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Commissioners extend offer

After deliberating in executive session for over an hour, the third of such sessions on the topic, Ellis County Commissioners voted three to one to extend an offer to Waxahachie attorney Carol Bush to serve the unexpired term of County Judge Chad Adams. A meeting is planned for April 8 at which the Court is expected to ratify the decision.

“I’ve spent a lot of sleepless nights and looked at a lot of information,” said Commissioner Bill Dodson, pct. 2. “There are a lot of good candidates out there – people I consider friends. I think she is a proven candidate, she has served before, and I fully think that she can do this job for us.”

Commissioner Dennis Robinson, pct. 1, agreed.

“I feel very comfortable with Carol,” he said. “She’s had some experience with County Government; she is active in the community, involved with Juvenile Board and CASA, and also familiar with the legal system.”

Commissioner Heath Sims, pct. 3, cast the dissenting vote, asking that the decision be delayed until April 8, but the other members of the Court felt it was important to allow Bush an opportunity to make preparation in order to be ready to step into the office once the vote is finalized.

Adams tendered his resignation on March 9, naming April 1 as his last day in the job. A vote earlier in Monday’s meeting formally accepted that resignation. Adams was presiding over the meeting at the point that his resignation was brought to the table, but abstained from voting. He absented himself from the executive session at which his replacement was discussed, and the gavel was passed to Commissioner Ron Brown, pct. 4, when the regular session reconvened. Brown serves as judge pro-tem.

The office of County Judge will be on the ballot in 2010, with the new term of office beginning on January 1, 2011.

The Court voted unanimously to proclaim April 2009 as Child Abuse Prevention and Awareness Month in Ellis County, with representatives of Child Protective Services, the Gingerbread House Advocacy Center, and CASA of Ellis County on hand to accept the proclamation.

“We received almost 500 cases to be investigated in the past six months,” said Katherine Jones, Child Protective Services Supervisor. “Without the Commissioners’ support of the Child

Welfare Board, CASA, and the Gingerbread House, our work would be even more daunting.”



In other business, Commissioners:

- Approved a resolution opposing Senate Bill 320 in the 81st Texas Legislature, which would require that Justices of the Peace in counties with more than 200,000 in population be licensed to practice law;
- Approved a contract with First Care Medical testing for pre-employment and random drug and alcohol screening and DNA testing;
- Accepted a grant from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality in the amount of \$20,954.30 for the Clean Vehicle Fleet Project and authorized the purchase of a specific vehicle for Constable Precinct 4;
- Listened to a proposal made by Sims to alter Court Order Number 69.03 regarding the duties and responsibilities of the County Judge and Commissioners' Court in supervision and management of certain employees and suggested that the County and District Attorney's office work with Sims to reduce his request to writing;
- Removed from table an item requesting approval of construction costs and associated professional fees for the below grade street crossing, or tunnel, which is the completing link of the secured prisoner walkway from the jail to the new courts building and subsequently approved those costs and fees;
- Authorized the County Judge to sign a pipeline right of way easement with Atmos Energy Corporation;
- Approved payment to Atmos Energy Corporation of \$6500 for unforeseen labor costs associated with rerouting the pipeline along Main and Clift Streets in Waxahachie;
- Authorized the County Judge to sign a contract with Electra Link for low voltage structured cabling associated with the Bond program;
- Granted a set-back variance to Michael Driggers, pct. 2;
- Approved a replat in the Hugh McDaniel Addition, pct 4;

- Awarded the asphalt emulsion contract for CRS-2 to Cleveland (Primary) and Ergon (Secondary) and for MS-2 and AE Prime to Ergon (Primary) and Cleveland (Secondary).