

Lafayette city council finalizes water contract with Red Boiling Springs

By Dan Copp

Lafayette lawmakers applied the finishing touches to a waterline contract between Red Boiling Springs and Lafayette during their Jan. 3 meeting.

After a series of special-called meetings, the RBS City Council finally approved the contract on Dec. 13 and the waterline itself during a special-called assemblage on Dec. 19.

Originally the contract called for RBS to purchase 14,400 gallons of water per day at \$3.71 per thousand gallons to prevent stagnation in the waterline.

After much debate and discussion, RBS council members revised the contract, which finally reached passage on a 4-1 vote, with Councilman Ray Bilbrey casting the lone dissention.

Under the revised agreement, RBS will assume responsibility of maintaining the water quality on its side of the meter by keeping the water in approximately 100 feet of line clean and properly chlorinated.

The contract stipulates that RBS agrees to obtain water from the Lafayette system "only in an emergency situation when the City of Red Boiling Springs supply sources are unable to service the

needs of the Nestle' Waters North America Inc. facility."

Lafayette will furnish all labor and material to maintain the master metering station up to but not including the gate valve on the RBS side of the metering station.

In the event RBS can't furnish enough water to sustain the Nestle' Water North America plant due to an inoperable or malfunctioning system, Lafayette will pump a maximum of 200,000 gallons of water per day into RBS' pipeline.

The contract indicates there would be no guarantee RBS will receive water from Lafayette, especially if the Lafayette residential water supply is jeopardized.

With little discussion, the Lafayette City Council unanimously approved of the revised contract.

In other business, the council OK'd a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) sewer rehabilitation project contract with Professional Engineering Services.

The agreement will give engineers the green light to identify, consult and analyze requirements of governmental authorities having jurisdiction

to approve the portions of the project designed or specified by the engineers, including but not limited to mitigating measures identified in the environmental assessment.

Engineer Ricky White will prepare a preliminary engineering report, accompanied by the projected cost of the project and a feasibility study.

The contract also enables engineers to develop a preliminary site plan.

According to the agreement, the estimated total amount of compensation to Professional Engineering will be \$70,400.

Before adjournment, the council approved:

- Lafayette Fire Chief Keith Scruggs' recommendation to purchase a command vehicle from Ted Russell Ford on a state bid for \$26,705.

- The fire chief's recommendation to reject the three bids for the department's brush truck that's up for sale. Scruggs noted the highest bid on the vehicle was about \$1,100 and he believed the department could receive more for it.

- John Mark Hix's request to purchase two acres of land in the city's Industrial Park.

- A request to bid three projects, for upgrades on the Page Durham and Carter sewer lift stations and waste water surge pumps. Lafayette Mayor Bill Wells said there was \$324,000 remaining from a wastewater construction project to be used in the proposed upgrades. The mayor said he hopes the new projects will be completed within the fiscal year.

- Rio Grande Fence Company's bid of \$5,432 for a new security fence for the sewer lift station at Macon County High School.

- The invoice for Adam's Springs emergency pump repair to the Layne Christensen Company for \$4,765.

- Councilman Loryn Atwell's recommendation to do away with a proposed ordinance to charge Lafayette citizens \$10 for yard sale permits as means to mitigate illegal sales. The measure died from a lack of support.

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City Board moves ahead on TAA expansion

By **BRIAN JUSTICE**
The Tullahoma News
Staff Writer

Despite questions about getting an attorney general's opinion, the Board of Mayor and Aldermen has approved the second and final reading of an ordinance to expand the Tullahoma Airport Authority from five to seven members.

The board voted 4-3 to expand the membership after a motion by Alderman Janice Bowling, seconded by Alderman C. Scott Shasteen, to seek the opinion was defeated.

Voting in favor of the expansion were Aldermen Phil Trimble, Jim Waters, Richard Darden and Lane Curlee.

Mayor Troy Bisby and Mrs. Bowling and Shasteen were in opposition.

Mrs. Bowling said that although the authority receives some city funding as an independent board, it still is just that — an independent board.

She said the authority also receives state and federal funding and its bylaws may require its own members to approve the expansion to make it official. She added that the city board should get an attorney general's opinion to determine what the proper course of action should be.

Darden said he had problems with an editorial that ran in *The News*.

"I was a little bit disturbed about an editorial that said let's avoid litigation," he said.

Shasteen questioned why Darden was concerned with what was being printed in the newspaper.

The board voted 4-3 to expand the membership after a motion by Alderman Janice Bowling, seconded by Alderman C. Scott Shasteen, to seek the opinion was defeated. Voting in favor of the expansion were Aldermen Phil Trimble, Jim Waters, Richard Darden and Lane Curlee.

Trimble said he and other board members were not informed about how a request had been made to seek an attorney general's opinion.

Bisby said he felt it necessary.

"This could be costly," he said, referring to the city getting in a legal fight over the issue. "Why not find out on the front end?"

Darden said it was a simple expansion from five to seven members, nothing more than that.

Trimble said he couldn't understand why some board members were fighting the expansion.

"What we're saying is we want more people involved in the Airport Authority," he said.

While those who have supported the move say the goal behind the expansion is to create diversity by adding members with different backgrounds.

Those in opposition say the move is an attempt to stack the board so that the

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TAA

(Starts on Page 1A)

majority can be changed to vote a certain way.

The issue has been controversial with a previous move to expand the membership defeated at the board's Oct. 10 meeting.

Trimble, who has supported the expansion, had requested whether the board could postpone its vote until Nov. 14 because Waters, who had previously voted in a 4-3 majority to have the resolution drafted, was absent.

Trimble had said it was obvious where the vote was heading — in a 3-3 tie — which would have killed the resolution.

Instead, the board voted 5-1 against the expansion, with Darden casting the sole vote in favor.

In opposition were Trimble, Bisby and Shasteen, Curlee and Mrs. Bowling.

Bisby explained later that, according to Robert's Rules of Order, which the board adheres to as an operational directive, an alderman wishing to bring up a failed issue must vote in the majority during a resolution's first reading.

Former City Attorney Steve Worsham, whose contract was terminated at the board's Nov. 14 meeting, had said that when the issue was defeated, it had to be treated as a new item to be brought up again for the board to consider.

The board later, in a split vote, agreed to resurrect the expansion move, which was voted on again Monday.

In a split vote, the Board of Aldermen approved at its Sept. 26 meeting began the process to expand the Airport Authority's membership.

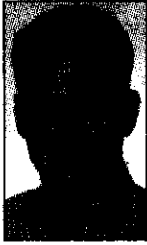
The board has been considering options — ranging from dissolving the authority, expanding its membership or giving it another chance to operate as is — to resolve extreme controversy that has developed in recent months.

However, Authority Chairman Ralph Kimberlin has said members had been working together much better recently with Tullahoma Regional Airport's best interest in mind. He added that the city has in the past faced difficulty in getting and retaining enough qualified authority members, and expanding its leadership from five to seven would be difficult.

Kimberlin had said that even if the city board approved the expansion, it would have to be agreed to by an authority vote before being final.



Hixson



Franklin

321

New MJ overpass gaining ground Beckwith Road interchange to accept bids soon

By LAURIE EVERETT
 Mt. Juliet Managing Editor

Thousands of prime industrial acres will soon be accessible to anxious developers with Friday's announcement the long-delayed Beckwith Road interchange project will be open for bids until Feb. 3.

County and city officials expressed elation at the news the bid process for the much-anticipated Interstate 40 interchange project is finally here.

"It's a great day for Wilson County," Wilson County Joint Economic and Community Development Board Executive Director G.C. Hixson said Tuesday. "This call for bids announcement eases the concerns of developers. They see the letting process as a go-ahead and a green light for the construction process."

Hixson noted the call for bids "sets the first stone" in place for an explosion in industrial development in an area developers have been eyeing for years. He noted the area will eventually be a "tremendous asset to the county and the city of Mt. Juliet."

Mt. Juliet City Planner Bobby Franklin said Tuesday contractors have until Feb. 3 to prepare bid packages. And once the project is let, it's full steam ahead on the project, he

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MJ OVERPASS

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said.

The cloverleaf interchange, located between Mt. Juliet Road and Highway 109 exits, will provide access to the growing Gladeville community.

TDOT officials said the projected completion date for the project is on or before Dec. 15, 2007.

"The City of Mt. Juliet fulfilled its obligations for this project December 2004," Franklin said. "So, we are very excited the project is finally ready for bids. This is confirmation this portion of the project won't be delayed anymore."

Hixson noted the new interchange will not only open prime industrial acres but will open up rail property along the Nashville Star commuter rail route.

"The fact we've reached this stage is a fine commitment to the folks in Mt. Juliet who have worked for years to get this through," Hixson said.

The economic director noted he's spoken to numerous developers who have expressed interest in the area that will be primed for construction when the interchange is complete.

"We've had a lot of interest not only from Nashville but from all over the Southeast," Hixson said. "Developers are ahead of the curve, and there are numerous options on the property that will probably progress with this news. We've had interest for all mixed-used developers."

He explained the area is perfect for industrial-sized warehousing and servicing developments.

Mt. Juliet Mayor Linda Elam said the official announcement for bids gives developers "assurance" the project is moving forward.

"It's fantastic news, and this lets people know the area is

viable," she said.

Elam stated when the interchange is complete, traffic on Mt. Juliet Road near the Providence project will receive relief.

"This project will provide a safety valve for traffic instead of everyone using the congested Mt. Juliet Road interchange," she said. "It will also be a back door for all the Providence people."

She said plans for a connector road between Hwy. 70 and I-40 will ease traffic concerns in the future.

The Mt. Juliet mayor expressed a desire to see a seven-story office building or office headquarters in the area first thing, and "we can go on from there."

"That's a possibility now," she said. "This prime industrial property will be made easily accessible. It's very exciting."

Mt. Juliet Managing Editor Laurie Everett can be reached at 754-6397 or by e-mail at mtjulietnews@bellsouth.net.

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391 **NU**
approves
nearly \$2
million
for Del Rio
Waterline Project

By **STEVE BLANCHETT**
NPT Staff Writer

NEWPORT- The Newport Utilities Board of Directors met in regular session on Monday and approved three bids totaling \$1,940,136.60 for the Del Rio Waterline Project.

NU Water Department Manager Topper Allen presented the bids to the board for its approval and he recommended approving the low bids for the waterline and the water tank and the only bid for the pump station.

The Del Rio Waterline bid in the amount of \$1,450,930.60 was awarded to the low bidder, Merkel Brothers Construction, of Greeneville.

The Del Rio Water Tank bid in the amount of \$413,400 was awarded to the low bidder, Southeastern Tank.

The Del Rio Pump Station bid in the amount of \$75,806 was awarded to the only bidder, Engineer Fluid, Inc.

Allen said Merkel Brothers has completed work for NU before and said it has always been of the highest quality.

NU General Manager Lee Baker said Merkel Brothers has always taken care of customers and that he believes it would do an excellent job on the waterline.

Director Jabo Francis asked whether the material it would use would be a different type of pipe.

Allen said they are using the standard pipe.

Chair Roy Campbell Jr. asked whether they did the engineering for the project.

Allen said they did not. He said it was completed by Hatfield Allen Engineering.

Allen said the water tank would be a glass-lined steel tank that is equivalent to a concrete tank-only with much less maintenance.

Baker said NU considered increasing the size of the tank from one-half million gallons to three-quarters of a million gallons for \$100,000 more, but decided not to spend the extra funds because the project is very close on its funding.

"Increasing the size of the tank is important, but not as important as getting water to the school," said Baker.

Campbell asked whether the gap would cause problems for the utilities.

"There is a gap and when you add all the variables together, we're a little shy, but we're working with Don [Hurst] to close that gap," said Baker. "The development on the river is selling lots and they will be important to the tax base. If it hadn't been for the development, we wouldn't have been able to put the project together."

Allen also told the directors that Southeastern Fluid was the only bidder on the pump station and that it had completed the pump station for the Lowe's project for NU.

"This tank is actually costing a little less than the one used for Lowe's," said Allen. "We're happy with their workmanship and product."

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The directors unanimously approved all three bids requested by Allen and construction is now set to begin.

Board members present were Campbell, Francis, Dan Lindsey, Mike Proffitt, Roger Butler, and Leon F. Bryant.

In other business, the board approved \$62,000 for the completion of the funding for the Hartford Waterline Project.

"I've been working on the Hartford Waterline Project since 1997 and I'm ready to see it completed," said Baker. "NU did the preliminary engineering report at our expense of \$7,000 to determine the most economical way to get water to Hartford. The Environmental Protection Agency has worked with us since that time to get potable water to Hartford because of downstream contamination of the water from [then] Champion."

Baker said he and Cocke County Mayor Cliff McMahan, Jr., have lobbied Washington for the process to continue and that everything is now in place through three different grants and a low interest loan for the project to continue, except for \$62,000 that NU still needs to provide.

"It has been very complex and it has taken

a long time, but \$62,000 is all I can ask for you to approve because of the customer base," said Baker. "We looked at going through Lindsey Gap, as was requested, but it would add 5.2 miles to the project at an additional cost of \$2.4 million. It isn't feasible in that direction at this time because of the ridge that would require an additional water tank and pump station."

"The people involved will still try to stop it, but I want to get the project moving," said Baker. "It's my intention to keep pushing it and bid it as soon as possible."

"It's been explained to them time and time again and they just will not listen," said Proffitt. "I think we need to proceed with the project."

Campbell asked whether there is any way that a cost overrun could occur, which NU needs to worry about.

Baker said he does not believe so, citing as the reason the way it would be bid.

Campbell asked whether the system could handle all the new waterlines being installed, because, he said, at one time it wasn't sufficient.

"We have a lot going on, but we have a surplus of water and our system can handle it

now," said Baker. "The system is considered to be a very good system, with 1,300 miles of waterline and about 10,000 customers."

"Then we've been prospering and you all should be proud of what we've accomplished," said Campbell.

The board then unanimously approved the recommendation for \$62,000 for the Hartford Waterline Project.

Cocke County Partnership President Don Hurst thanked the board for their approval of the Hartford project.

"Obviously, other projects will be coming this way," said Hurst. "We are working on a grant proposal to extend water for the town of Parrottsville and working on the grant for the extension of the Cosby Highway waterline to connect with the new Interstate 40, 438 exit that has been approved by the state."

Hurst said the Cocke County Partnership appreciates the efforts of the NU Board of Directors to continue to grow the community.

Baker also reported that 592 people utilized NU's community room in December.

The next NU Board of Directors meeting is set for Monday, February 6 at 3:30 p.m. ■

321 Road work annoying, but inevitable

SUMMARY:

State officials begin work soon on the bridge over Little Pigeon River on Chapman Highway near downtown Sevierville. It will mean delays and aggravation, but that's the way it goes in an area so heavily traveled.

Some Japanese industrialists were visiting a small southern city a few years ago, considering that town for a major plant. As city officials drove the visitors around they were forced to take streets that were barricaded or being worked on. Embarrassed, the city officials apologized to the industrialists. "No apology needed. We like torn-up streets," one of the Japanese men said. "It shows progress."

That's a positive way to look at what will be five difficult months for motorists in Sevierville, as state officials make repairs to the bridge over the Little Pigeon River on Chapman Highway. Workers for the Tennessee

Department of Transportation will be making repairs to that bridge and two others on Chapman during the next five months or so, and it will mean inevitable delays and lane closings. TDOT hopes to finish by Memorial Day in late May. Maybe it will, but be prepared for a longer work period.

Yes, it will be annoying and aggravating, especially when tourists rediscover us in the spring, but what can you do? Interstate 40 through Knoxville is under continuous states of repair. So are interstates around Nashville, Asheville and Chattanooga. It's a little like the guy who paints the Golden Gate

Bridge. It takes months and months to do it, and as soon as he finishes, he has to start over. Road work is a never-ending process, and it's always the heavily traveled roads that draw the most attention because they wear down faster and need widening more quickly.

There will always be road work under way in Sevier County, as long as there are millions of visitors and thousands of permanent residents.

Leave a little earlier and be a little more patient, and we'll get through the Chapman Highway work as we have every other road project over the past years.