

January 12, 2006
Special Session
Bonifay, Florida

The Holmes County Board of Commissioners met in a Special Session on the above date with the following members present: Commissioner Jim King, Commissioner Raymon Thomas, Commissioner Harold Smith, Commissioner Phillip Music and Commissioner Earl Stafford, Chairman of the Board.

Jennifer Neitsch, Deputy Clerk, was present and kept the minutes.

Commissioner Music opened the meeting.

Commissioner Thomas led the prayer and pledge.

Melissa Proctor with Government Services Group, stated there would be a special assessment for fire only.

The process would be as follows:

- Conduct a fire study
- Study fire call data, property appraiser information, budget information
- Develop a rate
- Look at inventory, stations, trucks, etc to determine the current level of service.
- Do projections and develop a 3-5 year rate structure
- Public Notice
- Public Hearing and notice to all land owners
- Master Ordinance – advertise 10 days prior
- Prepare final resolution, final public hearing – advertise 20 days prior, by Sept. 15th to go on tax collector's roll

Commissioner King asked if there would be any charges to the county. Commissioner Thomas stated if the Board went through the process and adopted the ordinance the fire assessment fee would not have to go on the ballot. Fees for the service would be as follows:

- Total cost of \$42,100
- Small County Technical Assistance Program offering \$5750
- The total cost the county would be responsible for was \$36,050.

Administration fees are built in with this cost and the tax collector charges 2%. Mrs. Proctor explained a policy decision would need to be made by the Board of how to charge each classification of agriculture, commercial, and land assessment from the county.

She also stated by dropping the ISO ratings that home owners insurance would also be lowered.

Commissioner Thomas stated the 2006 budget did not include the total cost. Melissa stated that payments could be amortized, but a decision needed to be made due to the deadline from the Small County Technical Assistance Program which was Jan. 15th. Mrs. Proctor stated residents could obtain a hardship package from the tax collector's office if needed. Commissioner Thomas asked if initially the

funds would be used county wide to upgrade the fire departments. Mrs. Proctor responded that we would need to develop a list of need to see where the money was most needed. Not all departments would need the same amount or percentage.

Mrs. Proctor stated the Fire Assessment money could not be rolled into the general fund. She explained any unused funds would be rolled over into the fire departments next fiscal budget year to use as needed. Chief Evans asked if they would need to get purchase orders from the county or do their own record keeping. Melissa Proctor recommended that due to each department not having the time to do book keeping that the county bookkeeping department oversee the funds and issue many purchase orders in advance. Any purchase orders left over at the end of the year could be returned to the county and new ones issued. The County Finance Department could pay the bills on a monthly basis for the volunteer fire departments. Any money received from fund raisers, etc would remain separate from the fire assessment monies. The agreement would be for unincorporated areas only and use the inter-local agreements that are already in place. Mrs. Proctor stated the only downfall of the process is the assessment of every property. Some property owners don't have home owner's insurance, therefore the savings on the insurance won't be realized. Commissioner Smith state those people could apply for a hardship application.

Shay McCormick thanked the Board for their consideration of this process and offered his support. He also encouraged the Board to step forward and go through with the fire assessment.

Commissioner Thomas made a motion to proceed with the study and to develop fees effective today. Commissioner Music offered a second. The motion was passed unanimously.

Melissa Proctor, Government Services Group, stated the study should be complete and rates determined around June or July 2006. She also asked for a contact person from the Board to correspond with and Commissioner Thomas assumed that responsibility.

The Esto Volunteer Fire Department offered 100% support in the study.

Amy Loflin, Special Projects Manager, reported on the generator bid for the repeater tower. She stated the fuel tank listed in one of the bids was not an issue. Commissioner Thomas made a motion to remove the bid from the table and Commissioner Music offered a second. The motion passed unanimously. Commissioner Thomas made a motion to approve the low bid and Commissioner Music offered a second. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board also discussed that the Procurement Policy currently had no reference to a local vendor preference.

Commissioner Thomas discussed the 911 phone bill that is overdue. He offered a motion to loan money to pay the bill. Commissioner Music offered a second. The vote passed unanimously.

Commissioner Thomas stated the new map plotter had been moved to the Supervisor of Elections office and the maps would be made there. He also stated that a rate schedule needed to be set for the maps. Commissioner Thomas made a motion for fees as follows:

- \$10 for black & white 3x4
- \$50 for color 3x4

Commissioner Music offered a second. The motion passed unanimously.

With no further business, Commissioner Thomas made a motion to adjourn with Commissioner Music offering a second. The motion passed unanimously.