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Bronson accepts building official's resignation; Town hires independent contractor

By Jeff M. Hardison © June 6, 2017 at 3:47 p.m.

BRONSON -- Town of Bronson Building Official Robert D. "Bob" Niffenegger sent a letter April 7 to the Town Council seeking an increase in pay from \$25 an hour to \$70.

The matter was on the agenda for the past few meetings of the Bronson Town Council and on Monday night (June 5), with a little discussion, the Town Council voted 4-0 to accept Niffenegger's resignation.

Vice Mayor Beatrice Roberts was absent.

Bronson Town Clerk Pamela Whitehead brought the Town Council up to date. Whitehead had spoken with a family member of Niffenegger's who said he was still recuperating from a medical issue.

She had sent the man a note so that he knew the Town Council voted May 1 not to accept his request for a pay increase, and to add another staff member part-time to help him.

Niffenegger let Whitehead know that he had no intent to return to work at the current rate of pay.

On a motion by Councilman Aaron Edmondson, seconded by Councilwoman Katie Parks, the Town Council accepted his resignation.

After that, Mayor Bruce Greenlee mentioned the town now has two options. First, the mayor noted his appreciation to Levy County Commission Chairman John Meeks who helped make one offer. That offer would be for the Levy County Building Department to accept many of the jobs the former Bronson building official performed.

If the town went with that gracious offer from the county, which it does not do for other municipalities, then the town would pay the county 100 percent of the fees for those permits, Greenlee said.

The other offer would be to accept Walter Brown of Florida Municipal Services Inc. and the Causley Group as independent contractors.

In that offer, the Town of Bronson would adopt the same fee schedule as the City of Dunnellon for building permits, and the town would pay the Causley Group 80 percent and keep 20 percent.

Councilwoman Parks mentioned that she would prefer the county's offer only because the Town of Bronson would now be exporting 80 percent of its money to the Homestead-based company, rather than keeping 100 percent of the money in Levy County.

Mayor Greenlee intimated that he felt the county's offer would lead to it begrudgingly doing the extra work.

After more discussion, the Town of Bronson agreed to do as the City of Chiefland and the City of Williston, and other Levy County municipalities, and hired the Causley Group as independent contractors to perform most Building Department functions.

For planning and other services, Bronson will do as other municipalities and hire the North Central Florida Regional Planning Council for those services.

IN OTHER NEWS

In other news from the meeting, town resident Elijah Williams said he thought that Bronson Public Works Director Eric Wise had done some sort of work for Williams' sister while Wise was still on the clock for the town.

Williams' sister said that was not the case.

Mayor Greenlee said he has complete faith in the work ethic of Public Works Director Wise, and the mayor is extremely pleased with all of the employees' works for the town.

Councilman Edmondson suggested that Elijah Williams find some hobby other than to attempt to find fault in the performance of duties by the town's workers.