Memorandum from Commissioner McCann, for Termination or Formal Public Reprimand to Charlie Bishop attached

October 20, 2026 - Regular Meeting

Subject
County Administrator Contract Discussion

Category
COMMISSIONER AGENDA/COMMENTS

Briefings
None

Contact and/or Presenter Information
Commissioner Dr. Bob McCann

Action Requested
- Motion for a formal written and public reprimand
- Motion to authorize an outside Forensic Audit

Enabling/Regulating Authority
Commissioner

Applicable Advisory Board
N/A

Background Discussion
This item concerns allegations of misconduct by County Administrator Charlie Bishop, as defined by applicable Florida Statutes and the County Administrator's contract, following the October 8, 2026, discussion regarding his contract. The County Administrator was absent from that meeting due to illness. This item provides the Board with an opportunity to continue the discussion, ask the County Administrator questions directly, provide feedback, and address concerns regarding his conduct.

Based on comments made by Commissioners during the October 8, 2026, discussion, an independent external forensic audit is requested to review the identified discrepancies, clarify outstanding questions, and establish a clear understanding of the matters under consideration.

A formal written memorandum will be distributed at the meeting and entered into the public record.

Attorney Review
Not Reviewed (No apparent legal issues)

Instructions to Board Records
None

Cost and Funds Source Account Number and Name
TBD

Amount and Frequency of Recurring Costs
N/A

From: talonthedog@mail.com <talonthedog@mail.com>
Sent: Friday, October 9, 2026 1:28 PM
To: Mike Rahn <mike.rahn@mymanatee.org>; Robert McCann <drbob.mccann@mymanatee.org>; Charlie Bishop <charlie.bishop@mymanatee.org>; Amanda Ballard <amanda.ballard@mymanatee.org>; Bryan Parnell <bryan.parnell@mymanatee.org>; Stephanie Garrison <stephanie.garrison@mymanatee.org>; Jason Bearden <jason.bearden@mymanatee.org>; George Kruse <george.kruse@mymanatee.org>; Tal Siddique <tal@mymanatee.org>
Subject: Expectations for Conduct and Accountability

Commissioners Bearden and McCann,

I strongly object to your characterization of Administrator Bishop's response at a past board hearing as "verbal assault." As someone present in the audience, I believe that accusation leaves out the conduct that prompted his response and misrepresents what occurred.

Commissioner Bearden, your aggressive demeanor and invitation for Mr. Bishop to "step outside" were alarming. His response—"Why, you want to take a swing at me?"—must be considered in that context. It is unacceptable to disregard the provocation while portraying his reaction as the offense.

The escalation made me fearful for my safety. I was concerned about how far the confrontation might go, including the possibility of a weapon being drawn. That was my fear in the moment, and it underscores how disturbing the conduct appeared from the audience.

Commissioner McCann, I believe your characterization is wrong. Presenting this exchange as an unprovoked verbal attack by the administrator looks like political spin rather than a fair accounting of the incident. Please review the complete recording and address the full sequence of events.

An elected title does not excuse intimidation or disrespect toward county staff. Decisions belong to the board acting collectively, and individual commissioners should not use their positions to pressure, demean, or threaten employees.

You have every right to question the administrator and disagree with his decisions. You also have a responsibility to exercise restraint, represent events accurately, and meet the standards of professionalism you expect from others.

Do better. Get the facts straight, acknowledge your own conduct, and treat county staff with the dignity they deserve.

J. Bender

MEMORANDUM FOR TERMINATION OR FORMAL PUBLIC REPRIMAND

To: Board of County Commissioners
From: Commissioner Bob McCann
Date: October 20, 2026
Subject: Recommendation to Terminate Charlie Bishop for Cause and Determine Statutory Ineligibility for Severance Pay (or Alternative Motion).

I. Summary

This memorandum recommends that the Board of County Commissioners consider terminating County Administrator Charlie Bishop for cause based on documented conduct that, established by the evidentiary record, demonstrates a deliberate disregard for the professional standards and responsibilities of his office.

The principal incident identified for consideration is a documented confrontation between Administrator Bishop and Commissioner Bearden during an official public meeting. The reported exchange, including Bishop's alleged challenge, "Do you want to swing?", raises serious concerns regarding professional judgment, executive conduct, and the standards of behavior reasonably expected of the County's chief administrative officer. Florida Statute 784.011 **Assault**. — (1) An "**assault**" is an intentional, unlawful threat by word or act to do violence to the person of another, coupled with an apparent ability to do so, and doing some act which creates a well-founded fear in such other person that such violence is imminent.

The applicable legal framework includes section 443.036(29), Florida Statutes, which defines misconduct, and section 215.425(4)(a)2, Florida Statutes, which requires qualifying government employment agreements containing severance provisions to prohibit severance when an employee has been fired for statutory misconduct.

II. Background and Factual Basis

The County Administrator serves in a position of substantial public trust and executive responsibility. The office requires sound judgment, professional interactions with elected officials, adherence to lawful Board directives, and the ability to manage disagreements without disrupting the orderly conduct of public business.

The reported confrontation involving Bishop and Commissioner Bearden presents a significant concern because it allegedly escalated beyond an ordinary disagreement into a personal exchange suggestive of a possible physical confrontation. See Florida Statute 784.011 **Assault**. above.

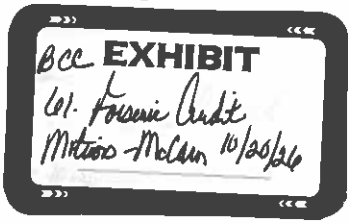
According to witnessed accounts and the supplied description of reporting by The Bradenton Times, the exchange became sufficiently heated that **observers reportedly feared it might become physical**. Bishop allegedly asked Commissioner Bearden, "Do you want to swing?" Sheriff's deputies took the confrontation seriously and approached the dais and positioned themselves between the two individuals.

An executive officer's conduct during an official public meeting is relevant not merely because it attracts public attention, but because it may bear directly on the officer's judgment, ability to discharge executive responsibilities, and compliance with reasonable professional standards.

II. Applicable Florida Law

A. Statutory definition of misconduct

Section 443.036(29), Florida Statutes, identifies several categories of misconduct, including:



- Conscious disregard of the employer's interests: Conduct demonstrating conscious disregard of an employer's interests and constituting a deliberate violation or disregard of reasonable standards of behavior expected of the employee.
- Culpable carelessness or negligence: Carelessness or negligence of such a degree or recurrence that it manifests culpability or wrongful intent or shows an intentional and substantial disregard of the employer's interests or the employee's duties and obligations.
- Other specified categories: Additional statutory grounds involving certain attendance violations, regulatory violations, and violations of employer rules, subject to the statutory requirements.

The statutory text under Florida Statute 443.036(29) defines "misconduct" with high specificity. This legal standard is critical for this motion, as it dictates exactly what behavior legally disqualifies an executive from receiving a taxpayer-funded severance package under F.S. 215.425.

B. Application to the reported confrontation

The reported confrontation is most directly relevant to the conscious-disregard standard in section 443.036(29)(a).

The official record substantiates a deliberate physical challenge or threatening exchange with an elected official during a public meeting; the Board must consider that conduct as evidence of a serious departure from expected executive standards. The legal determination is grounded in full statutory language. An example given in section 443.036(29) is "2. Such conduct may include, but is not limited to, committing criminal assault or battery on another employee..."

The fact that an exchange was contentious, embarrassing, establishes statutory misconduct.

- Willful Disregard of Workplace Standards: Challenging an elected official to a physical confrontation or engaging in a physical threat in a public forum, breaches the fundamental duty of a county's chief executive. This satisfies the state's misconduct definition by violating the basic behavioral standards the Board has a legal right to expect from its top employee.
- The Video Record: Because the meeting was a recorded public forum, the video, audio transcripts, and subsequent disclaimers attached to the county broadcasts (which warned viewers of "strong language or coarse dialogue") serve as irrefutable evidence. No one can claim a lack of factual basis when the entire sequence is preserved in the official public archives.
- A physical challenge on the record, a concrete, documented violation of state-defined executive misconduct, gives a firm basis to argue that a "Termination for Cause" is justified—which would completely block any taxpayer-funded severance under Florida law.

IV. Findings for Consideration by the Board

Following review of the evidence and any applicable procedures, the Board should conclude that the record supports the following findings:

1. Executive standards. The County Administrator is expected to exercise sound judgment, maintain professional conduct, and preserve the ability of the Board to conduct public business in an orderly manner.

2. Established conduct. The official meeting recording and other reliable evidence establish the statements and actions attributable to Bishop during the reported confrontation.

3. Deliberate disregard of professional standards. If supported by the evidence, the Board should find that the established conduct constituted a deliberate violation or disregard of reasonable standards of behavior expected of the County Administrator and demonstrated conscious disregard of the County's legitimate interests.

5. Grounds for termination. The Board should determine that the established conduct, considered under the applicable employment agreement and law, provides sufficient grounds for termination for cause.

6. Statutory misconduct determination. The Board should determine that the established conduct satisfies section 443.036(29), Florida Statutes, for purposes of the severance restriction in section 215.425(4)(a)2.

These findings should be adopted as supported by the record.

V. Severance Pay and Protection of Public Funds

Section 215.425(4)(a)2, Florida Statutes, requires qualifying government contracts or employment agreements containing severance provisions to prohibit severance pay when the covered employee has been fired for misconduct as defined in section 443.036(29).

Accordingly, the Board should not authorize severance compensation prohibited by the statute. If the Board finds, based on the evidentiary record, that Bishop was fired for statutory misconduct and the statutory prohibition applies to his agreement, the County should implement that prohibition.

This approach protects public funds while ensuring that the severance decision rests on the statutory requirements and the actual terms of the governing agreement—not merely on the label attached to the termination.

VI. Proposed Motion – First Motion by McLean

I move that the Board of County Commissioners:

1. Terminate Charlie Bishop for cause from his position as County Administrator, effective in 30 days, in accordance with the applicable employment agreement and law.

2. Adopt written findings of fact identifying the conduct established by the evidentiary record and the specific grounds support termination for cause.

3. Place the Administrator on either paid or unpaid leave for the thirty days to address any potential Due Process Claim.

4. Determine severance eligibility in accordance with section 215.425(4)(a)2, Florida Statutes, and the governing employment agreement, and prohibit any severance payment that is barred by applicable law.

VII. Alternative Motion (because several Commissioners have publicly stated the votes are not sufficient for Termination) - 2nd Motion by McLean

I move that the Board of County Commissioners:

1. Issue a formal public reprimand of County Administrator Charlie Bishop concerning the reported conduct during the public meeting involving Commissioner Bearden, to the extent the conduct identified in the Board's deliberations is substantiated by the official record.

2. Affirm the standards expected of the County Administrator, including maintaining professional decorum, exercising sound judgment, communicating respectfully with elected officials and members of the public, and avoiding conduct that disrupts the orderly conduct of County business.

3. Direct that disagreements with commissioners be addressed through appropriate professional and administrative channels, rather than through personal confrontations or exchanges that undermine the effective working relationship between the Board and the County Administrator.

4. Request that the County Administrator acknowledge these expectations and demonstrate commitment to maintaining professional working relationships with all members of the Board, regardless of differences in policy, opinion, or administrative approach.

6. Clarify that this reprimand does not, by itself, constitute a finding of statutory misconduct under section 443.036(29), Florida Statutes, or determine severance eligibility under section 215.425, Florida Statutes. Any such determination must be made separately and supported by the applicable law and evidence.

7. Retain the Board's authority to address future substantiated conduct in accordance with applicable law, the Administrator's employment agreement, and established County procedures.

I further request that this motion, the Board's deliberations, and the resulting vote be reflected in the official meeting record in accordance with applicable requirements.

VII. Conclusion

A. The County Administrator's responsibilities demand sound judgment, professional conduct, and respect for the orderly functioning of County government. Conduct that is established by reliable evidence to constitute a deliberate disregard of reasonable executive standards may provide substantial grounds for termination for cause.

The Board should act on the clear record, the reasons are stated expressly, and the documentation supports the legal basis for termination and severance determinations. Because the evidence supports statutory misconduct, the Board should ensure that the County complies with the applicable prohibition against severance payments.

B. "Colleagues, I recognize that the Board may reach a different conclusion regarding the Administrator's continued employment. Nevertheless, I believe it is important that we address the conduct at issue and clearly state the standards we expect from the person entrusted with managing County government.

This is not about personal disagreements or differences of opinion. It is about professionalism, sound judgment, and maintaining a working relationship that allows this Board to conduct the public's business effectively.

A public reprimand provides an opportunity to put those expectations on the record. It makes clear that professional conduct matters, that disagreements must be handled appropriately, and that accountability remains an important responsibility of this Board.

I ask my colleagues to support this motion so that our expectations are clearly documented and understood going forward."

Respectfully submitted,
Commissioner Bob McCann
District 5