

High Springs looking to collect slashed impact fees

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HIGH SPRINGS – Looking to increase revenues in city coffers, impact fees are on the table for the High Springs City Commission. At the April 11, 2013 commission meeting, commissioners discussed the impact fee study prepared by City Manager Ed Booth, which was provided to each of them for review during the March 28 meeting.

Booth explained that while impact fees were originally set at \$9,000 per household, they were never collected by the City. “This study presents a more affordable and realistic alternative and takes into consideration a joint project with the City of Alachua and considers grant opportunities,” he said.

The matter brought little discussion as commissioners realized the revised impact fees would be significantly less than the original amount. Following unanimous agreement, commissioners tasked City Attorney Scott Walker to develop an ordinance based on Booth’s suggested impact fees at under \$3,000 per average household.

Walker is expected to present the ordinance at the April 25 commission meeting for the required first reading. If it passes at that time, a public hearing and second reading of the ordinance will be scheduled to receive citizen input. Most likely the public hearing will take place at the May 9 regular commission meeting.

If fees are approved at second reading, “developers will have to pay the impact fee if they want to be guaranteed the use of the sewer system,” Booth said.

Impact fees are not intended to be used for ongoing operations and maintenance. Instead, the fees are to be used to further develop or expand the existing water and wastewater systems to accommodate new demand created by new development.

Booth earlier said as the cost for infrastructure expansion within the existing systems occurs due to new users, the connection fees should be directly based on the reduction of capacity caused by the new customers.

Booth estimates total capital cost to the City of \$1.3 million for wastewater facilities, which equates to an impact fee per unit of \$1,303 for additional wastewater customers.

“Based on a 250-gallon per customer water usage, the cost for residential customers would be \$1,342 for a 3/4-1-inch meter. Two- and 3-inch meters, usually reserved for businesses using a larger water supply, would add \$1,000 for a 2-inch meter or \$3,000 for a 3-inch meter to the residential amount of \$2,645.