

MINUTES OF THE WORKSHOP MEETING FEBRUARY 10, 2026 @ 5:10 PM HELD AT THE COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE OF THE WILCOX COUNTY COURTHOUSE.

Those present for the meeting were as follows:

Jamie Handley	Chairman
Clay Reid	Vice Chairman
Jowan Johnson	Commissioner
Kerney Hair	Commissioner
Mel Powell	Commissioner
County Manager	Michael Pomirko
Jeff Wessel	Wilcox County Sheriff
Lucas Allison	Cordele Dispatch
Jim Ingram	Studio 8
Chase Gregory	Studio 8

### Call to Order

Chairman Jamie Handley called the meeting to order at 5:10 p.m.

### 1. Studio 8 – Design Firm Proposal Presentation

Chairman Jamie Handley called the meeting to order and introduced the first item of business: a presentation from Studio 8, a design firm that submitted a proposal for the new jail project.

County Manager Michael Pomirko introduced Mr. Jim Ingram and Mr. Chase Gregory, representing Studio 8. Mr. Ingram and Mr. Gregory expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to present and stated their willingness to answer questions and provide additional insight regarding their proposal.

Discussion focused on several key aspects of the proposed new jail, including projected costs, facility size, and design elements best suited to meet the needs of Wilcox County. Mr. Ingram provided an overview of Studio 8's experience with similar projects and discussed current trends contributing to successful jail design and operations.

Mr. Ingram outlined his vision should Studio 8 be awarded the bid, including the development of multiple design schemes for evaluation. These schemes would consider both construction costs and long-term operational expenses to determine the most efficient and cost-effective solution. He emphasized that a smart, well-planned layout could significantly improve jail operations and reduce staffing costs over time.

Additional topics included housing configurations, such as four-bed holding areas versus two-bed areas, noting that certain layouts may reduce overall construction and operational costs. The discussion also addressed security components, including locking systems and door selections, with Mr. Ingram recommending economical options where feasible to control expenses. The advantages and considerations of steel cells versus masonry cells, both commonly used in modern jail construction, were also reviewed.

Mr. Ingram and Mr. Gregory concluded by sharing examples of past projects delivered within governing authorities' established budgets while maintaining operational efficiency. They thanked the Board for the opportunity to present and expressed their interest in working with Wilcox County should they be selected.

### 2. FY2027 Budget Calendar and Employee Incentives

County Manager Michael Pomirko presented an overview of the proposed FY2027 budget process. He expressed his intent to begin the budget process earlier than in previous years, starting with meetings with department heads prior to presenting information to the Board of Commissioners. He stated that this approach would help clarify potential issues, gather additional data, and provide more comprehensive information to the Board during budget discussions.

Mr. Pomirko identified employee retention as a primary concern entering the FY2027 budget cycle. He proposed implementing a graduated retirement incentive structure to reward long-term service. Under the proposal, employees would receive incremental increases in their base retirement contribution based on years of service, up to a maximum of 6% after 21 or more years. The proposed structure is as follows:

- 2% after 3 years of service
- 3% for years 5–9

- 4% for years 10–15
- 5% for years 16–20
- 6% for 21 or more years of service

In addition, Mr. Pomirko proposed a longevity incentive program consisting of one-time annual payments issued near the end of November. The proposed payment schedule includes:

- \$250 at Year 4
- \$375 for Years 5–9
- \$500 for Years 10–15
- \$600 for Years 16–20
- \$750 for 21 or more years

Mr. Pomirko noted he is finalizing cost projections but would like to explore extending some type of one time payment to volunteer firefighters in recognition of their service to the county.

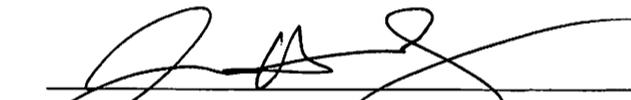
He further stated that while several county salaries are currently competitive, certain positions may require additional adjustments, specifically within the Road Department, the Jail, and select other individual roles.

In conclusion, Mr. Pomirko summarized his proposed direction for the FY2027 budget and requested feedback from the Board. Board members expressed support for the approach, noting that slowing Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA) while focusing on retention incentives may be a strategic way to maintain workforce stability, particularly given recent salary adjustments in prior years.

#### **Adjournment**

Commissioner Mel Powell made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Jowan Johnson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

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CHAIRMAN, JAMIE HANDLEY

COUNTY MANAGER, MICHAEL POMIRKO