

BOCC suspends impact fees for a year

[JAY FELSBURG - Managing Editor](#)

October 24, 2008 - 4:14PM

CHIPLEY – The Washington County Board of County Commissioners voted to suspend impact fees for a year beginning Dec. 1, 2008 and Dec. 1, 2009. The action was taken at Thursday's regular Board meeting.

The action followed a complaint about paying impact fees by a homeowner.

The impact fees are designed for funding infrastructure needed for County growth. Fees are charged for new construction, improvement of property and other actions. The state Department of Community Affairs would not approve development, particularly major development, without provision for adding the necessary emergency services, transportation and other improvements to support development.

County Planner Lynda Waller sent a memorandum to the Board and County Attorney Gerald Holley describing impact fees and the legislation supporting them.

“Regarding concurrency and infrastructure, Senate Bill 360 as passed by the Florida Legislature says that the local governments will have some way of providing for the infrastructure before they issue the development permits for any new development,” Waller wrote.

Waller noted that EMS/Fire impact fees to fund needed improvements in emergency services, and a transportation impact fee to fund improvements in roads are in place.

She said the fees were vital for improvement.

“It may be questionable whether the county can furnish the levels of service needed for the development we have now with regard to EMS and fire,” Waller wrote.

“We have identified two much needed EMS stations in the south and southwest sections of the county and these are shown on our Capital Improvements Element Schedule. Note that the Impact Fee is shown as the funding source. These are also identified in the Evaluation and Appraisal Report as being items that will need to be upgraded to support future development.”

Waller said that failure to retain impact fees would have serious consequences for future development.

“At some point, if we are unable to fund these improvements, we may be ordered by the state to not issue any more development permits (building permits) and any future land use amendments sent to DCA for approval could be denied by DCA for failure of the County to show that services are available or will be available in the near future,” Waller wrote.

“While this is an extreme action for DCA to take with regard to local building permits, it is not as far as new subdivisions and land use change amendments are concerned.” Waller went on to list projects that impact fees would be required for.

See the related article at www.chipleypaper.com

“The Board was informed near the end of the discussion and after the motion was made and voted on, that a suspension of the Impact Fees would have to be done through the Public Hearing process to modify the Ordinance,” Waller wrote. “Otherwise this was to be effective Dec. 1, 2008.