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Sheriff's Office to provide security at Lake Bardwell

As they have done for a number of years, deputies of the Ellis County Sheriff will provide security services at Lake Bardwell during the summer months, under a contract with the Army Corps of Engineers approved this morning by the Commissioners' Court.

"This is an item that comes to Commissioners' Court every year since I can remember," said Captain Chuck Laubach. "We are in agreement with the numbers."

The contract calls for the services to begin this week and continue through September, 2012.

Commissioners also approved a contract with Hibbs Hallmark for Comprehensive Property and Casualty Insurance for the period of one year, beginning on May 22, 2012 and continuing through May 22, 2013. The award follows an extensive review of the coverage, both with Hibbs Hallmark and the Texas Association of Counties.

"We have had the opportunity to develop great relationships with both of these carriers," said County Judge Carol Bush. "I would like to say on behalf of the Court that we have appreciated the relationships we have developed over the years and certainly whatever decision we make today is not indicative of any complaint."

Representatives from both carriers were on hand to answer questions for members of the Court. In the end, Commissioner Dennis Robinson, pct. 1, made the motion to contract with Hibbs Hallmark.

"Thank you (both) for taking time to provide the information," he said. "I see additional savings with TAC, but also some inherent risks. Our service with Hibbs Hallmark has been good over the years, and while the savings may not be as much, we are still receiving a benefit."

The Court chose not to add specific flood and earthquake coverages at this time.

A request for a one-time variance from the County Rules, Regulations and Specifications for Subdivisions and Manufactured Homes relating to the 150 foot road frontage requirement failed for lack of a second. Property owners in Precinct 3 sought the variance in order to obtain a building permit for property they purchased that has no frontage on a County road.

Commissioner Heath Sims, pct. 3, was in favor of granting the variance, due to the existence of a recorded easement for ingress and egress from the property, as well as the fact that homes have already been built on two adjacent pieces of property that also lack road frontage as required by the current regulations.

“The purpose of this regulation is for health and safety of residents, so that they will be able to be located if emergency responders go out to that area,” said Robinson. “I do not recall since 2005 granting a variance without any road frontage. We need to be consistent.”

The failure of the motion for lack of a second is equivalent to the Court’s having taken no action on the item.

In other business, Commissioners:

- Granted a one-time variance from the County’s Rules, Regulations and Specifications for Subdivisions and Manufactured Homes to allow construction of a water well for the purpose of filling a retention pond in Precinct 3;
- Heard a brief presentation by Kevin Blankenship, Plant Manager of Ash Grove Texas LP regarding planned kiln modifications to meet new EPA regulations;
- Received the Ellis County Investment Report for first quarter 2012 from Ellis County Treasurer Cheryl Chambers;
- Approved an agreement with Apex Innovations to purchase software licenses to administer mass notification services for firefighter response alerts and cities readiness initiative volunteer alerts;
- Approved a contract for the Cities Readiness Initiative Volunteer Coordinator;
- Approved an amendment to the Master Services Agreement with the Ellis County Jail and T-NETIX for July 10, 2012 through July 10, 2013;
- Authorized County Judge to send a letter of denial to the Ellis Central Appraisal District regarding the abatement exemption application of Direct Energy.
- Approved submittal of a grant application for the 2012 Clean Diesel Call for Projects;
- Took no action on a proposal to sponsor the South Ellis County Water Supply Corporation for a grant application.