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Gilchrist County takes care of business *New jail is in the works*



Gilchrist County Manager Bobby Crosby (left) and Gilchrist County Attorney David Miller 'Duke' Lang Jr. prepare for the start of the meeting Monday night (May 2).

Story and Photos

By Jeff M. Hardison © May 3, 2022 at 10:12 p.m.

TRENTON – The five-member Gilchrist County Board of County Commissioners on Monday night (May 2) took care of business in a number of ways.



Gilchrist County Clerk Todd Newton sits ready to provide the services to the County Commission as he does.

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Gilchrist County Sheriff's Office Deputy T. Sanders is the deputy assigned to the County Commission for security on Monday night.

This bug seen on one of the padded pews in the County Commission meeting room found its way indoors after riding into the building from outside. It had dropped out of an oak tree that hangs over a steel picnic bench on the grounds outside the meeting room, and it landed in a journalist's hair. A kindhearted and



considerate candidate for county office flicked it off the scribe's hair. The fate of the bug is unknown after this photo was taken, however it was not hurt up to the point where the writer left the meeting room.

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George Green speaks about the Summer Youth Employment Program offered by this region's CareerSource unit. (More information is in the story below.)



Gilchrist County Finance Director Richard Romans looks at a printed version of what is on a screen in the room, where County Clerk Todd Newton is speaking about the current condition of the county financially for this fiscal year.

Perhaps, of most significant importance, they moved forward on the financing aspect of a new jail that can cost up to \$4 million.

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County Commission Chairman County Commission Chairman William “Bill” Martin, Vice Chairman Darrell Smith and commissioners Sharon Akins Langford, Marion Poitevint and Kenrick Thomas all voted in favor of motion by Commissioner Thomas seconded by Commissioner Poitevint.

That motion was to accept the proposal from Ameris Bank for a 20-year funding note of up to \$4 million at a fixed finance rate of 3.66 percent.

Ameris Bank’s bid beat bids provided from Drummond Community Bank and one from Capital City Bank. Capital City Bank only provided a 10-year quote, and that took it out of the running, even though that rate was 3.17 percent, according to records.

Drummond Community Bank sent a rate of 4 percent on 10 years and 5 percent on 20 years, according to records.

The County Commission anticipates seeing figures in two weeks, at the May 16 meeting, to have a better gauge of the actual cost to build the new jail.

The note will be drawn down upon to pay construction costs as the money is needed, reducing the amount of payment of interest. The note is not a mortgage. It is a loan.

Other Bills

The Gilchrist County Board of County Commissioners approved payment other bills Monday evening during the regular twice-monthly meeting of the Commission.

One invoice that met with a check was from North Florida Professional Services (NFPS). That \$22,200 check is part of the total \$199,800 billed from NFPS to-date of the \$296,000 contractual agreement for the NFPS’s work relevant to the Northwest 30th Street and Northwest 20th Avenue paving project.

That paving is being performed thanks the Florida Department of Transportation Small County Road Assistance Program (SCRAP). The purpose of the SCRAP program is to assist small county governments in resurfacing and reconstructing county roads.

This SCRAP project, including the engineering performed before the start of paving, is covered 100 percent by a grant from the state, Gilchrist County Administrator Bobby Crosby said when he was asked by HardisonInk.com.

As for NFPS, it provides Gilchrist County with a broad range of engineering services. Tori Humphries of NFPS is managing this SCRAP project for this County Commission.

Another bill the Gilchrist County Commission agreed to pay was to Fred Fox Enterprises for managing a Community Development Block Grant. That bill was for \$5,250. This company is a business management consultant in St. Augustine. It has been managing CDBG for towns, cities and counties in Florida for several years.

Just as with SCRAP, this CDBG is 100 percent grant funded.

Another agency that helps Gilchrist County handle business matters is the Suwannee River Economic Council (SREC). Its invoice for \$34,748.80 pays for the reimbursement to SREC for Charles Lott’s owner-occupied rehabilitation of his dwelling for the funding year 2021-2022.

This program is another 100 percent grant-funded venture that helps Gilchrist County.

New Building Permit Fees

After some discussion, a motion by Commissioner Langford, seconded by Commissioner Smith, met with a 5-0 vote of approval to adopt new building permit fees effective May 30.

These fees are for new construction.

The fee for a new single-family dwelling is a minimum of \$1,500 on a building up to 2,000 square-

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feet under the roof. That includes space for attached garages, porches, etc. After the 2,000 feet, there is an additional \$1 added per square-foot.

The fee for a new mobile home, manufactured home or modular home is a minimum of \$1,500 on a building up to 2,000 square-feet under the roof. That includes space for attached garages, porches, etc. After the 2,000 feet, there is an additional 75-cents added per square-foot.

Payment of this building permit includes electric, HVAC, plumbing, driveway, 9-1-1 addressing, plan review and building inspections by the county.

Other News

County Clerk Todd Newton said a review of the Gilchrist County Commission budget in the current fiscal year shows it to be fairly in line with where it should be at this point in the year.

County Administrator Crosby said the county's new procedure of hauling its own garbage to the landfill at New River started today, and this is the start of the county saving money in that process.

County Commission Chairman Martin said the dry weather is causing some lime rock road grading to be delayed, because it is too dry to grade those roads.

Meanwhile, he added, with sand pockets poking up through the lime rock, motorists are advised to take more care. Hitting a sandy spot on a lime rock road, Martin said, can send a vehicle off the road and into a ditch or worse.

Also, North Florida Professional Services Administrative Director Megan Carter provided the County Commission with the final draft of an element to be added to the Comprehensive Plan.

A couple of years ago, the Florida Legislator required the addition of verbiage about property rights in all city and county comprehensive growth management plans. The NFPS plan meets the requirements of the state.

The County Commission voted 5-0 to transmit it to the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, where it is anticipated to be approved. Upon return to Gilchrist County, there will be a public hearing, after which it is anticipated to be added to the comprehensive plan.

Summer Youth Employment Program

George Green of Florida Crown CareerSource said the Summer Youth Employment Program is happening this summer.

CareerSource will be at Trenton High School and Bell High School on May 9, and it will be at the Dixie County Library in Cross City on May 16 and 17.

The in-person registration by students for this program in Union County has passed already.

To qualify, a student must be 16 to 18 years old. They must be enrolled in school and be a graduating senior in 2022 or receiving their GED in 2022. They must live in Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist or Union counties.

The pay is \$12.50 an hour. For more information, contact the Florida Crown CareerSource office in Cross City or in Lake City. The Trenton location closed years ago.