



# DeSoto County

## Board of County Commissioners

### Meeting Minutes

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Tuesday, May 12, 2026

9:00 AM

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#### 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

Ed Horne of Pine Level Church gave the invocation.

#### INTRODUCTION OF ELECTED OFFICIALS

#### SET/AMEND

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

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

#### PUBLIC FORUM FOR NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Ms. Ashley Brown, the district's Community Outreach Coordinator, shared several important announcements about upcoming end-of-year events.

#### CONSENT AGENDA-MOTION TO APPROVE

##### Approval of the Consent Agenda

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

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

##### 1. Revised Classification and Pay Plan.

**Attachments:** [Parks Maintenance Technician II Classification & Pay Plan 5-12-26](#)

##### 2. Minutes/BOCC Public Meeting 03-24-2026 and 04-14-2026

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**Attachments:** [BOCC Meeting Minutes 04-14-2026 Comp Plan Workshop](#)  
[BOCC Meeting Minutes 04-14-2026](#)  
[BOCC Meeting Minutes 03-34-2026](#)

**3. Local Housing Assistance Plan**

**Attachments:** [DeSoto 2026-2029 LHAP with Exhibits.pdf](#)  
[Resolution for LHAP 2026.pdf](#)  
[2026-exhibit-d.pdf](#)  
Enactment No: 2026-043

**4. Declaration of Surplus Property**

**Attachments:** [Surplus Declared 5-12-2026](#)

**PRESENTATION**

**5. Presentation/Valor Awards**

The Board of Commissioners honored and gave recognition to Sergeant Niurvis Nunez and Deputy Jose Trujillo, two deputies with the DeSoto County Sheriff's Office, for their heroism and valor during the events of January 25, 2025. Sheriff Jim Potter, shared a video from the investigation, including body-camera footage that documented the sequence of events leading to an officer-involved shooting involving the two deputies.

**REGULAR BUSINESS**

**6. Proclamation/Economic Development Week**

**Attachments:** [2026 Proclamation-Economic Development Week](#)

Sondra Guffey, Economic Development Director read the Proclamation into record proclaiming May 4-8, 2026 Economic Development Week. A motion was made by Commissioner Gross, seconded by Commissioner Langford, to approve this Proclamation. The motion carried by the following vote:  
**Aye:** Deriso, Schaefer, Hickox, Langford, and Gross

**7. Proclamation/National Tourism Week**

**Attachments:** [2026 National Tourism Week Proclamation](#)

Sondra Guffey, Economic Development Director read the Proclamation into record proclaiming May 3-9, 2026 National Tourism Week. A motion was made by Commissioner Schaefer, seconded by Commissioner Deriso, to approve this Proclamation. The motion carried by the following vote:  
**Aye:** Deriso, Schaefer, Hickox, Langford, and Gross

**8. Proclamation/May 20, 2026, Emancipation Day**

**Attachments:** [Proclamation- Emancipation Day May 20th 2026](#)

Mandy Hines read the Proclamation into record to proclaim May 20, 2026, as Emancipation Day. A motion was made by Commissioner Langford, seconded by Commissioner Deriso,

to approve this Proclamation. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

**9. Agreement/Spring Lake, Flood Risk Reduction**

**Attachments:** [authorizing-agent-approval-form  
4734-113-R For Subrecipient Signature\(04-21-26\)](#)

Dennis Johnston presented a request to approve the Agreement between the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) and DeSoto County to conduct Phase I (Engineering and Design) of the Spring Lake drainage ditch. A motion was made by Commissioner Gross, seconded by Commissioner Langford, to approved the agreement between the Florida Division of Emergency Management and DeSoto County to conduct Phase I (Engineering and Design) of the Spring Lake drainage ditch. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

**10. Contract / Construction - NW Second Bunker Avenue Bridge Replacement Project (Bridge No. 044047)**

**Attachments:** [26-10-00ITB BID TABULATION  
26-10-00ITB Contract](#)

Dennis Johnson presented a request to approve the construction contract with Zep Construction, Inc. for the NW Second Bunker Avenue Bridge Replacement Project (Bridge No. 044047) in the amount of \$1,033,297.70. A motion was made by Commissioner Langford, seconded by Commissioner Gross, to approve the construction contract with Zep Construction, Inc. for the NW Second Bunker Avenue Bridge Replacement Project . The motion carried by the following vote:

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

**11. Amendment / KCI Technologies, Inc. - Task 11 Construction Phase Services Amendment Second Bunker Bridge #044047**

**Attachments:** [KCI Contract  
23-15-00RFQ Agreement Amendment #1](#)

Dennis Johnson presented a request To approve the amendment to the agreement with KCI Technologies, Inc. for Task 11 Construction Phase Services for Second Bunker Bridge #044047. A motion was made by Commissioner Langford, seconded by Commissioner Gross, to approve the amendment to the agreement with KCI Technologies, Inc. for Task 11 Construction Phase Services for Second Bunker Bridge #044047. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

**12. Accounts and Warrants Drawn Per Schedule of Bills Payable.**

**Attachments:** [AP Check Report - Warrants 03-24-26 to 04-27-26](#)

Peter Danao, Finance Director presented a request to approve accounts and warrants drawn according to Schedule(s) of Bills Payable March 24, 2026-April 27, 2026.

A motion was made by Commissioner Langford, seconded by Commissioner Schaefer, to approve the accounts and warrants drawn. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

**Recused:** Hickox

**13. Resolution/Budget Amendment Fiscal Year 2025/2026**

**Attachments:** [Resolution Summary and Narrative](#)  
[2026-89 Article V- COC](#)  
[2026-90 Utilities Capital Wastewater](#)  
[2026-91 Utilities Capital Water & Wastewater](#)  
[2026-94 Public Safety](#)

Brian Wagner presented a requested to adopt a Resolution relating to the budget amendments affecting the 2025/2026 adopted budget as provided in Budget Amendment 2026-89, 2026-90, 2026-91 and 2026-94.

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

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

Enactment No: 2026-041

**14. First Amendment/Renewal for County Attorney Services**

**Attachments:** [First Amendment - NGN Agreement for County Attorney Services](#)

Valerie Vincente, County Attorney presented a request to approve the First Amendment to the Agreement for County Attorney Services between DeSoto County and Nabors, Giblin & Nickerson, P.A.

A motion was made by Commissioner Deriso, seconded by Commissioner Langford, to approve the First Amendment to the Agreement for County Attorney Services between DeSoto County and Nabors, Giblin & Nickerson, P.A.. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

**15. 2026 Bulk Water Rate Calculation Study**

**Attachments:** [desoto\\_bulk\\_water\\_rate\\_memo\\_20260324 - 3.31.26](#)  
[Resolution - Accepting FY 2026 Bulk Water Rate Calculation Study](#)

Greg Harris, Utilities Director presented a request to adopt the resolution accepting the Fiscal year 2026 Bulk Water Rate Calculation Study prepared by Stantec Consulting Services INC.

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

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

Enactment No: 2026-042

**16. ORDINANCE/ Amending Tourist Development Tax Plan**

**Attachments:**      [Ordinance Amending TDT Plan in ARTICLE XIX of Chapter 10 Proof of Publication Amended Ex. A to Ordinance #2010-15 and for Codification](#)

Sondra Guffey, Economic Development Director presented a request to adopt an Ordinance Amending Article XIX of the DeSoto County Code of ordinances update the Tourist Development Tax Plan.

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: 2026-007

## **ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

## **COUNTY ATTORNEY'S REPORT**

## **BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Commissioners expressed their appreciation to County staff, Law Enforcement, and Public Safety. Commissioner Schaefer also noted that May is Military Awareness Month and reminded everyone that a Hurricane Expo will be held at the Turner Center on June 6, 2026. Commissioner Hickox shared that he had met with the DCIP data center group the previous week and noted that representatives had also been working closely with the county's planning and zoning office. He explained that the applicant was strongly pushing to move the project onto the July agenda and asked the board for direction, acknowledging that other constituents had been patiently waiting in the planning and zoning process as well. Commissioner Hickox stated that he felt the project timeline was being rushed and emphasized that he did not want the county to make any mistakes in handling a matter of this scale. The board then held an extensive discussion regarding the proposed DCIP data center project and the possibility of accelerating its review timeline for a July hearing. Commissioners acknowledged the significant economic potential of the project, including increased tax revenue and economic development opportunities, while also emphasizing the need to protect DeSoto County residents and infrastructure through a thorough and responsible review process. Board members discussed balancing the urgency of the project with fairness to other applicants already in the development review queue. While several commissioners supported moving the application forward as quickly as possible to avoid losing the opportunity, others cautioned against rushing such a large and unprecedented project without fully understanding its long-term impacts. Key concerns included water usage, independent power generation, noise mitigation, industrial wastewater management, emissions, traffic impacts, and other unknowns associated with rapidly evolving data center technology. Valerie Vincente, County Attorney explained that the application had only recently been submitted and that the proposed timeline was extremely aggressive for a project of nearly 800 acres and approximately 8.3 million square feet. Mandy Hines advised that the county lacked specific regulations and internal expertise related to data center developments and recommended hiring outside consultants and technical experts to assist with the review. Areas identified for expert analysis included acoustics, water demand, power infrastructure, industrial waste, traffic, and industry best practices. Commissioners generally agreed that relying on qualified experts and firsthand research was preferable to public speculation and misinformation circulating online. Members also discussed visiting operational data centers in other states to better understand potential impacts and mitigation strategies. While concerns remained about rushing the process and overlooking important details, the board ultimately expressed support for staff making every

reasonable effort to move the project forward responsibly. The board reached a general consensus authorizing staff to retain outside consultants as needed and proceed with an expedited but comprehensive review process. Commissioners emphasized that the applicant would still need to provide complete and timely information and that the board retained the authority to approve or deny the project after all impacts and conditions had been fully evaluated.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Being no further business before the Board, Chairman Hickox adjourned the meeting at 10:30AM

ATTEST:

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
DESOTO COUNTY, FLORIDA

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MANDY HINES  
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

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STEVE HICKOX  
CHAIRMAN

**BOARD DOCUMENTS 05-12-2026 BOCC PUBLIC MEETING**

**Attachments:** BOCC Public Meeting 05-12-2026 Speraker cards  
Form 8B voting Conflict 05-12-2026

**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.**