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County progresses with narrow banding compliance

With a Federal Communications Commission deadline of January 1, 2013 looming ever closer, Ellis County Commissioners approved a contract extension with RCC Consultants that will take the County to full compliance. The action was taken during the Court's regularly-scheduled meeting on Monday, November 28.

"This requires enormous coordination, technical expertise, and analysis, as well as helping to write the vendor bids to get us to the point where we are in compliance," said Special Projects Director Kathy Eriksen.

The cost of this second phase of the narrow banding project is just over \$68,000.

Problems with the existing radio voter system must be addressed before it can be made narrow band compliant. RCC was also engaged by the Court to implement the necessary repairs, at a cost of approximately \$117,000.

"After three months as an elected official, almost five years ago, I went to a meeting with firefighters, and that was the biggest complaint they had," said Commissioner Bill Dodson, pct. 2. "They felt we were putting them in danger each time we sent them out (because of poor radio coverage)."

Commissioners also authorized participation in a Hazard Mitigation Grant Program being coordinated by the North Central Texas Council of Governments. NCTCOG has proposed applying for a collaborative planning grant that includes Ellis, Kaufman, Navarro, Rockwall and Hunt Counties and will allow strategic planning and a search for available funding resources to address various hazards, with a focus on wildfire hazard mitigation.

Several citizens approached the Court to suggest items that might be considered during that planning process should the grant be obtained.

In other business, Commissioners:

- Approved the purchase of one 2007 Ingersoll-Rand SD77F-TF Padfoot Soil Compactor pursuant to a recent bid process for Road and Bridge Precinct 4 at a cost of approximately \$49,000;

- Declared as surplus a 2002 Vibromax padfoot roller with strike-off blade;
- Granted a variance from the County of Ellis Rules, Regulations and Specifications for Subdivisions and Manufactured Homes relating to the ten-foot side building set-back line for a lot in Hunter's Run;
- Granted a variance from the County of Ellis Rules, Regulations and Specifications for Subdivisions and Manufactured Homes relating to fire hydrant requirements for a lot in Green Manor;
- Approved a replat of the property in Green Manor pursuant to the variance;
- Approved a replat for two lots in Talton Home Place in precinct 3;
- Took no action on a proposed ban on outdoor burning;
- Approved changes to election precincts and polling places as necessary to conform to the Commissioner and Justice Court/Constable lines recently pre-cleared by the Attorney General (Justice Court and Constable lines were not changed during the redistricting process);
- Approved an interlocal agreement with the City of Grand Prairie for improvements to Gifco Road.
- Convened an executive session to discuss the possible sale or lease of real property and the possible appointment, employment, evaluation, duties, or hiring of a new Ellis County Fire Marshal/Emergency Management Coordinator with no action taken on either topic.