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Prepared by: Ellis County Communications  
101 W. Main Street  
Waxahachie, TX 75165

Contact: Diana Buckley, 972-825-5087, [Diana.Buckley@co.ellis.tx.us](mailto:Diana.Buckley@co.ellis.tx.us)

### Bond projects moving forward

With safety fences up and earth movers already in action at the corner of Main and Jackson Streets just a few days after the formal ground breaking ceremony was held, County Commissioners gave their approval to several items related to the facilities bond.

Four agreements were approved in Monday's regularly scheduled meeting of the Ellis County Commissioners' Court:

- \$269,859.83 with TXU Electric Delivery Company for extension of electrical facilities;
- An addition \$44,132.51 added to an existing contract with Flowers Construction Company for installation of conduits and junction box construction;
- A maximum of \$55,000 to AT&T for telephone line reroutes; and
- Not more than \$54,000 to Atmos Gas for pipeline relocations.

"This was contemplated and budgeted for in the bond program," said Jon Vidaurri of Jones Lang LaSalle. "It is within the bond budget."

The agreements will allow for all overhead utilities to be rerouted underground, in addition to extending utilities as required for the project, which includes a courts/administration building, a jail expansion, and a City parking garage.

The Court also approved a lease for new facilities for the Ellis County Adult Probation Department in Ennis, adding options to renew at five-year increments. The proposal, which was first made at the November 10 meeting, was postponed to allow the renewal options to be refined in the contract.

"This additional space would allow us to provide more services, and also allow for the future growth of the department," said Alfred Mims, director of Adult Probation. "We are proud to say that the support of the department is primarily from our collection of fees – probably one of the most cost effective departments in the county. But we can't provide space for ourselves – we turn to you for that."

Mims said the new space will allow four to five additional community supervision officers to be hired.

No action was taken by the Court after a discussion of a proposed slaughter house location at the address of 620 Greathouse Road in precinct 3. The facility would reportedly be part of a larger operation producing all natural beef, processing it, and offering it for sale at a retail site on some 200 acres in a rural area. The authority of the Commissioners' Court extends only to the location of such facilities.

Commissioners authorized the County and District Attorney's office to draw up a letter to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality issuing notification to that agency that the County will withdraw from responsibility for inspection of onsite sewage facilities (septic systems) located within the city limits of Midlothian and Red Oak effective September 30, 2009. This would transfer

the responsibility for such inspections to TCEQ itself unless those cities elect to enter into agreements to represent the agency. Currently, the cities of Waxahachie, Ennis and Ovilla provide septic inspections within their own city limits.

Discussion continued regarding the structure and scope of a proposed Emergency Management and Response Advisory Committee, with no action taken. At issue, the size of the committee and whether or not it would be authorized to address radio communications and ambulance service.

“How you pull all these people together and get on the same page, I do not know,” said Commissioner Bill Dodson, pct. 2 of his ongoing work regarding radio communications. “Right now, there’s not any consensus.”

In other business, Commissioners:

- Approved a work order under an existing interlocal agreement with the Maypearl ISD;
- Issued payment to Wray and Willett, PLLC in the amount of \$1850.00 for legal services performed on behalf of the Ellis Prairie Soil and Water Conservation District in opposition to a petition seeking to create the Maypearl Water Control and Improvement District, in a matter pending before the TCEQ and the State Office of Administrative Hearings;
- Accepted the recommendation of the Texas County and District Retirement System to maintain retirement benefits at the current level;
- Designated Diana Buckley as Executive Sponsor and Donna Evenden as Wellness Coordinator for 2009 for the purpose of participating in the TAC Healthy County wellness initiative;
- Approved a replat in Buena Vista Heights, pct. 3;
- Approved purchase of a motor grader for pct. 3 on a three year lease/purchase agreement at a price of \$167,475 through HGAC;
- Declared items that received no bids at the November 15 Sheriff’s auction as salvage and authorized disposal/destruction of those items.