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**Williston declares war on sinkhole;
Dog, jets, fair, humor and more discussed**



Levy County Fair Association President Amanda Henderson leaves the podium after learning the city will renew the annual lease for the 2016 Levy County Fair.

Story and Photos By Jeff M. Hardison © Nov. 18, 2015 @ 1:57 p.m.

WILLISTON -- There were a number of messages from the Tuesday night (Nov. 17) meeting of the Williston City Council meeting, not the least of which was "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

That pearl of wisdom applies to an insurance company advising the city to close Williston City Hall in early December for 30 to 45 days as grout and other material are added to fight potential sinkhole damage.

Among the other messages were that it is not illegal to have humor in a meeting; there is a dog seeking a home; Williston wants jet owners to visit; Williston welcomes the Levy County Fair again; the city is prepped for another municipal election; and the mayor is thankful for people who care about their city.



(from left) Williston City Council Vice President Danny Etheridge, Mayor R. Gerald Hethcoat, Council President Charles Goodman, Councilman Jason Cason and Councilman Elihu Ross tend to the business of their city.

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SINKHOLES

Office workers in Williston City Hall will be serving the public via a couple of portable trailer units to be placed in part of the parking lot in front of City Hall starting in early December, Williston City Manager Scott Lippmann told the City Council on Monday night.

The insurance company that covered the sinkhole issue and repaired the damage to the Williston Police Department and Williston Fire Rescue Station found gaps that need filling under City Hall.

Lippmann said this work is costing nothing from the city coffers, however there was a comment from the dais that increased insurance premiums are one potential outcome.

In any event, there will be some level of inconvenience for people who use city services right at city hall during that month or so as the structure is shored up to counteract potential sinkhole damage. City residents and visitors may want to visit Williston's website to determine if some services may be possible without going to City Hall. That website can be visited by clicking

[HERE](#).

A DOG

City Councilman Jason Cason announced that Williston Animal Control took custody of a male, yellow Labrador Retriever that seemed to want to make Cason's house his own.

The dog apparently has been someone's pet, Cason surmised, because he wanted to be indoors. The Cason house was not to become his.

City Council President Charles Goodman, after Cason announced the dog's owner may want to find the dog, asked if it was big and then said "I wonder..." and without hesitation, Sue Ellen Goodman announced from the audience "No!"

Everyone understood that she preempted his potential of adopting that dog, even if that was not what he was wondering. However, that particular conversation wrapped up from the council president's perspective.

Williston Deputy Police Chief Clay Connolly said the dog's owner can learn about the dog's whereabouts by calling 352-528-4991. The people in Williston will call the WPD to speak with Wayne Carson for animal control or code enforcement issues.

JET OWNERS

After some discussion, the Williston City Council voted 4-0 to approve City Manager Lippmann's recommendation to buy a \$21,000 ground power unit.

This machine offers an electric power source for corporate jets or charter jets that land at Williston Municipal Airport, while those jet pilots wait for their passengers to complete business in Williston. The city manager said this improves the airport to make it even more attractive as a destination for those business owners who use those jets.

Among the interests he mentioned are people who come to this part of Florida for the Horses In The Sun event. Lippmann said other people with jets are business owners looking at Williston as a location for their business. It was on a motion by Councilman Cason, seconded by Councilman Elihu Ross and with positive votes from President Goodman, Vice President Danny Etheridge that the motion passed 4-0. Councilman Matt Brooks was absent Tuesday night.

COUNTY FAIR

There was not a lot of discussion needed for the 4-0 approval of the annual lease by the Levy County Fair Association.

City Clerk Fran Taylor introduced LCFA President Amanda Henderson. The annual lease agreement shows the Levy County Fair is scheduled to be at the fairgrounds near Williston Municipal Airport on March 31 through April 3.

Levy County Fair Association Vice President Judi Yaegar was in the audience too. Henderson and Yaegar mentioned the LCFA is seeking to create a jingle. There is a potential for the LCFA to note for *HardisonInk.com* in the future a method for how the general public may become involved with the submission of a fair jingle.

As for the lease with the city, this year's contract is not different than the most recent one –

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except that the starting and ending dates are different.

CITY ELECTION

Councilman Cason reminded his colleagues that he is not seeking reelection, because he has moved outside of the city limits.

Qualifying to be a candidate for the seats currently held by Group “D” Charles Goodman, Group “E” Jason Cason and Mayor R. Gerald Hethcoat is set to be from noon on Jan. 11, 2016 to noon on Jan. 15, according to the City Charter, City Clerk Taylor announced.

Taylor serves as the supervisor of elections in Williston city elections. She has conferred with Levy County Supervisor of Elections Tammy Jones.

While the City Council approved the qualifying dates, there was a delay on the appointment to the canvassing board for that election. New state law requires an alternate member of the canvassing board.

As it stands, the likely people for the canvassing board will be Police Chief Dennis Strow, City Manager Lippmann and County Commissioner Danny Stevens. The alternate is going to be some neutral party, such as Levy County Judge James T. “Tim” Browning.

City staff were tasked with the mission to ask possible canvassing board members if they can and will serve. The approval of the canvassing board, including the alternate member, is anticipated to be at the next regular Williston City Council meeting.

Councilman Ross mentioned the closure of City Hall during the addition of grout and material to offset a sinkhole. City Manager Lippmann said the insurance company assured him that City Hall will be open for business long before that election in the spring.

THANKS LITTER WARRIORS

Mayor Hethcoat handed out certificates to many people who helped pick up debris from the roadways of Williston in a recent anti-litter campaign.

He found that as the volunteers went around neighborhoods, there were people who joined the effort and cleaned up their part of the city too.

Among the people who participated was Latricia Wright. The mayor said she worked tirelessly to organize this event.

Others who were given certificates included City Council President Goodman, Sue Ellen Goodman, Vice President Etheridge, Councilman Brooks, City Clerk Taylor, her daughter Katie Taylor, Wayne Carson, Dr. Ken Schwiebert, Heidi Schwiebert, Dale Neal, Ann Larkins, Larry Wininger and Nancy Wininger.

The mayor said there are many more certificates to be presented as well.

IT’S FUNNY

Wrapping up the evening, which included many jokes and funny remarks, Williston City Attorney Frederick Koberlein Jr. assured all listeners that having a fun meeting with jokes is not illegal.

While his statement is no joke, it was funny. And so, just as Sue Ellen Goodman’s announcement to her husband that the stray dog was not to be considered for their pet, the city’s counselor for legal issues wrapped up the fun-filled evening on a happy and positive note.