

MINUTES of
October 01, 2009

The Columbia County Board of County Commissioners met in a regularly scheduled meeting at the School Board Administration Office. The meeting opened at 7:00 p.m. with prayer. The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America followed.

Commissioners in Attendance:

Stephen Bailey, Chairman
Ronald Williams
Dewey Weaver
Jody Dupree
Scarlet Frisina

Others in Attendance:

County Manager Dale Williams
Attorney Marlin Feagle
Deputy Clerk Sandy Markham
BCC Admin. Secretary Penny Stanley

PUBLIC INPUT:

Citizen Barbara Lemley said regarding the possible purchase of the **Blanche Hotel** that the hotel is full of history, and that she believes it is essential and vital to the community. She told the Board that the county offices need to remain in the downtown area. She said that because of the age of the building that it may qualify for special renovation funding, and that an engineering study by someone specializing in older buildings is needed.

Citizen Stewart Lilker asked regarding the **fee increases**, why the old rates are not shown so that everyone knows the amount of the increase. The County Manager replied that staff will be recommending those two resolutions be pulled from the agenda. The resolutions will be re-advertised with underlines and strike through format.

Mr. Lilker said that the County's **Annual Financial Report** was not posted to the website in time for public viewing. He said that it is a violation of the Charter to take this matter up without giving sufficient time to inspect the document. He said that it is his understanding that the document was not made available until 4:00 p.m. today. He asked that it be pulled from the agenda.

Mr. Lilker asked Commissioner Dupree if he had the **laptop computer** and bag with him that the county recently purchased. Chairman Bailey responded that he did not see the laptop.

Mr. Lilker said that he seconded the words of Ms. Lemley regarding the **Blanche Hotel**. Regarding the development of the downtown area, Mr. Lilker said that it is unconscionable to him that Commissioner Dupree, who is the county's representative, has not attended the last six months worth of **Downtown Development Committee** meetings. He told the Board that the citizens deserve more from their representative and that Commissioner Dupree owes the public an explanation. Commissioner Dupree replied that he would probably miss the next meeting, when Mr. Lilker interjected that perhaps the commissioner should find someone to take his place at the meetings. Mr. Lilker suggested that the commissioners rotate serving on committees so

that everyone has input and is informed, and if a commissioner is not able to attend a meeting that they should advise the Chair, who can then appoint someone in their place.

SCRAP to MUSIC PROGRAM

Mr. Raymond Macatee displayed band instruments recently purchased for the Columbia County School System from funds derived from the Scrap to Music Program. Mr. Macatee asked that everyone remember to donate their scrap metal, which in return helps him to purchase more band instruments. The Board thanked Mr. Macatee for his dedication to the students.

LAKE CITY SKATE PARK ("LCSP")

Ms. Sandra Caslow, President of the LCSP reviewed with the Board a rough draft of the proposed design of a park at the Southside Sports Complex and an estimated quote for construction.

The County Manager said this was a joint venture between the County and the City of Lake City, and he gave a brief history. He explained that the County funds capital projects from year-end fund balances, which has not yet been determined, and no budget has been developed for year-end money distribution. The LCSP requested the skate park be considered for funding when year-end distribution occurs.

Columbia High School Band ("CHSB")

Ms. Debi Friedman President of the Band Parent Association. She said the band is almost solely supported by the parents and through fundraisers. The parents and students are working to raise enough money for the band to attend competition in April 2010. They estimate the cost to be approximately \$80,000. The CHSB is requested that they be considered when year-end funds are distributed.

Blanche Hotel

Stephen A. Smith said that since he discussed the Blanche Hotel purchase at the City/County joint meeting, he has met with the County Manager, City Manager and Councilman George Ward to discuss the pros and cons of such a plan. Mr. Smith said that he sent a letter to the county approximately a week ago with an offer for the county to consider purchasing the Blanche Hotel at \$1,500,000. He said the property was appraised at \$1,600,000 in 2002. In that letter, Mr. Smith offers additional information regarding the building and a scenario where he said the county could actually purchase the Blanche at no cost. Mr. Smith said the offer is economically sound, will meet the immediate space needs, and will be a great benefit to downtown Lake City and Columbia County. He said if the Board knows of a better alternative than what his group is offering that it should be pursued.

Commissioner Williams said that he is open-minded to the Blanche Hotel, but said that he does have concerns with sufficient parking and whether the configuration of the building would allow for a drive-thru. He said that a "true" renovation cost would be needed that would include the cost of modern air-conditioning. The Commissioner stated he needed more facts.

Mr. Smith said that there are lots that could be made available for parking and that he is confident that a drive-thru would be possible. Mr. Smith asked the Board to agree to move forward with getting the answers that they need in order to make a decision. Mr. Smith said that he would have someone with experience in drive thru buildings take a look at the building and to make recommendations regarding possibilities and costs. He will also get answers relating to the full renovation costs, but that he needed some idea as to what standard of quality the Board was

looking for. Commissioner Williams said the renovated building would be a major project, because it should be at the same level of quality as the current Board offices.

Commissioner Dupree said that until the Rudder Team has put together the Economic Development Plan, that he is not willing to spend any money on this idea. He said that the county should not take on this type of project without knowing exactly what the needs are. He agreed that the quality of the Blanche should be the same as the building the Board is currently located in.

Commissioners Williams and Bailey would like to see an updated Space Needs Study.

The County Manager said the Florida Department of Management Service's data base will provide helpful information. The Board will do what it can to gather free information at this point, and Mr. Smith will have someone look at the issue of renovations and building a drive through.

MOTION by Commissioner Williams to authorize staff to obtain information that is free to the county. Second by Commissioner Weaver. The motion carried unanimously.

Building and Zoning

The following was presented by County Planner Brian Kepner for consideration:

Final Plat Plan - Planned Residential Development (PRD)

(1) Z0515 – Reserve at Jewel Lake, Phase 1 – District 3. The property is located on the western side of SW Pinemount Road. There are 12 lots.

MOTION by Commissioner Dupree to approve. Second by Commissioner Williams. The motion carried unanimously.

Audit for FY 2007-2008

External Auditor Richard Powell of Powell & Jones gave a brief overview of the audit. He concluded his presentation by stating that the county was definitely stronger at the end of the fiscal year than it was at the beginning of the year. The County's debt was reduced by \$1,100,000 and capital assets were increased. Mr. Powell reviewed the current and prior year's findings. He said that the audit did not reveal any significant findings.

Commissioner Williams asked how well the county done overall on a scale of 1-10. Mr. Powell replied that the county scored an "8.5". The complete report is attached to the original minutes.

MOTION by Commissioner Williams accept the audit as presented. Second by Commissioner Weaver. The motion carried unanimously.

Consent Agenda

- (1) Budget Amendment - Fire/Rescue - BA #08-36 - Operations - \$8,094.50**
 - (2) Budget Amendment - Sheriff's Office - #7 - BA #08-37 - Subsistence Cost Generated by Detention Facility - \$4,081.76**
 - (3) Columbia County Emergency Medical Services - Refund Request - Blue Cross and Blue Shield - \$374.75**
 - (4) Columbia County Emergency Medical Services - Refund Request - Blue Cross and Blue Shield - \$316.25**
 - (5) Old Wire Road Improvement - Shirley Bennett Property - Parcel No. 3 & 3-A \$9,400.00 Fee & Easement Acquisition & \$4,428.00 Fencing of Drainage Easement - Providing Additional Driveway**
 - (6) Indigent Burial - Dees-Parrish Family Funeral Home - Gordon S. Peterson, Deceased - \$500.00**
 - (7) Policy Requiring Funeral Homes on Rotation to Disposition Bodies Designated as Indigent or Unclaimed at the \$500.00 Disposition Rate, Removal of Guerry Funeral Home from Rotation List for Body Removal**
 - (8) Agreement - Columbia County Board of County Commissioners/State of Florida Department of Health - Operation of the Columbia County Health Department 2009-2010**
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- (9) Agreement - Columbia County Board of County Commissioners/North Central Florida Regional Planning Council - FY 2010 Annual Monitoring of Hazardous Waste Generators - \$9,731.00**
 - (10) Agreement - Columbia County Board of County Commissioners/North Central Florida Regional Planning Council - FY 2010 Local Government Comprehensive Planning Services - \$85,000.00**
 - (11) Building and Zoning - Special Exception Refund - Westridge, Inc. - \$750.00**
 - (12) Bid Award - Hayward Construction Group - Bid No. 2009-08 - Old Wire Road Bridge Repairs - \$52,500.00**
 - (13) Public Library - Food for Fines Project - Partnering with Christian Service Center**
 - (14) Minute Approval - Columbia County Utility Committee - Regular Meeting - August 18, 2009**
 - (15) Columbia County Emergency Medical Services - Refund Request-Bankers Life and Casualty - \$42.77**
 - (16) Bid Award - John C. Hipp Construction - Bid No. 2009-04 - Tommy Lites Road - \$696,310.00**
 - (17) Public Library - Library Behavior Policy**
 - (18) Human Resources - Senior Community Service Employment Program Agreement**
 - (19) Public Works - Request to Recruit One (1) Brush Chipper Operator and One (1) General Laborer - These Positions were**

in the Budget for FY 09-10

(20) Public Works - Request to Enter Private Property - Removal of Large Tree From Falling on County Road 240 - Sherrod Keene, 1038 S.W. County Road 240, Property Owner

(21) Minute Approval - Board of County Commissioners - Budget Workshop - July 22, 2009

MOTION by Commissioner Williams to adopt the consent agenda, unless there were items to be pulled for further clarification. Second by Commissioner Frisina.

The County Manager pulled item #12. He said that some of the commissioners had questions pertaining to the county's responsibility as it relates to **bridge assignment, maintenance**, etc. in the county. Supplemental information has been supplied to the Commission by the County Manager. The County Manager gave a history on the Florida Department of Transportation assigning all bridges between Columbia County and its neighboring counties to Columbia County for repair and maintenance..

This has been an on-going issue and legislative assistance has been requested to amend the law. The County Manager has concerns that a day will come when the county is faced with an extensive bridge repair that will cost millions of dollars. Columbia County's position is that the neighboring counties should share equally in the responsible of the bridges.

The bridge on tonight's agenda is a small wooden bridge located on October Road. It has been closed to through traffic for a couple of years. The project has been bid out. The low bidder was Howard Construction. The estimated repair is \$52,500. In addition to that amount it will cost approximately \$5,000 for engineering to be done by a certified bridge engineer.

The County Manager said that he has been asked if Columbia County is required to accept responsibility for the bridge, simply because the Bridge went through the DOT process. He said that he, nor the County Attorney, are able to answer that question. The question has also been posed, if the county should choose to perform a service on a bridge, does it establish a precedent that can be used against the county when bridges are found in need of repair in the future. The County Manager said that Attorney Feagle said that he is in no position to render an answer to the question.

Commissioner Dupree expressed concern that the county should be careful to not set a precedence when repairing bridges. Commissioner Williams recalled the bridge repairs that were required "on the bridge over the Suwannee River," after a car accident. Commissioner Williams said that the issue of why Columbia County should have to repair the bridge was taken up with the state then.

The County Manger said that he cannot answer the question as to whether either of the bridge repairs establishes a precedent to the extent that it binds the county in the future.

In Commissioner Dupree's opinion, the element of precedence would go away if there was supporting documentation from Union County that stated that they absolutely refused to

repair the bridge. The County Manager will request documentation from Union stating that they did not have the resources to repair the bridge, but offered in-kind services.

Commissioner Williams suggested they repair the bridge subject to receiving documentation from Union County stating they are not financially able to supply funds to repair the bridge, but that they are willing to do in-kind work on the bridge. He said the documentation should be received prior to awarding the bid. Commissioner Weaver agreed, but said people living in the area could care less if documentation has been received prior to awarding the bid.

The MOTION to approve the Consent Agenda (except for item #12) carried unanimously.

MOTION by Commissioner Weaver to approve item #12 with the stipulation that documentation be received from Union County. Second by Commissioner Williams. The motion carried unanimously.

Amended Roadside Mowing & Litter

K & M Maintenance has requested a one year extension on their current contract, which will expire in April 2010. They are requesting this in advance as they plan to replace equipment. The County met with K&M to discuss the current contract and the outdated language contained within. K&M has presented the county with their proposed changes. The County Manager understands there are language changes that some of the commissioners would like to see as well as changes the county attorney may propose. The County Manager asked the pleasure of the Board.

Commissioner Weaver said that he does not find some of the changes acceptable, and some of their proposed changes may violate safety regulations. Commissioner Weaver said that he would like to see the Board make a counter proposal and authorize staff to meet with the contractor to identify those areas of concerns collected from each commissioner, and that the matter then be brought back before the Board.

MOTION. Commissioner Weaver said that he would place his suggestion in the form of a motion. Second by Commissioner Williams. The motion carried unanimously.

Imagetrend Software

The combined Fire and EMS Department have made a request to purchase Imagetrend Software. Currently, the Fire Department and EMS Department use two different types of software. The recent merger between the two departments brings with it the need to have a single software that is shared between the two departments for producing run reports and tabulations. The County's IT personnel said that while it is possible to interface the two types of software, it would not be a good interface and would not work very effectively with the new 911 CAD (Smart Cop) equipment. The County Manager said that if the county winds up using the Firehouse Software for the purposes of EMS billing, Firehouse will charge a percentage of the collections.

The County Manager said that he thinks that the way the department has presented the request for purchase is that it be paid for from the 911 Upgrade Budget. The County recommended the Imagetrend Software purchase (\$55,000) be born from the Department's budget and not from the 911 budget. Year-end balance for the department has not yet been determined. County Manager Williams said if there is not enough money in their year-end

money to pay for this, the difference may be made up in the department's current year budget. County Manager continued that he would like for the Board to approve the purchase "subject to," so that the county can proceed with the planning.

MOTION by Commissioner Williams to approve the Imagetrend Software subject to funds being available from the department's 08-09 year-end funds, and from their 09-10 Budget, if necessary. Second by Commissioner Weaver. The motion carried unanimously.

Resolutions

- (1) Resolution – Establishing Schedule of Fees and Charges for Petition, Applications and Appeals Pertaining to Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Regulations
- (2) Resolution – Establishing Fees for Obtaining Building Permits

The County Manager said that he has asked the Assistant County Manager to contact the appropriate office to have these resolutions re-written in a strikethroughs and underline format. The resolutions will be postponed at this time.

Food Preparation Building at Columbia County Fairgrounds

Columbia County Resources, Inc. ("CCR") has requested a waiver of the permit fees for the construction of a Food Preparation Building. The Board was reminded that the Building Department operates on the fees generated and collected, and that the county is in the process of laying off individuals within the Building Department.

MOTION to deny the request by Commissioner Dupree. Second by Commissioner Weaver. The motion carried unanimously.

Wilson Springs Corporation ("WSC")

WSC has made a request to deed to Columbia County, property that adjoins Powell Road (Iowa Street), which is located in the Three Rivers Estate area. The unique thing about this donation is that the property is a long strip that runs down the edge of Iowa Street, except that there are breaks in the strip for the driveways. The County Manager said that he assumes that when the lots were sold, that the property was sold all of the way out to the edge of Iowa Street, across the strip they now wish to deed. He recommended acceptance of the dedication since Iowa Street may eventually have to be widened.

MOTION by Commissioner Weaver to accept the property. Second by Commissioner Frisina. The motion carried unanimously.

Items Not On Agenda

The County Manager said that it has come to his attention that the **November 05, 2009 Board of County Commissioner's meeting** is the same date of the **Annual Swine and Steer Sale** at the Columbia County Fair. The commissioners generally participate in this event. The Charter requires appropriate notice in order to change the date or time of meetings. The Board was asked to adopt Resolution 2009R-44 changing the time of the meeting to 3:00 p.m.

MOTION by Commissioner Frisina to approve the resolution. Second by Commissioner Williams. The motion carried unanimously.

A meeting was called yesterday between representatives of the User's Group of the County's **911 Communications Interlocal Agreement**.

As of today employees transferred under the umbrella of the county. Those employees that were dedicated to Lake City dispatch are to remain in their current location until such time as the 911 Center could accommodate them with physical space. All parties involved agree it would simply be easier, administratively, if the employees were not transferred under the county's umbrella until they move into the 911 Center. This would require an amendment to the Interlocal Agreement.

The County Manager asked that the Board agree to a change in the interlocal, which would allow the City of Lake City's dispatch employees to remain with the City until they are physically relocated to the 911 Center. The County Manager said that on a pro-rated basis, whatever portion of the \$300,000 stipend the City spends, they would be able to keep. Approval was requested.

MOTION by Commissioner Weaver to approve. Second by Commissioner Frisina. The motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

ATTEST:

Board of County Commissioners

P. DeWitt Cason
Clerk of Circuit Courts