

# HOLLISTER FREE LANCE

County to examine fees, potential 3-year budget plan

Tuesday, April 14, 2009

By Colin McConville ([cmconville@freelancenews.com](mailto:cmconville@freelancenews.com))

HOLLISTER

The San Benito County Board of Supervisors approved a contract with Willdan Financial Services for analysis of county impact fees and a related preparation of reports. The board unanimously approved the contract at today's meeting.

The contract - not to exceed \$12,500 - will ensure the county is in compliance with state codes that require annual review of impact fees.

"It is a government code requirement that you re-visit those impact fees every year and get a report on the balance of each impact fee and what is there, what has been constructed with that money and any changes you may want to make in the projects," Assistant County Administrative Officer Rich Inman said.

He went on: "We have not been in compliance with that requirement. It is a requirement that you have a five-year report that consolidates all the information relative to those fees and that has not been done."

The county has solicited bids from various firms, and Inman described the price of \$12,500 to be a "bargain."

The report will be completed in seven weeks, which will be in compliance with the state code that says the report needs to be submitted 180 days after the end of the fiscal year.

Impact fees are a factor in the funding of capital improvement projects. County Administrative Officer Susan Thompson said that impact fees are discretionary in terms of what projects they fund.

"We have to go through this process in order to know how we want to use future moneys and how much you want to charge, if anything," she said.

Supervisor Margie Barrios asked if it will be a similar study to the examination of county service area funds and fees.

"It's a different exercise than what you are going to be going through with the CSA but it's a full analysis of each impact fee - what's been spent and what your balance is," Inman said. "I view it as a very critically important activity."

## Also at the meeting:

- The board heard a report from Inman regarding the hiring status for the county counsel and public works administrator positions.

Inman said that he spoke with Bob Murray and he will be at the April 28 meeting to give recommendations to board for filling the positions.

"He is recommending four applicants for the public works administrator position and seven for the county counsel," Inman said.

The county contracted the services of Bob Murray and Associates, a firm that specializes in public-sector executive recruitment, to replace the vacancies left by the retirement of former County Counsel Dennis LeClere and the firing of former Public Works Director Jerry Lo.

- CAO Thompson also announced to the board that she will be making a presentation at the next meeting regarding the current



status of the budget.

Thompson said this is a standard practice around budget time to make good, solid fiscal decisions. With many state and federal budgetary concerns, Thompson said she wants to create "a good, solid three-year plan."

"What do we think is going to happen in year two, year three," she said. "I want to have the conversation with the board so they can give me direction."

---

### **Colin McConville**

Colin McConville is a reporter with the Hollister Free Lance. You can reach him by [email](#) or at (831) 637-5566.