

Columbia County Board of County Commissioners
Minutes of
March 19, 2009

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

Commissioners in Attendance:

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

Others in Attendance:

County Manager Dale Williams
Attorney Marlin Feagle
Deputy Clerk Sandy Markham
Asst. County Manager Lisa Roberts

Public Comment

Marsha Morrell who is the vice president of Century Ambulance Services (“CAS”) gave a history and an overview of the services offered by CAS.

Public Hearings

Lulu Road Closings

This matter has been advertised as a public hearing. Attorney Feagle said that several of the property owners in the town of Lulu requested that miscellaneous alleys and roads that have been abandoned or never opened be closed. He said that there are multiple roads and alleys included in the notice. The public hearing opened and closed without opposition.

MOTION by Commissioner Williams to approve Resolution No. 2009R-8. Second by Commissioner Frisina. The motion carried unanimously.

Impact Fee Ordinance

Attorney Feagle explained the Impact Fee Ordinances for the possible suspension of impact fees were suppose to be heard tonight, but the county did not meet the deadline for advertising. He said that the *Notice of Intent to Adopt Ordinance* was sent to the newspaper without the public hearing date being contained within the notice.

MOTION by Commissioner Williams to set public hearing for April 02, 2009. Second by Commissioner Weaver. The motion carried unanimously.

Florida Wildlife Commission

Officer Bill Sergeant requested on behalf of the Florida Wildlife Commission that the County assume maintenance of Rifle Range Road beginning at the end closest to the Moose Lodge and ending at the rifle range. This is approximately a one half mile strip. The Forest Service maintains Rifle Range Road to a standard that will allow for the harvest of timber and fighting forest fires.

The Board said this range is somewhat of a jewel, because Columbia County's public rifle range is one of only five public ranges located in Florida. Commissioner Weaver said that it is becoming increasingly difficult to get a permit to open a rifle range due to the stringent permitting requirements.

MOTION to amend the interlocal agreement with the U.S. Forest Service to include maintenance of that stretch where the county currently maintains the road to the rifle range. Second by Commissioner Dupree.

Commissioner Dupree said the sport of shooting is dying out, because there are so few places to shoot anymore. The commissioner said that he would like to see the TDC explore the idea of expanding the use of the rifle range. Mr. Sergeant said that it's his understanding that the TDC and Steve Roberts, who manages the range, already have plans to meet. Mr. Sergeant said that it's everyone's goal to work together to make the range a place for families to enjoy. There have been some upgrades lately at the range, but many more are needed.

MOTION by Commissioner Williams to assist with minor improvements around the building up to \$6,000. The needed improvements will include field dirt, limerock, milling, grass seed, shrubbery and picnic tables. No work shall be done in the firing line. Second by Commissioner Frisina. The motion carried unanimously.

Liberty Ambulance Service

The Board considered the request made by Clinton Randolph, PMD for issuance of a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (COPCN) in behalf of Liberty Ambulance Service. This ambulance service would not be in place of the local ambulance service, but would be in addition.

The County Manager said that it is the opinion of staff that there is no need for another service in providing interfacility transports within Columbia County at this time.

MOTION by Commissioner Weaver to deny the request and encourage LAS to move forward in seeking a contract with Lake City Medical Center. Second by Commissioner Williams. The motion carried unanimously.

Lake Harris Basin

Commissioner Dupree addressed the need to have Suwannee River Water Management establish the one hundred year flood elevations for Harris Lake's basin. Because the elevations have never been established, those living in the basin area are having to pay maximum flood insurance rates. County Engineer John Colson suggested the county ask SRWMD to establish the elevations.

The County Manager said that he has spoken to Executive Director David Still of SRWMD, who said that SRWMD understands the need to establish the elevations within that basin. The Board will need to send an official letter asking for their support to get the process started.

MOTION by Commissioner Dupree to have staff prepare a letter to SRWMD. Second by Commissioner Williams. The motion carried unanimously.

Fire/EMS Merger Study

The Board authorized a study of merging the county's fire and emergency medical services departments to determine if any of the following objectives could be met:

- 1.) a reduction in overall costs

- 2.) a new staffing pattern could be achieved that would assist in further reducing the county's Insurance Serving Organization (ISO) rating
- 3.) efficiency could be increased

Should the departments be merged, it was decided that the Columbia County Fire Department would be the lead agency. In order to create a merged department, changes in personnel would be needed. These new positions would be created from either the Columbia County Fire Department or Columbia County Emergency Medical Services staffs:

Deputy Chief
Assistant Chief of Training Operations
Education and Prevention Captain
District Commanders (2)
Firefighter EMT's (Paramedics)

Based on the desired staffing pattern for a merged department, the current staffing available, and the necessary personnel changes, the costs would be approximately \$593,855. Of that amount, \$292,855 would be recurring. It is believed that a merger would create some efficiencies, and in time save costs by completely merging the two departments. Staff recommended the Board of County Commissioners not do a complete merger of the two departments at this time due to the initial upfront costs.

Skip Starling of National Fire Service has indicated that the county can benefit from the entire number of employees that exist between fire and emergency medical services as they relate to Insurance Service Organization (ISO) ratings without a full merger taking place at this time. The County Manager suggested the Board ask Mr. Starling to present options.

MOTION by Commissioner Frisina to authorize exploring other options and to have Mr. Starling do a full analysis of the numbers. Second by Commissioner Dupree. The motion carried unanimously.

Consent Agenda

There was a call for clarification on item #13. The County Manager assisted with clarification.

Motion by Commissioner Williams to pull items #6 and #9 for separate discussion. Second by Commissioner Frisina. The motion carried unanimously.

Motion to approve Consent Agenda with exception to the pulled items by Commissioner Williams. Second by Commissioner Dupree. The motion carried unanimously.

Regarding Item #6, the county has learned of past problems with the lowest bidder. It was recommended that the bid be awarded to the second lowest bidder.

MOTION by Commissioner Dupree to award bid to Pete Olin Auto. Second by Commissioner Williams. The motion carried unanimously.

Regarding Item #9, Public Works Director Kevin Kirby is recommending as part of the re-organization of the Public Works Department, implementing a *Temporary Administrative Training Program* for employees who are selected to perform administrative type duties outside his/her normal scope of responsibility. Mr. Kirby believes this is necessary in preparing for two (2) supervisory positions that will become vacant in 2011. The two employees selected to perform these supervisory job duties will receive a \$1,500 stipend.

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

Special Project Allocations

District 2 request: \$2,000 be allocated to purchase bleachers in recreational park.

District 4 request: \$400 be allocated to Lulu Homecoming Day.

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

Fire Conditions

Mr. Keith Osteen spoke on current fire conditions. It has been 17 days since the county received any significant rain. The drought index is approaching a critical stage. Mr. Osteen recommended a burn ban on residential open burning.

MOTION by Commissioner Weaver to accept recommendation to implement a burn ban. Second by Commissioner Frisina. The motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

ATTEST:

Board of County Commissioners

P. DeWitt Cason
Clerk of Courts