

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
IN AND FOR ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA

**GREATER PENSACOLA JUNIOR  
GOLF ASSOCIATION, INC. and  
WARRINGTON EMERGENCY  
AID CENTER, INCORPORATED**

Plaintiffs,

v.

CASE NO.: 2026 CA 000624  
DIVISION: Okaloosa, Div. 2

**PAM CHILDERS**, Clerk of the  
Circuit Court and Comptroller  
for Escambia County,

Defendant.

**PLAINTIFFS' REPLY TO DEFENDANT'S MOTION TO DISMISS COUNTS II, III,  
AND IV OF PLAINTIFFS' COMPLAINT**

Plaintiffs, Greater Pensacola Junior Golf Association, Inc. ("First Tee Gulf Coast") and Warrington Emergency Aid Center ("WEAC"), hereby file this Reply to Defendant Pam Childers ("Childers") Motion to Dismiss Counts II, III, and IV of Plaintiffs' Complaint, and in support state:

**ADDITIONAL FACTS DISCOVERED AFTER COMPLAINT**

While Plaintiffs concede that this Court's ruling on Childers' Motion to Dismiss should rely primarily, if not entirely upon the factual allegations made by Plaintiffs in their Complaint alone, Plaintiffs believe the below facts, discovered after the filing of their Complaint, are relevant to their cause of action and may be found relevant by this Court in its ruling.

On April 14<sup>th</sup> and April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Plaintiffs submitted public records requests to the Office of the Escambia County Clerk and Comptroller. While Childers' office has not fully

responded to Plaintiffs' requests, the documents that have been provided to date support Plaintiffs' claims in their original Complaint for the following reasons:

**I. Childers has Struggled to Identify how Payments to Plaintiffs are Unlawful**

On July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025, Childers sent an email to Commissioner Steve Stroberger, updating him on her meeting with Commissioner Ashlee Hofberger regarding the Commission's "Discretionary/Community Support Funds." **Exhibit A.** Childers told Commissioner Stroberger that Commissioner Hofberger "gets it" and "understands it" before encouraging Commissioner Stroberger to have his aide meet with Commissioner Hofberger's aide to further discuss the topic.

Childers attached to her email a document titled "7.17.2025 Outline D4 mtg. **Exhibit A.** Within her notes, Childers listed the reasons for her decision to start denying payments as "felt it was the right time to address," "DOGE letters" and "had convo with Chairman" among others.

On January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2026, Childers sent an email to Commissioner Hofberger and Assistant County Attorney Kristin Hual and stated "It sort of sends the message that anything and everything is county public purpose, which *in my opinion* is not true." **Exhibit B** (emphasis added).

On April 2, 2026, Childers sent an email to the Office of Florida's Chief Financial Officer, Blaise Ingoglia. **Composite Exhibit C.** In her email, Childers asked the CFO for assistance in trying to stop the Commission from issuing payments through its discretionary funding program. Childers admitted in her email that the payments may not be illegal. *Id.* Her justification for her refusal to pay grants like those of Plaintiffs' was simply that "I do not believe property tax dollars should be given in increments of \$500-\$1,500 to the Commissioner's

not-for-profit of choice just because it feels good...”<sup>1</sup> Childers ended her email to the CFO by asking him “if its not illegal, but ‘wasteful’ who is enforcing? The Comptroller? How? What statutes give that authority?” *Id.*

On April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Childers sent the same email and attachment to the Florida Attorney General’s Office. **Exhibit C.** In her email forwarding her communication, she described the County’s program as “illegal and wasteful spending of property tax revenues.” Childers has never distinguished whether she’d deemed either WEAC or First Tee’s appropriations “illegal” or “wasteful,” and Childers has never identified the statutory or constitutional authority she possesses that allows her to reject appropriations that she subjectively deems “wasteful.”

On April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2026, Childers sent an email to Florida’s CFO, Florida’s Attorney General and to State Representative Michelle Salzman entitled “Andrade Demand Payments to Charities or Else – Commissioner Discretionary Spending -Property Tax Dollars.” **Exhibit D.** Within her email, she stated “I hope to have a conversation with someone in Tallahassee regarding the use of the County’s property tax dollars to fund charities.” Childers’ attempts at involving state cabinet officials in her confusion, again, appear to have been ignored. While her thought process in sending the email to a state representative is undetermined, it appears that Childers is hoping to *change* a law to retroactively justify her unlawful refusals to pay otherwise lawful warrants as directed by the Commission.

## **II. Childers’ Reasoning Justifying Payment to The American Legion Contradicts her Reasoning Denying Payment to Plaintiffs**

On July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025, Childers sent an email to county officials explaining why she’d decided to pay an appropriation to fund the travel of two children to attend Boys State in

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<sup>1</sup> It appears that Childers’ request to Florida’s CFO was ignored.

Tallahassee via American Legion Post 33. **Exhibit E.** Childers cited no statute or constitutional provision before stating the following:

*The BCC has identified the County Public Purpose as: Sending youth to Tallahassee to learn about State government.*

*This was a nationwide opportunity for all kids and the mission of Post 33 is to help fund the opportunity in Escambia County. (Escambia Childrens Trust is also a good resource).*

*This was not direct funding to schools (Schools have their own budget through their taxing authority)*

*The purpose was primarily achieved through the individuals attending and completing the event*

*The safeguards existed for accomplishment*

*My staff will keep a log of the “public purpose” to ensure uniformity and understanding. (Due to my conversations and understanding with DOGE, I expect this will be a review item if they continue their persistence in Escambia).*

Nothing in Childers’ determination of lawfulness is distinguishable from the purpose that either Plaintiff identified when requesting funds for their programs. Bizarrely, Childers shared three articles along with her email related to “Florida DOGE.”

The same justifications for issuing payments to American Legion Post 33 to finance a field trip for two children apply similarly to Plaintiffs, yet Childers is adamant that payment should not be issued to Plaintiffs. There is no rational basis for Childers’s discriminatory decision to fund American Legion Post 33 and deny payments to Plaintiffs.

### **III. Childers’ Decisions Have No Basis in Law**

In an email correspondence where Commissioner Hofberger asked Childers “Do you want to move towards only funding county projects?” Childers replied “In short summary, it is not the mission nor the objective of property tax dollars to provide bikes, as to funding school

events as I've said before I will not fund these items because schools are a taxing district, and it appears one of the not-for-profits gets funding from the Children's Trust... Escambia County government is pretty clear about what its primary purpose is which can be readily discerned[sic] by looking at the items funded in the General Fund..." **Exhibit F**.

Nowhere has Childers ever cited her legal justification for her bizarre claim that "General Funds" are *more* restrictive than the other sources of funds she repeatedly references as permissible to fund the payments she denied.

### **PLAINTIFFS' STANDING**

While Childers very clearly desires to have a veto over all funding decisions made by the County Commission, her statutory authority is limited in scope, unlike that of the Commission's. Plaintiffs' rights in the funds appropriated by the Commission vested immediately upon their fulfillment of the requirements of the Program, i.e. the submission of their forms and expenses they'd incurred that were authorized by the Commission. Plaintiffs' rights to those funds could only be deprived by the Clerk upon an affirmative determination that the appropriation was unlawful.

Put more simply, Childers cannot hide behind her egregiously subjective and conclusory statements about "public purpose" to turn her ministerial obligation to issue lawful warrants into a discretionary one.

Childers' arguments regarding Plaintiffs' standing ignores over 100 years of Florida case law. *Ray v. Wilson*, 29 Fla. 342, 343 (Fla. 1892)("mandamus lies against a county treasurer to compel the payment of a valid warrant or order drawn on him as such treasurer, and for the payment of which he has the necessary funds applicable thereto.").

For over 100 years in Florida, private parties have had the right to compel the payments of warrants issued to them by county commissioners. *Wiecking v. State*, 66 Fla. 49, 50 (Fla. 1913)(“the private party to whom the warrant is issued” has the right “to compel the county treasurer to pay it.”).

The Florida Supreme Court has made clear that “the direct pecuniary interest in the perfecting of that warrant was in those named as its beneficiaries...” *State ex. Rel. Norris v. Chancey*, 129 Fla. 194, 199 (Fla. 1937). Since at least 1937, Florida law has established that Plaintiffs’ property rights established once the warrants were directed to be paid to them, and that the perfection of their warrants is an interest for which they have standing to bring suit.

In the same year as *Chancey*, the Florida Supreme Court issued an alternative writ of mandamus directing the Hillsborough clerk of court to make payment to a private individual. *State ex rel. Himes v. Culbreath*, 128 Fla. 210, 220 (1937). In *Himes*, the Hillsborough county commission had approved of and directed the payment of \$1,000 to a private attorney and the clerk had refused to issue the payment, claiming illegality. The court weighed the county commission’s broad powers and found the law cited by the clerk to be unconstitutional. *Id.*

In *Askew v. Green, Simmons, Green and Hightower, P.A.*, the 1<sup>st</sup> DCA affirmed a circuit court judgment issuing a writ of mandamus compelling the Marion County Clerk to withdraw stop-payment orders he had issued on county warrants to private law firms. *Askew v. Green, Simmons, Green and Hightower, P.A.*, 348 So. 2d 1245, 1248 (Fla. 1st DCA 1977).

Of specific note in *Green*, the Governor, Attorney General and State Attorney (the “State”) in that case affirmatively waived any argument that the action required of the clerk was “discretionary,” conceding that it was ministerial. *Id.* at 1247. The State conceded that the clerk’s action was ministerial “in order to secure a decision on the merits and to avoid further trial court

litigation on what is essentially a matter of law...” *Id.* In its findings, the 1<sup>st</sup> DCA stated that a county commission is within its rights, absent a general law declaring otherwise, to reimburse the legal expenses of public officials who are found not guilty of the charges brought against them. *Id.* at 1248.

Additionally, in circumstances where a county stipulates an amount is owed to a private party, the private party has a right to bring suit in mandamus to require payment. *McDonnell v. Hasse*, 553 So. 2d 717, 719 (Fla. 2nd DCA 1989).

In sum, a clerk’s objection to a payment does not constitute a final legal determination that an expenditure is unlawful; it creates a justiciable controversy that a court must resolve.

This Court, not Childers, is the final arbiter of whether the Commission possessed the authority to declare that the subject expenditures constituted a lawful public purpose, and both Childers and this Court must remove their own subjective preferences from their analysis. *Askew* at 1248 (“The judicial question is not whether we would more fervently desire legislation benefiting police officers than legislation benefiting county commissioners, but rather whether the Constitution or statutes deny counties the legislative power to find a public purpose in such provisions. Neither the public meetings law nor any statute to which our attention has been called proscribes such reimbursement.”).

### **THE CLERK’S MINISTERIAL ROLE IN PAYMENTS**

A clerk’s pre-audit function is a legal check, not a political veto of a commission’s decisions. While a clerk “does exercise a discretion pertaining to the expenditure of county funds and may properly in his official capacity seek a determination of the validity of the claim in controversy,” the phrase “seek a determination” clearly establishes that the question of legality is the sole question upon which a clerk’s authority to refuse payment turns. *Mayes Printing Co. v.*

*Flowers*, 154 So. 2d 859, 862 (Fla. 1st DCA 1963). If a payment is legal, a clerk no longer has discretion in the process of payment.

Once a county commission lawfully votes to authorize payment, the clerk's duty to sign and issue the resulting warrant is ministerial and subject to mandamus compulsion under Florida law. *State ex rel. Himes v. Culbreath*, 128 Fla. 210, 212 (1937); *Askew v. Green, Simmons, Green and Hightower, P.A.*, 348 So.2d 1245, 1247 (1977); *Paxson v. State ex rel. Dillon*, 122 Fla. 470 (1936).

The clerk's pre-audit function exists to prevent payment of illegal claims; not to override lawful legislative decisions of the county's governing body. *Alachua County v. Powers*, 351 So.2d 32 (1977).

While Childers vaguely claims that the payments are not authorized by law, the Escambia Commission's vote constituted authorization "by law" because the commission acted within its statutory and constitutional powers. *Board of Com'rs of Escambia County v. Board of Pilot Com'rs of Port of Pensacola*, 52 Fla. 197, 214 (Fla. 1906).

Because Childers cannot and has not argued that there are insufficient funds to pay Plaintiffs, the only question for this Court to decide is whether the Commission's appropriation was legally valid. *State v. Pomeroy*, 100 Fla. 1510, 1511 (Fla. 1930); *Ray v. Wilson*, 29 Fla. 342 (Fla. 1892).

Based upon all available cases and Fla. Stat. § 129.09, it remains clear that a clerk's role is to raise the question of legality, not to permanently veto lawful expenditures.

**THE SOLE QUESTION TO BE ANSWERED:**  
**IS IT LAWFUL FOR THE COMMISSION TO APPROPRIATE**  
**COUNTY FUNDS TO PLAINTIFFS?**

As this Court astutely found in a prior case related to a somewhat similar circumstance:

“The Court finds that the resolution of this case depends primarily on two questions: (1) Is it lawful for elected officers (e.g., county commissioners), to participate in the Local Plan, and (2) if it is lawful for elected officers to participate in the Local Plan, does such participated constitute unlawful compensation?” *Order Resolving Disputed Issues and Denying Escambia County’s Request for a Writ of Mandamus*, 2022-CA-0141.

This Court accurately assessed the sole question(s) required to be answered: is the payment lawful or prohibited by statute?

While the Court determined that participation in the Local Plan was not lawful, this case turns on a much simpler assessment; and one which Childers continues to sidestep, deflect and avoid answering:

Is it lawful for the Escambia County Commission to appropriate funds to WEAC to feed Escambia residents in need<sup>2</sup> and to First Tee Gulf Coast to provide recreational and educational opportunities to children in Escambia County; and are there any general laws prohibiting the expenditures?

The answers to these questions establish a clear entitlement to mandamus and undergird Plaintiffs’ claims regarding the violations of their constitutional rights to equal protection and due process.

**I. The Escambia County Commission Possesses Broad Authority to Define a Public Purpose**

The commission is the primary legislative decision-maker on what constitutes a public purpose justifying the expenditure of public funds. Whereas here, the Escambia Commission’s taxing power and credit are not involved, only a basic public purpose needs to be identified.

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<sup>2</sup> Childers’s claim that WEAC only serves residents within the Pensacola city limits is patently ridiculous. Escambia residents in the unincorporated area largely show “Pensacola” as their residence on their driver’s licenses.

*Linscott v. Orange County Indus. Development Authority*, 443 So. 2d 97, 101 (Fla. 1983).<sup>3</sup>

Unless the Legislature has preempted a particular subject by general or special law, the Commission has “full authority to act” in the exercise of its home rule power. *Speer v. Olson*, 367 So. 2d 207, 211 (Fla. 1978).

A public purpose is satisfied when "the public interest, even though indirect, is present and sufficiently strong," but "public bodies cannot appropriate public funds indiscriminately, or for the benefit of private parties, where there is not a reasonable and adequate public interest" *Linscott* at 101.

Courts only review whether a particular expenditure "offends the Constitution of the State of Florida, laws of the State of Florida, or fundamental concepts of justice and fair play." *Palm Beach County v. Hudspeth*, 540 So.2d 147, 153 (Fla. 4th DCA 1989). Florida courts will not interfere with a county commission's public purpose determination unless such action “has no legal or practical relation to a valid county purpose." *Florida Power Corp. v. Pinellas Utility Bd.*, 40 So.2d 350, 354 (Fla. 1949).

In the same way, pursuant to Fla. Stat. § 129.09, a clerk’s pre-audit review of an expenditure is limited to the same framework as that of a court. The only circumstance where a county commission’s expenditure should be refused is if there is no legal or practical relation to a valid county purpose, or it offends the Constitution of the State of Florida, laws of the State of Florida, or fundamental concepts of justice and fair play.

Where a nonprofit functions as a conduit for delivery of genuinely public services, the expenditure by a commission has been repeatedly upheld. For instance, the Florida Supreme Court upheld a county’s expenditure to construct a planetarium to be operated by a nonprofit

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<sup>3</sup> “With the adoption of the Constitution of 1968, the “paramount public purpose” test developed by case law under the Constitution of 1885 lost much of its viability. The test is still applicable when a pledge of public credit is involved, but where such pledge is not involved, as here, it is enough to show only that a public purpose is served.”

because the nonprofit was “in no sense a private concern,” and “the actual beneficiaries of the arrangement are the county and its citizens.” *Burton v. Dade County*, 166 So. 2d 445, 448 (Fla. 1964).

Similarly, the Florida Supreme Court found that the beneficiaries of a county’s appropriation of funds to a nonprofit day-care “are the disadvantaged children,” and that any benefit received by the nonprofit organization “itself is insignificant and cannot support a reasonable argument that this is the quality or quantity of benefit intended to be proscribed.” *City of Boca Raton v. Gidman*, 440 So. 2d 1277, 1282 (Fla. 1983).

As established below, the Escambia Commission’s appropriations to both WEAC and First Tee Gulf satisfied the public purpose requirements sufficient to enforce their payment.

## **II. Payment to WEAC was Lawful and not Prohibited by General Law**

Fla. Stat. § 125.01(1)(e) explicitly grants county commissions the power to “provide hospitals, ambulance service, and health and welfare programs.” The statute explicitly contemplates the provision of health and welfare programs but does not restrict a county commission’s broad home rule authority.

Fla. Stat. § 125.01(1)(w) states that commissions may “perform any other acts not inconsistent with law, which acts are in the common interest of the people of the county, and exercise all powers and privileges not specifically prohibited by law.”

Further, Fla. Stat. § 125.01(3)(a) states “the enumeration of powers herein may not be deemed exclusive or restrictive, but is deemed to incorporate all implied powers necessary or incident to carrying out such powers enumerate, including, specifically, authority to employ personnel, *expend funds, enter into contractual obligations*, and purchase or lease and sell or exchange real or personal property.” (emphasis added).

WEAC submitted its funding application on October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Within its application, WEAC identified the service it would provide with the funds as addressing “community hunger.” WEAC stated that the funds would be used to reimburse its expenses for “food to stock the pantry for monthly distribution with canned vegetable, canned fruit, jelly, canned tuna, canned chicken, Chef Boy Ardee, spaghetti and spaghetti sauce, breakfast items such as cereal, pancake mix, syrup, powdered milk, juice, etc.”

As an additional safeguard, WEAC requires recipients to produce a valid driver’s license, to guarantee that its resources go to residents of Escambia County, the majority of whom colloquially refer to their general location as “Pensacola.”

The Escambia Commission voted to appropriate \$2,500 to WEAC on October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

The public purpose of the appropriation to WEAC fell squarely within the type of public benefit that has, for decades, been permitted by Florida courts.

In 1983, the Florida Supreme Court upheld the appropriation of funds by the City of Boca Raton to a nonprofit organization operating a child day-care center for disadvantaged children, finding that the appropriation of funds to the daycare was “rationally related to the health, morals, protection and welfare of the municipality.” *Gidman* at 1280.

The court, addressing the meaning of “municipal purpose,” stated “though there was a time when a municipal purpose was restricted to police protection or such enterprises as were strictly governmental, that concept has been very much expanded and a municipal purpose may now comprehend all activities essential to the health, morals, protection and welfare of the municipality.” *Id* (citing *State v. City of Jacksonville*, 50 So. 2d 532, 535 (Fla. 1951)).

The Florida Supreme Court noted that they found a Supreme Court of Wisconsin case instructive as to the question of whether day care facilities constituted a “municipal purpose.” *Id*

(citing *Hopper v. City of Madison*, 79 Wis. 2d 120 (Wis. 1977)). The Court went on the state “It is clear that the legislature still considers the activities enumerated in chapter 167 as proper municipal purposes. Considering the clear legislative intent that municipalities be able to provide for the poor as well as provide educational facilities, and the broad interpretation of “municipal purpose” by the courts, there is not doubt in our minds that provision for day care education facilities... is indeed a valid municipal purpose which is rationally related to the health, morals, protection and welfare of the municipality.” *Id.*

While *Gidman* related to day cares, and not a food bank, the analysis is clear, and the Florida Supreme Court’s reference to Wisconsin’s finding that a day care serves a public purpose could likewise apply here. Plaintiffs have not found a Florida case where a court has been asked to determine whether a non-profit food bank serves a public purpose, but there is a rich history of case law across the United States that, frankly, confirms what Plaintiffs believe to be obvious.

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| Missouri     | <i>Jennings v. City of St. Louis</i> , 332 Mo. 173 (Mo. 1933) – a city can levy taxes to feed, clothe and shelter the poor as a public purpose.   |
| New Jersey   | <i>Roe v. Kervick</i> , 42 N.J. 191 (N.J. 1964)– Relief of the poor is a performance of a governmental function, not a gift of public funds   |
| Oklahoma     | <i>Phillips v. Chambers</i> , 174 Okla. 407 (Ok. 1935) – “There are no public purposes... more important than to see to it that deserving persons... do not suffer from hunger and cold”  |
| Arizona      | <i>Community Council v. Jordan</i> , 102 Ariz. 448 (1967) – state matching funds to a nonprofit for food, lodging, clothing for the destitute is constitutional.  |
| Pennsylvania | <i>Com. Ex rel. Schnader v. Liveright</i> , 308 Pa. 35 (Pa. 1932) - "the support of the poor—meaning such persons as have been understood as coming within that class ever since the organization of the government, persons who are without means of support... is and has always been a direct charge on the body politic for its own preservation and protection..." standing "exactly in the same position as the preservation of law and order." |

- Kentucky      *Jefferson County v. Jefferson County Fiscal Court*, 220 Ky. 678 (Ky. 1927) – A government body may use a nonprofit intermediary to administer relief without converting the expenditure into an unconstitutional private benefit.
- Louisiana      *Safety Net for Abused Persons v. Segura*, 692 So. 2d 1038 (La. 1997) – Public funds may be used for social programs supporting the needy and may engage in cooperative endeavors with private entities in furtherance of a public purpose.
- Nebraska      *United Community Services v. Omaha National Bank*, 162 Neb. 786 (Neb. 1956) – a non-profits welfare program that served residents of the municipality exclusively served a public purpose, and the test of public purpose is not measured by the means of the service, but by the end result of the service.

The Arizona Supreme Court’s analysis in *Jordan* established a “true beneficiary theory” which disregards any “legal subterfuge” to identify the entity or individual that actually benefited from the expenditure of public funds. *Community Council v. Jordan*, 102 Ariz. 448, 455 (1967). In that case, the Arizona Supreme Court found that the beneficiary of the public funds was not, in fact the Salvation Army, but “those who actually profit from the disbursements-to the individuals and families who are destitute and received the emergency aid.” *Id.*

Likewise, here, WEAC is not the beneficiary of Escambia County’s funds, the beneficiaries of these funds are the individuals and families who are destitute and receive WEAC’s emergency aid.

Because no general law prohibits the Escambia Commission from providing funds to a non-profit food pantry, and the expenditure furthers the Commission’s statutory charge to provide for the health, safety and welfare of Escambia County residents, the grant of \$2,500 to WEAC to reimburse it for its purchase of food supplies to provide to Escambia residents is obviously a lawful expenditure of County funds.

### **III. Payment to First Tee Gulf Coast was Lawful and not Prohibited by General Law**

Fla. Stat. § 125.01(1)(f) explicitly grants county commissions the power to “provide... playgrounds, recreational areas... and other recreation and cultural facilities and programs.” The statute explicitly contemplates the provision of recreational programs and does not restrict a county commission’s broad home rule authority.

Fla. Stat. § 125.01(1)(w) states that commissions may “perform any other acts not inconsistent with law, which acts are in the common interest of the people of the county, and exercise all powers and privileges not specifically prohibited by law.”

Further, Fla. Stat. § 125.01(3)(a) states “the enumeration of powers herein may not be deemed exclusive or restrictive, but is deemed to incorporate all implied powers necessary or incident to carrying out such powers enumerate, including, specifically, authority to employ personnel, *expend funds, enter into contractual obligations*, and purchase or lease and sell or exchange real or personal property.” (emphasis added).

First Tee Gulf Coast submitted its funding applications on September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Within its applications, First Tee Gulf Coast identified the service it would provide with the funds as addressing “youth enrichment.” First Tee Gulf Coast stated that the funds would be used to support First Tee Gulf Coast’s mission, and provide scholarships to at-need youth in the area to learn about nutrition, physical activity, build self-esteem, resilience and emotion control, with a focus on social well being through character development, social emotional learning and community engagement.

The Escambia Commission voted to appropriate \$4,500 to First Tee Gulf Coast on February 6<sup>th</sup>, March 6<sup>th</sup> and March 25<sup>th</sup> of 2025.

The public purpose of the appropriation to First Tee Gulf Coast fell squarely within the type of public benefit that has, for decades, been permitted by Florida courts.

Just as in *Gidman*, the beneficiaries of a county's appropriation of funds to First Tee Gulf Coast "are the disadvantaged children," and any benefit received by the nonprofit organization "itself is insignificant." *Gidman* at 1282.

In 1983, Florida's Attorney General concluded that a local government could "contribute, directly or indirectly through the purchase of equipment, to a nonprofit, quasi-public corporation's football program if such a program is open to the public and satisfies a need for a public recreation program." *Mr. Terence M. Brown*, Fla. AGO 1983-10.

In 1986, Florida's Attorney General concluded that a county commission could donate revenue sharing monies to a nonprofit senior citizens organization for field trips. The opinion concluded that the board of county commissioners was authorized to do so, "provided that the program is open to the public and is determined by the board of county commissioners to serve a valid public purpose and provided that proper safeguards are implemented to assure accomplishment of the public purpose." *Mr. Conrad C. Bishop Jr.*, Fla. AGO 1986-102.

Taken together, these authorities establish that recreational and youth enrichment activities, such as youth sports leagues, after-school programs, and similar community programming, are the type of activities that constitute a legitimate public purpose under Florida law. Providing recreation and youth programs is not a merely incidental benefit to the public; it is recognized as a primary county function under Fla. Stat. § 125.01(1)(f), giving county commissions substantial justification for such appropriations.

#### **THE COUNTY COMMISSION AS AN INDESPENSIBLE PARTY**

Childers is likely right, that a review of her prior payments to entities, including First Tee Gulf Coast, and her personal liability to Escambia County for all payments she now claims to

have been illegal, would require the participation of the Escambia County Commission as a party to this suit.

It is curious that Childers is asking the Court to dismiss the question of legality from this suit. Childers has admitted she doesn't know whether the payments are lawful, and she sought the assistance of Florida's Chief Financial Officer and Attorney General but was ignored.

**Exhibit C.**

Given that Childers has admitted she is confused or unsure on the issue of the legality of her prior payments and the legality of prospective payments, it is puzzling to Plaintiffs that her request of this court was not to resolve the question of legality by joining the County Commission into this suit herself, and instead requesting to live in admitted ignorance in perpetuity.

If the Court determines that Plaintiffs' requested relief in its declaratory judgment count requires the Escambia County Commission's participation, Plaintiffs request leave of the court to amend their complaint to include the Escambia County Commission as a party.

**INDEPENDENT STANDING TO BRING DECLARATORY JUDGMENT ACTION**

While Plaintiffs are willing to join the Commission as a party to this action, and such joinder would reasonably allay Childers' contention that standing is at issue in this case, Plaintiffs have alleged in their Complaint sufficient facts to overcome Childers' contention, regardless of joinder.

The four elements Plaintiffs needed to alleged are that (1) there is a bona fide dispute between the parties; (2) Plaintiffs have a justiciable question as to the existence or nonexistence of some right, status, immunity, power, or privilege, or as to some fact upon which the existence of such a claim may depend; (3) Plaintiffs are in doubt as to the claim; and (4) there is a bona

fide, actual, present need for the declaration. *Strickland v. Pinellas County*, 261 So.3d 700 (2018); *Angelo's Aggregate Materials, Ltd. v. Pasco County*, 118 So.3d 971 (2013); *Mandarin Lakes Community Association, Inc. v. Mandarin Lakes Neighborhood Homeowners Association, Inc.*, 322 So.3d 1196 (2021).

Based upon the facts as alleged in Plaintiffs' Complaint:

- (1) Plaintiffs possess a bona fide dispute with Childers over her attempts to exceed her constitutional and statutory authority and arbitrarily deprive them of a lawful property interest under color of law. Not only has Childers stated she will not consider applications for reimbursement to Plaintiffs in the future, she has continued to vaguely allege that her prior payments to First Tee Gulf Coast were unlawful;
- (2) Whether Childers has exceeded her constitutional and statutory authority and has, in effect, exercised an unlawful veto over a broad swath of the Commission's expenditures is certainly a justiciable question (see *Jacksonville Expressway Authority v. Duval County*, 189 So. 2d 837 (1966))(the court held that a complaint seeking a declaration of rights regarding a party's entitlement to reimbursement for costs expended fell squarely within the declaratory judgment statute, and the availability of a breach of contract action at law did not preclude the declaratory action);
- (3) While Plaintiffs are not in doubt as to their rights, Childers has not stated whether the prior payments to First Tee Gulf Coast or similarly situated charities were illegal or not, and neither Plaintiff is confident that, absent a judicial ruling, Childers will stop exceeding her authority and exercising an unlawful veto over Commission expenditures;

(4) There exists a bona fide, actual, present need for the declaration, otherwise Childers will continue to violate the equal protection and due process rights of local charities, continue exceeding her authority under the existing separation of powers framework, and would have, in reality, asserted for herself a veto over all Escambia County expenditures she subjectively disagrees with.

### **CONCLUSION**

Childers is disregarding the lawful directives of the Commission to undertake and perform her ministerial obligation to tender lawful payments as appropriated by the Commission.

Plaintiffs are entitled to a writ of mandamus to address Childers's refusal to carry out her ministerial obligations. Plaintiffs have established a *prima facie* case for alternative writ and respectfully reiterate their request that the Court enter such writ.

Because Childers has failed to establish the law that gives her the authority to refuse the lawful payments the Commission appropriated for Plaintiffs, they have suffered harm both financially and to their constitutional rights to due process and equal protection.

If the Court determines the Escambia County Commission is an indispensable party to this action as it relates to Plaintiffs' requests for declaratory relief, Plaintiffs request leave to file an amended complaint to join the Commission as a party to this action.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiffs respectfully request this Court deny Defendant, Pam Childers' Motion to Dismiss, issue an alternative writ to Childers to show cause why payment to Plaintiffs should not issue, and grant such other and further relief as this Court deems just and proper.

Dated this 3<sup>rd</sup> day of June, 2026.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Robert A. Andrade

ROBERT A. ANDRADE

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aandrade@mhw-law.com

hmalone@mhw-law.com

Counsel for Plaintiffs

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I HEREBY CERTIFY that a copy of the above and foregoing has been furnished to the following by e-service this 3<sup>rd</sup> day of June 2026:

CODEY L. LEIGH  
Clerk of the Circuit Court and  
Comptroller  
190 W. Government Street  
Pensacola, Florida 32502  
(850) 595-4199  
legal@escambiaclerk.com  
*Counsel for Escambia County Clerk of  
the Circuit Court and Comptroller*

EDWARD P. FLEMING  
AARON T. McCURDY  
Florida Bar No.: 106499  
McDonald Fleming, LLP  
719 S. Palafox Street  
Pensacola, FL 32502  
(850) 202-8531  
flemingservice@pensacolalaw.com  
*Counsel for Escambia County Clerk  
of the Circuit Court and Comptroller*

---

**From:** Pam Childers (COC)  
**Sent:** Monday, July 21, 2025 11:42 AM  
**To:** District1  
**Subject:** Discretionary Funds  
**Attachments:** 7.17.2025 Outline D4 mtg.docx

I had a very good meeting on Friday with Commissioner Hofberger and her Aide Melanie about Discretionary/Community Support Funds spending. She gets it, understands it and is probably a good person for Hassan to talk with to understand characteristics of a valid expenditure.

Sharing the document I created to navigate the conversation.

Pam

**PAM CHILDERS**  
***Clerk of the Circuit Court & Comptroller***  
First Judicial Circuit, Escambia County

## 7/17/2025 D4 Mtg Discretionary Funds

Why now? “right the ship”

- Began in FY17
- No policy, procedure or public application
- Covid delays
- Lawsuit 3.5 years
- DF request were noticeably broad in nature
- Backup was noticeably not a public purpose
- DOGE letters
- Felt it was the right time to address
- Had convo with Chairman

April 23, 2025 – Discretionary review by the Clerk’s office

County Public Purpose (Implied ie: pay rep from Palm Beach Co., does it serve a public purpose. Yes. But is it an Escambia Co PP?

School Public Purpose

Sheriff Public Purpose

Escambia Children’s Trust Public Purpose

Foundations – Sheriff and School Board (Sheriff also has LETF)

Mission of County Government?

Is there a COMMON need to be met by county government?

Is there a reasonable expectation that such purpose/need will be substantially accomplished?

Very high risk level of misuse.

Heavily scrutinize expenditure

Codey:

1. Clearly ID PP
2. Primary purpose
3. Sufficient controls – PP is carried out

Giving money to Private Organizations  
Law requires MORE THAN a noble cause

Art VII S 10 Constitution – nor any county .. to use taxing power to aid  
...

SO when you do, there must be a  
Clearly identified and concrete public purpose as the primary objective  
*O'Neil V Burns*

Legislative Body – first determination

*Alachua County v Powers* – Clerk's determination (pre-audit, checks and  
balances)

AGO 58-236 – the Clerk give deference to the Boards determination  
*Dickinson v Stone* Gov levies taxes for a purpose, it must also spend for  
the same purpose (ref in other AGOs)

County powers – facilities, fire, hospitals, ambulance, health/welfare  
programs, playgrounds/parks, recreation, cultural, housing,  
redevelopment, beach,

The County is drawing a check from the General Fund  
Revenues include - property taxes, other taxes, fees

General Revenue activities of expenditures include – wages, parks,  
buildings, animal, community centers, jail, admin exp, fleet, fire, sheriff

**Home Rule Power\*\*\*County can perform other acts not  
inconsistent with law, which act are in the COMMON INTEREST  
of the people of the county\*\*\* *Fl Stat 125.01 (6)***

Art I, S 3 – no revenue shall ...directly or indirectly be in aid of any  
church (there are examples to offset the absolutes, County wants to do a  
recreation program... church has facilities, this activity does not  
promote religion. The Co is not aiding the church).

TODAY -

County Policy – provides a framework reflective of statute

Application

-NFP to fill out, mark box/category, explain what they are doing with the funding, sign.

**Board responsibility – WHAT IS THE COUNTY PUBLIC PURPOSE for granting these funds to this NFP? Does the activity have a common interest of the people in our county?**

*Refer to TDT audit – how are you getting into the record the identified Public Purpose? The auditor requires you “say it” in a meeting. This promotes tourism by.....*

Is this a county public purpose for the greater good of all citizens or a benefit to an individual?

Are you picking winners and losers?

Not all counties have Discretionary funds.

Santa Rosa does not spend their discretionary funds like Escambia

Every application is case specific. Did you expect First Tee to throw a party with your money based on their submission? Once you approve at the BCC level, do you go back to ensure how the money was spent? This is where the Clerk has pre-audit function and determination.

Clerk – net funds. Can spend on county purpose. SO.... ??

---

**From:** Pam Childers (COC)  
**Sent:** Friday, January 23, 2026 3:33 PM  
**To:** Kristin D. Hual; Ashlee M. Hofberger  
**Cc:** Codey Leigh (COC)  
**Subject:** Discretionary Funds follow up -

Touching base as I have returned back in town from a long week in Tallahassee and believe you have also returned.

To reiterate my comments following our meeting on January 9<sup>th</sup> -it was a good meeting. To come to the table with ideas, draft documents, specific points, understanding the history and a willingness to work together is what changes government and ensures a better future for our community.

I did review the documents you provided and wanted to share my thoughts in writing and express a willingness to meet again if needed. The current policy as written and adopted by the Board of County Commissioners is in operation doing what has been done over the last several years. It sort of sends a written message that anything and everything is a county public purpose, which in my opinion is not true. I do not find problematic setting aside a predetermined amount from the General Fund for a district wherein the commissioner has the opportunity to fund a county project or enhance a project that is running over budget, or an opportunity to add amenities that was not contemplated in totality (additional lights at a park, sidewalks on both sides of a highly pedestrian intersection). I agree with Commissioner Hofberger, funding from the General Fund using property tax revenue should be a county project. I reread my own document on Discretionary Funds Dated April 23, 2025, presented to the BCC on May 1, 2025, and remain in this posture. The MAA option adds very little credibility to the process.

If the Commissioners want to give away money, \$1,000 here and there, to their favorite charity to ensure there are bikes at Christmas, Thanksgiving meals, mentoring of young children, uniforms to basketball teams, trips to Disney, church meals, etc, they should talk with the Sheriff about working together to utilize LETF funds. I'm sure the Sheriff would be more than willing to support their charity and its mission assuming it follows the statutes that govern those non-tax sources (confiscated funds).

On a related topic –

I do want to share that there should not be any department planning to do a work around by using their pcard or spending/approving authority to submit like kind discretionary requests. I bring this to your attention because there were some Pcard purchases that were made in the past that will be denied if submitted again (Rosamond Johnson Beach); and there are purchases for celebration events like Mother's Day/Grandparents Day that were previously charged to LOST that will be reviewed for overall legitimacy. My staff is reviewing 2025 Pcard purchases and community center purchases for compliance.

Feel free to send dates/times that you would like to meet or have as a discussion item at a BCC meeting.

**PAM CHILDERS**  
**Clerk of the Circuit Court & Comptroller**  
First Judicial Circuit, Escambia County

*If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more – you are a leader. – John Quincy Adams*

---

**From:** Pam Childers (COC)  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 02, 2026 3:05 PM  
**To:** Hannah.Christian@MyFloridaCFO.com  
**Subject:** Escambia Comptroller - Topic: Discretionary spending by Commissioners  
**Attachments:** 2026 04-02 Correspondence to CFO Regarding Discretionary Funds.pdf

Hannah –

Thank you for taking my call. As I stated on the phone, I drafted a letter and was planning to send to CFO Ingoglia or one of the staff members per some direction. I am requesting collaboration on discretionary spending by county commissioners. As to public policy, it seems to me that “county public purpose” needs to be better defined, discussed and implemented at the local level. I do not believe property tax dollars should be given in increments of \$500-\$1,500 to the Commissioner’s not-for-profit of choice just because it feels good, expenditures from the county treasury must serve a county purpose. And if its not illegal, but “wasteful” who is enforcing? The Comptroller? How? What statutes give that authority?

Please forward the letter to the appropriate person within the CFO’s office.

Pam  
Cell – 850-530-7213

***PAM CHILDERS***  
***Clerk of the Circuit Court & Comptroller***  
First Judicial Circuit, Escambia County

“Before you are a leader, success is all about growing yourself. When you become a leader, success is all about growing others” – Jack Welch



# Pam Childers

Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller, Escambia County

Clerk of Courts • County Comptroller • Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners • Recorder • Auditor

April 2, 2026  
(sent via e-mail)

The Honorable Blaise Ingoglia  
Chief Financial Officer, State of Florida  
200 East Gaines Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0301

The Honorable Blaise Ingoglia,

I write to you in my capacity as Comptroller and Auditor of Escambia County, Florida, to request collaboration between our offices to eliminate misuse of property tax dollars and to ensure that all expenditures from the County treasury comply with applicable law. Recently, in Escambia County, a dispute has arisen between my office and the Escambia County Board of County Commissioners (the "Commission") concerning the disbursement of the County's property tax revenue to the Escambia County School District and private non-profit organizations. As background, the Commission allocates \$50,000 to each of the five Commissioners to use at their discretion. Individual expenditures of "discretionary funds" are voted on by the Commission; however, there is seldom, if ever, any discussion by Commission members regarding the propriety or County purpose of the expenditures.

I have, for several years, called for a policy to establish guardrails for the use of discretionary funds and have even questioned the legitimacy of the practice. My calls went unanswered by the Commission and County Attorney until I halted all discretionary fund expenditures in early-2025 pending a legal review of the program. That review, dated April 23, 2025, identified improper use of property tax dollars by the County for charities, galas, school district equipment, church picnics, and other expenditures, like wine glasses, that do not serve a County purpose. In response to my office's written review, the Commission renamed the program to "Community Support Funds" and established a written policy. Since the rebranding, little has changed.

After the County's written policy was implemented the Clerk's office was asked to draw checks on the County treasury for expenditures such as a fund-raising golf tournament held in another county, a donation to an organization that then selects other organizations to fund, and more operational type expenses for schools. As you can see, this spending fails to demonstrate a bona fide County purpose. Thus, I have recently denied payment for a number of discretionary fund requests. Some on the Commission, however, continue to aggressively demand payment.

I have been following your work throughout the State of Florida to curb waste, fraud, and abuse of public funds. I too have had to fight to ensure good stewardship and legal compliance of property tax spending. In 2021, my office concluded that it was illegal for the County to fund private non-FRS retirement accounts for commissioners as elected officials. Those payments were halted and in response the County sued my office to force the lucrative payments. After a multi-year legal battle, a Circuit Court Judge ruled the payments were illegal and that my office properly exercised discretion in halting the payments. The private retirement accounts of the three commissioners were later swept and the money recovered into the County treasury.

The outlandish lawsuits continued. During that same time, I was sued by the Commission for refusing to pay a personal fine from a commissioner's discretionary fund account. My refusal was grounded in the Florida Constitution, as my office determined that using taxpayer dollars to pay an individual's punitive sanction does not serve a County purpose, regardless of the Commission's verbal label to the contrary. It was discovered later within a myriad of documents obtained through discovery that the County Attorney had expressed in writing, before the Commission vote, that *no lawful public purpose could be served through payment of the fine*. After making this discovery, the suit was dismissed, and the payment was never issued.

I firmly believe a collaboration between our offices to further review so-called "discretionary fund" accounts would be beneficial to Escambia and to the State of Florida as a whole. I know that this type of spending is not confined to Escambia County, county government, or party affiliation. Sharing both legal and fiscal knowledge among our offices, I believe, will help us collectively eliminate unnecessary and improper spending of property taxes, thus allowing for some relief to taxpayers.

During a contentious public Commission meeting held on March 26, 2026, the Commissioners indicated a desire to ask the Attorney General to validate their authority to determine County purpose. The item giving rise to this dispute was denied payment of County funds for "essential gear and equipment" for a public school sports team – a classic example of a "school purpose" expenditure. There is no dispute over the Commission's authority to authentically determine that an expenditure serves a "county purpose." However, applying a "county purpose" label to a clearly improper expenditure does not alter its true nature or confer constitutional acceptance. The Commission may indeed need help from the Attorney General, but the more appropriate assistance would likely come from the Attorney General's newly established unit aimed at identifying and investigating misuse of public funds.

\*\*\*\*\*

As I have said, the County continues to push for Commissioner discretionary spending, and it is my opinion that the risk of misuse of public funds in Escambia County continues to be high. If not addressed in Escambia and elsewhere, I have serious concerns this practice of “discretionary” spending will result in substantial misuse of public dollars statewide. I am certain that collaboration between our offices and sharing of information will strengthen our collective goal of protecting the public trust and the public treasury. I look forward to your response, and I will make myself available to travel to Tallahassee if necessary.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pam Childers". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Respectfully,".

Pam Childers, CPA  
Clerk & Comptroller, Escambia County Florida

---

**From:** Pam Childers (COC)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 14, 2026 11:44 AM  
**To:** Cate.McNeill@myfloridalegal.com  
**Subject:** FW: Escambia Comptroller - Topic: Discretionary spending by Commissioners  
**Attachments:** 2026 04-02 Correspondence to CFO Regarding Discretionary Funds.pdf

Good morning –

I am sharing with you a letter to the CFO regarding Escambia County’s illegal and wasteful spending of property tax revenues. I contacted the CFO’s office for a collaborative effort to stop spending for galas, charities, school district equipment, church picnics, and other expenditures. Since I’ve mentioned the AG in this letter and the Escambia County leadership may contact your office, I wanted to put you on notice.

Please share this communication with Mr. Uthmeier or the appropriate person.

Pam  
Cell 850-530-7213

***PAM CHILDERS***  
***Clerk of the Circuit Court & Comptroller***  
First Judicial Circuit, Escambia County

“Before you are a leader, success is all about growing yourself. When you become a leader, success is all about growing others” – Jack Welch

---

**From:** Pam Childers (COC)  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 2, 2026 3:05 PM  
**To:** Hannah.Christian@MyFloridaCFO.com  
**Subject:** Escambia Comptroller - Topic: Discretionary spending by Commissioners

Hannah –

Thank you for taking my call. As I stated on the phone, I drafted a letter and was planning to send to CFO Ingoglia or one of the staff members per some direction. I am requesting collaboration on discretionary spending by county commissioners. As to public policy, it seems to me that “county public purpose” needs to be better defined, discussed and implemented at the local level. I do not believe property tax dollars should be given in increments of \$500-\$1,500 to the Commissioner’s not-for-profit of choice just because it feels good, expenditures from the county treasury must serve a county purpose. And if its not illegal, but “wasteful” who is enforcing? The Comptroller? How? What statutes give that authority?

Please forward the letter to the appropriate person within the CFO’s office.

Pam  
Cell – 850-530-7213

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***Clerk of the Circuit Court & Comptroller***  
First Judicial Circuit, Escambia County

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---

**From:** Pam Childers (COC)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 21, 2026 3:31 PM  
**To:** 'Hannah.Christian@MyFloridaCFO.com'  
**Cc:** Cate.McNeill@myfloridalegal.com  
**Subject:** Andrade Demands Payment to Charities or Else - Commissioner Discretionary Spending - Property Tax Dollars  
**Attachments:** 2026-04-14 Demand Letter on Behalf of FTGC and WEAC.pdf

Last week I received a demand letter from Representative Andrade for payment of public funds by the Comptroller's office to two charities. If I don't pay Andrade says he will seek to hold me personally liable for previous payments of \$600k to other local charities. I hope to have a conversation with someone in Tallahassee regarding the use of the County's property tax dollars to fund charities.

I've copied AG Uthmeier's office on this email.

**PAM CHILDERS**  
**Clerk of the Circuit Court & Comptroller**  
First Judicial Circuit, Escambia County

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First Judicial Circuit, Escambia County

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---

**From:** Pam Childers (COC)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 21, 2026 3:33 PM  
**To:** Caver, Sarah  
**Subject:** FW: Adrade Demands Payment to Charities or Else - Commissioner Discretionary Spending - Property Tax Dollars  
**Attachments:** 2026-04-14 Demand Letter on Behalf of FTGC and WEAC.pdf

Good Afternoon,

Will you please share this with Representative Salzman? I would like to keep her informed.

***PAM CHILDERS***  
***Clerk of the Circuit Court & Comptroller***  
First Judicial Circuit, Escambia County

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**To:** 'Hannah.Christian@MyFloridaCFO.com' <Hannah.Christian@MyFloridaCFO.com>  
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First Judicial Circuit, Escambia County

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**Sent:** Thursday, April 2, 2026 3:05 PM  
**To:** [Hannah.Christian@MyFloridaCFO.com](mailto:Hannah.Christian@MyFloridaCFO.com)  
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Cell – 850-530-7213

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**Clerk of the Circuit Court & Comptroller**  
First Judicial Circuit, Escambia County

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**From:** Pam Childers (COC)  
**Sent:** Friday, July 25, 2025 10:46 AM  
**To:** District2  
**Cc:** Alison A. Rogers; Stephan D. Hall; Wesley J Moreno; Codey Leigh (COC)  
**Subject:** Post 33 payment approved, with comments

**I approved the payment package for Post 33 Discretionary Item for payment today.**

Here are a few comments –

Like the requirement for tourism spending, my staff will need to be able to clearly identify that the Board of County Commissioners (the Legislative body) has identified the County Public Purpose. It may not be enough only to have a category selected by the applicant with a summary description of what they are doing. In many situations the purpose is unclear or the back up doesn't exactly match the words on the application. We will need the Commissioner to state the purpose in the coversheet/backup or verbally at the meeting to have it on the record. As you understand, interpreting the purpose and matching the back up should not be on a \$20 staff member in the finance office. Even Mr. Moreno did not want his OMB Director to have the responsibility to identify the County's public purpose.

In the case of Post 33 my review consisted of this:

The BCC has identified the County Public Purpose as: Sending youth to Tallahassee to learn about State government.

This was a nationwide opportunity for all kids and the mission of Post 33 is to help fund the opportunity in Escambia County. (Escambia Childrens Trust is also a good resource).

This was not direct funding to schools (Schools have their own budget through their taxing authority)

The purpose was primarily achieved through the individuals attending and completing the event

The safeguards existed for accomplishment

My staff will keep a log of the "public purpose" to ensure uniformity and understanding. (Due to my conversations and understanding with DOGE, I expect this will be a review item if they continue their persistence in Escambia).

Pam



Naples Daily News • 25/07 09:27



### **Florida DOGE is knocking on Marco Island's door, looking for documents, waste**

*As Gov. Ron DeSantis loudly points to larger communities such as Gainesville and Broward County as targets of the Florida Department of Government Efficiency, Marco Island and other Southwest Florida cities are quietly being questioned as well.*

Reach: 437460



Florida Politics • 24/07 14:50



### **Gov. DeSantis sets his sights on Manatee County for next financial audit**

*The state's next audit target is Manatee County.*

Reach: 207140



The Gainesville Sun • 23/07 12:43



### **DeSantis targets Florida cities with audits, makes no mention of own no-bid spending**

*act' of DeSantis' 'political theater'? Jeff Brandes, a Republican former state senator from Pinellas County, questioned DeSantis' latest*

**PAM CHILDERS**  
**Clerk of the Circuit Court & Comptroller**  
First Judicial Circuit, Escambia County

---

**From:** Pam Childers (COC)  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 13, 2025 9:57 AM  
**To:** Ashlee M. Hofberger  
**Subject:** RE: Hadji Shriners - Denied

I will review the complete agenda over the next couple of days. I do see where he has 6 items for discretionary funding. I'll review the back up and the online information to make a timeline determination. In short summary, it is not the mission nor the objective of property tax dollars to provide bikes, as to funding school events as I've said before I will not fund these items because schools are a taxing district, and it appears one of the not-for-profits gets funding from the Children's Trust. These are my quick comments on a few -after a glance of the listed items.

Escambia County government is pretty clear about what its primary purpose is which can be readily discerned by looking at the items funded in the General Fund. When you collect property taxes and deposit them in the General Fund, the County is obligated to spend those tax dollars for the intended purpose for which you collected them.

Feel free to call me when you get time.

Pam

**PAM CHILDERS**  
**Clerk of the Circuit Court & Comptroller**  
First Judicial Circuit, Escambia County

*If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more – you are a leader. – John Quincy Adams*

---

**From:** Ashlee M. Hofberger <amhofberger@myescambia.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 12, 2025 4:27 PM  
**To:** Pam Childers (COC) <PCHILDERS@escambiaclerk.com>  
**Subject:** Re: Hadji Shriners - Denied

Received, thank you!

What about the more recent request by Lumon?

Do you want to move towards only funding county projects?



Ashlee Hofberger  
District 4 County Commissioner

Office 850.595.4940

Cell 448.239.1887

---

**From:** Pam Childers (COC) <[PCHILDERS@escambiaclerk.com](mailto:PCHILDERS@escambiaclerk.com)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 12, 2025 4:07 PM  
**To:** District4 <[District4@co.escambia.fl.us](mailto:District4@co.escambia.fl.us)>  
**Subject:** FW: Hadji Shriners - Denied

Sharing

**PAM CHILDERS**  
**Clerk of the Circuit Court & Comptroller**  
First Judicial Circuit, Escambia County

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---

**From:** Pam Childers (COC)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 12, 2025 3:57 PM  
**To:** District5 <[District5@co.escambia.fl.us](mailto:District5@co.escambia.fl.us)>  
**Cc:** Sharon Harrell (COC) <[SHARRELL@escambiaclerk.com](mailto:SHARRELL@escambiaclerk.com)>  
**Subject:** Hadji Shriners - Denied

The Clerk's office reviewed the November 6, 2025 Agenda item for payment of \$10,000 to Hadji Shriners and is preemptively denying payment. While the Hadji Shriners may be a noble fraternity, their mission is of their own definition and not the purpose of county government. When the county levies and collects property taxes for county purposes it must also spend the revenue for county purposes. Donating funds to a not-for-profit that will provide financial assistance for transportation and lodging for select children to an out of area Shriner Healthcare Center is not achieving the primary mission of our local government. There must be a clearly identified and concrete public purpose as the primary objective and a reasonable expectation that such purpose will be substantially and effectively accomplished.

Please refer to the Post-Payment Review of Discretionary Fund Expenditures provided on April 23, 2025. If you would like to talk through this denial with me, feel free to reach back.

**PAM CHILDERS**  
**Clerk of the Circuit Court & Comptroller**  
First Judicial Circuit, Escambia County

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