

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS (BOCC) MEETING

PUBLIC HEARING ON CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The regular meeting of the Calhoun County Board of County Commissioners was called to order at 5:05 P.M. by the Deputy Sheriff Captain Broward Vickory.

Board Chairman, The Honorable Fred Attaway opened the meeting by addressing the disposal of waste tires proposals. Two (2) bids were received by the County, the first by BFI Inc. and the second was Cummings Enterprises. Emergency Management Director, Sonny O'Brien recommended that any vote on final selection be tabled until the next Board meeting to allow Commissioners adequate time to study the cost proposals associated with each bid.

Public Hearing was then called into session with the arrival of Commissioner Duane Capps to constitute a quorum.

Chairman Attaway called on Mr. Tony Mills, President of Disaster Resource Management (DRM) to address the Conflict of Interest requirement that must be complied with by all Commissioners, the five (5) Task Force members and Sonny O'Brien, Dir. of Emergency Management. Mr. Mills recapitulated the basic format that was introduced to the Board at previous workshop session on February 8, 1996. Mr. Mills then called on Mr. Darrell Shepard, Vice-President of DRM to elaborate on specific procedures to ensure compliance. Mr. Shepard then called on each member of the Citizen's Task Force to report the names and nature of their relationship to those program recipients on the master list. Mr. Bert Howell (banker and task force member) declared a conflict of interest with respect to Mr. & Mrs. Mark Fitten as a result of his professional relationship with them. Mrs. Gwen Strickland identified her father and mother as conflicts. Mr. Manuel Gatlin, Mr. Michael Pratt and Mr. James Freeman all reported no conflict of interest as the remaining members of the Citizen's Task Force. Mr. Shepard then asked each Board of County Commissioner to reveal any conflict of interest with the list of program recipients. All Commissioners reported no conflict with the exception of Commissioner Willie Truman Grant who declared his ex-wife (Veresta Grant) as conflict of interest. In addition, Mr. Shepard then proceeded to inform the County Attorney, Mr. Mat Fuqua of the need to prepare a legal opinion on the disclosures of each Commissioner and a transcript of the commission meeting must reflect the disclosures of each Commission member. The final procedure mandates that the Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners sign a summary letter requesting the release of waivers, and the copy of the advertisement from the local newspaper be displayed. All Commissioners then completed the required forms (Form 8B) with authenticated signatures. The completed documents were collected (including those of the Citizen's Task Force).

The Public Hearing segment of the Board meeting was closed after it became obvious there were no further comments from the public.

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Mr. Tony Mills, President of DRM, brought before the assembled group of decision-makers, the issue of limiting the size of property to be acquired in the voluntary buy-out program. He stated that the total acquisition database consist of approximately twenty-eight (28) individuals. Of this total, twenty (20) or the equivalent of seventy-one (71%) percent of the database own five (5) acres or less. The remaining eight (8) or twenty-nine (29%) percent own five (5) or more acres of land. Mr. Mills preceded to elaborate on the scoring and ranking method assigned to program recipients involving such qualifying elements as substantial damage to structure, special needs due to handicaps etc. He reminded the Board of County Commissioners that voluntary acquisition of primary residence take precedence over elevations. Commissioner Donnell Whitfield made a motion that the Board adopt the five (5) acre limit as a standard threshold for the size of property to be acquired under the hazard mitigation program. Commissioner Duane Capps seconded the motion to adopt the 5-acre rule. Mr. Mills stated that DRM will provide the local newspaper with frequent updates on the County's program for public release so as to eliminate or reduce the incidence of misinformation or conflicting signals among area residents regarding the City of Blountstown and Calhoun County's hazard mitigation programs since both programs are simultaneously on-going.

The DRM staff and members of the Citizen's Task Force were then excused from the remainder of the Commission agenda session at 6:20 P.M.