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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

Sale of county buildings to move forward

After adjourning to executive session near the end of Monday's regularly scheduled meeting to consult with county attorneys, Ellis County Commissioners voted unanimously to authorize the County Judge to execute a contract of sale pertaining to the conveyance of all property located at 109 W. Franklin, 111 W. Franklin, 113 W. Franklin, 115 W. Franklin, 200 S. College Street, 114 S. Rogers Street, and an unnumbered lot on S. Rogers Street immediately adjacent to 115 W. Franklin in Waxahachie, Texas to Children's Palace Investments, Inc., doing business as AZEB.

The buildings include those vacated when several county offices were moved into the new courts building on Jackson Street as well as some that will be vacated when new facilities are completed on the property known as the County Farm.

Details of the agreement will be made public once it is finalized.

Michael Morrison of Guinn & Morrison, the firm retained by the Court to assist with redistricting, reported that he had met individually with each member of the Court to discuss 2010 Census data as it applies to the county's redistricting benchmark plan.

"It has been a very productive afternoon," he said. "It is my intent to come back before the end of April or the first part of May with maps to capture what I have been hearing."

Morrison said he would also plan to meet with the citizen advisory board at that time, with an overall goal of submitting the plan to the Department of Justice during the month of June.

A resolution in support of local post offices was also approved by Commissioners.

"The City of Italy contacted us and has concerns because there has been a lot of talk about closure of many of the smaller post offices," said County Judge Carol Bush. "Obviously they believe it is vital to their community, and they asked for our support."

Bush said she had also spoken to the chief of staff for Senator John Cornyn to express the same sentiments.

A discussion-only workshop held before the regular meeting addressed the topic of bio-solids (human waste sludge) and agricultural application in Ellis County. Presentations were made by the

Trinity River Authority, Renda Environmental, and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, and were followed by comments from members of the public who were in attendance.

Comments fell on both sides of the issue.

“We do not have the jurisdiction to take action on this issue,” Bush said, adding her appreciation for the participation. “We can provide a forum; we can listen to our constituents. I do encourage you to continue to work with the people that have at least made themselves available to you.”

In other business, Commissioners:

- Granted a one-time variance from County of Ellis Rules, Regulations and Specifications for Subdivisions relating to the 25 foot building side set-back line for a lot in the Broadhavens Addition in precinct 2;
- Granted a variance relating to the fire hydrant requirement for property in precinct 2 because the property in question would generally fall within the family exemption to the County’s platting requirements and there are special circumstances involved such that enforcing the rule would deprive the applicant of the reasonable use of his land, relief was necessary for the preservation of a substantial property right, granting the variance would not be detrimental to the public or injurious to other property owners, and granting the variance would not negatively affect future orderly subdivision of property;
- Approved a simplified plat of the above property after granting the variance;
- Awarded a contract to TD Industries for replacement of two HVAC chillers located on the rooftop of the County Jail, with pricing per the Texas Cooperative Purchasing Network contract, not to exceed \$295,000;
- Approved a work order under the interlocal agreement with the City of Milford to patch pot holes;
- Authorized the purchase of a 1997 Ford F-450 for precinct 3 at the price of \$9750;
- Approved a resolution in support of the City of Midlothian in its pursuit of legislation creating the Midlothian Municipal Management District #2, located entirely within the corporate limits of Midlothian.