



WCCY MINUTES

Wakulla County Coalition for Youth

Date | time 08/05/26 12:30 pm-1:30 p.m. | *Meeting called to order by* James Lewis

In Attendance

James Lewis, Karen Zak, Lottie Roy, Bonnie Wertenberger, Caden Gruebel, Amanda Gruebel, Emily Zak, Josh Lawhon, Rebecca Sahar, Michelle Peltier, Liz Neighbors, Carl Roach, Clay Bania, Lisa Sherry, Samantha Kennedy, Jenness Jones, Stephanie Cash, Tiffany Lewis, Tamika Rich, Olivia Piazza, Michelle Hawkins, Amanda Madden, Rev. Dr. Renita Dixon, Christina Ash, Kelly West, Kaizsa Threatt, Lydia

Approval of Minutes

Minutes from June 2026 Meeting – A motion was made by Lottie Roy and seconded by Caden Gruebel to approve. The motion carried.

Note: The June 2026 minutes are corrected to reflect that the motion to approve the May 2026 minutes was made by Caden Gruebel and seconded by Carl Roach (previously left blank). Carl Roach's attendance has also been added to the May 2026 meeting record.

Agenda Items/Presentation

1. **James Lewis on Vice President Resignation & Vacancy:**

- Read a resignation letter from Kimberly Mattox, who is stepping down as Vice President for personal and health reasons.
- The board expressed sincere appreciation for her service; a certificate of appreciation will be presented to her.
- This creates a vacancy in the Vice President position.
- Caden Gruebel and Amanda Gruebel have both been approached about filling the seat; discussions are ongoing and no one has committed.
- If no one steps forward before then, the seat will be filled during the regular slate of officer elections in October.

2. **Karen Zak on Drug-Free Communities (DFC) Grant Update:**

- WCCY is finishing Year 3 of the DFC grant; the reporting deadline has been extended from the end of August to the end of September.
- A full report with Year 3 statistics will be presented at the September or October meeting.
- WCCY requested \$25,000 in opioid settlement funds from the county and was awarded \$34,650.
- Funds will be used to purchase medicine lockboxes and Detera drug deactivation bags for families, and to support FLOW Safe Space events; remaining funds will be allocated by a special team.
- A subcommittee will be established by September (and no later than October) to oversee and make decisions on the settlement funds so that routine decisions do not have to come before the full body.

3. **Emily Zak on FLOW (Future Leaders of Wakulla) Update:**

- FLOW's Community Pride project was recognized as one of the top six projects in the nation by National 4-H; through it, FLOW launched the "Prevention Starts With Me" campaign.
- FLOW held its kickoff meeting for the new school year this week; the first official meeting is September 1.
- FLOW will host a Youth Leadership Retreat on August 15, 9 a.m.–3 p.m.

- FLOW is partnering with Wakulla 4-H to host the Big Bend Youth Leadership Summit on October 12, with workshops on leadership, communication, financial management, job preparedness, and interviewing skills. Registration opens August 14; cost is \$30.
- The Wakulla 4-H Open House will be held August 29.
- FLOW is recruiting new members ages 11–18; contact Rachel Pienta at the UF/IFAS Extension Office or Karen Zak for more information.

County Report

Josh Lawhon: The county is in the middle of its budget year, with the November election adding to the workload. FRESH's back-to-school event, rained out last weekend in Sopchoppy, will be held this Saturday, August 8, at 8 a.m. in Crawfordville for families needing school supplies.

Sheriff Report

No report given at this meeting.

School District Report

No report given at this meeting.

Treasurer Report

Lottie Roy presented the WCCY Treasurer's Report for June–July 2026. Income during the period came primarily from donations, including \$296.26 raised through the online auction and a \$50 donation from the brunch fundraiser. Disbursements totaled \$70.00 for online service fees (\$35/month for two months). As of the July 30, 2026 bank statement, the coalition's account balance was \$4,349.90.

Partner Reports

Rebecca Sahar – Wakulla County Public Library: Regular children's programming resumed this week, including Book Bunch (preschool–2.5 years) on Tuesdays, Book Babies (birth–2.5 years) on Wednesdays, and Tummy Time (birth to walking) Wednesdays from 9:30–10:30 a.m. A new collaborative STEAM/Lego Robotics program with the UF/IFAS Extension Office kicks off tomorrow evening at 5:30 p.m. at the library. Read to the Dogs (therapy dogs) will be held Saturday, August 15, from 10 a.m.–12 p.m. The library is preparing for its move to a new building; WCCY can meet at the library in September but will need an alternate location in October, returning to the library in November. Contact Linda Oaks (loaks@mywakulla.com) about booths for the Trick-or-Treat Story Walk.

Lottie Roy (LWREA): The Leon-Wakulla Retired Educators Association has not yet held its first meeting of the school year. LWREA is hosting a Back to School Breakfast for retirees at Thomasville Baptist Church at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday.

Michelle Peltier (Wakulla Health Dept): Attending Open House tonight at the high school and representing SWAT (Students Working Against Tobacco) while a colleague is away at another SWAT event. Will have a table at Saturday's FRESH event. The next quarterly partnership meeting is August 27 at 4 p.m.

Liz Neighbors n(Wakulla Health Dept): Reported for SWAT in the absence of the usual presenter: Isabel Scott, an incoming 8th grader, was selected as one of 16 statewide Youth Advocacy Board members, representing Region 1. SWAT clubs will be active at all Wakulla schools this year (high school, both middle schools, and Coast Charter, grades 6–12). Healthy Start is a free, voluntary home-visiting program for pregnant women and children up to age three.

Carl Roach (CareerSource Capital Region): CareerSource ended its contract with C2 (the former service provider), which has been replaced by EDSI. Carl now holds a new, formalized title: Designated Youth Advocate for the Wakulla County office. The Leon Center will host a “Find a Job Friday” event on August 14, 9–11 a.m., at the Leon Center for Career Source on Blainstone Road.

Caden Gruebel (Keep Wakulla County Beautiful): The Environmental Institute's second Youth Board meeting (ages 11–18) will be held tomorrow from 5–6 p.m.

Clay Bania (UF/IFAS Extension): No updates on the farmers market at this time.

Lisa Sherry (DISC Village): Announced a save-the-date for the Neighborhood Empowerment Resource Fair (NERF), a partnership with Second Harvest of the Big Bend and Tallahassee State College's Wakulla Center, on October 14 from 2–4 p.m. at the TSC Wakulla Center. The event will offer non-profit vendor tables and food and cooking demonstrations from Second Harvest. A flyer is pending Anissa Southall's approval and will be sent to all members by Karen once available.

Bonnie Wertenberger (FSU FCPR): Submitted a STOP Act grant application for \$60,000 (which requires the DFC grant WCCY already holds) to fund enhanced youth services, additional FLOW activities, and teacher training on incorporating related curriculum into classrooms. A funding decision is expected in September. Bonnie and Karen also presented on social norming/marketing campaigns and the importance of county-level data for grant applications at the CADCA Mid-Year Conference in Orlando; the session was well attended.

Samantha Kennedy (UF/IFAS Extension): Reiterated the Big Bend Youth Leadership Summit and the 4-H Open House. As the Family & Consumer Sciences agent, she has upcoming classes on cheesemaking, sourdough bread, canning, and starting a cottage food business, among others. The sourdough class is full and will be offered again. The Extension office is also exploring an “economic entrepreneurship month” with classes to help residents prepare for side businesses at the community market.

Jenness Jones (Grace and Mercy Counseling): Relocating; the in-person counseling office will be at 2473 Crawfordville Highway by September 1.

Stephanie Cash (Healthy Families Franklin/Wakulla/Gulf): The program continues to offer free, voluntary in-home parent support coaching for expecting parents or parents of young children experiencing life stress. The home visitor is housed at the Wakulla County Health Department and also serves Franklin and Gulf counties.

Tiffany Lewis (Survive and Thrive Advocacy Center): Introduced herself as the new Administrative Director and Special Projects Coordinator, replacing Carly, and will represent the organization at future meetings. Survive and Thrive will have a table at Saturday's FRESH event with resources including rack cards on staying safe online and recognizing signs of trafficking.

Tamika Rich (Wakulla County Christian Coalition / FRESH): Reminded everyone that FRESH is this Saturday from 9 a.m.–2 p.m.; anyone who has not yet signed up for a table should contact Kenny as soon as possible.

Olivia Piazza (TMH/Safe Kids Big Bend): Will host a small fashion show at Saturday's FRESH event. Announced the annual Baby and Family Fair on Saturday, September 12, from 10 a.m.–2 p.m. at the Jack McLean Community Center, featuring car seat checks and educational sessions for families. A registration link was shared for vendors, sponsors, and attendees.

Michelle Hawkins (Capital Area Community Action Agency): Introduced herself as the new Program Coordinator for the CSBG “Getting Ahead in a Just Gettin' By World” program, replacing Peggy Sullivan, who has left the agency; case manager Tamara Lockley will also sit in periodically. Registration is open now for the September class.

Amanda Madden (Capital Area Healthy Start Coalition): Shared highlights of the organization's new five-year Service Delivery Plan, which focuses on equitable access to care for prenatal and postpartum women, children, and fathers; developmental milestones for babies (including possible collaboration with the library's Tummy Time program); and building a network of community champions for consistent messaging on topics like safe sleep and car seat safety. The Capital Area Healthy Start annual meeting is September 15, 11:30 a.m.–2 p.m., at the Capital City Country Club, featuring a panel on perinatal mental health; vendors and table sponsors are welcome. Contact: amanda@capitalareahealthystart.org.

Rev. Dr. Renita Dixon (Unity in the Community): No formal update at this meeting; separately announced that she will present the Wakulla Community project to the County Commission on August 17 and will report back on the outcome.

Next Meeting

September 2, 2026 at 12:30 pm at Wakulla County Public Library & Virtually

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Rebecca; seconded by Caden Grubel. The meeting was adjourned at 1:08 PM.