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County moving forward on radio communications work

With a 2013 Federal Communications Commission deadline looming for narrow banding of two-way radio communications, Ellis County Commissioners voted to engage RCC Consultants, Inc. to assist with upgrading the County's systems.

"This is the proposal from RCC that the Court asked them to prepare at the April 25th meeting," said Special Projects Director Kathy Eriksen. "It broadens the scope and includes all the agencies that are affected."

Eriksen said there are three phases to the project, and the proposal presented to the Commissioners deals with Phase I, which is a comprehensive needs assessment.

"What does the County need, and how do we develop the proper system to fix what's in place," Eriksen clarified. "Phase II is going out for bid, and if we choose to engage RCC, they would help write the specs for that. Then Phase III would be system implementation."

County Judge Carol Bush said she believes the firm has an understanding of what it is that Ellis County needs to achieve in the project.

"It's been made really clear to all of us that we do not have someone in-house that could mastermind the entire system," she added. "It's time to bring in someone with that expertise."

The next step, now that the Court has approved the proposal, is to hammer out the details of the contract.

"There are things we can put in the contract to safeguard the end result," Bush said. "I would suggest we start talking about those – make your opinions known to Kathy and we can communicate them to RCC."

After a short executive session, the Court voted to authorize Bush to extend an offer to an applicant for the position of Purchasing Agent. The name of the preferred candidate has not yet been released, pending acceptance of the County's offer.

Reading of a proclamation in recognition of 35 years of service came as a surprise to Texas AgriLife Extension Agent Glen Moore. Moore, who serves the county in the area of Integrated Pest Management will retire at the end of this month.

“Glen Moore, while serving Ellis County, received the Vice Chancellor’s Award in Excellence, the Superior Service Award, and the Texas Pest Management Association Outstanding Extension Agent award,” Bush said, reading from her proclamation. “(He) performed invaluable duties as the IPM agent so that farmers, ranchers, and homeowners might learn the latest scientific, research-based information...for the improvement of their quality of life.”

In other business, Commissioners:

- Granted a one-time variance from County of Ellis Rules, Regulations and Specifications for Subdivisions and Manufactured Homes as it relates to utility easement/drainage/building set-back on side of lot 50, Mission Hills, Phase 4, in pct. 4;
- Approved a preliminary plat for Garden Estates, four lots, on Westmoreland Road;
- Accepted the completed subdivision, Rockett Ranch, including John Rockett Lane and Cotton Gin Pass, in pct. 1;
- Released the irrevocable letter of credit for the completed infrastructure in Rockett Ranch;
- Declared Law Library books as surplus;
- Declared 21 police cruisers as surplus;
- Approved the sale to the City of Milford Police Department of one or more police cruisers;
- Extended the contract agreement for Convenience Store Gasoline for the period starting May 23, 2011 and running through December 31, 2011, with extension of one additional twelve month period;
- Authorized the County Judge to sign a contract with West Publishing for the District Court Judges, County Court at Law Judges, and County Judge to use Westlaw Next Select, at a yearly increase of \$678;
- Approved a contract and addendum with AIM Healthcare Services for recovery of potential overpayments relating to Ellis County Indigent Health Care, with a fee charged only on any monies recovered as a result of AIM’s efforts;
- Accepted the resignation of Henry M. Rhoades, Sr. from Emergency Service District #9;
- Accepted the resignation of Sadie Telez from Emergency Service District #8;
- Appointed Ronnie Gatlin Sr. to the board of Emergency Service District #8 and administered his oath of office;
- Cancelled the contract for maintenance with KONE on the elevator located at the historic Courthouse (which is maintained instead by Thyssen Krupp);
- Entered into a maintenance contract with KONE on 11 elevators, six located at 109 S. Jackson, two located in the new jail addition, and three located at 300 S. Jackson;
- Took no action on the County’s basic plan and functional annexes that make up the County’s Emergency Operations Plan.