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Levy County Commissioner Matt Brooks strives to reduce stress for residents regarding garbage collection

Levy County Commissioner Matt Brooks listens to a person speaking during the meeting Tuesday. He is working with Levy County Solid Waste Department Director Rod Hastings on a potential for three new drop-off sites for residential garbage in Levy County.



Story and Photos

By Jeff M. Hardison © Sept. 5, 2018 at 4:38 p.m.

BRONSON – The Tuesday morning (Sept. 4) regular meeting of the Levy County Board of County Commissioners provided audience members with information, and a glimmer of hope for some residential garbage customers who prefer not to have to drive to Bronson to drop off their garbage.

Nature Coast Business Development Council Executive Director David Pieklik shared information about various projects in the county.



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County Commissioner Rock Meeks listens during the meeting Tuesday.



County Commission Chairman John Meeks listens during the meeting Tuesday.



County Commissioner Lilly Rooks listens during the meeting Tuesday.

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County Commissioner Mike Joyner listens during the meeting Tuesday.



Levy County Housing Planner Marlon Gayle is approved as the Levy County Public Sector Representative to the Board of Directors for the Central Florida Community Action Agency for the period of Oct. 2 through Sept. 30, 2019. The County Commission unanimously reappointed Gayle.

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Levy County Road Department Administrative Manager Alice LaLonde receives approval to accept bids for combination synthetic and conventional oil and transmission fluid for all vehicles in the county's fleet. LaLonde said this will save the county money by reducing the number of times oil changes will be needed on each vehicle. County Commissioner Rock Meeks said at this meeting that now he will consider using a mix of normal and synthetic oil in his vehicles to reduce costs.



Levy County Sheriff Bobby McCallum (standing at the back wall) is recognized during the meeting. Another elected county leader at the meeting was Property Appraiser Oz Barker, and Levy County Clerk Danny Shipp was present as well. County Clerk Shipp is the clerk to the Levy County Board of County Commissioners, as well as being the clerk for the county judge's office and for the Levy County part of the Eighth Judicial Circuit's courts.

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Levy County Commissioner Matt Brooks shared his vision for three new drop-off points for garbage during his comments at the end of the regular meeting on Tuesday morning.

Commissioner Brooks said he has been speaking with Levy County Solid Waste Department Director Rod Hastings about the potential to have garbage transfer stations located in Williston, the Inglis-Yankeetown area and the Chiefland-Cedar Key area.

Brooks said the county owns some property in each of these regions. This discussion is just in a preliminary conceptual point now.

Brooks said there would be a cost to the new places, including security fencing around those properties. The current very rough and preliminary estimate is \$50,000 to \$5,000 per location for each of the three locations, Brooks said.

And there would have to be drop-off days and times slated.

These would be places to add to the solid waste transfer station currently located between Bronson and Williston.

Commission Chairman John Meeks said funding from a proposed \$116 special assessment fee that is tentatively going to be put on each developed residential property in Levy County could be used to cover the cost of these three new drop-off points.

There is a public hearing scheduled for tomorrow (Thursday, Sept. 6) starting at 6 p.m. in the Levy County Commission Meeting Room in the Levy County Courthouse in Bronson. That hearing will be to discuss the various special assessments like for fire service, ambulance service and to have free garbage drop-off service.

These tentatively proposed fees are for the coming tax season. If the garbage fee comes to be, then people will not have to pay 75-cents for each bag of residential garbage they bring to the solid waste transfer station.

NCBDC NEWS

The county's paid promoter of economic development gave a report on some projects.

Nature Coast Business Development Council Executive Director David Pieklik shared information about various projects in the county.

There was input from others during Pieklik's presentation. Some people asked questions. Some people shared information.

Dana Sheffield, a resident of Fanning Springs, said the Fanning Springs City Council is working to help the developer of a five-story, 92-room Best Western in the Gilchrist County part of the City of Fanning Springs.

That City Council encourages the development of the hotel for this location, which will be central to Levy, Gilchrist and Dixie counties.

While Sheffield was able to share some insight from the southwestern part of Gilchrist County, Inglis Mayor Drinda Merritt gave an update on a whitewater attraction that might be built in the southern part of Levy County.

Mayor Merritt said the city is working to generate the next round of funds for engineering of that project. The city has \$8,000 of the \$15,000 for that part of the engineering for the project, she said.

Mayor Merritt has been at the forefront of adding a whitewater-kayak recreational outlet to the Town of Inglis.

This project is tentatively to be built south of Levy County Road 40 near to a canal.

The mayor has said a drop from the dam that controls the flow through the canal is significant enough to create a whitewater environment for kayakers to enjoy.

The feasibility study for this project is completed, Mayor Merritt said, and this project is continuing to move forward.

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MEETING'S CLOSE

Near the end of the meeting, as Chairman John Meeks gave his report, there was mention of a couple of deaths that are bound to have brought sorrow to family members and friends of two beloved residents of the county, who died recently.

He mentioned, too, that Levy County Animal Services Director David Weatherford suffered a heart attack and is recovering, as was said during the opening prayer for this meeting.

The two recent deaths Chairman Meeks mentioned were of people who are dear to him.

Of course, the loss of every loved one affects families across the Tri-County Area; however, Chairman Meeks was moved enough to mention these two people's passing at this meeting.

L.J. "Jimmy" Durden, Jr. died at Shands on Thursday (Aug. 30). He was 54. He was a lifetime resident of Bronson. He was a member of the Gulf Hammock Church of God.

He was a member of the Bronson High School Class of 1982. He was a flagman at Bubba Speedway in Ocala, and also a flagman for the racetrack in Bronson.

"Jimmy Durden did tons, and tons and tons for youth athletics in Bronson," Meeks said.

Durden was active as a softball coach for Bronson High School and with the former Bronson Youth League, as well as being a past director for the BYL. He was a fire chief for the former Gulf Hammock Volunteer Fire Department.

Chairman Meeks said Durden was his friend and that Durden was always oriented toward helping the people of Bronson.

Another death mentioned by Chairman Meeks was that of Norma (Sheffield) Woeller, 49, of Levy County. She was co-owner of Woeller Construction of Williston with her husband Richard Woeller.

Meeks said he is friends with her brothers Ken Sheffield and Melvin Sheffield as well as with the late Ms. Woeller. Melvin Sheffield is a former employee of Levy County, Meeks mentioned.

She died after being struck by lightning on Saturday (Sept. 1).

On Tuesday morning, Chairman Meeks asked people to keep those families in their prayers, because this sudden and tragic loss of two wonderful people who have big families is felt in the community.

During the Rotary Club meeting in Williston on Tuesday afternoon (Sept. 4), everyone who knew Norma Woeller said she was a wonderful person who they never saw become angry, and everyone was sad to have heard about her passing.