

PROCEEDINGS HELD BEFORE THE

BALDWIN COUNTY COMMISSION

(Special Meeting)

Thursday, February 28, 2019

The following proceedings were held on this the 28th day of February, 2019, at the Baldwin County Central Annex, Conference Room, 22251 Palmer Street, Robertsdale, Alabama, before Susan C. Andrews, Certified Court Reporter Number 287.

A P P E A R A N C E**COUNTY COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:**

Charles F. (Skip) Gruber, Chairman

Billie Jo Underwood

Joe Davis, III

James E. (Jeb) Ball

ALSO PRESENT:

Kim Creech, Clerk/Treasurer, Finance/Accounting

Department

Deidra Hanak, Acting and Interim Personnel Director,

Personnel Department

Joey Nunnally, County Engineer, Highway Department

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2
3 1 - WELCOME

4 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

5 All right. Good morning, everyone.

6 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Good

7 morning.

8 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

9 Welcome to the special meeting on Thursday February 28,
10 2019, at 8:30.

11
12 2 - INVOCATION

13 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

14 At this time I've asked Commissioner Underwood to do the
15 invocation and Commissioner Ball to do the Pledge.

16
17 (Commissioner Billie Jo Underwood led in prayer.)
18

19 3 - PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

20 (The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.)
21

22 4 - MAKE SPECIAL MEETING CALL LETTER PART OF THE RECORD

23 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

24 All right, Commissioners. Let's see. Do I hear a motion
25 that we put the call letter into the record?

26 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Yes, sir. I
27 make a motion.

28 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Second.

1 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
2 All right. Motion made by Commissioner Ball, seconded by
3 Commissioner Davis to put the call letter as part of the
4 record.

5 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: What are you
6 talking about?

7 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
8 The call letter, you know, stating that we're having a
9 special meeting.

10 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Oh.

11 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: You have to have
12 that as part of the record.

13 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
14 Yeah.

15 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Yes, sir.

16 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
17 All right. Is there any further discussion?

18 (No response.)

19 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
20 If not, all in favor, signify by saying aye.

21 (Commissioners say "aye" in unison.)

22 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
23 Opposed?

24 (No response.)

25 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
26 The ayes have it.

27 //////////////////////////////////////

28 //////////////////////////////////////

Ayes: 4 Commissioners: James E. (Jeb) Ball, Joe
Davis, III, Charles F.
(Skip) Gruber, Billie Jo
Underwood

No: 0 Commissioners: (None)

Abstain: 0 Commissioners: (None)

Absent: 0 Commissioners: (None)

MOTION PASSED.

SPECIAL MEETING CALL LETTER

5 - NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY ENGINEERS (NACE) CONFERENCE

2020

COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

I think Joey had something real quick that you wanted to
do, by the way.

MR. JOEY NUNNALLY: We can do it now, or we can
do it at the first break.

COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
Okay.

MR. JOEY NUNNALLY: Either one.

COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
Okay. Well, do you want to explain what --

MR. JOEY NUNNALLY: Yeah. Yeah. I'll explain
it real quick. So the NACE, which stands for the
National Association of County Engineers -- Let me get
this sign.

The National Association of County Engineers is
having their -- their national conference this year is in

1 Wichita, Kansas, which Commissioner Gruber has already
2 kind of approved me to go to that this year.

3 Next year Baldwin County is going to be hosting that
4 conference. And it's a huge conference, I mean, large
5 attendees. Perdido Resort down in Orange Beach is one of
6 the biggest ones. The biggest resort down there can't
7 hold all the people that are coming to this, okay.

8 So we're actually having to split it in two
9 different venues, one at Perdido Resort and one at the
10 Orange Beach Civic Center, just to try to get everybody
11 in.

12 I mean, it's a -- it's a big deal. So I've never
13 been to one. I thought it would be good for me to go in
14 2019, because since we're the host county next year, I
15 need to figure what -- what -- what all this is about.

16 So I'm going to Wichita in April to figure out
17 exactly how this thing goes down, hosting this thing in
18 2020, about April of 2020.

19 And Sonny Brasfield asked us to do a little
20 commercial video. So I'm trying to help do that. So I
21 would love to get a photo op of y'all holding the NACE
22 2020 sign.

23 I've got a banner here that says "WELCOME TO BALDWIN
24 COUNTY." We do can just do a little photo op as soon as
25 y'all get a little break. And then we'll -- and then
26 I've got to book out probably a little early today as
27 well. I won't be able to sit through everything. But
28 that's -- that's all I've got.

1 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

2 Okay.

3 MR. JOEY NUNNALLY: Just as soon as y'all get a
4 chance, don't rush.

5 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

6 Okay.

7 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: That's great that
8 we're hosting.

9 MR. JOEY NUNNALLY: It's going to be big.

10 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Give us a
11 chance --

12 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

13 Y'all want to --

14 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: -- to sell the
15 region.

16 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

17 Y'all want to --

18 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Do it now?

19 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

20 Y'all want to do it now so Joey can get going --

21 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Yeah.

22 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP)

23 GRUBER: -- going that way?

24 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Yeah.

25 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

26 You don't mind, do you?

27 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: I'll step out.

28 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

1 No, no, no.

2 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: No. You just --

3 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

4 We just need to -- we're just going to get a picture.

5 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: I didn't know what
6 y'all --

7 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Where do you
8 want to take it?

9 MR. JOEY NUNNALLY: This banner is pretty
10 large. So we'll probably have to go to the main room.

11 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
12 All right. We will recess for a couple minutes to take a
13 photo of an upgoing event -- for an upcoming event.

14

15 (The Baldwin County Commission Special Meeting was recessed at
16 8:36 a.m.)

17 (The Baldwin County Commission Special Meeting resumed at
18 8:39 a.m.)

19

20 **6 - DISCUSS AND CHOOSE CANDIDATES FOR THE APPOINTED POSITIONS OF**
21 **COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR, EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (EMA) AND**
22 **PERSONNEL DIRECTOR**

23 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
24 All right.

25 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: All right.

26 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
27 All right. We are back.

28 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Want to

1 close that door?

2 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Oh, we have to
3 leave it open. My bad.

4 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
5 We are back. So we'll go ahead and get started, Deidra.

6

7 **6-A - INTERVIEW OF MR. JESSIE PEACOCK FOR THE POSITION OF**
8 **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (EMA) DIRECTOR**

9 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: All right. So first we have
10 Mr. Jessie Peacock.

11 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
12 Good morning, Jessie.

13 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: Good morning,
14 Commissioners. How are y'all doing?

15 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
16 Oh, pretty good.

17 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: I'm assuming I get one of
18 these four chairs?

19 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
20 You sure can.

21 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Take your
22 pick.

23 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
24 Yeah. Jessie, if you don't mind, how about telling us a
25 little bit about yourself to begin with.

26 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: Well, I've been a resident
27 of Baldwin County for 44 years. I've served my community
28 as a volunteer fireman since -- I know I was a volunteer

1 fireman at the age of 16 at the Whitehouse Fork
2 community. I currently hold the rank of captain as of
3 October.

4 There was a couple times I was the Training Chief.
5 But every time I got elected as the Training Chief, the
6 United States Coast Guard would call me up for
7 deployment. So that became a running joke. They won't
8 vote me in as Training Chief because I'd get deployed
9 again.

10 With that being said, I've been in the United States
11 Coast Guard. This is my 27th year. I've done five
12 deployments, two of them in state. Right after 9/11, I
13 went to Dauphin Island and did ship escorts. I went to
14 Texas, did military out loads there out of Sabine, Port
15 Arthur, Sabine Pass, Port Arthur, Beaumont, Texas.

16 I got called to Guantánamo Bay in 2007. I actually
17 got to come home on D-Day, December the 7th of 2007.
18 That was a six-month deployment.

19 I went to the Persian Gulf, the Kuwait Naval Base in
20 Kuwait where we secured a platform and three different
21 ports there for military shipments coming in that was
22 going across the boarder. That was an eight-month
23 deployment.

24 Those grant me veteran status. And I'll say this,
25 and I don't care if it don't leave this room. Most
26 people don't know I am considered a disabled veteran.

27 I've had surgery on both shoulders. It does not
28 limit me in any way, not that y'all -- that's just

1 something most people don't know about.

2 I have a wife and two kids. My daughter is
3 currently attending Coastal. My son works for Jason
4 Padgett at North Baldwin Utilities. I love my kids. I
5 love my family and still reside in the community where I
6 was raised.

7 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
8 Okay.

9 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: That's the short version.

10 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
11 Okay. We appreciate that.

12 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: It's your
13 chance to tell us --

14 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: CliffsNotes.

15 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: -- anything
16 you want to tell us.

17 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: Right.

18 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: All right.
19 We'll let Commissioner Underwood go with her --

20 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Yes.

21 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: -- her
22 questions.

23 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: This is just
24 to give you an overview. You may have heard how we
25 conducted the other interviews.

26 But I have like five questions that I'll ask the
27 same question to each applicant. And they are
28 behavior-based questions, so they're not based on

1 technical skills.

2 Okay. My first question is: What experience do you
3 have in making oral presentations, and how would you rate
4 effectiveness in this area?

5 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: In the experience I've had
6 through the Coast Guard, I've been through several
7 trainings. And I brought my -- my most proud
8 certificates, the only ones I submitted, not the whole
9 list, which I brought them in case anybody was interested
10 in looking.

11 One of my biggest accomplishments was the Chief's
12 Academy in California, LAMS, which is a leadership
13 management course, is also through the Coast Guard in
14 Guantánamo.

15 It allowed me the opportunity to make presentations.
16 As a good friend of mine said, he said, Jessie, you have
17 the gift of gab. One of the fun classes in college was
18 public speaking.

19 As a marine police officer for 11 years -- I guess I
20 dropped the ball on telling y'all about that one. But
21 I -- one of the job descriptions was to teach the public
22 the boating safety course for State of Alabama and
23 license personnel. They took the test afterward. We
24 graded it.

25 So I hate bragging. We increased that program --
26 program. I -- As soon as I started instructing that
27 program, I seen a way that would make it better.

28 I come up with an idea to make a model boat. Had a

1 buddy of mine who is a welder build me a model boat with
2 an explosion chamber in it. I put lights on it. Because
3 versus sitting there reading a PowerPoint and telling
4 people about the -- the boat safety course, I wanted an
5 example.

6 We turned the lights out in the room. And I even
7 had a little blue light on top. That was my claim to
8 fame. As soon as the Director of Conservation seen that,
9 he loved it. He ordered five of them, one for each
10 district and one for Montgomery.

11 I love instructing and teaching classes. Along with
12 that, we also -- we taught -- we went through a media
13 relations course in the marine police academy. Because
14 as a marine police officer, you deal with the media by
15 yourself. They are very few and far between, until they
16 become troopers.

17 If there was a case, a drowning or a large case, the
18 media would come up. The officer in charge of that scene
19 was the one that spoke to the media.

20 How would I rate myself? I won Marine Police
21 Officer Of the Year for two consecutive years, the only
22 two years that they did it by a jury of my peers, not
23 just appointed by the captains.

24 That is a moment that I'm proud of. The first year
25 I won that was because of my educational outreach program
26 through the marine police.

27 So, yes, ma'am. I would rate myself in that
28 category --

1 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Effective?

2 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: Yes, ma'am, very
3 effective.

4 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay. Thank
5 you. Okay. If you need me to repeat the question,
6 that's fine.

7 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: Yes, ma'am.

8 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: But it can
9 be difficult to reach out to other people that you don't
10 know in a new situation. Give me an example of how you
11 have coped with such a situation in the recent past.

12 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: I resort back to what my
13 friend, Max, said. I don't mind calling anybody. And he
14 knows that. That's why he said I have the gift of gab.

15 If I don't know anything, I will pick up the phone
16 and call whomever and hope that they -- if they don't
17 have the answer, they'll lead me to the right person.

18 Those that know me, have known me for any extended
19 period of time, know I do not have a problem calling
20 somebody and saying, hey, this is Jessie. So-and-so gave
21 me your name. This is what I'm looking for. I need
22 help.

23 So to actually think of an example right now, I
24 can't. If one comes to me later on --

25 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: If you -- if
26 you think of something --

27 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: Yes, ma'am.

28 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: -- and you

1 want to come back, that's fine.

2 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: Okay.

3 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay. Tell
4 me about a time when work tensions ran high. Describe
5 the situation -- describe the situation, the people
6 involved, what happened, and what you did to help manage
7 the situation.

8 So when tensions were high, describe the actual
9 situation, who was involved, and what you did to help
10 manage it.

11 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: How long do y'all have?

12 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: You don't
13 have to pick all of them.

14 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: Yes, ma'am. I'm sure all
15 of y'all aware about the situation when I come to
16 Emergency Management. I -- it was my dream job. I
17 voiced that to y'all. As a marine police officer, I come
18 to grow and love Emergency Management, now that I see
19 what it can be.

20 It was a unique situation when I arrived. There was
21 an elephant in the room every day. Tensions were
22 extremely high. There was no trust.

23 I talked to individuals one-on-one, people that I'd
24 known my whole life, people that I had -- that mentored
25 me, to people that I had only met that week -- I had met
26 during that job. The -- to --

27 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: This is when
28 you first came to work here?

1 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: Yeah.

2 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Not when the
3 other guy left?

4 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: Right. This is when he
5 was here.

6 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay.
7 Gotcha. Okay.

8 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: Yes, ma'am. So right
9 after -- right after I started, you could tell -- I spent
10 the first six months trying to get my basic
11 certification.

12 But I isolated the individuals. I brought them out
13 of a group setting and talked to them one-on-one.
14 Because you can get a personal relationship with people
15 to figure out where the situation lies.

16 You always look for -- I look for the common
17 denominator in any in situation, because that's generally
18 going to tell you what are -- the initial problem lies.

19 I -- I coached those individuals that were hurting.
20 And I reached out to Personnel. And due to my
21 relationship with Personnel, I actually went to the
22 Assistant Director of Personnel at the time so that was
23 no question, which happened to be Ms. Deidra. She can
24 vouch for that.

25 I spoke with her on that. And I got -- attempted to
26 get these people some help. They needed -- a situation,
27 it wound up, it -- it ran deeper to where I actually had
28 to go talk to the Commissioners.

1 I did have to go outside my supervisor, because he
2 was the one that was -- that was the problem. I did not
3 do that out of disrespect or go -- I spoke with him on
4 several occasions to -- how -- how do I deal with that
5 situation? I try to isolate the problem and figure out
6 where the root of the problem is by looking at all
7 avenues.

8 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay. This
9 is a three-part question. And I'll be happy to repeat
10 any parts of it.

11 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: Yes, ma'am.

12 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: And you have
13 to understand I'm not a skilled HR person. I have spent
14 a lot of time just trying to get this to point. So I
15 hope I'm not being graded.

16 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: My wife works in HR.
17 She's like, do this; do this. I'm like, what?

18 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Give me an
19 example of a situation that required multiple tasks to be
20 accomplished at one time. How did you handle the
21 situation, and what was the result?

22 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: I'd like to use the -- the
23 bus wreck on I-10 for that. Give me the -- Lay those
24 three out for me again real quick.

25 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay. It's
26 really an area of planning and organization, is what
27 we're looking at in this question. That's the -- that's
28 the behavior that -- that I'm looking for.

1 Give me an example of a situation that require
2 multiple tasks to accomplish -- to be accomplished at the
3 same time; okay? And how did you handle the situation?
4 And what was the result?

5 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: How I handled it was
6 dividing and conquering. And I'll answer your second one
7 first.

8 In Emergency Management, I was -- I'm growing to
9 understand this job. It's ever changing. We're
10 always -- always in a planning mode, but we're planning
11 for the unknown, because you don't know what tomorrow
12 holds, you don't know what storm.

13 You take Michael. It was going to be a 2, but it
14 landed as a 5. I feel sorry for those in -- in the
15 Panama City area.

16 But the bus wreck, at 5:30 that morning, we got our
17 phone call. We worked with every agency in Baldwin
18 County, from EMS, fire and law enforcement, all first
19 responders.

20 So when we got that phone call, we got to stand up
21 the EOC, because they had 56 kids that needed a place to
22 go. Not only did they need a place to go, they need
23 medical attention, somewhere --

24 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: What's the
25 EOC?

26 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: Emergency Operations
27 Center, the actual building.

28 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay. Just

1 making sure.

2 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: EMA is Emergency
3 Management --

4 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: I know what
5 that one is. I know that one.

6 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: This -- this is the
7 building. The EOC is the building. My bad.

8 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay. Thank
9 you.

10 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: So -- so we stood -- we
11 stood up the EOC. We were having to extricate personnel
12 out of the bus. And when I say we, please -- please
13 understand this is the fire -- the fire department's job,
14 the sheriff's job, the HELO's job. We are just a hub to
15 kind of funnel this information.

16 So as a they were doing -- as they were extracting,
17 they were flying these kids to the hospitals.
18 Organizations were having to be made with the hospitals.

19 Not only that, we were having to reach out to Texas
20 to align parents up, looking for a staging place for
21 these children, and a temporary staging place, and a
22 long-term staging place for the kids that were going to
23 be left here or for the parents to have a place to stay
24 for the kids that were going to be placed in the
25 hospital.

26 There was many moving parts that morning. Now, the
27 way we handled it, we were completely without a director
28 or an interim at that particular time.

1 The team came together. I went to the scene. Me
2 and the sheriff spoke. I went to the scene, got an
3 overview of what was going on. I relayed the information
4 up to the EOC.

5 Scott, in his sheltering, he made preparations to
6 house those kids at the church. He started reaching out
7 to local hotels for long-term stay. Jenni was reaching
8 out to contact the superintendent.

9 We got the most organized person out of the group.
10 And I forget her name, but one of chaperones. We
11 organized the list of the each kid. We figured out which
12 ones went where.

13 So that's the multiple moving places. That's how we
14 met. We came together as a team. And every person at
15 EMA knows their -- their role and are very good at it,
16 and allowing people to do their portion, and not stepping
17 in and not interfering, and not micromanaging them.

18 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay. So
19 during the bus wreck --

20 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: Yes, ma'am.

21 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: -- there was
22 no director at that time --

23 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: That's correct.

24 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: -- not even
25 a named interim at that time; is that right?

26 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: I was supposed to be at
27 that workshop that morning to be named interim.

28 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay. But

1 y'all just really --

2 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: I stepped up and --

3 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Thanks.

4 Because I really -- you know, I didn't really remember.

5 I wasn't part of this yet.

6 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: Yes, ma'am. That was the
7 reason I was throwing that tidbit --

8 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Thank you.

9 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: -- out there.

10 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Last
11 question.

12 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: Yes, ma'am.

13 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: It's -- it's
14 very important to build good relationships at work.
15 Please tell me about a time you were able to build a
16 successful relationship with a difficult person.

17 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: Um --

18 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: It could be
19 any of your jobs.

20 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: Yes, ma'am. That's what
21 I'm --

22 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: And you can
23 think a second.

24 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: In the -- in the law
25 enforcement officer world, there is a lot of Type A
26 personalities.

27 Mike Coleman was my lieutenant for a while. He
28 passed away, and Ryan Bennett is now. Both of those

1 lieutenants used me to go ride with some of the difficult
2 people. I'm going to slip up and call a name here in a
3 minute.

4 There was one guy who had been there a while. We
5 called him Cranky Nick. Love him to death. He's a dear
6 friend. I could call him right now. And I would tell
7 him that, myself.

8 But he would push people's buttons. He loved to
9 push you to the limit. The first guy that they assigned
10 him to on his boat, he -- he pretty much run off.

11 So the sergeant moved him -- moved that guy and
12 wound up putting me on his boat, because he recognized my
13 personality, to be able to speak with and deal with him.

14 He pushed my buttons as much as he did anybody. But
15 I learned a lot from him. Because once I realized that
16 was just his personality, he wasn't -- he wasn't trying
17 to be mean. He wanted you to realize your limitations by
18 putting you in a stressful environment, by putting your
19 boat in places.

20 I was like, we have no reason to go over there. The
21 boat won't fit. And without going into great detail, he
22 said, back up. And I said, I've been there. This home
23 my home. He's like back -- he made me back up into the
24 mud until the boat shutoff.

25 And I was just like -- I knew what was fixing to
26 happen. And he said, now you know exactly how far you
27 can go if you have to get in here to save somebody's
28 life.

1 Like I said, he and I are very good friends. I've
2 been able to -- to use that, use his personality to
3 affect my life and others.

4 There was a different time when I was placed with a
5 gentleman who was causing a -- a lot of grief within the
6 same department. I was not able to reconcile that
7 situation. That was one gentleman I couldn't get along
8 with.

9 I worked with him for a week. And I finally went
10 back to the captain. And I said, sir, I'm sorry. You've
11 got to move me.

12 This guy, he -- he insulted my wife, talked about
13 me. And it was either he or I at that point. But I went
14 to my supervisor, my direct supervisor, and explained it
15 to him. I was very straight with him.

16 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: But the
17 first example that you gave me --

18 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: Yes, ma'am.

19 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: -- you said
20 that you grew from having to deal with that difficult
21 person.

22 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: Yes, ma'am.

23 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Your
24 first -- okay. That's what I wanted to the make sure of.
25 Okay.

26 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: Right.

27 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: We can't
28 help many people sometimes.

1 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: If you give people the
2 opportunity, we all have our own different personalities.
3 And if you -- if you can just listen to what people are
4 trying to tell you, in most situations -- that's the
5 reason I brought the second situation up. Sometimes you
6 can't. Sometimes you just have to move on and say,
7 sorry. But in most situations you can learn from it and
8 grow.

9 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Well, that's
10 my five questions. I have one followup at the end.

11 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: Yeah.

12 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: What about
13 you Joe?

14 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: All right.
15 Jesse, thank you for sharing with us your record. And
16 while we can read it, it really is impressive the way
17 you've described it. So that is a compliment to you and
18 how genuine you are about your accomplishments.

19 And this is kind of maybe not a good question, but
20 what I'd like -- What are you proudest of that you got
21 accomplished in any of those roles, and you either
22 accomplished something or you started something?

23 I mean, if you -- And it's the not saying that
24 there's ten things, and you're going to pick two, and the
25 other eight are bad.

26 But, I mean, when you're given that question, what
27 jumps out? And you may have already talked about
28 something. But what -- what are you proudest of in terms

1 of experiences you've had where you've started something
2 or you got something accomplished?

3 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: My career as a marine
4 police officer. Yeah, I'm -- I'm proud of the Chief's
5 Academy. I was more proud to make First Class. E-7 is a
6 big accomplishment in the -- in the -- in the military
7 world, especially in the Coast Guard.

8 But my marine police career, it allowed me to meet
9 people in the north end of Baldwin County and build
10 relationships that I would never had the opportunity to
11 realize the amount of people that I know and to be able
12 to help to -- to bring closure to families, whether it
13 was in a time of death, and sometimes it was.

14 Or I remember the time that we found a 77-year-old
15 guy. I thought he was -- I thought we were looking for
16 a -- a victim. And he was alive. He made him a bed of
17 palmettos. And he went God knows how far through the
18 woods.

19 But just to sit there on the bank with his son,
20 who's my age, and tell him, we've got your dad. He's
21 alive, that sense of accomplishment in -- in that whole
22 career field was phenomenal. It was my dream job as a
23 kid, and I loved it.

24 It has changed a little bit. It has taken me two
25 years to realize this job here has that same capability.
26 You may not see the immediate gratification and -- and
27 because we plan long-term.

28 And there's sometimes, kind of like a dispatcher,

1 they never see the end result of the case. But, yes,
2 that would be my -- my -- that's my proud, shining
3 moment, other than, you know, your standard answer of my
4 family --

5 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Sure.

6 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: -- and my church.

7 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Sure. All right.
8 What future projects do you think need to occur in
9 Baldwin County to move the county forward, particularly
10 if you are chosen to be the permanent director? And
11 there's no right or wrong answer.

12 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: Right. I know it sounds
13 like a -- a broken record, but the EMA is an ever
14 involving discipline, working with so many partners.

15 I am still trying to get around to all the fire
16 meetings in their hometowns. I have not accomplished
17 that in the year that I've had the opportunity to.

18 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: That's not
19 easy.

20 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: No, ma'am. It's not.

21 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: No, it's not.
22 It's a big county and there's a lot of them.

23 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: And the
24 meetings conflict.

25 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: Yes, ma'am. And I have a
26 reminder pop up. I want to see things continue to -- to
27 move forward as they are now.

28 We're moving -- when I first got here, I got EMA on

1 the paging system of the fire department, receive a text
2 on -- People can opt it on their personal phone, but they
3 can get it on there so the 911 Center didn't have to deal
4 with recall lists and who's on call this week.

5 We all get the same text. If EMA gets called to a
6 scene or needs to be notified, every EMA personnel gets
7 that text. Whoever is responsible that week calls 911.

8 I want to see that continue moving forward. I want
9 to continue to build a relationship with our partners.
10 Again, I have a police, a fire, and a military
11 background.

12 The -- working with Coast Guard -- because I don't
13 know the exact mileage. I know bay is 44 miles long, but
14 the -- the coastal shoreline is extensive in Baldwin
15 County, the river system in Baldwin County.

16 I want to continue to see this relationship through.
17 I just want to build upon what we already have, nothing
18 that -- that we -- there's no greater goals anticipated
19 as of now.

20 I'm sure there will be some. But right now I just
21 want to continue going forward and mending fences that
22 may have broken in the past so that we can be prepared
23 for whatever comes our way.

24 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay. Are
25 there any new approaches that you'd like to see put in
26 place in this department? And these are approaches, not
27 programs, that can provide the citizens better service
28 and more efficient service in time of need.

1 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: Right now, I'm -- I'm sure
2 there are. But I'll be honest with you, the past six
3 months, I have been trying to work on my advanced level
4 certification, which is taking up a lot of my time,
5 increasing my job knowledge before I move forward with
6 that.

7 I'm always open for suggestions. I reach out to Ron
8 and Joey. And I've got a few things I need to bring
9 before y'all in the future, some money that was given to
10 us by the last Commission that I have actually placed on
11 hold for land and a building because I want to bring it
12 back before this Commission.

13 I have actually -- Because of the past history of
14 the EMA in Baldwin County, I did not want to implement
15 too many great changes, knowing the possibility a new
16 person could come in and change it again.

17 The people there have seen too much change in the
18 past several years. And I didn't want to be the guy to
19 change them and it changes six months from now.

20 And I told them that. I said, we're not going to do
21 any major situations until we -- until the Commission
22 decides on a permanent director. It's not fair to them
23 for that reason to continue that roller coaster ride.

24 So we had it on a level playing field. I wanted to
25 keep it there until the newly appointed director came in
26 to make decisions where they could more accurate.

27 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay. Very
28 good. Thank you, again.

1 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Most of the
2 questions already got answered, Jessie. That was a
3 good -- good bunch questions.

4 So you're talking about your certifications. How
5 far are you on where you need to be?

6 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: I mailed my advanced
7 package off at the beginning this week. Actually --

8 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Well, we
9 were talking about something one time, and we were
10 talking about the big certification. And you said there
11 may be a hang-up getting it because you -- nobody's ever
12 been named the director.

13 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: Yes.

14 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: So -- so am
15 I getting you right? You have to be a director in order
16 to complete this certification process?

17 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: So there are -- there's --
18 there's four levels. There's basic, intermediate,
19 advanced, and masters in the AAEM program.

20 Outside of the AAEM program, there's the CLEM
21 certification. Some people are CLEM eligible because of
22 their -- their certificates in the AAEM portion.

23 It kind of got -- it was really messed up. You
24 should be able to get CLEM certified without being
25 Advanced AAEM, Association of Emergency Management,
26 Alabama Association of Emergency Management. With the
27 CLEM certification, it gives Federal --

28 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: What is

1 CLEM?

2 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: Yes, ma'am, if I can think
3 of it. I knew I was going get stuck on the acronyms.

4 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: You don't
5 necessarily have to tell me what the acronym is, but tell
6 me what -- okay. I understand AA-whatever is Alabama.

7 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: Certified local Emergency
8 Management, I believe is what --

9 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay. And
10 who administers that?

11 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: That also comes from the
12 AAEM organization. But when you get the CLEM, -- And
13 I'm -- I'm going to mess this up, because I get it turned
14 around in my head.

15 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Well, I
16 really wouldn't know.

17 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: The -- the main thing, you
18 can get \$12,000 for the director, towards the director
19 position if you're CLEM certified, if your director is
20 CLEM certified.

21 I seen how many certificates I had to get advanced
22 certified, so I started working on the CLEM
23 certification, only to find out that -- And this is where
24 the system is messed up.

25 The only way to get CLEM certified -- They give you
26 a list of hours. You take all the courses for a total of
27 250 hours to get our CLEM certification.

28 Well, I started on those courses without

1 accumulating those hours. Well, there's only 100 hour in
2 the list certifications they give you, so the total will
3 never add up to 250. And I'm just pulling a weird
4 number.

5 So I called him up. And he was like, yeah, the only
6 way to get CLEM is get advanced. So then I turn around
7 and I put my focus back on advanced.

8 So I have sent my application off for advanced,
9 mailed it this week. There's the whole list in the
10 packet that I sent to Mr. Hicks.

11 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: What's the
12 timeframe on getting it all done?

13 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: For?

14 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Advanced.

15 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: For us, or how long is it
16 going to take him?

17 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: How long is
18 it going to take you to get your -- the certifications
19 you're seeking?

20 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: It's done.

21 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Okay.

22 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: It's mailed off. It is
23 mailed to Eddie Hicks. He has to look through my packet
24 and --

25 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: You're
26 waiting for the --

27 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: You're just
28 waiting for like an overall --

1 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Verification.

2 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: Right.

3 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: --
4 verification.

5 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: That's right. The board
6 to -- the board to certify. And I've got 60 spare hours.
7 So it should -- it should be no problem. I've had three
8 people -- Jimmy and Scott and Bob Franklin -- to look it
9 over and tell me it was good before I sent it off.

10 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: There is
11 some type of masters program offered from Jacksonville
12 State University. What's the difference in this versus
13 what these programs are? Is there a difference?

14 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: I have not looked into
15 that. There is also a masters level in the AAEM, but you
16 have to have three years of Emergency Management
17 experience --

18 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay.

19 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: -- which is my next step.

20 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay. I'm
21 just -- this is a different field. And I'm just not
22 exactly sure about all the certifications. Okay.

23 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: Yes, ma'am. But I am
24 still learning them as far as --

25 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Thanks for
26 your honesty.

27 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Jessie, I've
28 got another question. You know, Hurricane Michael

1 shifted and saved us, basically, because it could have
2 hit us.

3 And my question is: Is do you think you're prepared
4 for something like that to hit Baldwin County and to be
5 able to -- your job would be to protect the citizens of
6 this county; right?

7 Are you prepared for worst-case scenario? And, if
8 so, I mean, just give me like a little brief -- you know,
9 your first five steps of action, what you're going to do
10 to handle a situation like that.

11 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: I got the opportunity to
12 think about the morning Hurricane Michael was hitting,
13 because I was on the phone with Jason Behman (phonetic)
14 asking him, is this thing going to come?

15 I think Baldwin County is prepared. And it's not
16 just about me, it's about every moving part in this
17 county.

18 Talking to Jason, who is the Assistant Director for
19 the State EMA -- I mean, Jonathan.

20 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Jonathan.

21 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: Yeah. Sorry. I said
22 Jason. He -- he -- he and many other have told me
23 90 percent of the director's job at a County level is
24 relationships within that county, to be able to pick up
25 the phone and make a phone call.

26 Yeah, we're prepared. We -- we'd have had to start
27 moving and running. And you would see personalities and
28 conflicts clash. But people would have come together.

1 Baldwin County -- Volunteers would have opened their
2 doors. We have a phenomenal VOAD. Alainna is now the
3 assistant, to be able to call her or Bill Stevens at the
4 time and say, we've got to get some churches opened up.

5 You know, we have agreements with some churches to
6 organize the VOAD after the storm, to be able to pick up
7 the phone and call Hoss Mack and say, I need all hands on
8 deck. This is what you've got coming.

9 To call Coach Tyler and Anthony Sampson with the
10 school system, and what do you have available? Can you
11 clear out this gym? What do you have that's safe?

12 Some people in Baldwin County live in -- in houses
13 that would not sustain those winds. And we would need to
14 get them --

15 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: What's our
16 notice on that? What are we going to -- how far in
17 advance are we going to tell people to start getting out
18 and getting into shelters?

19 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: It depends on the approach
20 of the storm, the speed at which the storm approaches.
21 The -- 12 hours before onset of tropical storm force
22 winds, we will have a meeting with you guys.

23 My job, as it stands right now, the director's
24 position is to give you the information straight from the
25 National Weather Service, without twisting it, without
26 putting my spin on it. Give you the facts and let you
27 make a decision.

28 I will recommend what I think, given the

1 information. I'll give you the facts from the National
2 Weather Service. Because our opinions are going to
3 differ.

4 It also depends on the weekend and how many people
5 are actually on the island at the time.

6 To constantly be out in this county, moving and
7 calling and asking people, you know, to understand that,
8 you know -- It may be farm season when you've brought in
9 migrant workers from another place, to know that number
10 and have that number handy, you know, to be able to move
11 those people to a more secure location.

12 And it's not -- We have a shelter plan. We have
13 workers to come open it. And you can fit 1900 people in
14 a 19,000 square foot building.

15 There's rules and regulations on every bit of that.
16 You know, if you're staying three nights, how many square
17 foot you get.

18 But when Hurricane Michael comes, there's no rules
19 on that. There's no guidance on a Cat 5 storm. We don't
20 have enough named shelters in Baldwin County. There's no
21 way we could have that.

22 We're going to pull our volunteers together, and
23 we're going to put them as safe as possible place we can
24 house them, you know, even if it's not a 200 mile-an-hour
25 storm shelter.

26 I'd rather have them in a 100 mile-an-hour brand-new
27 church than I would, you know, a camper trailer, because
28 that's all they could afford to bring over at the time.

1 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: One other
2 thing. You know that there is a difference -- I know
3 your passion for policemen. I know your passion for
4 firemen. And I think those qualities and traits help out
5 an EMA Director.

6 But an EMA Director is a sit-and-wait guy. And I
7 know you're antsy, and you've got problems with sitting
8 and waiting. But you do know that we've got to separate
9 the first responder from the EMA Director?

10 And you're talking about light on the car and all
11 that. Right now I think the EMA Director, the
12 sit-and-wait game, and when comes time, like with the bus
13 wreck, your first responder will come out in you.

14 When the storm hits, then you, you know -- first
15 responder, but I want to make sure that we're not chasing
16 down the EMA Director. And -- and I think -- you -- you
17 understand that.

18 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: I will -- On that note, I
19 appreciate that. It has been -- Commissioner Ball knows
20 me very well. That -- that has been my biggest trouble
21 with this job, is I am a boots-on-the-ground, hands-deep.

22 In the past year, I have realized -- The bus wreck
23 was a prime example. It killed me not to go. I got in
24 my truck, and I went to the EOC, until the Sheriff
25 himself called me and said, Jessie, this is one you need
26 to come out to. You need to see this.

27 That was the only point in which I responded. There
28 are times that, you know, we get called to weird stuff.

1 And if I'm out and I see something, I'm going to stop,
2 because that is your -- That's just in my blood. I can't
3 let somebody lay there.

4 But as soon as a first responder gets there from
5 that area, I'll -- I'll back up and told a flag. And I
6 tell people all the time in the fire department, not
7 everybody can run down and run the jaws and cut somebody
8 out and hold pressure on the bleed. Somebody's got to
9 direct traffic. And I do not mind being that person at
10 all.

11 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Okay.

12 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
13 Jessie, what do you think would be the most challenging
14 thing about this job, the most challenging thing?

15 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: For me personally, not
16 going to the scene.

17 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Not being there
18 first.

19 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
20 But, I mean, you know, the job itself, you know, I know
21 there's -- there's -- there's --

22 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: This job is full of
23 challenges, Commissioner. Keeping up with the --
24 everybody's job. I had to realize that -- even as -- I
25 can't know everybody's job as they know it. That's why
26 they're hired in that position.

27 I rely a lot on other directors, Joey, as far as the
28 infrastructure of the culverts. Ms. Kim, the financing

1 stuff, I -- that is my weakness. But I know there's good
2 people.

3 When I had Jennifer there, Jennifer was -- she could
4 explain it in ways that I understood it. And we have
5 Danon back now. I'm having to -- I have to look at
6 different things every time something crosses my desk for
7 a signature.

8 Because all the Federal moneys flow through Baldwin
9 County out to these other agencies on these grants.
10 That's the biggest challenge for me, is trying to wrap my
11 mind around that.

12 The plus side of that is we have good people in
13 Baldwin County. And there is a good staff there at EMA
14 to be able to explain that to me.

15 And I don't mind picking up the phone and calling
16 Ron or Deidra or Kim or any of them, because they have
17 been there to help me.

18 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
19 All right. Well, I think that pretty well, you know --
20 you know --

21 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: And Jessie's
22 no stranger.

23 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
24 Yeah.

25 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: And he knows
26 it's a contract position --

27 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
28 Yeah.

1 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: -- and he
2 knows --

3 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
4 Yeah.

5 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: -- it's --
6 you know, and we've told all the other applicants, you
7 know, just to interview for this job is -- is -- you
8 know, we really appreciate it. We appreciate the step
9 out, you know, to get into a four-year contract. And, as
10 you know, EMA has not stayed around a long time.

11 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: It's very dangerous. And
12 I'm still in a lot thoughts and prayers about that one.

13 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Billie Jo,
14 did you say you had a followup?

15 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Yeah. Y'all
16 almost covered it. But I will say what my followup: In
17 trying to research what an EMA Director was, I have heard
18 some comments come from the first responder world,
19 comments come from EMA world.

20 And I think they've already addressed it: Can you
21 separate yourself from that when it really matters?
22 Because the bus wreck is -- is tragic.

23 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: Yes, ma'am.

24 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: An out-all
25 national Presidentially-declared desister is another
26 situation.

27 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: Yes, ma'am.

28 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Not that one

1 life doesn't matter more than a lot of lives. But can
2 you separate that first responder from an EMA Director?

3 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: It will be easier for me
4 to separate it if the -- in a nationally-declared,
5 because you can't be everywhere during a hurricane.

6 And my neighbor told me one time, we were -- right
7 after Hurricane Ivan. I was like, so-and-so's down. You
8 know, this one's got to go.

9 I had people calling me, and I was trying to -- My
10 neighbor told me, Jessie, we're going to clean up this
11 road first. He said, that way we can get out and help
12 others.

13 That was the biggest word of advise that -- that I
14 had. So, yes, it's harder for me when -- when it's a bus
15 wreck, because I know what to do there. I -- I know how
16 to run the jaws of life. I know how to direct traffic.
17 I know -- CMS background.

18 The hurricane, you've got to back up and let --
19 There's 37 different fire departments in Baldwin County.
20 You let each one of those run their community, because
21 they're embedded in that community, and they know that
22 community better than anybody else.

23 Now, if we're in Whitehouse, it's going to be hard
24 for me not to, because I have that personal relationship
25 in Whitehouse. But if I go to Elberta, not a problem.
26 Tell Nick, hey, bud, this is yours. What do you need me
27 to do? Do you want me to come down there?

28 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Are you

1 still considered a volunteer fireman in Whitehouse?

2 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: Yes, I am.

3 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: All right.

4 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: That's what I said in the
5 beginning. I'm -- I'm actually the captain.

6 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: So if you
7 had an incident in Whitehouse, you would be active in the
8 volunteer fire role?

9 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: Night before last at
10 one o'clock, we were putting out a house fire. Yes, I
11 am.

12 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay.

13 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: But if it -- when it comes
14 down to -- because, as a volunteer fireman -- But if they
15 have a chemical spill in Whitehouse there at the railroad
16 tracks, Jessie is not responding as a fireman. I am
17 getting that call as an EMA, and I will respond in that
18 capacity.

19 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Then your
20 passion is first responder?

21 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: Uh-huh. (Indicates
22 affirmatively.)

23 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Is it really
24 that you really want to leave the first responder for the
25 EMA? I know you'll still be a first responder in
26 Whitehouse. Is that really what you want?

27 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: I have already left that
28 world. I left that world two years ago. You know, I

1 still tinker with the volunteer fire department.

2 There are those that do as well. But, yes, ma'am,
3 because we continue to help people, as EMA. And I said
4 it has taken me two years to realize the --

5 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: So you've
6 evolved from --

7 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: Yes, ma'am.

8 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: -- that
9 passion?

10 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: Yes, ma'am.

11 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: So far.

12 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: It's still there. Don't
13 get me wrong. I'm still going to stop and help
14 somebody --

15 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: I think
16 we're all --

17 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: -- change their tire.

18 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: -- good --
19 we're all good Samaritans. We try to help somebody.

20 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Doing the right
21 thing is still the right thing to do.

22 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay.

23 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
24 Okay.

25 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: All right.

26 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
27 All right.

28 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: But as far as the job is

1 concerned.

2 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay.

3 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

4 All right. Thank you very much, Jessie.

5 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: Thank y'all for the honor.

6 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

7 Thank you very much.

8 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: I see we had
9 one drop out.

10 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: Benjie Abbott rescinded his
11 interview today.

12 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Okay. Did y'all
13 get something?

14 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: An e-mail
15 came during this.

16 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Okay.

17 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay.

18 MR. JESSIE PEACOCK: Thank y'all.

19 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: All right.
20 Thanks, Jessie.

21 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
22 Thank you.

23 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Thank you,
24 Jessie.

25 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Thanks,
26 Jessie.

27 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: See if the
28 other gentleman is already in the area and see if he can

1 come in earlier. I think Benjie was in between that last
2 one.

3 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: He was.

4 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

5 Yeah.

6
7 **6-B - INTERVIEW OF MR. SCOTT WALLACE FOR THE POSITION OF**

8 **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (EMA) DIRECTOR**

9 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Hi, Scott.

10 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: Good morning.

11 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Good
12 morning.

13 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Good
14 morning.

15 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Hello, Scott.

16 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
17 Good morning, Scott.

18 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: Good to see you.

19 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
20 Good seeing you.

21 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Good to see you.

22 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: Where's the hot seat?

23 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: Hot seat right here.

24 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Jessie sat
25 there, but you're welcome to --

26 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: We can't throw
27 any of these at you, and you can't throw any of these at
28 us.

1 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: Okay.

2 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: They're on
3 tether, so they won't go --

4 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: If it gets real bad, just
5 pour water on the electrical outlet.

6 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: And then we'll
7 all --

8 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: We'll all leave.

9 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: There you go.

10 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: It's a much
11 friendlier environment than you may have envisioned.

12 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: That's correct.
13 That's exactly right.

14 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: No. We're
15 nervous, too. How do you spell EMA? I don't know. What
16 does it stand for?

17 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
18 It's on now, so just -- there you go. It's off.

19 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: I know Joey
20 told me NACE earlier. Stop with all these acronyms.

21 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: We get to meet sometimes --
22 I'm on the board for the association, Alabama Association
23 of Emergency Managers. And from time to time, I get to
24 travel.

25 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Sure.

26 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: We get to do NACo.

27 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Well, this
28 is his first time to go to a conference. And they're

1 going to host it here next year. So that was --

2 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: And that's going
3 to be significant. And it's going to be a lot of -- a
4 lot of visitors.

5 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: I need to be
6 on the plane to Wichita. I need to check it out,
7 represent the Commission, see how it works.

8 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Hey, go
9 ahead.

10 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Yeah, that's
11 right.

12 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: I don't have
13 any desire to go to Kansas.

14 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: If I go
15 there, one of them tornados will hit.

16 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: Then you'd be not in Kansas
17 anymore.

18 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: That's
19 right.

20 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: That's right.
21 Toto, where are we?

22 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: That's
23 right.

24 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: I don't know where we are.
25 I'm asking myself that question.

26 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
27 All right. Good morning, Scott. How are you this
28 morning?

1 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: Good morning, Commissioner
2 Gruber. I am fantastic.

3 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
4 Great. If you don't --

5 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: Glad to be here.

6 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
7 Great. If you don't mind, would you please tell us a
8 little bit about yourself. And we -- And I don't know if
9 everybody knows you. So just let us know a little bit
10 about you.

11 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: Sure. Let me -- let me
12 start, if I may, just sharing my heart with you, okay,
13 just more personal, and -- and kind of where -- my
14 history and where I come from and -- and why I'm here
15 today.

16 When I was teenager, whether it was volunteer or
17 whatever, I was part of the community and volunteering in
18 the community, because that was the way I was raised.
19 Come on. We're going to do this for Ms. So-and-so or
20 Aunt So-and-so, whoever that it is.

21 And that kind of -- that kind of spun an interest in
22 me. And I began volunteering with youth groups and
23 helping -- Now, I was a youth, but still volunteering
24 with youth groups.

25 And then I started with the volunteer fire
26 department at a young age and was elected to a board at
27 21 years old, earliest to be elected to that board.

28 And still volunteer stuff, nothing paid, all

1 volunteer. But I saw how, you know, just that little bit
2 of volunteering could be a difference in my community. I
3 wasn't saving the world. I was making a difference in my
4 community.

5 So as I grew and as I began to develop, I saw where
6 other places you could volunteer and other things you
7 could do, things that made a difference, whether it --
8 whether that was coaching ball at the local ballpark,
9 making a difference in those children's lives and not
10 just teaching them how to play ball; teaching them life
11 skills and how to deal with conflict or whether it's
12 being a part of a steering committee and -- and helping
13 people there.

14 And they help me. And that's what happens. You end
15 up helping each other. So as I begin to develop, I
16 thought, man -- And then got to work -- started work for
17 the Commission.

18 Started working at the school in '97, and then went
19 to Commission side in 2000, and volunteered -- Okay. We
20 had the option when Ivan was coming in, Hurricane Ivan
21 was coming in, had the option to volunteer at the EMA or
22 go home and ride the storm out and -- or volunteer and do
23 preliminary damage assessment, or go home and wait until
24 the buildings are ready to come back to work; all right?

25 And I thought, I've been volunteering all my life.
26 Might as well go in there and volunteer, too. And I did.
27 And we were in that building. And we was in that
28 building for a while.

1 Got my hand slapped a couple times because I'd grab
2 cookies when I shouldn't have. They weren't ready to be
3 served yet.

4 But that's -- that's kind of what got me started in
5 EMA. In 2004, that was my first activation since 2004,
6 you know, whether it's been on a volunteer basis or
7 whether it's been on a -- in 2009, I went full time.

8 And, in that, now I get to work not as a volunteer,
9 I'm -- I'm -- I'm paid staff, but I work with a lot of
10 other volunteer organizations, whether it be faith based,
11 nongovernment organizations, Red Cross, Salvage, all
12 those. And you get to still be in the atmosphere and
13 that culture.

14 So that's really what makes me like what I -- what I
15 do, not only working with public health and working with
16 health and human service, but working with the Sheriff's
17 Department, the school system.

18 Mr. Tyler has been fantastic to work with. I worked
19 with him before he went to Eufaula, ran into in Eufaula,
20 actually, and then I maybe worked with them again
21 after -- after he came back here. Enjoy doing that.

22 Sheriff -- of course, Sheriff Mack is always a -- a
23 pleasure to work with. So to just be able to pull all
24 these together and work, so that's who I am.

25 That's -- that's my heart. And that's why I'm here.
26 It's not just a job. It's something I've kind -- I have
27 been preparing for since I was a teenager, really.

28 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

1 Okay.

2 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Very good.

3 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

4 Billie Jo.

5 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay.

6 Scott, what we've done for all of our interviews so far
7 is I have five questions that I'll ask you. They are
8 behavior-based questions. And if you need to me to
9 repeat a question, I'll be happy to.

10 And I'll just start with the first question; and it
11 is: What experience do you have in making oral
12 presentations, and how would you rate your effectiveness
13 in this area?

14 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: Okay. I have some formal
15 training in this within the International Training Center
16 up in Anniston. That's where I took my class. It was a
17 week long. And I've had others also. My presentation --
18 Now, you're talking public speaking, right?

19 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Uh-huh.
20 (Indicates affirmatively.)

21 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: Public speaking, I've been
22 keynote speakers, you know, whether it be the Kiwanis
23 Club. I was asked to go to -- when I was in Wisconsin
24 one time for something else, they said, will you come
25 back and speak at our conference?

26 So I agreed to. Took vacation time from here, and
27 went and spoke at their conference to -- they were
28 interested in how the Deepwater Horizon affected us and

1 our economy and public health and mental health and that
2 kind of stuff. So I was able to do that.

3 I've been public speaking pretty much all my life.
4 My first time public speaking, I was 15 years old. And I
5 totally fell on my face. And I walked out of that room
6 that day and said, that will never happen again.

7 And I began to develop -- to develop that with that
8 mentoring. The way I did it is when I would public
9 speak, I would ask a dear friend of mine, my mentor, to
10 sit in the back of the room and critique me.

11 And you don't have to pat me on the back and be
12 nice. And that -- and that's what we ended up doing for
13 each other, until we -- until we learned how to do that.

14 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay. Next
15 question is: It can be difficult to reach out to other
16 people that you don't know in a new situation. Give me
17 an example of how you coped with such a situation in the
18 recent past.

19 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: Where I've had to reach out
20 to someone knowing it would be a difficult situation?

21 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Well, it
22 just can be difficult to reach out to other people that
23 you don't know in a new situation. It doesn't have to be
24 a difficult situation.

25 It's just sometimes it's difficult to reach --
26 sometimes. Give me a situation of how you coped with
27 such a situation in the recent past with reaching out to
28 someone you did not know. Was it difficult or not

1 difficult for you?

2 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: Over the last, you know,
3 years of my life, I've had to reach -- I mean, that's my
4 job, is to reach out. And I'm constantly doing it. I'm
5 trying to think of one that was new that I didn't know
6 someone.

7 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: It was
8 really more of a behavior-based question in dealing with
9 extraversion; okay?

10 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: Uh-huh. (Indicates
11 affirmatively.)

12 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: How do you
13 deal with --

14 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: And I am an extravert. I
15 am an extravert. Particularly, how -- how I deal with
16 that, if I don't know that person, and I'm reaching out
17 to find out more, I will call them. I will introduce
18 myself and say who I am and why I'm calling to set them
19 at ease.

20 I'm not here picking information. And then I'll
21 say, here is the situation we have. Will you please
22 explain to me your part of it?

23 And let them talk, and listen to them, and listen to
24 them actively. Ask them questions about what they just
25 said. Make sure I summarize what they just said.

26 I know one situation that I -- I've had to kind do
27 that, call, and see how this is going to go. It started
28 out. The first five minutes was a little tense.

1 But after you listen for a while and let them know
2 you are actually listening to understand, not just
3 listening to reply, it got a lot better after the first
4 five minutes. And we ended up being able to joke around
5 and talk and formed a -- a relationship. So now we can
6 text back and forth.

7 So did that -- did that --

8 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay. I
9 mean, so that's your example of how you've been able to
10 deal with that?

11 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: That's -- that's how I deal
12 with -- with those.

13 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay.

14 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: I start by letting them
15 know who I am and why I'm calling. All right. There's
16 no secrets. When I worked for the Appraisal Department,
17 I had to do that a good bit, just --

18 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay.

19 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: -- calling property owners
20 and saying, I appraised your property. I understand you
21 have a question about it.

22 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay. We'll
23 move on to the next one.

24 Tell me about a time when work tensions ran high.
25 Describe the situation, the people involved, and what --
26 what happened, and what -- what you did to help manage
27 the situation.

28 And I'll repeat that. Tell me about a time when

1 work tensions ran high. Describe the situation, the
2 people involved, and what happened, and what you did to
3 help manage the situation.

4 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: Not disclosing names or
5 anything like that --

6 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: You can be
7 specific.

8 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: Most of you know maybe what
9 the situation's been in the past with some of the
10 turnover with the EMA, with some the EMA Directors that
11 didn't work out. Then it makes people want to just
12 jump -- jump ship.

13 And that was exactly what was taking place. And I
14 just refused to jump ship. I wanted to. My mind was
15 saying one thing, and my heart was saying another.

16 And people got to where they were coming to me and
17 saying, Scott, I just don't know how else -- what else to
18 do.

19 And I would simply encourage them to not let one
20 person define them and not let one person drive them to
21 make decisions, that this is a group effort. This is a
22 team effort. And don't do anything rash, but make sure
23 you are making decisions based on the facts that -- that
24 you need, that you have.

25 We can easily -- sometimes when we get into those
26 high, tense moments, our emotions take over our -- our
27 intellect sometimes. And we need to be -- you know, we
28 need to calm down and take some breaths.

1 And then I would ask myself, think about it for a
2 day. Sleep on it. Come back and we'll talk about it
3 tomorrow. And so a lot of times that tension would go
4 down. They thought about it and then was better the next
5 day.

6 So that -- that's kind how -- you know, if you're in
7 that situation also, which in mine, I was, and I was
8 having some of the same thoughts. The worst thing for me
9 to have done, you're absolutely right. That's -- that's
10 the wrong thing to do.

11 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Not fuelling
12 the fire.

13 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: Right. You have to --
14 Here's the thing I've learned in conflict management,
15 just across the board conflict management. Whether
16 you've got two subordinates or whether it's one-on-one,
17 if you've got two subordinates or -- or two people, you
18 need to stay neutral in that situation, right, while
19 you're listening to those two.

20 You listen to their side, and you listen to their
21 side. And you listen -- again, you listen active --
22 actively and actually staying neutral and you're
23 listening close.

24 If you -- if you start taking sides, you're going to
25 have a situation, another situation. And then you begin
26 to ask them questions, again, to gain that understanding.
27 And then you begin to paraphrase what they're saying to
28 them so they see you understand this is where they are.

1 All right. And then when you've finished that whole
2 conversation, you summarize back to them what we just
3 talked about, whether it's a 10-minute conversation,
4 whether it's a 30-minute conversation.

5 Then you do the same thing with the other, usually
6 separate, and then -- then try to find that root cause of
7 what is causing that. If you can get to the root cause,
8 then you can usually resolve the situation, usually, if
9 they want to resolve it.

10 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay.

11 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: And that -- that's kind of
12 how I handled that.

13 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: All right.

14 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: Even though I was not
15 neutral, I tried to at least appear neutral.

16 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: That is
17 actually a three-part question.

18 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: Oh, three.

19 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: And I'll be
20 happy to repeat it. Give me an example of a situation
21 that required multiple tasks to be accomplished at that
22 time. How did you handle the situation? And what was
23 the result?

24 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: I have a process to handle
25 multitasks at the same time.

26 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: All right.

27 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: I fought that process tooth
28 and nail, you know, eight or nine years ago. I just felt

1 like more processes, but process is important.

2 I handle probably the hardest -- I say the
3 hardest -- the most moving parts and multiple tasks that
4 I have is the example of the full-scale exercise we did
5 at Fairhope High School and Fairhope Middle School.

6 That was -- that was involving two schools, two
7 law -- it was three law enforcement. It ended up being
8 two agencies, two law enforcement agencies, EMS, fire,
9 actively involved, over 1200 kids and teachers involved
10 in that, of course, some concerned parents.

11 And what that really means is your phone is going to
12 ring a whole lot, and your texts are going to go off a
13 whole lot, and you're going to get a lot of e-mails.

14 So I had to compartmentalize. And I -- as I
15 compartmentalized and I met with those entities and those
16 agencies individually -- Well, I pulled them all
17 together.

18 I said, choose one to represent you. And I pulled
19 them all together. And I said, this is our goal. Here
20 are our objectives, what we want to accomplish. Are we
21 all in agreement on that?

22 And once you get those leaders in agreement on what
23 you want to accomplish, on what you want to do, they can
24 go advocate for you. Okay. So that really helps cut
25 your job down.

26 Again, I may have trust with all those agencies, and
27 I do have trust with every agency in here. I don't have
28 the time to talk to each and every individual person.

1 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Right.

2 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: So you get somebody to
3 advocate for you. And normally -- that's how I handled
4 that.

5 So once I do that, then I go meet with those. I
6 say, I want to meet with you on this day. I want to meet
7 with you on this day. So then they all have a chance to
8 meet with me, the advocates.

9 And we're all meeting together to make sure now we
10 understand that is what we said in our meeting. This is
11 what the advocate is saying. And this is -- this is your
12 concerns. And let's address those concerns.

13 That might can be handled in one meeting. It may
14 have to come back and make some adjustments and then come
15 back. And you -- and you do that with everyone involved.

16 Again, they're all important. They all have
17 different concerns. But we need to make sure we address
18 those concerns and not ignore them.

19 Ignoring the concerns is the worst thing to do.
20 They grow like a cancer. And the next thing you know,
21 it's the biggest thing you've got to deal with, when it
22 was a small thing if you would have just dealt with it.

23 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay. This
24 is the last question in this category: It's very
25 important to build good relationships at work. Please
26 tell me about a time when you were able to build a
27 successful relationship with a difficult person. And you
28 can bring this from any of your past job experiences.

1 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: I was hired on the school
2 system. I didn't realize at the time I was coming in on
3 the heels of a bad situation of that person who was the
4 manager before me basically didn't manage. And they let
5 the person that was just a worker manage.

6 So that person was used to be the manager. So now I
7 come on to actually do the job and manage, and they
8 didn't want to let that go.

9 See? See what happened? So now this person is so
10 used to basically being in charge, because this person
11 was not doing their job.

12 So I could have said, you know what? I'm the
13 manager, and this is my job, and that's my title. And I
14 could have said, you're going to do this, you're going to
15 do this.

16 But that would have really accomplished nothing.
17 All that would have accomplished is either more tension,
18 them quitting; right? Didn't want that. Because they
19 have a livelihood and they have -- so I had to first of
20 all develop a relationship with them that they'd trust,
21 and they'd trust me that I have their interest at heart.

22 And once they realized I had their interest and I
23 want to take this off them so they don't have that burden
24 anymore, but you still have input, you have input.

25 But I'm going to need to manage this, because my
26 boss is telling me to manage it. So let me do what my
27 boss is telling me to do.

28 And I really worked that as a team effort. I

1 wasn't -- I was the boss, technically, but I worked at it
2 from a team effort.

3 And that's what I've -- I've learned in anything
4 we're doing. If we go at it from a team effort, say,
5 hey, look, we're one team trying to get this thing
6 accomplished. Let's work together on this.

7 And that's how it is. It took -- it took some time.
8 And right when you think things are going well, something
9 else would come up, and we'd have to address that.

10 The most important thing that I have found with
11 dealing with this type situation is not to embarrass them
12 in front of someone and correct them in front of someone,
13 to go ahead and pull them to side and find a time that,
14 hey, can with talk?

15 Can we talk over here, or, you know, find a time,
16 even walking down a hall. It makes such a difference
17 walking, having a shoulder-to-shoulder conversation while
18 we're walking.

19 So let them know that you care and you want to do
20 what's right. And to what's right by them, and yet do
21 what's right, what my boss is asking me to do.

22 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay. All
23 right. Thank you.

24 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Scott, thank you
25 for applying. Thank you for all the jobs that you have
26 done and are doing.

27 I need you to give us a couple examples of things
28 that you either started or accomplished that you're

1 proudest of in any of the jobs. And it can be
2 conceptual. It can be actual.

3 But you talked about the mind and heart an talked
4 from the heart. But I'd like to kind of know -- we all
5 have accomplishments. Some are more significant than
6 others. But what stands out in your experience thus far
7 that you're the proudest of?

8 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: I would say the training.
9 And -- and it wasn't supposed to be the training and
10 exercise program that is at the EMA now, but it morphed
11 into that.

12 We -- we had -- our training program was pretty much
13 nonexistent. I wasn't hired there to be the training
14 person. I was -- I had another title. And the new
15 director said, I want you to be the training person.

16 Now, I was hired there knowing that I knew how to
17 teach and knowing that I knew how to train. And they
18 were going to eventually probably want me to train and
19 stuff. And I knew that going in. But that was not my
20 title. So this new director said --

21 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Which --

22 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: -- we want to --

23 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: At what
24 point was this?

25 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: 2012.

26 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: 2012. Okay.

27 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: 2012. So I said, okay.

28 And, of course, they -- they were very candid. They

1 said, you're going to get double duty, and we're not
2 increasing your pay. Thank you very much.

3 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Like that
4 attaboy.

5 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: Yeah. So they just went
6 ahead and said that right upfront. Okay. So, anyway,
7 you get two attaboys.

8 So I went back. I sat in my office. I got to
9 thinking about other programs I'd put together at church.
10 I was the Christian Education Director. We kind of set
11 it up on a college basis. You could choose electives
12 that you could go take classes from.

13 So I kind of took that experience and I applied it
14 to this. And I went ahead and laid out a year's worth of
15 training. And knowing that we're a multiagency
16 coordination system, I -- we don't just deal with a silo
17 of one.

18 I thought I need to -- I need to include something
19 for public safety for training so that they're included.
20 I need to include something for public -- public health,
21 so health and human services, DHR, public health, all
22 that so they're included.

23 So I picked out, you know, those people that we deal
24 with, you know. Our volunteers, hey, what kind of
25 volunteer training can I bring in here?

26 Because when you start bringing them into your
27 building and start spending time with them and training
28 with them, then that's when you get those relationships.

1 And you realized when it does happen -- you'd rather
2 invite friends to the party than enemies or strangers,
3 not enemies but strangers.

4 So I put all that on a spreadsheet. I called a
5 meeting with my director at the time. And I said, this
6 is what I propose. I said, I want -- now, it was an
7 18-month program, but I knew it was going to -- it was
8 for a year, but I knew it was going to take 18 months to
9 get it off the ground.

10 So, quite honestly, before then, you could have a
11 class and you wouldn't get five people to show up or to
12 sign up. So I knew I was going to have to develop trust.
13 I don't know what did that. All I know is that's how
14 was.

15 So I said, first of all, we've got to make sure that
16 when we have a class, that we actually have participants
17 there. And only way to get that is for them to say, you
18 know what? We trust that's going to be a good class,
19 because EMA is bringing it -- bringing it to us.

20 All right. So I've got to build that. So I say,
21 give me six months to build that. Give me 18 months to
22 have a good program. Give me two years, and we'll have
23 them calling us. That's exactly what I told him. He
24 said okay. And that's what I did.

25 And, sure enough, pulling teeth the first few
26 classes. Please come. You won't regret it. It's going
27 to be a good class.

28 Now I get constant e-mails, constant phone calls. I

1 see somebody in the hall, I see somebody out at another
2 meeting, hey, what training you got coming up? I've been
3 looking at your training calendar. Can you help us do
4 this? We've got this we want to bring. Can you help us
5 bring this in?

6 So I'm quite proud of that. And I did the same
7 thing with the exercise. There was no exercise program.
8 We -- we contracted some out. But I went back and I seen
9 what -- training and exercise, they go hand in hand.

10 If we're going to -- if we're going to train, we
11 need to come back and make sure we exercise this, and do
12 it, and find our gaps, and plug those gaps.

13 And I did that. I went and got my masters for
14 science practitioner. That took a year to go through
15 that program. Sticking needles in you eyes is about the
16 equivalent of going through that program, so if you can
17 imagine. But it was well worth it.

18 Again, it gained that confidence and that trust to
19 where now, you know, in the county we're doing exercises.
20 We've got two coming up in May that we're doing. So --
21 so I'm very proud of that. I really am.

22 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Very good. All
23 right. What do you see as future projects, if you're
24 made the director, that we can explore that can move
25 Baldwin County forward?

26 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: Commissioner Cooper with
27 Highway Department, he -- he appointed me last year to
28 the traffic incident management. We're the first --

1 We're calling ourself the -- we're naming ourself.
2 There's only six of us. And we're -- we're figuring this
3 out.

4 Now, again, I'm an extravert. I don't like mundane;
5 okay? I like creating, and I like developing; okay? And
6 this has really been exciting.

7 Back to my training program, I was helping with this
8 just to teach occasionally. It's a -- it's a program.
9 And I didn't realize -- I plugged it into my training
10 program; okay?

11 This is public safety. This is traffic incident
12 management, public safety. I'm going to plug it into my
13 training program. And we're going to report our numbers
14 back up to the State.

15 Well, little did I know, we were one of two
16 counties, basically, that were doing anything with
17 program. All right. So I got a phone call, Scott --
18 from the State Highway. He said, Scott, what are y'all
19 doing? How are you -- how are you getting these numbers?
20 You know, I explained it to him.

21 Will you do a statewide webinar on all this, create
22 a PowerPoint, let people know how you're doing this, how
23 you're accomplishing this?

24 That's -- I thought we were trying -- I thought
25 Baldwin County was catching up to everybody else. Come
26 to find out, we were the only ones doing something. So
27 that's kind of how I got --

28 COMMISSIONER JEB BALL: And what was this study

1 showing?

2 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: Okay. Traffic incident
3 management, I'm sorry. Let me explain that just real
4 quick.

5 We have too many deaths on the highway with people
6 getting struck by, okay, because people aren't slowing
7 down. People are distracted drivers. They're just --
8 it's just plain dangerous out there.

9 That's -- that's the safety side of it. We're
10 losing billions of dollars in the United States every
11 year with people sitting in que in traffic.

12 I look at it as Highway 59 and the Beach Express,
13 especially during the summer. So it's how can we keep
14 this traffic moving, all right, rather than just sitting
15 in que? That's really important for the economy, to keep
16 traffic moving.

17 Yes, we have a bad accident. We didn't cause it.
18 We need to deal with it. And if we can deal with it in
19 some kind of way to keep traffic moving in a safe manner,
20 then that's what we need to do.

21 So the Federal Highway Administration, they
22 developed this program. And it was having a hard time
23 getting traction.

24 Now, in my personal opinion, what I would try to do
25 with that is institutionalize it. Because once you
26 institutionalize this program, then it's going to require
27 you to have some kind of card or whatever to be on the
28 side of the road.

1 It's going to require your EMS -- Let them get
2 CEU's. You know, that's what we're pushing for right
3 now. Now, I hope to go to Montgomery to deal with EMS
4 and their CEU's to get that training.

5 Because the thing is with EMS, we're private. Every
6 time they come to a training, they're paying somebody
7 else overtime to backfill them. So we're trying to
8 navigate through that.

9 So that's one thing I really want to bring to the
10 county. And I think -- I know it help. One, it would
11 make it safer for our first responders out there. Two,
12 it will make traffic flow during these times of
13 accidents.

14 Lord knows we have enough of those so that we can
15 keep track of movement, especially during high tourism.
16 That's -- that's one thing I would do.

17 When I look at EMA, I look at it in a couple
18 different facets. Inward, okay, inward, what I would do
19 with the EMA is I would make sure it's healthy.

20 Again, we've had some situations there. It was
21 difficult. And there was a lot of trust issues. And it
22 was a very unhealthy environment. So we want to make
23 sure it's healthy.

24 And I would first of all make sure that we're
25 healthy internally. And once I know that we're healthy,
26 when we're outward facing, then we can actually
27 accomplish something and do something.

28 There's nothing worse than putting up a facade and

1 people trust that and realize that's all it was. And you
2 won't gain the trust back, or if you do, it takes a lot
3 longer to gain that trust back.

4 So that would be another thing I would do, is spend
5 some time to make sure that -- that our people internally
6 are healthy, so that we're out there helping others.

7 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
8 Okay.

9 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: And you may have
10 already touched on this, but my third part is are there
11 new approaches that you're aware of that haven't been
12 done that we want to consider doing to make it more
13 efficient and effective in serving our citizens?

14 And it may be in terms of projects that you may have
15 already touched on. But what's next? In other words, I
16 grew up when the only thing that was in the cloud was
17 rain. Now we have data and all kind of stuff. And I'm
18 always about, well, then what's going to be the next
19 version?

20 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: Right.

21 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Are there things
22 on the horizon that you've seen that might be worth
23 digging into?

24 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: I want -- I want to talk
25 with our IT Department. Cyber security is becoming a
26 huge --

27 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Sure.

28 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: -- thing. And for some

1 people, cyber security falls into the IT Department.

2 Some people think it falls into EMA. You know, whose
3 plan does it fall under?

4 You know, put it under whatever plan you want to.
5 The fact is it's here. We need do deal with it. So if
6 we all have to get in the same room and look at each
7 other and say, okay, how are we going to deal with it?
8 And you take part of it, and I'll take part of it. And
9 we'll work on it together.

10 That's another meeting I want to have also. I would
11 like to have a couple more meeting with DOI, Department
12 Of Insurance, especially -- they're -- they're kind of
13 finishing up the Strengthen Alabama.

14 They've quit taking applications for that. I know
15 there are a lot of people, okay, we did all this
16 application work. What now? What's next? I got left
17 out.

18 I hope they come back and bring something --
19 something else to the table for that. So -- so I think
20 that's helped -- it's going to help a lot of people, but
21 I think it could help a lot more.

22 And I would -- if nothing more, just have that
23 conversation and see what we can get. I've spent some
24 time with them. But, again, spending time with them as
25 the training guy is different.

26 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Sure. Very good.
27 And thanks. Thanks again for putting yourself out here
28 and sharing with us your thoughts on things.

1 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: Commissioners, I appreciate
2 you allowing me to be here, you all allowing me to be
3 here.

4 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: We've got a
5 couple more questions. Me and this guy has got to ask
6 some questions.

7 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: Okay. I can't go throw up
8 in the garbage can yet?

9 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: I just --
10 you mentioned something about the healthiness of your
11 team and that kind of stuff. How -- how would you rate
12 the healthiness of EMA now, current situation?

13 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: There's still some work to
14 be done.

15 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: And that
16 would fall under strength and weaknesses. Name -- name a
17 weakness maybe that -- that you see.

18 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: There's still some trust
19 issues. That's the -- that's --

20 COMMISSIONER JEB BALL: You know we had a
21 hurricane that hit a neighboring county --

22 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: Absolutely.

23 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: -- in
24 another state. Nobody in this room has ever been through
25 anything in their lifetime like that. If that would have
26 shifted a little bit more, I mean, Ivan, Fredrick didn't
27 even scratch the surface on what this did.

28 Are we prepared? Do you feel right now, if

1 something like that came here next week, are we prepared
2 to take care of that?

3 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: I'm glad you brought that
4 up, because I've got that in my notes. When we look at
5 EMA, we're looking at four different phases; okay?
6 Preparedness, that's where we spend 90 percent of our
7 time. Response, we spend a very small amount of our time
8 in response. Recovery, it moves at glacier speed.
9 People get frustrated with that.

10 Ivan took 10 years. And it wasn't near what Michael
11 was. It took 10 years to close Ivan out. And then
12 mitigation. And mitigation, that's where you have the
13 mitigation planning committee has come in. They've got
14 all mitigation, anything that has to do with mitigation.

15 If -- if you ask me what keeps me awake at night and
16 what -- back to answering your question or adding onto
17 that answer, I would like to shore up our recovery
18 program. Now we have a recovery plan; okay?

19 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: What all
20 does recovery entail, just in short?

21 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: In short, your IA -- I'm
22 sorry. I'm trying to not use letters. Your public
23 assistance and all the categories, A through G.

24 Most of the time we think of in A and B, which is
25 our debris removal and protective services. And, of
26 course, C, getting to road and bridges and those
27 categories of public assistance from FEMA.

28 Something -- something that's small -- I say small.

1 It's not small -- that damage assessment, to come in and
2 get a good, accurate damage assessment of what's going.

3 Now, if it's a Michael, damage assessment is easy.
4 We just got blown away. We're getting a declaration
5 before it ever gets here, most of the time. Depends on
6 who -- who -- you know, who the President is.

7 But on these smaller storms, that -- that's when it
8 gets tricky, whether it's the \$2 per capita thing or
9 whatever that is right now.

10 And, you know, you're not going to get C through G,
11 but you might get some A and B. You might get some
12 restoration for beaches. You may get culvert, you know,
13 fixed, that kind of stuff under public assistance. Maybe
14 the SB -- Small Business -- I started to say more
15 letters.

16 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: I think we
17 know what SBA stands for.

18 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: The thing I
19 want to make sure is -- in an EMA Director standpoint is
20 I want to make sure that, you know -- because we, as a
21 body, have to rely what an EMA Director is telling us is
22 happening. And then we have to make the decisions to
23 tell the public, hey, look, this is what you've got to
24 do.

25 And there's been times where I think we kind of
26 overreacted and shut things down when nothing came, but
27 I'm always it's-better-to-be-safe-than-sorry type of guy.

28 And all that other stuff you said, I mean, that's

1 good. Because that's -- that's picking up the pieces
2 afterward.

3 But during this thing, I think my number one thing
4 is stuff can always be replaced, but our citizens have
5 got to be taken care of. And, you know, we were -- we
6 were talking about maybe the shelter issues. And I know
7 you're shelter coordinator or whatever.

8 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: That's correct.

9 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: In a mass
10 situation like that, do we have the ability to place a
11 lot of people that may be displaced with a Category 5
12 coming in?

13 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: Pre- or post-storm?

14 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Well, I
15 would think pre, pre-storm to start with.

16 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: Okay. Pre-storm, we can --
17 we can --

18 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: I mean, do
19 you have with a relationship with volunteers and --

20 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: I do.

21 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: -- stuff
22 that may --

23 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: Yeah.

24 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: -- can think
25 outside the box and do different things.

26 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: Okay. The message -- Okay.
27 There's a -- there's a lot of facets to this. If it's a
28 Category 4, Category 5 storm, you would not -- you would

1 not get your volunteers to stay and open the shelter most
2 of the time. They're going to evacuate or say this
3 building is not wind rated at a Category 5, Category 4
4 storm.

5 Well, it starts at 3, actually. 1 and 2, yes, we
6 get them there. We can open up some shelters. Wind
7 ratings are not -- Usually we can make that happen.

8 When it comes to wind ratings, now you're talking
9 about FEMA 361 building codes. The coliseum is a FEMA
10 361. The safe rooms at our satellite offices, those
11 little -- You may not realize they're safe rooms. Those
12 little rooms off to the side there, that's separate,
13 those are 361 and a Level 2 shelter up in Bay Minette are
14 the only ones we have.

15 Now, the elementary school in -- Daphne's elementary
16 school and the Bay Minette Middle School, they were built
17 as hardened shelters, too. I have not been able to tell
18 somebody -- get somebody to say these are 361 rating.

19 So to answer your question, you look at percentages.

20 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Sometimes --
21 what I'm saying is there's sometimes like with Michael,
22 it was a 2, and then it became a 5 without any warning.

23 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: Right.

24 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: So that -- I
25 know we don't have the shelters wind rated, but there may
26 be a time we can't evacuate everybody, and we can only
27 stick them in places. And I just -- I guess there's a
28 plan for that if all the things fill up.

1 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: Is it. It's called our
2 shelters of -- See, our shelters are what we consider
3 shelters of last resort.

4 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Right.

5 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: That's exactly what you're
6 explaining, Commissioner, is that we've told you for the
7 last day and a half, two days to evacuate. We need to
8 you evacuate.

9 Worse case, we didn't tell you to evacuate, and it
10 went from a Category 1 to Category 3. You remember what
11 Dennis did?

12 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Yes.

13 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
14 Uh-huh. (Indicates affirmatively.)

15 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: You wake up, and somebody
16 is knocking -- I was at EMA. I went sleep. Two hours
17 later, they're waking me up saying it's a Cat 5. I was
18 like, wait a minute. It was a Cat like 1 or 2 when I
19 went to sleep two hours ago.

20 That type of situation, that's when we have shelters
21 of last resort. And for that, we can shelter somewhere
22 in the neighborhood of 8,000 people in that. Okay. We
23 could push it to 10, but they're going to have to really
24 love each other. Because you're looking at it
25 square-foot-wise.

26 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Right.

27 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: Legally -- I probably
28 shouldn't use the word "legally." Realistically, 10 --

1 10 square foot a person is a short-term, more of a
2 tornado shelter. You go more to 20 square foot a person
3 if they're staying over 12 hours.

4 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Right.

5 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: Okay. So when you do that,
6 you know, you just halved your capacity. The Erma
7 situation, we were a 40-square-foot a person. That's
8 long -- that's what we got into, is long-term sheltering.

9 So it's all in how it's configured. I'm not trying
10 to dance around. I'm just saying --

11 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Oh, I
12 understand.

13 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: -- if it's this, we're
14 going to have to do this. But if it's this, then we can
15 do this. But that shelter of last resort, we -- Kind of
16 off the heels of Dennis, it was actually in this room, I
17 proposed -- And it's -- it's now one of our memorandums
18 that we have with the school system to use their
19 facilities, not just this facility, this facility.

20 It's a facilities agreement, the school system's
21 facilities, in the event of a disaster, not a hurricane,
22 I just put disaster.

23 Because we thought we may have to be doing something
24 like that with Deepwater Horizon, when all that smell
25 started coming on the island. We thought we might have
26 to evacuate the island. We didn't know what -- you know,
27 we weren't sure what to do. We was trying to get
28 answers.

1 So I was like, we've only got this many. I said, we
2 need all facilities. So I went back and I rewrote that
3 to include all facilities.

4 Or to your -- to your -- if it's a Cat 5, and it
5 blows the Fairhope High School to where we can't use it,
6 but Daphne High School, even though it isn't on our list,
7 it is usable. And then we're just going to shift to
8 Daphne High School. Because now the way that is
9 rewritten --

10 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Right.

11 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: -- we can do that. So the
12 message is to evacuate. But in case they don't, we do
13 have shelters of last resort that we can -- we can
14 shelter three to four percent of our population, okay,
15 our 215,000 population --

16 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Right.

17 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: -- not our 4th of July
18 weekend population.

19 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Right.

20 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Yeah. Good
21 point.

22 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
23 Scott.

24 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: Yes, sir.

25 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
26 What would be the most challenging thing about this job?

27 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: You know, I laid awake at
28 night two days hoping that question was going to be

1 asked. Because I know what my real answer is.

2 And I can be candid with it. This is public record,
3 isn't it? I'm just going to -- probably my concern --
4 not concern -- to answer your question, you all four will
5 be my boss. So I have four bosses.

6 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: That's your
7 biggest fear?

8 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: Possibly telling me four
9 different things. You know, if I get all one thing,
10 we're going down the road. We're getting it done.

11 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Right.

12 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: I'll work to the best of my
13 ability to get it done. I -- so that's probably --
14 that's probably --

15 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Are you
16 saying your biggest challenge is to try to please four
17 different people?

18 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: I've never had four bosses.

19 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Well,
20 remember a Commissioner can't do anything. It takes four
21 of us to make something happen, or at least three out of
22 four.

23 So, I mean, I wouldn't let that -- I wouldn't that
24 scare you, having to please four different people. I
25 mean, whoever -- whoever comes in there is going to do a
26 good job.

27 And I think we're trusting whoever in any of
28 positions to -- Because we don't know -- I mean, I have

1 no idea how to be an EMA Director.

2 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: And it's not just -- you
3 know, I'm talking the next election if some things change
4 again.

5 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: So your
6 biggest challenge is not knowing if you're going to have
7 a job in four years or not, if you got the job? I mean,
8 is it the -- is it the contract thing that's hanging over
9 your head?

10 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Or is it
11 your current work situation? Is it anything to do with
12 that, or is it strictly the fact that it's a contract
13 position?

14 I mean, like it's no secret there's two people from
15 your own department that are applying for the same
16 position. Would that be an issue or -- or not?

17 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: I don't have an issue with
18 that.

19 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay. So,
20 really, do you have a -- you really are apprehensive
21 about the -- the structure of this position being
22 contract position?

23 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: (Indicates affirmatively.)

24 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay.

25 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: Yeah, I am. It's not --

26 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Oh, I
27 understand.

28 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: -- it's not going to keep

1 me from doing the job and doing it to the best of
2 ability. And I will absolutely -- And one thing I have
3 learned being in front of the camera, don't promise
4 results. Promise effort.

5 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
6 Well, the -- the reason I asked that, you know, you're
7 not only -- you're dealing with -- you're not only
8 dealing with us, but you're dealing with every other
9 elected official in this county. You're the one that --
10 you're actually the decisionmaker during an emergency.

11 You've read -- you've read the law. You know, your
12 EMA Director is in charge when there is a disaster. And,
13 you know, it's -- it's a challenge, you know -- you know,
14 trying to bring together all these folks and get them to
15 understand why Scott is telling me this.

16 And, you know, it's -- and that is very important,
17 you know, to me. Because it is -- it is a challenge, you
18 know. You know, I mean, you know -- you know, you're --
19 you're dealing with all these folks, you know.

20 And not only that, then you've got -- then you've
21 got the Governor. You've got -- I mean, you've got
22 everybody, you know, that's -- that's pulling at you,
23 EMA, FEMA, you know, all of the -- all of their folks,
24 you know. They're all, you know -- it's -- it's a
25 challenge, you know. And that's, you know --

26 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: I totally -- I totally
27 agree with that. That is a challenge. Because I have
28 dealt with these municipalities, worked with these

1 municipalities, not just the last nine years I've been at
2 EMA, but when you're doing their taxes, tax work, they
3 learn your name, too. Believe me, they do.

4 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
5 Well, the thing, too, you know --

6 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: And I've had the privilege
7 of working with them. And that hasn't been a big problem
8 for me.

9 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
10 You know, always in the -- in the past, you know,
11 we've -- some of the things that I've seen that, you
12 know, I just didn't kind of agree with was a lot of
13 municipalities will say, well, I'm doing this on my own.
14 You know, and they -- they sidestep the EMA.

15 The EMA, you know, is the -- is their line of
16 defense. You know, if they need something -- You know,
17 and we've had this before, you know, happen.

18 And they -- they -- instead of calling EMA and say,
19 hey, look, I need A, B, and C, they call strictly to
20 Montgomery and bothering them folks when we've got the
21 same thing, just trying to bypass.

22 And they don't understand the importance of what we
23 do here in the County. And, I mean, they're trying to be
24 their own -- you know, their own thing.

25 And, you know, they've got their own folks that's on
26 the ground and trying to tell us how to do it. And, you
27 know, it -- it's a challenge, you know, trying to get
28 people together.

1 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: I ran that race for years
2 now.

3 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Does the
4 law -- does the law, Chairman -- Mr. Chairman -- state
5 that our County EMA Director supercedes all the rest?

6 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
7 If I'm not mistaken, it is. I've read it, but --

8 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: If you're talking about the
9 Code of Alabama, you're talking about Title 31. This
10 isn't Title 44 from the Feds, but we're -- I'm talking
11 about Title -- Title 31.

12 Somewhere down there about Number 12, Chapter 12,
13 it's on down there, it starts talking EMA Director's
14 delegations. And I don't see where it -- Now, I'm not an
15 attorney. I didn't see where it was spelled out.

16 If you -- I never saw it. Now, I haven't read
17 everything word for word. But the Governor, under that,
18 can give -- can delegate the authority down to the local
19 government, situations, so forth, so on.

20 Then you all can delegate the authority to the EMA
21 Director to make those decisions on behalf -- not sign
22 contracts -- but on behalf of the Commission.

23 What kind of authority, being a municipality, being
24 a situation? I don't know -- I don't know the answer to
25 that question.

26 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
27 Well, I mean, you know, what I'm saying is that you're --
28 you're the first line of defense with it.

1 You know, you're -- you're in contact with
2 everybody. You have to inform us what to do. I mean,
3 you're basically, you know -- you know, the way I look at
4 it, you know, you're basically -- you're the one that's
5 going to, you know, lay it out, you know, like it is.
6 So, and that's --

7 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: And back to what my
8 answer --

9 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
10 Yep. Okay.

11 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: -- talking about what keeps
12 me up at night, or what -- the hardest part about this
13 job. You know, the fact is I may have to lay it out
14 there for you. And it may not be what everybody wants
15 hear, you know, whether it's the elected officials,
16 whether it's the citizens. But it's just the facts.

17 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
18 Yep.

19 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: And just like you all
20 alluded to, sometimes you think Hurricane Michael is
21 coming to us. And we tell you Hurricane Michael is
22 coming to us. And then Mother Nature says, no, I decided
23 not to. And here you are -- We evacuated for Elaine in
24 1985 twice.

25 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Oh, I
26 remember.

27 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: Twice.

28 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

1 Twice.

2 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: We evacuated the island
3 twice, you know. Remember it bounced back and forth.

4 So -- so, yes, I'm -- so when I say that, I wasn't
5 talking about you all. I'm just saying I may have to
6 present things.

7 We'll make decisions on those things. And when
8 you're talking about a hurricane, they don't always play
9 nice, and don't always follow the rule.

10 And then we would evacuate, done all this, get
11 everybody in a hoopla, and then nothing. There's barely
12 a breeze. Dennis was one of those, if y'all remember.

13 So -- so, yeah, that's what I meant by, you know,
14 what keeps me up at night or the hard part about this job
15 is having to tell you all this is what it is. And this
16 is everything I've got so far. We've got to make a
17 decision on this.

18 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Well, I'll
19 followup with a similar question. I don't know if I
20 actually said this. It's really a statement more than
21 anything.

22 I -- I take it as a compliment that you're willing
23 to apply for this job. Because I realize there has been
24 a lot of volatility in this position.

25 And the longevity of an EMA Director is similar to
26 the Administrator. And some -- so I take it as a
27 compliment that you would want to apply, knowing that we
28 are four. And but I am one of four. We each are one of

1 four.

2 And it takes us all working together. And I hope
3 you saw something, and that was reason you wanted to
4 apply. So --

5 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: Absolutely.

6 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: -- hopefully
7 that wasn't too scary for you.

8 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: No. That's why I applied.

9 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay.

10 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: If I was scared, you know,
11 then I wouldn't have applied. I trust you all. I look
12 forward to working with you. I really do. I have
13 enjoyed working with you this past ever how many months
14 it's been now, six months? No, it hasn't been that long.

15 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: No.

16 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: November the
17 14th.

18 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: November the 14th. That's
19 right.

20 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Four.

21 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: Four months. It's seems
22 like -- Yeah. Wow.

23 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: All right.
24 Okay.

25 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: Anything else? Did I say
26 anything -- I want -- I want to end with one closing
27 statement that I've lived by for -- for years now. And I
28 got this from Andy Andrews, actually. He's going to be

1 in town next weekend, too. And it's from his book.

2 I'll kind of paraphrase the chapter, but it's God
3 didn't give me the ability to make all the right
4 decisions, but He did give me the ability to make all my
5 decisions right.

6 And that's what I live by. You know, if I mess up,
7 I'm going to come to you and say, look, I did -- I did it
8 wrong. I wasn't right. So let me make that right. So
9 that's -- that's something I live by.

10 Relationships, you'll hear it. It's not cliché. It
11 sounds cliché. EMA is about building relationships. And
12 that's what I've worked for my tenure here at the Baldwin
13 County Commission.

14 But you cannot build relationships without building
15 trust. And I believe more than that, I've built trust
16 with a lot of these.

17 There are seven municipalities that touch the water,
18 if y'all didn't know that. I thought there was six. In
19 2010, I found there was seven. And I had to back up and
20 make my decision right and make sure I included everyone.

21 Because my job during Deepwater was to maintain a
22 relationship with those seven mayors to make sure they
23 got what they needed, that their property touched the
24 water.

25 And it took a little bit, but we got there. And
26 that's what I will do on this job. It may take some
27 work. I'm not scared of the work. All right. It may
28 take some doing.

1 You know how it is. But by the time you get a good
2 relationship, they've moved on to something else. And
3 you've got to start over again.

4 So that's just part of it. It's kind of fun. So
5 I'm an extravert. I like building those friendships and
6 relationships and the trust with people.

7 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: All right.

8 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: Any more? I hope I didn't
9 ramble too much.

10 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
11 No, no.

12 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: You did good.

13 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
14 Thank you so very much, Scott. And we --

15 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Thanks,
16 Scott.

17 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP)
18 GRUBER: -- appreciate you --

19 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Thank you,
20 Scott.

21 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP)
22 GRUBER: -- talking your time --

23 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Thank you so
24 much.

25 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP)

26 GRUBER: -- and your willingness to come here and apply.

27 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: All right.

28 MR. SCOTT WALLACE: I appreciate it. And I

1 look -- I do. I forward to working with you all so much.
2 I have enjoyed it so far.

3 Let me get all my stuff. Jessie wasn't flooding
4 when he came out. So I felt pretty good after that.

5 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: We had this
6 Christy Ivey pull out, too.

7 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Oh, she did?

8 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Yep.

9 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
10 Y'all want to -- Our next one is at 10:45.

11 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Is he here?

12 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
13 Is he here?

14 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: I don't know.

15 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: I've got to
16 take a --

17 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
18 I was going to say, let's take a -- let's take a -- a
19 small break, until we -- until we -- and we can reconvene
20 in a few minutes.

21
22 (A recess was taken at 10:18 a.m.)

23 (The Baldwin County Commission Special Meeting resumed at
24 10:36 a.m.)

25
26 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
27 All right. We're back. We're back in session. And our
28 next candidate will be coming in.

1 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Is this the last
2 one?

3 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
4 Yes. This is the last one for the EMA. The other one --
5 Mr. Benjie Abbott has pulled his application for --

6 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Was that the
7 person we were going to do it electronically?

8 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Yes.

9 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
10 Yes.

11

12 **6-C - INTERVIEW OF MR. ZACHARY HOOD FOR THE POSITION OF EMERGENCY**

13 **MANAGEMENT AGENCY (EMA) DIRECTOR**

14 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Good morning.

15 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
16 Good morning.

17 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: It's a good day to be here.
18 Good to meet you.

19 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Good to meet
20 you.

21 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Again,
22 Billie Jo Underwood.

23 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Good to meet you. How are
24 you?

25 MS. KIM CREECH: And I'm Kim Creech.

26 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Good to meet you. Good to
27 meet you.

28 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: Have a seat.

1 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: All right. Wherever you
2 would like.

3 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: This is Zachary Hood for EMA
4 Director.

5 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Yes. Absolutely.

6 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: We made sure
7 these -- if you throw one at us or we throw one at you,
8 it's tethered, so it won't go very far.

9 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Well, if that happens, it's
10 an accident. I promise you.

11 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Just lean back,
12 and it'll be okay.

13 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
14 All right. Zach, let's get started. Tell us a little
15 bit about yourself, if you don't mind.

16 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: No. You'll see I have on my
17 resume Zachary. Zach goes good. And a lot of children
18 in the community I live in, they just call me Mr. Z or
19 Coach Z. It depends on what I'm doing.

20 So I'm originally from Birmingham, grew up in
21 Fultondale. Went to Jacksonville State. Ended up
22 staying in Jacksonville.

23 It was not planned to be that way, but I did,
24 because I ended up, during my educational path, tying up
25 with local entities, governments, and -- and it was a
26 blessing.

27 But ended up working for the Center for Domestic
28 Preparedness, which is one of two charter training

1 facilities for FEMA. And -- and so I stayed. I built a
2 home in Jacksonville and -- and just stayed right there.
3 Made it -- made it the place I -- I call home today.

4 And disaster preparedness, I got involved in this.
5 You know, you kind of look at it and wonder how in the
6 world does someone get involved in this line of work.

7 And, honestly, you know, as a young child, I can
8 remember being scared of storms. I was -- I was -- I was
9 terrified of storms. And -- and so through -- though my
10 life, you know -- I remember my father and other people
11 that I looked up to telling me, hey, if you -- if you
12 have a fear, once you face the fear, then you won't be
13 scared it, you know.

14 And so that kind of stuck with me. And that's how I
15 ended up in disaster preparedness. And -- and I feel
16 that I can relate to people that are nervous or anxious
17 over severe whether, disasters, acts of terrorism.
18 And -- and so that's the line of work I'm in.

19 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Tell us a
20 little bit about -- You said you have a family?

21 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Absolutely. Yeah. I have
22 three boys.

23 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Okay.

24 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Two -- two were planned, one
25 was not. So I have three boys. And -- and they range
26 from ages five, and middle guy is two, and the youngest
27 guy of seven months old.

28 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Oh, brand-new.

1 All right.

2 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Yeah. He's brand-new.
3 Maverick is the oldest, and Jagger is the middle, and
4 Hucksill is little. And so the middle bosses them both
5 around. And they just kind of follow him. And that's --
6 that's how we are.

7 My -- my wife is a school teacher in Calhoun County
8 schools. You kind of -- you probably ask yourself, well,
9 how in the world did you apply for a job and want to be
10 in Baldwin County?

11 Well, I'll tell you we're a family of -- of
12 Christians. And we believe that things happen for a
13 reason. I wasn't -- if you would have asked me ten years
14 ago, what do you want to do with your career? Where do
15 you want to be? It's to work in a coastal community.

16 But the specific thing that attracted my wife and I
17 to Baldwin County is it's in the State of Alabama. And
18 she has 11 years vested in the school system.

19 So not having to cross the state line changes
20 everything. In fact, I wasn't even looking for a
21 position. And during the government furlough, that
22 affected the Department of Homeland Security, which is
23 where our funding is.

24 And so I had to update my -- my credentials, my
25 experience, because I instruct incident command and
26 emergency management. So I have a lot of different
27 counterparts throughout the nation that are constantly
28 looking -- looking to me for advice and where to go.

1 And so I was updating all of my information. And --
2 and in that, I said, well, I wonder what's going on in
3 Baldwin County.

4 And so, low and behold, I pull up the Baldwin County
5 website, and there was the posting for the job. And --
6 and so my wife and I always agreed if there was an
7 opening, this is one that we felt we had to go for.

8 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: So you
9 wouldn't have a problem relocating? You're the first
10 applicant that was not already here.

11 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Yeah. No. In fact, it
12 would be -- for us, it would be seamless. We have a
13 support system here.

14 We have really good friends, individuals that I've
15 worked with that I've developed relationships with. And
16 that -- that -- that -- we don't really have that
17 anywhere else other than Baldwin County.

18 So we -- we have a support system. We have
19 infrastructure here for us. And, in fact, something to
20 celebrate, Disney's Make a Wish, two of our close
21 friends -- I don't know if you know their story, but
22 Disney's Make a Wish came through for them yesterday.

23 I saw it on the news. I had no idea, and neither
24 did -- did they. But it was on the news that the family
25 of the child -- It was a horrible accident. Now they
26 have the child. And Disney offered them an opportunity
27 to go Orlando.

28 So, anyway, that -- that -- that is big for them,

1 you know. So they're close to us. They live in Foley.
2 And just they needed some sort of normalcy. So maybe
3 they'll get that.

4 They've been back and forth between Birmingham. But
5 our -- our -- we have a strong support system and
6 infrastructure here for us.

7 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Well, this
8 is how we did the other interviews. And I'm going to ask
9 five different behavior-based questions.

10 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Okay.

11 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay. And
12 the first question that I have is what experience do you
13 have in making oral presentations? And how would you
14 rate your effectiveness in this area?

15 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: So -- so the answer to that
16 is in oral presentation, I give myself a 10 out of 10 on
17 that now.

18 It was probably the most uncomfortable thing to
19 learn in this career field. Teaching first responders,
20 emergency managers from diverse areas, even the -- the
21 tribal nations we have in US territories, that is an
22 uncomfortable feeling when you are talking, you know,
23 government policy, directives. And some of their beliefs
24 and personal opinions obviously do not match up with
25 that.

26 So I had to become good at articulating what is
27 needed in their communities to sustain their operation.
28 And -- and -- and so I had to become a good presenter.

1 Without that, I -- I -- I could never connect with them.

2 And it was a waste of government money to have them
3 come and sit in a classroom of that nature not leave
4 understanding what FEMA needs from them and -- and how
5 they can be -- be assisted.

6 So as far as the -- the presentation, a 10 out of
7 10. And I know the second part of that question was
8 something.

9 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Your
10 effectiveness.

11 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Oh, the effectiveness? In
12 the field of emergency preparedness is -- is I would say
13 90-something percent, somewhere in there. I always tell
14 everyone I speak to, please reach out to me if you have
15 anything. I'm a resource. And -- and there are very few
16 who do not. I'll put it like that. There are very few
17 that -- that do not.

18 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: So you
19 are -- where you work now, do you work with people
20 nationwide that come to you, or do you go to them?

21 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Both.

22 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Both.

23 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: It's very interesting.
24 FEMA, the Center for Domestic Preparedness -- And I don't
25 know if you're familiar with it.

26 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Maybe you
27 can help us out with it.

28 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Yes.

1 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Tell us what
2 that is.

3 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Yeah. That would
4 be good.

5 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: So the -- the Center for
6 Domestic Preparedness is a weapons of mass destruction or
7 a CBRNE, so chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear,
8 explosive training facility.

9 It's the only facility that you can go to in the
10 nation and receive live agent in chemical and biological
11 training.

12 And -- and so with that what happens is if you're a
13 local, state, and even some Federal agencies, but
14 definitely -- so Baldwin County, let's talk Baldwin
15 County and all of the cities within this area, volunteer,
16 non-volunteer, all of them, law enforcement, fire
17 service, public works.

18 They can come on FEMA's dime to Anniston or -- or an
19 instructional can come here and host and the deliver and
20 complete training from start to finish without costing
21 anything to -- to you.

22 Obviously, the salary to employee is -- is all that
23 is owed. But travel expense is reimbursed. Lodging in
24 Anniston is reimbursed.

25 So when they come in, there is a menu of courses
26 that they -- that you can take, ranging from civil
27 unrest, protest. I know we're familiar with the Ferguson
28 incident. And there's been many more since. So we touch

1 on that.

2 We talk about the chemical side, so chemical
3 incident. And the way we tie in natural disaster is
4 making two disasters kind of link together, because we
5 find that's kind of how disasters work now, you know.

6 And so to keep the funding, we have to bring the
7 natural disaster in. But mostly it's a man-made disaster
8 discussion.

9 So what we do is deliver -- we -- my contract --
10 Leidos, which is based out of Virginia, we've held the
11 contract since the conception of the CDP in the late
12 '90s, which is when historically Fort McClellan, Alabama
13 shut down during the Clinton Administration.

14 So the Federal buildings were basic turnkey
15 operations to the Department of Homeland -- well, the
16 Department of Defendant first, and then it was the
17 Department of Homeland Security.

18 So now if you look at pictures of our campus, we
19 have a main training facility, which is where our law
20 enforcement and fire service personnel are trained every
21 week, except for the weeks that there are holidays and --
22 or -- or like maybe a natural, you know, disaster has
23 maybe occurred. Sometimes we'll shut down for that.

24 But we have the Noble training facility. So the
25 Noble training facility is the health side of emergency
26 preparedness.

27 And -- and recently they were excluded from the
28 planning process because they had their own language.

1 They -- they -- they really didn't operate like someone
2 in the fire service did. And there were some issues.

3 So one thing FEMA identified is, hey, we need to --
4 we need to bring common terminology across the board.
5 And so that was -- that's the way they do this.

6 So if you came in to visit, you would see courses
7 going on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, classroom based
8 lecture, PowerPoint.

9 And then Thursday you will start seeing tabletop
10 exercise where all the stakeholders come together from
11 various communities, or the same. They can arrange for
12 that. But they -- they come together and talk about
13 disaster.

14 We write the scenario. We write the training
15 program. And they respond as they would if -- if -- if
16 they were here.

17 And then the hospital, same thing. We build an
18 environment that is similar to Thomas Hospital. And they
19 stand up the hospital with high-fidelity and low-fidelity
20 mannequins and -- and have to respond as if there's an
21 event. So that's Thursday and Friday.

22 So it's -- it's -- it's not only classroom, it's
23 hands-on training. All meals are paid for, all snacks
24 are paid for, everything. They -- all they have -- we
25 want the environment to be comfortable so -- so that we
26 can teach.

27 And that's -- that's what the mission of the CDP is.
28 There's only two -- two facilities chartered by FEMA, and

1 CDP -- Outside of the Emergency Management Institute up
2 in the Northeast area of the United States, you have EMI,
3 and you have CDP. And CDP is the only one capable of
4 doing this because of our location.

5 So that's sort of some background. But -- but
6 you'll come in and train and then -- and then -- for like
7 fire service, for practical experience and exercise, they
8 go to our chemical ordinance facility and dress up in
9 personal protective gear and walk into a contaminated
10 chamber and have to perform.

11 And -- and actually there was a research article
12 that was just released on that. Because we would say it
13 increased the confidence and what was confidence.

14 And we went detailed in that and proved that it does
15 help your ground-level first responders. It's at no cost
16 to the government here.

17 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: It's
18 interesting.

19 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: It is very interesting.

20 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: You're the single
21 site for this sort of training in the entire country?

22 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Okay. So we're part of a
23 consortium.

24 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Okay.

25 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: The National Disaster
26 Preparedness Consortium. We -- we specialize in weapons
27 of mass destruction and CBRNE, natural disaster type of
28 events.

1 You have Texas A&M. They do more of your like
2 school-related planning for incidents such as active
3 shooter or, you know, evacuation, things like that.

4 Then you have New Mexico Tech. That's your --
5 that's your bomb technician site that -- that -- that
6 they actually teach about explosive ordinance and then
7 detonate different ordinances.

8 And then we have a partner over in Hawaii. And they
9 do more like the geographical, GIS-related type training.
10 But any of those consortium members are under the FEMA
11 umbrella. And it's the same concept. Absolutely.

12 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: It's
13 interesting we have something that's this close to us.

14 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: That's right.

15 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Yes. It's within -- within
16 driving distance. Yeah. And I always bring that up.
17 You know, I see first responders from all over the
18 country. And maybe five times out of a calendar year
19 there's someone from Alabama.

20 It's usually state patrol, maybe a County Emergency
21 Manager, maybe. But that's about it. That's about it.

22 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: That's
23 information that --

24 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Yes, sir.

25 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: -- we're always
26 learning.

27 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Absolutely.

28 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay. The

1 next question is: It can be difficult to reach out to
2 other people that you don't know in a new situation. Can
3 you give me an example of how you have coped with such a
4 situation in the recent past?

5 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Absolutely. You know, I
6 like to operate under the idea that a disaster is not the
7 first time to be exchanging business cards.

8 So I don't have many encounters like that except on
9 a national level. So locally speaking, most disasters,
10 there's someone that you have trained with, someone you
11 know, someone you have worked with. So that's limited
12 for me.

13 But on a national scale, absolutely. Puerto Rico,
14 we all know Hurricane Maria, I went into Puerto Rico with
15 the Department of Health and Human Services under
16 Emergency Support Function 8, which is public health.
17 And I was the Support Branch Director.

18 And -- and so, obviously, we haven't trained with
19 anyone in -- in Puerto Rico. There was a language
20 barrier. I'm not a fluid Spanish speaking individual.
21 So I had to identify someone that could help me there.

22 I was able to -- to get that. And then through a
23 local that -- that was determined to help in some form,
24 we were able to get around to different parts of the
25 island and speak to mayors in the various communities.

26 One that stands out is Fajardo, which is, if you're
27 looking at a map, the eastern side of Puerto Rico.

28 And -- and so, you know, basically it was a conversation

1 like we're having. What can we do? What's going on?
2 Where are we at?

3 And the number one need they had was the mayor
4 needed insulin. He was diabetic and needed insulin.
5 It's a remarkable story. But from that mayor, he had
6 contacts around Puerto Rico.

7 So we were able to start building a -- a list of
8 contacts and, you know, be active and proactive in
9 reaching out to -- to the individual players.

10 And same situation in Guam. We had the -- the
11 largest recorded typhoon in the Pacific this year.
12 And -- and I was actually there just over a month,
13 Support Branch Director, again.

14 And the challenge was is the typhoon devastated
15 Saipan, which was, you know, just over 140, 150 miles
16 away from Guam. So there was daily transport by military
17 in and out of Guam.

18 And so just about every day brought someone new.
19 And -- and so how we -- how we -- the success I had in
20 meeting someone new during a disaster and functioning
21 is -- is get to know a little bit about the individual,
22 what the role is, what contacts, what partners they have
23 within that area, and identifying that. And then you're
24 generally successful from -- from there forward.

25 So it's -- it's sort of, you know, the concept is
26 you start on the ground, you know, work with individuals
27 on the ground. See what their needs are. See what
28 contacts they have, and then build your way up.

1 And as you get to your leadership, identifying who's
2 the leadership and the decision makers and stakeholders
3 are. And so once you can do that --

4 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Got it made.

5 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: -- you're good, yeah.

6 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Tell me
7 about a time when work tensions ran high. And describe
8 the situation, the people involved, and what happened,
9 and what you did to help manage that situation. And I'll
10 repeat that if you need me to.

11 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: No. No. You know, I think
12 it's natural. It's human behavior for that just exact
13 scenario, especially during disaster.

14 So, you know, most recent being the 19th, the
15 March 19th tornado that came through Jacksonville. It
16 damaged the university. Fortunately there were many on
17 spring break. The college was on spring break. The
18 local schools were on spring break.

19 So that -- we anticipated severe weather, but it was
20 kind of one of those things where, you know, you go
21 through this, what, five or six times before actually
22 something occurs. So now we had this incident.

23 So immediately after was -- was chaos. And -- and
24 so, you know, you have individuals that are worried about
25 families. They can't contact their families. But
26 they're staffing the emergency operations centers.

27 And so that's where a lot of the tension comes from,
28 is responders not knowing how their own families are,

1 because they're assisting others.

2 So it's not necessarily between, you know, staff.
3 It's more of in our community, we're impacted, somehow
4 our families are impacted. And recognizing that in an
5 emergency management role is -- is -- you find many
6 different detailed articles on that.

7 But managing that can be difficult. So preparedness
8 starts out at a level of the responder. And -- and if
9 you can bring this in, you know, an annual or quarterly
10 training to -- to -- to make sure the bases are covered
11 as far as when it comes to your personal life and
12 responding to disaster, you'll find that a lot of the --
13 the tension is -- is -- is -- is minimal.

14 Now, another scenario you do have that is -- is --
15 and it can be challenging, is having -- responding to
16 like, you know, a disaster and not being able to make a
17 decision because of -- whether it's stakeholders that are
18 not able to determine what needs to occur. We don't
19 really know enough information, whatever the case may be.

20 Sometimes that is more damaging than making a
21 decision, whether it was wrong or right. And so that's
22 another example that -- that's very difficult and
23 challenging.

24 And, again, the way to adapt to that and overcome
25 that type of incident is training -- is training
26 together, you know, all of your stakeholders, your
27 response leadership, your responders. You have to
28 exercise in training to kind of know where each other's

1 thoughts are during a disaster.

2 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: All right.
3 That's good. This is kind -- you kind of touched on some
4 of this. But in fairness to the other --

5 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: I apologize.

6 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: --
7 interviewers -- No, no, no. It's fine. I just --

8 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Okay.

9 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: -- want to
10 be fair. I ask --

11 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: I understand.

12 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: -- the exact
13 same question --

14 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Understood.

15 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: -- of all --

16 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Understood.

17 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: --
18 applicants. But --

19 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Understood.

20 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: -- give me
21 an example of a situation that required multiple tasks to
22 be accomplished at the same time and how did you handle
23 the situation, and what was the results?

24 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Okay. So the -- the -- the
25 good news to this -- it does sound overwhelming. And I'm
26 going to talk to disaster specifically, regardless of
27 type; natural, manmade, acts of terrorism, whatever the
28 case may be.

1 There are tools to assist with multitasking, one of
2 which is the Incident Action Plan and the use -- the
3 proper use of an IAP, is what we call it.

4 And so immediately following any type of incident or
5 even a planned event -- I know there's many large-scale
6 events in this area -- a planned event or a non-planned
7 event, you have to have an Incident Action Plan and --
8 and know your resources.

9 And -- and so the way to get that, again, is through
10 training and discussion and tabletop exercise. I think
11 that the most challenging part to accomplishing multiple
12 tasks is communication.

13 And so that's something that obviously has to be
14 identified early and often, is -- is communication and
15 methods of communication, whether it be phone, e-mail,
16 radio, whatever that the case may be.

17 But that is the key to being able to respond and --
18 and successfully closing your task out as the event
19 expands or contracts in some cases as well.

20 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: All right.
21 This is my final question in these categories. It's very
22 important to build good relationships at work. Please
23 tell me about a time when you were able to build a
24 successful relationship with a difficult person. We
25 don't know any of the people you know.

26 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: I'll talk about a most
27 recent event, and just leave it at this. All right. So
28 a -- And this is by far the most difficult.

1 Every year, annually, we facilitate an emergency
2 training week for our tribal nations. So, ideally, you
3 meet with leadership, that their -- you know, what is
4 collectively sort of -- if you will, their -- their
5 Commissioners and talk with them about desires, what
6 their interests are.

7 And -- and so the seven or eight that I have dealt
8 with over -- over the course of the year were very laid
9 back, with the exception of one. And -- and you -- you
10 can identify the individual very quickly, you know, body
11 language and things like that.

12 And so for me that -- that lets me know that -- that
13 that is a relationship that I need to -- to further
14 pursue, because our natural behavior is, you know, what's
15 going on with that person? What's going on? You know,
16 why would they not want to be here doing this?

17 It's easy to get into that kind of complacency. You
18 know, the other six are fine. You know, the one --
19 that's really -- the one individual is just as important
20 as the other six.

21 So -- so what I did, I sought opportunity during
22 breaks to get to know the individual on a personal level.
23 And so, with that, I found out culturally that in tribal
24 communities, if you prepare for a disaster, then to them
25 it's like it's going to happen.

26 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Predicting
27 it.

28 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Cause and effect.

1 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: You're
2 predicting it.

3 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: You're -- you're -- yes.
4 And so that was the -- that was the problem. But the
5 gentleman felt uncomfortable sharing that in an open
6 forum.

7 And -- and the reason I tell this story, it's
8 unfortunate, but it's -- it's what we see happen every
9 single week when we have different cohorts in. And --
10 and, you know, you identify one or two, whether it's --
11 another incident would be Public Health that doesn't
12 believe in what Emergency Management does, or Emergency
13 Management that doesn't understand Public Health, how to
14 two can play together to -- to -- to accomplish one goal.

15 And so that's very challenging and difficult. And
16 obviously you have -- you know, you have the political
17 side of things, too, that you have to be cognisant of.

18 But -- but I -- but I -- I -- I seek opportunity to
19 build relationships with someone that normally maybe
20 would be uncomfortable for anyone or feel uncomfortable
21 to talk with. I'm okay doing that.

22 And so I have learned, you know, that that's the
23 most effective way. And it usually creates a desirable
24 outcome, because now you understand one another.

25 And -- and so understanding that sensitivity, we
26 were able to, you know, change the curriculum and -- and
27 to something that the individual bought into. And so we
28 all had a win-win. You know, I'm big -- big on win-win.

1 And so that's -- that's how we did it. But it
2 was -- it was very recent. I'll put it that way. It was
3 very recent, probably the last 30 days.

4 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Well, thank
5 you. Thank you very much.

6 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Very good. And
7 you may have touched on some of these things that -- but
8 what I'm interested in is something that you were a part
9 of and that you're proud that you got accomplished or
10 started. It may not be complete yet.

11 But tell me about something that you've been
12 involved in, either in your current job or any of your
13 previous experiences that makes you proud inside.

14 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: What comes to mind here
15 is -- is -- it's not even disaster related. I'm --
16 I'm -- Anyone that knows me will tell you I'm big on
17 embedding myself in the community that I live in. And I
18 do that.

19 One thing I like to do out of my normal
20 responsibilities is -- is serve. And currently I am a
21 volunteer high school baseball coach for one of the most
22 challenging high schools in my county to even go teach
23 at.

24 And so, you know, a lot of questions are why are you
25 doing -- you know the -- the children are difficult to
26 deal with and so on and so forth.

27 And the way I got involved with this is through
28 umpiring, officiating high school sports. So I umpire

1 and officiate baseball and football.

2 And so on the baseball side, this is -- this is
3 where I saw this team, you know. And I would see them
4 play. And they were scrappy.

5 And they always had something to say back to the
6 official, you know -- you know, everything from
7 inappropriate language to, you know, things that you just
8 don't -- you just don't do, you know.

9 And -- and so I embedded myself into the team.
10 And -- and, obviously, you know, the challenge was there
11 was a lot of, you know, what does this person have
12 invested in me?

13 There's no one that really invests in them. There's
14 not. Their families don't invest in them. Their, you
15 know -- their -- the community invests in them, and
16 that's about it.

17 So in that, that's been my work in progress. But I
18 will give you a success story on that, is -- is we played
19 one of the -- probably the best teams in our area the day
20 before yesterday. And we beat them by one point.

21 And so that is a step. Now, I can't tell you what
22 the next game will look like. I can't tell you that I
23 won't have a player that's ejected or something of that
24 nature. But I can tell you that we're taking a step in
25 the right -- right direction.

26 And so I'm very proud -- I'm proud of the
27 opportunity to serve and give to the community. That --
28 that's what I'm really proud about.

1 And so it's not -- totally not disaster related,
2 but -- but I -- I need that to get my mind off of some
3 the stuff that I'm constantly discussing.

4 I mean, disaster work is -- it's -- it's not fun at
5 times or most of the time. And so that's -- that's --
6 that's my outlet is serving, yeah.

7 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: All right. What
8 about what did you see as future projects that could
9 occur, if named to this position, that would benefit the
10 citizens of Baldwin County, short term and long term?

11 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: You know, and I appreciate
12 your question. Recently -- And I say recently. 2016,
13 there was a research study. And the study was
14 interesting to the point where FEMA got involved.

15 And so what we identified in emergency preparedness
16 was the fact was everything was from the top down, and it
17 wasn't working. It wasn't working.

18 And so now the idea and the concept is creating a
19 culture of preparedness. And that is exactly what I
20 would do. You have to understand who lives here and how
21 psychologically they react to disaster.

22 And that directly benefits them. That creates
23 buy-in and empowers them to mitigate homes, their --
24 their -- be prepared in their personal lives, all the way
25 to the responder level that I -- that I touched on.

26 So the number one project -- And it would benefit
27 the -- the grants side of the house, too -- is get
28 compliant with the most recent release of the NIMS.

1 So the National Incident Management System is sort
2 of the -- it's our guiding principal in disaster work.
3 And NIMS 2017 has updated a lot of their response
4 mechanisms because of -- because of not only the study,
5 but because of the issues that we're seeing in disaster
6 around the country.

7 And -- and so that's -- that, to me, would be
8 looking at what you have in place is the number one
9 priority project for Baldwin County, Alabama, is -- is
10 updating our infrastructure to reflect the NIMS 2017
11 release. Absolutely.

12 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: And you may have
13 addressed it in your comments right then, but are there
14 any new approaches that you see on the horizon?

15 I grew up when the only thing in the cloud was rain.
16 And there's a lot in the Cloud now. So do you see things
17 coming down the road? Or what do you see coming down the
18 road that will enable us to do things better and more
19 efficient?

20 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: So -- so to get to that, we
21 have to start somewhere. And, again, NIMS is going to
22 be -- the -- the National Incident Management System is
23 going to be the way to start down that path.

24 The thing to remember here -- And I tell everyone
25 this -- is that this is a sprint -- not a sprint, it's a
26 marathon. We have to look at the -- the duration and
27 longevity. We can't try to throw everything out that's
28 not ready that's not completed.

1 You know, it takes time for people to adapt to
2 change. And you know how that can be. So, with that, is
3 we have to remember it's a marathon. So we have to be in
4 it for the long haul. But NIMS, the updated NIMS is --
5 is bringing many different changes or forecasts as to
6 what you're asking.

7 One, for instance, to be specific for you, is the
8 disaster credentialing process. So what has -- what --
9 what happened is we were finding that Emergency Operation
10 Centers were staffing the centers with individuals
11 that -- and this is nationwide, not specific to here or
12 anything like that. This is just a national
13 discussion -- with individuals that were not prepared to
14 be in that position.

15 So if we look at your -- your -- your branches of
16 Emergency Operation Centers, outside of your Director,
17 you have an Incident Commander. You'll have a Operations
18 Section Chief, a Planning Section Chief, Finance
19 Administration, and on and on.

20 So we have individuals, whether they were volunteer
21 or a full-time staff member at a local fire department,
22 or police department, whatever the case may be. They
23 didn't have the appropriate training.

24 So when the EOC would activate, they -- they were
25 showing up to the EOC with, you know, as much knowledge
26 as we all have sitting -- sitting right here today. And
27 they would just do what was best at the time.

28 And -- and so we identified that this was an issue.

1 So what FEMA has done, because of the burden to local
2 government, state and local government, was, okay, so
3 what are the requirements for this individual? And then
4 how do fund -- how do we fund that? How do we come up
5 with the money for someone to technically write all these
6 job descriptions?

7 So FEMA did that. And -- and it's accessible to you
8 today. It's called resource typing. But there's
9 requirements now for each of the positions, the seat
10 holders inside the Emergency Operations Center that have
11 to be met.

12 And -- and so when I talk about compliant, NIMS
13 compliant with 2017 policy and guidance, that's exactly
14 what I'm -- I'm talking about, is -- is getting the
15 Emergency Operations staffing the right size, the right
16 people, with the right knowledge and tools.

17 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Okay. Very good.
18 Thank you.

19 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: You're welcome.

20 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: I've just --
21 I've got a couple questions. I'm -- I'm interested on
22 you named two disasters that you've been a part of,
23 Hurricane Maria, and the incident -- typhoon in Guam, and
24 then the small tornado that came through your hometown.
25 What else other kinds of disasters have you been
26 affiliated with?

27 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Okay. So another large
28 disaster or just a local disaster, we'll talk in terms of

1 local, which is what applies here, is --

2 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Local or
3 all.

4 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Okay. Okay.

5 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: I mean, it
6 could be -- it could be another part of the globe. I'm
7 just interested in all the stuff you've been a part of.

8 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Okay. You can see where I
9 am an Awareness and Certified Hazmat Technician.

10 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Right.

11 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: And so in April 27th of
12 2011, a tornado came across the Coosa River, went to a
13 very rural area, much like areas in Baldwin County.

14 A farmer that had excessive amounts of fertilizer,
15 the fertilizer was compromised and released into the
16 river. And so that created immediate threats and issues.

17 And so my job for that specific disaster was respond
18 with the hazardous materials team, because it fell under
19 the -- the response of the County --

20 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Right.

21 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: -- and -- and to stop the
22 exposure of the fertilizer, you know, as far as it had
23 gotten into the Coosa River. And in the immediate area,
24 you know, it was just leaking, and so we had to clean
25 that up.

26 And then everything from fuel spills on the
27 interstate, you know, what we would identify as a
28 traffic -- a significant traffic accident where there was

1 a diesel spill into a creek, things like that.

2 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: I think
3 Baldwin County natives and people that move here -- Of
4 course, you know we're a coastal county.

5 And I don't even know if I've ever even thought of
6 any other type of disasters except for hurricane. I
7 mean, that's what we're focused on. And did you get to
8 go see Panama City and that area down there?

9 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Yeah, so Panama City, I was
10 off rotation.

11 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Right.

12 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: And the reason being I had
13 just returned home for Hurricane Florence.

14 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Okay.

15 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: So I did have Hurricane
16 Florence, major flooding. It was nothing like Hurricane
17 Michael.

18 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Right.

19 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: A lot of counterparts were
20 there and in discussion.

21 But an interesting story to that is the Emergency
22 Coordinator for the hospital, Bay Medical System -- which
23 I don't know if you're familiar with their story, but
24 their hospital was destroyed, with patients.

25 The Emergency Coordinator came to Anniston. And we
26 talk about -- It's funny you asked that question --
27 dealing with a difficult individual. And so I -- I
28 realized in that course, you know, this individual was --

1 didn't want to be there.

2 So I get to talking with her. And -- and she was
3 originally a nurse and was pointed at and said, hey, now
4 you're our Emergency Preparedness Coordinator. And we're
5 going to send you to Anniston.

6 And so there was just her there from Bay Medical.
7 And this -- this was last year. This was probably March
8 or April of last year.

9 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay.
10 Before the --

11 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Yes.

12 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: --
13 hurricane.

14 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Yes. She comes. She sits
15 through. This is great. She goes back. She gets the
16 CEO and CFO and all the key stakeholders. They came back
17 with a little, small cohort of responders from their
18 hospital.

19 And they said, we want to do the healthcare
20 leadership, which puts you through a disaster scenario
21 that is unlike any other. I mean, it's a catastrophe.

22 And they went -- went through that, all as a team.
23 And then went back home. And then here comes Hurricane
24 Michael.

25 The day of that -- the day of that storm, she
26 reached out to me and wanted to -- wanted to say thank
27 you. And then the hospital was destroyed.

28 It wasn't even 12 hours later, and she privately

1 messaged me and said, you know, I appreciate --
2 appreciate the information that you empowered us with.
3 We didn't lose one employee. All patients were evacuated
4 or -- or close to being evacuated.

5 And that was realistic to hear. That could happen
6 here. And -- and so, no, I was not there, but --

7 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: I was going
8 to say --

9 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: -- indirectly, I would say
10 that I indirectly impacted --

11 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Sure.

12 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: -- how that hospital
13 operated. Absolutely.

14 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: I have one
15 question I wanted to ask you. And other people we
16 interviewed know this person. But I have a fraternity
17 brother that I graduated with.

18 I would say sometimes he was my roommate and
19 sometimes he wasn't, depending on where he was. He was
20 supposed to be my roommate. But he is now the Director
21 of FEMA. His name is Jeff Byard. Do you have a
22 relationship with him?

23 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: I do not.

24 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Okay.

25 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: I do not. I know
26 indirectly. You know, he's from this area. I think
27 that --

28 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: He's from

1 Prattville.

2 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Well, listen. I -- I -- I
3 think that's important for us to -- to -- to recognize.
4 But, no, I don't have a personal relationship with him.

5 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Right.

6 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: I do have a -- a solid
7 relationship with the Deputy Director for our state. And
8 I know a lot of our counterparts have mutual connections.
9 And that's kind of how Emergency Management works.
10 That's how we -- you know, but -- but I would anticipate
11 fully --

12 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Oh, yeah.
13 But there was a -- there was a time when he was bouncing
14 around in the state, doing certain things.

15 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Yeah.

16 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: And, you
17 know -- and he's -- he's just a personal friend. And I
18 don't think that the Commission knows that I know him.

19 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Yeah.

20 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: So he's a
21 good person --

22 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: That's a good thing.

23 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: -- to know.
24 So, anyway, that's all I've got.

25 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
26 Okay. I've got a question for you. What do you think
27 the most challenge thing about this job would be?

28 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Most challenge?

1 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
2 Most challenging part of it.

3 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Is waking up every morning
4 knowing eventually there will be a disaster. I mean,
5 that's a heavy burden to carry on your shoulders.

6 And, you know, the -- the -- you know, the answer to
7 it is -- is preparedness, you know, and understanding
8 what is effective about preparedness, you know.

9 It's easy to know something is going to happen and
10 not really know what to do. And -- and so the way I cope
11 with that, the way I deal with that is -- is I enable --
12 or I empower -- I empower other individuals to be
13 prepared, whether they're in our organization, a
14 nongovernment organization, you know, a religious
15 organization, whatever the case may be.

16 You know, that's -- that's -- that's the culture
17 that -- that you can anticipate if I were in the
18 position.

19 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Can I -- can
20 I followup on that?

21 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
22 Yeah, yeah, yeah, please do.

23 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: I think
24 Commissioner Gruber is getting to the point that Baldwin
25 County is going to be your largest county landmass-wise
26 in this state. We have approximately, I think, 215 to
27 270,000 residents. You've got 14 municipalities with 14
28 different mayors, who all 14 are different.

1 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Understood.

2 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: These
3 people -- some of them will listen to you. Some people
4 are going to do it their own way. You also have -- Is it
5 37 fire departments? Is that how many we've got?

6 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Total.

7 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Total.

8 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Volunteer
9 and paid.

10 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: We've got 37
11 fire departments. And we haven't even met all of them.
12 And we campaigned for a year with fire departments and
13 stuff and still haven't touched all of them. We do have
14 a good volunteer chiefs meeting where they all usually
15 come together.

16 So I think what Commissioner Gruber was going to
17 say, the challenging aspect, how would you think you
18 could collaboratively communicate with 14 mayors, with
19 different personalities, and 37 fire departments, which,
20 you know, they pretty much hold the EMA Director to a --
21 to a very high standard.

22 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: That's right.

23 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: And how
24 would you break those communication barriers and that
25 kind of stuff?

26 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: So the best way or the
27 ideal -- And there's a couple of ways to go about this,
28 but the ideal way is to get the same individuals

1 mentioned involved in the local Emergency Planning
2 Committee.

3 Now, I'm not sure whether they come to that or not.
4 It is -- it is a very important meeting. It is a
5 starting point.

6 I would say for the majority of the mayors or the
7 chiefs that maybe disagree with what has gone on at the
8 EMA level probably was a result of something that was
9 said or done inside that LEPC.

10 And so, you know, what I find most of the time is
11 somewhere there was a fractured relationship. Something
12 happened, whether it was an event, or sometimes it's just
13 may be somebody that is individually there, just a little
14 more difficult to deal with. And they're really, you
15 know, just concerned about the one little space they
16 have, and that's it.

17 So to get that mindset out to build a different
18 culture obviously is not quick. But the way to approach
19 it is -- is to -- to build individual personal
20 relationships with everyone that's identified.

21 Now, you hit the ground, you start running. That's
22 a large challenge. That's a -- that's a big task. But I
23 think the thing that separates myself from any other
24 candidate is I don't have a relationship with any of the
25 individuals. And whatever may have happened that
26 fractured the relationship, this could be a fresh start
27 for them.

28 And I have a totally different mindset than most

1 emergency managers in the state. And that's what
2 attracts me to Baldwin County. Because I think Baldwin
3 County would be the perfect platform nationally to -- to
4 speak on emergency preparedness and response.

5 And that's a pretty cool opportunity, if you think
6 about it. I know it -- I know it can be done. It's --
7 it's not going fast, but I think you look at 24 -- you
8 know 24 months down the road from today, if I'm in the
9 position.

10 There's definitely a -- a national interest in what
11 Baldwin County's doing as an emergency response community
12 through their Emergency Management Agency.

13 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Did you
14 understand the contractual agreement?

15 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Not fully. I understand how
16 the EMA Director position works as far as contract goes
17 and the duration and things. Are we three or four years
18 here?

19 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: It's a
20 four-year.

21 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
22 Four-year contract.

23 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Four-year
24 contract.

25 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: It coincides
26 with the Commission. You're not a merit employee. You
27 are a contract employee.

28 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Okay. Okay. Well, and

1 that's what I am with FEMA as we speak. I -- I have a
2 five-year contract. That's the main difference. It's
3 Federal Government, but I've been through --

4 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: And we're
5 equal basically. I mean, we can't do anything --

6 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Individually --

7 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: -- three to
8 one --

9 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: I understand.

10 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: -- we have no
11 power or authority. Collectively we can get things done.

12 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: That's understood. It is.
13 That's understood. It is.

14 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
15 Okay. You know, getting back to, you know, we are prone,
16 you know, to have different, you know -- and we've had
17 tornados. We've had hurricanes. We've had the oil
18 spill.

19 And the thing is there is a challenge, you know,
20 with a lot of people, they don't understand -- they still
21 don't understand how EMA operates. They've been through
22 a lot of stuff, you know, but they still have got their
23 own mindset. I like to do it my own way.

24 And they can't do it. You know, Federal guidelines
25 say, you know, you have to follow these guidelines and
26 you have to follow all this stuff here if you're going to
27 get reimbursed for a lot of stuff.

28 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Yeah.

1 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

2 And, you know, getting these people to understand that
3 and, you know, you've got be able to take the lead and
4 bring these people to the table and, you know, get
5 them -- and, you know, we've got good participation.
6 Don't get me wrong.

7 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: That's good.

8 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
9 We've got good participation. But, you know, the thing
10 is that we -- we've got to have somebody that can really
11 step up there and say, all right, you know, you know, I'm
12 your leader.

13 You know, you're basically -- when an incident
14 happens, you're basically the leader of that disaster.
15 You know, because everything comes through the EMA.

16 You have to be the top person to make sure that
17 things get done, you know, making sure that, you know,
18 this one is done, that one is done and everything. And
19 it's a great big challenge.

20 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Absolutely.

21 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
22 That's a big one.

23 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Absolutely.

24 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
25 I've been on this -- I've been on this Commission
26 12 years. I've been, you know -- I've also been a mayor
27 at one time.

28 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Okay.

1 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: How many EMA
2 Directors have we had?

3 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
4 Oh, I've had -- through several of them. And I've been
5 through some disasters within the thing itself. But our
6 first -- our center we had was in an old underground
7 watertank in Fairhope. That's where --

8 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Oh, wow.

9 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP)
10 GRUBER: -- the EMA center used to be. And one incident
11 we had, we had to set cinderblocks up to get computer
12 stuff out of the -- out of the -- to keep it from
13 flooding because there was water coming in.

14 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Where was this? Where was
15 this at, Commissioner?

16 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
17 It was in Fairhope.

18 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: It was? Fairhope, okay.

19 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
20 Fairhope had their water storage tank, and they made it
21 into, you know -- this was -- that's where the EMA went.

22 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: We have
23 evolved since then.

24 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
25 And we have come down --

26 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: That's still --

27 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP)

28 GRUBER: -- to a real --

1 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: That's --

2 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
3 We've got a real center now.

4 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: That's a pretty cool story,
5 though. I might want to steal that from you, if --

6 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
7 But, I mean, it's --

8 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: -- that's all right. That's
9 a pretty cool story.

10 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
11 And, but, you know, we're to where we're at. And this
12 Commission is not afraid to stick money into EMA for
13 technology and whatever it is.

14 You know, we're -- if you get a chance to look at
15 our EMA center, you know, it's -- it's very modern, you
16 know. And we've tried to keep it -- we want it that way,
17 because we want everything that's going to be -- make our
18 citizens protected. Because they are -- they're --
19 that's the number one priority, you know, take care of
20 our citizens --

21 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: We're
22 fixing --

23 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP)
24 GRUBER: -- in a disaster.

25 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: We're fixing
26 to open a new 911 center across the street from the
27 current EMA center that we have, which I know they're
28 separate. But it is an amazing facility.

1 And so I think the opportunity to have great
2 facilities and things like that are on the horizon for
3 whatever we may need. So, resource-wise, Baldwin County
4 is very blessed.

5 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: We have let's say
6 215,000 people. We have six million people come to this
7 county that don't live in Baldwin. And so the weather,
8 the times, and -- and so we've got challenges of the
9 people live here, and we've got challenges of people that
10 are visiting. And we appreciate that. And that's kind
11 of our lifeblood. And so we've got accommodate it.

12 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: I'll
13 followup with kind of a similar question. It's a little
14 different for you because you're coming from a
15 non-first-responder background.

16 And I wanted to know how do you think that -- what
17 is the general reception? I get a sense there is a
18 good-ole-boy first responder attitude when it comes to
19 EMA Director.

20 And that's not what it's really about. And how do
21 you think you'd be able to bridge that gap from your
22 background, you know, like we were mentioning all the
23 different fire departments and first responders.

24 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: So it's --

25 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: I hope
26 that's not --

27 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: No, it's a -- it's a great
28 question. I don't know if you saw some of the documents

1 I had on that -- that top discussion. Okay. So --

2 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: The only
3 thing that I'm coming in that was I did contact one of
4 references. And they said that they thought it was rare
5 that someone with your skill set gets an opportunity
6 to -- because so many times it's a first responder
7 that -- that ends up in these positions. So that's --

8 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: It is.

9 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: -- where I'm
10 coming from.

11 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: It's -- that the most
12 challenge part to sit in that seat. And the way -- Okay.
13 And that's a great question.

14 So what I did, because I'm not the only case.
15 There's many cases throughout the nation. But what I did
16 was research. And I -- I developed some research on --
17 on that type environment.

18 So the title of it is training, education --
19 training versus education. And so I was invited by
20 the -- the Georgia Emergency Management Agency to speak
21 at their state conference on that.

22 It was probably the most nervous I've ever been.
23 Because, you know, you -- you anticipate what will
24 happen. And I tell you for this event -- And being in
25 crisis response, I gotten pretty good at anticipating
26 problems and then what those outcomes may be.

27 But as soon as the individuals walked into this
28 particular breakout session, my 25, 30-year deputy, fire

1 chiefs -- fire chiefs sat on my left together. My -- my
2 students, graduate, undergraduate level, some of which
3 had been a first responder, some had not, they sat on the
4 right.

5 There was great divide in the room before even I
6 started my presentation, before I even began. And so,
7 you know, the session started. And that was the first
8 thing I brought up.

9 And I -- and I asked them to -- to -- to picture
10 this as their community and -- and picture some of the
11 challenges they have had and understand if that
12 relationship were different, that those challenges
13 wouldn't be there.

14 And I could hear -- it was -- it was like the --
15 the -- the tension from the air was -- was gone. I had
16 20, 25, 30-year fire chiefs, police chiefs that are now
17 in the EMA. You know, they retired, and now they're in
18 EMA, you know, come up to me or openly say, hey, look,
19 that was the best presentation put together, you know.

20 And so, yeah, that is difficult. But one thing I
21 did so I could understand the ground level response and
22 what your responders on the ground are -- what they're
23 going through is I became a member of the hazardous
24 materials team for Calhoun County as a volunteer, unpaid
25 position.

26 I did this because I wanted that ground level
27 understanding of response as it applies to the Incident
28 Command System. I study it. I -- I can defend it, you

1 know, academically. But that's no good if you have never
2 participated in any ICS structure or system.

3 So that was exactly why I joined the hazmat team.
4 And then after that, that's when I had the opportunity
5 nationally with the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness
6 and Response.

7 So although it's a position to where I'm not a first
8 receiver or a first responder, it is a response-level
9 position where I am on the ground having to figure out
10 when resources are available, where our critical
11 infrastructure is damaged, you know, what problems or
12 issues we face immediately.

13 And I have to relay up a chain of command up to a
14 national level. So -- so, you know, to bridge that gap,
15 that's what I did.

16 Now, as far as, you know, being respectable here
17 and -- and being credible, I think that -- that that's
18 not going to be a problem with me if I can create a
19 relationship with these individuals.

20 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay.

21 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: And -- and so that would be
22 the goal. And -- and, again, I -- I think -- and I
23 understand that there may be bridges and issues that
24 historically -- And it's like this everywhere -- that --
25 you know, there's -- there's ties everywhere. And --
26 and, you know, people question why this or why that.

27 It's easy to get into that. Well, with me,
28 there's -- it's a fresh slate. It's a clean start. It's

1 a new beginning. And -- and so I think that's where that
2 relationship is important. You know, I want the
3 responders knowing that -- that Emergency Management
4 Agency is a support element as well.

5 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Great.
6 Okay.

7 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
8 Thank you.

9 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Thank you.

10 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
11 Anything else?

12 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: No.

13 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
14 Well, we -- we appreciate you coming.

15 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Certainly.

16 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Thank you.

17 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
18 And coming here for the interview. And, you know -- you
19 know, we've got some decisions we've got to make.

20 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: And I understand that. And
21 I appreciate the time.

22 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
23 But I appreciate you taking your time out to come here
24 for us to consider you.

25 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: I very much enjoyed it. It
26 was a pleasure to meet each of you. If it's okay with
27 you, I'd like to leave a little package with each of you.

28 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

1 Okay.

2 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: It's basically some letters
3 of recommendation from residents of this year and first
4 responders that I have worked. So it would better answer
5 that -- that question for you.

6 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
7 Okay.

8 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: I asked them to include
9 their contact information. And I asked them if it were
10 okay if they were contacted by -- by anyone looking at me
11 for this position. And the answer was yes. So there
12 should be no hesitation, if you'll allow me to leave
13 this.

14 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
15 Oh, yes. Please. Please do.

16 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: And you'll see nongovernment
17 organizations, government, and then local residents as
18 well. And I do have extra for anyone else, if I can
19 leave for you.

20 *****

21 LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION FOR ZACHARY HOOD

22 *****

23 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
24 Okay.

25 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Thank you
26 very much.

27 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: This is a good
28 example.

1 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Yes, sir. I appreciate
2 that.

3 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: And we take
4 it as a compliment that you applied here.

5 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Oh, certainly.

6 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Oh, no. Thank you for the
7 opportunity to come and speak with you. And, look,
8 whatever the outcome may be, you always have a contact,
9 all right, regardless.

10 You've got to do what's best for the county. And I
11 understand that. If it's -- if I'm the one that you
12 think would be the best, do you know what? I'll take it,
13 and we're going to run with it, and we're going to do
14 well; if not, I'm still a resource.

15 I hope that I never respond on the Federal side to
16 here. I'll tell you that. You know, I'll -- I'll keep
17 that in my prayers and thoughts. But -- but you --
18 you -- you have a contact. I have ties here. I'm in and
19 out. And so I -- I appreciate the opportunity. Thank
20 you.

21 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Thanks,
22 Zach.

23 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
24 Thank you so very, very much.

25 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Thank you.

26 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Thank you. And
27 you'll be hearing back from us.

28 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Thank you

1 for coming down.

2 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Absolutely. Do we have a
3 timeframe? Did we know?

4 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
5 Well, we're trying to get this hopefully within the next
6 few days.

7 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Okay. That's understood.

8 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Yeah.

9 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: That's understood.

10 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
11 We should know --

12 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: We have to
13 do it in a public meeting so --

14 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
15 Yeah.

16 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: If we don't
17 get that accomplished --

18 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: It'll be on
19 Wednesday, the 6th.

20 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
21 Yeah. Hopefully, we --

22 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Is Wednesday
23 the 5th or the 6th?

24 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: The 6th.

25 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
26 The 6th we are trying to --

27 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Mardi Gras
28 is in our area. So Tuesday is our normal Commission

1 meeting. And so it's been postponed to Wednesday. And
2 so our next public-announced meeting is on next
3 Wednesday.

4 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: And if you -- Please
5 understand that there should be no reservation as far as
6 my geographical location to Baldwin County and getting in
7 and going.

8 You -- you -- you tell me, you know, we -- we pull
9 the string and we're going, I'll be down here whenever
10 you're ready to hit the ground running.

11 It'll be seamless, seamless for us. The timing is
12 perfect, you know, with my wife as a school teacher,
13 obviously, you know, the summer is the time.

14 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
15 Yeah.

16 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: So, anyway, so understand
17 that. Don't let that be a reservation; okay?

18 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
19 Okay. All right. Thank you very much.

20 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay. Thank
21 you very much. Have a safe trip.

22 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Thank you such
23 much.

24 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Good to meet you.

25 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Thank you.

26 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: No. Thank you. And I
27 appreciate you. Absolutely.

28 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Thank you.

1 I appreciate it.

2 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Yes, sir.

3 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

4 Thank you so very much.

5 MR. ZACHARY HOOD: Thank you, Commissioner.

6 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Take care.

7 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

8 All right. That -- that winds up -- I think that winds
9 up all of our applicants for the EMA, being that we had
10 Benjie Abbott --

11 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Withdraw.

12 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP)

13 GRUBER: -- dropped out.

14 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Hey, guys.

15 I want to introduce Dana.

16 MS. DANA THOMPSON: I'm Dana Thompson. I've
17 been here for about four years already in Summerdale from
18 Southern California.

19 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Wonderful.

20 MS. DANA THOMPSON: We're very delighted to be
21 here. We couldn't be happier. We particularly certainly
22 did love the housing prices. We are very happy to be
23 here.

24 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Nice meeting
25 you.

26 MS. DANA THOMPSON: Love the culture. Very
27 tired of the one we came from.

28 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: When you discover

1 paradise?

2 MS. DANA THOMPSON: Um.

3 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Had you been here
4 before?

5 MS. DANA THOMPSON: No, no, never.

6 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Okay.

7 MS. DANA THOMPSON: We came out to Foley, just
8 because we'd known some friends from there for a period
9 of time. And we started looking around. They started
10 taking us around to look at houses. Next thing you know,
11 we signed escrow four years ago almost.

12 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Very good.

13 MS. DANA THOMPSON: We love it.

14 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Well, welcome.

15 MS. DANA THOMPSON: Thank you for allowing me
16 to come here.

17 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Some people were
18 born here and have been here off and on all their life.
19 Some of us are the same. I was born in Mobile, grew up
20 in the north part of the state, and came here. So I
21 always like to ask people when they discovered --

22 MS. DANA THOMPSON: You have a wonderful county
23 and wonderful people.

24 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Thank you, ma'am.

25 MS. DANA THOMPSON: Thank you.

26 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Are we going
27 to recess for lunch?

28 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

1 Yeah. Yeah. If y'all want, y'all want to recess for
2 lunch, and then we'll eat, and then we'll get right back
3 into it?

4 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Yeah.

5 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: I hear my
6 stomach.

7 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
8 Well, we'll recess then until after we finish eating.

9

10 (A recess was taken at 11:40 a.m.)

11 (The Baldwin County Commission Special Meeting resumed at
12 12:10 p.m.)

13

14 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
15 Yeah. We're ready. We're back -- we're back -- back in
16 session.

17 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: All right. I'll get
18 Ms. Rollins.

19 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
20 Hey, Deidra.

21 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: Yes, sir.

22 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
23 In all fairness to the rest of the candidates, if you'll
24 just introduce them and then --

25 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: Oh, yeah.

26 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
27 Okay.

28 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: I've got -- I've already got

1 my work set up in there.

2 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

3 Yeah.

4

5 **6-D - INTERVIEW OF MS. PAMELON ROLLINS FOR THE POSITION OF**
6 **PERSONNEL DIRECTOR**

7 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: All right. Come around this
8 way.

9 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Hello.

10 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Hey. How
11 are you?

12 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: Pamelon Rollins.

13 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: I'm Joe. Good to
14 see you. Good to have you with us.

15 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Jeb Ball.
16 How are you doing?

17 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Billie Jo
18 Underwood.

19 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
20 Commissioner Gruber. How are you doing?

21 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Doing good.

22 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
23 Good.

24 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: You can just come around
25 right here.

26 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: On this side?

27 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: Yes, ma'am. Here on this
28 side. That's the chosen hot seat.

1 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Give me just
2 a second.

3 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Okay.

4 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Thank you
5 for coming down.

6 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Thank you for having me.

7 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
8 Okay.

9 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: We're new at
10 this.

11 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Oh, okay.

12 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: We have plenty of
13 information provided to us on all kind of things. Then
14 it's a matter of keeping up --

15 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: I know. Paper, paper,
16 paper.

17 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: That's it.

18 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
19 Okay. All right. We'll get -- go ahead and get started.
20 Ms. Rollins, would you mind just telling us a little bit
21 about yourself and, you know, so we can get to know you a
22 little bit.

23 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Okay. Well, of course, I
24 am a native of Tensaw, Alabama. And I was born and
25 raised in Tensaw, literally born in Tensaw.

26 I graduated from Baldwin County High School, of
27 course. Once I graduated from high school, I went to
28 start my educational career with Alabama State University

1 in Montgomery where I did receive a Bachelor's of Science
2 in Criminal Justice with a minor in Sociology.

3 After that, I got married right after graduation,
4 moved to Washington DC to live with my husband who at
5 that time was working for the one of the major agencies
6 of our government. He was military as well.

7 We lived there about maybe 13 years, and then he
8 retired from the government. And we relocated back to
9 Montgomery. And I kind of took a break after traveling
10 with him a little bit and went -- after that, I stayed
11 home for about a year. We had our daughter around that
12 time as well.

13 And then I went on to work for Auburn, Montgomery.
14 And then I left Auburn, Montgomery and started my career
15 with Trenholm State Community College.

16 And, literally, starting my career with Trenholm
17 State, I also started my masters program in Human
18 Resources at Troy University.

19 So that was an experience, because when I came into
20 Trenholm, they didn't have HR office. So I had to start
21 HR from the beginning. So that was a lot going on, and
22 being in a masters program.

23 But I went on and I finished that degree with Troy
24 University. And then I recently finished my doctoral
25 degree about a year and a half ago with Nova Southeastern
26 University. It's an educational doctorate with a focus
27 in organizational research.

28 So that's where I am right now. Again, I'm married,

1 and I have one daughter. She's graduating in May from
2 Auburn University in Montgomery, a fine arts major.

3 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Very good.

4 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: And, of course, my
5 family, my parents, they're all here in Tensaw. My
6 sister lives in Daphne. I have another sister. My
7 oldest sister lives in Little River. So I'm kind of
8 coming back this way. So that's pretty much it.

9 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
10 Okay. Good.

11 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Very good. I
12 remember Trenholm when Hobson State Tech College was in
13 Thomasville.

14 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Oh, okay.

15 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Way back. I
16 was --

17 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Okay.

18 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: -- a business
19 manager there --

20 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Oh, wow.

21 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: -- in a previous
22 career. So, yeah.

23 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Okay.

24 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Yeah. You had
25 Reed. You had --

26 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Yeah.

27 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: -- Trenholm. You
28 had Bishop. You had --

1 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Right.

2 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: -- Faulkner and
3 then --

4 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Uh-huh. (Indicates
5 affirmatively.)

6 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: -- all the
7 others.

8 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Right.

9 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Well, thanks
10 for filling that in. I was trying to guess. Because
11 when you said something about thanks to the County, I was
12 like, she's got to be from here.

13 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Yes.

14 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay.

15 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: It all started the right
16 in Baldwin County, my first job. I think it was like the
17 JTPA program during the summer. They have the summer
18 program. I did a secretarial position at the elementary
19 school. And that kind of started me on the path.

20 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: I haven't heard
21 of the JTPA for a long time.

22 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: A long time ago.

23 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Yeah, that was a
24 great startup program.

25 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: That's where it all
26 started.

27 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay. Well,
28 how we have -- this is the -- You're the first applicant

1 on the Personnel Director interviews.

2 We've also been interviewing for two other
3 positions. And how we've conducted those interviews, I
4 have five questions that I will ask that are
5 behavior-based questions.

6 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Okay.

7 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: And just to
8 give you -- for your benefit, because you're -- several
9 of the applicants have been from this area. But we are
10 three new Commissioners. And, Commissioner Gruber, he's
11 serving this third --

12 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
13 Fourth.

14 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: -- his
15 fourth term.

16 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: And we're the
17 rookies.

18 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: And we're
19 the rookies. And we've tried to do the best we can in
20 this particular situation.

21 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Okay.

22 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: My first
23 question is there are times when we feel overwhelmed by
24 our workload or some interpersonal problem in the office.
25 Tell me about such a time and how you handled it.

26 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Um, let's see. How --
27 which one do I want to start with?

28 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Calculate.

1 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Start from the HR office.
2 I think I'll give an example of our -- not recent, about
3 five years ago.

4 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay.

5 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Trenholm State put in an
6 application to become accredited with SAC COC, which is
7 the major accrediting body for all two-year and four-year
8 colleges.

9 And I was assigned to about five different
10 standards. And there was 20, 25 standards that a college
11 must pass. You know, you can't make a negative mark on
12 one standard. It's over.

13 So, of course, I was assigned to about five of
14 those. But the largest was the one dealing with the
15 faculty's positions, making sure all the employees had
16 the proper credentials to be teaching whatever class they
17 were supposed to be teaching.

18 So, of course, you get assigned helpers on the
19 committees. And my president feels like every employee
20 should be involved.

21 So you could get employees -- maybe two employees
22 from human resources. You may have someone from
23 maintenance. You may have someone from, you know,
24 different areas that has no idea what you're talking
25 about, but, yet, you're -- I'm the chair, so I'm
26 responsible. So all this is riding on me.

27 So this is all new to the college. The whole entire
28 process is new. And I was -- I was assigned the

1 responsibility to chair this committee.

2 So, of course, I had to go out, you know, read the
3 manuals, got to the faculty website, kind of research it,
4 because I wasn't sure -- we weren't sure what we was
5 supposed to be doing, you know.

6 So we eventually brought in a consultant who helped
7 us through a lot of this. But, anyway, once I got a list
8 of all the faculty folks, I went through each individual
9 personnel file to make sure we had everything we're
10 supposed to have. Because you must have original
11 transcripts, for instance.

12 And in some instances, because of the faculty had
13 been teaching so long, they may not have had a transcript
14 on file.

15 And just to back up just a little bit, Trenholm
16 State merged with John Patterson Technical College, you
17 know, back in -- I think it was around 2000.

18 So you had a big merger that had taken place prior
19 to me getting there. Trying to get all of those
20 documents in one place, because personnel files were on
21 one campus, the other files were on a different campus.

22 They all were stored differently. You know, they
23 weren't really necessarily in personnel files, the
24 appropriate files, you know, the appropriate fireproof
25 safe, any of that going on.

26 So I had to get these files together. You know, you
27 may have started 25 years ago, and your transcript is not
28 there. So I had to come to you, because I need you to

1 get your transcript, and I need it right away.

2 So, of course, you know, some of the employees kind
3 of got upset. Well, I had my transcript. You know,
4 y'all lost my transcript. And I'm saying, I wasn't even
5 here when the transcript came in.

6 So but you have to be able to overlook that, but
7 then try to get what you need to get the job done. So
8 what I did, I held a workshop, and like a little kickoff
9 from Human Resources office, just to get everybody
10 excited and just to explain to them what I needed from
11 them to make it happen.

12 Because if we don't get this accreditation passed,
13 this is not just affecting Human Resources or the
14 faculty, it's going to affect the entire college. It's
15 going to affect every employee on this campus.

16 So, you know, we had a little kickoff, a little
17 reception where we talked to them, explained what we
18 needed, explained the process and how it related to Human
19 Resources and how we needed information from them.

20 So everybody got onboard -- To make a long story
21 short -- got onboard. Folks who did not have transcripts
22 went ahead and got those ordered.

23 My assistant and I, we worked long hours. We worked
24 weekends. We did what we had to do to get it done. It
25 didn't matter if our office only consisted of three
26 people and we had a short window to get this done. We
27 just did what we had to do.

28 We just made a schedule, and we just plotted out a

1 plan, you know, how we're going to get it done, how we're
2 going to make sure we're in compliance.

3 And -- and we're going to do it early. We're not
4 going to wait. We had a deadline within a deadline. I
5 believe in having -- my deadline had a deadline. So I'd
6 rather be early than late, you know, well prepared.

7 So when they came, we had way -- we had an abundance
8 of information. They said, y'all went way above what we
9 needed, which is good. So we was fine with that. But
10 that was the fifth year. They said at that point they
11 would come back in five years.

12 Well, last year they came back, our fifth-year visit
13 where they had come back. So that was another process.
14 Because you -- by then you had new people coming in. And
15 we had procedures in place to capture all the information
16 coming in.

17 And then also we ran into an issue where the way the
18 job descriptions were written for faculty did not match
19 the SAC standards. They matched the State Board of
20 Education standards. But those standards didn't match
21 the SAC standards. So we had a double problem.

22 So we ended up, because we have an HR association
23 where all the HR Directors comes together, some of us
24 kind of brought that and put that on the table and said,
25 look, we need to talk about how we're going to address
26 this.

27 Maybe we can present some information to the board,
28 and -- and the board can look at revising some of those

1 policies, because some of those policies were outdated,
2 extremely outdated.

3 So, of course, they did agree. They understood what
4 we were saying. And so a lot policies got rewritten
5 because of -- of that. So, anyway, we had that visit.
6 That visit went very well.

7 Any SAC conference that I attend, the first thing
8 they're going to tell you is that you're going to get
9 dinged on faculty credentials. And I'm saying to myself,
10 not me. I'm not going to get dinged on faculty
11 credentials, not me, you know. So I was like, I don't
12 care what they say.

13 And so my Executive Vice-President kept telling me,
14 Pam, don't worry about it, you know, you're going to get
15 hit. Don't worry about it. I'm like, no, I'm not. My
16 name is not going to be on the list. No. No, I just --
17 that's not me.

18 So, sure enough, the visit came around. And they
19 called me in to interview me. And they said, you know
20 what, Dr. Rollins? I don't even know why we have you on
21 the list. We don't need to talk to you. You did an
22 excellent job. So you -- don't even worry about it.
23 You're good.

24 So I was like, okay. So I hurry up, and I ran away.
25 And just a couple days ago, I got an e-mail from the SAC
26 commission saying I am now considered a peer evaluator,
27 what they would call me in to go on some SAC visits at
28 other schools around the country to evaluate them. So I

1 was like, whoa.

2 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Sure.

3 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: I know it's long, what I
4 had to say, but --

5 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Well, you
6 had to give us a background.

7 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Yeah.

8 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Thank you.
9 Thank you very much. Okay. And my next question is --
10 And -- and the same questions will be asked of each --

11 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Okay.

12 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: -- HR
13 applicant. There are times when one needs to make a
14 decision or recommendation based on limited information.
15 Share with me an example of how you went about making
16 such a decision and what was the result.

17 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Based on limited
18 information?

19 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: I can repeat
20 it, if you'd like.

21 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Sure.

22 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: There are
23 times when one needs to make a decision or recommendation
24 based on limited information. And share with me an
25 example of how you went about making such a decision and
26 what was the result.

27 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Okay. Being human
28 resources, often you get hit with EOC complaints out of

1 nowhere. You know, you don't even know -- you didn't
2 even know something was going on in a department.

3 And you just get this notice from EOC saying, you
4 know, so-and-so just filed, you know, a racial
5 discrimination complaint against you.

6 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Can I ask --

7 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Yes.

8 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: -- you what
9 the EOC --

10 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: I'm sorry. Equal
11 Opportunity Commission.

12 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Okay.

13 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: They govern all of the
14 discrimination claims --

15 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Right.

16 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: -- that employees --

17 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Right.

18 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: -- come to them. Yes.
19 Their office -- there is one here in Mobile as well.

20 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
21 Yes. Mobile.

22 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: There's one in Mobile.
23 It's the closest one here.

24 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
25 And it's Federal.

26 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Yes. It's Federal. You
27 know, and they apply to local, Federal, and State, if you
28 have 15 or more employees. Any employee can go there.

1 But you can get this charge. It's called a charge
2 of discrimination. And we had a situation where an
3 employee actually said an employee -- a supervisor had
4 discriminated against them because they were black. The
5 supervisor was white. The employee was black.

6 And we were like, what in the world? Where did this
7 come from? So it just had -- And they won't give you the
8 exact details, detail for detail in those charges.
9 They'll give like a -- just a summary of what happened.
10 They'll give the date of incident, but no general -- it's
11 just a general statement.

12 So we get this charge. I go to the president. I
13 said, look, we just got this charge. And the process is
14 you make sure the president is made aware first. And
15 then you take it and you e-mail it over to our general
16 counsel. And then we take it from there. General
17 counsel and myself, we'll take it from there.

18 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: That's your
19 attorney?

20 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Yes, the attorney. The
21 system -- the two-year college system, they have a system
22 office downtown. And they have a general counsel office
23 who assists all the HR Directors all over -- all the
24 different colleges throughout the state.

25 But so, anyway, so I -- I send the charge to person
26 who works with our particular college. And he said, Pam,
27 what is going on? What is this?

28 And said, I don't -- I don't know. I mean, I have

1 to dig into it to find, you know, out what the details
2 are. And he said, please do so and we can go ahead and
3 prepare our college position statement.

4 We have to respond back in what's called a position
5 statement saying this is what we said we did. This is
6 not what happened. This is what happened.

7 So, anyway, I said, but I'm very surprised at this
8 particular employee that would say this. I mean, why
9 would -- And I know the -- the -- the supervisor. And
10 that person -- from what I know, that person is not like
11 that. So why are they even saying that? We don't have
12 any issues at our college.

13 So, anyway, I talked to the supervisor, ran it by
14 them. And she said, what it was, the person wanted to
15 take off. They had been abusing leave.

16 So she decided she was going to start turning the
17 person's annual leave down, because they were -- If she
18 said no annual leave, the person would turn around and
19 take sick leave. They'd call in sick.

20 So the supervisor decided, you know what? I'm just
21 going to start denying it. And so the person started
22 saying, well, she'll let the other person off because
23 they're white or they're Indian, but when it's time for
24 me to get off, you know -- we was like, really?

25 So I said, okay, give me every incident you have for
26 each employee and let's look at them individually. And
27 then I went on -- because I have access to the employee
28 leave. And I pulled a report on each individual employee

1 in that particular area.

2 And, sure enough, that person had been taking
3 excessive leave. And the supervisor basically was just
4 supervising. But the person got upset and felt like if I
5 go and make an EOC claim, then I can get away with it,
6 you know, the supervisor will back off, and I can just do
7 what I want to do.

8 So we just got the facts together. And then I typed
9 a report, met the attorney. We went over it, and we
10 wrote our position statement, sent it in to EOC.

11 They came in. They investigated. And they turned
12 around and they don't necessarily say discrimination
13 didn't happen. They'll just say we're going to -- we
14 didn't find reasonable -- enough reason to believe that
15 this happened.

16 However, we're going to get you what's called a
17 right to sue letter. And that person can take a right to
18 sue letter to any attorney, and then they proceed from
19 there.

20 They did not say we found cause or reasonable enough
21 evidence to say we believed something happened. That did
22 not happen. So the person didn't even file lawsuit.

23 It didn't even go anywhere. The person basically
24 kind of acted like nothing ever happened. And we was
25 like --

26 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: All the
27 stress.

28 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: -- all this stress and

1 then --

2 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Time and effort.

3 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: And it takes a lot of
4 time, you know. And it's like, really? And then the
5 person straightened up and stopped calling in and got
6 into compliance.

7 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: All right.

8 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: But it -- it took a lot
9 of time away from us.

10 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Describe a
11 situation when you uncovered a serious problem. How did
12 you bring the issue to the attention of management and
13 peers? And how did you resolve it?

14 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: A serious problem?

15 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Uncovered a
16 serious problem.

17 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Let's see. Let me think.
18 Let me think.

19 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: And it can be a
20 generic discussion.

21 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: And it
22 doesn't have to be work related.

23 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Okay.

24 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: It can be in
25 a volunteer organization.

26 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Okay.

27 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Anytime in
28 your -- how would have handled a situation like that?

1 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Well, I guess I can use
2 this, this example. Again, this ties into leave, because
3 I oversee the leave aspect of the college as well when
4 we're doing payroll, you know.

5 Sometimes employees exit the college. Well, this
6 particular instructor resigned. She was in the hospital.
7 She says, hey, I'm not coming back to work. And we was
8 like, wait a minute. She was in the hospital. We don't
9 have any leave. What happened?

10 The supervisor did not notify Human Resources the
11 person was in the hospital, number one. So what
12 happened, the person that was in the hospital thought she
13 was getting paid. Okay.

14 So, in essence, what happened is she received an
15 overpayment. So once she received an overpayment, we
16 were like, we've got to let the president know about
17 this.

18 We made him aware of situation. And then we also
19 said, look, we need to talk to these supervisors, because
20 this could be an audit finding when the state examiners
21 come in and they come across this, which they will come
22 across, because every exit employee, they do tend to pull
23 them in the sample then they're sampling.

24 So and I said, we need to go ahead and do the
25 following things before the auditors find this. They are
26 going to find it. We need to minimize the impact of it.

27 Let's sit all the supervisors down. Let's train
28 them. Let's go over the leave policy again, let them

1 know the impact of this situation, how it's going to
2 affect us. And we are going to get an audit finding
3 because of it.

4 I also recommended to the president that he
5 reprimand that particular supervisor, because they are
6 supposed to let us know when someone is exiting the
7 college.

8 You just can't have someone that's in the hospital
9 or whatever. And I don't think they thought the person
10 was going to quit. And but they quit, and they ended up
11 owing us money.

12 See, we gave the person an option. They would have
13 to pay it back within so many days, 30 days to be
14 specific. The person said, well, I don't have the money
15 to pay it back some. And we was like, well, somebody's
16 got to pay this money back. You know, we're not paying
17 it back, because we didn't do it.

18 So we said, if we don't receive the money within
19 30 days, then we're going to recommend that -- we're
20 going to turn it over to the Attorney General's Office
21 and let them collect the money that way.

22 And so the employee ended up giving us the money for
23 that. And we was able to wipe it out. But we ran across
24 a situation. And that was actually like a hearsay. We
25 heard about it. Somebody --

26 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: The other --

27 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: -- started talking about
28 it. So we was like, what happened? Who's in the

1 hospital? What's going to? And sometime in Human
2 Resources, you don't know stuff. You just kind of hear
3 it. Employee kind of talk. And they kind of tell
4 different people who they know will tell you. So --

5 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Yeah. Okay.
6 Great.

7 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: -- through a rumor, we
8 found out.

9 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: A quality of
10 a good leader is the ability to develop others.

11 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Uh-huh. (Indicates
12 affirmatively.)

13 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Tell me
14 about an employee who became more successful as a result
15 of your management and leadership and how did you go
16 about developing this person?

17 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Okay. My assistant, my
18 HR assistant is a really good example. I'm not sure how
19 familiar you are with the different generations in the
20 workplace. That was my dissertation topic, so I'm like
21 all into that topic. But, anyway, I'm an X'er, and my HR
22 assistant is a Millennial. So --

23 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: I'm an X'er.

24 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Okay. So you understand.

25 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: I'm on the
26 upper end of it.

27 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Me, too.

28 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay.

1 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: So you understand.

2 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: I'm almost
3 on the other side.

4 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: So, anyway, she's, of
5 course -- Millennial, the characteristics of Millennial,
6 you know, they think, oh, I just start 30 days ago, so
7 when am I going to get promoted? Can I do this? Or,
8 hey, look that this. I just did this. What do you
9 think? You know, every -- every hour, what do you think?
10 What do you think? What do you think?

11 And it's like, okay. That's good. Go finish what
12 doing what you're doing. You know, the next hour, okay,
13 look at what I did. Look at what I did. Is this a good
14 idea? You think this is a good idea?

15 I mean, they just really, really -- you know, they
16 love to be praised. So I was like, okay. I said, all
17 right. She wanted make more money. I said, okay. We
18 need to talk about this. You know, there's procedures.
19 There's guidelines.

20 I believe you have a lot of potential. You have a
21 master's degree as well. You're very smart. You're very
22 bright. You know, but we need to work on some things.

23 So I pretty much sat her down and said, you know,
24 you can't come to work too relaxed. They're very, very
25 relaxed, by the way. You know, they think, hey, I can
26 come in spandex or I can come, you know, however, you
27 know.

28 No, no, no, no. This is not Google. You can't come

1 like this. You have to dress appropriate. So I talked
2 to her about dressing. And I said, look, let's do some
3 professional development.

4 I want you to go to a conference with me. I'm going
5 to an EOC conference in Birmingham. I want you to ride
6 with me. Or let's go to the diversity conference.

7 So I started getting her involved in different
8 conferences with me. If it was like a two-day conference
9 or a one-day conference, I would let her tag along.

10 Or we have our HR association meetings. And I'm on
11 the executive committee. Sometimes I may not attend.
12 I'll send her in my stead. I said, okay, you're
13 representing me. I need you to do X, Y, Z. You have the
14 agenda. I need to go over whatever I would have gone
15 over. Talk about this. Talk about that. Come back and
16 give me a report. So she really, really got involved.

17 And, you know, and then her office, I was like,
18 okay. I'm really neat. I need -- we need things to be
19 in place. This is Human Resources. We cannot have
20 papers everywhere. You don't know what's on a sheet of
21 paper you don't want somebody to see.

22 You know, you can have a Social Security number on
23 it, or you could have someone's medical file or
24 something. It has to be put in its place every day.

25 So we did -- I established some rules with her, some
26 boundaries within the office with her. My inbox is
27 literally on her desk. So that way when I walk past it,
28 I already know there's something I need to look at.

1 At the end of the day, if it's clean, we know we've
2 gone through everything. We've at least put our eyes on
3 things. We know what's going on.

4 So she understands that. She's a stickler about
5 that with me. If somebody brings something in, she's
6 like, no, no, no. Give me that. I need to put --
7 Dr. Rollins will get it.

8 You know, so she's very good at that. And then she
9 files every day just the way I want her file. You know,
10 she dresses much, much better.

11 You know, she's really bloomed with that part. I
12 said, because we're the first face people see in
13 representing the college. You know, you don't want to
14 come in looking any kind of way. We need to present
15 ourself in a professional manner.

16 Also, I said, when I am talking, I need to make
17 sure, if someone's in my office, if you hear me raise up
18 my voice, that means I need you to get up and close my
19 door.

20 So we have our own little signals. And she knows
21 how to catch on. And she will close the door. And she
22 will do different things.

23 But she's advanced so much. I can send her, like I
24 said, to meetings in my stead. I can leave her in my
25 office, you know, to run the office while I'm gone.

26 If there is an issue, she knows to call me or to
27 text me. And we will handle the situation or she will
28 e-mail. She will copy me on things. You know, she'll

1 make sure I'm always in loop on what's going on.

2 So she's developed very, very well over -- over
3 time. If I left today, I know she's one of the people I
4 would recommend to step up to that position.

5 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: That's
6 wonderful.

7 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: And I've always told her,
8 I said, you know, we have ways to promote within. You
9 have to do it through what's called a growth plan.

10 Show me what you're going to do over the next year.
11 And that way, once you reach these things that we laid
12 out for you to reach, then we can write a recommendation
13 letter to the president for you to move up on the salary
14 schedule. And we have done that before.

15 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Good. Good.
16 Very good. My last question in these types of categories
17 is -- That last line is a little small.

18 As managers, we are sometimes faced with the task of
19 disciplining or even firing an associate. Share with me
20 an experience when you were faced with such a situation
21 and how you went about handling it.

22 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Well, that is my job --

23 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Right.

24 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: -- at the college. The
25 president basically will say, hey, Pam, I need for
26 so-and-so -- this is not working out. I need you to
27 terminate that person.

28 And he'd go on about his business, you know. I'll

1 call him when I'm getting ready to terminate the person
2 and say, hey, look, are you on this campus? And he'll
3 say, yes. And I'll say, do you want to go to the other
4 campus, because it's getting ready to go down? And he'll
5 say, oh, yeah, I'm leaving.

6 So, you know, you hear doors slamming. So it's him.
7 And he's taking off. You see his truck leave off the
8 campus.

9 But we had a situation just last year where we had
10 to end up terminating one of the senior executive
11 officers at the college. She was a dean. She was the
12 Dean of Finance and Administrative -- Dean of Finance and
13 Administrative Services, because so many people began to
14 complain about her.

15 We kind of knew we had some issues. I knew we had
16 issues. Some of the others knew we had issues. We were
17 just trying to deal with them, because we had to kind of
18 tread softly with her because of who she was connected
19 to.

20 So we just began to say let's just keep up what's
21 going on. Let's monitor things closely. We've got to
22 get her out of her, because it's -- it's just tearing up
23 business office.

24 And she was constantly after people. This was like
25 a campus-wide thing. It became a campus-wide bullying
26 kind of situation, because she would use her influence
27 with people to intimidate those around her.

28 So something had happened over there. And the

1 president give her an order to discipline one of her
2 employees. And she pretty much just kind of said to him,
3 I know you may write me up, but I'm not going to do it.

4 And so he told me about it. And I was like, when
5 did that happen? And so we, of course -- me and the
6 attorney, we -- you know -- okay. Okay. So what else is
7 going?

8 So we had to write down a list of things going on
9 and decide what are we going use. Because one thing
10 about it, when you have a tenured employee -- She was a
11 tenured employee -- there is a different process. And
12 terminating a tenured employee, there is due process you
13 have to go through.

14 A nontenured employee, you just give them a 15-day
15 notice. As long as there's nothing discriminatory,
16 within 15 days, you can let that person go.

17 So we knew we had to deal with the tenured -- the
18 tenured process. And with that process, me, as Senior
19 Personnel Officer, I would make a recommendation to the
20 president, because he would serve as the hearing officer.
21 And there had to be a separation.

22 When they wrote -- the legislature wrote the Student
23 First Act where the president can't serve as the judge
24 and the jury, so they made -- appointed HR Directors as
25 the Senior Personnel Officer who would make the
26 recommendation to the president. And then the president
27 would preside over the proceeding.

28 But if was some kind of -- if he was involved in any

1 kind of way with what was going on, then he would have to
2 recuse himself, and the chancellor of the two-year
3 college system will appoint another president, say, from
4 Coastal, to come to Montgomery to preside over that
5 particular hearing.

6 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay.

7 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: So he would -- the
8 president of that college would withdraw himself and let
9 another president come to preside over it.

10 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: So you have
11 had to face --

12 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Yes. I've gone through
13 it all.

14 So, anyway, with this person, we ended up saying,
15 okay, let's stick to insubordination. We know got that
16 without a shadow of a doubt.

17 I think she -- we had audit findings that year
18 before, you know, after we'd gone through and cleaned a
19 lot of audit findings up in the past. And it kind of
20 started creeping back into the same situation. So we
21 used that as well.

22 I said, okay. Me and the executive vice-president,
23 who I report to, we was the person to met with her to let
24 her know she was being terminated.

25 And I was like, okay, I think that if we give her a
26 chance to resign, she would -- she would go away.
27 Because if we go through this proceeding, we don't know
28 what else she may do, what she may say. We don't know.

1 So, you know, the attorney and the president and
2 everybody was like, well, I don't she's going to go for
3 it. And I was like, you know, she'll -- she'll -- she'll
4 go for it. Because she's not the type of person who's
5 going to want us to bring all these witnesses on the
6 stand and said she bullied them and did X, Y, Z.

7 So we had to kind of, I guess, bluff her out a
8 little bit, I guess you could say. So we brought her
9 into the office. And when she came in -- Normally when
10 people see me, they know what's going on. Oh, God. Why
11 is she in here?

12 So when she came in and she sat down, and we pretty
13 much said, look, we're -- we're asking you to resign,
14 because of some situations. You can choose to resign, or
15 we're going to move to terminate through Student First.

16 And here's a -- We had a severance package that the
17 attorneys had put together saying you're going to retire
18 in a couple months anyway. So if you retire, go on
19 administrative leave, nothing will happen. You will go
20 out in peace.

21 And, of course, she signed it. And the executive
22 vice-president was sitting across the table like -- and,
23 of course, I was just kind of rushing her to hurry up and
24 sign before she changed her mind, you know.

25 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Let the ink
26 dry.

27 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Yeah. Hurry up. Hurry
28 up. Then we couldn't find a notary. We're here. Where

1 is the notary? Where's the notaries? Where are they?

2 So I stepped outside the room and called the
3 attorney and said, there's not a notary. What are we
4 going to do?

5 He was like, okay, just get a third person as a
6 witness to sign saying they witnessed or whatever and you
7 won't have to have a notary. So we said, okay.

8 So we got one of the other deans to come in to watch
9 her sign. And they signed. And that's how that ended.

10 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: That's
11 interesting. Very good. Thank you.

12 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Everybody in the college
13 was like, she's going to retire?

14 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Thank you so
15 much. Those are the end of my questions.

16 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Okay.

17 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Whether at Bishop
18 State or someplace else, we all have opportunities to
19 either start some things or accomplish some things.

20 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Uh-huh. (Indicates
21 affirmatively.)

22 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Give us an
23 example or maybe the example of something that you've
24 started or accomplished as a group --

25 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Oh.

26 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: -- or as an
27 individual --

28 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Okay.

1 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: -- that you're --
2 that you're the proudest of.

3 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Okay. The proudest I
4 think I can say I am -- Of course, like I stated before,
5 I started the HR from the ground up with nothing, with
6 absolutely nothing but an old, outdated handbook.

7 But out of all of that, I think our new employee
8 orientation program is something that I'm very, very
9 proud of that.

10 Because when I started, I just felt like I was just
11 dropped in the payroll division to fill out tax forms and
12 all this type of stuff, and just left alone.

13 And I was like, well, where am I supposed to go?
14 Where is my office? Or what am I supposed to do? And,
15 you know, I was just kind of left, you know. And I felt
16 like, oh, my God. I don't think they want me here.

17 So I called my boss at AUM and I said, I don't think
18 they want me here. And she's like, no, you're going to
19 do this. You can -- She was prior military as well --
20 You can do this. And I was like, okay.

21 And I said, okay, well, where is my office? And
22 they were like, you're in admissions. And I was like
23 admissions? HR in admissions? They had -- I didn't have
24 a place to go, so they just stuck me in the office.

25 And I was like, okay. I have to make the best of
26 this. And then it was like my second day on the job, the
27 president at that time, he called me to his office and he
28 said, okay, let's start a new employee orientation

1 program. I need you to have an orientation, you know,
2 pretty soon or whatever.

3 And I was like, well, yes, sir. Okay. So when do
4 you want me to have it? And I was thinking he was going
5 to say like next month. He was like, oh, let's have
6 it -- Back then they had Blackberry's. And so he pulled
7 out his big Blackberry. And he was like, oh, let's do it
8 Thursday.

9 And I was like Thursday? Two days from now,
10 Thursday? In my head, I was going -- I said, yes, sir,
11 okay. And I was writing down stuff. And I'm like, okay.
12 And I was like, okay.

13 And I left, and I went to my office. And I was
14 like, oh, my God. Oh, my God. What am I going to do? I
15 don't even know what the policies are. You know, the
16 policies are outdated.

17 And okay. I was like, okay. Calm down. Calm down.
18 Pull it together. You know, you can do this. You can do
19 this. So I did. I got the policies, and I read day and
20 night, literally day and night, day and night, just
21 trying to get a grasp of all the policies.

22 And, fortunately, at that time, they had a lot of
23 policies on the website. So I was able to go and look
24 there. And then I able to go ahead and put together a
25 PowerPoint real quick and kind of walk around the campus
26 and just find the different locations of everything,
27 because I didn't know.

28 And I went in, I think it was the night before -- it

1 was around -- it was around Thanksgiving time as well.
2 And my husband came with me. And he helped me set up the
3 room, the orientation room.

4 And my mom, you know, she's, you know, oh, yeah,
5 you've got to have some decorations for Thanksgiving in
6 the room. So she had me do all of this stuff.

7 So we had food. I had snacks. I just got it out my
8 own pocket. And I said, I'll just -- I don't even know
9 how to do a purchase order. I don't even know if they
10 can cover this stuff. But I can't worry about that.
11 I'll just pay out of my pocket. It looked good.

12 So I did. I went and bought snacks and all of this
13 stuff. And it ended up being the best thing we could
14 have ever done.

15 And right now it has evolved over the years.
16 Because every new group of new employees coming in for
17 year, at the end of the year, we always send a survey out
18 to get their input on what they liked the most, what
19 could be improved, any suggestions. We're always asking
20 for suggestions to make it better each year.

21 It's getting better and better. We're down to now
22 we have a new academy where it's a yearlong process for
23 new employees coming through. It's just not that one
24 day.

25 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay.

26 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: It's a yearlong process.
27 Also, if you start -- Say, if you start today --
28 Sometimes we may have to start someone by themselves,

1 because, you know, we're in the business of education.
2 So you can't wait for the next month or the end of the
3 month to bring somebody in. You have to bring them in
4 when you can.

5 So we will do individual orientation where we will
6 sit down with that employee and go over everything, just
7 as if we were in a big group.

8 Of course, we give paraphernalia from the college.
9 We take them on tours. You know, we take them out to
10 lunch. You know, we make them feel really, really
11 welcome, that we really, really want them at the college.

12 Because I -- Like I said, I know how I felt as a new
13 employee left alone. We buddy them up with a mentor in
14 their particular division or whatever it is that job --
15 Say, if they're in maintenance, we'll pair them with
16 another maintenance person to kind of walk them through,
17 keep up with them, make sure they're doing different
18 things the correct way.

19 And then we invite that person to be a part of the
20 orientation so they can share their experience with the
21 person, being their mentor, their buddy.

22 And so it's progressed over -- over the years. You
23 know, we have an online aspect of it now. We do the
24 harassment training online. When they're done with the
25 harassment training, it kicks out a certificate. That
26 certificate is put in their personnel file.

27 And the end of the year when have our faculty and
28 staff retreat, we would recognize those employees and

1 have them stand and, you know, just kind of put them on
2 the screen and let everybody see them.

3 We were taking pictures throughout the year and
4 posting them. We have -- on Facebook, on the college
5 Facebook, we'll put the pictures out there. You know, so
6 that has evolved over the years. And I'm -- I'm really
7 extremely proud of that.

8 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Very good. Very
9 good. On the horizon, do you see new approaches in the
10 HR arena that you would like to see tried, whether at
11 your current employer or with us, if you're successful
12 being our HR person? Are there new -- What's the new
13 thing that you can see coming?

14 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: One of the new trends --
15 HR trends out there -- I just hit on it just a little
16 bit -- are the different generations in the workplace.

17 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Okay.

18 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: And being able to
19 recognize the different characteristics of these
20 generations in the workplace.

21 We all -- Let's say if we all are on the team
22 together, and we are all from one of each four
23 generations -- or the 5th generation is coming in now.
24 It's Generation Z. But they're in high school, but
25 they're coming.

26 But be able to work in teams to understand our
27 differences. The way a traditionalist may view things,
28 they're more loyal to the company. No matter what it's

1 asking you, you need to do it without question.

2 You know, that's just the way -- that's that
3 generation. That's my mom's generation. That's what
4 they do. They don't -- no questions asked. You just do
5 it. And you do it. And don't job hop from job to job to
6 job. That's just not good.

7 Then you have your Baby Boomers. Your Baby Boomer
8 pretty much says, hey, we're loyal to the company as
9 well. You X'ers and Millennials, you need to wait your
10 turn before you get promoted. You have to work for the
11 next 25 years to get to where I am, so you just need to
12 wait.

13 And then, of course, there's your X'ers. We're
14 pretty much the laid-back workers. As long as you're
15 doing what you're supposed to do, we're fine.

16 You know, we don't like to be micromanaged. We
17 don't like somebody to stand over our shoulder. We're
18 not going to stand over somebody's shoulder. We're going
19 to hold you accountable, you know, to do what you need to
20 do and what you're supposed to do, but we're not going to
21 stand over you. To us, that's a waste of time. You
22 know, you should be able to do what you need to do when
23 you're told to do it.

24 Then you have your -- your -- your Millennials, like
25 I described my -- my assistant, you know, full of energy;
26 think they're supposed to get promoted, go to the top.

27 They're supposed to be Commissioner today. You
28 know, they've been on the job all but a week, you know,

1 but they have the answer to every problem, you know.

2 And then you have your Z people coming in who -- we
3 have like -- I know you've heard of dual enrollment. You
4 have students in high school taking college classes out
5 of high school. That's the Z generation. They're coming
6 out.

7 But the new trend is we have to be able to find ways
8 to partner with all of those generations in the
9 workplace, being able to understand and accept those
10 differences and then still be able to work as a team to
11 get, you know, common goals accomplished.

12 And then, for instance, we've come out with an app.
13 And we -- I have the IT people looking at an HR app. You
14 know, the group now, the -- the generations now want
15 to -- to be able to submit leave from their smartphone.
16 You know, why do it on paper? Or, you know, to them,
17 it's a waste of time.

18 And it -- it helps when you're able to do it online,
19 you know, do an app, you know, submit the leave. It's a
20 way to let your supervisor know you're not able to come
21 in today, through your phone app.

22 A lot of the emergency plans now are on apps.
23 Everything is on apps, you know, some type of app. So
24 app is a -- is a big, big, big thing now.

25 Training apps, you know, getting away from a lot of
26 paper, day-to-day paper, just being able to communicate
27 and take advantage of the technological advances.

28 That -- that's the newest trend now, just being able

1 to look at those generations and bring in all those
2 different technological advancements coming into the
3 workplace. And that's where it's really heading now.

4 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Thank you, ma'am.

5 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Okay.

6 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: I'm just
7 going to touch on a couple things. Everything else has
8 been covered.

9 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Okay.

10 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: So you
11 understand how our system works here with contract
12 employees versus merit-based employees?

13 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: I do -- when you say
14 contract employees, so we have contracts as well. We
15 don't have merit employees either.

16 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Okay. So
17 you're -- if you were to assume this position, you would
18 be a four-year contract employee --

19 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Gotcha.

20 MR. MATTHEW BROWN: -- which is -- which is
21 sometimes just as good as the Commission is good.

22 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Okay.

23 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: We get an
24 election every four years.

25 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Okay.

26 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: And, you
27 know, sometimes things change. But those four-year
28 contract employees, that's exactly what it is.

1 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Okay.

2 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: And then you
3 have all the people that work under you are the
4 merit-based employees.

5 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Okay. I got you. At the
6 college, we used to be contract employees. Every year we
7 all would get a contract. And it's kind of like we found
8 ourselves being stuck with all of these employees. The
9 good, the bad, and the ugly --

10 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Right.

11 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: -- you're stuck with
12 them, you know, because we're in a contract with them.
13 But when the Student First came out, that went away. And
14 we were able to give them appointment letters.

15 We appoint them to the position, but we weren't
16 stuck with them if they did not work out. We did not
17 have to pay them out or buy them out. You know, we could
18 let them go within a certain timeframe.

19 But we used to be under that contract. But, now,
20 the presidents are on contracts. They're on two-year
21 contracts. And then as far as merit, like I said, we
22 have the tenured employees.

23 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Uh-huh.
24 (Indicates affirmatively.)

25 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: I think it's
26 similar to tenured.

27 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Yeah.

28 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Merit.

1 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
2 Well, it's a little bit different. I mean, the tenured,
3 you know, you've got to have ten years, you know, before
4 you become eligible --

5 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Right.

6 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP)

7 GRUBER: -- for retirement.

8 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Right. Vested. Right.

9 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
10 We're kind of same way. But the merit is, you know --
11 they -- they strictly are -- they're merit people. These
12 Commissions cannot direct anybody to do anything.

13 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Uh-huh. (Indicates
14 affirmatively.)

15 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
16 I mean, they work strictly for their department heads.

17 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Uh-huh. (Indicates
18 affirmatively.)

19 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
20 And HR is in charge of all of those folks to make sure,
21 you know, that --

22 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: They're doing what --

23 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP)

24 GRUBER: -- they're following the same things, you know,
25 making sure --

26 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Okay.

27 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP)

28 GRUBER: -- you know, the policies are being followed.

1 And, you know, and if they've got a grievance, you know,
2 it goes before -- we've got a grievance board. And --

3 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Yeah.

4 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP)

5 GRUBER: -- everything is set up, you know, and
6 everything. It doesn't come to us --

7 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Right.

8 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP)

9 GRUBER: -- until a certain point. I mean, you know, the
10 day-to-day stuff does not come to the Commission.

11 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Okay.

12 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
13 It strictly goes to the HR Director and the department
14 heads. And they work that out, you know, with their
15 attorneys and stuff, you know. Then, you know -- it's --
16 but it's -- it's a long -- it's a -- it's a process.

17 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Process. Okay.

18 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
19 And it's set up by -- it was set up by the legislature.

20 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Okay.

21 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Yeah. In
22 order for the County Commission to have any powers,
23 pretty much the local -- well, the legislature --

24 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Uh-huh. (Indicates
25 affirmatively.)

26 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: -- has to --
27 we have an enabling act, which is a local personnel act.
28 And the four Commissioners have ten appointed contract

1 people, and HR is one of them.

2 And then everyone else, the 600 and some-odd that
3 work for the County, are under one of those ten --

4 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Gotcha. Okay.

5 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: -- each of
6 those ten. And so but yes.

7 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Okay.

8 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: I just want
9 to make sure --

10 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Yeah. We
11 just want to make sure before people uproot and come.
12 And --

13 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Right.

14 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: -- you're
15 here for four years and then you're gone.

16 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Right.

17 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Most people
18 that are -- you know, some of the -- you know, like one
19 of our second candidates is not from Baldwin, not
20 technically working --

21 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Uh-huh. (Indicates
22 affirmatively.)

23 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: -- in the
24 County system.

25 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Uh-huh. (Indicates
26 affirmatively.)

27 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: And but
28 there hasn't been a lot of volatility in the HR

1 Department.

2 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Right.

3 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: It's been
4 one of more stable departments as far as the ten
5 appointed positions.

6 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Right.

7 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: So it's not
8 as volatile as a few of the other ones.

9 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Okay.

10 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Just to help
11 you out.

12 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Okay.

13 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Yeah.

14 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: So after the four years,
15 does that person get reappointed or --

16 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
17 You're appointed.

18 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: -- could --

19 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Yeah.

20 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
21 You're appointed every four years --

22 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Okay.

23 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP)

24 GRUBER: -- for another four years.

25 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Okay.

26 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: As a mater
27 of fact, what just recently happened when we had the new
28 Commission come in, they reappointed everyone that had a

1 contract. There were two interims.

2 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Uh-huh. (Indicates
3 affirmatively.)

4 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay? We
5 split one position up that was doing a dual.

6 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Uh-huh. (Indicates
7 affirmatively.)

8 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: And so that
9 opened a position, because we had nine people doing ten
10 jobs. So we split one job. So it opened up a position
11 for Administrator.

12 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Okay.

13 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay? And
14 then there was the HR, Personnel Director retired. So
15 that opened up that position. And so we had acting
16 interim.

17 And then we wanted to -- The same thing in EMA.
18 That guy resigned before we even came into office. And
19 so there was an acting interim. So what we decided to
20 do, as a new Commission, is we wanted to be objective.

21 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Uh-huh. (Indicates
22 affirmatively.)

23 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: And so we
24 wanted to open up those positions to competitive
25 interviews.

26 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Uh-huh. (Indicates
27 affirmatively.)

28 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Because that

1 had not been done for a while. Because this is a
2 political environment.

3 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Right.

4 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay? And
5 so we were hoping to, you know, hopefully bring in a lot
6 of great applicants.

7 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Okay.

8 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: All right?

9 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Got you.

10 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: And we started
11 out with 61.

12 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Whoa.

13 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: And we're
14 down to three.

15 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: And we're down to
16 three.

17 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Wow.

18 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: So I say that
19 because you should take great pride in making that part
20 of the cut.

21 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Oh, okay.

22 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: And -- and --

23 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: There were
24 five selected. Two dropped off. And you're the first of
25 three that we're actually --

26 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Wow. Isn't that
27 something?

28 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: --

1 interviewing this afternoon. All right?

2 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Thank you for sharing
3 that.

4 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay.

5 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
6 I've got a -- a question. What do you think the biggest
7 challenge of this job is going to be?

8 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: The biggest challenge of
9 any, I think, HR Director position is being able to make
10 sure that you stay fair and consistent at all times.

11 It's not necessarily a problem if you're a person
12 with high integrity and you understand your role. Sure
13 you run into situations that you hate. You know, it's
14 unfortunate. You know, you're human, just like
15 everybody.

16 You know, sometimes people say HR people are not
17 human. But we are human. We do feel sad. You know,
18 even if the person -- the way I see it, sometimes when a
19 person is fired, you know, I'm like, well, they fired
20 themselves.

21 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: That's right.

22 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: You know, we don't fire
23 them. You know, we didn't do this. You know, this is
24 the -- the consequence that resulted from an action.

25 And you do feel bad, in the back of your mind, after
26 it's all over at night. You know, you want to go to
27 sleep. And you're like, that was so unfortunate. I
28 really hate that for the person.

1 But you have a job to do. And you're hired to do
2 the job. My president always says, I'm the good cop;
3 you're the bad cop.

4 Unfortunately, we have to be bad cops sometimes.
5 That's what we do. But I think as long as you're able to
6 understand your role as an HR Director, walk in a high
7 level of integrity, confidentiality, be fair, and always
8 consistent.

9 Consistent, consistent, consistent. It's very,
10 very, very important. I'd rather consistently wrong
11 versus being inconsistent. Because at least you can say,
12 I did not know. Because you -- it was consistent, what
13 you was doing wrong.

14 You know, just be consistent. Make sure you treat
15 everybody the same, regardless of whether you know them;
16 you don't know them; you know, they're an enjoyable
17 person.

18 You know, you're here to get a job done. To do the
19 job, just be fair, be consistent, be fair. Apply the
20 policies and procedures the exact way across the board,
21 and you should be okay.

22 Because anytime -- You can't stop lawsuits, or you
23 can't stop EOC complaints, or you can't stop people from
24 filing grievances or whatever.

25 But you should be able to back up what you're doing,
26 your action, what you decide, what steps you're taking.
27 You should be able to always back that up and show why
28 you made the decision that you made.

1 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

2 Okay.

3 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: So I -- I think being
4 consistent and being fair is one of the major, major
5 things. And just, you know, walk in a high level of
6 integrity and work ethics. You know, that's important.

7 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

8 All right. Anybody else have anything?

9 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: No.

10 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: (Indicates
11 negatively.)

12 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: (Indicates
13 negatively.)

14 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
15 Well, thank you for taking your time out of your -- your
16 job, coming here and interviewing with us. And, you
17 know, we really appreciate is it, you know.

18 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Well, thank you so much.
19 I -- I appreciate it. I told mom, I was like, I saw that
20 position. I was like, I never seen this in -- in Baldwin
21 County. What is going on, you know? So she's worried me
22 and worried me. You know, you need to come home. So you
23 got to hear all of that.

24 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: So it
25 wouldn't a problem with you transitioning back to Baldwin
26 County?

27 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: Definitely not.
28 Definitely not. I've -- I've been in the system for

1 22 years. You know. I know the Commission is part of
2 ERS. It's in the same system as the ERS, so there's no
3 conflict with that.

4 Like I said, family is here. This is home for me.
5 My daughter is graduating in May. You know, she's been
6 living on her own for the last three years. We've been
7 getting her prepared to be alone. And -- and she's been
8 doing an excellent job at that. We feel comfortable with
9 it. And, plus, it's only two and a half hours away.

10 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Awesome.

11 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: So there's no problem.

12 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Good.

13 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: I'm good. So and I -- I
14 really appreciate you guys --

15 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Thank you.

16 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: -- interviewing me today.

17 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Thank you.

18 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
19 Thank you so much.

20 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Thank you so
21 much.

22 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Thank you.

23 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Appreciate
24 you.

25 MS. PAMELON ROLLINS: All right. Bye-bye.

26 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
27 All right.

28 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Do you know

1 if the other lady is here?

2 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: I do not know. Would you
3 like me to check?

4 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: No. I
5 just --

6 MR. RON CINK: Yeah, I'll check. No, sir.

7 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
8 She is here?

9 MR. RON CINK: No, sir. She's not here.

10

11 **6-E - INTERVIEW OF MS. DEIDRA HANAK FOR THE POSITION OF PERSONNEL**

12 **DIRECTOR**

13 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
14 All right. To kind of conserve some time, if y'all don't
15 mind, we'll go ahead and --

16 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Yeah, that's
17 fine.

18 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Yes, sir.

19 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP)
20 GRUBER: -- and do Ms. Hanak.

21 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: Ready.

22 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
23 Deidra, if you don't mind, please tell us a little bit
24 about yourself.

25 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: Well, I was born and raised
26 here in Baldwin County. I'm originally from Fairhope.
27 And now I live in the Magnolia Springs area. I'm
28 married. I have two children. And they're probably a

1 whole lot tougher than this job is some days.

2 But when I graduated high school, I actually stayed
3 in the area. And I became a volunteer fireman for the
4 City of Fairhope. I was the second volunteer -- female
5 volunteer fireman.

6 And that got me hooked. That gave me the bug. And
7 I got into EMS. And I worked Rural Metro, which ended up
8 being bought out by Medstar. And I worked there for
9 several years.

10 And I worked there in a few capacities. I worked my
11 way through Intermediate EMT school, which is one step
12 below a paramedic. And when I became pregnant with my
13 first child, I worked in the office. And I did a lot of
14 the medical billing and a lot of the office work.

15 I went back on the ambulance for a couple years.
16 And when I became pregnant with my second child, I came
17 into the office and began with human resources.

18 And so that's how I got started here in this
19 profession. Human Resources isn't always necessarily
20 something that you choose to be when you grow up. It's
21 more a career that chooses you.

22 So -- so that's how I'm here. And -- and I -- what
23 I've found in the whole process was that I love to -- I
24 love to help people.

25 And whether it was helping as an EMT, serving my
26 community, or helping my employer as a whole. That's
27 where I find my happiness. And that's where I -- that's
28 where I feel like I do the best is in serving others.

1 And so I did a brief stint with First Gulf Bank.
2 And then a job opportunity with County opened here. And
3 I started here as the Safety and Training Coordinator.
4 And that was in 2006.

5 And at that time, there was -- that was the very
6 first safety person the County had ever had. It was a
7 brand-new position. So there wasn't anyone to train me.
8 There wasn't anyone to say, this is what you need to do.

9 So the first few years, it was sort of a
10 self-guided, try to build a program from scratch. After
11 the first four years -- Let me back up a little bit.

12 There -- there wasn't a whole lot of guidance. A
13 lot of the guidance that I received was from Meadowbrook
14 Insurance Company and our insurance adjustors. And this
15 is what we would like for you to see -- Or like -- this
16 is what we would like to see.

17 And so I tried to implement as many training
18 programs as I could. We implemented the CPR training
19 program at that time.

20 But they would come. And -- and you'll find they'll
21 come and they'll audit, you know, our workers' comp
22 practices. And so each year they would give us a
23 different set of here's things that you need to work on.
24 So I was able to build a program from that.

25 After a few years, some of the programs that we
26 implemented they took back to the insurance company. And
27 they were wanting to implement them statewide with their
28 entities, the spreadsheets that I had come up with and

1 the programs that we were trying to -- to produce.

2 And so that was -- that was one of my first
3 achievement, I believe, here. After that first four
4 years, we had a changeover in Commissioners. And so I
5 moved into more of a Personnel role.

6 I did, for a while, miss being out in the field.
7 Because I missed seeing all of the employees. You know,
8 I was out there every day working with them. And I
9 really was able to build a relationship from -- from the
10 ground up with the employees.

11 So they knew they could come to me with problems.
12 So, to me, it was sort of a natural move into the more
13 administrative part. And I held those relationships with
14 those employees. And they still know that they come to
15 us.

16 We -- we had a brief stint where safety was kind of
17 put to the side, because we were shorthanded and with the
18 turnover. But the end result ended up -- ended up with
19 us being able to get two safety people, a Risk Manager
20 and a Safety Coordinator.

21 And so, from there, we were really able to launch
22 the safety program up. And so over -- it's probably
23 completely way off, but, you know, over the course of the
24 past nine to ten years, we have saved the County over a
25 million dollars in premiums.

26 So at one point, it was 1.8 million dollars in
27 workers' comp premiums. And I believe last year, it was
28 about seven hundred thousand. So that's -- that's one of

1 our achievements that we've made.

2 But so I've just kind of moved up, and I've learned
3 every aspect of this job that I feel like I could learn.
4 And I'm learning every day, but there's still new stuff
5 to learn every day. And so -- so I just feel, you know,
6 I've worked my way here. And I'm very proud for it.

7 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
8 Okay. All right.

9 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay. You
10 sat in on the other ones. And so there are five
11 questions that I have for Personnel Director. And they
12 are behavior-based questions.

13 My first one is: There are times when we feel
14 overwhelmed by our workload or some interpersonal problem
15 in the office. Tell me about such a time and how you
16 handled it.

17 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: Well --

18 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: And you can
19 go back to any of your jobs. It doesn't have to be your
20 current job.

21 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: I will say that at any given
22 time in Personnel, it can be feast or famine. We have
23 lull time, which is normally at the beginning of the year
24 where there's not a whole lot going on. And then
25 probably April, it's -- it's nonstop until December.

26 And it does get -- it gets crazy, and it gets
27 hectic. But you have to rely on your team members at the
28 end of the day.

1 And being the interim, I've been doing my best to do
2 both jobs and -- and try to keep up. And what I quickly
3 had to learn was to rely on my coworkers, you know, that
4 I could teach them, and that they will immediately absorb
5 it.

6 And -- and so far they -- they have all stepped up
7 to the plate. There's no way that -- that I could do it
8 without -- without our team in place.

9 And for as long as I've been there, anytime that
10 we've ever had need, -- you know, open enrollment, it
11 gets busy. We have health fair. Everybody steps up,
12 whether it's their portion or not.

13 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay.

14 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Can I ask
15 something --

16 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Sure.

17 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: -- on that
18 question? When you say it gets crazy from April to
19 December, what -- what's -- what's the craziness caused
20 by?

21 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: You know, it's almost like
22 beginning of an -- of a -- We -- we start our budget
23 season a little bit early so we can kind of prepare when
24 budget meetings start.

25 And so it's meeting with the different department
26 heads, trying to get their ideas on paper, and then
27 trying to work those, trying to work through their plans.

28 So what we did, you know, we'll meet with them. I

1 believe you're in one of those pre-meetings. It starts
2 in June. It's like, okay. This is what I want.

3 And so I will take those wants, when it comes to
4 personnel, and I have to -- have to figure out a way to
5 implement where it doesn't impact the budget as much as
6 it possibly could.

7 We try to keep headcount down as much as possible,
8 but where all parties involved can be satisfied with the
9 end result.

10 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Is that what
11 the Director does, or is that your -- what your position
12 was as an Assistant?

13 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: Well, that's a trick
14 question.

15 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Well, no. I
16 wasn't sure if that was something that, you know, if you
17 were managing the person under you, or if it's, you
18 know -- I know you're kind of doing a dual role right
19 now. But in the past when you had a Director and you
20 were the Assistant, how --

21 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: I was -- I was involved in
22 the majority of those meetings.

23 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay.

24 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: I -- I did a lot of the
25 budget. At the end of the day, after the budget
26 meetings, I would be the one that would handle all of the
27 changes. She would help me.

28 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Is that

1 something that the Assistant normally does, or is that
2 something that the Director handles?

3 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: I believe it's something
4 that the Director handles.

5 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay. But
6 in the past, it's been --

7 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: (Indicates affirmatively.)

8 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay.

9 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
10 Well, and --

11 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: We've had to
12 learn all these positions.

13 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
14 And one --

15 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: We still --

16 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP)

17 GRUBER: -- thing, too.

18 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: -- don't
19 know.

20 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP)

21 GRUBER: -- you mentioned about the craziness. You know,
22 they're dealing with our benefits as well, you know, with
23 all our insurance and all that and then dealing with all
24 these people, you know.

25 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Claims and
26 all that stuff.

27 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
28 Well, the claims, you know, is a completely different

1 thing. But the biggest part, you know, is dealing with
2 the insurance people, you know, making sure that we're
3 going into the thing.

4 And, I mean, that correlates with, you know, working
5 with the rest of the team to make this thing happen. You
6 know, you know, we're trying to -- we're trying to --
7 we're trying to save money, but yet we're still trying to
8 get the best -- best thing we can for our employees and
9 citizens.

10 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: That's
11 right.

12 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: There's a lot of moving
13 parts to it. And we actually will -- will begin to start
14 working with Cobbs Allen on our next year's premium year
15 starting March or April.

16 So there's a lot of moving parts going into
17 implementing the budget, you know, other than just
18 sitting through the meetings. It's a lot
19 behind-the-scenes work.

20 And so we -- Kim and Ron, we're always in there
21 together. You know, well, okay. What can we do th tweak
22 this so we don't have to raise the premiums on the
23 employees. And so we do -- we work that month to month.
24 It just seems about April it all just starts getting
25 ramped up and ready to go.

26 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay. There
27 are times when one needs to make a decision or
28 recommendation based on limited information. Share with

1 me an example of how you went about making such a
2 decision and what was the result. I can repeat it, if
3 you need me to.

4 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: There's -- That's a --
5 that's a tough one. A lot --

6 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Any -- any
7 time in your career.

8 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: And I can -- and I have to
9 go way back for that. I know -- I'll say for example on
10 an EMA call, on a 911 call, you -- we get a call, I mean,
11 it could be at two o'clock in the morning. And it would
12 be for one fallen or unknown medical. There was so many
13 unknown medicals.

14 But you get there. And it's probably one of the --
15 it'd be the biggest medical emergency of your life. And
16 so working in that position in particular really taught
17 me how to be ready for the unknown.

18 You always have be prepared. I -- I can come in
19 here and think of a hundred questions that I would need
20 to answer. I'd need to be prepared for that.

21 So working in that capacity, we would -- We have to
22 bring all equipment in, because we don't know what one
23 fallen meant. One fallen means they could not be
24 breathing, or one fallen could mean that they're old and
25 they fell and they can't get up.

26 And so that would be the best example that I could
27 give on working on very limited information. You just
28 always have to be prepared and -- and be trained.

1 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay.
2 Describe a situation when you uncovered a serious
3 problem. How did you bring the issue to the attention of
4 management and peers? And how did you resolve it?

5 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: Well, that could be every
6 day. I would have to -- You know, in -- in working in
7 Personnel, you can get something as simple as a simple
8 e-mail. And sometimes you have to read into it more than
9 what it is. And you have to start asking questions.

10 And there's -- there's been a lot of difficult
11 situations over the years. I will have to say one of
12 ones that comes to mind -- I know it's -- I was already
13 kind of prepared to talk about it if I needed anyway.

14 But with the EMA earlier, you know, we -- we had a
15 big mess at EMA. And it -- it cultivated over a couple
16 of years. And so it was one incident or two incidents
17 few and far between.

18 The employees, you know, one at the time would --
19 would come to us. And I -- so I would have to refer it
20 to my supervisor. And I was like, okay. There's
21 something shady about this. You know, we really need to
22 look into this.

23 And I think that with the limited information that
24 she knew, she did the best that she could. But then as
25 more information would come, it got to point where we
26 could not address it with that director directly, because
27 then it would result in even further stuff for the
28 employees, even worse for them.

1 That was a big learning thing for me in my career.
2 There's a lot of things that I would have done different.
3 But I think with the information that we had at the time,
4 we did the best that we could. But once it all finally
5 ended, it's one of those we could have done so many
6 things different. And so --

7 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: But you were
8 kind of bound, because you had to answer to a contract
9 person. And then that other person that was the problem
10 was another contract person.

11 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: Right.

12 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay.

13 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: It's a peer. And so --

14 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Right.

15 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: -- you know, it was very
16 difficult for her, that she didn't really feel that she
17 could go over her peer's head to --

18 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: She would
19 have to go to --

20 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: And --

21 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: I'm just
22 trying to make sure I'm understanding.

23 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: It is. It's a very
24 difficult --

25 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: It is very
26 difficult.

27 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: -- situation to be in.
28 Because you want to -- you want to help your peers,

1 because there's not very many appointed people. You want
2 to help them as much as possible.

3 But when you see a problem, you really want to try
4 to help them correct the problem before it gets worse
5 without ever -- In that particular case, we didn't know
6 that that person was the problem the whole time. And so
7 once it got there towards the end --

8 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: And so your
9 resolution was you went to your current supervisor and
10 let her --

11 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: Right. So any time any of
12 that would come to me, I really -- I hate to say it. I
13 really tried to put more pressure on her to try to help
14 get the situation resolve. Because in my capacity, there
15 wasn't much I could do --

16 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: You
17 couldn't -- okay.

18 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: -- to resolve it. And so I
19 really felt like I was trying to --

20 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Yeah.

21 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: -- move her along.

22 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay.

23 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: Did I answer that?

24 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Yeah. It's
25 a different category; okay?

26 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: Okay.

27 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: The quality
28 of a good leader is the ability to develop others. Tell

1 me about an employee who became more successful as a
2 result of your management and leadership and how did you
3 go about developing this person?

4 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: I would have to say that my
5 employee, Andrea, is one that I was able to help mentor
6 and guide her.

7 So when -- when she came to work for us, she was a
8 temporary employee. And it was when we had all of that
9 change through. We were down a couple people.

10 I had about seven months' worth of filing on my
11 desk, and I just needed help with filing. You know, I
12 just -- please help me. I just need some help.

13 And she -- she came in, and she -- she blew us away,
14 you know, with her work ethic. And so when we were able
15 to finally create position, you know, we -- we
16 interviewed, and we hired her for it.

17 And she -- but she had zero personnel experience.
18 And so we were able to teach her over the years, you
19 know, this is -- It took a while for her to get her own
20 voice and to be able to say, hey, this is -- I think we
21 could do this better or start to ask questions.

22 But once she -- once it clicked, you know, and we --
23 we sent her to various training classes within this past
24 couple years. She actually completed her certification;
25 whereas, before, she was completely terrified of even
26 taking the test.

27 Once she passed that first test, she really over --
28 she really blossomed after that and came into her own.

1 And so now she's able to actually help train our new girl
2 in our office, Brittany, on a lot of the things that
3 she's learned over the years. And she -- she's really
4 worked her way up. And I'm couldn't be more proud of
5 her.

6 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Great. This
7 is my last one. As managers, we are sometimes faced with
8 the task of disciplining or even firing an associate.
9 Share with me an experience when you were faced with such
10 a situation and how you went about handling it.

11 And I know that's what HR's faced with. But if you
12 can answer that.

13 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: No. No. So I like to pride
14 myself on being able to develop relationships with our
15 employees. I have -- I have several friendships
16 throughout the County, some before -- I was friends with
17 them before I even started here.

18 But I always try to make clear to them, at the end
19 of the day, this is what it entails. So don't get into
20 trouble, you know, because I don't want to have to be the
21 one to come in and discipline or help discipline you.

22 So they know that -- that that possibility is always
23 there. And there has been a few times where I had to go
24 in and discipline people that I consider my friends. I
25 won't say discipline myself, but help discipline.

26 And there was one instance where one was even being
27 terminated. And so they -- they understand that that's
28 my position. And so far they've been able to respect

1 that.

2 And it's not been the easiest thing. To me, I think
3 that is probably one of the worst parts of the job, is
4 having to sit in and see someone or even terminate them,
5 have to discipline them.

6 So it's -- it's very difficult, but it's one of the
7 things you know has to come with the job, and -- and you
8 have to treat it as such.

9 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay. All
10 right. That's my questions.

11 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Deidra, tell us
12 about -- And whether it's in your current job or in a
13 previous experience -- something that you, as part of
14 your group, got accomplished or got started that you're
15 the proudest of.

16 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: There are -- you know, I
17 heard you ask that question once. And that's a really
18 good question. Because I've never been able to be one to
19 brag on myself.

20 Like I like to be the center of attention every now
21 and then, but it's hard to like think back like, okay,
22 this is everything that we accomplished.

23 And I would say we have the best team. I think we
24 have the best team in the County. I'm a little partial.
25 You know, but we've been able to band together and
26 accomplish so many things.

27 One of the biggest accomplishment that we had
28 recently was the transition into self-funded insurance.

1 We knew that that was going to be a big transition from
2 the beginning.

3 The former Commission, there were a couple that were
4 really just pushing it, like we need to have it
5 January the 1st.

6 And so we did about a year's worth of work in four
7 months to -- to get it implemented and getting the Symbol
8 Health Clinics up and running and going.

9 So that's one of those like unexpected things that
10 happened. At the end of the year, and you're like, okay,
11 well, I've a got all this going, but we're going to be
12 doing this now.

13 And so we all had to band to together to make sure
14 that that all happened within the timeframe that we were
15 assigned. So I think that was one of biggest
16 accomplishments I can think of recently, you know, for
17 our team.

18 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Good. All right.
19 What about in HR, what are some future projects that
20 you'd like to see us pursue? Are there any that come to
21 mind? And I'm not saying there are needs for them, but
22 just curious.

23 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: One of the things that I
24 really envision on the Personnel side is to be able to
25 service our employees better. Because we're not a
26 citizen-facing department.

27 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Right.

28 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: The only thing that we do

1 will be receive applications. And -- and that was -- I
2 will have to back up. That was one of our other major
3 accomplishments, was going into an online application
4 system. That was a huge task that we took that we were
5 able to complete.

6 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: When was
7 that done?

8 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: May well be two years.

9 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay.

10 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: And it took a while --

11 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: So it was
12 all paper-based before that?

13 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
14 Yeah, it was all paper-based.

15 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: All paper-based.

16 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay.

17 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: And e-mail-based.

18 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: You don't
19 need to say --

20 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Yeah.

21 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay.

22 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: We actually had --

23 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: We don't
24 have to get off on that tangent. I was just curious.

25 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: We -- we actually cut down
26 the work time from three to four hours a day of
27 processing applications to about 20 minutes.

28 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay.

1 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: I mean, it was just -- it
2 took a lot of work getting there, but it was great at the
3 end of the day.

4 I just lost my train of thought. We were talking
5 about accomplishments.

6 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: We were talking
7 about are there some --

8 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: Oh, future projects.

9 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: -- future
10 projects. Right.

11 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: So I backed up, and can't
12 get forward.

13 One of things I would really like to implement is
14 a -- a Countywide training system. And so we try -- And
15 that goes back to my roots when I first started here. I
16 did safety and training. And I did more training than
17 anything.

18 So that's actually one of my loves that I have is
19 training others and helping others. And over the years,
20 that -- that kind of went by the wayside.

21 And we do try to do our annual training to get all
22 employees in, but I really would love it implement new
23 manager training.

24 And, you know, especially if we hire a new manager
25 from outside, if we hire this -- this brand-new EMA guy,
26 he's -- he's a blank slate. So he doesn't know who to
27 contact for purchase orders. He will have to rely on --

28 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Even for us

1 as well.

2 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: Right.

3 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: It's hard.

4 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: Right.

5 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: It's still
6 hard.

7 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Still learning.

8 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: It is. It is. And so I
9 started on something like that several months ago. But
10 then with our changeover in the department, it's still
11 sitting there on my desk.

12 And -- and I really -- you know, I love -- I want to
13 go and teach like this is how -- this is how -- what we
14 expect when you do evaluations, you know, one-on-one with
15 these supervisors.

16 And so there's -- I think we can do a lot of
17 video-based training for all employees. But I'd still
18 like have that one-on-one so the employees can ask
19 questions and can meet with you afterwards.

20 I enjoy one-on-one training more than anything. I
21 hate watching videos. But that's one of the major things
22 that I would like to see implemented Countywide, is a
23 better training system.

24 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
25 You know, and that goes back, too, you know, with the --
26 with the training, it also helps with our --

27 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Insurance.

28 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP)

1 GRUBER: -- insurance. You know, I can remember when
2 we -- when they first started this training program and
3 trying to bring our point system down. And, you know, we
4 have -- we have come a long way, folks --

5 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Sure.

6 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP)

7 GRUBER: -- you know, to -- to where we're at with our
8 insurance and everything else. And our rating is getting
9 better.

10 You know, when you have a major accident, you know,
11 it pushes that out there a ways. And it take a while to
12 drop off. But we're dropping off.

13 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Sure.

14 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
15 We've eliminated a lot of little accidents that caused us
16 to have our liability rate go sky high.

17 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Sure.

18 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: And we --

19 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
20 And it's coming down all the time. But, you know, every
21 time there is a major accident, you know, I mean, that --
22 you know -- and the thing about it is, you know -- and
23 this thing with our rating, you know, it affects us
24 because of the Sheriff's Department. You know, they're
25 included in it.

26 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Sure.

27 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

28 And if you take an automobile accident like they've had,

1 a couple of them --

2 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Sure.

3 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

4 Believe it or not, the -- the death of the deputy --

5 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: Right.

6 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Sure.

7 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP)

8 GRUBER: -- is a big thing, too. So it's all part of --

9 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: The nature of the
10 work.

11 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

12 Yeah. So, you know, I mean, it all plays into it. But
13 it's --

14 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: I'm all
15 about training and leadership.

16 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

17 Yeah. But, you know, I mean, and that's -- that's the
18 thing that, you know -- you know, I got put on the board,
19 you know, ACCA's liability board. And I served three
20 years on that. And I came off of it just last year.

21 But, you know, that was -- that was very impressive,
22 you know, to see us -- what we did coming to that point,
23 you know. And it was good because of our leadership.

24 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: You don't -- you don't
25 realize like the strides you make until someone puts it
26 like on the piece of paper.

27 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: That's
28 right.

1 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Sure.

2 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: Like here's your ten-year.
3 Look at how far you've come.

4 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Well, and we are
5 competitive. And we all like attaboys and attagirls.
6 And sometimes it's good to see how you compare with some
7 other places. Because, if nothing else, you can figure
8 out how to get better.

9 My last question has to do with any new approaches.
10 Is there anything new on the horizon in HR that you see
11 that we need to explore?

12 And let me -- let me make a side comment on that,
13 too. I liked what you were talking about dealing with
14 training. We've talked about Millennials and different
15 generations. I'm about career ladders. I mean, when we
16 hire in some people, they may stay in that job forever.

17 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: Right.

18 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: But if they want
19 to get better and expand and grow and move up the ladder,
20 then I personally think that's a very significant thing.

21 But back to the question.

22 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: No. I do, too. You know, I
23 think our primary job in -- in HR, we want to recruit and
24 retain the best talent available. We have such great
25 talent here locally in Baldwin County, and so many great
26 people to choose from.

27 And I think if we -- we can keep those -- if we can
28 keep the employees as long as possible -- you know, we

1 have a great benefit system. And that's also one of the
2 things we're tasked with in Personnel is to make sure
3 that we -- we're -- we're always offering the best that
4 we can to employees, whether it's benefits or it's the
5 opportunity to grow. Because we want them to stay.

6 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Thank you.

7 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: And we want -- my personal
8 goal is to have every employee that we have stay as long
9 as possible. And I would rather train these employees as
10 best as we can and with the possibility of them leaving,
11 other than not training and have them stay forever.

12 And so my goal is to have the -- the smartest
13 workforce, you know, well trained, customer service,
14 however they need to work it and be long-term.

15 Because, ultimately, within the County, long-term
16 employees is what helps keep this County running.

17 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Sure.

18 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: And they're the -- you know,
19 right now, they're the ones training the future. So
20 that's -- that's -- that's what my end goal is.

21 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Very good. Thank
22 you.

23 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: I was going
24 ask a question I haven't asked anybody else. Because
25 everything gets covered so much, I'm going to ask a
26 different question.

27 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: Okay.

28 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Have you

1 ever been on a team where somebody was not pulling their
2 own weight; and, if so, how did you handle it?

3 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: Yes, I have. And I -- I --
4 hopefully I'll be working in a different capacity where I
5 can handle it differently.

6 But, at the time, what I end up doing is taking on
7 more, you know. I -- I will end up pulling the weight
8 that the person is not pulling. And while I will be
9 aggravated from here to the end of the earth, what I
10 learned over the years is that makes me a better person.

11 And I have -- And the weight that I have pulled, I
12 have learned more than I could ever learn not -- not
13 helping others. And so --

14 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: And the only
15 reason you couldn't take care of the situation was
16 because you wasn't in the job title to take care of the
17 situation.

18 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: Right. And so but I -- I've
19 always tried to -- to take good out of any kind of bad
20 situation. And that's always been -- This is what I've
21 learned. I wouldn't have learned how to do this job if
22 this person didn't do it.

23 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: I guess I
24 could have asked one of the funny questions.

25 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: He's got a list
26 of questions.

27 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Why is there
28 fuzz on the tennis ball? I'm just kidding. Thank you,

1 Deidra.

2 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: It helps it bounce further.
3 I taught tennis lessons when I was younger.

4 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Oh, did you? See
5 there?

6 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
7 Well, that's pretty close to what I said.

8 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: It wouldn't
9 hurt when it hit.

10 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
11 Yeah, it would hurt when it hit you in the face, you
12 know.

13 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: That's probably more like
14 it.

15 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
16 All right. What would you say the most challenging thing
17 is about this job?

18 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: You know, I mean, do I have
19 to narrow it down? I'll narrow it down.

20 The most challenging thing about the job are all the
21 dynamic personalities that you have to work with. And
22 not just -- it's on a day-to-day basis.

23 And so we have -- we have great department heads in
24 this County. But each of them work very differently.
25 And so -- and there's -- there's only a few different
26 department heads, but I actually have to work with all of
27 them.

28 And so what might work with one department head

1 isn't going to work with another. And that's always been
2 a challenge, and -- and communication.

3 And I know personally which supervisors would rather
4 pick up the phone and call and talk to you and which ones
5 would rather just have you send an e-mail.

6 And so once you get over that communication barrier
7 and you learn how to communicate with each kind of
8 personality, then that -- then that challenge -- it's
9 always going to be a challenge, but I think once you can
10 figure out the little steps, how to communicate, it can
11 be overcome a little bit.

12 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Can I -- I
13 wanted to followup with something else, because you
14 brought up a good point. And I noticed this when we were
15 doing our -- you know, when we were trying to establish
16 the -- the ten positions, that when people -- you could
17 see that may have been a lack of training in some aspects
18 of how -- just approach, and, I mean, going back to
19 standard interview-type things and not being able to
20 communicate in the right ways how you would want
21 something.

22 And I see your training module you have in mind
23 maybe could -- could benefit each department, could be,
24 you know, specifically or unique to each department that
25 we have based on the jobs that are -- You know, because
26 training the Solid Waste people is going to be different
27 than training people at the animal shelter.

28 You know, there are common things, but different

1 aspects on training. And this is something that I would
2 like to see within our Personnel Director, is have
3 different types of training for all the employees. Just
4 a thought.

5 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: Yeah, I agree with that.
6 That's -- that will be -- that's one of my biggest goals.
7 We had worked towards that a while back. But, I mean,
8 even since this, ten and twelve years, technology has
9 come so far.

10 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: And what's next?

11 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: Right. Always plan for
12 what's next.

13 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: You know,
14 one of these days we may just be like a -- I don't
15 know -- like a computerized image sitting in these
16 chairs.

17 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: And can be four
18 places at the same time.

19 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: That's
20 right.

21 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Avatars.

22 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: You know. With the
23 Polycoms, it's really -- it's helped us. We're going to
24 try to start doing that even with our employee
25 orientation where we have people starting at the
26 landfill.

27 They need to be there at 6:30 in the morning. And
28 it's really been a chore getting people going back and

1 forth. Well, they have one of these.

2 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: There you go.

3 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: So they are able to do that
4 without any lost work time.

5 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Yeah. Because
6 time is money, yeah, and effort.

7 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: It's a big
8 county, too.

9 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: A little bit.

10 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: It's a long ride to Bay
11 Minette.

12 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: A little bit.

13 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
14 All right. Anybody else have anything else?

15 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: I'm good.

16 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: I'm good.

17 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: Thank y'all. Thank y'all so
18 much.

19 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Thanks,
20 Deidra.

21 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
22 Thank you so very much.

23 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Thank you for
24 putting together all the other stuff.

25 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: Oh, you're welcome.

26 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Very
27 beneficial to us.

28 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Yes.

1 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Do we have
2 time to do something, stretch or something?

3 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
4 Yes. Let's take a five-minute stretch break.

5 (A recess was taken at 1:36 p.m.)

6 (The Baldwin County Commission Special Meeting resumed at
7 1:40 p.m.)

8

9 **6-F - INTERVIEW OF MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD FOR THE POSITION OF**
10 **PERSONNEL DIRECTOR**

11 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
12 I'm Commissioner Gruber. How are you doing?

13 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: Nice to be here.
14 Good.

15 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Hey.
16 Commissioner Ball. How are you doing?

17 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: My name is Joe
18 Davis. Nice to have you with us.

19 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Hi. Billie
20 Jo Underwood.

21 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: Hi.

22 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: And I think
23 most everyone has sat in that chair.

24 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: Okay. That's the
25 hot seat.

26 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: As I told
27 everyone, all of this is tied, so you can't throw it at
28 us, and we can't throw it at you. It's all tethered

1 down; okay?

2 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: I'll keep that in
3 mind. Thank you.

4 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: We're new to
5 this.

6 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
7 All right. Jacqueline, if you don't mind -- if you don't
8 mind, if you would, just tell us a little bit about
9 your -- yourself and what interested you in this job.

10 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: Okay.

11 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
12 So we can kind of get to know you a little better.

13 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: All right. I'll
14 start with I'm originally from Mobile. And I currently
15 live in Spanish Fort.

16 In terms of my career, I first started with
17 Amazon -- I'm sorry. Target, Target Distribution in
18 Huntsville. And there I worked as a warehouse manager.

19 I applied for both HR and Operations, but I just
20 recently gotten my bachelor's degree in Human Resources.
21 Didn't have a whole lot of HR experience. So they
22 offered me an Operations position instead.

23 And so in the Operations world, I managed a group of
24 hourly employees. They basically did all of the supply
25 chain, distribution.

26 We worked in warehouses and so were responsible for
27 storing food and also making certain that products got to
28 our outbound customers so they could be sent to the

1 stores.

2 I also did some support functions as well. I was a
3 part of the college recruiting team, their mentoring
4 program where I mentored incoming college graduates who
5 were just getting started with their careers, helping
6 them develop their managerial skills and so on and so
7 forth.

8 I also worked on our activities committee to help
9 create activities for employees that were morale boosting
10 and kept them engaged.

11 And so while I was working for Target, the Home
12 Depot reached out to me. They were starting up a
13 distribution center in McCalla, Alabama.

14 Brand-new to distribution. It was a brand-new
15 venture for the Home Depot. And because they heard about
16 all of the great training Target did for their employees,
17 they were heavily recruiting Target employees.

18 And so, at the time, I was in Huntsville. McCalla
19 was a little bit closer to Mobile. And I saw this as a
20 great opportunity as well. So I took the job with Home
21 Depot.

22 My primary functions were essentially the same as
23 what I was doing at Target. However, with this being a
24 brand-new venture, I was even more involved in training,
25 interviewing, hiring, and that type of thing, trying to
26 get the building staffed.

27 And so while working for the Home Depot, after my
28 first year, I was promoted to a Consolidated Officer

1 Manager. The scope of the role was a little different.

2 Once I transitioned to that role, I was responsible
3 for all the administrative function in the facility. My
4 team was a little bit smaller, but our expectation and
5 performance was essentially same.

6 And so while working at the Home Depot, Amazon
7 reached out to me for a Learning Manager position in
8 Nashville, Tennessee.

9 So I interviewed for that job. And once I competed
10 the interview, the recruiter called and said, hey, if
11 you're interested in this position, we can make you an
12 offer today. But the panel felt like you would be better
13 suited for Human Resources.

14 And so it was like it came full circle. And I
15 thought, okay, finally. This is what I've been wanting
16 to do. And so I accepted that position. The job ended
17 up being in Lexington, Kentucky. And so I relocated my
18 family there.

19 I worked as an HR business partner. And what
20 created the need for that role, they'd just done a
21 complete overhaul of their HR team due to some breaches
22 of confidentiality.

23 And so we basically had to start from the ground
24 floor to reestablished relationships, build trust with
25 the team there, and basically change the culture.

26 And so I really enjoyed my position there. But
27 there was a time when -- During my time at Amazon, my
28 father took ill. He got diagnosed with prostate cancer.

1 And so that's what had me -- that's what prompted me
2 to start looking for opportunities back here in this
3 area. So I saw the Kimberly-Clark position. And the
4 stars were aligned. I got the HR Specialist role and was
5 able to come back home with my family.

6 Still some of the primary responsibilities there
7 were essentially the same as what I did for Amazon. The
8 only difference is this was a human facility. So all of
9 my other positions had been in nonhuman mills or nonhuman
10 facilities. So that was different for me.

11 But we had a great relationship with the leaders
12 there. You know, we all had one end goal, and that was
13 to make certain that we had fair and consistent processes
14 and policies, and that we were treating our employees
15 with respect and doing what was in the best interest of
16 them.

17 And so my primary goal with -- primary role -- with
18 Kimberly-Clark was staffing and recruiting, but I also
19 did a lot of labor relation and employer relations,
20 investigations. I did both hourly and salary recruiting
21 and also some compensation and benefits.

22 I was with Kimberly-Clark for four years. And just
23 last year, Kimberly-Clark did a reduction in force. And
24 as a result of that reduction in force, the least tenured
25 salaried employees, their position were eliminated. And,
26 unfortunately, I was one of them. So that was my reason
27 for leaving.

28 I'm also in grad school, finishing up my master's

1 degree in human resources, which I'll be done with the
2 end of May.

3 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD:

4 Congratulations.

5 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: So I've been -- so
6 I've been focusing solely on that. And also, you know,
7 taking this time to spend with my kids as well, until I
8 find that right opportunity that I've been looking for.

9 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Awesome.

10 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Very good.

11 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Thank you.
12 This is what we have -- And, by the way, I'll give you a
13 brief. We are a new Commission that was just elected in
14 November. And we --

15 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: We are the
16 rookies.

17 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: We three are
18 the rookies and -- and Skip has been around a little
19 longer than that. He's the pilot right now helping us
20 out.

21 We had -- The Personnel Director retired. We have
22 an interim in the position right. But we, as a new
23 Commission, wanted to open it up to competitive
24 interviews.

25 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: Okay.

26 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: And we -- I
27 have five questions that I've asked each applicant the
28 same question. And they behavior-based questions. So

1 I'll ask these questions, and then they'll have a few
2 others.

3 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: Okay.

4 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: My first
5 question is: Is there are times when we feel overwhelmed
6 by our workload or some interpersonal problem in the
7 office. Tell me about such a time and how you handled
8 it.

9 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: Well, working with
10 Kimberly-Clark, when I first started with the company, I
11 had a week to spend with the person I was replacing. So
12 I didn't get a lot of face time with her.

13 And then in addition to that, after being there
14 about a month, my manager was moved to another facility
15 to help them with their contract negotiations.

16 And so as far as our HR team was concerned, there
17 were only two of us at the time, my manager and myself.
18 So here I am on this island by myself, no real
19 transition, not really knowing completely what was
20 expected of me at the time.

21 And so that one-month assignment for my manager
22 ended up turning into a full-time position. And so I was
23 without a manager for over a year. So, needless to say,
24 that can be a little bit overwhelming.

25 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: I would
26 think so.

27 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: But what I did to
28 help with that is prioritize things that I really needed

1 to focus on; identify, you know, the low-hanging fruit,
2 things that were right within my reach to be able to work
3 on and improve.

4 So one of the biggest opportunities we had was
5 training. We had -- it was very disorganized in terms of
6 the filing room where we kept training documents. There
7 was no consistent process in place on how to get
8 employees through the training process and promoted and
9 getting their paperwork out timely.

10 So that was something I knew I could tackle
11 immediately and just bring some order to. And then in
12 addition to that, I worked closely with my site leader to
13 find out exactly what he wanted me to focus on.

14 And so we kind of worked on a plan to be able to
15 address whatever things he needed me to work on, those
16 critical things. We met weekly to talk through those.

17 I also talked to the director as well, monthly. I
18 had one-on-one check-ins with her to just make certain I
19 was working on the right things.

20 And so in doing that, that helped me get some order.
21 It helped me find out exactly what those things were that
22 I needed to work on and be able it get that transition
23 until we found a replacement.

24 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Next
25 question is: There are times when one needs to make a
26 decision or recommendation with limited information.
27 Share with me how you went about making such a decision
28 and what was the result.

1 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: Well, you know, in
2 working in HR, sometimes that's pretty common that we
3 have to make decisions without having -- not having all
4 the right information.

5 There was one incident where we had an employee. It
6 was on the weekend. The employee had reported in to work
7 and appeared to be under the influence. And so it was
8 around eleven o'clock at night. And we don't have
9 managers on nightshift nor on the weekends.

10 So I received a call from one of the hourly team
11 members. He and other employee, they were shift leaders,
12 and they had made an observation that the person was or
13 appeared to be under the influence.

14 And so I talked them through the steps to take. The
15 first thing was to take a partner, make certain that
16 someone else was identifying the same behaviors.

17 And then the second thing was to get the employee
18 off any type of moving or operating equipment. Because
19 we didn't want to compromise his safety or the safety of
20 others.

21 And then once we did that, we actually had a taxi
22 service come, remove the employee from the premises. We
23 did a reasonable suspicion drug test -- drug and alcohol
24 test. The employee did test positive.

25 And so we -- after -- on Monday when I got with the
26 rest of the team, we made the decision to suspend the
27 employee.

28 And so really it was just doing what was in the best

1 interest at the time for the employee and the company as
2 well, you know, preventing any safety hazards from
3 occurring, removing the employee from the premises, and
4 then consulting with the rest of the team on Monday to
5 decide what we needed to do. And that was the end
6 decision, was to suspend the employee.

7 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: There you
8 go. Next question is: Describe a situation when you
9 uncovered a serious problem. How did you bring the issue
10 to the attention of management and peers, and how did you
11 resolve it?

12 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: Um.

13 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: In any of
14 your work.

15 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: When I was working
16 for Amazon, we actually discovered or I discovered a
17 problem with one particular employee. He came with a
18 payroll concern.

19 And so initially it was about a pay increase that he
20 was supposed to have received, and he hadn't received it.
21 And so after digging a lot deeper, it turned out that
22 this pay increase was supposed to have happened a year
23 and a half prior, and he never noticed it.

24 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
25 Wow.

26 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Wow.

27 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: He'd only noticed
28 that one particular paycheck. And so I did, like I said,

1 some research to find out what was happening for this
2 particular incident or that particular paycheck. We
3 discovered that he had never received a pay raise.

4 And so then that caused me to see if there were any
5 other employees that had been impacted as well. And
6 there were. So as a result of that, we had to partner
7 with our payroll team. We had to do a retroactive pay
8 increase.

9 And to the employees' benefit, they received a
10 lump-sum payment. So we were able to resolve the issue.
11 But it was very unfortunate that here this occurrence had
12 taken place and had gone on for over a year and nobody
13 caught it.

14 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Payroll was
15 one responsible --

16 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: Right.

17 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: -- not HR.

18 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: Right, right, right.
19 HR discovered it, but Payroll was the one --

20 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay.

21 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: -- who missed it.

22 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay.

23 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: So we were able to
24 get that resolved for them.

25 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: A quality of
26 a good leader is the ability to develop others. Tell me
27 about an employee who became more successful as a result
28 of your management and leadership. And how did you go

1 about developing this person?

2 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: Well, there was an
3 hourly employee -- I'm sorry. Not an hourly employee.
4 He was a salaried leader at Amazon.

5 And this person, he had been with the company for
6 two years. He was a college hire. And his performance
7 had gotten to a point where he was actually put on a
8 Performance Improvement Plan.

9 But this actually happened -- Let's see. I think I
10 had only been with the company maybe six months. But I
11 actually worked with his manager to develop the
12 Performance Improvement Plan. And I also had to sit
13 on -- sit in the performance discussion when the manager
14 reviewed it with the employee.

15 So we sat down and we had this discussion with the
16 employee. And he seemed completely surprised that his
17 performance had gotten him to this point.

18 And so we went through the entire plan. We talked
19 about isolated incidents that had occurred and times
20 where he had received specifics that he didn't act
21 accordingly.

22 So after we got the Performance Improvement Plan, of
23 course, we had timelines for him to complete certain
24 activities, kind show some type of improvement.

25 The PIP was for 60 days. And so our goal was to
26 coach the employee within 30-day increments to let him
27 know how he was doing.

28 Well, I actually took that step further and met with

1 the employee weekly. And the reason why I did that is
2 because I could see that there were -- there was a
3 breakdown in communication between he and his manager.

4 And I felt like there needed to be a third-party to
5 intervene, someone who was, I guess, a sounding board for
6 them to be able to vent and voice any frustrations they
7 had and be able to give them counsel and support as well.

8 And by us having our weekly check-ins in addition to
9 the monthly check-ins he had with his manager, he
10 eventually came off the Performance Improvement Plan.
11 And after his third year, he actually got promoted to a
12 different site.

13 So that was a success story. Because usually we see
14 the opposite occur. You know, when people reach that
15 point, in most instances, they give up, and their
16 performance falls downward. But this was someone who
17 truly wanted to do well. And just by taking that extra
18 step, that -- that helped him.

19 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Well, thank
20 you. Last question: As managers we are sometimes faced
21 with the task of disciplining or even firing an
22 associate. Share with me an experience when you were
23 faced with such a situation and how you went about this.

24 And I do know that that is what HR has to do. But
25 maybe you could tell us a little bit about how you
26 handled those types of things.

27 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: Well, I always say
28 that people fire themselves. And the reason why I say

1 that is because it's usually their actions that get them
2 to that point.

3 And we, you know -- if we do our jobs effectively,
4 they know that that's about to happen before it even
5 happens.

6 There was one instant when I worked at Amazon where
7 we had an hourly employee. And Amazon has some pretty
8 rigid rules when comes to meeting production goals. An
9 employee cannot meet less than 95 percent. And if they
10 fall below 95, at some point, they will lose their job.

11 And so we had a situation with employee who fell
12 into that bracket. You know, and it's not immediate. So
13 they do get some type of performance discussion to kind
14 of help them kick it up a notch.

15 And then we set up a training plan for them if there
16 are any training gaps. And then after we've done that,
17 then we proceed to termination.

18 And so we'd taken those steps with this employee.
19 And we got to a point where we were at termination. And
20 we met. And when we all got in the room, it was myself,
21 my HR manager, her manager, and the employee.

22 And we had this discussion. The employee said that
23 she had no knowledge that it was getting to this point.
24 And after further investigation, what we realized was
25 prior to her falling below 95 percent, the week before
26 that, she was at 98 percent and received positive
27 feedback. And then when she fell below, there was no
28 performance discussion.

1 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: She didn't
2 know.

3 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: She didn't know. So
4 it went from 98 percent to 95 percent, no performance
5 discussion, now moving to termination, which we were well
6 within our right to do, based on our guidelines.

7 And so we proceed to terminate this employee. And
8 so after we left that meeting, I followed back up with my
9 manager. And I said, this just doesn't feel right.

10 After finding out that it was our miss or the
11 manager's miss, it was my thought that, you know, we need
12 to have a discussion with this manager. Because we
13 should never walk into a situation and the employee says,
14 well, I didn't know. He just gave me positive feedback
15 and now we're firing now.

16 So we actually brought that employee back, because
17 it was the right thing to do. So after we -- we talked
18 about it. We brought the employee back. It was
19 conditional, because they still had to meet our
20 performance standards. But we did bring them back
21 after -- after having that discussion.

22 And, you know, eventually it ended up with the same
23 result. But at that point, we knew we had done our due
24 diligence to make certain that, you know, this person had
25 received the feedback they needed. And then we moved
26 forward accordingly.

27 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: That's a
28 good story. Thank you so much. That's the last of my

1 questions.

2 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Jacqueline, in
3 any of your experiences, give us some of the information
4 on anything that you are proud of you that you either
5 accomplished or you and your team started that you feel
6 very proud to have been a part of.

7 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: One of the things
8 that I'm proud is a training program. That was my baby.
9 I birthed it when I was working at Kimberly-Clark.

10 And when I say training program, we had a very
11 challenging time staffing for E&I Technicians and
12 Maintenance Mechanics.

13 For instance, we would post an E&I position, and
14 that requisition would stay open for a year. And we may
15 get one person hired during that timeframe.

16 What we were finding was the challenge was we
17 couldn't find people that pass our employment assessment,
18 and we couldn't find people with the skill set that we
19 needed to be able to do the job successfully.

20 So after, you know, having such a -- a rough time
21 doing that, I talked to the hiring manager, because one
22 of the things the union leaders constantly talked about
23 was an apprenticeship program that they used to have
24 years ago.

25 And for whatever reason, the hiring managers were
26 not bought in to doing the apprenticeship program. So I
27 had the union leaders screaming apprenticeship; the
28 hiring manager saying, no, we don't want to do that.

1 So, you know, I'm like, well, there has to be a
2 compromise. And so after talking with the union leaders,
3 the apprenticeship program, originally, they would have
4 instructors from Bishop come onsite, and they would train
5 these employees. And they would work an apprenticeship
6 program and eventually get full-time -- or move full time
7 into a technician role.

8 So I said, well, why don't we partner with Bishop
9 again, and this time we'll have them create a curriculum
10 specifically for Kimberly-Clark and our technicians.

11 So we did that. We partnered with them. We had
12 them develop this curriculum for us. And so rather than
13 looking for talent externally, we made this available for
14 internal employees who were interested in and E&I or a
15 Maintenance track.

16 And the interest was extremely high. So found a way
17 to narrow down most of the candidate pool. We narrowed
18 it down to ten employees. We paid for the training. It
19 was on their off time.

20 The curriculum that we developed, it would take a
21 year to complete. And then after that year, they would
22 take our assessment. And if I passed, we moved them into
23 these roles.

24 And since the development of that, we've had four
25 classes to complete that program. And we've been able to
26 staff our E&I Technicians or those roles as a result.

27 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Very good.
28 That's an excellent program. I may want to talk to you

1 more about that and on some other things that I'm working
2 on.

3 What sort of future projects do you see us possibly
4 needing in Baldwin County in the HR area? Now, I know
5 you haven't been here and been in the weeds, so it speak.
6 But based on your vast experience -- And I very impressed
7 with that -- what sort of future projects do you see HR
8 being involved in? Do you have any?

9 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: Well, you know, in
10 terms of HR, training is always needed. And, you know,
11 one of the -- the biggest gaps that I've seen just in my
12 experience is having training programs specifically for a
13 new leader, helping them with soft skills, leadership
14 capability, how to have performance discussions,
15 performance management.

16 Because when you're looking at bringing on new
17 employees or even new entry-level or hourly employees,
18 it's important for the people in these leadership roles
19 to know exactly how to do it. And if they're set up for
20 success, then your hourly staff is set up for success as
21 well.

22 So I can see that being something that would be the
23 official, you know, just having training available for
24 employees or leadership training available for those
25 employee that want to take advantage of it.

26 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Very good. Very
27 good. And that kind of covers if there's any new
28 approaches that we need to -- What's on the horizon in

1 HR? I come from a generation that the only thing in the
2 cloud was rain. And that just shows how old I am. But
3 I'm acknowledging the fact that things are different.

4 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Icebreaker.

5 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: And what's next?
6 What's next. I mean, there are -- there are things that
7 are on the horizon. IT used to be a department. Now it
8 impacts every department, whether it's health or safety,
9 you know, whatever.

10 So is there something on the horizon that you're
11 aware of that you'd like to see us jump into?

12 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: No, not that I'm
13 aware of. I know a lot of companies are using different
14 types of applicant tracking systems that are
15 all-inclusive. For instance Kimberly-Clark just adopted
16 Workday.

17 And Workday is an HR system that you can do
18 recruiting. You can do job postings, perform management,
19 performance review. It can house disciplinary actions,
20 those Performance Improvement Plans that I talked about.

21 Employees can go in and update direct deposit,
22 contact information. So those things are very
23 beneficial, because they're user friendly for your
24 employees. And they make HR's life a whole lot easier
25 when they work properly.

26 So, you know, I see a lot of companies adopting
27 that. Amazon used PeopleSoft, which is different from
28 Workday, but the concept was essentially the same. And

1 that happened during my time working there.

2 And the Workday initially started off just as an HR
3 system to keep employee data, but it grew to recruiting
4 as well.

5 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Very good. Thank
6 you, ma'am.

7 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: I think my
8 main question that I've been asking everybody is kind of
9 like a question for you type statement for me. But you
10 understand how the system works here in Baldwin County
11 with the employment in this position is a four-year
12 contract?

13 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: Yes, sir.

14 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Whereas,
15 Personnel Department has had probably the longest track
16 record of somebody staying in that position for a
17 consecutive number of years.

18 We're changing now. So every time this body
19 changes, there could be now directors in different spots.
20 So we just -- I just -- we just always -- the people that
21 aren't from Baldwin County and are coming down here
22 interviewing, we just wanted to know your feeling on that
23 process, that you've relocated -- Or you're not really.
24 You're coming -- not really relocating.

25 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: I'm right here.

26 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Some people
27 are coming from long places, you know, long ways for the
28 job. And we just want to let them know that this, you

1 know, is only good for four years, but it could further.
2 So just didn't know what your feeling was on that.

3 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: I'm comfortable with
4 that. You know, having moved back here, I have no desire
5 to leave. My kids won't let me. So, you know, and I saw
6 that when I read the job posting. And it definitely
7 didn't deter me from applying.

8 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Well, thank
9 you for -- for applying and coming in and interviewing.

10 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: And there was a
11 time -- there are ten contract people. There was time
12 that they were annual contracts.

13 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: Oh, wow.

14 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Luckily we've
15 moved to --

16 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
17 Moved to four years, finally.

18 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: -- four years,
19 which is better for us and better for our --

20 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: That's for
21 the current Commission. You know, it doesn't mean
22 that --

23 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
24 It's at their discretion.

25 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: -- if we're
26 not successful --

27 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Yeah, yeah.

28 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: We'll have

1 to run and be reelected.

2 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Sure.

3 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: But if there
4 is new Commission that comes in, in four years, they can
5 go back to one year.

6 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Yeah.

7 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: I mean, it's
8 possible. So, yeah, it is a political environment. But
9 I take it as a compliment that you applied.

10 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Certainly. Well,
11 and you strike me as somebody -- HR is not just hiring
12 people, we're trying to keep people.

13 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: Absolutely.

14 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: And that's
15 workforce development right there.

16 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: Yes.

17 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
18 Thank you very much.

19 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: Yes, sir.

20 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
21 I've got one question real quick for you. What would you
22 think would be the most challenge thing about the job?

23 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: Learning what's
24 expected specifically for this role. You know, HR is
25 universal. You can pretty much assimilate into any
26 organization and know the general guidelines and scope of
27 an HR role.

28 But each organization is different. And each

1 organization has different expectation, different
2 processes.

3 And so coming into a role for me, personally, you
4 don't come into a role expecting to change. You want to
5 get a feel for it. See what's working well. See what
6 things you can improve upon. And so coming into the
7 role, just knowing exactly what those things are is one
8 of the bigger challenges.

9 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
10 Okay. You know, we are under what we call a merit-based,
11 you know, employment. It's on a merit thing. They're --
12 they're permanent employees.

13 You know, they're part of the RSA system, retirement
14 system. And they are considered permanent, unless they
15 do something wrong. And they can be -- they can be
16 terminated.

17 But, you know, and they're protected by -- by the
18 merit system, you know. None of these four --

19 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: We don't give
20 direction.

21 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
22 None of these four here --

23 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: No.

24 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP)
25 GRUBER: -- can actually go out and direct any of these
26 merit people. You know, we have ten people that we can
27 talk to, basically. And it's not saying we can't talk to
28 somebody, but --

1 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: We can't
2 discipline.

3 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP)
4 GRUBER: -- we can't give directives and we can't direct
5 anybody. Not saying we can't talk to people. But, you
6 know, you just can't give directives.

7 But, you know, those -- those ten people are the
8 ones that, you know -- that's their -- they are the ones
9 that's under the contract.

10 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: Okay.

11 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
12 And so it is -- it does sometimes cause, you know,
13 things. And we have a personnel grievance board. If
14 something happens, you know, there's a grievance board.

15 You know, that's the process. Because we don't hear
16 about it until -- unless there's a lawsuit or something.
17 Then, you know, we're brought up into it. Then we're
18 brought into it, you know, letting us know what's going
19 to happen, you know.

20 We do the hiring, basically. And all that is, we
21 don't do -- we don't get into interviews or none of that.
22 But what we do, we have to -- we have to say yes. We --
23 we budget money for that. And this person -- we're --
24 we're hiring this person to fill that spot. That's the
25 only thing we got involved with everything with this.

26 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: Okay. I understand.

27 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: I lost my
28 training of thought. Yes. This -- this is new for us.

1 And so we're just excited that you --

2 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Sure.

3 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: -- applied.

4 And we ended up with three out of 61.

5 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: Oh, wow. We had
6 five, but --

7 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: We've seen a lot
8 of resumes.

9 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: -- two
10 dropped off. And we had to kind of do a crash course
11 ourselves --

12 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Sure.

13 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: -- so a
14 training program would be very much helpful, even --

15 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Sure.

16 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: -- for
17 Commissioners.

18 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: We need one for
19 us. That's the truth. They didn't give us a book and
20 say, here's how you to do that.

21 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: We had to do that.
22 I had to do that at Kimberly-Clark. I had to train all
23 of the salaried employees just on how to do interviews.

24 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Yeah, sure.

25 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: Because, oftentimes,
26 if you don't have that skill, you can ask the wrong
27 question.

28 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: There you go.

1 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: And now we're in
2 trouble.

3 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: That's right.
4 Leading down a bad path.

5 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: Exactly.

6 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: It was very
7 difficult for us, because I don't have an HR background.
8 And I don't think any of us do.

9 And I had to reach out to people. Because this
10 position was open. You know, this was one of the
11 positions that was a little difficult. So I had to reach
12 out to people that I knew from other organizations that
13 were HR to help me with questions and things like that.

14 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: Well, and that's
15 helpful, too. I had to do that, too, the first year I
16 didn't have a manager. I had to learn to be very
17 resourceful --

18 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Sure.

19 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: -- and reach out to
20 other sites as well just to get a feel for what other
21 sites were doing as well so I would know.

22 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: I remember
23 my question now. With you finishing your degree, your
24 masters, would there be any problems with you -- a start
25 date or anything if you were selected?

26 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: No. My classes are
27 online.

28 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: You're

1 online.

2 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Very good.

3 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: And even now I
4 usually do my schoolwork at night, because I have my
5 children running me crazy most of the time. They're in
6 sports and band --

7 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Sure.

8 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: -- so I've allotted
9 time to do schoolwork.

10 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: All right.
11 Very good. Okay.

12 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Any questions for
13 us?

14 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: I do have some
15 questions. So what do you all see as one of biggest
16 challenges for someone coming into this role?

17 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: I will tell
18 you what I faced, which was simply learning how the
19 organization of Baldwin County Commission worked.
20 Because it's -- there's 67 counties in Baldwin County --
21 I mean, in Alabama. In Baldwin County.

22 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: It seems like it.

23 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: It's been a
24 long day. There are 67 counties. They are all run
25 differently. We are a branch of the State. It does not
26 give us the statutory powers that municipalities have.

27 So we are very dependent upon the local legislative
28 delegation to help us. And there was a personnel act

1 passed specifically for Baldwin County. So I -- I would
2 probably say that it took me -- I'm still learning on
3 this.

4 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: I was going to
5 say, I am, too.

6 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: But I really
7 didn't even -- I didn't get that the whole year and a
8 half that I ran for office.

9 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: Wow.

10 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Because it
11 was -- Running for office was the most challenging thing
12 I had ever done. And then it was like, okay, now you got
13 elected. And it was like, whoa, this is not like
14 anything I've ever seen in my life.

15 But I do see a lot of potential. We live in a great
16 county. And so I think that once someone grasps that --
17 But you did make a very good point where you said that
18 basic HR principals are the same --

19 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: That's exactly
20 right.

21 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: -- okay and
22 that learning to adapt to a certain organization is not
23 that big of a deal for an HR person, once you got in
24 there and if you've got good support.

25 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: Yes.

26 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay.

27 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Well, in -- in my
28 case and in Skip's case, we were previously in city

1 government. City government is allowed to do anything
2 that is not illegal, pretty much.

3 Counties, however, can only do what they're
4 authorized to do, either by the Constitution or by acts
5 of the legislature. And that's taken me a little --
6 shifting a little bit to understand.

7 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: Right.

8 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: But you've got to
9 remember we weren't created from the bottom up. We were
10 created for the top down. And I think that's the way I
11 kind of justify it in my mind.

12 But we're bigger than the state of Rhode Island.
13 We're growing 15 to 17 people a day. And that's not
14 something that we could stop, even if we wanted to.

15 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: Right.

16 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: What we want to
17 do is make sure our 14 cities -- And we've got 14 cities
18 and towns -- that they prosper and that our connectivity
19 with them makes everybody prosper.

20 But we're a big -- we're a big county. And we've
21 got a lot of great stuff going on. There are counties --
22 Well, there are 67 that are in settings that I don't see
23 how they're going to --

24 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
25 Survive.

26 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: -- make ends
27 meet, I really don't. But in our case, we're blessed.

28 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: We're

1 blessed.

2 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: And then we have
3 six million people that come to this county that come to
4 visit here and vacation and such. And they're a big part
5 of our livelihood as well, so by keeping our quality,
6 keeping our local people comfortable, but also welcoming
7 people into the -- into the county.

8 You did a great job. And I appreciate you.

9 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: Thank you.

10 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Thank you.

11 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
12 Thank you very much.

13 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: Thank you. So what
14 are the next steps in the interview process?

15 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
16 Well, we'll -- we'll --

17 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: We've
18 completed --

19 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP)
20 GRUBER: -- decide.

21 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: -- the
22 interviews.

23 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: You're the
24 last one.

25 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
26 Yeah. You're the last one. So we'll compile our stuff
27 and make a selection at that point.

28 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: And next --

1 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

2 And hopefully --

3 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: We have to
4 do this --

5 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP)

6 GRUBER: -- we want to try to do this --

7 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: -- in an
8 open --

9 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Yeah.

10 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: -- public
11 meeting.

12 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
13 That's why we have -- that's why --

14 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: So we can't
15 deliberate behind closed doors or anything like that.

16 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Right.

17 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: I think --
18 now, I can't speak for anybody else. My identity these
19 days is one of four. But I'm tired today. And there's a
20 lot that's happened today.

21 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Oh, sure. And
22 we've got some more things to deal with later today, too.

23 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: I think that
24 I have seen some very good --

25 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Sure.

26 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: -- people
27 today. And I want to be able to soak a little of that
28 in. But hopefully as soon as next Wednesday, we may be

1 able to --

2 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Sure.

3 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: -- have our
4 next public meeting, which would normally have been on
5 Tuesday. But due to Mardi Gras --

6 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: Okay.

7 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: We moved it to
8 Wednesday.

9 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: -- it's been
10 postponed one day.

11 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: And everybody
12 will get communication from us.

13 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Yes. And
14 that is a public meeting. You're welcome to attend as
15 well, since you are local.

16 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: Okay.

17 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay. But
18 you're always welcome to attend. And we're Facebook
19 Live, too. So you don't have to drive --

20 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Sure.

21 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: -- to Bay
22 Minette. But, yeah, I just can't thank you enough. I
23 take it as a compliment that you applied. Because --

24 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Certainly.

25 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: --
26 governmental units sometimes get a lot of -- you know,
27 but I know that from working with these guys, that we all
28 have a passion to serve Baldwin County. And so far I've

1 not seen any personal agendas which can get in the way of
2 serving the people.

3 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: And what's really
4 great is we had 61 people apply for one job, 61 for
5 another, and 39 for another. And I am so proud we've
6 done this.

7 Because everybody we've interviewed tells me that
8 this was the right way to go about it. And I'm tickled
9 about that.

10 Now, that's just my feelings. I can't speak for
11 them, and I don't want to. But you're an example of why
12 we should have done this. And you have a bright future.
13 If it's not with us, it'll be somewhere else, and it
14 might be with us.

15 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Wonderful.

16 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Thank you.

17 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
18 Thank you so much.

19 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: Thank you for your
20 time.

21 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Thank you, ma'am.

22 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: Thank you.

23 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: So glad to
24 meet you.

25 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Nice to meet
26 you.

27 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
28 Thank you.

1 MS. JACQUELINE WHITFIELD: Thank you.

2
3 **7 - DISCUSS AND CHOOSE CANDIDATES FOR THE APPOINTED POSITIONS OF**
4 **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (EMA) AND PERSONNEL DIRECTOR**

5 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

6 Okay. That concludes all of the applicants, our
7 interviews of all applicants. And how do y'all want to
8 do this? Do you want to come back?

9 MS. KIM CREECH: Want to do any whiteboard
10 stuff?

11 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: We can -- we
12 can do whatever we want, because we have a court reporter
13 here.

14 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
15 Yeah.

16 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Whatever y'all
17 want to do.

18 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
19 If y'all -- if y'all -- if not --

20 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: I kind of --
21 I haven't written my numbers down for EMA yet, but I kind
22 of have them -- I can write them down. I really am --
23 I'm really not ready to make -- I don't know that I'm
24 ready to make a decision yet on Personnel Director. But
25 if I'm the only one, then I'll -- I'll -- I'll -- I'll
26 try to.

27 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: I guess my
28 question would be if we don't do it now, when would we --

1 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
2 We'd have to do it Tuesday, sometimes Tuesday during the
3 meeting.

4 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Wednesday.

5 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
6 Wednesday. Excuse me.

7 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: The next meeting.

8 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
9 I live and die by Tuesdays, you know.

10 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: When you do
11 it at the meeting, we won't be able to --

12 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Well, we
13 each would have our -- our --

14 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: It's not
15 doing like we did the last guy.

16 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: That's right.

17 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: We -- we
18 won't know. And each one of us will vote yea or nay on
19 each one of each one of these people. It'll go by --
20 it'll go by an individual basis. Applicant Number 1, yea
21 or nay, all the way across.

22 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Yeah.

23 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Applicant
24 Number 2, yea or nay, all the way across it. If we can't
25 make a decision today, it's going to be --

26 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay. If we
27 come up with our numbers then today, and we can --

28 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: No. Can't

1 do it. We have to do it while she's here.

2 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Right.

3 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Or if we go
4 to the meeting, we don't know anything what we're
5 thinking.

6 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: All right.
7 Okay. So, I can take a few minutes --

8 MS. KIM CREECH: Unless two people --

9 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: -- to go the
10 restroom --

11 MS. KIM CREECH: Unless two people discuss it
12 and --

13 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: -- and I'll
14 come back.

15 MS. KIM CREECH: Two people discuss it.

16 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: No. We're
17 not talking about that.

18 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: No, no, no,
19 no, no.

20 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: We need to
21 all be able to discuss it.

22 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: I -- I can
23 do it. I can do.

24 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Okay.

25 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Just let me
26 go to the restroom.

27 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Okay.

28 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: And I will

1 be back.

2 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Don't you
3 think that's the right thing?

4 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
5 Oh, yeah, yeah.

6 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Otherwise --

7 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: We may not
8 even have an employee hired.

9 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Well, we're in
10 front of the cameras, and don't have an idea.

11

12 (A recess was taken at 2:22 p.m.)

13 (The Baldwin County Commission Special Meeting resumed at
14 2:40 p.m.)

15

16 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
17 All right. We're back. And it looks like, you know --
18 it looks like I'm going to get to start first.

19 MS. KIM CREECH: Yes, sir.

20 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
21 So let me go ahead and give you mine -- my number.

22 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Which one are we
23 doing?

24 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
25 We're going to start with EMA.

26 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: We're going
27 to start with EMA.

28 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

1 That's the way we started out this morning.

2 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Right.

3 Right.

4 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

5 All right. For Jessie, I had 33. Scott Wallace, I had
6 35. And Zachary, I had 27. All right. You want to go
7 down -- You want to finish this?

8 MS. KIM CREECH: Yeah. Let's finish this
9 first.

10 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

11 Okay. All right.

12 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Me? Jessie
13 is 31. Scott Wallace is 32. And Zachary is 38.

14 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: All right. Mine.
15 Jessie was 34. Scott's 32. And Zachary is 39.

16 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: All right.
17 I got Jessie at 36, Scott at 34, and Zachary at 38.

18 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Add each one
19 up. Jessie is 134 --

20 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: One, three, four.

21 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: -- divided
22 by four, 33.5.

23 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: 134 divided by
24 four?

25 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: You've got
26 an odd number in there.

27 33.25.

28 MS. KIM CREECH: 33.25.

1 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Oh, that's
2 close.

3 MS. KIM CREECH: I'll double check them.

4 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: We'll let
5 you double check them. I'm using an iPhone calculator.

6 MS. KIM CREECH: That's what I'm using, too.
7 That's right. 35.5 on the last one, but double check us
8 Kim. You are an accountant.

9 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: 35.5.

10 MS. KIM CREECH: 35.5 is what you've got?

11 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: I think so.

12 MS. KIM CREECH: That's right. That's all
13 correct.

14 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
15 Okay. Ready for the next one? All right. Let's see.
16 All right. Pamelon Rollins 34, Deidra 39, and
17 Ms. Whitfield, 32.

18 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Rollins 41,
19 Whitfield -- Oh, I'm sorry. Deidra, 34, and Whitfield
20 36.

21 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: All right. And
22 Rollins, I've got 39. Deidra, I've got 41. And
23 Whitfield, I have 39.

24 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Rollins,
25 I've got 35, Hanak 41, Whitfield 33.

26 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: We need to get
27 her a red pen. Crimson, we'll get her a crimson.

28 MS. KIM CREECH: Oh, y'all.

1 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: You heard me,
2 didn't you?

3 MS. KIM CREECH: I did.

4 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Look, she did get
5 the red pen.

6 MS. KIM CREECH: I did, because that blue one
7 was going out on me.

8 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
9 Running out of ink.

10 MS. KIM CREECH: Okay. Deidra had the high
11 score. Let me double check it.

12 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: That's what
13 I've got, Kim.

14 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Okay.

15 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
16 Okay.

17 MS. KIM CREECH: Do y'all want Deidra to step
18 back in here?

19 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
20 Anything else?

21 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Yeah, we just
22 need to know there is a method in our madness in terms of
23 communicating to all six of them.

24 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: How are we
25 going to be able to communicate to all of those people?

26 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Well, we've got
27 to get acceptance.

28 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: First of

1 all, you've got to get acceptance from the highest --

2 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

3 Highest grade.

4 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: -- grade.

5 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

6 Yeah. See if that person accepts it.

7 MS. KIM CREECH: So if you want Deidra to come

8 back in here, it looks like for EMA, for her to --

9 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Yeah. We need to
10 get in touch with them.

11 MS. KIM CREECH: -- in touch with them.

12 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

13 And she can do this. She's still HR, regardless.

14 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Oh, yeah.

15 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

16 She can do -- she can do all of this. I mean, you know,

17 I mean --

18 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Yeah, I think.

19 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

20 I mean, it's not a conflict for her, because she's, you

21 know --

22 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: She's interim

23 now.

24 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: We're just

25 making sure so the communication is given to all six of

26 these people.

27 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

28 Oh, yeah.

1 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: You know,
2 you know her communication. But I want everybody to now
3 how we arrived at what we arrived at.

4 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
5 Oh, yeah.

6 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: The fair
7 process of -- of how we did these interviews, because
8 this is a hard decision sometimes.

9 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Sure.

10 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: And it
11 affects a lot of people.

12 MS. KIM CREECH: Y'all did a great job. I
13 mean, it was as fair as you could be. You want me to get
14 Deidra?

15 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
16 Yeah.

17 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: I think so.

18 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
19 Yeah.

20 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: Yea. Thank you.

21 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: You did it. You
22 did it.

23 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: Thank you.

24 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
25 Okay. So, basically, what -- what we'd like to see
26 happen is that you let everyone know where -- where
27 they -- where they stand; right? You know, and I guess
28 we -- or you can get in touch with the -- I guess

1 Mr. Hood.

2 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: All right.

3 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
4 And let him know that he was -- he was the top -- you
5 know, top pick. He got the best score out of everybody
6 and see, you know, what his -- you know, he's got a -- he
7 had a salary range.

8 So, I mean, make sure he's comfortable with that and
9 just let us know. And we can go from there, you know.

10 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: Do we have a salary we want
11 to offer him?

12 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
13 Well, I think it was --

14 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: He -- he --
15 he put down --

16 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Well, he put
17 down a minimum.

18 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
19 A minimum, yeah.

20 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: He put down
21 a minimum. But do you think we should actually offer him
22 an amount --

23 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
24 Well --

25 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: -- rather
26 than -- I think he didn't want to come work for any less
27 than that.

28 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

1 Okay.

2 MS. KIM CREECH: But he has a -- you know, I
3 don't know if y'all have read the transcripts. So I was
4 offered a number. I was a County employee, and I was
5 offered a number. And they took a recess and gave me
6 opportunity --

7 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
8 Right.

9 MS. KIM CREECH: -- to come back. And I did.
10 I came back with the number.

11 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
12 Okay.

13 MS. KIM CREECH: So --

14 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
15 Well, we can get -- we can get -- we can get in touch
16 with him and say, hey, look, this is the number.

17 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Well, would
18 we want to --

19 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
20 Yeah.

21 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Because the
22 other day I thought it was weird how we didn't really --
23 you know, like when we did the other contract people,
24 each one of us had a number, and then we -- just like we
25 did this.

26 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: I'm trying to
27 find what the range is.

28 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: I think it was 90 (\$90,000)

1 to one ten (\$110,000).

2 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Ninety
3 (\$90,000) to one ten (\$110,000)?

4 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
5 One-oh-one (\$101,000), wasn't it?

6 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: I thought it
7 was one-oh-five (\$105,000).

8 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: We just
9 erased all of that.

10 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
11 It was still up there?

12 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Yeah.

13 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: It was so long ago. I've
14 got it in my folder.

15 I'm sorry. Eighty-five (\$85,000) to one hundred
16 (\$100,000).

17 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Eighty-five
18 (\$85,000) to one hundred (\$100,000). Okay.

19 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: And what did
20 his --

21 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: His is about
22 ninety (\$90,000), because he put down fifty dollar (\$50).

23 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: No.

24 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
25 Well, he put down --

26 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: He put down
27 thirty-seven fifty (\$37.50). That's only seventy-eight
28 thousand (\$78,000).

1 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: All right.

2 Excuse me. Okay.

3 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

4 Did he put down --

5 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: On Zachary
6 Hood, he put down thirty-seven fifty (\$37.50).

7 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

8 Well, let's see. He put down here --

9 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Well, that's
10 his -- that's where he's at now.

11 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

12 Expected, yeah, thirty-seven fifty (\$37.50) an hour.

13 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: That's
14 seventy-eight thousand (\$78,000).

15 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
16 Seventy-eight thousand (\$78,000)?

17 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Yeah. Each
18 one of us could come up with our number. And then
19 let's --

20 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
21 Sure.

22 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Can we do
23 that?

24 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: What was the
25 range again?

26 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: Eighty-five (\$85,000) to one
27 hundred (\$100,000).

28 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Well, I'm

1 going to ask you this. I'm going to ask you this. What
2 is our interim making now?

3 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: Ninety (\$90,000).

4 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Ninety
5 (\$90,000).

6 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
7 Yeah, but he won't be.

8 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: I know what
9 the pay is now. We just left that one alone, I think.

10 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Well, didn't we
11 bump Deidra up from your interim -- to become interim?

12 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: You have an
13 interim of eighty-seven (87,000)?

14 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: Eighty-seven (87,000).

15 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Both of the
16 interims were getting director pay.

17 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
18 Yeah, yeah, yeah. They were supposed to. All right.

19 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Okay.

20 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
21 Now, quick question to Deidra. If Zachary accepts this
22 and Jessie goes back to the Assistant, his pay goes back
23 with that, or does he stay at that?

24 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: His pay will go back to what
25 it was.

26 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
27 Okay.

28 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: But he also was due an

1 evaluation --

2 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

3 Okay.

4 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: -- in March.

5 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

6 Okay.

7 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: So if we can consider --

8 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

9 Okay.

10 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: -- an increase for his
11 merit.

12 MS. KIM CREECH: 2-1/2 percent is what he would
13 have got.

14 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
15 Okay. I just wanted to make sure, you know, that we
16 weren't going to keep somebody at that level.

17 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: No. I
18 totally understand that.

19 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Yeah. I think
20 Mr. Hood's salary needs to be highest paid person in the
21 EMA.

22 MS. KIM CREECH: Which -- which Jessie would
23 have been -- He's in the 60s.

24 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: He is. And Scott's right on
25 his tail. Let me run and get my computer. I'm sorry.
26 Yeah. I think Jessie --

27 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: I -- I'm not
28 about throwing a lot of money. But if you're -- if

1 you're up here responsible for these, it gets awkward.

2 MS. KIM CREECH: It does. It does. I was a
3 difference between four hundred and fifty dollars (\$450).

4 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Yeah.

5 MS. KIM CREECH: What was his requirement?

6 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD:
7 Seventy-eight (\$78,000).

8 MS. KIM CREECH: Seventy-eight thousand
9 (\$78,000).

10 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: It's below
11 the range --

12 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
13 It's below the range, actually.

14 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: -- what we
15 offered, yeah. Well, I'm ready with a number.

16 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Well, and I
17 think, too, what needs to be communicated to him is that
18 this will be the salary the day that he comes onboard.
19 We don't pay moving costs or --

20 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
21 No, we don't pay --

22 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: -- or any of that
23 sort of stuff. But we may have gone up from his request
24 in order to recognize that. You see what I'm saying?

25 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
26 Right now he's at seventy-eight thousand (\$78,000).

27 MS. KIM CREECH: That's what he's asking for.

28 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

1 That's asking for it right now.

2 MS. KIM CREECH: Minimum.

3 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

4 And we can --

5 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Go a little
6 further. I don't want to be behind anybody in his
7 department.

8 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Eighty-five
9 (\$85,000) to one hundred (\$100,000)?

10 MS. KIM CREECH: Yes.

11 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Eighty-five
12 (\$85,000) to one hundred (\$100,000). Okay. All right.
13 Okay. Skip, do you want to do yours first?

14 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
15 I'll go first. I'm saying eighty-five (\$85,000).

16 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: I'm ninety
17 (\$90,000).

18 MS. KIM CREECH: Ninety (\$90,000)?

19 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: (Indicates
20 affirmatively.)

21 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: I'm going to go
22 ninety (\$90,000) also.

23 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: I'll -- I'll
24 go ninety (\$90,000).

25 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Throw out the
26 high and the low.

27 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: I can do
28 that in my head, even without a CPA degree.

1 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

2 That's fine with me, ninety (\$90,000).

3 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Yeah.

4 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

5 Okay. And EMA Director, it's at what now?

6 MS. KIM CREECH: That's what you just did.

7 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

8 No, no. I'm talking about --

9 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: HR.

10 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP)

11 GRUBER: -- HR.

12 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Personnel,

13 HR.

14 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Yeah, she's

15 already at -- we did that already.

16 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: We moved up.

17 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

18 What was --

19 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: We

20 established all that, though, didn't we?

21 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: What was the

22 range on that?

23 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: Eighty-five (\$85,000) to one

24 hundred (\$100,000) as well.

25 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

26 How much?

27 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Eighty-five

28 (\$85,000) one hundred (\$100,000).

1 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

2 And you're at --

3 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: I'm at eighty-seven

4 (87,000).

5 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

6 Eighty-seven (87,000).

7 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: That ought to be

8 at least ninety (\$90,000) in my book.

9 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: I say ninety

10 (\$90,000).

11 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

12 Let's just do -- I'm fine with that, if you want to just

13 do ninety (\$90,000), that's fine.

14 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Billie Jo?

15 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: I told her

16 ninety (\$90,000).

17 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Ninety (\$90,000).

18 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Ninety

19 (\$90,000).

20 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Let's see. Throw

21 out the high and low.

22 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: Can you do

23 that one, Joe?

24 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: I think I can.

25 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

26 I don't think I can do that one.

27 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: I can see it

28 better in red.

1 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

2 Okay. All right. So then if --

3 MS. KIM CREECH: I've got a blue one up here.

4 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: I've got a
5 pen I'll give you.

6 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

7 So now what we will do now is Deidra get in touch with
8 those folks and let them know where everybody stood. And
9 if Mr. Hood accepts, then, you know, she'll let us know
10 that.

11 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: All right.

12 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

13 And then we can go from there.

14 MS. DEIDRA HANAK: I'll call them this
15 afternoon.

16 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

17 We're set.

18 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: And if per chance
19 for whatever reason he didn't, would Jessie be the Number
20 2 person?

21 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

22 He would.

23 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: I think he will,
24 just so we can get this taken care of.

25 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

26 Okay.

27 MS. KIM CREECH: I'm going to leave that up
28 there.

10 - COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

Okay. Now, Commission questions.

COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: I don't have any questions. I'll make a comment, that, you know, I really want to thank all of us, everybody here that was involved in this process.

I think it went well. I think it's fair. We had to make some hard decisions, but we collaboratively came up with our decisions.

And thank y'all for making this as painless as possible. Because we could be doing this for a few more days. And we got this wrapped up. And I think this was a big hurdle in our new adventure. And I think now we can get on with business.

COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: I agree.

COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER: All right. Thank y'all.

COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you, Deidra, and your department.

MS. DEIDRA HANAK: Thank y'all. Thank you for this opportunity.

COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: You had -- you had the ducks in a row and made it mighty easy for us. We had great applications. And we've got great people

1 currently in place.

2 And it's all about getting better, because we're
3 getting better. So let's get better as we get bigger.

4 Thank you.

5 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
6 Okay. All right.

7 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: I want to
8 thank everybody. This has actually been a very taxing
9 task, because --

10 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: No question.

11 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: -- it's not
12 in my field. And I wanted to make sure I didn't violate
13 any -- any laws or rules.

14 And I do feel like we have the opportunity to move
15 forward, especially with training. I think we do need a
16 lot of training. I think we need training.

17 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: Yes.

18 COMMISSIONER BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD: And so I
19 look forward it seeing that for everybody. Because this
20 has been something that we've had to -- had to learn a
21 lot on our own. And it's hard. It's hard.

22 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
23 Okay.

24 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Do you need
25 a motion?

26

27

8 - PUBLIC COMMENTS

28

COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

1 Let's see. There no press -- no more -- There's no
2 public comments.

3
4 **9 - PRESS QUESTIONS**

5 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
6 No press.

7
8 **10 - COMMISSIONER COMMENTS (REVISITED)**

9 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
10 Commissioner comments? Anything.

11 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: Did you want
12 to say anything?

13 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
14 I'm just -- I'm thankful. We got this thing done. And,
15 you know, I'm glad we're moving forward and getting this
16 on the way.

17 So and I appreciate everybody's, you know, endeavor
18 in working this -- working this through. I think
19 everything -- We're kind of thinking, you know, pretty
20 close to what, you know, everything was, if you look the
21 how the scoring went.

22 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: That's right.

23
24 **11 - ADJOURNMENT**

25 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:
26 But, anyway, with that being said, do I hear a motion
27 that we adjourn?

28 COMMISSIONER JAMES E. (JEB) BALL: So moved,

1 Mr. Chairman.

2 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

3 Got a motion made --

4 COMMISSIONER JOE DAVIS, III: I second.

5 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP)

6 GRUBER: -- by Commissioner Ball, seconded by Commission
7 Davis. Any further discussion?

8 (No response.)

9 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER:

10 If not, all in favor, signify by saying aye.

11 (Commissioners say "aye" in unison.)

12 *****
13 Ayes: 4 Commissioners: James E. (Jeb) Ball, Joe
14 Davis, III, Charles F.
(Skip) Gruber, Billie Jo
Underwood

15 No: 0 Commissioners: (None)

16 Abstain: 0 Commissioners: (None)

Absent: 0 Commissioners: (None)

17 MOTION PASSED.

18 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN CHARLES F. (SKIP) GRUBER: The meeting is
19 adjoined at three o'clock.

20
21
22 (The Baldwin County Commission Special Meeting was adjourned at
23 3:00 p.m.)

24 

C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF ALABAMA)

BALDWIN COUNTY)

I hereby certify that the above and foregoing transcript was taken down by me in stenotype and the proceedings were transcribed by means of computer-aided transcription, and that the foregoing represents a true and correct transcript of the meeting given by said parties upon said meeting.

I further certify that I am neither of counsel nor of kin to the parties, nor am I in anywise interested in the result of said proceedings.



SUSAN C. ANDREWS,
Certified Court Reporter,
Certification No. 287

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www.baldwincountyal.gov

MEMBERS
DISTRICT 1. JAMES E. BALL
2. JOE DAVIS, III
3. BILLIE JO UNDERWOOD
4. CHARLES F. GRUBER

February 12, 2019

Mr. Ronald J. Cink
Budget Director
Baldwin County Commission
312 Courthouse Square, Suite 12
Bay Minette, Alabama 36507

Dear Mr. Cink:

Pursuant to Section 11-3-8 (b), Code of Alabama 1975, "A county commission may schedule a special meeting [of the Baldwin County Commission] when determined necessary in writing by a majority of the members of the commission, or in the case of an emergency, upon call of the chair."

Therefore, taking into account the aforementioned, coupled with the fact that this request is not styled an emergency, please be advised that a majority of members of the Baldwin County Commission have determined in writing and by this instrument that it is necessary to conduct a Special Meeting of the Baldwin County Commission for the date/time/place as follows:

Tuesday, February 19, 2019
1:00 p.m.
Baldwin County Commission Chambers
322 Courthouse Square
Bay Minette, Alabama 36507

Thursday, February 28, 2019
8:30 a.m.
Central Annex County Commission Conference Room
22251 Palmer Street
Robertsdale, Alabama 36567

Wednesday, March 6, 2019
1:00 p.m.
Baldwin County Commission Chambers
322 Courthouse Square
Bay Minette, Alabama 36507

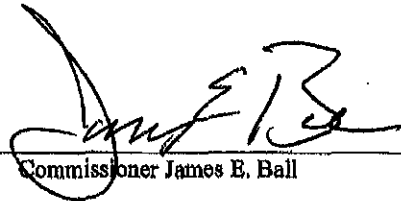
The purpose for the special meeting is to:


- [1] Discuss and choose candidates for the Appointed positions of County Administrator, Emergency Management Agency (EMA) Director and Personnel Director.

Please make the necessary arrangements for the conduct of the Special Meeting.

Sincerely,


Commissioner Charles F. Gruber, Chairman


Commissioner James E. Ball


Commissioner Joe Davis, III


Commissioner Bill Jo Underwood, Vice Chairman



United Way
of East Central Alabama

February 19, 2019

Baldwin County Commission
322 Courthouse Square
Bay Minette, AL 36507

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter on behalf of my friend and colleague, Zach Hood, who is submitting his name for consideration as the next Baldwin County EMA Director. There is no doubt that Zach has both the education and professional experience to lead Baldwin County's EMA, and I am sure that his skills and expertise go beyond what I can relay in this letter.

In my role as President of Calhoun County VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster), I personally witnessed Zach sacrifice time with his own family to provide volunteer support and lend his expertise in the immediate recovery efforts of the recent tornado event which impacted Jacksonville, AL and the surrounding communities on March 19, 2018. In my experience of serving at our EMA's Emergency Operations Center, I must say that there was a heavy burden that came with knowing that I was responsible for organizing and supporting certain logistics for an area that had been devastated by this type of storm. I can also personally tell you that my mind was set at ease when Zach came along beside me to support these efforts.

During this time, I witnessed Zach rise to meet challenge after challenge with skill and steadiness. Zach is a problem solver, a manager, a great communicator, and an encourager. He is humble, calm, dependable, and knowledgeable. He is a leader who exemplifies quality, success, and excellence! During our time together, he literally asked me what my biggest challenges were, and then he took those challenges as his own and navigated through them with success! When the call comes to work our next disaster in Calhoun County, I can only hope that I have someone as skilled and dependable as Zach Hood working beside me in the response efforts. I would have no reservations in putting my trust in his leadership.

As hard as I may try, I will never convey in words how much I respect Zach and his leadership. Therefore, I'll simply say that it is my pleasure to write this letter to recommend that you carefully consider Zach Hood as the next Baldwin County EMA Director. In my humble opinion, there is no better candidate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Shannon Jenkins", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Shannon Jenkins
President & CEO, United Way
President, Calhoun County VOAD

February 27, 2019

Recommendation for Zachary Hood

Dear Hiring Committee:

My name is Jonathan Beason. My wife, Jessica Beason, and I are teachers in Baldwin County. We have known Zach for 12 years. I was roommates with him in college at Jacksonville State University. Zach is one of the most dependable, hard-working guys I know. He is a family man, a Godly man, and a really good friend to have.

I have recently lost 98 lbs thanks to Zach sharing his insights for dieting and exercise. His motivation, support, and encouragement gave me the push I needed to lose the weight. Zach is a very focused, driven person. When he puts his mind to something, he is not going to quit until it is finished. The last few years I have seen Zach travel during terrible disasters to help other people. He is truly in this profession to help others. He has always been the kind of person to think of others first. His passion for his career is very evident and shows in his work.

I cannot speak on the specifics on this profession, but I can tell you any employer would be blessed to have Zach. He puts extreme effort and dedication into everything he does, and I am confident this opportunity would be no different. He is very deserving of this and will be an amazing asset to Baldwin County.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact myself or my wife.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Beason
15517 George Younce Road
Foley, AL 36535
(251) 504-5873
jbeason@bcbe.org

Jessica Beason
15517 George Younce Road
Foley, AL 36535
(251) 284-5757
jdbeason@bcbe.org



JACKSONVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT

OFFICE OF THE FIRE MARSHAL

February 25, 2019

Dear Sir or Madam,

It is my absolute pleasure to recommend Mr. Zachary Hood for the position of Director at the Baldwin County Emergency Management Agency. Mr. Hood and I have been close friends, working as fellow referees in local high school football and fellow church members for several years.

I thoroughly enjoy my time working with Mr. Hood and have come to know him as a true asset to any team. He is honest, dependable, and an incredibly hard-working individual. Beyond that, he is an impressive emergency management leader who is always successful at overcoming any challenge presented to him. His knowledge as emergency management and expertise in operational and administrative abilities has proven to be a tremendous advantage for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). He put his skillset to work, as a responder to Puerto Rico, just after Hurricane Maria devastated the island in September 2017. Along with his undeniable talent, Mr. Hood has always been an absolute joy to work with. He is a true team player, and always manages to foster a positive work environment, bringing the best out of his employees.

Without a doubt, I confidently recommend Mr. Hood as Director of Baldwin County EMA. As a dedicated knowledgeable employee and an all-around great person, I know that he will be a beneficial addition to that organization. Please feel free to contact me, should you like to discuss Mr. Hood's qualifications and experience further. I'd be glad to expand on my recommendation.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lee Batey".

Lee Batey, Fire Marshal
Jacksonville Fire Department
911 Public Safety Drive SW
Jacksonville, AL 36265
Office: (256) 782-3856
Fax: (256) 435-9586



Turn your attention to Fire Prevention!

February 25, 2019

Subject: Recommendation for Zachary Hood

Dear Baldwin County Commission,

As a resident of Baldwin County, it is my pleasure to recommend Zachary (Zach) Hood for the position of Baldwin County Emergency Management Director. As a former supervisor, I have observed Zach's growth and development as an Emergency Management professional. During my tenure as the Facility Manager for the Noble Training Facility at the Center for Domestic Preparedness in Anniston, Zach served as a Logistics employee. It was evident that Zach possessed the skills and abilities to meet the daily challenges associated with the logistical requirements to support the training delivery for the numerous courses offered at the Noble Training Facility.

Zach distinguished himself by ensuring all of his responsibilities and assigned tasks were completed in a timely and professional manner with customer support being his primary focus. His efforts ensured all course instructors had the equipment sets, kits, and supplies necessary to ensure training success for the students in each class. As a highly competent and dedicated employee Zach also sought self-improvement by enrolling in the Emergency Management Program at Jacksonville State University where he completed his professional training.

Upon completing his degree, Zach has supported multiple deployments in response to natural disasters. These experiences have allowed Zach to see the devastation of natural disasters on families and communities where enhanced planning and preparation could have prevented some of the impacts of these events.

Over the years, I have been consistently impressed with Zach's can-do attitude and his productivity. Zach is a highly motivated individual with the skills and abilities that are essential to meeting the challenges associated with the position of Baldwin County Emergency Management Director. I am confident that he will devote himself to your organization and demonstrate attention to detail, thorough planning, and a high degree of diligence. I am confident that Zach will be a positive addition to your staff, and the Emergency Management community in Baldwin County.

Sincerely,

Joseph Burckel
Colonel, United States Army (Retired)
burckeljw@gmail.com

Robert C. Gareri
328 Royal Drive
Gulf Shores, AL 36542
February 25, 2019

Mr. Zachary Hood

Subject: Letter of Recommendation

Dear Commissioners,

Please allow me to introduce myself. I am Robert C. "Bob" Gareri. I spent 30 years & 7 months in the Huntsville Fire & Rescue Department, Huntsville, AL., & the last 9 years of my career spent as the City of Huntsville Fire & Rescue Chief. After leaving the Fire & Rescue Service, I was hired by Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC) as a Senior Homeland Security Analyst working on Emergency Management (post 911) contracts & eventually was hired by BP to be their State of Alabama Operations Manager with the Gulf Coast Restoration Organization (GCRO) which brought me to the beautiful Gulf Coast where I now reside (Gulf Shores).

Understanding the complex world of Emergency Management...I would like to recommend Zachary Hood for your current search for the best and most qualified Baldwin County Emergency Management Agency Director.

I've had the pleasure of working for & with Zach during my time as an Incident Command Instructor for the Center of Domestic Preparedness in Anniston, AL.

Zach is a stellar individual. In my professional opinion, Zach has the talent as well as the skillsets necessary to far exceed expectations of an Emergency Management Agency Director. He has worked hard to prepare himself academically in obtaining all the necessary credentials & qualifications. Couple the credentials & qualification/certifications with his FEMA response experience to numerous disasters; he has what it takes to be an excellent EMA Director and will serve you well. I've witnessed his demeanor under fire and can tell you he is cool, calm & collected.

Moreover, I believe he has another attribute that surpasses his curriculum vitae. This attribute is his ability to "think outside the box" and bring people in conflict (or opposing views) together to function as a team who can function effectively & efficiently under duress. In an emergency disaster situation, one of the most difficult challenges of a Unified Command team is that of being able to guide & direct team members into a "consensus" agreement where critical life saving objectives & strategies have to be made. Zach has the knowledge, experience, and the temperament to excel at this and many other EMA challenges.

Given the opportunity, I wouldn't hesitate to hire him. He is an incredible candidate who will serve you well and will be an asset to your organization.

Sincerely,

Robert C. Gareri
328 Royal Drive
Gulf Shores, AL 36542



February 22, 2019

Dear Selection Committee,

I have had the privilege of professional association with Zach Hood since 2014. His knowledge, guidance and leadership have been integral to the successful development and maintenance of the curriculum at the Department of Homeland Security, FEMA Center for Domestic Preparedness (CDP), in Anniston, Alabama. Additionally, as a former Medical Officer for the National Disaster Medical System, Florida 3 DMAT, I can attest to the value of Zach's service to the community as a member of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Logistics Response Team.

Most recently, I have had the opportunity to interact with Zach while serving as a Lead Instructor at the CDP. Zach has served in multiple roles at the CDP, ranging from Logistics Lead to Course Manager, and his commitment to the pursuit of excellence in training our first responders and first receivers is a testament to his character and value to the disaster management community.

Zach exhibits the disposition and demeanor that is most highly regarded in an Emergency Manager and I offer him my highest recommendation. Please contact me if any additional information is needed.

Respectfully,

Richard Salkowe, DPM, PhD, FACFAS
Lead Instructor, Leidos, FEMA Center for Domestic Preparedness
Research Associate, University of South Florida School of Public Affairs
Medical/Training Officer, Florida Department of Health-Region 4 State Medical Response Team

February 25, 2019

Reference Letter – **Mr. Zachary Hood**

I have had the opportunity to work with Mr. Hood on several major disaster responses, and he has continually demonstrated the ability to think quickly and act decisively while under tight time constraints and extreme pressure to accomplish the assigned tasks. He has demonstrated the practical application of the National Response Framework, and is proficient in the terminology, procedures and expected outcomes when the NRF is implemented.

Mr. Hood is also knowledgeable in the missions and functions of other organizations that are deployed during disasters, such as FEMA as well as non-government organizations, and works well with these organizations as well as learning more about them when he can. He is proficient in the knowledge of the Emergency Support Functions and their operations during responses as demonstrated by working with these ESFs on a daily basis.

While Mr. Hood is excellent in the job he does, he also works well with others on a personal level. He does not try to take over someone else's job, but is willing to help if he sees a person having issues. He volunteers to assist when his tasks are completed, and cares about the success of the mission and the people involved.

He has excellent problem-solving skills, and when he makes a decision, he also accepts responsibility for his actions. Mr. Hood would be an asset to any organization because of his hard work, dedication, and loyalty to the mission and the agency.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Guido Girimonti, BS Fire Science/Admin

Allegheny County Airport Authority – PIT

Emergency Management Coordinator

DHHS/OEM/ASPR Logistics - AHIMT Logistics Section Chief – East Coast

(412) 760-1991



February 24, 2019

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing this letter to recommend Zachary Hood as a candidate for the Baldwin County EMA Director position. In my position as Logistics Manager supporting FEMA Department of Homeland Security, Center for Domestic Preparedness (CDP), Training Delivery contract, I have directly managed Zach for more than 6 years. He is a valuable asset and exceptional to work with! Our mission here at the CDP is to identify, develop, test, and deliver training to state, local, and tribal emergency response providers; provide on-site and mobile training at the performance, management, and planning levels; and facilitate the delivery of training by the training partners of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

As a Logistics Team Lead in my Healthcare Training Facility, Zach has demonstrated that there is no limit to the tasks that be accomplished and always with exceptional results. He directly supervises up to 12 personnel in all aspects of logistics that support the training mission. This includes operational oversight, mission planning, transportation operations, property accountability, personnel supervision, and equipment maintenance among other tasks. The tasks that Zach manages are monumental. There are many moving parts, he will often be multi-tasking, especially when major training exercises are being conducted, usually several times per training week.

I have monitored Zach's educational path and have been very impressed by the experience he has received from the Emergency Management Programs at Jacksonville State University. He has been able to apply many of the emergency management aspects to the challenges that he has encountered while performing his day to day activities here at the CDP. It is also notable that he has taken on a couple of additional tasks that have also helped to increase his knowledge, skills and abilities in the emergency management field. His volunteer position in the Calhoun County Hazardous Materials Response Team and his acceptance into the FEMA NDMS/LRAT Program to work with major disaster response is commendable and shows his commitment to achieve success in the emergency management areas.

He leads a highly morale and ethical lifestyle, is a good family man, and I have no doubt that Zach would also be a valuable asset to you and your agency. Without reservation, I give my highest recommendation. If I can provide any further assistance, do not hesitate to contact me at (256) 847-2048.

Sincerely,

Michael W. Purner

Michael W. Purner
Leidos
Logistics Manager

Leidos

Post Office Box 5510 | Anniston, Alabama 36205 | tel: 256.847.2256 | www.leidos.com