**Summary of Town Hall Meeting January 27, 2015**

With over 50 citizens in attendance the first of a series of Town Hall Meetings that I will hold throughout our county took place at the Board Chambers. The format was open. The citizens were able to express their concerns and ask questions without restrictions of time or topic.

**Road conditions:** Concerns were; Sue Lane (off of East Ivan Rd.), Bettywood Circle, George Crump Rd., Raven Road, Captain James and J&K Rds. were discussed with respect to inability of emergency and other services (Fire trucks, ambulances, law enforcement and school bus) to access the properties.

**Action:** Obtain update on Bettywood and gather facts on Sue Lane and possible meeting with homeowners as a group to explore options moving forward. Establish official history of George Crump Rd. and explore options. Obtain current status of Capt. James and J&K Rds.

Besides the usual comments about the poor road conditions not maintained by the county one citizens attributed the current road conditions as a result of poor planning in the past and advised citizens to, “Watch who you elect.”

**Planning and Sprawl:** Concerns about sprawl, flooding, poorly planned older subdivision such as Wakulla Gardens were discussed. Warnings of the effect of upcoming Comprehensive Plan Amendments being proposed by at least one County Commissioner were expressed.

**Impact Fees:** Arguments of the pros and cons of impact fees were discussed. What impact fees are and how they are calculated were discussed.

An impact fee is a fee that is imposed by a [local government](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Local_government) on a new or proposed [development](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Real-estate_developer) project to pay for all or a portion of the costs of providing [public services](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_services) to the new development. These fees are implemented to help reduce the economic burden on local jurisdictions and the people and businesses who already have built. The fees are placed on the new development.

**Action:** Clarify the existing status of impact fees in our county. Clarify statements made during the meeting.

**Facts:** Wakulla County presently has no impact fees. In the past Wakulla County had impact fees (During the boom years impact fees were in place.)

**Environment:** The impact of growth on our environment was voiced. Consider the value our environment and how cheap we are rushing to sell it off.

**Gravesites:** Does the county have a policy on gravesites? Is there a certain size that is needed to establish a family gravesite or family cemetery?

**Response:** The County does have a “Indigent” Burial Policy for County purposes only; however, other gravesite or cemetery permitting would depend on the property zoning. Family cemeteries can be approved as conditional uses by the Planning Commission.  The conditional use also requires the submission of a survey of the property with the location of the proposed cemetery identified.  We just approved one last month, in fact.  The only condition that was included was that they could not offer plots for sale to the general public without approval of a new conditional use.  We also require that the cemetery be fenced to prevent construction over the graves. There is no minimum size.  There are very few State regulations of these uses.

 **An additional question relating to private grave sites is: If a grave site is on private property, not owned by the family of the interned, can family be restricted from visiting the grave site?**

It is administration’s understanding that no one can deny access to a cemetery to a family members.

**WastePro: C**omplaints about cigarette butts, continued trash along the sides of the roads, and large trash hauling trucks that are tearing up small dirt roads were made.

**Response:** WastePro deals with complaints on a per compliant basis.  We can ask that WastePro uses a smaller truck or that the customers move their pick up point.  The county has received the same complaints about the school buses tearing up the roads. Complaints are handled by ESG and sent to WastPro or the customer can call them direct. If a citizen has a problem with trucks tearing the roads up as per above there are alternatives and a complaint should been made to ESG 926-7616 or WastePro.

**Community Health for County:** Announcement of a meeting relating to Community Health in our county: Breakfast meeting 7:30am, February 16, 2015 at the community center.

**319 Widening and Right of Way Purchase:** FDOT meeting at the community center February 19, 2015 @ 6:30pm. Information is needed to help citizens understand the purchase process of FDOT for ROW. Citizens should ask FDOT to provide a workshop on the process when they attend the meeting on February 19.

**Storm-water study and management:** Where does the county stand with regard to a county-wide storm water study and implementation of the plan into action to manage drainage and reduce or prevent flooding?

**Action:** Will get update from the administration.

**Affirmative Action Plan:** Does the county have an affirmative action plan? Yes, it does but was said by one citizen that the plan is poor and needs have a major update. Our county resource office, Debbie Dubose, can provide you with the present plan.

**Response:** Yes. The Wakulla County Equal Employment Opportunity Plan (EEOP) is updated and adopted by the Board every two years.

We will be updating the EEOP this year within our purchasing policy updates. It passes the test for our attorneys as well as we have to send the purchasing policy to FEMA, USDA, CDBG and State of Florida for them to review prior to accepting grants etc.. And all have been okay with our policies with the exception of one comment from CDBG that is being taken care of it now with the recent upcoming changes.

**Bidding of County contracts:** What is the county policy on when a contract needs to be put out for bid?

**Response:** Yes, the Procurement thresholds are outlined in the Wakulla County Purchasing Policy. Staff is in the process of providing the Board w/ an amended Purchasing Policy for consideration/approval; the current Policy requires a competitive sealed bid/proposal for any purchase or service that is $10,000 or more.

**And specifically as relates to the County Attorney contract.**

In 2009 the County released a Request for Proposals (RFP) for legal services for which the Contract was awarded to Nabors, Giblin, & Nickerson. This was a 5 year Contract. The original Contract provided extensions if both parties agreed. In July 2014 the Board approved extending their Contract for three years (expiring Sept. 30, 2016).

**Vetting of County Commissioners:** Are County Commissioners vetted before they run for county commissioner? No, but I will seek additional information.

**Response:** The information filled out for the Supervisor of Election offices when a candidate registers to run for office is the only vetting process.

**Volunteer Firefighter Training:** There is a Senate Bill that would give relief to volunteers. As relates to training requirements. A request for a Board resolution in support of this bill was suggested.. Concern by County Fire Chief Morgan was voiced as to the adverse effects of the Senate Bill.

**Response:** At this time based on the information the county has to date, staff would be against the passage of the bill as written. The reasons are below:

* + The Insurance Services Office (ISO) has gone on record stating that any community that would use non-certified firefighters would receive the lowest rating of a 10 for insurance on property.
	+ WCFR currently has three levels of VFD membership and does allow for those unable to achieve FF1 certification to operate at emergency scenes including driving and operating apparatus on scenes. This classification of VFD member who is not able to enter the “hot zone”, according to staff is not any easier to recruit that other classifications..
	+ The administration believes that if the bill were passed that it would not significantly increase our volunteers as we can’t get folks to volunteer now to even drive the truck.
	+ Staff and our Firefighters are concerned that putting non trained/certified folks in a fire situation could and probably would result in either the trained or non-trained getting injured or worse. No Firefighters want to go into a burning building with someone who is not trained and certified as they depend on them to save lives.
	+ Staff is also concerned about the county being responsible and being sued for not having trained/certified Firefighters working a scene where mistakes are made resulting in injury.

**What is Florida Association of Counties’ position on this bill?**

It is too early for FAC to have a position as the bill has not been to committee yet. We will be tracking it though.

**Amendment #1**: A suggestion to divert money to Wakulla County for sewer projects. Significant opposition to that idea was voiced and the idea that the Amendment #1 money should go to the purchase and preservation of land and not spent on infrastructure projects. I agree that money should not be diverted from the purchase of land, marshlands and water bodies to pay for infrastructure that should be paid by other funding.

**Is Wakulla County intending to go after Amendment #1 money? If yes, for which projects?**

**Response:** If the legislature allocates funds from Amendment #1 to water, sewer and storm-water projects, yes, the administration intends to go after funding for Sewer improvements and system expansion as well as storm water projects probably in Wakulla Gardens and also along 319 in the Crawfordville corridor.

**Recreation for Wakulla County Youth:** Information about parents having to form not for profit corporations in order to provide liability for the youth engaged in different sports. There were questions concerning how the county department was functioning: 1) activities sponsored by the county and those not and 2) how the tax dollars and fees were being spent.

**Response:** The Wakulla County Youth Tackle Football and Cheerleading Association  has been set up as a non for profit and the Wakulla County Girls Softball Association is currently in the process and expects to be done by the end of this month. The Girls Softball Association has been working with Shepard Accounting of Crawfordville to get this completed.

The Associations are as follows:

Wakulla Youth Tackle Football & Cheerleading Association

Wakulla County Girls Softball Association

Wakulla County Cal Ripken Youth Baseball Association

The programs directly run by the county are as follows:

Youth Flag Football

Youth Winter Soccer

Youth T-Ball

Youth Pitching Machine Baseball League

Youth Player Pitch Baseball League

Youth Spring Soccer

Adult Softball

All sports games are at the rec park. This past Fall Girls Softball League for the first time ever, they started out at Wakulla County High School but due to some construction projects on the WHS softball field they ended up playing at Medart Rec. Park.

Also, the Tackle Football plays all their games at Medart Recreation Park but they have played the super bowl at WHS the past 3 years. Additionally one Tackle Football Team practices at Shadeville Elementary (Cougars), one practices at Wakulla Middle School (Eddie Metcalf's Team) and one practices at the Wakulla High School (Scott Klees team).

Lastly, sometimes a team will request to practice at a local school and if so I contact the school and request permission, but 95 % of the time they all practice at Medart Recreation Park due to the central location for all and the lights needed to see.

This response about Recreation still is unclear to me and needs more explanation.