



## **Impact fees, county clerk litigation among issues Collier board will consider Tuesday**

By I.M. STACKEL

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Large sums of money will change hands when Collier County commissioners meet Tuesday.

At the same time, county leaders are preparing to freeze some impact fees for certain properties; take to the shade to discuss ongoing litigation with Collier Clerk of Courts Dwight Brock; discuss hiring outside counsel to handle a sexual harassment lawsuit filed by a former employee; and determine a different way to calculate impact fees.

The county has been awarded \$7.3 million in federal grants to implement a Neighborhood Stabilization Program. Acceptance of the grant will enable the Collier County Department of Housing and Human Services to administer, implement and monitor an improvement program approved in November.

Commissioners will have to amend the current budget — which took effect Oct. 1 — to acknowledge the windfall. The grant carries special conditions, including immediate adoption of a plan to administer the money. That plan was adopted Nov. 18, and will be reaffirmed today.

According to a memo by Marcy Krumbine, Collier's director of Housing and Human Services, the plan would enable the county to acquire, rehabilitate, transfer, demolish and land-bank properties.

The plan also enables Krumbine to sign rehabilitation contracts and direct assistance mortgages of up to \$50,000 per residential unit.

The plan would also enable Purchasing Director Steve Carnell to sign purchase orders for property, construction, maintenance of other Neighborhood Stabilization Program activities for up to \$200,000 with qualified and approved vendors.

Under the consent agenda — a large collection of issues approved with one vote — commissioners will also consider prepayment of \$9.5 million on the Caribbean Gardens Commercial Paper Loan. It will make for a better deal for taxpayers, according to Budget Director John Yonkosky.

"The current principal reduction request...results in interest savings of approximately \$9,812 per month," Yonkosky wrote. The money is available and budgeted in Caribbean Gardens Debt Service Fund 220.

The same request, for the same reasons, will be considered for about \$8.3 million worth of county capital improvements, including ambulances, Emergency Service Center, South Regional Library Construction, Golden Gate Library Expansion, and the county's Fleet Management complex, as well

as the Sheriff's Office fleet management facility.

If the commission approves these commercial paper loan prepayments, they will be scheduled for April 6.

"At the current rates of interest, saving of approximately \$8,550 per month will result," Yonkosky wrote.

What is not included in the consent agenda, and subject to discussion, are two impact fee proposals, both of which were designed to help businesses and revitalize the economy.

The two impact fee discussions should not be confused, said county spokesman John Torre.

"They are two different issues," Torre said Monday.

One is just bringing back an ordinance commissioners discussed last month that would freeze some impact fees for two years for change-of-use properties. The second issue is how to calculate some impact fees.

In the past, county officers used a longer time-span to gauge the economy, hence, its financial needs and fees.

Today, commissioners will consider temporarily shortening that price indexing process to a two-year average calculation to ride out the rocky economic conditions.

That was the recommendation of the Collier County Productivity Committee.

In other discussions, County Attorney Jeff Klatzkow will discuss retaining a private attorney to handle a lawsuit filed two weeks ago by a former county employee.

A county worker for nearly 20 years, Barbara Burgeson filed a sexual harassment suit against the county, Stan Chrzanowski and Rudy Moss. The suit contains separate charges against Commissioner Tom Henning, not for sexual harassment, but for interfering in county employee issues.

"With respect to Commissioner Henning, the County Attorney strongly recommends that the board provides Commissioner Tom Henning with private legal counsel," Klatzkow wrote.

Klatzkow does not believe Burgeson's charges against Henning "have any true legal merit," but is concerned about the precedent that would be set, affecting any negative comment or criticism ever uttered by a current or future commissioner about any employee, past, present or future.

In an executive session, meaning closed to the public, Klatzkow will also ask commissioners how they want to proceed in their continued dispute with Brock.

They can continue in the court system, or enter into a joint stipulation agreement to dismiss remaining claims of both parties.

Commission meets at 9 a.m. on the third floor of the Collier County Administration Building, 3301 U.S. 41 East. For more information, check out the

agenda at [www.colliergov.net](http://www.colliergov.net).

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