

\$1,500 impact fees for building permits get nod in MJ

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Fire chief says ordinance would keep taxes, insurance low

MT. JULIET -- Growth and development have financial consequences for Mt. Juliet and its fire services, Fire Chief Erron Kinney told the Mt. Juliet Board of Commissioners Monday night as they listened and unanimously approved a proposed ordinance to adopt impact fees to offset fire protection expenses.

However, there were serious questions about whether new permit applications should be accepted before the proposal can become law after a second reading.

Kinney said the fees to be paid by developers are a way to avoid increasing the property taxes that fund fire protection, and the quality of fire protection will help keep insurance premiums down.

"The property tax does not allow the department to keep pace with the growth and development," Kinney said. "This new fee collected only from new growth will allow the Mt. Juliet Fire Department to expand its services, employees and equipment to maintain a high standard of services as the city grows."

The impact fee in the proposed ordinance would be \$1,500 per housing unit or \$1,500 plus 25 cents per square foot for non-residential buildings. It would be assessed only one time per building, when the building permit is issued.

The funds would go directly into an emergency services fund to pay for fire services only.

At the end of the meeting, District 4 Commissioner Jim Bradshaw introduced a resolution requesting a hiatus on issuing new building permits until the second reading of the impact fee ordinance.

Bradshaw's resolution, which eventually passed unanimously, puts a hold on issuing new permits for not more than 30 days, but does not affect those submitted by the end of the day on Oct. 14 before the commission took its vote Monday night.

District 3 Commissioner Art Giles questioned whether the resolution establishing the hiatus on building permits is fair to contractors and developers. But after hearing concerns about the possibility of a run on permits to avoid the new fees, Giles agreed to support it.

In other action, the commissioners agreed to accept a \$1,600 sign for the entrance to Mundy Park that was contributed by Wilson Bank & Trust. They also agreed to fund electricity to light the sign. Bradshaw pointed out that the sign could be used to inform people of community events and to welcome visitors to the city.

The potential agreement between the city and Wilson County Emergency Management Agency about division of emergency services in Mt. Juliet was deferred until the next Board of Commissioners meeting on Oct. 28 to allow Kinney to talk to WEMA Director John Jewell about some changes to the agreement.

The commissioners also responded to the state's finding that Mt. Juliet, Lebanon and Wilson County may owe the county school system as much as \$800,000 from required sharing of sales taxes on liquor for previous years. For now, they only acted to prevent future underpayment by setting aside funds to pay whatever Mt. Juliet will owe the school system this fiscal year.

The commissioners voted to set aside \$80,000 of the liquor tax yet to be collected this fiscal year that will end June 30, 2014, but not to pay any funds to the school system until it is decided how much the city will owe the county schools this fiscal year.

The commissioners also:

Agreed to set aside "\$600,000 to stabilize the budget."

Approved changes to the storm water regulations.

Split the ordinance governing street-cutting and surety bonds to insure the repair of streets damaged by construction into two separate ordinances, as recommended by the Planning Commission.

Approved funding for Phase III of the Town Center Trail.

Approved funding for changing rooms-restrooms near the Ava's Splash Pad at Charlie Daniels Park.

Approved, on second reading, an ordinance controlling adult businesses.

Funded the design phase of a new sewer pump station.

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