

## **WEWAHITCHKA, FLORIDA**

**APRIL 15, 2008**

### **SPECIAL MEETING**

The Gulf County Board of County Commissioners met this date in special session with the following members present: Chairman Billy E. Traylor, Commissioners Carmen L. McLemore, and Jerry W. Barnes. <Commissioners Nathan Peters, Jr. and Bill Williams were absent.>

Others present were: County Attorney Timothy McFarland, Clerk of Circuit Court Rebecca L. Norris, Deputy Clerk Kari Summers, Deputy Clerk Kayla Duke, Deputy Administrator Lynn Lanier, Human Resources Director Denise Manuel, Building Official Lee Collinsworth, Road Department Superintendent Bobby Knee, Mosquito Control Director Mark Cothran, Solid Waste Director Joe Danford, Building Inspector George Knight, and Sheriff's Office Deputy Ken Starnes. \_

Chairman Billy E. Traylor called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., E.T.

#### **GULF BEACHES SEWER SYSTEM**

Deputy Administrator Lynn Lanier requested the Board's permission for the Chairman to sign a grant agreement for the Gulf Beaches Sewer System. Commissioner McLemore motioned to do so. Commissioner Barnes seconded and the motion passed 3-0.

#### **HIGHLAND VIEW DONNIE WAYNE BRAKE PARK/ CHANGE ORDER #3**

Upon recommendation by Deputy Administrator Lynn Lanier, Commissioner McLemore motioned to approve Change Order #3, for the installation of a 4-foot specialty picket fence, in the amount of \$4,225.00. Commissioner Barnes seconded and the motion passed 3-0.

#### **CITY OF WEWAHITCHKA BUILDING DEPARTMENT**

Chairman Traylor discussed a request from the City of Wewahitchka for Gulf County to take over all the functions of the building department inside the City of Wewahitchka. Commissioner Barnes motioned to proceed with the County taking over the City of Wewahitchka's functions of the building department, contingent upon County Attorney McFarland and City Manager Don Minchew' s review, and execution of an Interlocal Agreement. Commissioner McLemore seconded the motion and it passed 3-0.

#### **MOSQUITOES/BEEES**

Chairman Traylor discussed a cooperative effort to protect bees while maintaining public safety and allowing Mosquito Control to do their job. Commissioner McLemore stated that his district cannot be sprayed at all because of a law that states Mosquito Control cannot spray within two miles of a bee farm.

Donald Smiley, a beekeeper who resides in Wewahitchka, Florida, approached the Board and discussed that he has no problem with mosquito spraying near his bees as long as it is not during daylight hours. Commissioner McLemore inquired of Donald Smiley about an old tradition in which beekeepers would move their bees down the river during mosquito

season. Smiley discussed that this was before his career as a beekeeper. Commissioner McLemore inquired about specifics regarding the best time to spray to insure bee safety and whether thirty minutes before dark, or thirty minutes after sunrise would be acceptable. Smiley discussed that dark would be the most favorable time to spray. Chairman Traylor discussed that this has been the worst year for complaints concerning mosquitoes. He further discussed that he and Mosquito Control Director Cothran had spoken in a conference call with Apiary Inspection Assistant Chief, Jerry Hayes and discussed two main objectives:

1. To work with the beekeepers
2. To maintain flexibility between Mosquito Control Department and beekeepers.

Cothran discussed that Mosquito Control has every intention of working with beekeepers and respects their career but also asks that beekeepers understand that the Mosquito Control Department has to consider the public safety issue. Commissioner McLemore stated that he does not know of any beekeepers on the south end of the County and inquired of Cothran if they could spray the south end exclusively in the daytime and the north end at night. Cothran responded this would be a problem in the south end because the most crucial time for spraying for mosquitoes is at dusk. Upon Commissioner McLemore's inquiry, Cothran reported that he has researched the possibility of leasing two extra trucks, on a per mileage basis, to further aid in efforts of Mosquito Control. Cothran informed the Board that there are thirteen people from the Union interested in the temporary Mosquito Sprayer position. Cothran reported on the distribution of training material and a training class to be held at the EOC Building on Friday, April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2008 from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. E.T. Upon Commissioner McLemore's inquiry, Cothran discussed the need to train the new employees on the routes.

Road Department Superintendent Bobby Knee informed the Board that last year's \$40,000.00 due from VMS might not be available to the Mosquito Control Department due to current year revenue shortfalls in the Road Department budget; according to the Clerk Finance Director Carla Hand.

President of the Beekeepers Association, Lawrence Cutts expressed a desire to come to a compromise with the Department of Mosquito Control. He addressed Commissioner McLemore's question concerning moving bees down the river, stating that in the 1880's the river was the highway and the bees were moved by steamboat but since it is no longer so, it would be labor intensive and not cost effective to continue that tradition. Cutts discussed that he has had spraying done within fifty yards of the bees with no adverse effects. Cothran stated they are using a different chemical now. Cutts stated that the later in the evening Mosquito Control sprays, the closer they can be to the bees. Chairman Traylor stated that the Board has not received any reports of dead bees and further stated that beekeeper Chris Wood, has had spraying done within 500 feet of his bees.

Beekeeper, James E. Rish appeared and informed the Board that he has had some dead bees but not many. He expressed his gratitude to Mosquito Control for allowing him time to move his bees further away from the road before spraying.

Beekeeper, Reno Plenge appeared before the Board and reported to Cothran that his bees are located within 200 feet of the road. He requested that Cothran turn of the sprayer before approaching. Cothran discussed a law that states if you own a bee farm you must have a sign indicating so, posted in plain view for the public. This would be beneficial to

Mosquito Control as they train new employees to insure that they do not spray near bee farms. Rish stated that some beekeepers keep their bees too close to the road. Commissioner McLemore discussed that it is unfair to residents who live near bee farms to not have their area sprayed for mosquitoes. Rish expressed the need for a map with the exact location of bee farms.

Beekeeper, Eddie Causey appeared before the Board and stated that he has aparies in White City and Dalkeith. He discussed that he does not see what difference Mosquito Control makes. He doesn't know what is killing his bees but he does have dead bees. Chairman Traylor again discussed a need for compromise between beekeepers and mosquito control. Cothran explained a program in which they test chickens for possible diseases transmitted by mosquito bites. He discussed that if a certain percentage of chickens are found to be infected, it will become an issue of public safety and the Mosquito Control Department will be allowed to spray 24/7. He further stated that beekeepers would receive a warning if it should come to that. Chairman Traylor introduced Commissioner Barnes to the assembly and informed them that Barnes's mother-in-law was the first person in the state of Florida to be lost to the West Nile Virus.

Marilyn Blackwell, of the public, discussed that mosquito spray is harmful. She informed the Board that her doctor signed a statement saying that Mosquito Control is not to spray around her house. She further stated that bees are very important to Gulf County for the production of honey, namely Tupelo Honey, and requested that the Board look at this issue from all perspectives. Chairman Traylor acknowledged what Blackwell discussed but stated that one life is worth more than all the bees in the world.

Gordon Foster, of the public, stated that there are 132 food products that would not exist without bees and again stated the need to keep things in perspective. Chairman Traylor responded stating that the County will continue spraying to assure the health and safety of this County. Rish stated that there is a need for public awareness concerning mosquito control. Chairman Traylor agreed.

There being no further business and upon motion by Commissioner Barnes, the meeting did then adjourn at 7:47 p.m., E.T.

**BILLY E. TRAYLOR**  
**CHAIRMAN**

**ATTEST:**

**REBECCA L. NORRIS**

