ACTION, FAIR HOUSING, SECTION 3 PARTICIPATION AND IS A HANDICAP ACCESSIBLE JURISDICTION

### SUWANNEE RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT DECLARATION OF PHASE II WATER SHORTAGE

The Suwannee River Water Management District (District) has issued a Phase II Water Shortage Order, WSO 26-002 for water uses within all Counties located in the District, including all locations in Alachua and Levy counties, excluding the cities of Gainesville, Micanopy, and Hawthorne located in Alachua County.

To learn more or to view WSO 26-002, visit our website at www.mysuwanneeriver.com.