

**Highlands County Hospital District
Board of Commissioners
Special Meeting – December 12, 2024**

The Highlands County Hospital District Board of Commissioners met at 1:30pm on Thursday, December 12, 2024, at the Highlands County Commissioner's Board Room. Notice of the Special Meeting was published in the Highlands News-Sun on December 1, 2024. The notice is filed in the Board's meeting file.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Victor Divietro, Dean Gerber, Dusty Johnson, Jeff Roth, Katie Wilson

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: N/A

OTHERS PRESENT: Bert Harris – Swaine, Harris & Wohl, PA; Gail Escobar- Clerk; Leah Sauls – Development Services Director; Joe Gleason – CEO HCA Florida Highlands Hospital; Jack W. Bass - BBG Real Estate Services Senior Managing Director via TEAMS.

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER at 1:30 pm by Chairman Gerber.
Chairman Gerber stated that the special meeting was called to consider the contract with BBG Real Estate Services for the valuation of the hospital property.

II. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
Mr. Roth led the pledge and gave the invocation.

III. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC
No comments

IV. APPROVAL OF PAYMENT OF INVOICES
MOTION: Mr. Johnson made a motion seconded by Ms. Wilson and Mr. Roth to approve payment of invoice for Highlands News-Sun – 48.40 as presented by the Clerk. Upon roll call, all Members voted aye. The motion carried.

V. CONSIDERATION OF CONTRACT WITH BBG REAL ESTATE SERVICES
BBG Real Estate Services was the only response from the RFP that was advertised. Jack Bass joined the meeting via TEAMS.

Mr. Harris stated that a request for proposal was done requesting for a valuation of the hospital to be completed within the parameters of the statute which requires an appraisal and requires certain criteria under Section 155.40, Florida Statutes. The RFP resulted in the one submittal from BBG Real Estate Services. The proposal from BBG did not address the cost of the valuation, but emailed correspondence from Jack Bass received earlier today indicated the valuation fee of \$9,750 with a \$450 per hour fee for any subsequent meetings or hearings following the submission of the appraisal. The correspondence also stated that they have done work for HCA which was quantified as one percent or less. Mr. Harris stated he did speak with the recently hired special counsel with Jones Walker concerning this matter and the fee does seem to be quite low, and they are aware of at least two other firms that would be qualified to submit a proposal to fulfill the request of the RFP the District Board had issued.

Mr. Harris suggested that the Board not decide today and reach out to the other firms suggested by Jones Walker. Mr. Harris will be certain that the statute does not require the RFP to acquire the additional proposals before moving forward with the additional requests. Previously, the District followed the RFP process to obtain proposals. but he does not believe that the statute requires following an RFP process.

Due to audio difficulties, Mr. Bass was able to join the meeting approximately eight minutes into the conversation.

Mr. Harris asked if he is comfortable with BBG's response to the scope of work set out in the RFP to which Mr. Bass stated that he was. Mr. Harris asked if he had completed an appraisal under Section 155.40, Florida Statutes to which he stated he had not though he had completed appraisals for hospitals owned by municipalities and financial institutions. Mr. Harris asked Mr. Bass if his firm is prepared to meet the statutory requirements setup by Florida law. Mr. Bass said the only question he had was related to statement contained within the lease that all assets reverted to the Hospital Board upon termination of the lease. Mr. Harris stated the lease provides which tangible personal property the tenant is able to remove and requires the tenant to return any licensure to the District. Therefore, the license (the right to do business as a hospital in Highlands County) would be part of the valuation. Mr. Bass stated the only thing their proposal did not include was furniture, fixture, and equipment and he did not have a copy of the lease on hand to determine what it says. Mr. Harris stated the believed the lease had been made available through the bid documents. Mr. Bass asked for a copy of the lease agreement. Mr. Harris asked if he had valued a hospital license before to which Mr. Bass replied yes. Mr. Roth asked approximately how long the process will take, to which Mr. Bass stated four to six weeks, the middle of February.

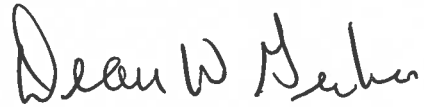
Mr. Bass exited the meeting.

MOTION: Mr. Divietro made a motion seconded by Mr. Johnson to continue to negotiate with BBG as well as reach out to other firms that have been brought to the Board's attention. It was discussed that this may mean that a decision may not be made until the regular meeting on February 27 or at a special meeting in January, if scheduled. Upon roll call, all Members voted aye. The motion carried.

Mr. Roth asked what part of the statute raised concern for Mr. Harris that BBG may not be able to fulfill. Mr. Harris said that the question was not a "simple and highest best use" question he asked BBG, but the statute is rather confusing and under the statute it is what is best for Highlands County. He does not want to put further interpretation on record without having the statute in hand. Mr. Harris said he can email the statute to Mr. Roth. Mr. Roth asked, could what is best for Highlands County possibly mean the valuation for a hospital versus a different venue? Mr. Harris stated that would mean a public hospital versus a private hospital when weighed by the Agency for Healthcare Administration (AHCA) and the benefit to the public.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Gerber adjourned the meeting at 1:54pm.



Dean W. Gerber, Chairman



Gail Escobar, Clerk