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City cooperates with Tri-County Resource Center; *Police chief speaks about student safety*



Tri-County Community Resource Center Director Beverly Goodman tells the City Commission about the celebration set for April 21.

Story and Photos By Jeff M. Hardison © March 1, 2018 at 9:48 a.m.

CHIEFLAND -- The Chiefland City Commission on Monday night (Feb. 26) granted requests from the Tri-County Community Resource Center, and the five-member group of municipal leaders heard from the city's police chief as well.



**(from left)
Chiefland City
Commissioner
Teresa
Barron, City
Commissioner
Rollin Hudson
and Mayor
Betty Walker
tend to city
business on
Monday night
(Feb. 26).**

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City Commissioner Donald Lawrence (left) and Chiefland Vice Mayor Chris Jones are seen at their duty stations for the night.

In a 4-0 vote, on a motion by Commissioner Teresa Barron, seconded by Commissioner Donald Lawrence, the city waived its fee for use of the Tommy Usher Community Center on March 27. That is where and when chef Laura Fowler Goss is providing a free cooking class. Mayor Betty Walker and Vice Mayor Chris Jones voted in favor of the Barron-Lawrence motion.

City Commissioner Rollin Hudson arrived a few minutes after the start of the meeting on Monday night, and was able to vote on other requests from Tri-County Community Resource Center Director Beverly Goodman.

By a 5-0 vote, the City Commission approved the request from Goodman to close Northeast First Avenue from Main Street (U.S. Highway 19) eastbound to First Street. This closure is to be during the Third Annual Celebration of the start of the Tri-County Community Resource Center. That big event is set for April 21 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., and includes free bicycle raffles, bounce houses, information booths and much more -- like the past two years.

The city is having its Easter egg hunt for children again this year at the Delma Locke Park, behind and across the street from Chiefland Middle School (Northwest Fourth Drive) on March 31, the Saturday before Easter, starting at 9 a.m.

The Forward Church of Chiefland usually has its massive Easter egg hunt at Strickland Park a week before, which would be on March 24.

In other news from the City Council meeting, Chiefland's elected leaders voted 5-0 to pay \$46,865 for the city's part in a United States Department of Agriculture Facility Grant that will result in the federal government funding \$140,595 so that the Chiefland Police Department will have four 2018 Chevrolet Tahoes as new cruisers in its fleet.

Police Chief Scott Anderson also found a unanimous vote of approval for the CPD to replace four body cameras for officers, and for eight printers to go into cruisers. The previous body cameras wore out and the printers provide the officers with better methods to help the public with required documents.

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The CPD is one of three municipal police forces in Levy County, with the other two being the Williston Police Department and the Cedar Key Police Department.

The murder of 17 people in a Broward County school recently had a nationwide impact.

From the opening prayer of the Monday night meeting, given by Commissioner Lawrence, a former teacher and coach, through the time when Police Chief Anderson was at the podium, this was a matter of discussion by the City Commission.

Chief Anderson said Gov. Rick Scott wants the Florida Legislature to approve \$500 million to improve school security in the state's 67 counties.

The Levy County School Board is applying to increase its School Resource Officer (SRO) staff by nine more Levy County Sheriff's Office deputies, the police chief said.

That would add to the current six -- for a total of 15 LCSO SROs.

Commissioner Barron asked Chief Anderson if he favored school teachers who pass tests to carry concealed firearms to be allowed to bring those guns with them to school.

Chief Anderson said he would be in favor of that.

The chief said the four officers on duty during the school day would take two minutes to reach the school from the Police Department. That set of officers adds to the one SRO Sheriff Bobby McCallum has for the four schools in the city limits of Chiefland, Anderson said.

Those are the current limits.

"There's not a lot you can do about it," Anderson said, "unless you have an SRO at every school."

"But that one didn't go in," Commissioner Barron said about the SRO in Broward County at the school.

"They stood out there," Mayor Walker said in reference to the three other deputies at that scene.

The chief mentioned that when the local police department arrived on the scene, those officers entered the school.

"Nobody knows what they are going to do in the face of a life and death situation," Anderson said.

The chief said there is no method of security or arming of teachers or other methods to solve the problem.

"This is a mental illness problem," Anderson said. "This is a free country and we treat mental illness with a prescription."

He said patients can choose not to take their medicine.

The chief said he would endorse having CPD officers as SROs.

As for the \$500 million the governor seeks, Anderson mentioned, for instance, that Pasco County sought 54 more SROs.

Right now, in Levy County, the School Board funds two LCSO SROs and the sheriff funds four LCSO SROs, Anderson said.

Barron and Anderson expressed their opinions that one method to add to security in schools to defend against an armed attack by a killer is to put guns in the hands of teachers who are willing to become qualified and certified to use lethal force to end an attack.