



DeSoto County

Board of County Commissioners

Meeting Minutes - Final

Tuesday, March 24, 2026

3:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioner JC Deriso
Commissioner Judy Schaefer
Commissioner Steven Hickox
Commissioner Elton Langford
Commissioner Jerod Gross

TURN OFF OR SILENCE ALL CELL PHONES

PRAYER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Pastor David Stewart of Grace Presbyterian Lake Suzy gave the invocation.

INTRODUCTION OF ELECTED OFFICIALS

SET/AMEND

A motion was made by Commissioner Deriso, seconded by Commissioner Langford, to amend the agenda, adding emergency item 7a. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Deriso, Schaefer, Hickox, Langford, and Gross

PUBLIC FORUM FOR NON-AGENDA ITEMS

CONSENT AGENDA-MOTION TO APPROVE

Approval of the Consent Agenda

A motion was made by Commissioner Schaefer, seconded by Commissioner Deriso, to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Deriso, Schaefer, Hickox, Langford, and Gross

1. Resolution/Write-Off Delinquent EMS Accounts FY 2024-2025

Attachments: [Resolution -Write-Off Delinquent EMS Accounts FY 24-25](#)
[DeSoto County Adjustment Report - Bad Debt 10.01.2024 - 09.30.2025](#)

[100124-093025-Referred-Limited](#)

[100124-093025-Recoveries-Limited](#)

Enactment No: 2026-027

2. Grant Agreement / Wastewater Treatment Plant Effluent Disposal

Project/Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery.**Attachments:** [MS010-Agreement-READY FOR SIGNATURE](#)**3. Minutes/BOCC Public Meeting 02-10-2026 and 02-24-2026****Attachments:** [02-10-2026 BOCC Meeting](#)
[02-24-2026 BOCC Meeting](#)**4. Suncoast Remake Learning Days Letter of Agreement-Economic Development****Attachments:** [DeSoto County Board of County Commissioners LOA SRLD 2026](#)**5. Suncoast Remake Learning Days Letter of Agreement-Turner Center****Attachments:** [2026 SRLD Agreement](#)**6. Declaration of Surplus Property****Attachments:** [Surplus Declared 3-24-26](#)**7. Amendment Request/D1489 2023 LAP Funding****Attachments:** [letterhead D1489](#)**EMERGENCY ITEM****7a Resolution/Florida Boating Improvement Program Grant Application****Attachments:** [Deep Creek Boat Ramp_100% Estimate of Probable Cost Resolution- FBIP Application Deep Creek Phase II](#)
Enactment No: 2026-028**PRESENTATIONS****8. Presentation / Update on the DeSoto County Vulnerability Assessment****Attachments:** [DeSoto BoCC Meeting on VA Update 3-24-26](#)

Curtis Knowles from the Central Florida Regional Planning Council presented an update on DeSoto County's state-mandated Vulnerability Assessment, funded through the Resilient Florida Grant Program. The assessment analyzes potential flooding impacts to DeSoto county and City of Arcadia assets using nine rainfall modeling scenarios, including the 100-year (1% chance), 200-year (0.5% chance), and 500-year (0.2% chance) storm events. These scenarios are modeled for current conditions, 2040, and 2070. Mr. Knowles reviewed the exposure and sensitivity findings, demonstrated the new interactive public map, and explained how the results will help identify priority mitigation projects and qualify the county for future Resilient Florida funding. The final report is awaiting DEP approval, and the Council will return once it is finalized. No questions were raised by the Board.

REGULAR BUSINESS**9. Proclamation/ National Nutrition Month March 2026****Attachments:** [Proclamation - National Nutrition Month 3-2026](#)

Mandy Hines read the proclamation into the record, proclaiming March 2026 as National Nutrition Month in DeSoto County.

A motion was made by Commissioner Schaefer, seconded by Commissioner Gross, to approve the Proclamation. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Deriso, Schaefer, Hickox, Langford, and Gross

10. Piggyback Agreement / Gainesville Regional Utilities / Commerce Controls, Inc.

Attachments: [2026-004PA Commerce Controls](#)

Greg Harris, Utilities Director made a request to approve the Piggyback Agreement with Gainesville Regional Utilities and Commerce Controls, Inc. (CCI)

A motion was made by Commissioner Langford, seconded by Commissioner Gross, to approve this Agreement. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Deriso, Schaefer, Hickox, Langford, and Gross

11. Contract Award / DCR WWTP Expansion - Phase 1 / Poole & Kent Company of Florida

Attachments: [25-24-01ITB Contract](#)
[25-24-01ITB Bid Tabulation](#)

Greg Harris, Utilities Director made a request to approve the Construction Agreement with Poole & Kent Company of Florida for the Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant Expansion - Phase 1 project, contingent on approval of necessary budget amendments.

A motion was made by Commissioner Gross, seconded by Commissioner Langford, to approve the Contract. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Deriso, Schaefer, Hickox, Langford, and Gross

12. Professional Services- Landfill Expansion Zones 6 and 7

Attachments: [26-08-00RFQ Contract](#)

Jeff Phipps, Landfill Director made a request to approve the Agreement for the Phase 1 Professional Services for the Landfill Expansion of Zones 6 and 7.

A motion was made by Commissioner Langford, seconded by Commissioner Schaefer, to approve this Agreement. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Deriso, Schaefer, Hickox, Langford, and Gross

13. Resolution/Budget Amendment Fiscal Year 2025/2026

Attachments: [Resolution](#)
[Summary and Narrative](#)
[2026-66 SP Projects- Util. Wastewater DCR Project](#)

Brian Wagner, Budget Coordinator, made a request to adopt a Resolution relating to the attached budget amendments affecting the 2025/2026 adopted budget as provided in Budget Amendment 2026-66.

A motion was made by Commissioner Langford, seconded by Commissioner Schaefer, to adopt this Resolution. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Deriso, Schaefer, Hickox, Langford, and Gross

Enactment No: 2026-029

14. Resolution/Burn Ban/Drought Emergency expires**Attachments:** [Resolution ending Burn Ban 3-2026](#)

Mandy Hines, County Administrator, requested the adoption of a resolution declaring that the Burn Ban/Drought Emergency had expired. After much discussion, the Board decided instead to extend the burn ban and review the matter again in a few weeks based on the next U.S. Drought Monitor index numbers.

A motion was made by Commissioner Langford, seconded by Commissioner Gross, that this Resolution be denied. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Deriso, Schaefer, Hickox, Langford, and Gross

15. Resolution to amend the Planning and Zoning Division fee schedule**Attachments:** [Resolution with Exhibit A](#)
[Fee Comparison 11x17](#)
[PZ Div Fee Schedule MARKUP 032426v3](#)

John Osborne presented a motion to adopt the proposed resolution amending the Planning and Zoning Division fee schedule. A vote was passed to adopt this resolution, however Commissioner Deriso expressed concern about adopting the higher fee options without more discussion, noting the significant increases and the impact on residents who already pay taxes. Commissioners questioned whether it was better to address the issue now or bring it back at the next meeting, especially since their consultant had already left and some materials weren't available. Commissioner Gross pointed out that the largest fees apply mainly to major development activities rather than typical residential projects. Ultimately, commissioners agreed that the matter needed further review with their consultant present, and the reconsideration of the resolution amending the Planning and Zoning Division fee schedule-at the next BOCC meeting. The motion passed, and the reconsideration was scheduled for April 14th.

A motion was made by Commissioner Deriso, seconded by Commissioner Schaefer, that this Resolution be tabled to the Board of County Commissioners, due back on 4/14/2026. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Deriso, Schaefer, Hickox, Langford, and Gross

PUBLIC HEARING 3PM**16. Amendment No. 1 to the Third Garbage Franchise Agreement****Attachments:** [AMENDMENT No1](#)

Valerie Vicente, County Attorney, presented a request to approve Amendment No. 1 to the Third Garbage Franchise Agreement between DeSoto County and Womack Sanitation, Inc. The amendment authorizes a capped annual CPI adjustment to the hauling portion of the rate at Womack's request, while leaving all other terms of the agreement unchanged.

A motion was made by Commissioner Gross, seconded by Commissioner Langford, to approve this Amendment. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Deriso, Schaefer, Hickox, Langford, and Gross

17. Ordinance / Land Development Regulation Amendment Family Homestead (LDR-0011-2025)

Attachments: [2026-02-13 REV Ordinance for PC- revising min acres and owner](#)

Misty Servia, Planning Director, presented a request to adopt the proposed ordinance amending the Land Development Regulation to reduce the minimum parent-parcel acreage required to qualify for the family homestead exemption from 30 acres to 25 acres, and to clarify that the 5-year ownership requirement for the parent parcel may be met by either the applicant or an immediate family member.

A motion was made by Commissioner Gross, seconded by Commissioner Langford, that this Ordinance be adopted. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Deriso, Schaefer, Hickox, Langford, and Gross

Enactment No: 2026-003

18. Hearing on an appeal by M. Lewis Hall, III, Trust (APPL-0012-2026) to the BOCC of the Board of Adjustments decision to uphold the Development Director's denial of Hall's application for a certified lot split (CLS-0009-2025)

Attachments: [Exhibit A-Denial Letter Survey](#)
[Exhibit B-Quit Claim Deed](#)
[Exhibit C-Application with attachments \(1\)](#)
[Exhibit D-Ordinance 2025-010 \(2\)](#)
[Exhibit E-ingress egress easement](#)
[Exhibit F-GIS Map of Driveway distance \(1\)](#)
[Exhibit G-Picture of driveway from Pine Island Rd \(1\)](#)
[Exhibit H-Engineering Detail D-3A](#)
[Exhibit I-Engineering Detail D-17C](#)
[Exhibit J-Applicant request for Appeal](#)
[Exhibit K-Development Director's Position Statement \(Staff Report\)](#)
[Exhibit L - BOA Final Written Determination](#)
[Exhibit M - Notice to appeal to BOCC.](#)
[Exhibit N-Publisher's Affidavit](#)
[Exhibit 1- Sec. 20-1728 Road Construction Ord codified](#)
[Exhibit 2a- Sec. 20-1523 Appeal decision of development director BOA](#)
[Exhibit 2b-Sec. 20-1280 BOA variance](#)
[Exhibit 3a- HAAS Engineer Report](#)
[Exhibit 3b- Lomski Engineer Report](#)
[Exhibit 4- Correspondence 11.17 through 11.18](#)
[Exhibit 5- Survey](#)
[Exhibit 6- Photograph](#)
[LDR Code Provisions for Reference](#)

The County Attorney advised the Board that attorney Derek Rooney will be representing the Board during the hearing. Derek Rooney served as legal counsel to the Board for the appeal hearing. Mr. Hall requested approval to build a single

home on an 11-acre parcel that was created by deed but did not go through the county's certified lot split process. Staff originally denied the request, citing two issues: (1) the parcel did not have the required lot frontage needed for a buildable lot under the land development regulations, and (2) the private access road was not constructed to county standards. During the hearing, Mr. Rooney explained that recently adopted code language for certified lot splits could result in two different interpretations. The board discussed the long-standing private road, the size and history of the family ranch, and the fact that this situation differs from smaller subdivisions. Commissioners generally agreed that common sense supports allowing the home and that the code needs refinement for large agricultural properties. Mr. Rooney advised that the board could resolve this case immediately by granting a design exception for the existing private road. This approach would address both access and frontage concerns and allow the parcel to move forward as a buildable lot. The board agreed, and supported bringing back future code amendments to clarify these issues for similar cases. Ultimately, the board moved toward approving the design exception so Mr. Hall can proceed.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

COUNTY ATTORNEY'S REPORT

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Commissioners thanked county staff, volunteers, and community members for their contributions to DeSoto County. The Commissioners also reminded everyone that the 22nd Annual Pioneer Day will be on Saturday March 28 at the Turner Agri-Civic Center from 9am - 2pm.

RECESS UNTIL 6:30 PM PUBLIC HEARING

QUASI-JUDICIAL PUBLIC HEARING

19. Ordinance / DCIP Commercial Data Processing Facility rezone (RZNE-0077-2025)

Attachments: [2026-03-16 DCIP for BOCC SR](#)
[Location Map](#)
[FLU Map](#)
[Wetlands & Conservation Overlay Map](#)
[Zoning Map](#)
[DCIP revised plan3-3-26](#)
[2026-03-16 Ordinance RZNE-0077-2025 DCIP BOCC](#)
[Exhibit G Comp Plan Policies](#)

Valerie Vicente, County Attorney reviewed Quasi-Judicial procedures and Ex Parte communication rules, followed by Commissioners disclosing any constituent contact or site visits. The Clerk administered the Oath to all speakers. Planning Director Misty Servia presented a request to rezone 34.22 acres at 3800 NE Roan Road from A-5 to PUD for the proposed DeSoto County Industrial Park, a Rapid Response project involving the renovation of a former power plant into a 35,134-square-foot data center with on-site power generation. Staff evaluated the application for compatibility with surrounding agricultural land,

environmental conditions, available infrastructure, and consistency with the comprehensive plan. While the site lies in the Rural Agricultural Future Land Use category, staff found that-with conditions-the proposal met rezoning and PUD criteria. The applicant explained that the facility would be energy-independent, reuse existing infrastructure, avoid water-intensive cooling systems, and operate with approximately 25 full-time employees. Residents raised broad concerns, including noise, emissions, water use, lighting, proximity to schools and the event center, loss of agricultural land, limited job creation, and potential future expansion. Gross made a motion to close the public hearing, seconded by Commissioner Langford. The vote carried unanimously. The board spent significant time discussing noise, lighting, and water impacts, ultimately supporting a 55-dBA noise limit at 200 feet from all property lines and requiring a photometric plan showing no light trespass. Water use prompted further discussion, including input from the City of Arcadia, which expressed interest in providing reclaimed water. Rather than mandate reclaimed-water use immediately, the board directed the applicant to explore feasibility and return with findings at the improvement plan stage. Staff presented updated conditions reflecting these directives, including perimeter buffering, noise limits, lighting requirements, and reclaimed-water exploration, confirming that the revised conditions captured the board’s intent.

A motion was made by Commissioner Gross, seconded by Commissioner Langford, to adopt this Ordinance. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Deriso, Schaefer, Hickox, Langford, and Gross
 Enactment No: 2026-004

ADJOURNMENT

Being no further business before the Board, Chairman Hickox adjourned the meeting at 10:09pm

ATTEST:

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
 DESOTO COUNTY, FLORIDA

 MANDY HINES
 COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

 STEVE HICKOX
 CHAIRMAN

Board Documents 03-24-2026 BOCC Public Meeting

Attachments: BOCC Public Meeting Supplemental Documents

NOTE: For quasi-judicial matters, any party desiring a verbatim record of the proceeding of this hearing for the purpose of an appeal is advised to make private arrangements for the production of a record and anyone wishing to present documents or other written evidence to the Board must provide eight (8) copies of the written material . If special accommodations are required in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, individuals should contact the County Administrator's Office by calling 863-993-4800 at least 48 hours prior to the hearing.