



David O'Keefe
LEON COUNTY COMMISSIONER, DISTRICT 5

Dear Neighbor,

Passover begins this Wednesday evening, April 1.

To everyone in our community who will gather around a seder table this week – with family, with friends, with neighbors – I want to wish you a meaningful and joyful holiday. Chag Sameach.

The story of Passover – freedom, perseverance, and the importance of remembering where you came from – is one that resonates across faiths and backgrounds. It's a reminder that the values we pass down at the dinner table matter just as much as anything that happens in a commission chamber.

I'm grateful to serve a community as diverse and rich as District 5. This week, I'm thinking of all of you celebrating.

David O'Keefe
Leon County Commissioner, District 5

County-wide Burn Ban in effect thru 4/3

The County issued a **temporary** county-wide burn effective from Friday, March 27, 2026, through Friday, April 3, 2026. This is due to extreme drought conditions and a [Red Flag Warning](#) issued by the National Weather Service (NWS). All unauthorized open burning, including yard debris, campfires, and trash, is prohibited.

WHAT IS A RED FLAG WARNING?

A warning issued when **critical fire weather conditions** are happening or about to happen.

It does not necessarily mean there is a fire, but that conditions will be very dry and windy. If a fire is present, it can become extreme!

Avoid activities that could spark a wildfire!



Take Action!

- ✓ Make your wildfire plan, with at least 2 evacuation routes
- ✓ Maintain your go kit
- ✓ Follow fire prevention tips and regulations
- ✓ Listen to local officials for updates and evacuation orders

weather.gov



Elder Care Services Big Wheels Deliver Meals

The **Big Wheels Deliver Meals** initiative, organized by Elder Care Services, highlights the importance of the community-based **Meals on Wheels** program, which provides nutritious meals and daily contact to seniors in the Tallahassee area. Through this effort, local leaders, residents, and volunteers step in to personally deliver meals, helping raise awareness about food insecurity and isolation among older adults while encouraging more community involvement.

Last week, I **volunteered to deliver** hot meals directly to seniors in their homes. These deliveries are more than just food—they also provide a brief wellness check and friendly interaction that can be especially meaningful for seniors who may live alone.

Overall, the program supports hundreds of older adults across Leon County each year, helping them remain independent and safe in their homes while strengthening the connection between the community and the seniors it serves.



Tallahassee State College's President's Leadership Institute

The **President's Leadership Institute** at Tallahassee State College is a year-long professional development program designed to cultivate leadership skills among faculty and staff across the college. The program brings together a diverse cohort of participants who meet regularly throughout the academic year to explore leadership principles, institutional strategy, and the evolving challenges facing higher education.

I was invited to speak with participants and share my own thoughts on leadership principles, including the importance of collaboration, accountability, and service to the community. The conversation focused on how leadership happens at every level of an organization and how

thoughtful decision-making and strong relationships help institutions and communities succeed.



Private to Public Dirt Road Improvement & Maintenance Program

This past weekend, I celebrated with residents of Augustine Hills as Brushy Creek Road became the first dirt road accepted through the [Private Road to Public Dirt Road Improvement and Maintenance Program](#), which was adopted by the County Commission in July 2024.

The program gives property owners on private dirt roads the option to donate 100% of the needed right-of-way so the road can be brought into the County system, improved to County standards, and maintained - it requires unanimous participation from every property owner on the road. If you would like to learn more about this new program offered by Leon County, click this [link](#) to find more.

United Way's Read United

Today, I had the opportunity to participate in the United Way's Big Read program by reading to a first-grade class at **Hartsfield Elementary School**. It's a meaningful experience to spend time with the students, share a story, and support the important goal of helping young learners strengthen their reading skills and enthusiasm for learning.

Read United is a community literacy initiative led by United Way of the Big Bend that focuses on helping young students in Leon County develop strong reading skills early. The program brings together volunteers, educators, and community partners to support children—especially those in kindergarten through third grade—by encouraging regular reading and providing positive learning experiences that build confidence and a lifelong love of books.



Recent Votes at the County Commission and Blueprint

To keep you informed on decisions we make at the County Commission and Blueprint, I am providing a summary of the key votes we took at our March meetings.

✓ Leon County Commission Highlights - March 10 Key Votes

- **Funding Levels for CHSP Programs**

Established the maximum funding levels for the Community Human Services Partnership (CHSP) program to fund non-profit organizations providing direct safety-net services to vulnerable citizens.

Vote: Passed 6-0-1 (Commissioner Maddox abstained)

- **Funding Levels for Outside Agencies**

Established the maximum discretionary funding levels for special events and outside agencies.

Vote: Passed 7-0 (Unanimous)

- **Commissioner Office Budgets**

Established the maximum funding level for Commissioner Office Budgets, including a measure that adjusts budgets based on yearly inflation.

Vote: Passed 6-1 (Commissioner O'Keefe voted NO)

- **Straw Poll on Consolidation**

Approved adding a straw poll to the November 2026 ballot asking residents whether they support consolidating county and city governments under the County structure and leadership.

Vote: Passed 6-1 (Commissioner O'Keefe voted NO)

✓ Leon County Commission Highlights - March 10 Key Votes

- **County Charter References & Amendments**

Requested scheduling the first and only public hearing to consider a Board-initiated Charter Amendment to update Charter language, remove outdated statutory references, and specify procedures for future Charter amendments.

Vote: Passed 7-0 (Unanimous)

- **County Charter Amendment - Street Naming**

Directed staff to draft a Charter Amendment allowing the County to set uniform standards for street naming, renaming, and property addressing countywide, with County standards taking priority over conflicting city ordinances.

Vote: Passed 6-1 (Commissioner Maddox voted NO)

- **County Charter Amendment - Food Insecurity**

Reaffirmed the County's commitment to reducing food insecurity, awareness of resources, and directing staff to schedule a workshop on this topic once the FAMU Food Council report is complete.

Vote: Passed 4-3 (Commissioners Maddox, O'Keefe and Proctor voted NO)

- **County Charter Amendment - Dignity & Humanity for All**

Directed staff to prepare a Board-initiated Charter Amendment revising the Charter Preamble to reflect the dignity and humanity of all residents, and to schedule a public hearing.

Vote: Passed 7-0 (Unanimous)

✓ Leon County Commission Highlights - March 10 Key Votes

- **County Charter Amendment - Healthcare Access**

Reaffirmed the County's long-standing commitment to ensuring healthcare access for low-income residents in support of an equitable, safe, healthy, and vibrant community.

Vote: Passed 4-3 (Commissioners Maddox, O'Keefe and Proctor voted NO)

- **County Charter Amendment - Affordable Housing**

Reaffirmed the County's long-standing commitment to increasing and preserving affordable housing in the community.

Vote: Passed 4-3 (Commissioners Maddox, O'Keefe and Proctor voted NO)

- **County Charter Amendment - Whistleblower Protections**

Directed staff to bring back an agenda item on Whistleblower protections available to County employees and others.

Vote: Passed 7-0 (Unanimous)

- **County Charter Amendment - Historic Impact of Past Policy Decisions**

Directed staff to bring back an agenda item accounting for the historic impact of past public policy decisions and asked the CCRC to reconsider the issue.

Vote: Passed 6-1 (Commissioner Welch voted NO)

✓ Leon County Commission Highlights - March 10 Key Votes

- **County Charter Amendment - County Ordinances Prevail over City Ordinances**
Proposed a Charter Amendment stating that County ordinances shall prevail when a conflict arises between a City and County ordinance.
Vote: Passed 6-1 (Commissioner Maddox voted NO)
- **Ad Valorem Property Tax Exemption for Certain Rental Properties**
Adopted an ordinance to establish a County ad valorem property tax exemption for rental properties with 50 or more units (up to 70) that dedicate at least 20% of the units for low-income households.
Vote: Passed 7-0 (Unanimous)
- **Amendment to Southwood DRI**
Approved the Twelfth Amendment to the Southwood Development of Regional Impact Integrated Development.
Vote: Passed 7-0 (Unanimous)

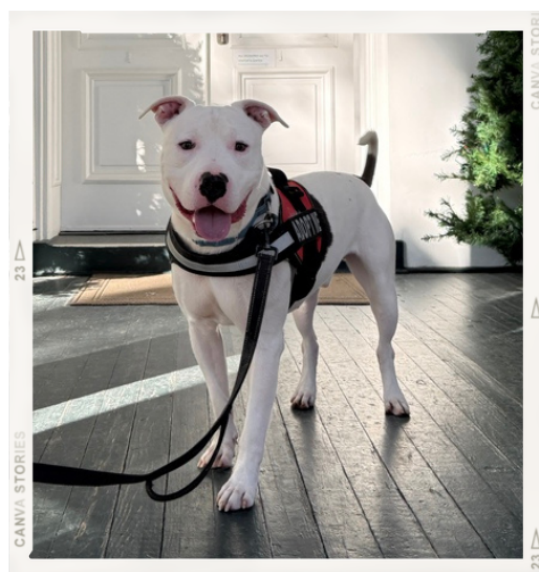
✓ Leon County Commission Highlights - March 10 Key Votes

- **Workshop on TMH's Community Health Needs Assessment**
Directed staff to schedule a workshop to discuss TMH's Community Health Needs Assessment and invite stakeholder groups to participate.
Vote: Passed 7-0 (Unanimous)
- **Proclamation for Leon County Humane Society**
Requested a Proclamation to honor the Leon County Humane Society's 65th anniversary.
Vote: Passed 7-0 (Unanimous)

✓ Blueprint Board Highlights - March 12 Key Votes

- **Eminent Domain - Magnolia Drive Trail**
Authorized eminent domain to acquire property for the Magnolia Drive Multi-Use Trail project.
Vote: Passed 10-0 (Unanimous, Commissioners Dailey and Proctor absent)
- **Eminent Domain - Springhill Road**
Authorized eminent domain for property needed for Springhill Rd. bridge improvements over Munson Slough.
Vote: Passed 8-2 (Commissioners Matlow and Porter voted NO, Commissioners Dailey and Proctor absent)
- **Eminent Domain - Bannerman Road**
Authorized eminent domain for property needed for Bannerman Rd. improvements in the Northeast Connector Corridor Project.
Vote: Passed 9-1 (Commissioner Porter voted NO, Commissioners Dailey and Proctor absent)
- **Bond Issuance for BP Projects**
Authorized a bond issuance of up to \$90 million for Blueprint projects.
Vote: Passed 6-4 (Commissioners Caban, Matlow, O'Keefe and Porter voted NO, Commissioners Dailey and Proctor absent)
- **BP Project Impact Funding**
Requested an agenda item to explore a policy related to Blueprint projects and provide impact funding for local businesses negatively impacted by the projects
Vote: Passed 10-0 (Unanimous, Commissioners Dailey and Proctor absent)
- **Neighborhood Medical Center Pharmacy**
Requested an agenda item to fund a non-competitive project for a Neighborhood Medical Center Pharmacy.
Vote: Passed 10-0 (Unanimous, Commissioners Dailey and Proctor absent)

Shelter Pet of the Month - ☐ Tobias ☐



[Meet Tobias!](#)

I am a 2.5-year-old neutered male, and the shelter staff says I look like an American Staffordshire Terrier. I may be a goofy 60-pound boy, but I love nothing more than to be around other people.

I love a nice walk around the block, a good hike, and even romping around the backyard. I'm still working hard on my leash skills, and they are getting better every day. I also make the perfect passenger in the car, and I am known as a champion car snoozer! I'm also told that I have the cutest curly tail ever.

By Appointment: Daily, 10:00 am – 6:00 pm

Walk-in Kennel Viewings: Tuesday through Sunday 1-5

Phone: 850-891-2950

Shelter Address: 1125 Easterwood Drive

Apply to be a Summer Youth Intern with Leon County

The [2026 Summer Youth Intern Program](#) is a paid summer work-experience and training initiative for local youth ages 14-24, offered by Leon County Government in partnership with CareerSource Capital Region. The goal is to help young people gain real-world job skills, professional development, and workplace experience within County government departments.

Interns work in County departments, performing entry-level tasks and building practical job skills. Interns will work for 5 weeks (June 29 - July 24), 20 hours per week, and earn \$14 per hour.

For more information, contact VolunteerLeon@LeonCountyFL.gov or call 850-606-1970. The [application portal](#) is open now and will close on April 20th. **Apply now!**

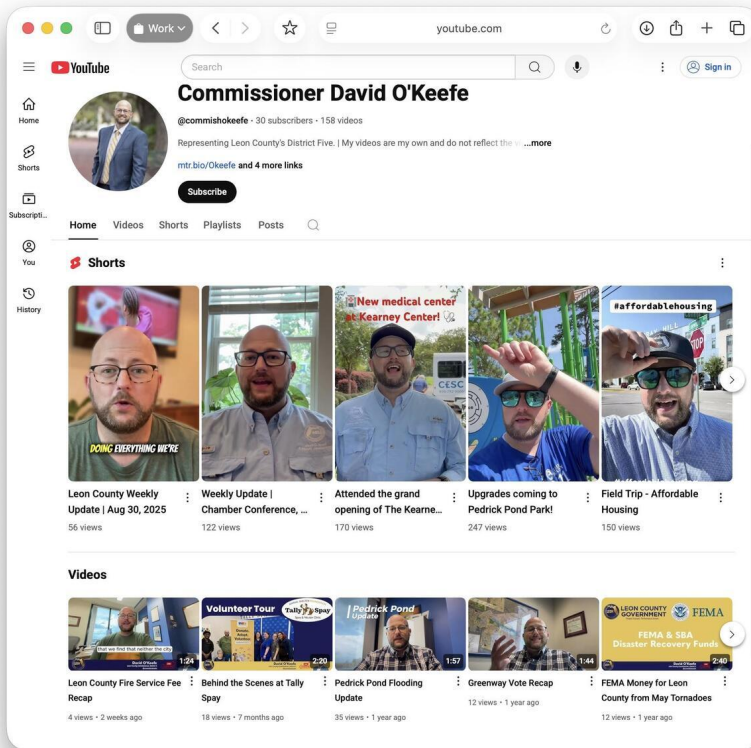
Apply to Serve on a Citizens Committee

Leon County is seeking residents who want to serve on citizen advisory committees, boards, and authorities. These volunteer committees help guide local decision-making on issues such as planning, housing, environment, public safety, and more. Serving on a citizen committee is a great way to make a direct impact in our community.

To view available committees, vacancies, and to submit an application online visit:

□ <https://www2.leoncountyfl.gov/Committees/>

Watch our Community Updates on Youtube



Stay connected between newsletters by subscribing to our YouTube channel. Each week we share updates on County projects, local events, and issues that matter to the community.

[Subscribe on YouTube](#)

Upcoming Commission Meetings

[Leon County Commission](#)

April 14 at 3:00 p.m. - Commission Meeting

April 14 at 6:00 p.m. - Public Hearings





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